

## **"Look good, do good!"** **- Entrepreneurs & their communities**



**Social entrepreneurs win awards in Dublin**

**INSIDE: 5-7**



**Social enterprise making waves in Sierra Leone**

**INSIDE: 26-27**

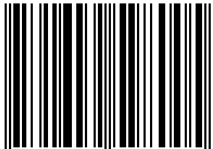


**ALSO: Trump & Community Development... Our Communities... Brexit... Inclusive Software... 50/50... Lynn Ruane...**

**DURTY WORDS**  
Back Page

ISSN 1649-5985

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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 Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government.



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## INDEPENDENT

'Changing Ireland' is an independent not-for-profit publication.

## 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 and communities best.

The magazine was established in 2001, is based in Moyross, Limerick, and is core-funded by the Department of Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government.

This year, we began to produce journalism to reflect social inclusion work funded or supported by an array of Government departments and agencies. At the same time, we provide space 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 4 for information about the team behind 'Changing Ireland'.

## SUPPORT

'Changing Ireland' generates a small amount of social enterprise revenue. It is core-funded by Government since 2001, receiving support from the:



An Roinn Tithíochta, Pleanála,  
Pobail agus Rialtais Áitiúil  
Department of Housing, Planning,  
Community and Local Government

**5-7 COVER STORY:** 5 winning social enterprises in Dublin

**8-9 NEWS:** Teen Parenting / 16 Days of Action

**10-11 JOBS & INCLUSION:** Pobal's annual conference

**12-13 NEWS:** Brexit Concerns / Zero Waste

**14-15 HUMOUR/NEWS/OPINION:** Horace / Pride of Place / Trump & Community Development

**16-19 National Forum:** "We're serious as a Department of Communities," says Coveney

**20-21 EQUALITY:** Calls for gender quotas

**22-23 RURAL & UNEMPLOYED:** Supporting Men

**24-25 GOVERNANCE & TECH:** Sola / Enclude

**26-27 SURFING & DEVELOPMENT:** Sierra Leone

**28-29 EDUCATION:** Lynn Ruane / Donegal / Limerick

**30-31 VIEWS & NEWS:** Branding / SSNO Grants

**32: 'DURTY WORDS' CONFERENCE / UN DAYS**



contents

## FRONT COVER PHOTO

Aileen Cruise, manager of Aspire and Lye Ogunsanya, co-founder & CEO of Aki-na. Photo by AM.



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Déirdre O'Byrne

Programme Co-ordinator, UCC

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## Activists looking good, doing good



Across the Atlantic, Trump has triumphed and billionaires with vested interests are filling powerful positions, while racist rhetoric becomes more and more acceptable among mainstream politicians there.

Ireland is not the USA.

In our coverage in this edition, we highlight the work of award-winning social entrepreneurs in Dublin.

Don't be fooled! These are not ordinary business people, they are activists for social

change in their communities.

Activist-minded people in Ireland are heartened to see a fightback against inequality here, evidenced by various protests last year, the most recent of which was the occupation by homelessness protesters of Apollo House. Whatever about bed-space availability, the occupation helped to highlight the fact that homelessness also has to do with policy-choices.

Protests by environmentalists, Travellers, people with disabilities and others last year showed there is plenty energy among people seeking social change in Ireland. Thankfully, we live in a democracy where protest is allowed.

By contrast, police in Dakota, USA, stood aside while thugs hired by an oil pipeline company shot at, set dogs on and pepper-sprayed water-protectors (who don't like to be called protesters).

Many might still scratch their heads when then hear of neo-liberal capitalism, but enough know of its evils to fight it at every corner.

\*\*\*\*\*

It's notable that the relationship between grassroots organisations and local and national government shows signs of improving. Cuts have stopped, as Minister Simon Coveney noted at a recent 'Our Communities' forum (pages 16-19). Everyone present saw the event as an opportunity to do right by those who are most marginalised and the Minister swore to listen to community workers and volunteers at grassroots level if they found they were not being heard.

He said, "The opportunities are there now for real engagement and genuine partnership between community leaders, community groups, sectoral interests and local and national government."

Community workers said they would put their trust in the process so that the formal structures for tackling social exclusion at local level could be made to work better. They expect results.

Whether we seek to ensure the voices of the most vulnerable in society are heard through formal structures or through street campaigns, we cannot sit back. We must all be activists for social change.

At the wider level, not to defend human rights and choosing not to become active for social justice where you have the opportunity is to invite in division, exploitation and fascism or worse.

*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.

#### Published By:

Established in 2001, 'Changing Ireland' is a national magazine focused on community development and social inclusion. It is managed and published by Changing Ireland Community Media Ltd., through funding from the Department of Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government.

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**L:** linkedin.com/company/changing-ireland

**Also:** lssuu.com

#### Production:

**Editor:** Allen Meagher

**Editorial Team:** Juan Carlos Azzopardi, Viv Sadd, Gearoid Fitzgibbon, Joe Saunders, Rosie Smyth and Allen Meagher.

**Packing and Distribution:** Speedpak, Dublin, an award-winning social enterprise.

**Printed by:** Davis Printers, Limerick.

**Voluntary Board of Directors:** Claire Gallery (chair), Kay Flanagan, Viv Sadd, Ellen Duffy, George Clancy, Seamus McGiff, Jude Meaney and Cathy Jones.

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LIMERICK**

### Disclaimer

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 Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government.

# COVER STORY:



## EMBRACING OPPORTUNITY: FROM ASPERGERS TO DIRECT PROVISION

### ASPIRE PRODUCTIONS

Aspire Productions is the name of a new social enterprise based in Dublin that can produce high quality, low cost media products on demand. The production team consist of people with Asperger Syndrome.

The project taps into their creative side and provides employment and a commercial service in the community.

Manager, Aileen Cruise, described the disability: "Some people with Aspergers see the world in a really black and white way and, because of that, it's difficult for them to get employment, but they can also be incredibly creative."

"We've made an animated documentary about Aspergers – what it is and what it isn't. The ten-minute feature was supposed to be launched six months ago, but they're perfectionists," said Aileen.

So, crucially, can the team work to deadlines?

The answer is 'Yes': The group entered The Wheel's 'Better Ireland' video competition and their entry was "done and edited on time," said Aileen. Once they have a deadline, they meet it.

Aileen refers to the group as "the lads". She said this is because the ratio of men to women with Aspergers is 9:1.

"More men are diagnosed. Women have Aspergers as well but women are better at modelling the behaviour of others. We've all men attending at the moment, so I just talk about the group as 'the lads'."

**O**ur front cover features Aileen Cruise of Aspire and Lye Ogunsanya of Akina. who represent two of five winning social enterprise projects in Dublin.

They each received awards in December. For more on the awards and the other three winners, turn to pages 6-7.

"They may have to learn coping skills to fit in with society, but I don't want them to have to change," she said.

The team's skills range covers animation, direction, storyboarding, project management, leadership, writing, editing, sound and lighting. The team's "unique outlook on the world reflects on the end result" said Aileen.

Aspire has for 21 years been supporting people with Aspergers to access the same opportunities as their peers and meet their full potential.

W: [aspireireland.ie](http://aspireireland.ie)

### HOUSE OF AKINA

House of Akina's slogan is "Look good, Do good" promoting the idea that you can spend your money on trendy yet ethical products that do good for those marginalised in society.

The social enterprise works to support women living in direct provision in Ireland. It creates handmade, limited edition items of clothing, mainly accessories such as bow ties, pocket squares etc.

Products are made by women who have been through the Irish direct provision system and now have the legal right to work and remain in Ireland.

Profits are used to facilitate workshops to support and educate marginalised Migrant Women in Ireland in order to facilitate better integration of new communities.

**D**ebate is continuing in regard to "restoring" pay, particularly in the public sector. However, the Community & Voluntary Sector hasn't got much of a look in.

When it comes to this Sector, the media is focused on high CEO salaries. Recently, the-journal.ie asked: Should there be a salary cap for CEOs of charities? They pointed to well-publicised scandals and a survey they conducted earlier last year into CEO salaries in charity organisations. As we know, some CEOs were being paid almost €150,000 a year. They also noted a wide variation in

pay to senior management personnel in not-for-profits. Whatever about high salaries in some charity organisations, most workers in the Community & Voluntary feel their pay is too low and if anyone deserves pay "restoration" perhaps it should be the Sector's lower-paid workers.

IMPACT has been holding public meetings on this issue around the country. The trade union, which represents 5,000 workers, is running a campaign aimed at restoring pay to workers in the sector.

For an insight into pay and conditions,

it's worth reading a report published last year by the Community Foundation for Ireland titled: 'National Guide to Pay and Benefits in Community, Voluntary and Charitable Organisations' (available online at: <http://bit.ly/C-Vpay-conds>).

Meanwhile, we received the following letter on the subject from a Limerick Labour councillor, Joe Leddin, who recently completed his Masters in Voluntary and Community Sector Management at UCC.

Have a read and send us your views!



Dear Editor,

In every city, town and village throughout Ireland over 100,000 people work in community centres, voluntary or charitable organisations and social enterprises delivering real and meaningful change to people's lives.

The current debate and media commentary around pay and conditions in both the public and private sector as advocated by unions and workers on the merits of pay restoration and increased allowances would lead one to think that there is no other sector within our

## 100,000 workers must not be ignored

economy where workers fare worse from low pay and entitlements.

The community and voluntary sector or not for profit sector has struggled for years to gain accreditation from Government despite contributing over €6 billion annually to our economy. The sector provides frontline care in the absence of state services to those most in need especially in the area of social care and support despite suffering enormously from the years of economic downturn with drastic funding cuts impacting adversely on those most marginalised and isolated from society.

These same workers don't share the salaries, allowance or even the pensions that many in both the private and public sector enjoy yet they work just as hard day in day out to serve their local communities.

As Governments change, responsibility for sector invariably switches from department to department with little understanding or appreciation of the impact these workers have on the quality of peoples lives.

Let's have a dedicated government department similar to the UK with responsibility for the Community and Voluntary Sector. This will enable a sustainable strategy to be formulated that will strengthen both the sector and the rights and entitlements of workers.

Yours sincerely,

Cllr. Joe Leddin (M.Soc. UCC)  
Limerick





Sean Mullan and Tom Slattery of Third Space in Smithfield.



Greg Swift of Dublin City Local Enterprise Office with Eddie Darcy and Andrew Doyle of the Solas Project on Marlborough Lane.



Dara Connolly accepts the award for the ReCreate project.



Minister of State Damien English is presented with a dicky bow by Lye Ogunsanya, co-founder & CEO of Aki-na.

# Enterprises supporting

## 5 top Social Entrepreneurs €45,000 handed out to spur on

**F**ive thrilled winners were presented with €5,000 to €15,000 cheques as award winners in Social Enterprise on December 15. The awards were presented by Minister of State for Housing and Urban Renewal, Damien English.

Minister English didn't go away empty handed himself - he was presented with a hand-made navy-blue 'House of Aki-na' dicky-bow by project co-founder Lye Ogunsanya. Ryan Tubridy already wears one.

The ceremony took place at the Hugh Lane Art Gallery in Dublin.

The winners were: Re-create; The Yard at Solas Project; House of Aki-na; Aspire Productions; and Third Space.

Dublin's Social Enterprise Grant Scheme Awards was established in 2015 to raise awareness and reward the important work being done by Social Entrepreneurs in the city.

At this year's awards, a total of €45,000 was handed over to five winning projects to further develop their operations and organisations.

Evanne Kilmurray, CEO, Inner City Enterprise, said that social enterprises in the City "play a key role in rejuvenating many of the local communities and have long lasting impacts in terms of job creation and provision of real social services."

The awards help to showcase what social enterprise can achieve in our communities.

The scheme was launched "to address the gap for accessing funding for start up social enterprises" and Evanne said funding and mentoring makes "a vital difference".

Minister English praised the important work done, saying: "Social Enterprise is the up and coming way to give ownership back to a community by delivering much needed local services in an efficient manner using self sustaining enterprises."

