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CHANGING IRELAND

Issue 53 • COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT • COLLECTIVE ACTION • EMPOWERMENT • SOCIAL INCLUSION • www.changingireland.ie

NO LONGER A HUNCH, BUT A CERTAINTY

NEW EVIDENCE PROVES EARLY CHILDHOOD SUPPORT WORKS

BRUSSELS BRIEFING: OUR HUMANITY IS OUR STRENGTH, NOT OUR WEAKNESS. 10-11

- EQUALITY: **WHAT IF YOU'D BEEN BORN IN 1955?**
- **CINEMA FOR PEOPLE WHO ARE HOMELESS**
- TRUTZ HAASE & POBAL RESPOND TO IAN DEMPSEY
- **WHY WE'LL NEVER FORGET WHAT'S HER NAME**
- **CO-OPS: YOU'LL NEVER BAKE ALONE!**

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This publication is produced by Changing Ireland Community Media Ltd, an independent, not-for-profit NGO funded through the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government.



FRONT COVER

Pictured - Alannah McGuinness and her family are taking part in a programme in Dublin to support development in early childhood. The outcomes are being studied by researchers.

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INDEPENDENT

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



Comhshaol, Pobal agus Rialtas Áitiúil
Environment, Community and Local Government

ABOUT US

'Changing Ireland' engages in original journalism to highlight the impact of local and community development and social inclusion work across Ireland. We report on action on the ground and provide a space for reflection on what serves people best.

Established in 2001, the magazine is based in Moyross, Limerick.

This year, we are embarking on a new project in agreement with our core-funder, the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government. We have begun to produce quality journalism to reflect social inclusion work funded or supported by an array of Government departments and agencies. At the same time, we always have space also for those with empty pockets and nothing but community development in their hearts.

We are dedicated to promoting social justice, equality and fair play and to giving people who are rarely heard a voice.

While covering serious issues, we hope our style of journalism provides encouragement to workers, activists and volunteers nationwide, including civil and public servants and all involved in social inclusion in Ireland today.

See page 3 for information, including contact details, about the team behind 'Changing Ireland'.

Making history with children in north Dublin



Congratulations to the team involved in 'Preparing for Life', an early childhood intervention programme in north Dublin.

They're making history.

'Preparing for Life' is a community initiative conducted by the Northside Partnership and funded by the Department of Children

and Youth Affairs and Atlantic Philanthropies. What makes it different is that, every step of the way, the work is being evaluated by a team from UCD's Geary Institute.

And they have proven beyond doubt that early childhood support is worth its weight in gold.

For anyone working in early childhood care or development, they have scientifically measured the impact of your work. If you had a feeling you were having an impact but couldn't swear on it before, now you have the proof. Presuming you're doing the kind of things they do in north Dublin.

Tremendous detail is provided in analysing the results and everything is rigorously backed up by science.

The findings to date should be of interest to everyone, from parents to national policy-makers, programme-designers, trainers and lecturers, and community-based projects seeking evidence to support grant applications. They are of interest to students and indeed anyone wishing to better understand children's development.

The material is all available online. It's dense, yet insightful, and supported by data throughout. It will be immensely

important in guiding us in the long-term.

The project focuses, for instance, on cognitive development and how best they can nurture their children in a challenging environment.

The programme recognises that, "Disadvantage is often associated with lower cognitive resources which can be a difficult intergenerational cycle to break."

On this issue, the team have made a breakthrough. Their interventions are working. Children receiving support show better cognitive outcomes and this is but one example.

Early childhood interventions can be better targetted as proof emerges about what works best. It should now also be easier to campaign for increased funding to help young children grow and develop to their full potential.

Speaking of how funding is allocated, but on a different note, Trutz Haase, a poverty index expert, raises an issue for us in an interview in this edition. Funds for alleviating poverty are reportedly not always allocated entirely according to need. Whatever about roads, surely poverty alleviation should be a no-go area for politicians.

One hopes that the current caretaker government and the one to follow pay attention to Mr Haase's observations.

On this and any other matters relating to community development and social inclusion, your constructive views are welcome as always.

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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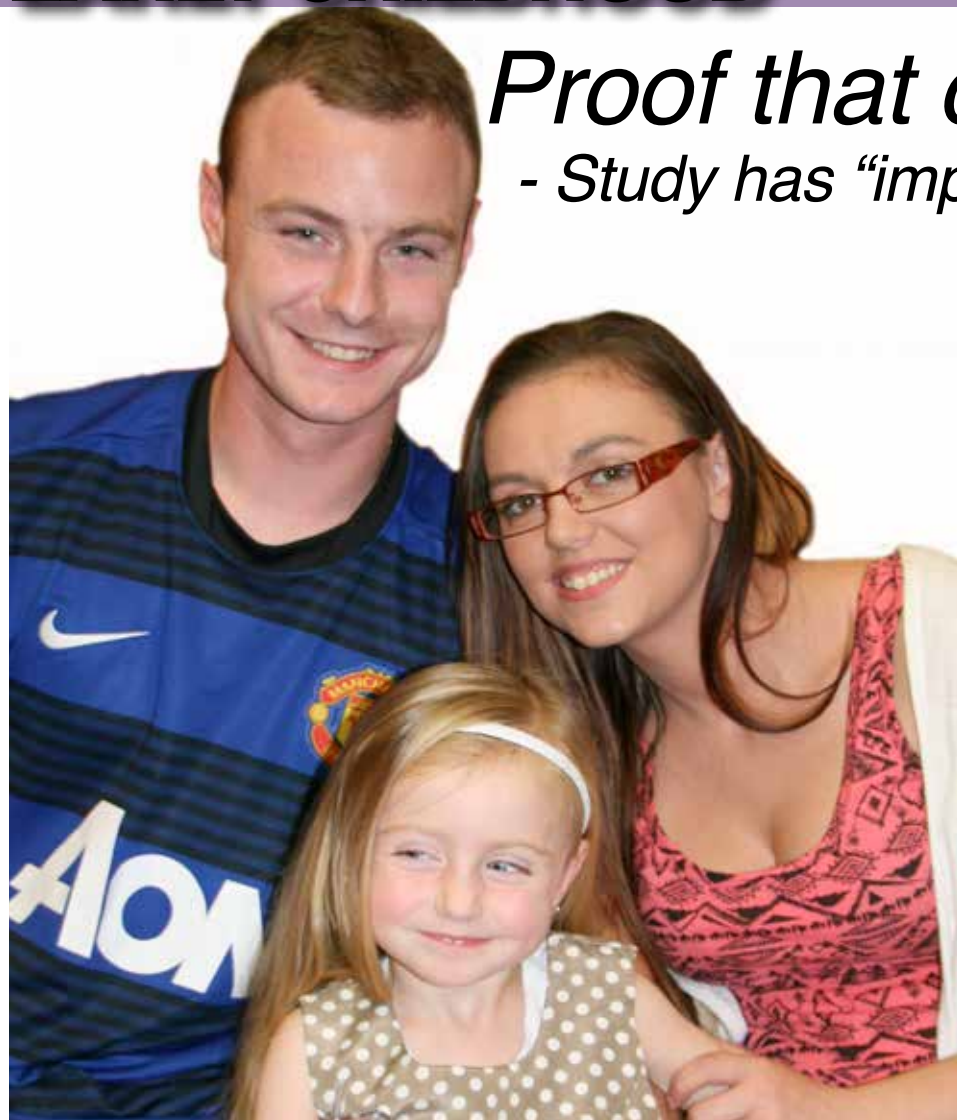
'Changing Ireland' thanks everyone involved in the production of Issue 50.

**MADE IN MOYROSS
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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.

EARLY CHILDHOOD



David Burns, Gemma Dwyer and daughter Ava.

BY BEN PANTER

A pioneering project - conducted by the Northside Partnership in Dublin and evaluated by UCD - is Ireland's biggest random control study into the effects of intervention in early childhood. It involves 200 families, has been running for nine years and supports social, emotional and behavioural development, literacy, physical health and cognitive health.

It has also produced evidence that early intervention works. The latest research - published in January - documents outcomes for children who have participated in the programme from birth up to age four.

The need locally for early childhood intervention was first identified after a 2004 study (Murphy et al) in the Northside area found that half the children starting school lacked skills considered essential for education. The target area includes all of Dublin 17 and parts of Dublin 5.

The study revealed that language, communication, cognitive development and general knowledge were all areas that needed to be addressed.

As fortune would have it, around this time Atlantic Philanthropies (AP) had expressed a desire to invest in programmes for children and youths in Ireland.

The Northside Partnership was asked to submit

a proposal and focused on early childhood.

"There is now a lot of evidence to suggest that intervention is better than crisis management later on," programme manager Noel Kelly told 'Changing Ireland'.

"Children are more likely to be ready when they go to school, this results in higher educational attainment and a decreased likelihood that they will suffer from addiction, mental health issues and anti-social behaviour."

Much of his team's initial work was informed by the research of Prof. James Heckman, a Nobel winner from the USA. He was among the first to provide evidence that investing in early childhood care was a most productive use of resources.

The Department of Children and Youth Affairs got behind the Northside Partnership in supporting the programme alongside AP with five years of funding (through the Area-Based Childhood Programme).

In a project that will have such a long term impact on the lives of its participants, mistakes were not an option. Preparation was essential.

It was not until 2007 that the programme began in earnest and even then it was a further two years until fieldwork began. Why did it take so long?

Noel said, "We had to be absolutely sure we were not doing harm, yet we had to be sure it

Proof that childhood inte - Study has "important policy consequ



Above: Amber Ward.

**"We had two groups of families. One group would get the services (but not the other) and we thought that clearly that can't be right."
- Team Leader, Val Smith**

worked. The debate raged long and hard and now we can say that this study can stand up to international scrutiny."

There were huge ethical concerns. The programme involved Randomised Control Trials (RCT) which meant splitting volunteer parents into two groups, all with different levels of intervention.

This presented a dilemma for those involved with the project.

As mentor team leader, Val Smith recalled: "There were concerns, we had two groups of families and all of them would be needy, one group would get the services (but not the other) and we thought that clearly that can't be right.

"The answer to that was; we actually don't know whether the programme is going to be doing any good or not, so we are not actually (knowingly) denying anyone anything."

Orla Doyle, economics lecturer in UCD and the principal investigator on the 'Preparing for Life' research team emphasised the importance of the control group: "The study was unique in an Irish setting because most evaluations of early childhood intervention were not tested rigorously.

"The RCT evaluation design ensures that any impact we identify has been generated by the programme, we can definitively say that any outcomes are a result of this intervention."

With these concerns addressed to the

Intervention works "consequences"



Gillian Cumiskey, Shane Kearney and daughter Mia. Photos by Preparing for Life staff.

satisfaction of the team, they began the arduous search for willing participants.

"We didn't have a mandate, we are not TUSLA and we had to win over parents' trust," said Noel.

"Parents volunteered, we had to meet them in the maternity hospital which was very time-consuming. We had to do all the footwork and physically meet them. It was successful though, 52% of parents joined," he said.

It was not all plain sailing. Since the programme is voluntary, parents are under no obligation to see it through to the end, according to Val Smith.