### RECREATE

ReCreate collects clean, end of line materials from business and redistributes them for all kinds of creative and artistic purposes.

The concept, Creative Reuse, encourages the whole community to reuse everyday materials that are normally being thrown away, in all kinds of inventive ways.

Members pay a set annual fee and have

unlimited access to ReCreate's materials. The idea is to nurture fun, creativity, holistic development of the individual and care for the environment by diverting materials from landfill through resource exchange. It affords quality employment to a range of individuals including people who have been long-term unemployed and people with a physical, sensory and intellectual disability.

**W:** [recreate.ie](http://recreate.ie)

### THIRD SPACE

Third Space was set up to open and run eating and meeting places in the redeveloped areas of Dublin that lack these community spaces.

Each Third Space serves as a community hub where people can gather regularly, informally and inexpensively.

Built around a simple but great menu, an excellent team and an informal environment they will nurture a creative buzz that reflects the vibrant variety of life at the heart of a modern urban community.

The first Third Space has become a hub for the community in the Smithfield area of Dublin and has helped in the transformation of the area.

That was just the start. New outlets are expected to open in other areas in 2017.

**W:** [thirdspace.ie](http://thirdspace.ie)

### THE YARD@SOLAS PROJECT

The Yard Crew is one of five projects run by The Solas Project in South Inner City Dublin. It works mostly with men aged between 15 and 24 years.

They produce woodwork products from bowls to pens to full size canoes, which are then sold to partly fund the programme.

There is "no huge formality" about young people joining us here, said Eddie Darcy, CEO.

They aim to broaden the horizons for young people not in employment, education or training who come from challenging backgrounds. Some will have experienced homelessness, poverty and alcohol or drug misuse. After taking part in a 16-week course with 'The Yard Crew', they will walk out with work experience, practical woodwork skills, bicycle maintenance skills and the ins and outs of running a social enterprise.

The programme runs three times a year.

The Yard gives young people the skills, knowledge and confidence to empower them to fulfil their personal and professional potential.

**W:** [solasproject.ie](http://solasproject.ie)

The  
Social Enterprise  
Grant Scheme Awards  
2016



# Communities

## urs in Dublin: on communities

*RIGHT: Mary McSweeney, Dublin City Local Enterprise Office, Minister Damien English and Aileen Cruise, manager of Aspire.*

### BEHIND THE AWARDS

**B**ehind the awards are: the Inner City Enterprise, which formed a partnership with Dublin Local Enterprise Office, the Irish Social Enterprise Network, the Carmichael Centre, Dublin City Council and Dublin City University. Their aim is to promote practical business supports to social enterprises in Dublin city.

The Social Enterprise Grant Award Scheme was established in 2015 to raise awareness of and promote and reward the important work being done by entrepreneurs in the capital.

Support has also been provided to the entrepreneurs through the Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme, which is co-funded under the European Social Fund.



*Cause to celebrate: Award-winning social entrepreneurs who provide superb community services in Dublin with Minister of State, Damien English.*





# TEEN PARENTING

## YOUNG DADS

## LEARN THE ROPES



*Young dads from Ballyfermot discovered inner strengths and also that there's no mountain, never mind any hill, that they can't climb. These are not trips for the faint-hearted or softies!*

### BY CIAN MATTHEW KEARNS

When you hear the words “teen parent” the mind jumps to a scared young girl and an absent father. Yet, this is often not the case.

A 2012 study by Crisis Pregnancy revealed that, in general, adolescent males who are parents believe they should take responsibility for the pregnancy and not leave everything up to their girlfriend (where applicable). Furthermore, given a range of preferences for the future, 38% of those surveyed wanted to stay with their girlfriend and raise the baby together. While surprising to some, this reflects reality. Almost a third of young parents are already cohabiting.

Margaret Morris, co-ordinator of the national ‘Teen Parents Support Programme’, explains that keeping fathers involved in their child’s life is crucial, even if their parents’ relationship has ended.

“All the evidence shows that from a child’s point of view, a child fares better if it at least knows who its father is and ideally has contact,” she says. With the father involved, “the baby has not just the father’s influence and care in its life but also the paternal family’s influence and care. For a child it’s all about the more people who love you the better.”

The Teen Parents Support Programme (TPSP) consists of eleven separate projects funded by Tusla (the Child and Family Agency) and the HSE.

One of these projects is FamiliBase, in Ballyfermot, where Tracy Skerrett works with parents and their children.

She said FamiliBase works with, “young parents who need support around housing, unemployment, mental health problems, family law, information, advice, parenting and everything to do with being a parent and living in a community with social deprivation.”

The project realised from the beginning that young fathers are often forgotten: “It’s really

hard for the young fathers to be identified as a young father, even statistically, because it’s not recorded anywhere. Unless they are actually in a relationship with the mother - or the mother has given consent to have their name recorded on the birth cert - it can be really difficult for the young father to play a role automatically in their child’s life,” said Ms. Skerrett.

FamiliBase has carried out research to identify the needs of young fathers. They found men lacked information on how to access their children and how to work through the legal system. As Ms. Skerrett said, “A lot of young men just don’t know how to go about getting access to their children.”

Their research also found there was a strong need for peer support and that mental health issues were also impacting on young fathers.

FamiliBase were determined to rise to the challenge. Working with Paul O’Shaughnessy of Cherry Orchard Youth services, and Derek Ahern, sports development officer with Dublin City Council, they set up a Ballyfermot young fathers group. The group provides a place where teen fathers come together and learn from each other.

Older fathers share their experiences with younger members and the group promotes positive attitude to mental health. Regular hikes and cycles across the country build up to some impressive yearly events. For example, members of the group successfully scaled Ben Nevis in Scotland one year and they walked the Camino de Santiago in Spain the next year. Perhaps the most anticipated event, however, is the family day where, once a year, FamiliBase workers help fathers and their children spend a night away together.

“But, whatever the activity is, the group keeps costs low,” Ms. Skerrett said.

While building team spirit and individual resilience, the group aims to show parents that they can enjoy time with their children without spending much money.

As Ms. Skerrett pointed out, “A lot of our young dads worry about when they have access, because of the cost of everything, that they can’t do anything with their children.”

The activities the group engages in help them to see that money is not always necessary.

While the group has been very successful in Ballyfermot, Ms. Skerrett realises, “There are a lot of young fathers out there who aren’t getting support and who aren’t being recognised. They are facing a lot of the problems that the young dads we work with have faced. But they’re doing it alone. And they’re doing it silently.”

Helping these young people is vital, not just for themselves, but to “ensure the best possible outcome for their child.”

**For more information, contact: The Teen Parent Support Programme, FamiliBase, Blackditch Road, Ballyfermot, Dublin 10  
E: [Tracy.skerrett@familibase.ie](mailto:Tracy.skerrett@familibase.ie)  
T: 01-654-6800.**

**NOTE: FamiliBASE is a member of the ‘Keep In Training and Education’ group in Ballyfermot which aims to ensure that projects in Ballyfermot that offer alternative educational services co-operate and are not duplicating provision. KITE featured in ‘Changing Ireland’ a year ago (Winter 2015/2016 edition).**



*Young Polish and Irish dads.*



# FEMICIDE

## 209 WOMEN'S DEATHS COMMEMORATED DURING 16 DAYS OF ACTION

By December, 209 women had been murdered in Ireland since 1996 when Women's Aid began recording figures.

Marking the annual '16 Days of Action Opposing Violence Against Women', Margaret Martin, director of Women's Aid said:

"Femicide must not be accepted as a fact of life. Women should be safe in their homes and in their relationships. And we must recognise the strong connection between the killing of women and domestic violence."

The project's Femicide Watch shows that a woman in Ireland is more likely to be killed in her own home and by a current or former boyfriend, partner or husband.

Where the cases have been resolved (through the courts or in cases of murder-suicide) 89 women (54%) were murdered by a current or former male intimate partner. Another 54 women (33%) were killed by a male relative or acquaintance and 21 women were murdered by a stranger.

Meanwhile, figures from the Central Statistics Office show that breaches of domestic violence court orders have nearly doubled in the past 10 years.

Lashing out at those in power who could do more, Sharon O'Halloran, CEO of SAFE Ireland said, "We can prevent these murders. We can

open the doors of our refuges and let people in when they call, instead of turning them away due to a lack of resources."

### LOCAL ACTIONS

Local actions took place nationwide throughout the 16 Days.

For example, Limerick Women's Network (LWN) members gathered to hold a minute's silence in solidarity with victims of domestic violence. Members of the 'Circle of Friends' group produced a symbolic wreath recording the names of the 209 victims.

They also launched a booklet (pictured) listing all the services for women in Limerick city.

The event took place on December 7th in

Watchhouse Cross Library, Moyross and was attended by women from women's groups across Limerick.

According to group facilitator Edel Geraghty, the issue of violence against women is one that the women's network deal with on an almost daily basis. "We come across many women survivors of domestic abuse who have never reported the crime. Statistics say one in four women are affected by this issue but from our experience the number is likely to be far higher."

LWN is funded by the Dept. of Justice and Equality.

**The Women's Aid 24hr National Freephone Helpline operates all year round.  
T: 1800 341 900.**



### 16 DAYS EXPLAINED

Women's Aid define the '16 Days of Action Opposing Violence Against Women' as "an important opportunity to raise awareness and call for changes at an international, national and local level to make women and children safe from abuse."

## MOTHER AND SISTER OF LATE CLODAGH HAWE LAUNCH FUND FOR WOMEN'S AID

The mother and sister of Clodagh Hawe who was murdered in her home last year alongside her three sons Liam, Niall and Ryan, have set up a fund in their memory, with all proceeds going to Women's Aid.

The aim is to raise at least €50,000.

"Clodagh was strong and beautiful inside and out and was so loving," wrote Clodagh's mother Mary Coll and sister Jacqueline Connolly. "She was warm, loving, bright and capable and she was bringing her boys Liam, Niall and Ryan, up to have those same qualities. We want their deaths to help other women who are living in fear and isolation in their own homes."

"Please support our fundraising appeal for Women's Aid. One in five women in Ireland experience domestic abuse and many women are isolated and alone," said Mary and Jacqueline.

The four were killed on August 31st by their husband and father Alan Hawe who afterwards killed himself.

Donations can be made online through this page: <https://give.everydayhero.com/ie/in-memory-of-clodagh-liam-niall-and-ryan>



Clodagh Hawe with her sons Liam (14), Niall (11) and Ryan (6). Photograph: Jacqueline Connolly

# JOBS & INCLUSION: POBAL's annual conference

## COMMUNITY WORKERS, RESEARCHERS & I

BY ALLEN MEAGHER

**The 2016 annual Pobal Conference was held in The Helix theatre, DCU, Dublin, on the day after the world learned that Donald Trump had won the US presidential election.**

Given the platform on which he stood and how he tapped into alienation among the working poor and those on the margins, Pobal's conference theme was apt: "Creating an Inclusive Labour Market".

Unemployment in Ireland fell to 7.2% by January of this year, 0.1% lower than in November. However, unemployment remains high for groups such as refugees, Travellers and people with low formal education, while people who are unemployed for more than three years (termed "very long-term unemployed") face considerable barriers.

The audience/participants and the many guest speakers – too many to mention – identified barriers and sought solutions to make employment opportunities more socially inclusive.

The debate was lively. Ken Loach's heart-breaking movie 'I, Daniel Blake', was mentioned by a speaker from the floor. The movie is about an unemployed man struggling to get social welfare supports and the Minister had been to see it:

"I'd recommend anyone to go see it. I'd like some of my staff to go see it too, to get a different perspective as to how a person can interact with our Department and

how sometimes engagements can be very meaningful."

He added, however, that he could imagine a "counter-movie that might provoke our customers".

Pointing out that he is only the second Fine Gael member in 60 years to hold office in the Department of Social Protection (including its earlier manifestations), the Minister said:

"I'm a strong believer in the contributory principle. If people pay into the system, they should benefit from it."

He highlighted progress on "encouraging self-employment and entrepreneurship", for example by extending more social protections.

The most important area of his work, he said, was "moving people from welfare into work" and "creating an inclusive labour market is part of that."

The Department aimed over five years "to move 100,000 people from welfare to work", he said.

"But, while the numbers who are unemployed are falling every month, we're actually seeing the number of people unemployed for more than five years increasing," he acknowledged.

"As unemployment falls, the cohort of people who are unemployed are harder to reach and it requires much more focused interventions than we have at the moment," he said.

He referred to barriers such as the lack of transport particularly in rural areas and the costs.

"Obviously, childcare is an enormous barrier," he continued, drawing attention to the Government's



Minister for Social Protection, Leo Varadkar, with Denis Leamy, CEO of Pobal. The conference aimed to support greater co-ordination between community, statutory, local government and the private sector in creating a more inclusive labour market for disadvantaged groups and communities.

initiative to subsidise childcare.

Plans for 2017 he pointed to included:

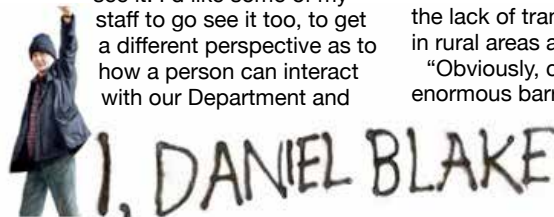
- Making it easier and quicker for people to access the Back To Work Enterprise Allowance.
  - Engaging employers to increase their awareness of grants to support them in employing people who are long-term unemployed, young and unemployed or with a disability.
  - Relaxing the rules governing access to Community Employment and Tús schemes.
  - Investing €1m extra in the Community Services Programme.
- The Minister also spoke about the Action Plan for Jobless Families, Jobpath, Gateway and the importance of services delivered through CE and Tús. On intergenerational unemployment, he said, "Any intervention is going to have to be holistic, and expensive too, but if we're

serious about doing this we're going to have to do it properly."

Questions from the floor included one from a community worker from Kerry which resonated with the audience.

**Dee Keogh, a Jobs Club co-ordinator in Castleisland**, said, "I work with a lot of 45-year-old skilled males who are course-weary, tired of CE schemes, and of hearing there's a job out there. They might do a Tús scheme, it lifts their morale and confidence for a time, but afterwards they come asking me what will they do next."

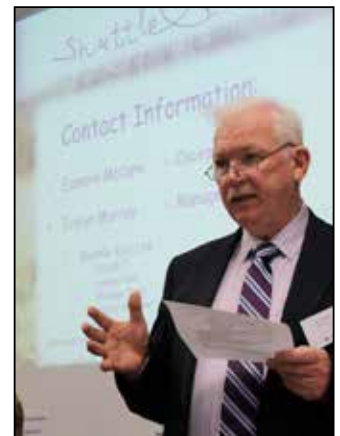
She said more than two funded "interventions" should be allowed for each individual. She said that it can take community workers up to eight (often voluntary/unofficial) meetings with individuals to lift their courage and confidence to be ready for one of the formal



Minister of State Catherine Byrne announced that the Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme will be extended into 2018. The programme is to be evaluated in the meantime.



Maureen Gaffney, writer, psychologist & broadcaster, who moderated a roundtable discussion, with Jerry Murphy, programme manager with Pobal.



Eamonn McCann of Wicklow Travellers addressed a workshop looking at how social enterprises create work for people from disadvantaged groups.



# MINISTER SIZE UP BARRIERS / SOLUTIONS

interventions – for instance, joining a course or applying to a scheme.

She called for a new 'Tús Plus' scheme: "I have people who've worked in a charity shop for a year through Tús and, when they're finished, they go and do another scheme for free because they just want something to do.

"There's no jobs where I live in Castleisland – check it out yourself, we've no bus service, no wifi. And, no disrespect, but these men don't want to do computer courses, they want work, real work," said Dee.

**From Dublin, a Simon community worker called Tracey** endorsed the Kerry contributor's views, adding: "We need to measure the quality-of-life impact of our work on people who are homeless, who have disabilities, who are third generation unemployed, to see the impacts that don't show up in cost-per-head or regional analysis."

**Minister Varadkar replied**, "I totally hear the point you make about course fatigue and scheme fatigue and spending years going

from course to scheme to welfare, and that's not a success.

"I'm always open to new ideas, including a Tús Plus, or people spending longer on CE, but I don't think we should see it as a success if somebody spends three instead of two years on CE.

"But, bear in mind, all of this is paid for by taxpayers, who go out and work everyday, who maybe aren't in their dream job or ideal job, but go to work to earn money for their families and themselves – and pay taxes – and they have a right to raise questions if somebody is saying, 'I'm not going to take a job because it's not suited to me, or I don't like it, it's not the job I want and, by the way in the meantime you should pay for me.' We can't have that," he said.

Addressing the point raised by the Simon worker, he said, "Of course we should take into account the quality of life and the impact any intervention we make has on a person," said Minister Varadkar.

**Philip O'Connell of the Geary Institute** said he too shared the

concerns expressed from the floor.

"Recovery has seen the growth of a substantial group with multiple disadvantages who stay unemployed for very long periods," he said.

Age, skill-levels and education are among the determining factors.

He said there has been "an alarming growth" in the number of those unemployed for more than three years: "About two-thirds of those unemployed for two or more years are still unemployed one year later. It is very hard to escape long-term unemployment, though there is some indication that activation is reducing long-term unemployment."

In 2016, around 50% of those on the live register were "long-term unemployed", compared to 63% in 2012.

He credited the Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme with playing a role in reducing the levels of very long-term unemployment. He spoke about a "rationing of services" available through the Government's 'Pathways To Work' and said socially excluded groups

such as ex-offenders should be better supported.

Calling for a range of measures, he said, "As unemployment falls it becomes necessary and possible to adopt more inclusive client-centred investment in employability of all with the capacity and desire to work."

Meanwhile, **Donald Storrie of Eurofound**, an EU agency promoting better social, employment and work-related policies, spoke about the employment challenge facing refugees, noting that 4,000 people from Syria and other war-torn countries are due to arrive here. "They'll be traumatised and far from the labour market," he said. "Unlike labour migrants, they are not labour-market ready," he said. Looking at Sweden's experience, he said migrants and refugees "do catch up after many years, but for women it's a big catch-up."

**He pointed people to the latest Eurofound research paper for more information on the best approaches (available at: <http://bit.ly/eurofound2016>).**

## 6 INCLUSION WORKSHOPS:

### Co-operation, social enterprises, employers, work & homelessness, the 'activation agenda' and the role of local authorities

Six workshops took place during the conference to identify key learning points from experience to date.

The first workshop looked at how local agencies that provide employment supports co-operate and exchange information.

The second examined the performance of local authorities and Local and Community Development Committees (LCDCs) in supporting employment activation and broader economic development. It also looked at the impact of Local Economic and Community Plans.

Workshop number three highlighted the contribution of social enterprises to

creating employment opportunities for disadvantaged groups.

The fourth workshop heard how employers can engage with employment services to create local job opportunities for disadvantaged groups.

The fifth highlighted integrated approaches to supporting people who are at risk of homelessness to find work.

The sixth workshop discussed the value of apprenticeships and how they operate locally.

'Changing Ireland' attended two workshops and will follow up in the Spring by looking at the performance of LCDCs, some being more open than others.



On creating opportunity: - Eamonn McCann of Wicklow Travellers, Evelyn Murray of Shuttleknit Ltd and John Murphy of Speedpak in Dublin gave excellent presentations on the contribution of social enterprises, at Pobal's annual conference.

# BREXIT: Anthony Soares speaks out

## CROSS-BORDER PROJECTS ALREADY NEED MORE SUPPORT

### Is the threat Brexit poses to communities being taken seriously?

Brexit poses a threat to the peace process on these islands. Support and funding for many community groups is at risk, despite the impact this could have.

Anthony Soares (pictured right) told 'Changing Ireland' in late 2016 that because of Brexit's impact to date, cross-border projects already need more funding.

And this was before political power-sharing collapsed at Stormont.

In December, the House of Lords EU Sub-Committee deliberated on Brexit, saying an agreement should be drafted to "guarantee open land borders and sea boundaries, support cross-border trade and preserve EU funding for cross-border projects". The issue also received attention in December from the British-Irish Parliamentary Assembly, while An Taoiseach, Enda Kenny, has addressed the matter as being of the utmost concern.



Anthony Soares listens to a colleague at the launch recently of the latest *Journal of Cross-Border Studies in Ireland*, available online for free: <http://bit.ly/XborderJourn>

### BY ALLEN MEAGHER

The UK's Brexit minister late last year visited Belfast and Dublin, meeting with political representatives and business leaders. He did not meet Community and Voluntary Sector representatives.

This sent out a strong signal to those in the Sector that the priority is trade, commerce and business.

Meanwhile, as a direct result of the Brexit vote, community organisations are seeing an increasing workload. Witness the subsequent rise in hate crime, said Anthony Soares, deputy director of the Centre of Cross-Border Studies.

He told 'Changing Ireland' there are "significant concerns" for communities on both sides of the border with regard to the continuing funding of community projects if, or indeed when, the UK leaves the EU.

The ESF will continue for the ROI – "they'll be okay", said Anthony. However, for community groups in Northern Ireland, some of which depend almost completely on ESF funding, their very existence is under threat.

"We're already seen organisations talking about shutting up shop – for example I'm thinking of one project focused on young people's employability. Groups are really concerned going forward," he said.

"For cross-border projects, without the EU funding I don't think a lot of them would continue to run," he said. "Putting it generously, the governments in Dublin or Belfast don't have the funding that those cross-border projects need."

In the most positive scenario – cross-border projects may still have EU funding – this depends on a "soft" exit. There is a precedent for this – Norway is outside the

EU, but inside the single market and takes part in social programmes.

One of the two most important cross-border programmes is INTEREG – which covers NI, ROI and West Scotland – and the European Social Fund (ESF).

This promotes "inter-regional integration", the opposite of what Brexit was supposedly about.

The other "really important programme", according to Anthony, is the Peace Programme: "We are the only part of the EU that has such a programme."

"The needs, rationale and logic is there, but where the funding comes from?"

Even if the UK leaves completely and doesn't want to fund any more cross-border projects, well the need will still be there," he said.

"The Centre and other groups have been proposing – in that scenario – that the UK government should create a new Intereg – for the ROI, NI, West Scotland and also Wales. Let's keep the projects going and new projects, by creating a new fund, we propose."

The hole in that argument is that a new UK government may come along and at budget time drop funding for peace and cross-border activities.

"That's absolutely true," admitted Anthony, "In one year, the money could be taken away."

EU funding has always been of increased value because it comes in seven-year cycles.

His organisation is "safe" as, since 2014, it has not relied on significant EU funding and it is campaigning hard with others

"A new 'hard' border doesn't have to be physical, because as soon as differences around rights and regulations emerge, it

becomes a much more significant border.

"We've already started – since June – seeing an increase in hate-crimes against immigrants – immigration became part of the discourse by those in the Leave Campaign.

"We've proposed that, for the current Peace Programme, the Irish and UK governments should add a special pot of money to deal specifically with the uncertainty caused by the referendum result and the erosion around social cohesion at the border and away from border.

"As a co-guarantor of the Good Friday Agreement, Ireland (the Republic) could argue that it needs the EU to recognise special circumstances and the EU might continue to support the Peace Programme. We in the Centre for Cross Border Studies been arguing for that.

"Peace isn't done. It's a very young thing we have here. We have to continually work at it. We're no different from other places. You can return to conflict – it doesn't have to be violent conflict," said Anthony.



Martin Mansergh, Ruth Taillon and Michael Farrell at the journal launch. See link in caption above.



# Sustainable Development Goals

## Not all borrowing is bad

- Experts say we need to share more

BY MENDY O'BRIEN

**N**ot all borrowing is bad. We're not talking about money for once, but borrowing and loaning out items that reduce the amount of waste and needless dumping in society. But is zero waste possible? Can we chuck out our bins and live with no waste at all?