"Five years is an awful long time and it can be difficult to keep people actively engaged. There were incentives to get people to sign up and people were joining because of that and it is difficult to keep them engaged."

A cost benefit analysis is currently underway and the results should be known in September.

Meanwhile, the programme has secured a second phase of funding and over 140 parents have already signed up.

The programme recognises that, "Disadvantage is often associated with lower cognitive resources which can be a difficult intergenerational cycle

to break."

"Regarding child development, the programme was most beneficial for the children of first time mothers and the children of mothers with lower cognitive resources," state the researchers.

"This is a positive development for the programme with important policy consequences," they humbly point out.

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PFL Evaluation Team, September, 2013.

SAMPLE FINDINGS

Each family was part of a group receiving either high or low levels of support and after an 18-month period, researchers made the following discoveries:

- Children in the high treatment group displayed a higher level of gross motor skills.
- They were less likely to be at risk of socio-emotional and cognitive delay compared to those in the low treatment group.
- They had more appropriate eating patterns, were less likely to be hospitalised and had better mother-reported health.
- Mothers in the high treatment group were more likely to have positive interactions with their children.
- The home environment was more likely to be appropriate and safe for those in the high treatment group, most notably in the realms of appropriate behaviours toward children, overall health and safety of the environment and the availability of age-appropriate learning materials.

Download the 18 months report, a PDF, here: <http://bit.ly/1VJEtZU>

So, what kind of support is provided?

For example, children internalise and externalise problems. As well as measuring this, the team provided parents with 'Tip Sheets' to help them encourage their children to express emotions. This aimed "to offset children's communication problems which, if left unchecked, could lead to clinical levels of internalising or externalising behaviours."

At 48 months, results generally - from 217 interviews - were less stark than before.

Children in the high level support group did nonetheless clearly demonstrate "positive programme effects in the areas of cognitive development, behaviour, and fine motor skills".

There was "some evidence of consistency over time, particularly in the areas of cognitive development, behaviour and age-appropriate skills", the researchers said.

However, some of the positive effects on children's behaviour observed at both 24 and 36 months were no longer evident at 48 months.

The research team partly attributed this to flagging interest and involvement in the fourth year of engagement by some parents. The studies continue.

For this, and so much more, visit the website. **W: geary.ucd.ie/preparingforlife/-AM**



**UCD Geary Institute
for Public Policy**



**Northside
Partnership**



KERRY'S SIOPA NA FEIRME WINS NEW COMMUNITY IMPACT AWARD

- As Tipp Tearoom takes top 'sustainable' prize

Siopa Na Feirme, based in Waterville, Co. Kerry, was the first-time winner of a new award, the national 'Community Impact' award, worth €3,000.

The Kerry project received the award on February 25th at a ceremony in Dublin. However, like a good Munster derby, Tipperary was very much in contention with second place (worth €1,500) going to Loughmore Co-operative Shop and Tea Rooms.

The judges said, "Siopa Na Feirme provides a co-operative space for local producers to sell their produce, helping to both sustain and create jobs in the local community". They cited it as "a sterling example of the ongoing vision of Comhchoiste Ghaeltacht Uíbh Ráthaigh to develop its community in a sustainable way."

The Waterville-based shop brings 20 small food producers from Iveragh (see photo, left) under a single shop-roof. Shop-founder Kim Elliott recalled, "I came up with the idea while on a business course."

A further €12,500 was awarded on the same night for projects that excelled in sustainable development and, in this, Loughmore Tea Rooms took first prize of €5,000.

"We are mesmerised! We won not one but two prizes today," said Mary Fogarty. "We first won an award for Community Impact and then went on to win the overall award and first prize in the Get Involved Sustainable Communities Award. It's an awesome accolade."

Moyhill Community Gardens, based near Lahinch, Co. Clare, also won an award in the Sustainable Community section. You might recall our interview with the inspirational founder, shark-surviving surfer Fergal Smith.

The awards were sponsored by Clann Credo and the SEAL.

Bright side to EU's 2016 report on Ireland

- (Some) improvements noted in life for young people & children

- Concerns remain over childcare and long-term unemployment

BY ALLEN MEAGHER

Late on election day 2016, the European Commission (EC) published its annual report on Ireland's performance across a range of socio-economic indicators. The mainstream media generally focused on the downside, however there were positives.

The 'Country Report Ireland 2016' said Ireland performs "well on early school leaving and has clearly improved in basic skills": Early school leaving has been falling consistently since 2009 to a rate of 6.9% in 2014 which represents one of the lowest rates in the EU.

The situation continues to improve for young people," the report states.

It notes that youth unemployment (15-24 age group) has "fallen decidedly in the last year" and stood at 20.7% in late 2015, slightly above the EU average of 19.9%.

"This is a significant drop from the peak of 33% in mid-

2012," the report says. It does not identify emigration as a factor, noting that last year most people who left the country "tend to have a job in Ireland and higher education".

In fact, population growth is expected to be "quite strong" this year and next.

The report says, "The situation is also improving for young people not in employment, education nor training (NEET), with the rate dropping to 15.2% in 2014.

However this is 2.7% above the EU average: "Despite improvements, long-term unemployment remains a concern," the report says.

Nonetheless, the report notes progress:

"Under the Pathways to Work strategy, a range of new active measures have been introduced and there is a shift towards programmes targeted primarily at the long-term unemployed. The integration of benefits and employment services through the Intreo job centres has

been a big step towards better tailoring support.

"The latest version of the strategy, published in January 2016, highlights 86 actions to enhance the provision of services to jobseekers, including to those traditionally excluded from the labour market, to make work pay and to engage with employers to provide greater opportunities.

"Further evaluations of the Intreo activation process and the JobBridge scheme are set to be carried out in 2016 and these will be followed with evaluations of other activation programmes, e.g. Back to Work Enterprise Allowance, Community Employment and Community Work Placement Initiative (TÚS).

"This increased evaluation activity is a positive development as it will aid further alignment of the programmes to the needs and employability of participants," the report states.

On child poverty, the report says: "Absolute poverty,

including amongst children, has decreased but rates remain high. The proportion of people affected by severe material deprivation decreased slightly in Ireland in 2014 to 8.4%.

"The rate of severe material deprivation remains much higher than at the onset of the crisis in 2008 but is now slightly below the EU average. The proportion of children (aged 0 to 17) at risk of poverty or social exclusion (AROPE) fell to 30.3% in 2014, but remains higher than the EU average of 27.8%.

"The limited availability and high cost of childcare remain significant barriers to increased female labour market participation and hinders efforts to reduce child poverty."

Regarding the percentage of children living in jobless households, the figure (16%) in 2014 was a "slight" improvement on the previous year.

Download the report here: <http://bit.ly/1TOVnVJ>

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**Or
Allen Meagher, editor**
 (details, page 3)

PARTICIPATION LEARNERS GIVE VIEWS

- Grassroots solutions at first national adult learner forum



Learners call it as they see it: 'What is not working Further Education and Training?'



Marking progress: 'What is working well?'

Photos: Marc O'Sullivan.

A new formal structure now exists through which adult learners in Ireland can influence policy decisions that affect them.

The Government committed in 2014 to the establishment of a forum for adult learners (in the Further Education and Training Strategy).

It came to pass on election day, February 26th, when 80 learners from across Ireland met in the Mansion House, Dublin, to discuss their achievements and challenges in further education.

The learners were nominated by their peers and came from community education, the Youthreach programme, the Back to Education Initiative and the Vocational Training Opportunities Scheme.

Participants came with solutions to problems

they knew of in the adult learning environment.

They focused on 'What is *not* working well in Further Education and Training and how it can be improved', as well as looking at what is working well.

AONTAS, the national adult learning organisation, hosted the event which will become an annual one.

SOLAS head Fiona Hartley said, "Now learners will be placed at the heart of the FET service." She promised the adult learners' that their contributions "will have an impact on the decisions that are made in the future."

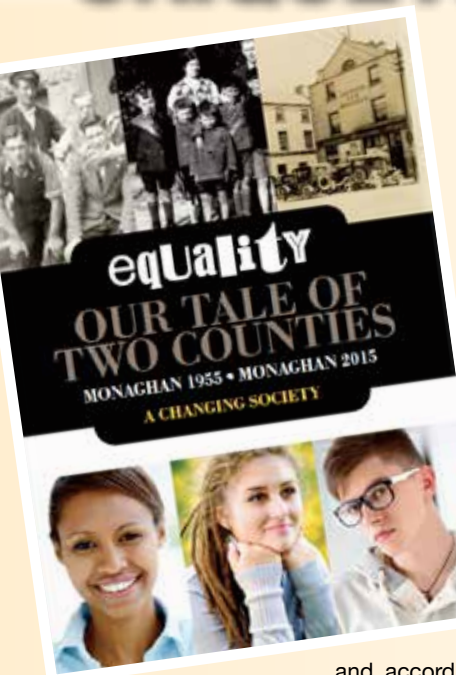
Meanwhile, Aontas has said the next Government "must" increase funding for community education by €10 million.

W: aontas.com

UNIQUE APPROACH TO LEARNING

HOW DIFFERENT YOUR LIFE WOULD HAVE BEEN HAD YOU LIVED IN 1955

- Monaghan County Council's booklet takes an unique approach to demonstrating how people's struggle for social justice and equality has reaped many rewards.



Last year's marriage referendum shook people involved with Monaghan's social inclusion efforts.

The 'Yes' side won by the narrowest of margins, less than one percent, in Cavan-Monaghan

and according to Bernie Bradley, social inclusion officer with Monaghan County Council, "If we weren't a joint constituency, it wouldn't have passed."

Their response was to produce a beautiful booklet titled 'A Tale of Two Counties' which is fast becoming the go-to resource for community workers seeking to educate people about the nine grounds for unlawful discrimination.

Through photographs and personal testimony (three pages of which are reproduced here) the book simultaneously contrasts yet merges the differing fates of youngsters in 1955 and 2015.

The booklet demonstrates how the fight for equality has changed the lives of so many people. Only Travellers have an even harder time of it now when it comes to discrimination.

"The results of the referendum show that this initiative is particularly important in Monaghan," said Bernie.

So striking is the imagery and layout that the hardest cynic could not deny the benefits of the long struggle for a more equal society.

Monaghan's experience of exclusion in 1955 can be seen as reflective of wider Irish society then. To put it mildly, it wasn't easy fit in if you were different and there are many people today who can testify to that.

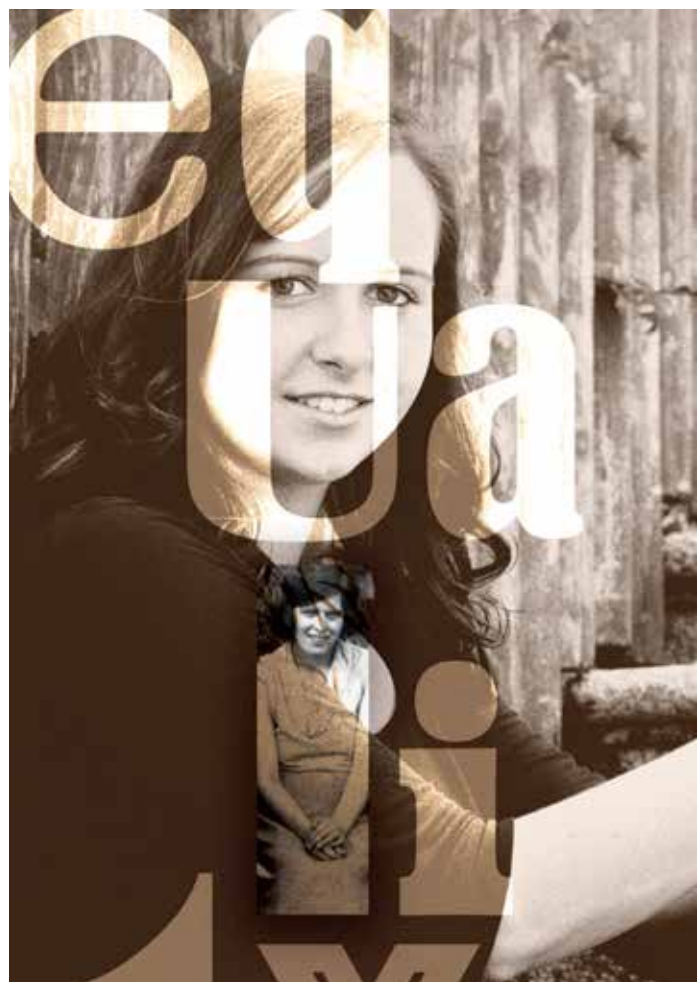
The book was launched last June as part of Social Inclusion Week by, then Minister-of-State, Aodhán Ó Riordáin.

Elsewhere in the country, it has been greeted as a ground-breaking resource for community workers.

As Bernie puts it, "The truth is, every day in Monaghan, Ireland and the rest of the world people are often treated differently because they are different. But Monaghan Social Inclusion Measures group, led by Monaghan County Council wants everyone to feel it's okay to be different."

This isn't the last you'll hear from Monaghan regarding the struggle for equality.

Copies of the booklet are available by contacting the community department of Monaghan County Council on 047-73720. E: gcostello@monaghancoco.ie or bbradley@monaghancoco.ie



MARRIED WOMEN

19 **55** — Mary is 21 she lives just outside Clones. Mary works in the County Council as a clerical officer, she really likes her job and thinks she is a good employee. Mary is getting married to John in the summer, she is excited to become a wife and

MARY IS 24. SHE LIVES JUST OUTSIDE CLONES. MARY WORKS hopefully a mother someday. Mary is sad that because of the

IN THE COUNTY COUNCIL AS A CLERICAL OFFICER, SHE "Marriage ban" she will have to leave her job when she gets

REALLY LIKES HER JOB AND HAS MANY FRIENDS THERE. married

MARY IS JUST HOME FROM HER HONEYMOON, SHE HAD A

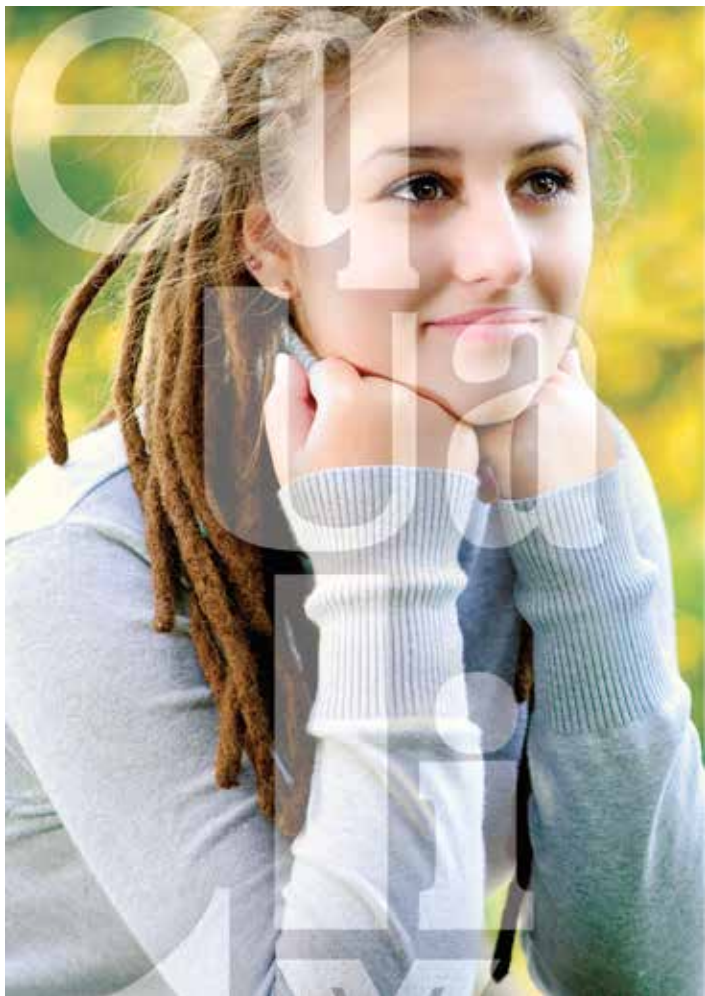
GREAT TIME SEEING ALL THE SIGHTS. MARY IS GOING BACK

TO WORK ON MONDAY. — 20 **15**

According to the "Marriage ban" a woman working in the public service was required to leave her job once she married. This ban was removed in 1973.

EQUALITY

LONE PARENT



19 **55** — Ann is 17, she is pregnant and will have her baby soon. Ann is not married. Ann's parents have told her she

must give her baby up to be adopted. Ann would love to keep

ANN IS 17. SHE WORKS PART TIME IN A LOCAL PRIMARY SCHOOL. SHE LOVES HER JOB. ANN HAS A BEAUTIFUL

DAUGHTER CALLED SUSIE. SUSIE IS 6. ANN IS A LONE PARENT.

SHE DIDN'T PLAN TO HAVE SUSIE AT 17, BUT SUSIE IS THE BEST

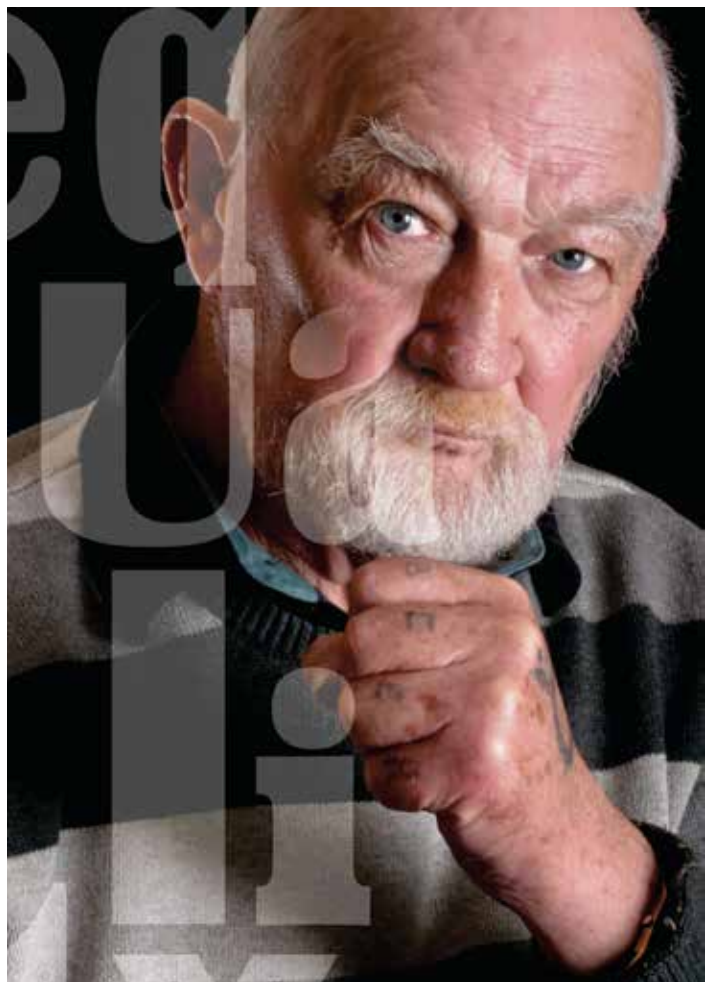
THING THAT EVER HAPPENED TO HER. ITS TOUGH SOMETIMES

BUT ANN LIVES NEAR TO HER FAMILY AND SUSIE SEES HER

DADDY ALL THE TIME — 20 **15**

1973, the Government introduced the "Unmarried Mothers Allowance"; this provided financial support for the first time to mothers who were not married.

TRAVELLERS



19 **55** — Paddy is a Traveller man, he lives in a Barrell wagon in a small camp with his family and other families near

MONAGHAN TOWN. PADDY HAS NEVER REALLY GOT USED TO LIVING IN A HOUSE. HE GREW UP IN A BARRELLED WAGON.

soon for the summer. They will travel back to the camp in **PADDY SUPPOSES LIVING IN A HOUSE IS BETTER FOR HIS CHILDREN. PADDY IS UNEMPLOYED. HE HAS BEEN**

grandfather. Paddy makes saucepans, pots and milk-cans and **UNEMPLOYED FOR A LONG TIME. NOT MANY PEOPLE WILL**

GIVE TRAVELLERS A CHANCE OF A JOB. PADDY IS PROUD OF BEING A TRAVELLER, BUT HE GETS UPSET WHEN HIS

the odd time. **CHILDREN TELL HIM THEY GET CALLED NAMES IN SCHOOL,**

THEY DON'T DESERVE THAT. THEY ARE NO DIFFERENT TO

ANY OTHER CHILDREN — 20 **15**

In 1963 the government published the "Report of the Commission on Itinerancy". This report looked at problems "caused" by Travellers, rather than problems faced by Travellers. The report recommended programmes that would absorb Travellers (assimilation) into the wider community. Many Travellers feel this led only to further exclusion for Travellers. The Equal Status Acts 2000-2008 protects members of the Travelling community from discrimination. Many Travellers in Monaghan still feel that they experience discrimination in society.



CHANGE THE CONVERSATION

European dignity “dying” as women are raped and 10,000 children go missing

- Civil society groups need to do what governments cannot
- Media creating moral panic over security, ignoring reality



The meeting brought MEPs, experts and journalists together to discuss the situation facing women and children in particular. The media was urged to change the discourse surrounding refugees from one of security to one of humanitarianism. Pic: BP.

BEN PANTER REPORTS FROM BRUSSELS



‘Changing Ireland’ reporter Ben Panter flew to Brussels to attend a seminar in early March. Shortly after he wrote this article, bombers attacked the EU capital. It greatly reinforces the need for the message he brought back to be heard:

The truth is very different to the scare-mongering right-wing narrative of male economic migrants, unwilling to fight in their country of origin.

Now it's time to stop obsessing about security and talk more about how to respond humanely to the needs of refugees in Europe, and those struggling to find safety here. Their vulnerability is great.

Now it's time to stop obsessing about security and talk more about how to respond humanely to the needs of refugees in Europe, and those struggling to find safety here. Their vulnerability is great.

Over 10,000 children have gone missing in transit, a seminar on ‘Women Refugees and Asylum-seekers in the EU’ was told on March 4th.