Unfortunately not, as our current system of supplying consumers prevents us from achieving lower levels of waste easily. Between plastic wrapped bags of fruits and vegetables and over packaged products, zero waste seems out of reach.

However, the definition of 'zero waste' is forgiving. It refers to the journey towards zero waste rather than the destination. It means looking at current consumption patterns and finding solutions through waste prevention, re-using and repairing products and recycling and composting.

Zero waste embraces a 'circular economy model', which turns the current 'linear consumption model' on its head. Instead of extracting, consuming and disposing of valuable natural resources, we can redesign products to be easily repairable, reusable and recyclable.

We can work with industry to adopt new manufacturing practices to reduce the amount of waste. In this way, we won't continue the current practice of using and destroying non-renewable natural resources such as rare earth metals and minerals.

Zero waste also looks at how to share products rather than purchasing new items. It is estimated that each electric drill is only used around ten minutes in its lifetime, unless the user is in the trade or an avid DIYer. We are used to borrowing books from our libraries, so why not create a tool lending library so we can borrow tools and little used items as well?

Many communities, large and small, have embarked on their zero waste journey.

For example, Gipuzkoa, in the Basque Country, has reversed its waste trend, going from 30% recycling and 70% residual waste to 70% recycling and 30% residual waste in just three years.

San Francisco is also a very successful zero waste community. It has done this through local action and local ordinances. Local government has banned polystyrene packaging, requires food businesses to use compostable or easily recyclable packaging for all food takeaway containers, has banned plastic bags and banned the sale of bottled water in public spaces.

California also has a container deposit/refund scheme where consumers pay a deposit on all drinks containers which is returned when the container is brought back.

Voice of Irish Concern for the Environment (VOICE) has started work to make Cashel, Co. Tipperary, the first zero waste community



Earlier this year, a 'food rescue' event was held in Clonakilty, Co. Cork, with support from the Voice of Irish Concern for the Environment (VOICE). They rescue food that otherwise be thrown away or rejected by supermarkets, businesses and restaurants. See below.

**"Share products rather than purchasing new items. It is estimated that each electric drill is only used around ten minutes in its lifetime."**

in Ireland. (See page 30 for news about Cashel).

We have begun meeting and consulting with local champions, groups and the county council. Zero waste must be a bottom up movement with the full engagement and commitment from local residents and businesses.

We hope that through zero waste we not only benefit the environment through reducing the amount of generated waste, but also benefit the economy through reduced waste costs, the establishment of new businesses (reuse, repair, leasing and recycling) and social enterprises.

Such businesses have been created in other zero waste communities. A thriving compostable packaging sector has popped up in San Francisco to meet demand, a nappy composting business was established in England, and leasing services, such as Airbnb, Dublin Bikes, and GoCar, have been hugely successful.

In Ireland, new social enterprises have also popped up, including FoodCloud, which redistributes surplus short-dated food from shops to charities to feed those who face food poverty each day. In two years, they have rescued enough food to provide over two million meals.

In Cork, Boomerang collects and deconstructs old mattresses so that the steel and padding can be turned into new products.

Charity shops ensure that unwanted

items find new homes. There are many new ventures in this area, which not only preserve valuable resources, but generate local jobs.

The promotion of zero waste and the circular economy has a win, win, win effect. It benefits the environment, creates new local businesses and jobs and pulls the community together towards a common cause. It's a sustainable consumption model that can be rolled out throughout Ireland, community by community.

**This article by Mindy O'Brien of Voice, is based on a presentation she made at the UCC Credit Union Summer School, organised by the Centre for Co-operative Studies, UCC.**

### How to run a local 'Food Rescue'

VOICE is an environmental charity working on waste and water issues.

Among the things it does best are 'Food Rescues' which involves recovering food that is edible, but often not saleable.

Call them if you'd like to see one held in your area.

"Our champions will organise the collection of short-dated food from local shops, farms or other food businesses which will then be prepared to make a delicious meal to share with their neighbours. They have already held events counties Sligo, Cork, Leitrim, Carlow, Wicklow and Fingal.

VOICE is supported through Local Agenda 21 contributions.

W: [voiceireland.org](http://voiceireland.org) E: [info@voiceireland.org](mailto:info@voiceireland.org) T: 01-642-5741. T: @voice\_ireland Also on Facebook.

# Diary of Horace McDermott

## REFLECTING ON THE YEAR BEHIND & AHEAD



Jays I hope 2017 is better than last year – we've seen musical maestros Prince, Bowie and Leonard, acting greats Alan Rickman, Gene Wilder and Zsa Zsa Gabor and sporting legends Mohammed Ali and Arnold Palmer all signing a long-term deal with Eternity Productions.

El Presidente Miguel Del Higuero got into bother for his comments on Uachtaran Castro. It brought me back to my days studying Community and Youth Work with Shay O'Gara who was a huge fan.

And what are we left with? Bieber, Baldwin, McGregor and The Donald coming up trumps in the election. Alec Baldwin – How can a man with bald in his name impersonate a Big Wig like Trump?

Other questions from 2016 are:

Why are the Gardai better at holding us to ransom than those lads who took the greyhound?

Did Obama ask Mary Robinson for advice about where to locate his presidential library before he decided not to have it in Ballina either?

Did somebody think Tommy Tiernan, with his dirty beard, was homeless and it would be funny to have him live at the Apollo House instead of perform Live at the Apollo?

Questions in 2017:

Will The Donald reap the rewards from his belief that – when it comes to Russia – you only get out of it what you Putin?

Will community workers threaten exclusion and disadvantage on themselves by going on strike to match the Gardai threatening to do something illegal to strengthen their position as law enforcers?

Will Northern Scotland be formed when Northern Ireland and Scotland unite to stay

in the EU? They have much in common as they are both called "them over the border" or "them up North" and they have very similar accents that no one else can understand.

Finally, will anyone come to my conference "Dutty Words" on Thursday, May 11th in the Limerick Institute of Technology where I hope to meet fans, sign autographs and hand out lots of free feckin' advice?

Happy New Year!

H.

*(Ed's note: Thanks for the reminder, Horace! More on the back page about our 'Dutty Words' Conference).*

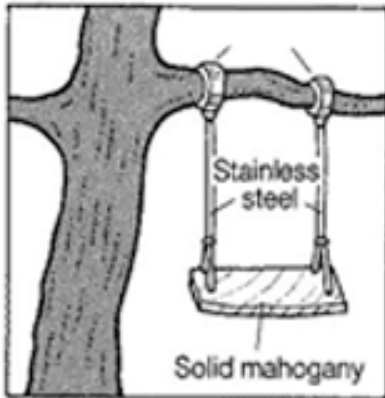
### ABOUT HORACE:

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

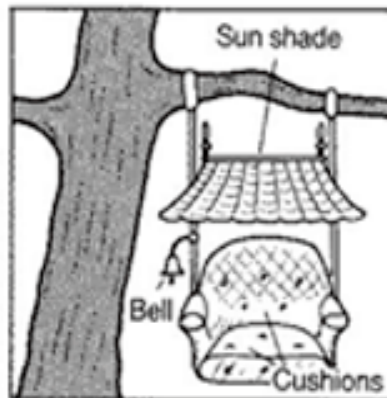
He has addressed everything from world poverty to extraordinary rendition and estate enhancement, and has a huge readership among people seeking change in their pockets.

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

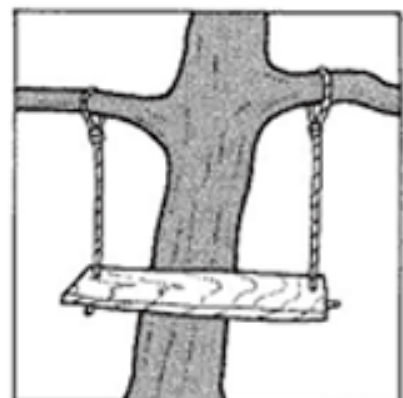
## How to consult communities...



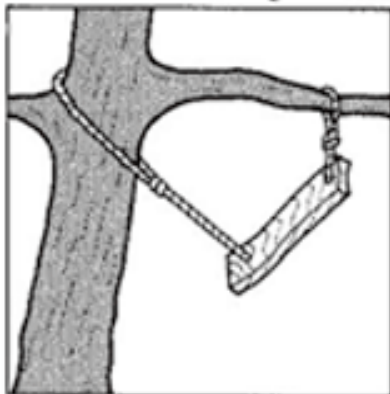
*As understood by field-workers who spoke directly to the village children.*



*As recommended by development experts back in HQ after speaking to top consultants.*



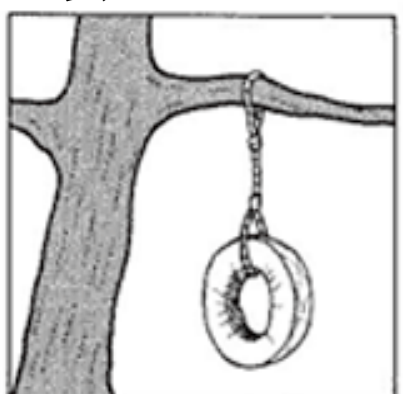
*As modified by the finance oversight committee after the project is re-evaluated.*



*What was eventually delivered to the village.*



*After costly consultants re-installed the facility.*



*What the village children and their parents actually wanted.*



# PRIDE OF PLACE WINNERS



Pride of Place is an all-island competition that acknowledges the work that communities are doing all over the island of Ireland.

"The competition is about showing respect and inclusion for every sector in our communities, young, old, rich or poor and creating communities to which the people are proud to say they belong," says Tom Dowling, former Meath County Manager and Chairman and Founder of the Pride of Place Initiative.

## MAIN COMPETITION WINNERS 2016

**Pop. up to 300:** Broadford Development Association, Co Limerick.

**Pop. 300-1000:** Clonbur Community Council, Co Galway.

**Pop. 1,000-2,000:** Borris Tidy Towns, Co Carlow.

**Pop. 2,000-5,000:** Moate Action Group, Co Westmeath

**Pop. Over 5,000:** Douglas Community Association, Co Cork.

**Age Friendly Community Initiative:** McAuley Place, Naas, Co Kildare.

**Community Social Enterprise:** Meath River Rescue, Co Meath.

**Community Business Enterprise Initiative:** Ferbane Food Campus, Co Offaly.

**Communities Reaching out Initiative:** Integration & Support Unit, Waterford City, Co Waterford.

**Housing Estates:** Three Drives Family Resource Centre, Tipperary Town, Co Tipperary.

**Islands and Coastal Communities:** Clogherhead Development Group, Co Louth.

**Urban Neighbourhoods:** Dominic's Community Centre, Tallaght.

## CITIES COMPETITION

**Neighbourhoods Under 1,000:** Glór na Móna, Belfast.

**Neighbourhoods 1,000-2,000:** Stoneybatter Heritage Village, Dublin.

**Neighbourhoods Over 2,000:** East Belfast Community Development Agency, Belfast

**Age Friendly Community Initiative:** Mahon CDP Agelink, Cork.

**Community Enterprise Initiative:** Foyle Down Syndrome Trust, Derry.

**Community Arts Initiative:** Blue Teapot Theatre Company, Galway.

## SPECIAL AWARDS

**Cities Competition:** 1. Play Resource Warehouse, Belfast; 2. Saol Café, Galway.

**Main Competition:** 1. Liskennett Farm – St Joseph's Foundation, Granagh, Co. Limerick; 2. Mulhuddart Motocross Project, Fingal Co. Dublin; 3. Trinity Arts Project, Castlerea, Co. Roscommon; 4. Wexford Marine Watch.

**Special Council Award:** Dublin City Council.

# Every cloud has a... TRUMP'S ELECTION SHOULD BE A CATALYST FOR COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

*- Particularly for strengthening the 'SICAP' programme from 2017*



BY ROBERT CAREY



Robert Carey (pictured) is SICAP Programme Manager with North East and West Kerry Development Company. He writes here in a private capacity and is a regular contributor to 'Changing Ireland'.

The election of Donald Trump should be a catalyst for community development in general and SICAP in particular.