Held in the European Parliament, the seminar called on politicians and journalists to change the discourse on refugees. Facilitator Cheryl Miller appealed directly to the media to change the focus from security to humanitarianism.

“It's time to pick a side,” she said.

Representatives from European political groups, feminist organisations, NGOs and aid agencies, were in Brussels to share stories and statistics so disturbing it prompted Iratxe García Pérez of the Spanish Socialist Workers' Party to declare:

“What is dying in the Mediterranean is European dignity.”

The seminar gave journalists an insight into the trauma women experience through gender-based violence and it was held the day before an inter-parliamentary meeting on the matter.

Despite recognition in the European Parliament that one million people trying to enter the richest region on earth - home to some 500 million people - should not constitute a crisis, the EU is failing the most vulnerable.

The land and sea journeys are dangerous enough for men, but women are also being forced into “transactional sex”, according to Sophie Magennis, head of policy at the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. Transactional sex was a word repeated again and again through the day; others called it ‘survival sex.’

That trauma is horrific - Rachel O'Reilly of the Women's Refugee Commission cited a case of a Sub-Saharan woman forced to pay by sex twice, once for a passport and once for the journey.

She described how “heavily pregnant women with serious health

conditions were forced to keep moving.”

Tellingly the level of pregnancy was, “twice the average population,” according to Aurélie Ponthieu of Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF).

“Many of them are under so much pressure to find a place of safety they need to move on,” she said.

“Our colleagues have seen really extreme cases of women in the very last stages of pregnancy, women with serious and sick children because of the pressures of what they have fled from and the fear they have of borders closing.”

“We need a new approach, where women and children are not left to engage in this very risky onward movement in order to find a place of safety,” said Aurélie.

“We are only talking about basic care for people in transit, this is not enough, nothing that we do is enough,” she said of the challenge facing MSF staff along Europe's migration routes.

Women interviewed by Amnesty International claimed they were abused in every country they passed through. When they crossed borders, interviews were usually conducted by men often in front of their own children, forcing them to relive the trauma or lie.

Many women, most likely the majority, were unaware of their rights, and language barriers made them vulnerable to traffickers. One woman spent days in need of healthcare, oblivious to the medical centre just a few hundred yards away.

Children frequently disappear: 10,000 children have gone missing along the route, according to Interpol figures quoted by Catherine Bearder, MEP and rapporteur of a report on anti-trafficking measures. She said 4,000 children alone went missing last year.

“They are worth more. Why are people so scared of children?” she asked, “There is an agenda of fear politics again.”

She didn't have to elaborate, nor would she be the last to compare the current crisis to Europe's darkest days.

The European project is in danger of giving away its values, its ethos and its soul, warned Syriza's Dimitrios Papadimoulis, MEP.

“We cannot have a Europe a la carte with 28 different policies,” he warned.

Unfortunately that is what we have got. Whether by accident or design refugees are, “moved around so often their vulnerabilities cannot be identified,” said Polish MEP, Marion Hübner.

This is a humanitarian issue, not one of security - laws and guidelines are already in place to deal with refugees/migrants specific needs, but they are just not being implemented.

Everyone present agreed the political agenda needs to change. “It is time to put ‘Love thy neighbour’ into practice,” urged Sibylle Bassler, editor-in-chief of one of Germany's top magazines and the director of a documentary on mass-rape in the Balkans.

While Europe was unprepared, things are beginning to change. Relief agencies are trying to oblige authorities to give women access to medical attention before the interview.

The ‘Blue Dot’ initiative is also helping as UN agencies begin to react to the changing dynamic of refugees that is seeing women and children become the majority.

CALL-TO-ARMS FOR COMMUNITY WORKERS

- Many examples of best practice to light the way

Integration is key for migrants and there are many examples of good practice, **REPORTS BEN PANTER.**

- Finland has introduced psychiatric treatment for traumatised children and offers training for staff working with them.
- In Belgium, there is a project in place to assist 40 unaccompanied minors build lives in their new host nation.
- In Italy over 700 asylum seekers have received support in work, education, health promotion, psycho-social wellness and culture.
- Irish people have visited Calais and further afield to support migrants in need of humanitarian assistance.

• At home, the Dublin Rape Crisis Centre provides training (from 2-day workshops to 12 day intensive courses) for organisations so their staff can sensitively support refugees and asylum seekers who have experienced sexual violence. (Email leonie@rcc.ie or ring 01 6614911 for more information).

• In Portlaoise, Failte Isteach, pairs older people with immigrants including Syrian refugees for the purpose of language training. Irish volunteers that we interviewed there spoke of an added purpose in life, showing there can be mutual benefits from such interactions.

These projects need to be replicated. Small-scale schemes need to be upgraded

The efforts of community workers, seemingly small scale in a European context can have a wide impact.



A mother and daughter rest in a relief centre while travelling Europe to seek safety.

on a continental level.

This puts the Community and Voluntary Sector at the very heart of the situation.

Community worker, Rachel O'Reilly spoke of the expertise within the sector.

"Governments need to look at the resources and expertise they have available and make use of that. Very often the best people to provide the expertise needed are from within the civil and voluntary sector," she said.

This should act as a call-to-arms for community workers.

The efforts of community workers, seemingly small-scale in a European context can have a wide impact.

Amnesty's European Director, Iverna McGowan, urged a grassroots drive by European citizens to speed up the process.

Some months earlier she made similar appeals: "Ministers must abandon once and for all the Fortress Europe approach. Desperate people will keep coming and a

coordinated emergency response coupled with an urgent overhaul of the EU's approach to asylum can no longer wait."

"The real European crisis is one of leadership and Europe's failure to radically reform its collapsing asylum system, with dire consequences for vulnerable people who need safety and sanctuary. There has been enough talk. Now is time for real action. The world is watching," she said.

CHILDREN & WOMEN UNSEEN HISTORICALLY

In 2014, half of the world's refugee population were women and girls. Historically, international conventions and national asylum policies have tended to overlook the specific position of female asylum seekers and the gendered nature of refugee situations. Asylum systems have largely been seen through the lens of male experience.

EU Year for Development ...and Discrimination

This photograph of a woman walking alone on a sandy road, presumably near home, was chosen to promote 2015 as European Year for Development. It was an interesting choice in a



year when millions were on the move.

The year was claimed by officialdom as an "unparalleled opportunity to showcase Europe's commitment to eradicating poverty worldwide".

Meanwhile, member states broke international law to prevent asylum-seekers from entering in search of refuge.

- AM



Making a crisis where there was none

Mary Honeyball (pictured left) MEP and author of an EU report on the protection of female refugees, said: "It is a crisis now

but it doesn't have to be."

She spoke of the general acceptance of immigration and its benefits in London, "the most multi-cultural city in Europe".

Ms Honeyball said she did not blame Europe for the ineffective response, claiming the crisis was unprecedented and caught everyone by surprise.

- BP

Winter 2015/'16 edition.

INTRODUCTION: CONCERNS SHARED

Trutz Haase, social and economic consultant, responds to our interview with Ian Dempsey, CEO, West Cork Development Company, in the Winter 2015/'16 edition of 'Changing Ireland'.

- **Mr Haase**, author of the HP Deprivation Index, responds to the issues raised by Mr Dempsey, particularly regarding the appropriate targeting of resources through the Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP).

- **Mr Haase** proposes that lessons learned from how SICAP targets social need could be applied across a range of government programmes. This ties in with the emerging 'whole-of-government' approach to local and community development.

- He also said it was "important" to point out that resource allocation models have "seldom been fully implemented... because Government Departments must respond to political pressures."

- As a result, historical allocation systems "which do not have any rational justification or objective basis" can remain operational for "very lengthy periods", **said Mr Haase**. He writes:

I very much welcome the opportunity to discuss the issues Ian raised in his contribution to the last issue of 'Changing Ireland'. I share many of his fears about how the current programme and performance measurement system can potentially work to the detriment of rural areas.

Greater clarity is needed to identify the crucial areas where the design and delivery of SICAP needs to change. I hope to contribute to this goal by discussing four key issues.

1. THE HP DEPRIVATION INDEX

The HP Deprivation Index (Haase & Pratschke, 2012) is based on the explicit understanding that urban and rural deprivation are not the same and a satisfactory deprivation index must achieve a balanced measurement of how poverty reveals itself differently in urban and rural areas.

For instance, unemployment rates and low levels of education and skills are effective in identifying deprived urban areas, but they fail to adequately capture deprivation in rural areas.

This is because people living in rural areas affected by prolonged, adverse labour market conditions tend to migrate to urban areas or emigrate. This reduces the effectiveness of using unemployment or education levels as indicators of deprivation.

For this reason, rural deprivation is measured in the HP index by assessing population loss and the effects of selective

migration, or "brain-drain". This leaves behind a disproportionate share of very young and old people (measured by the age dependency rate) and an adult population with lower educational attainments.

Based on this way of conceptualising and measuring the distinct forms of urban and rural deprivation, the HP Deprivation Index is the only existing measure of its kind that accounts for the distinct forms of urban and rural deprivation, avoiding urban bias.

We went to great lengths to construct such a balanced index, sensitive to the diverse forms of deprivation observed in Ireland. We consulted extensively with rural stakeholders under successive local development programmes. These discussions forced us to understand and acknowledge the "opportunity deprivation" that lies at the core of rural social vulnerability.

Further details on the construction of the HP Deprivation Index can be found at www.trutzhaase.eu.

INTERVIEW & BACKGROUND

An interview conducted with Ian Dempsey (above) by Ben Panter has stirred interest. Both Trutz Haase and Pobal respond on these pages. So, what was Mr Dempsey's beef?

Mr Dempsey felt strongly that some of the very people in rural areas who most needed support were being left out.

He felt the rules advising companies how to implement the Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP) were biased against those in poverty in rural areas.

As a result of this for example, small farmers and older people were losing out, he said. He spoke of "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."

They didn't understand that support had been pulled.

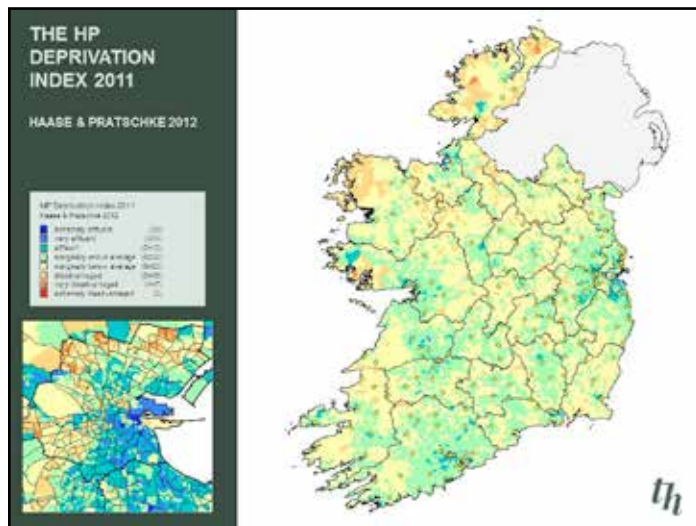
"We're now operating in a predominantly target-driven environment which appears to be the overriding concern of policymakers," he said.

He also reported that if Local Development Companies failed to meet agreed targets, they faced financial penalties. In response, Pobal stated it was "not aware of any penalties having been applied" (as of yet).

The interview on pages 12-13 of Issue 52 is available online: changingireland.ie

LOW INCOME SUPPORT

Since Mr Dempsey was interviewed, and following a scheduled review of the Programme, low income workers and households are now offered support under SICAP. They form a new target group (see page 15) and this group includes smallholder farmers.



Setting targets and measuring performance



Above: Trutz Haase in his office.

2. ACCOUNTING FOR RURAL DEPRIVATION IN PROGRAMME DESIGN

There have been debates and disagreements about the construction of community-based, social inclusion programmes since the Programme for Economic and Social Progress in the early nineties. This programme was piloted in 12 areas and included what are known as supply-side and demand-side measures.

Supply-side measures aim to improve people's employment prospects by providing education and training, and can be successful in urban settings. In rural areas, however, supply-side measures on their own, do not generally lead to overall improvements. They can have the unintended effect of encouraging even higher levels of emigration, because they enable more people to improve their skills and encourage aspirations which often can only be met by leaving the area.

Obviously there is nothing wrong with this in principle, but clearly this is not an adequate response to the problems that these measures set out to tackle in the first place.

Demand-side measures, as the name suggests, involves an increase in demand for goods, services and labour within the regional economy. Addressing rural deprivation requires a mixture of supply-side and demand-side measures.

Unfortunately, after the first programme, demand-side measures were completely dropped, only to be partially restored in more recent local development programmes.

3. THE NEED FOR TARGETING

While it is true that many poor people do not live in disadvantaged areas,

it is also evident that significant geographical concentrations of poor people exist. In addition, the very nature of these concentrations tend to bring a range of additional problems.

A well-established principle of community-based interventions is to target the most deprived areas. This principle has informed successive local development programmes overseen by Pobal. It informs the roll-out of primary health care services, the work of TUSLA and will be used in the new designation of DEIS schools by the Department of Education, to name only the most important recent initiatives.

What these initiatives have in common is that they all rely on the HP index for spatial targeting. We have frequently been asked to assist Government Departments in developing programme-specific resource allocation models, although these have seldom been fully implemented.

This is because Government Departments must respond to political pressures, which are particularly strong if allocations to local development companies (or other key actors) are threatened with sharp and enduring reductions. As a result, 'historical' allocation systems, which do not have any rational justification or objective basis, can remain operational in various parts of the system for very lengthy periods.

In my view, both local and national stakeholders sometimes fail to appreciate this wider picture and how it relates to their own goals. Fighting for a larger slice of a limited cake (SICAP, for example), they fail to appreciate the potential gains if a rational approach to resource allocation was adopted across different areas of funding.

For example, if the €13 billion health budget were to be allocated on the basis of objective criteria, the redistributive effect would be one hundred times greater than under SICAP.

In my view – and borrowing a phrase coined by Charles Sabel* – the local development programme offers opportunities for "democratic experimentalism". It can demonstrate the positive effects of targeting social need, with a view to applying these lessons across the full range of mainstream and statutory services.

Given the strategic and financial importance of mainstream programmes, it is important to work towards fairer and more rational forms of resource allocation and also to demonstrate the feasibility of their implementation.

4. MONITORING AND PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT

This brings me to the final point raised by Ian, which relates to the performance measurement system that is currently in operation under SICAP. We accept the need for targeting and accountability and acknowledge that we must demonstrate the ability to deliver an effective programme. Therefore, we have no alternative but to agree to a performance measurement framework. But how should such a framework be designed and implemented?

Simply imposing that a certain percentage of actions be implemented in the most disadvantaged areas of the country is likely to have little impact outside the main urban centres. As Ian rightly observes, rural areas tend to have a more varied social composition and rarely have extreme affluence/deprivation scores. This issue was raised recently with Pobal and efforts are under way to find an alternative formula.

As I noted above, rural areas require a combination of supply-side and demand-side measures, which implies that performance measurement systems also must reflect both categories. More could and should be done to move towards a shared framework for the assessment of local development programmes that respects these needs.

Performance measurement frameworks will only be effective, in the long term, if all stakeholders "buy into" them. This includes Government Departments and state agencies as well as local delivery organisations and actors. There are therefore good reasons for considering this as a key strategic goal, and one which is crucial to ensure that local development and mainstream programmes achieve their full potential.

* 'Ireland – Local Partnerships and Social Innovation' by Charles Sabel, published in 1996, OECD.

POBAL SETS OUT STALL IN RESPONSE TO DEMPSEY

The Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme was but nine months in operation when 'Changing Ireland' published an interview with Ian Dempsey highlighting a number of issues on the ground. Here, Pobal gives its view and highlights the Programme's ability to be responsive as among its strengths.

BY DANIEL ENGLISH

With reference to your interview (Winter 2015/'16 edition) with Mr Ian Dempsey, CEO of West Cork Development Company, Pobal would like to address some of the points raised.

The Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP) was developed as the successor to the Local and Community Development Programme (LCDP). The aim of SICAP is to reduce poverty, promote social inclusion and tackle equality through local, regional and national collaboration.

The programme is nine months in operation so things are still bedding down. Nevertheless, the programme has already had some real success.

For the programme to be effective at a grassroots level, its design took a collaborative approach with the views of the Community and Voluntary Sector, in conjunction with the Government, helping to inform the structure of the programme.

Indeed, at the time of the programme launch, positive feedback was received from within the Community and Voluntary Sector, in particular:

- regarding the reduction in the number of goals,
- the tighter focus on distinct target groups,
- and the framing of the work within a community development framework.

As a publicly funded programme, there is a clear requirement to set targets and defined outcomes. This provides clarity for programme indicators and ensures value for investment from a public perspective.

In fact, in 2015, SICAP targets were largely reached by the programme implementers and indeed exceeded in some instances. Pobal is not aware of any penalties having been applied as referenced by Mr Dempsey.

It is important to remember that behind the targets are people and communities who face real barriers to progression. This is why SICAP works in a developmental manner with individuals and groups and not on an ad-hoc or once-off basis.

Since it was launched, SICAP has proven to be a dynamic, responsive programme reacting to emerging issues and engaging with feedback from programme implementers.

For instance, low income workers and households have recently been added as a distinct target group to ensure that people who are in genuine need of assistance, such as smallholders or those on low pay, or in uncertain work, can benefit from the programme.

In a further example of the programme's responsiveness, the target to work in disadvantaged areas has been changed to more



closely match the levels of spatial disadvantage locally. This makes it easier for companies to meet this specification. These are both developments which we hope Mr Dempsey will welcome.

SICAP is not designed to offer all types of supports to all people. It is a targeted programme for communities and individuals most in need.

SICAP is not a universal programme and is not designed to offer all types of supports to all people. It is a targeted programme for communities and individuals most in need. Inevitably on occasions, this involves tough decisions being made in partnership between Local and Community Development Committees (LCDCs) and programme implementers on how best to tackle the issues in their area within their funding available.

Pobal has commissioned the Economic and Social Research Institute to examine the targeting nature of the programme. While analysis is still underway, initial findings indicate that SICAP is differentiating itself from mainstream government provision because it is targeting distinct cohorts of the population.

SICAP is strongly orientated towards giving people the opportunity to access training and courses, and in helping people to become more employable. This focus is deliberate and essential to a programme which seeks to reduce poverty and promote social inclusion.

We recognise the value of qualitative research. Two pieces of work examining qualitative metrics in SICAP will be undertaken this year. We also understand that the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government will be commissioning a full evaluation of the programme which will encompass both the

qualitative and quantitative dimensions.

SICAP has improved its ability to gather data on participants and outcomes, and the data is more robust, consistent and reliable than in past programmes. Accessing good data allows programme implementers and LCDCs to see how the programme is operating locally and to monitor it themselves.

It will be essential for future evaluations and programme reviews – and to allow the Department to make more informed decisions on future iterations of the programme –

that there is reliable information on how it targets disadvantage, poverty and inequality.

Mr Dempsey's support for local alignment of the programme is welcomed and we concur with his views that local community groups should be in partnership with local authorities. SICAP is a step closer to this arrangement and marks a devolution of power to local communities. For the first time, a national social inclusion programme of this type is being managed locally by local committees with public and private representatives, rather than by the sponsoring Department or Pobal.

LCDCs are required to empower communities to ensure a more coherent and joined-up approach. The expectation is that by working together, LCDCs and SICAP implementers will ensure a programme which is more locally informed and better shaped by local needs, while also staying consistent with the broad national needs.

We fully acknowledge that adapting to a new programme is not easy and takes time for all involved to become familiar with it. We would urge all stakeholders to get fully behind the programme and to promote it in a positive manner. Meanwhile, we will continue to work hard to make sure that SICAP continues to work well locally and that it is successful in what it was established to do – help those most need it.

Policy on Local & Community Development published

- Five core objectives in new Framework to support whole of government approach to development

The Government-approved 'Framework Policy for Local and Community Development in Ireland' is now available on the website of the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government: environ.ie

Download the document via this link and share your views with us: bit.ly/1UMvVRg

Sign-off on the 30-page document was announced in January. A synopsis and summary of submissions received has also been made available: bit.ly/22F8oo5

The Framework was adopted as there was until now no over-arching national policy and, accordingly, no 'whole of government' approach to local and community development.

FIVE CORE OBJECTIVES

The Framework's five core objectives are:

1. Engaging with Communities.
2. Working with Partners.
3. Planning for Local and Community Development.
4. Delivery.
5. Evaluating, Monitoring and Reviewing.

In January, then Minister of State, Ann Phelan, said the Framework tells communities and their representative bodies "that government is committed to supporting local and community development and to putting in place mechanisms that will facilitate greater engagement by individuals and communities in the development of policies and strategies that seek to address their needs and will help them to flourish."

NEXT STEPS

"The Framework Policy will be implemented on a cross-government basis and will seek to secure a joined-up, collaborative and participative approach to local and community development at local level," said the Minister of State.

"The development and implementation of policies, programmes and other interventions will be carried out by central and local government in line with the Framework Policy's five core objectives.

"The inter-departmental group will oversee and monitor the implementation of the Framework Policy, developing an implementation plan in the coming months to advance the measures associated with each of the five core objectives," she said.

Criticism over low level of consultation, and irony thereof

Community Work Ireland (formerly known as the Community Workers' Co-op) expressed concern regarding the process leading up to publication and some of the content itself.

It drew attention to then Minister-of-State Ann Phelan's statement that "meaningful engagement with communities, which goes beyond mere consultation, is the bedrock of policy".

While that is agreed, "the process for finalising the document appears to directly contradict such commitment to meaningful engagement," said the CWI.

Its chairperson Anastasia Crickley was "dismayed" at the lack of feedback or discussion with community development practitioners or the Community Sector as a whole prior to publication.

She noted the Department received 73 submissions on the draft document, but only a small number of "minor changes" were made. Therefore, "issues raised in our submission and those of others are not reflected," she said.

SOCIAL INCLUSION

People on low income to get support they deserve

People working part-time, or even full-time, but on a low income, will receive support from this year to upskill or find better jobs.

The support is also for people on schemes such as CE or Gateway and for smallholders in receipt of Farm Assist payments.

From this year, anyone on low income may qualify for access to local training courses, can join tailored community development initiatives, and get job-searching assistance.