There has already been a barrage of discussion on why and how Trump won the election. Of relevance to community development is the fact that working class and middle class people are voicing their disaffection with growing economic inequality. In addition, the equality agenda is under attack with many not convinced of its merits.

While America and Brexit may be totemic examples of these issues there are similar themes emerging across Western Europe, including Ireland.

Economic inequality has been increasing since the era of increased globalisation and neo-liberal capitalism was ushered in under Reagan and Thatcher in the 1980s. Issues such as precarious low paid work (Ireland has one of the highest levels of low paid workers in the OECD) unemployment, high debt and insufficient services are causing angst.

Against this backdrop there is increased tension around migration accompanied by reported increases in racism and a hardening of opinions in some quarters with less empathy shown towards those in great need.

So how is this relevant to community development?

These issues are not simple. Some working class people will blame people who are "downwards" (eg, the unemployed or poor) while some will look to hold those in power to account (witness the rise of the 'Right to Water' campaign).

Some people who support equality issues such as same sex marriage for example may not necessarily support equality issues around migrants, Travellers or economic inequality.

These issues require us to challenge ourselves and our beliefs and to think about complex,

sometimes uncomfortable issues that we often wish would just go away. This is why we need to engage, because most people's default position is to have goodwill towards their fellow citizen.

There are many issues which are causing uncertainty and fractures in society. In response, we need to increase our awareness and knowledge and to debate such issues. Community development is pivotal in this - it can support education, discourse, community self-reliance, advocacy and the promotion of equality.

The national Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP) is not only an activation programme: Equality and Community development (with its attendant concepts of social justice) are key principles in the Programme.

There is a clear need for a resource in communities to support the work identified above and the SICAP programme - delivered through Local Development Companies at local level - can play a key role here in promoting civic engagement around these issues. Local and Community Development Committees that oversee its management should take note.

In order to facilitate this investment in community development, the local delivery companies need to have the resources and support to fully engage in community development work. At present, Local Development Companies are under pressure to achieve high 'activation' targets (getting individuals into work and education). We could be putting more into promoting collective action and empowering communities. SICAP's emphasis on individual advancement commands the majority of resources at present when it is clear the country needs a renewed programme that is more community development orientated.

The world and Ireland is changing and if SICAP is to have any impact on these issues it will need to change also.

**Note:** At Pobal's labour market activation conference, in November, Catherine Byrne, Minister of State for Communities and National Drugs Strategy, announced that 2017 will see evaluation of SICAP and consultation on the new Programme, which will be introduced in 2018.

# "WE ARE SERIOUS AS A DEPARTMENT"

- Minister Simon Coveney

BY ALLEN MEAGHER

**Community groups and interests can work outside the formal structures or within those structures and in many cases they are obliged to do the latter. In practice, many do both:**

"We are serious as a Department of Communities," Minister Simon Coveney assured people attending a 'National Forum' meeting for 'Our Communities', held in November, in the great hall at the Royal Hospital Kilmainham. Answering the call, community reps gathered to see about turning policy into practice that will work on the ground and deliver community-driven, bottom-up social inclusion.

Opening the proceedings, Minister Simon Coveney, noted that in the most recent budget "we saw an increase in funding" for community programmes.

While this was a positive, he noted that "the approach towards community development has changed."

"In rural Ireland, it was very much led by LEADER funding, financing ground-up led projects and we've been through a painful enough policy change, but I think we can make it work in ways that are more effective than before - even though there are many good and strong things about previous decision-making and funding structures which we don't want to lose.

"The opportunities are there now for real engagement and genuine partnership between community leaders, community groups, sectoral interests and local and national government.

"And getting those structures right is key," he said.

He listed the five priorities in the

Government's Framework Policy for the sector published last year, saying, "They're all fine and aspirational, but what I'm interested in is their pragmatic implementation. How do we ensure that the community has had involvement and a say in the process when I make decisions based on the basis of recommendations that come up to me from talented and serious civil servants in the Department. Ensuring that involvement is the only way we'll start to light a fire again under communities and empowering them ... as opposed to top-down instruction.

One of the reasons that I took the ministry I was offered was because I wanted to close a gap that had opened up in the past decade between communities and (the State). One of the reasons we're insisting for instance on mixed tender housing development rather than segregated builds is because we are serious

## Policy into practice

The Department of Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government held a forum meeting with community representatives in the Royal Hospital Kilmainham in November.

The aim of the day was to help develop an implementation plan for the Government's 'Framework Policy for Local and Community Development'.

The implementation plan is expected to be completed by the middle of this year.

Community and Voluntary Sector groups, while to a degree welcoming the Framework policy statement when it was approved by Government in late 2015, had also expressed criticism. The Framework Policy seeks to promote "a joined-up, collaborative and participative approach to local and community

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# National Forum

## DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITIES"

by Simon Coveney



about community and community relations and diversity and we are trying to learn lessons from the past.

"We're not going to be able to do everything, but I hope ye see me as somebody who if you have good ideas you want to share and incorporate into policy that we can do that," he said.

While "sometimes, we disagree" it was essential to have a forum, an open line of communications, to work together.

"Communities have to be involved in decision-making", said the Minister, adding that people should get in touch with him directly if they feel they are being ignored by the process.

Among those to also address the conference were Anna Marie Delaney, CEO of Offaly County Council, who outlined the extent of the policy changes in recent years.

Rachel Doyle (CWI), in her contribution, reminding the audience of the critical role of community work in addressing poverty, social exclusion and inequality, and building participation of communities in decisions that affect their lives. She stressed that this work cannot take place in the absence of strong, autonomous community development at local, national and international levels.

## ON THE GROUND - Rachel Doyle, CWI

Rachel Doyle of Community Work Ireland, formerly the Community Workers Co-op, outlined what community development must be about.



## ice: What happens next?

development at local level."

Minister Coveney acknowledged there were some difficulties with the Framework and the forum event gave community representatives a chance to strengthen it from the 'bottom-up'.

The event included five workshops themed around the Framework Policy:

1. Engaging with Communities;
2. Working with Partners;
3. Planning for Local and Community Development;
4. Achieving with Partners;
5. Securing best outcomes for Communities.

Since the Forum, the Department has been busy preparing a detailed Forum report to be published early in the new year.

Also, a cross-sectoral group is being established, guided by advice received through the Forum, to assist and advise in the development of the implementation plan.

Meanwhile, Community Work Ireland planned to meet with the Department to review the Forum event and hoped to also meet with Minister Coveney.



Minister Simon Coveney urged people to contact him if the process was not working.



Minister of State Catherine Byrne speaking. She is responsible for Communities and the National Drug Strategy.



Minister Simon Coveney speaking to local development and community development workers, council officials, etc, at the 'Our Communities - National Forum' conference.

# OUR COMMUNITIES - National Forum

## AWAY FROM THE MAIN STAGE

Away from the main stage, the 'Our Communities' forum event was hailed by many as significant because it had been quite some years since the communities department had called a meeting of community representatives to discuss future possibilities.

The last occasion for such a gathering heralding in amalgamations, closures, cuts and cohesion, leading to the 'alignment' of community development with local government work.

In Kilmainham, the interaction between people was high, the venue was spectacular, the food excellent, the atmosphere good and promises of change were made that impressed a mature audience normally given to healthy skepticism.

One of the community rapporteurs remarked on stage that people present had

put a lot of trust in the Department and now they expect action in the coming months. That echoed what Minister Coveney said will happen, what civil servants said will happen and what is expected.

Meanwhile, there was an update from

***"About a half-dozen people remarked to me about the food."***

Junior Minister Catherine Byrne who spoke about a new SICAP being introduced in 2018 and promised investment in training and capacity building for LCDs to support the delivery of the Programme on the ground.

Her audience included people there who, while unhappy about elements of their work, obviously hold out hope for true bottom-up community development.

As was emphasised at the Forum, community involvement isn't an add-on; it's central to the whole thing. Community development must be bottom-up and ideally the country should be led by bottom-up influenced policies.

The relationship between the State and the Community and Voluntary Sector may indeed be improving.

Food might not seem important but the hot lunch with dessert for people grown used to sandwiches and soup at best sent out a positive signal. About a half-dozen people remarked to me about the quality of the food.

However, time will tell – depending on the quality of the implementation plan for the 'National Framework' – if communities are turning a new corner.

- ALLEN MEAGHER



*Who're you pointing at kid! Brian Carty of the Irish Local Development Network and Siobhan O'Brien of Wexford Local Development. Brian is moving on in January to become CEO of Carlow County Development Partnership.*



*Marie Price Bolger of Trustus facilitated a lively workshop.*



*Anna Lee, Dublin. She has worked in community development and anti-poverty work since 1986 and was the CEO of the South Dublin County Partnership.*



*Duncan Stewart, environmentalist and documentary-maker, chatting with Paul Lemass, assistant secretary, Community & Local Government Division of the Dept of HPCLG.*



## TRUST AND RESPECT

*Two key words came through today, trust and respect. We acknowledge it was a great day. But, there's a trust that we've been listened to today and a respect that something will happen out of today.*  
- **Community Worker addressing the Forum**

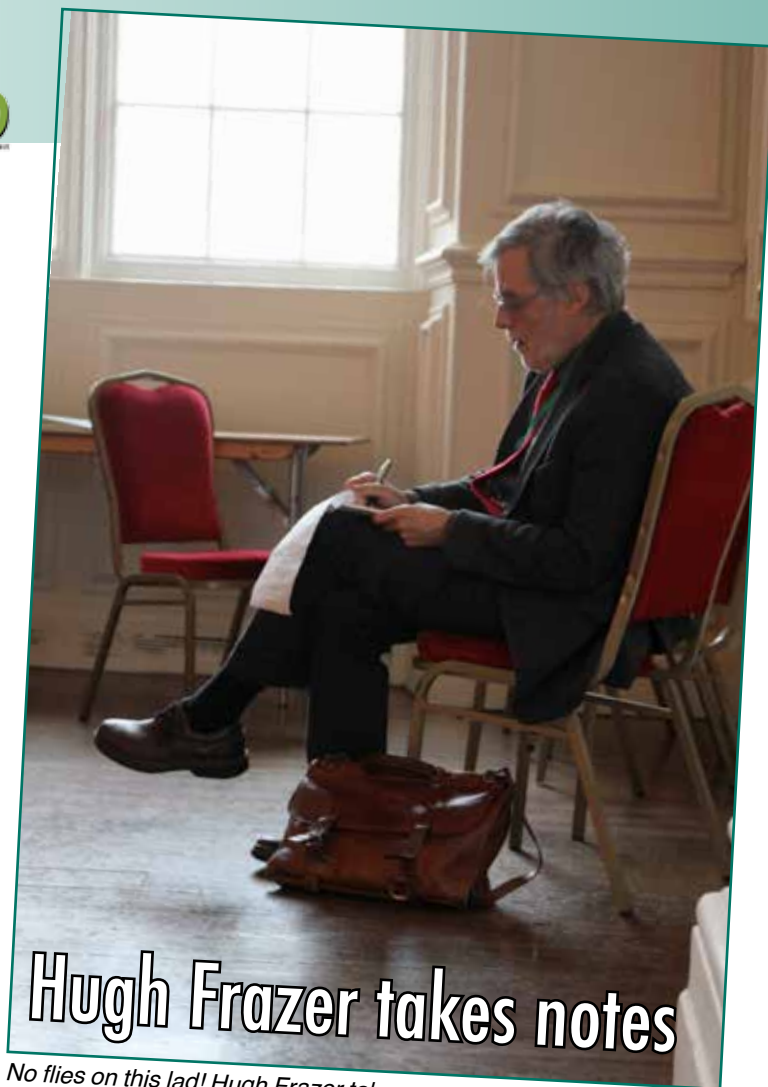


Roisin Heuston facilitates a group discussion. Roisin is responsible for Media and Communications at the Dept of HPCLG.



Active participation in wood-panelled rooms.