The extra support comes through the one-year-old national Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme, which tackles poverty, social exclusion and long-term unemployment.

"They can be assisted in upskilling and in time moving into a better quality, better paid job," said Póbal in a statement.

"Someone who previously may have been falling through the gaps because they did not fit any of the other target groups, such


as being unemployed or from a disadvantaged area, can now benefit from SICAP," the statement continued.

The change marks an official recognition that "low income households are at particular risk of poverty, with many in poor quality, unsustainable jobs and at risk of becoming unemployed."

SICAP works through local engagement and partnership and is funded by the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government.

Programme Implementers – Local Development Companies in almost all cases – have worked in conjunction with their Local and Community Development Committees to design initiatives targeting low income workers and will roll these out during the course of 2016.









SmartReFlex

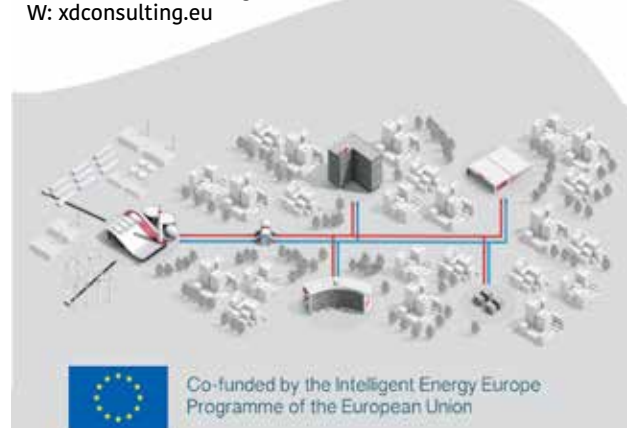
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HOUSING/SOCIAL INCLUSION

HOMELESS PEOPLE ENTITLED TO THE MOVIES AS MUCH AS ANYONE

- Dublin's free, volunteer-run cinema for people who are homeless
- A respite from stress

BY RAY LUCEY

A trip to the cinema is a costly enough treat for any family these days and for those who are homeless, or under the threat of homelessness, it is an absolute rarity.

However, there is an option.

The Stepping Stone Open Cinema is a weekly cinema club for those who are homeless or otherwise in need. It screens movies at 5.30pm every Monday (excluding Bank Holidays) in the Dublin Food Co-op, 12 Newmarket Square, right in the heart of Dublin 8.

It offers people and families without a place to call their own home some respite from daily worries and stresses in a neutral venue.

The cinema club is run by a group of enthusiastic, film-loving volunteers and admission is free for all, with no questions asked. Each screening costs a mere €35, so the service could easily be replicated elsewhere. That covers everything from room hire, DVD-hire, licensing, promotion and free tea, coffee and biscuits for all who come.

Schedules are planned well in advance with input from regular clients on the choice of screenings which in turn gives them a sense of ownership.

Dublin's Open Cinema is just over three years

in existence and is funded by Stepping Stone in association with Open Cinema, a London-based NGO.

Stepping Stone is a self-funding organisation that places people in ordinary houses and apartment blocks. This makes it different from other homeless organisations that use designated buildings to house formerly homeless people, placing them together in the one premises.

Louisa Sandoro, Stepping Stone's CEO, stresses that what Open Cinema provides to homeless and marginalised people is an extremely important, positive, cultural



You can't go wrong with the 'Blues Brothers' starring John Belushi and Dan Aykroyd.

element to their precarious existence. It adds a different dimension to what Stepping Stone is all about and fits in well into their holistic approach.

The Open Cinema was first established in London in 2005 and once Louisa saw it she decided to bring it to Dublin. Any community group could follow their lead (see below). At present the only other Open Cinema is in Belfast.

Louisa describes it as "a community cinema for those on the margins with cultural engagement for them to enjoy."

The whole experience of mainstream homeless services is dehumanising Louisa believes, "so an outlet like the Open Cinema provides a super way of escaping from such an uncertain existence."

Having access to culture is often overlooked, yet it is just as vital as food and shelter and, internationally, Open Cinema is at the forefront of a growing movement of cultural outreach in the social sector.

"Having access to culture is often overlooked, yet it is just as vital as food and shelter."

FIND OUT MORE



To contact Stepping Stone, to volunteer or make a donation, drop into: 12 Camden Row, Dublin 8.

W: steppingstone.ie

E: kate@steppingstone.ie

T: 01-473-6123.

M: 086-0297227 (Kate).

To contact Belfast's Open Cinema, visit:

www.opencinemabelfast.org

To see what Open Cinema is up to internationally or to find out how to replicate Stepping Stone's project in your area, visit:

www.opencinema.co



WHAT'S IT LIKE FOR CINEMA-GOERS & VOLUNTEERS?



RAY LUCEY WENT ALONG TO 'STEPPING STONE' OPEN CINEMA:

I spoke with some cinema goers from several countries including Russia, Spain and Ireland after the featured movie, 'The Cabin in the Woods' on February 29th. I learned much about the issues of homelessness and what an outlet such as Open Cinema means to people.

Valentina, originally from Russia, and a regular visitor for the past three years, likes the company as well as the talks by guest speakers.

Ewa, originally from Poland, only very recently made homeless and continuing to hold down a job that she loves despite her precarious situation, says about the Open Cinema: "I believe that everyone gets a little something for themselves." She was made aware of the project through Merchants Quay.

Katie, volunteering at the Open Cinema only a short while, thinks the outreach element encourages more people to attend Open Cinema. Volunteers visit the Rutland Centre and Focus Ireland to drop leaflets with maps to prospective cinema-goers.

Donncha, Open Cinema Co-Ordinator, promotes the project as being in a space that is neutral and not

labelled specifically as a homeless service.

"Homelessness is a spectrum, there are different types of homeless, from rough sleepers to people in emergency accommodation, and a lot of homeless services are for those at the risk of homelessness who use homeless services to stay homed," he said. All are welcome. No one asks the cinema-goers about their situations. Open Cinema is for anyone who can't access cultural activities normally.

Donncha notices that people stay around for a chat after the movies. Talks, meditation and yoga are occasionally held after a screening.

In March, a 'food and film' night was held and there are plans to bring homeless people from areas outside the city centre to the screenings in Newmarket Square, with transport being laid on.

The team also hope to reach out to residents of Direct Provision Centres to involve them in Open Cinema activities.



Archive photo of young cinema-goers. Open Cinema attendees were reluctant to be photographed.

Stepping Stone sets itself apart in how it responds

Stepping Stone manages 27 houses and apartments at present - not in purpose-built homeless housing developments - but within mixed communities. This provides "an enduring exit from homelessness" and is more stable and integrative.

The organisation received 108 applications for accommodation in 2015; on average, 30 clients per year are housed by the organisation.

The NGO is funded by rents paid by their own tenants. A two-year tenancy provides for stability and the rents are set at 'non-market' rates to gradually introduce clients to a real-life setting. CEO, Louisa Sandoro (pictured) says that what Stepping Stone provides is "social housing with a sensitivity to someone's history."

In existence for over 40 years, one of the other key differences between Stepping Stone, in contrast to other organisations, is that it deals directly with the homeless, vulnerable people. A one-page enquiry form determines a potential client's needs and eligibility for housing with supports.

Resilience, training and educational supports are essential to people in this situation and support workers help clients in their transition from homelessness and befriend volunteers to assist them.



Time to restore Traveller supports & funding

- Bernard Joyce, new ITM director



Bernard Joyce, new director of the Irish Traveller Movement, has thanked "all those who have shown courage and leadership in

Bernard Joyce, the new Director of the Irish Traveller Movement, has called for "a full reinstatement" of those support services across all government departments to Travellers that were cut during the banking crisis. He also called for State recognition of Traveller ethnicity.

"The State's treatment of Travellers has been a significant contributing factor to the continued exclusion and marginalisation of the Traveller community and many issues impacting on our community today," he said.

The current and previous government had dismantled "equality infrastructure, social inclusion programmes and supports to the Traveller community," he said.

The ITM Director said he is "grounded by my own experience of inequality, social exclusion and institutionalised racism."

He is also a university graduate and has over nine years of practical experience co-ordinating and managing Traveller organisations. He has worked as a community development worker in Cavan and Clondalkin.

The ITM operates from Community Development principles and values. Its mission is to provide a platform to represent the voice of Travellers and Traveller organisations nationally, by working in partnership with Travellers and non-Travellers.



TAKE OWNERSHIP!

You'll never bake alone!

BY EMMA MAGUIRE

Decline, depopulation and dilapidation. Sounds like rural Ireland. However, residents living in the shadow of Liverpool's Anfield Stadium have experienced similar troubles for over a decade.

The area suffered ham-fisted, Government-run regeneration programmes that ran out of cash just as the bulldozers were leaving. They also had years of 'will-they, won't they' prevarication from Liverpool FC's various owners about whether to expand or raze the stadium to the ground.

So, local residents began to fight back and take back their corner of Anfield "loaf by loaf, brick by brick" by establishing a community land trust and a co-operative café and bakery called 'Homebaked'.



Award-winning pies whose sales help the community to buy back homes.



In the neighbourhood of Anfield Stadium, Liverpool, whole streets were left boarded up when regeneration faltered in 2008. For four years now, a co-operative is enabling the local community to start to "take matters into our own hands regarding the future."

The co-op provides healthy food for its members and match-going customers. It ploughs profits into buying back Anfield one house at a time, to regenerate the community from within and rent lodgings out to people from the area, especially those who cannot find suitable housing due to the mismanagement of housing stock locally.

Since opening its bakery and café in 2013, Homebaked has won awards for its pies while getting on with some real regeneration in the area. When you're next over, drop in!

W: homebaked.org.uk/context/

BUST CLUBS CAN BE RESURRECTED USING COMMUNITY-BASED MODELS

Sports fans who club together can by taking a community-centred approach sometimes resurrect clubs that go into liquidation.

For instance, golf clubs - once associated mainly with well-to-do males - today cater for all-comers, function as community hubs and provide local employment.

During the height of the boom, it was reported there were more golf clubs in Ireland than children's playgrounds, the implication being that the country had lost the run of itself.

However, many clubs went bust during the recession.

One that reopened was Ballyneety Golf Club (formerly Limerick County Golf Club). After it went into liquidation, local people volunteered their time cleaning and preparing the grounds and clubhouse after four years of neglect.

Over 450 members joined, meaning they paid upfront while the course was still a giant meadow and they brought a wealth fund management company onboard. The county council also played a key role.

In 2014, its first full year back in swing, Ballyneety won the Munster Club of the Year award. In time, the club expects to become self-sufficient, run by its members and community-based. Over 25 people now have employment there.



A community-based ownership model often works better.

WELSH SOCCER CLUB

We can also point across the Irish Sea to see what was done when another privately owned facility important to the community went bust.

Merthyr is a small town in South Wales and when the local soccer club Merthyr Tydfil FC went into liquidation in 2010 after years of financial woes, people thought that was it.

Luckily, there was a formidable supporters club who thought otherwise.

John Strand, secretary, said the supporters were initially there to try and

influence the club's owner. Today, they own the club, renamed Merthyr Town FC and each of the club's 130 members pay €12 each, with everyone having a vote.

One of the questions they faced was: How do you establish a sustainable, community organisation that does not depend on State support or gate receipts?

They relaunched the soccer club as a sporting co-operative "for the long-term interest of the community" and have established a sustainable, community sports organisation in the cut-throat world of professional soccer.

The co-op has won awards from UEFA and the Welsh Co-operative Society, as it is seen as a model for other communities to take control of sports clubs.

YOUR STORIES

With sports clubs of all kinds so embedded in our communities, we'd like to hear from readers about clubs they know of that closed down, or lost State funding only to be reopened under a new community-based model.

Contact the editor. Details on page 3.

- Thanks to UCC student Gearoid McCarthy for his input to this article, in particular for providing the Welsh example.

Utopia in Ireland not outlandish

- Local people power takes on new meaning as islands strive for autonomy

BY JOE LEDDIN

Imagine living in a community that offers spectacular scenery, a rich heritage of culture and is self-reliant for its energy needs. Daily life where the fear of leaving the immersion switch on too long for hot water does not exist, but your water and home is heated from the sun, wind and ocean.

A daily routine that does not include the inhalation of exhaust fumes as cars are electric. The grind of lifting and shoveling coal to the fireplace to heat rooms is a distant memory. A community where streets are lit through LED lighting and green areas are free from metal pylons across the countryside.

Can you countenance life that is not adversely affected when foreign nations go to war resulting in shifts in fuel prices that cost you more to heat your home or fuel your car. Schools where children are educated in warm classrooms and not sent home as the oil tank is empty because there was no delivery.

Where traditional yet vital sectoral areas such as agriculture or fishing complement new industry areas such as research and development in renewable technologies. To work knowing your collective efforts are benefitting the sustainability of the wider community and



Comharchumann Fuinnimh Oileáin Arann Teoranta has certainly got people thinking.

environment.

A community rich in social capital where reciprocity, trust and a spirit of co-operation permeates; based on a realisation that working together in an innovative way we can become a model in terms of sustainable living.

A place where everyday activity and the environment inspire tourists who visit in large numbers, growing the economy.

Does such a place exist? Welcome to the Aran Islands, the year is 2022.

Note: The three Aran Islands in 2012 established a co-operative called Comharchumann Fuinneamh Oileáin Arainn Teo with the aim of developing the islands as energy independent, energy self-sustaining and carbon neutral by 2022.

More info at: facebook.com/AranIslandsenergy
Also: seai.ie

Author: Joe Leddin is studying for a Masters in Voluntary and Community Sector Management at UCC. He is also a Labour Party councillor on Limerick City and County Council.

Plans for community-based district heating

Communities in Ireland could follow the example of Denmark by developing district heating schemes to heat our towns and a new guide available online (see below) provides recommendations for local and regional authorities on how to do just that.

It should be of particular interest for integrating heat planning as a key pillar into Local Community and Economic County Plans and shows how to tap into a sustainable and local heat supply, thereby moving away from dependency on fossil fuels.

A district heating system basically supplies heat to a number of dwellings or other buildings from a common heat source. It may comprise of, for example, a biomass boiler heating a block of apartments, a housing estate, district or a whole town.

DENMARK'S EXPERIENCE

Denmark has built an enormous network of pipes under its towns and cities, collecting waste heat from factories, incinerators and transport systems, and combining it with heat generated from solar thermal energy plants, wind turbines, and gas and coal power stations. This way, they have a low cost and highly efficient heat supply.

Today, district heating is common in almost all Danish towns and is by far the largest source in terms of heat supply. It is managed by non-profit companies owned by consumer cooperatives and municipalities.

SMARTREFLEX PROJECT

The SmartReflex project, funded through the EU's Intelligent Energy Europe Programme, aims to learn from the Danish experience and to increase the development of district heating and cooling (DHC) systems, with a high percentage of renewable energy supply (RES), in European towns and cities. The Irish Partners in the project are Kerry County Council, Tipperary Energy Agency and XD Sustainable Energy Consulting Ltd.

Together, they have published the 'Smartreflex District Heating Guide for Regional Authorities'. It provides recommendations for local and

regional authorities to support RES-DHC. By supporting investment in local renewable heat supply infrastructure, local authorities help create jobs, reduce fuel poverty and meet their renewable energy obligations.

SmartReFlex also aims to build capacity among key stakeholders by providing training and technical assistance for RES-DHC project development. Training workshops were run here last year, with more planned for this year.

"We are also looking at different case-studies and lessons learned from existing district heating in Ireland such as in Cloughjordan, Tipperary and Tralee, Co Kerry," said Xavier Dubuisson of XD Sustainable Energy Consulting. "If someone is interested in getting involved in a community-run district heating project, contact us," she said.

The guide is available for download from: <http://www.smartreflex.eu>

Hard copies are available by emailing: xavier@xdconsulting.eu

More information: <http://www.smartreflex.eu>



Inspirational: An example of a district heating model in Denmark.

DEVELOPMENT EDUCATION

Replace bankers' playground with a social & solidarity economy - Youth group lobbies MEPs

- European Parliament considering call for a 'Year' to highlight the vision
- Culmination of thousands of volunteer hours, over 3 years in 6 countries

BY ALLEN MEAGHER

It may seem ironic for the EU to fund a campaign calling on it to stop strangling countries on behalf of banking elites.

However, the EU has many arms.

While the policy of austerity reigns supreme at EU level, a small amount of funding has enabled one hundred young people from the PIIGS countries (Portugal, Ireland, Italy, Greece and Spain) and Slovenia to have their views heard. These are the countries most affected by the European banking crisis.

Over the past three years, over a dozen young Irish people joined the campaign. Aged from 16-30, they included young people still in school, graduates and people who are not in education, employment, or training.

They used Development Education practices and methodologies to devise a campaign to tackle the social and economic injustices of austerity.

With their partners in the other five countries, they lobbied high ranking policy-makers, local and national politicians and MEPs to support their calls for a more equitable future through a 'Social & Solidarity Economy'.

The young people met monthly for the three years, chatted online and travelled when necessary to help them strengthen their message.

Through lobbying and advocacy, their 'Challenging the Crisis' campaign led 20 MEPs to co-author a Written Declaration* which asks all MEPs to support a European Year for 'Social & Solidarity Economy' (SSE).

The campaigners - or Young Global Advocates as they are now known - pushed their case in January at the first European Forum on Social and Solidarity Economy, held in the European Parliament, Brussels.

At the same meeting, Lynn Boylan MEP officially launched their 'Declaration'. Their call received resounding support from other MEPs and organisations involved in the SSE Sector.

The organisations behind the three-year initiative included the Irish Development Education Association (IDEA).

Stephen Frain, one of Ireland's Young Global Advocates said, "To be able to sit down with politicians in Brussels and discuss our campaign, for me, was a sign of how far 'Challenging the Crisis' has come."

The project officially comes to an end this April.

"That does not mean however that our work towards achieving a social and solidarity economy is done," said Stephen. "On a local and national level, we will continue to promote it locally in our communities across

the country."

IDEA's director, Frank Geary, said the initiative was "very powerful" in bringing together people from the six EU countries most affected by austerity.

"It enabled them to become activists and educators," he said.

"While there is only so much one project can do on its own, 'Challenging the Crisis' demonstrates the power of working collectively. It highlights how Development Education can provide people with the skills to create change in their own lives and affect real change at a political level," he said.

The European Commission provided 75% of the funding for 'Challenging the Crisis' with the remainder paid for through the project partners and charitable donations.



Young Global Advocates meet to discuss strategy in Madrid. Check out: www.challengingthecrisis.com/en/

Individuals and organisations can join IDEA from €15 annually. For information about IDEA's work in community settings, contact Helena McNeill, convenor of Community Sector Working Group:

E: deved@lycs.ie T: 01-8230860.
W: ideaonline.ie

GLOCAL PROJECTS

IDEA has a Community Sector Working Group (CSWG) whose members encourage local community participation in global justice issues. They also engage in lobbying.

For example, the Donegal Change-Makers project, which is run by Inishowen Development Partnership, Donegal ETB and Gorta Self-Help Africa. It has just run a Fetac Level 4 course linking the local to the global that ran for 30 hours over five days. W: changemakers.ie

Another member of the CSWG is Lourdes Youth and Community Services, a community development project in north inner city Dublin. As featured previously in 'Changing Ireland', LYCS has integrated development education into all of its work, viewing it as an essential tool for community transformation. It has produced an indepth guide in how to conduct development education at local level.

IDEA members recently called on the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government to enshrine development education in policy formulation. They proposed that it be included in Local Economic and Community Plans and be supported through the Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme.

* In Brussels, a Written Declaration is a text of a maximum of 200 words relating exclusively to a matter falling within the competence of the European Union.

THE SOCIAL & SOLIDARITY ECONOMY

The Social and Solidarity Economy refers to not-for-profit enterprises and organisations, in particular co-ops, mutual benefit societies, associations, foundations and social enterprises, which produce goods, services and knowledge while pursuing economic and social aims and fostering solidarity.

Some see it as a counterbalance to exploitative capitalism, others as a way to "humanise" the capitalist economy. It ties in with the terms Local Development, Green Economy and community-led initiatives.

In Europe, there are two million SSE organisations representing about 10% of all companies.

More info: <https://oxfamblogs.org> and <http://www.ilo.org>



GLOBAL VIEW 100 YEARS FROM 1916

SEEING OURSELVES AS GLOBAL CITIZENS FIRST

- Interview: Paula Galvin, teacher, fair trade activist and homeless volunteer

As events to mark 1916 give citizens and particularly children a greater sense of belonging to a nation, a republic and a people, and possibly an understanding of socialism, it's worth remembering there are other competing ways of looking at yourself, the world around you and history.

Belonging to a nation is a concept invented a few hundred years ago and nobody is Irish alone, utterly Russian or solely Mandinka. Many people affiliate in a different way, for instance looking at themselves primarily as global citizens.

Paula Galvin, from Leixlip, Co. Kildare, and a runner up in the Dóchas Global Citizen of the Year Awards in 2015, qualifies as one such person:

BY RAY LUCEY

Paula is a primary school teacher in Clondalkin and she also teaches development education at third level.

"I firmly believe, after 35 years of teaching, that Development Education is simply the only way to teach history. Taking a human rights base approach to history makes sense," says Paula.

"If you teach history as being on a continuum towards 'the pursuit of happiness' and view it as a struggle by all peoples of the world for the rights to be heard and acknowledged, everything in human history, viewed through this lens, makes sense."

"Development education has now evolved into global citizenship where we share our commonalities, all of us together in common humanity," she says.

"Development education - now also called Global Citizenship Education - is a good education with a global perspective. It acknowledges other voices, it is participatory, emancipatory and educational in terms of social justice and human rights".

She believes development education should underpin primary education and not just be a 'mix and stir' subject at secondary level.

"It should play a major role in the curriculum, not just be part of subjects such as SPHE (Social, Personal and Health Education) and Geography," she says. "The language used is critical and core components within it should be media analysis and critical literacy."

GLOCAL - GLOBAL TO LOCAL

There are strong links between global justice and community development here in Ireland, Paula says, adding that there should be no distinction between the Global North and South (once referred to as the First and Third Worlds).