Accountability requirements are undermining and reducing  
- Anna Lee, writing in 'The Changing Landscape of Local and



**Hugh Frazer takes notes**

*No flies on this lad! Hugh Frazer takes notes. A Maynooth academic, he has worked for many years advising national government and the EU on social inclusion issues, especially child poverty. He began his career/vocation as a youth and community worker/activist in Belfast.*



Afternoon workshops took opinion from community workers, local authority staff, agency workers and community volunteers.



Attendees at the 'Our Communities' national forum in Kilmainham. On the left is Bernie Reape, widely credited with doing the running in organising the event and ensuring all ran smoothly.





# WOMEN (NOT) IN POLITICS - THE Gender still a glaring issue and women no

**The boards of national sports organisations were put under pressure in December to improve the gender balance.**

Punitive measures were talked about for organisations that failed to reach a 30% female quota, with some politicians in favour and others opposed to penalties.

Despite women and girls playing soccer, rugby and Gaelic games, only one woman sits on the executive committees/boards of the FAI, IRFU and the GAA combined.

Together, these three bodies shared €7.4m last year from the State for youth development alone and they oversee thousands of games annually involving women and girls.

The sole female - on the FAI's board - is Niamh O'Donoghue, Secretary General of the Department of Social Protection.

These sports organisations are essentially not-for-profits, not unlike many of the groups operating in the Community and Voluntary Sector.

It is not beyond the bounds of possibility that quotas could also be sought - or imposed as a condition of future funding - for the boards of community projects.

The tables below - and indeed the photograph on the right of well-meaning and hard-working men (but so many of them!) - indicate how steep the challenge appears.

But sometimes you can crest a hill almost before you know it. There is currently a campaign gaining momentum seeking more balanced representation between the genders.

The 50/50 advocacy group seeks equal representation in Irish politics and encourages debate on the need for more women to engage in politics.

Quite simply, they want fifty-fifty by 2020. Nationally: 50% of Ireland's population is female, yet there are only 35 women in Dáil Éireann out of 158 TD's. That's 22%.

Ireland's position globally: Ireland was ranked 76th out of 133 countries on a world classification list compiled by the Inter-Parliamentary Union last year. That marks an improvement - four years ago, Ireland was ranked 89th.

## The 50/50 campaign group:

- believes that the under-representation of women in Irish politics is an affront to the democratic ideals of justice and equality.
- is a single issue national advocacy group.
- is politically non-aligned.
- has branches in Cork, Kerry, Dublin, Meath and the North West.
- welcomes both men and women as members.
- encourages the formation of affiliate groups at



*Hard-working men are conscious of not dominating, but sometimes despite the best of intentions, the impression fails. The official tape-cutting to open Crossroads Community Centre in Cong, Co. Mayo, in December. Photo via: @SeanKyneTD*

community level.

- endorses both male and female candidates who support special temporary measures to redress the over-representation of men.

## 50/50 NATIONALLY:

Nationally, the campaign:

- Raises awareness about candidate selection quotas, encourages more women to run, more people to campaign for women candidates and more people to support women candidates.
- Challenges political parties to effectively implement the candidate selection quota.

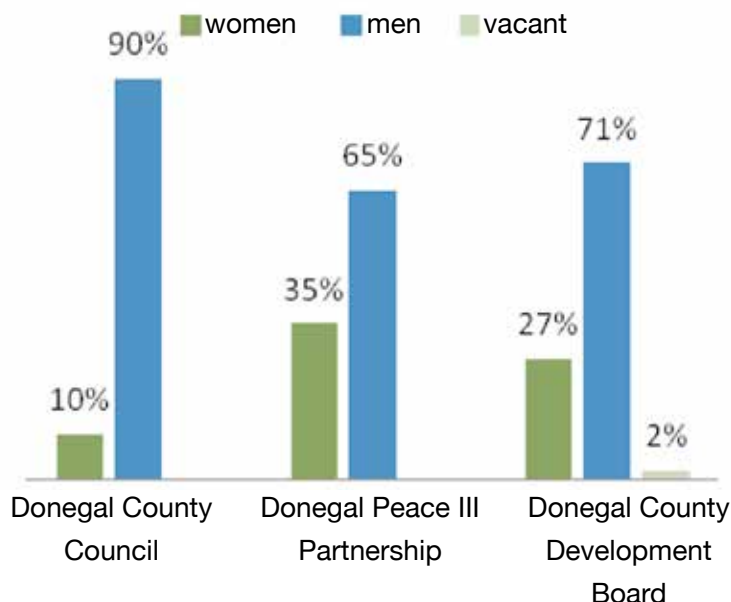
- Monitors the progress and implementation of the quota.

Here's how the situation looks from Donegal. Only three out of 37 councillors in Donegal are women. Since 1918, only two TDs from Donegal have served in the Dáil since 1918 (namely Mary Coughlan and Cecilia Keaveney).

## DONEGAL WOMEN'S NETWORK

Donegal Women's Network (DWN) is long established and is typical of the groups that are members of the 50/50 campaign. DWN works to

## Donegal Local Bodies



DONEGAL GENDER EQUALITY PROJECT  
RESTORING THE BALANCE





# 50/50 BY 2020 CAMPAIGN

## How campaigning locally and nationally



*Pictured: Various activities as part of the 50/50 campaign. Btm right: TY students at St. Columba's College, Stranorlar, Co. Donegal, took part in workshops to learn about gender stereotyping.*

inspire community growth through:

- Providing a friendly local support network to women in Donegal.
- Advocating & promoting equality and women's human rights.
- Highlighting the reality of women's lives in Donegal.
- Promoting and supporting women's empowerment in Donegal.
- Bringing local issues to a national level to influence policy-making.

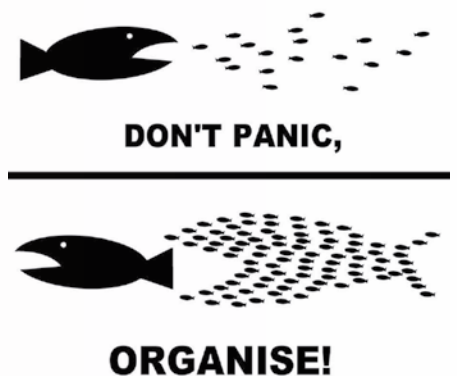
### 50/50 NORTH WEST GROUP

Currently, there are no women TDs representing Donegal, Leitrim or Sligo in the Dáil.

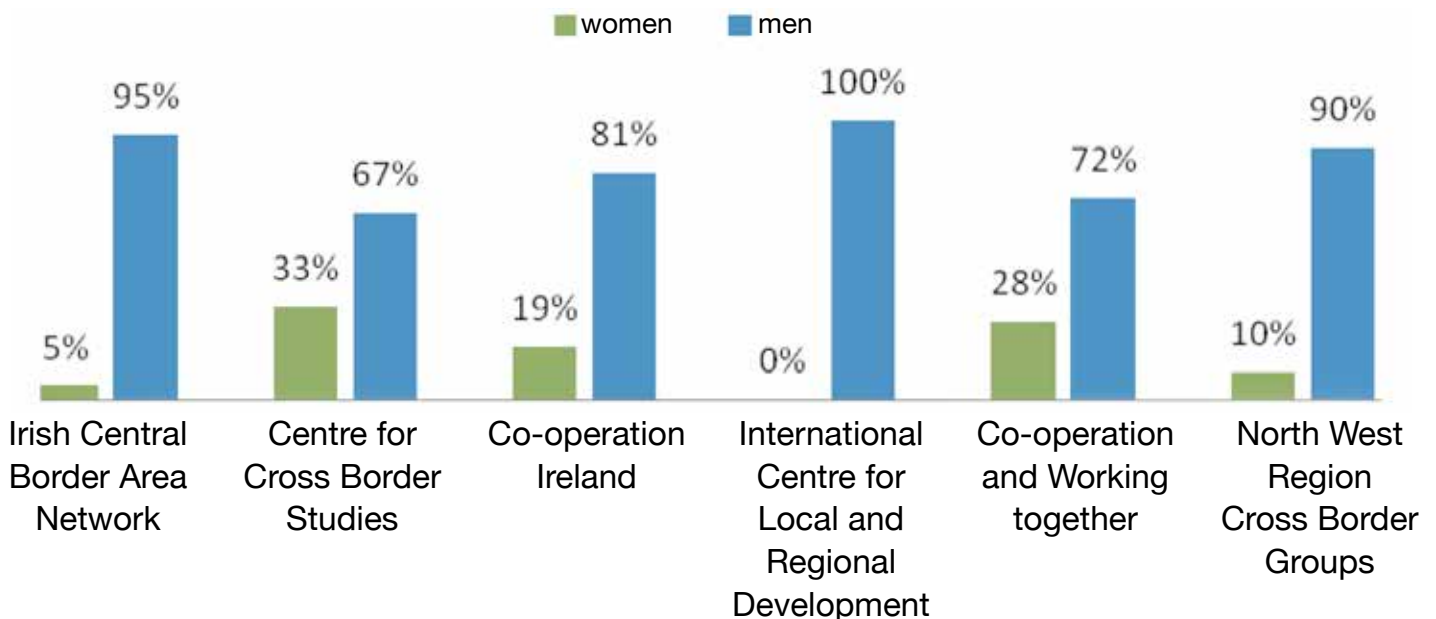
The North-West 50/50 group covers these three counties and is supported by individual women, DWN, the North Leitrim Women's Centre and The National Collective of Community Based Women's Networks (NCCWN).

Nationally, the NCCWN supports 17 women's projects that seek to empower and support community-based women who experience disadvantage and marginalisation as a result of barriers to participation and lack of opportunities.

The NCCWN is funded by the Department of Justice & Equality.



## Cross Border Bodies





# RURAL NEGLECT V. POTENTIAL

## WHAT SUPPORTS ARE THERE FOR RURAL

**BY CIAN MATTHEW KEARNS**

*Long-term unemployment can lead to “a lack of*

**A**cross rural Ireland, low quality jobs and unemployment have forced thousands of people into poverty. Yet, their suffering is rarely seen.

Seamus Boland, CEO of Irish Rural Link, describes hidden poverty as, “the lack of opportunity available to people. It’s the falling off of services. It’s people who are getting themselves into poverty, not being able to afford basics, which you don’t really see.”

He highlights how the problem is exasperated in rural areas: “You can travel around...and there’s no great signs of poverty there, whereas in urban you tend to see physical deterioration.”

The figures back him up. Unemployment rates in rural Ireland continue to hover around the 10% mark. In contrast,

Dublin and the Mid-East score 8% and 6% respectively.

Furthermore, a 2014 Survey on Income and Living Conditions found that almost one in five people in rural areas were at risk of poverty, compared to 15% living in urban settings. Although it might not be obvious, rural Ireland is still hurting.

Boland says, “The solutions have to include developing much more micro-enterprises in the rural regions.” He points out that, collectively, small businesses are the largest employment providers in rural Ireland. More growth in enterprises means more local jobs and more sustainable rural communities.

**Emily Casey is a Youth Worker with Clare Youth Service.** She runs a programme under the **Youth Employment Initiative (YEI)**

aimed at tackling youth unemployment in Clare, a county where three out of five people live rurally.

Casey explains that unemployment is a downward spiral. “When you’re out of work and have no routine your routine is all messed up. You’d be doing most of your living during the night-time and sleeping during the day. People would have a certain level of lack of motivation and a borderline bit of depression as well.”

Casey holds one-to-one meetings where she helps people identify career goals and prepare development plans. The participants, aged 18 to 24, come from a wide range of educational backgrounds, from early school leavers to degree holders.

Casey says, “I don’t give advice. I give support and I facilitate. That’s my role. It’s not to advise and lead someone down a certain path....They tell me what they want and I facilitate them in how to get there.”

The programme is innovative in

### WESTERN DEV’T COMMISSION

The Western Development Commission (WDC) promotes social and economic development in seven counties in the West of Ireland - Donegal, Leitrim, Sligo, Mayo, Roscommon, Galway and Clare.

Finding ways to boost employment in these counties is critical to the WDC’s work. It operates a Community Loan Fund as well as funds for small and medium-sized enterprises.