Examples she cites of development education underpinning initiatives in Ireland include Lourdes Youth and Community Services (based in Dublin) and the EU 'Challenge for Change' project and the Fair Trade movement.

Contrary to what you might expect, spending on Fair Trade during the recession increased (from €118m in 2009 to €221m in 2014) and Paula was involved locally.

"Children initiated the Clondalkin Fairtrade Town project, it is part of an authentic solidarity movement, not just tokenistic in nature. In fact, Fair Trade is a signifier of how well development education has worked in schools in Ireland," she said.

Fairtrade Town status was conferred on Clondalkin in 2014.

Paula believes, "Local authorities nationwide should begin to ethically source the materials they purchase", while employers and workers should be asking where their pensions are invested, in what industries.



Paula Galvin was previously a finalist in the National Volunteer of the Year awards. Her school-classes have won the Irish Aid 'Our World' Awards on three occasions as well as awards from Integration Ireland, Trocaire and Concern. She is a volunteer with Focus Ireland, lectures part-time in global citizenship at St Patrick's College, Drumcondra, and is a Right Sparks facilitator with Amnesty Ireland.

"Local authorities nationwide should ethically source the materials they purchase."

CERTIFYING EDUCATION

Paula believes community education or non-formal education should be certified: "Anything you do along that lifelong learning continuum should be acknowledged and should be recognised."

Paula's motivation stems from her late father's community involvement and her own personal teaching experience in schools here and in Britain where the equal participation of parents and children is valued, where an intercultural approach is utilized and where differences are celebrated with all ethnicities acknowledged.

"In these types of educational environments a teacher is not the sole educator but a facilitator," she says, "and the learners are peer educators."

Paula believes it is time to move away from the older 'Us and Them' approach to development with a primary emphasis on aid (rather than collaboration).

"We should acknowledge our complicity in inequality and our responsibilities as was evident in the EU Year for Development 2015 with 'Our World, Our Future, Our Dignity'".

She enjoys giving children a greater sense of empowerment and seeing social justice make global sense to them.

"If you can trigger something in a child, that makes sense in justice and fairness, you have a 'Eureka' moment. You hope that this will inform moral and ethical choices that they will make throughout their lives and that they will challenge complacency in all areas of life, personal and public."

WE'LL NEVER FORGET WHAT'S HER NAME

- Marian Vickers got project going with a hundred pounds
- Retirement event marked a quarter-century of development

BY BEN PANTER

It's been 25 years since Marian Vickers was handed a cheque for a hundred pounds with which to begin her adventure with Northside Partnership Company in Dublin.

"Today, Marian and the Partnership are synonymous," said chairperson Lorcan Ó hÓbain, at a party marking Marian's retirement. She was the company's one and only CEO until now.

With the retirement in December of another CEO in Munster – also a long-timer – all but two of the people at the helm in local development since 1991 have handed over to successors.

"When we started this organisation, there was Marian, a mobile phone and later a car and that was it," said Lorcan. "The impact that she has had over the last 25 years has been absolutely essential and we really say thank you."

She also served as vice-chairperson of the Irish Local Development Network, among other interests.

The Hilton Hotel on Malahide Road hosted the event which opened with a 'Champagne Reception', in stark contrast to Marian's humble beginnings. Guests included family, friends, community workers, academics, and representatives from various agencies and strands of government and the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government. All were there to celebrate Marian's quarter-of-a-century tenure and reflect on progress since Northside Partnership's humble start.

The Partnership's first chairperson Padraic White recalled that, "The philosophy we all tried to follow was the same as at national level where the government, trade unions and the community sector had come together after the recession of '87 to improve the country. We followed that at local level. It was a great time of innovation."

"As people know, the culture, organisation, and template of new projects are set down at the start and we were fortunate to have an amazing board of people around that table," he added.

Over the years, with Marian at the helm, the Partnership became a pioneer in the Community Development Sector.

- For example, RAPID set up in



Colleagues present a gift-wrapped toilet brush to Marian Vickers for the B&B she and her husband Aidan are moving into this Spring.

2001 to address issues of social exclusion attracted €5 million into the area in its first five years and is still in operation.

- Northside's Preparing for Life programme has become a flagship project according to an enthusiastic Dr Matthias Borscheid, SICAP manager (see inside this issue for more).

- SpeedPak, a distribution company set up in 1995 with help from the partnership to address unemployment in the area, was briefly featured in our last issue – It has become a valuable partner to Changing Ireland over the years.

- The Challenger Programme made the front page in the Winter 2014 edition featuring one of its successful graduates Ciara Hurley.

"The Parish Priests mobile phone took eight hours to wind up - I could make about four calls on it."

The Northside Partnership's initiatives impact on every area of life – they even run quit smoking courses for those of us sick of the devil's weed.

All this is in contrast to Marian's early

days in the job which started out with so much promise and then quickly took a nosedive, as she explained:

"I met the board in very salubrious offices next to the Shelburne Hotel – you're talking mahogany, crystal glasses, a beautiful boardroom. I met the directors, I signed the contract and I was given a petty cash cheque for a hundred pounds. And then they gave me the Parish Priests mobile phone which took eight hours to wind up – I could make about four calls on it."

She went on to pay tribute to her colleagues: "We have had the most incredible board of directors, management and staff over the years."

She spoke of the "privilege" she felt to be involved with the community development sector, saying she felt "very moved" working with people in the community and enabling them in "transforming their lives".

Soon, Marian and her husband, former local credit union manager Aidan O'Brien will be working with people in a different capacity. They are this Spring opening a B&B in Dingle, Co. Kerry.

If she approaches this latest venture with the same attitude and efficiency that her colleagues described, Francis Brennan might be nervously looking over his shoulder.

ES & ARRIVALS

THE VIEW FROM THE STARTING BLOCK

BY ALLEN MEAGHER

As folk who've been working in the Community & Voluntary Sector since the early 1990s begin to retire, we asked four up and coming community workers how optimistic they were about finding work and where their passions lay. Silvia, Luke and Donna are engaged in a Postgraduate Diploma in Co-operative Organisation, Food Marketing and Rural Development. Lesley is studying for a Masters in Youth Work with Community Arts and Sports Studies. All are students of UCC.

Silvia Amador - Nicaragua

I want to work in community development. I've done it and I want to keep on doing it. What excites me is – and this might sound a little clichéd – I can gain professional development and at the same time personal satisfaction, while being paid for it, and I'm helping to improve other people's lives. That's really a motivation for me.

It's a very competitive area. (Employers) mostly require people with years of experience. So, that's the reason I'm doing this Masters, so I can combine my work and experience with a good title.



Luke Casey - Kilkenny

To break into the Sector, you need a certain level of experience so I would be willing to do voluntary work again, but not for as long as in the past. I did it for a year before.

Some of the lecturers are saying there are more opportunities coming up, but nothing is concrete. I'm finding it hard to see past all the voluntary work. You need to get paid.

My background is doing community work in developing countries. I'm also interested in working with credit unions, helping them to make more of a connection through social media with young people in particular.

Lesley O'Sullivan - Cork/Canada

I love this area of work, I really enjoy working with young people.

While there are more jobs in Dublin than in Cork, there are more possibilities now through Erasmus Plus and other European funding mechanisms. I come from an arts background and I've learned you make your own opportunities.

I work sometimes with East Cork Music Project, connecting with young people by maker education, which mixes art and technology. I also work with the Youth Advocate Programme.

I went to college because I wanted to get more skills and a proper qualification. We've learned for instance how to use development education and creative methodologies in our work. Ideally, after my Masters, I would like to start my own project – a 'Maker-Space' for young people. Look it up!

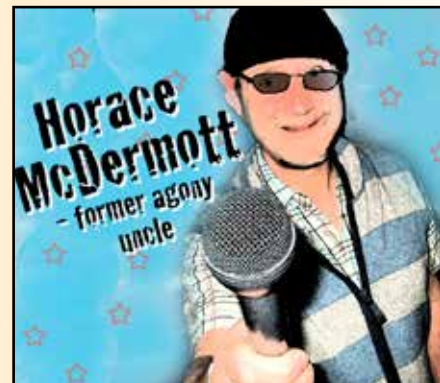


Donna Cleary - West Cork

My interest is in working with rural communities and promoting rural areas in terms of food, regional branding, tourism, eco-tourism, hopefully working in the LEADER programme. Rural areas are dying and they have so much to offer, but we need to get the momentum going.

I've absolute confidence I'll find work. I have to have. If you really want it, you go after it and if that means having to volunteer for a time, that's fine. The economy is picking up and we need more promotion of rural areas and I feel there will be jobs in that sector.

SERIOUSLY! HORACE MCDERMOTT SOLUTIONS TO SOCIAL ISSUES IN SECONDS



I'm delighted to see that the Workplace Relations Commission has been set up. It happened last October, in case you were in prison, in a coma or thought it was still 1916.

It offers a one-stop shop for all our complaints. It'll save on postage stamps.

Until recently, we had the Labour Court, the Labour Relations Commission, the Employment Appeals Tribunal, the National Employment Rights Authority, and the Equality Tribunal. #5-into-1

Sure, we didn't know where to be going and we facing discrimination and more besides.

Now they're all the one and I just send all my complaints to a Director General no less.

So far, I've complained about the election result – as a fictional character I don't have a vote which is utterly unfair.

I've complained about the availability of alcohol in supermarkets. Why can't we drink as we shop? All trolleys should come with pint-glass holders and shots-trays. Sure, Tesco nearly went bust last year and Dunnes had employees on strike. They need to make more money. Also, drink is cheaper in supermarkets. #Byebypubs

The Workplace Relations Commission of course has a role in sorting out the bunch in Leinster House. I say bring back the monarchy.

Finally, while FF/FG argue over how much I owe them for water, I've moved on. I've decided I'm changing my water supplier to Trocaire, because they can supply clean water to a whole village for only €2 a month. #NGOrock

ABOUT HORACE:

A former civil servant, community worker and agony uncle, Horace knows it all.

He has addressed everything from world poverty to extraordinary rendition and estate enhancement, and has a huge readership among people seeking change in their pockets.

A few of his better columns are available exclusively on the 'Changing Ireland' website.

ENNISCORTHY MEN'S SHED SHOWS WHAT THEY ACTUALLY DO

Members of Enniscorthy Men's Shed have produced striking artwork (left) to promote what they do.

Men's Sheds are often at a loss to explain what they do and these guys decided to do it through a photo-essay.

"Our favourite photo is the tea one (top left) which was photobombed by Stephen," said member Noel McCormack.

"We are proud to say that we didn't spend money on this project, we scrounge, recycle and upcycle wherever possible," said Noel.

To get ideas flowing, the Enniscorthy men began by discussing evidence-based actions which promote people's wellbeing.

Well worth looking up, says Noel: www.neweconomics.org/projects/entry/five-ways-to-well-being

Wexford Local Development which provides support to Men's Sheds in the county praised the initiative, noting that sheds are "a great way for men to become involved in their local community".

The photo (bottom, left) shows six of the men: Martin Redmond, Richie Healy, James Breen, Noel McCormack, Paddy Byrne and Stephen Dempsey.

'Changing Ireland' is always on the look-out for novel ways to show what community-based projects are really about. How about your project?



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