Three of the current projects spearheaded by the WDC include:

[www.lookwest.ie](http://www.lookwest.ie)  
[www.biopad.eu](http://www.biopad.eu)  
[www.rokwood.eu](http://www.rokwood.eu)

More info: [wdc.ie](http://wdc.ie)

### IRISH RURAL LINK

Irish Rural Link, formed in 1991, is a national network representing rural communities.

It directly represents nearly 500 community groups in the Republic and has a combined membership of 25,000.

It seeks to “represent the interests of community groups in disadvantaged and marginalised rural areas by highlighting problems, advocating for appropriate policies and sharing experiences and examples of good practice.”

To give but one example of its work, IRL led in establishing a national network for the many groups providing Meals On Wheels.

W: [irishrurallink.ie](http://irishrurallink.ie)

### THE CEDRA REPORT

The Commission for the Economic Development of Rural Areas (CEDRA) was established in September 2012, with Mr. Pat Spillane as its chairman.

Its 2014 report on the future economic potential of rural Ireland. It was coordinated by Teagasc in conjunction with the Western Development Commission, the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government and the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine.

Read the report at: <http://bit.ly/2iz5Yqt>



# UNEMPLOYED MEN?

*motivation and borderline depression”*

that Casey travels to the participants, rather than they to her. This allows people in rural areas with few transport options to take part. However, in such locations, training opportunities and jobs are limited. Casey says, “There is a need recognised to have more accessible training in these areas.”

One problem with enterprise promotion and YEI style programmes is that they often only target those already unemployed. People trapped in low paying, part-time or poor quality jobs are excluded.

Casey admits this: “There are lots of people in casual work who are finding it very difficult. They want to move on, they feel

they’re stuck....It’s something we’ll be reporting back.”

Perhaps, under-employment, as well as unemployment, needs more attention in the future.

## ABOUT THE YOUTH EMPLOYMENT INITIATIVE:

The YEI is one of the main EU financial resources to support the implementation of Youth Guarantee schemes. It provides support to young people living in the regions where youth unemployment was higher than 25% in 2012.

## RURAL LIVING

### IT COSTS €10k P.A. TO RUN A CAR

#### STATS AND FACTS

**16% of the population are at risk of poverty. However, in rural areas the figure rises to 19%, versus 14% in urban centres.**

- Those most at risk include people living in rented accommodation belowmarket value (36%) and those who are unemployed (40%).

- We know, nationally, unemployment has dropped. However, the gains are poorly spread. Over 62% of the increase in employment last year came in counties Dublin, Meath, Kildare and Wicklow.

- Western Counties saw a decline of 8.6% in the number of registered active enterprises between 2008 and 2014. The rest of the state only dropped 1%.

- Over 114,800 people are employed in the agriculture, forestry and fisheries sectors.

- A third of farms were economically vulnerable in 2015, according to Teagasc. Brexit is forecast to heap additional pressures on farming families.

- The estimated costs of running a car for a year is €10,850. Public transport is patchy in many rural areas and non-existent in others.

**Sources of Information:** cso.ie, socialjustice.ie, wdc.ie, rte.ie, theaa.ie.

## SUPPORT/TRAINING

### EU-WIDE SOCIAL ENTERPRISE GROUP

*1st meeting held in LIT*

In November, Limerick Institute of Technology (LIT) hosted the first meeting of a new European group called ‘Social Enterprise Development, Education and Training Tools’ (Sedett) which is focused on supporting social enterprise in Europe.

The Department of Applied Social Studies at LIT is a member of the group.

Backed by €274,000 in funding, SEDETT aims to increase “awareness and knowledge” about social enterprises by examining their nature, purpose, governance, leadership, management and impact assessment practices.

The group aims to produce an online self-assessment tool for social enterprises so they can learn how to best assess their development needs.

The group will organise a “blended e-learning course” for people interested in or working in social enterprises. Case study research will be central to the learning.

On the first day of the transnational group’s meeting at the LIT, the participants visited St. Munchin’s Community Centre, a social enterprise operating on the northside of Limerick City.

**For more information, email Cathy Jones at LIT: [cathy.jones@lit.ie](mailto:cathy.jones@lit.ie)**

*REPORT BY A. MEAGHER*

## BEHIND THE LENS

Thanks to **Tony Grehan** for the photograph of depopulation in Manister, a County Limerick village, not far from Limerick city. **W:** <https://www.facebook.com/tony.grehan.3>



# GOVERNANCE

## FOCUS ON 'QUALITY' TO ENSURE GREATER EQUALITY



Senator John Dolan paid tribute to activists who passed away recently, highlighting their legacy.

The private sector is breathing down the neck of projects operating in the community sector and disability activists from around the country expressed strong views at Sola's national symposium held at the University of Limerick, in December, **REPORTS ALLEN MEAGHER.**

The symposium asked how organisations and individuals can move "from providing a service to being of service" and the event was targeted at disability organisation managers, volunteers and frontline staff, funders of disability services and professionals with expertise in the field of quality.

While the event was focused on "improving services", attendees were wary of service-orientated language.

Opening the event, former education minister, Jan O'Sullivan, TD, emphasised "the importance of the voice of those for whom a service is being provided and ensuring the service is of use."

"The late Martin Naughton fought for so long to change that culture of expecting people to take whatever is provided rather than to have control over their own lives and being able to decide what is right for them," she said.

She congratulated Sola's partners for their collaboration and co-operation.

She hoped she was "correct in interpreting what this symposium is about - that it's about ensuring the person is at the centre of the service."

Reflecting Sola's triple-backing from a national community organisation, a third-level institution and a private company, activists, academics and industrialists discussed what "quality" meant to them.

In looking at how 'Lean Principals', widely used in business, can be adopted by the Community and Voluntary Sector, Billy Stack

of the Disability Federation of Ireland reviewed research on "using 'Lean Principals' to enhance transport services for persons with a disability".

Examining how quality systems can help protect the people's rights, Deirdre Nally gave a presentation on "the potential of quality systems to protect a persons' rights as enshrined in the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons' with a Disability."

Meanwhile, Stuart Lawlor of the National Council for the Blind talked about the practical steps needed to implement a quality management system in a community-based organisation.

The symposium also heard about a new system called PQASSO (pronounced 'Picaso') which promotes eleven "core competencies", the majority of which put the person using an organisation's services at the centre of those services.

Meanwhile, regarding "service-delivery", there was some concern expressed about 'language-creep' whereby the lingo from the top down is adopted by those "on the frontline".

### WHAT IS SOLA?

Based in UL, Sola aims to empower individuals and organisations in the community, voluntary and disability sector by engaging in research, education and training to implement proven governance and sustainable quality systems

Sola is a collaboration between the Disability Federation of Ireland, the University of Limerick, and Johnson & Johnson.

**For more info, contact Claire Gallery.**

**T: 061-202960.**

**E: [clairegallery@disability-federation.ie](mailto:clairegallery@disability-federation.ie)**

*Note: Claire is chairperson of Changing Ireland Community Media.*



Laura Ward of Clare Accessible Transport.



Jan O'Sullivan, TD, and Dermot O'Donnell of the Disability Federation of Ireland.



May Hourican, Valerie Moran, manager of Longford's Centre for Independent Living, and Claire Gallery, Sola.



SOLA's founders: Gerry Graney, Dr. Ann Ledwith and Dermot O'Donnell.



Pat Begley and DFI's Toni Gleeson, both from Limerick.



# TECHNOLOGY

## SOFTWARE FOR SOCIAL INCLUSION

The not-for-profit tech company 'Enclude' has carved a niche for itself finding solutions for groups working in the Community and Voluntary Sector.

The organisation is now ten years old and wrote to us following our Autumn edition. To back up their points, we also took testimony from two groups they worked with in recent years:

### EAMON STACK WRITES\*

We in 'Enclude' were struck by the cartoon in the last edition of 'Changing Ireland' which showed a community worker toiling endlessly in front of a computer screen to address the reporting needs of funders. It doesn't have to be so!

'Enclude' is currently working with partnership companies in Dublin to design an information management system that will remove some of the drudgery they are experiencing at present. The system will:

- Manage their interactions with people they serve through the Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP);
- Assist with reporting to IRIS (a system used by community workers nationwide involved in SICAP);
- Track interventions made that are not currently recognised by SICAP categories.

In the past we've done similar work in the addiction services area, working with the HSE and projects to develop custom-made client care and staff management system.

A recent evaluation conducted with the addiction services shows that the system is helping them to generate savings in staff and management time – by cutting out duplication and reducing time spent on administration – worth almost €50,000 per year on average (or 285 working days per year). Addiction services reported that they also saved 89 working days of managers' and administrators' working time each year. There was also an annual saving of €18,000 on software licences.



Senator Joan Freeman, Eamon Stack of Enclude and Dr. Suzi Lyons, Health Research Board.

The new system also helped to improve the quality of data available to manage interactions with clients as well as the data available to meet funders' reporting requirements.

Lisa Gavillet, Development Worker with the North Eastern Regional Drugs Task Force told us that: "Our eCASS system has given us a way to record and report on actual contact time, outcomes and progression of clients from a service perspective. This then feeds into a larger statistical gathering exercise providing timely and relevant information to funders and policy makers."

\* Eamon Stack is CEO of 'Enclude'.

More info: [www.enclude.ie](http://www.enclude.ie)

## PEOPLE-FRIENDLY SOLUTIONS FOR CANAL COMMUNITIES

The Canal Communities Training Programme, aka TURAS, is a rehabilitative education and training programme for stabilised drug users. Trevor Keogh, manager, said Enclude's 'eCASS' system helped them support their people to engage more effectively with their care plans and with getting into, or back to, work.

"This has really supported client engagement. For example, because of eCASS, clients can now move between addiction services with much greater ease, and staff changes in our own service generate much less disruption than they did previously," said Trevor.

There are benefits for staff too who have less paperwork to do than before.

TURAS operates as a Community Employment Scheme funded and supported by The Dept. of Social Protection, the HSE, the local Education & Training Board and the Canal Communities Local Drugs Task Force.



## NO 'DARKNESS INTO LIGHT' WITHOUT GOOD SYSTEMS

When an NGO grows, it needs to have systems in place to handle growth. Witness Pieta House's 'Darkness into Light' walks which now see up to 120,000 people taking part annually.

Pieta House has grown significantly since it was set up in 2006. It is a non-profit organisation providing a specialised treatment programme for people who have suicidal ideation or who participate in self-harming.

Enclude has been involved with Pieta House since 2009 and has helped it to cope successfully with the growth.

As demand for services grew, Enclude developed a client relationship management (CRM) system so the NGO could easily produce up-to-date information on the use of their services and keep a record of client bookings.

In addition, Enclude set up a system whereby Pieta House and vulnerable clients could contact each other via text message. This also meant Pieta House could text reminders directly to clients and this

has helped ensure high attendance rates at appointments.

The CRM also enables the various branches of Pieta to share availability of therapists for emergency assessments. As a result, clinical support staff in any centre can see all available therapists in a shared calendar and book an appointment directly from the calendar. This means that, for example, if a distressed client attends at one centre where there might be no therapists available, staff can look at nearby centres and book an urgent appointment.

### MINING DATA FOR POLICY & CAMPAIGNS

In 2012, Pieta House recruited a new in-house researcher to interrogate the data from its centres and to identify the key issues emerging. Enclude worked with Pieta House over a three-month period to upgrade its systems so that they could produce that quality data. Many of the national news stories over recent



**NGO success:** The first 5k 'Darkness Into Light' walk in 2009 brought out 200 people for the main run in Dublin's Phoenix Park. Last year, events were held in locations as diverse as London, Reykjavik, Perth, San Francisco and Abu Dhabi.

years on suicide, suicide ideation and self-harm have been sourced from this unique database.

Pieta House founder, Senator Joan Freeman, explains how the data mined from its systems helped shape one of its campaigns.

### WOMEN CALL FOR MEN

"We saw from data that 48% of

clients coming to our centres across country were men. At first, we thought 'Wow, so we are one of the few organisations in the country that men come to'. But our IT system let us see deeper than that, and on closer analysis we realized most of the appointments were made by women. This key insight prompted us to launch our 'Mind your Men' mental health campaign."

**Ruairi McKiernan speaking about Enclude:** Ten years of tech for a visionary, an activist. Enclude now has 22 staff, in 22 countries,



# SURFING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

## SURFING FOR A LIVING IN SIERRA LEONE

BY CIAN MATTHEW KEARNS



*Typical Sierra Leone style housing.*



*A surfer at Bureh Beach.*

**S**ustainability is key in community development. Projects that last are ones with strong local foundations. Bureh Beach Surf Club in Sierra Leone is a great example of a community-led initiative using its resources to their best advantage. Here a determined local effort, along with a little international support, made a big difference to a small, coastal community. And it was founded by an Irishman.

Sierra Leone has had a torrid time. In 2014, the country was thrust into the international limelight for all the wrong reasons. Images of death and disease swamped the global media. Yet Sierra Leone is a land full of potential. And with its golden, palm-fringed beaches and

pristine wildlife sanctuaries, tourism is certain to play a key role in its future.

40 km south of the capital, Freetown, a long crescent beach hugs the coast, framed by lush jungle spilling off the hills above. A river flows into the bay, sculpting the sandbar that produces one of the best waves in Sierra Leone: a long, mellow, left hand point-break. This is Bureh Beach.

Sitting outside the surf club, with waves lapping up almost to his feet, Galway man Shane O'Connor explains his role in founding the club. "Basically I wanted to help my friends and make sure they got the benefits of the natural resources: the waves here in Bureh." He focused on fostering ownership amongst the



*One of the local surfers, Charles, at Bureh Beach.*

All photos by Cian Kearns.

## IN SOLIDARITY: SURF & SEE

**C**ian Kearns travelled with support from the Simon Cumbers Media Fund, after becoming fascinated with Sierra Leone, as he explains here:

Sierra Leone is a country that defies your expectations. Perched on the coast of West Africa, it's a place on the very edge of global consciousness, where the romantic dream of Africa meets the hot, sweaty reality.

On Freetown's streets a thousand dramas are played out daily. Along palm-fringed shores, white sand beaches stretch out as if plucked from a dreamer's imagination and in the interior, red, earthen roads pierce dense jungles, revealing their mysteries to the intrepid. Sierra Leone is a place of adventure.



locals. Rather than manage, he prompted and advised. Gradually, he has stepped back. Now, more often than not, he is just another punter renting a board when the waves are good.

Charles, one of the young surfing talents of Sierra Leone, says: "The community thinks that surfing is the best thing in Bureh." He explains that along with being enormous fun itself, surf lessons provide a source of much needed income for local surfers. All the club members have a role to play. Some give surf lessons to tourists, mostly expats working at NGOs, who frequent Bureh Beach on the weekends. Others cook food for visitors or manage the rental equipment.

As a community-based organisation, all revenue from lessons, gear rentals and selling food is reinvested locally, with 25% set aside for community-based projects. The surf club members decide what they want to do with these funds including supporting new businesses and promoting events such as the country's first surfing competition.

The club has been a great success. Even when things were difficult during the Ebola outbreak the club did not disintegrate; it hibernated. When the epidemic ended, the skills, equipment and experience remained.

Bureh Beach quickly bounced back.

Today tourism to the beach has increased. Small restaurants and guest houses have sprung up to accommodate new visitors. These provide employment in an area people previously left to find work. Jabez, the club manager, summed up the community's feelings: "Now everybody's in love with surfing, everybody wants to get in the water!"

#### MORE INFORMATION

Generally, information on Sierra Leone can be difficult to find online. However, just because there's no website doesn't mean that there isn't a thriving business – they're just offline.

Bureh Beach Surf Club is on Facebook:  
<http://bit.ly/BurehFB>

Also, the following website (set up by film-makers) is excellent: <http://www.surfindsierraleone.com/bbsc/>

To contact the Surf Club directly, including to make bookings, call/sms/whatsapp on 00232-88-644273 or 00232-88-808654.

A phone number is by far and away the best method of getting in touch with people in Sierra Leone.

For more detailed information on Cian's visit, see: <http://bit.ly/SierraCian>

Or email: [cian@changingireland.ie](mailto:cian@changingireland.ie)

BY NAME SURFING

## FOR YOURSELF!

My urge to visit the country arrived subtly but grew irresistibly, nourished by whispered rumours of an unmatched vibrancy there. My ears pricked whenever I heard Sierra Leone mentioned. Then, scanning the internet, I stumbled upon a peculiar fact: Sierra Leone had just opened its first ever surf club – and the founder was a Galwayman! Intrigued, I made my decision. I sent an email to the unlikely founder, booked my flights and packed my bags.

Traveling in Sierra Leone is a challenging but rewarding experience. Tourism, although growing, is still rare. It's a tough country to travel in. It's safe – I never felt threatened in any way – but it's a country unused to visitors. Sierra Leone is a country that dances to its own rhythms. Let its pulses draw you in and you'll find yourself coming home dancing. (More info: See above).

**Quiz-time:** Name the Co. Mayo surfer settled in Co. Clare professional surfing to become a community organic gardener.

27

who featured in 'Changing Ireland' after he gave up Hint - First name Fergal. (Ref: Autumn 2014 edition).

# OPINION

## LYNN RUANE DELIVERED TASC'S ANNUAL LECTURE:- HER SUBJECT, EDUCATION



**A**n early school leaver and single mother of two from Killinarden, independent Senator Lynn Ruane gained access to Trinity in 2011 through the Trinity Access Programme as a mature student. Prior to her return to education, she worked for fifteen years as an addiction counsellor and community worker in west Dublin.

Lynn believes in the transformative power of education and she delivered the 2016 TASC Annual Lecture in Dublin on 24th November in the Royal Irish Academy, Dublin.

The title of her lecture was: 'Education and Inequality: Financial Capital, Social Capital and the Education Access Gap'.

"In looking at educational inequality, I always get led back to looking at equality as a whole," she told 'Changing Ireland', summarising her 20 minute speech for our readers:

"Looking at equality only through the lens of education means we're trying to look at it in too insular a way to make any progress," she said.

"We also tend to look at educational equality as a financial barrier. From my own lived experience – looking at the barriers that existed – in many cases, the financial barrier was not as much of an issue compared to how profound it was for me in terms of social capital.

"There is also a lack of cultural capital and an information deficit in working class areas, even when it comes to knowing what colleges do what, where to go, who to ask questions.

"Sometimes parents want nothing more than for their child to go to third level, but when the child goes to a parent and asks, let's say about veterinary, they get a blank face from the parent. They don't know what you have to do to achieve that goal," she said.

Senator Ruane also looked at differences between the rich areas and places such as Killinarden and the impact that has over generations, why it exists and what we can do to fix it.

"Poverty is not your identity. Not going to college is not somehow part of your culture. It's not that we need to recognise that we're a non-college going culture and a social-welfare dependent.

"Recognition of someone's culture means you give them freedom. If you recognise us as having a culture of poverty, that doesn't free us from anything.

"We may progress when people from a middle class background learn that it's not by choice and it's not something we can just decide to change.

"I didn't choose my oppressions growing up. Other people didn't choose their privileges, but the thing is they can share their privileges to better our situation. Nobody wants to share my oppression," she said.

Understanding inequality was "about understanding that balance of power that exists between the classes," she said.

Senator Ruane finished by quoting from a slam poet from England who talks about remoulding the second-level education system to embrace how working class people learn, "instead of shoe-horning into them into an exam setting that doesn't suit them."

Her talk also featured a video of TCD students being led on a 'Privilege Walk' – well worth watching: <http://bit.ly/2IE9jXZ>

**TASC is "an independent progressive think-tank" whose core focus is economic equality and democratic accountability. W: [www.tasc.ie](http://www.tasc.ie)**

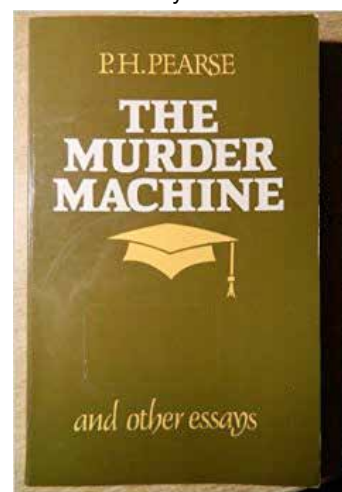
## Lynn & Padraig Pearse's 'Murder Machine'

**L**ynn Ruane didn't like school. She found that just like Padraig Pearse it was fundamentally flawed. She understood what he meant when she read his book, 'The Murder Machine', his last and most extensive work on education, in which Pearse wrote that the education system in Ireland was education in name only; "education" aimed at repressing and weakening Irish people.

Pearse wrote, "The education system here was designed by our masters in order to make us willing or at least manageable slaves". He said out that even our educational language was that of the factory.

Many decades later, as a child, Lynn witnessed the death of a friend – in a road accident – and the school system was unable to cope with or help her.

"At the time, I got up and got on with it. But I felt I had to squeeze all my life into a very short space of time because (I thought) I might not live long enough to do the things I wanted to do," she told a 'Late Late Show' audience earlier this year.



It led her down the wrong road. By the age of 13, she had tried cocaine, ecstasy and cannabis.

"I was doing anything that would take me out of the pain. It was short term escapism," she recalled.

The school system didn't really know how to deal with it. In working class areas, where there's so much trauma and pain, the school system is not actually equipped to deal with that and the social context they're working in.

"That was one of the reasons that drove me to run – is to try and change the education system to be more Community development focused and have supports within schools for children like me who experienced trauma so young," she said.



# NEWS

## PILOTS & POLICY

# DRIVING CHANGE IS GOING NATIONAL

A project we covered previously (Issue 49, Spring 2015) picked up a trio of awards last year.

The Pro-Social Drivers Programme which began as a pilot project in Donegal in 2012 has been impressing district court judges nationwide. If they can have the course run in their areas, they have the final say over whether an offender goes to prison or might benefit more from doing the course.

The programme is the brainchild of Gary Doggett and is based on best practice and proven solutions in other countries.

BY BEN PANTER

I caught Gary at just the right moment. The man who is bringing down traffic re-conviction rates in rural Donegal (is there any urban up there?) has begun sharing the know-how with neighbouring counties Cavan and Monaghan.

"We are spreading like a virus," joked the genial Yorkshireman. He was in relaxed mood throughout our interview.

Then again, why wouldn't he be:

"We've just finished our first programme in Monaghan," he said.

"How did it go?" I asked.

"A few years down the line we'll see," he replied.

Results to date from his Pro-Social Driving Programme have been terrific.

"We've had very few re-appear before the courts," says Gary.

Last February, he made a presentation to the Bar Associations of Cavan/Monaghan in front of District Judge Denis McLoughlin. It was a winning argument. Three months later and the first graduates of Cavan

and Monaghan's own pro-social course graduated. Done and dusted.

Feedback from those involved was positive.

One participant, John, was clear about the benefits of the course to his driving, "I stopped thinking about the worst case scenario when I was stuck behind someone."

Not the most patient person myself, I thought about signing up for the programme.

Could the course have been delivered more effectively I asked one young lady who wished to remain anonymous?

An emphatic "No" was the response.

"I thought it was brilliant and have already stopped my bad habits in the car," she said.

Another participant said: "I've changed. I take time to think about my decisions and the effects they could have on myself and others."

Expansion of the Pro-Social Driving Programme builds on the recognition it has received. In the dark of November, 2015, it won



*Aware that jail sentences often fail to curb dangerous driving, Gary Doggett (above) came up with a community-based alternative to prison and driving bans.*

the Light-of-Hope Award from the Irish Road Victims Association. It was recognition for a programme that cuts offenders ban and jail

time.

They have also received a Social Entrepreneurs Impact award, as well as an Aontas award.

This official recognition highlights the importance to rural communities of this type of restorative justice.

"If you get banned from the road in rural Ireland your life is over," said Gary, "There is little public transport, young people with no license are almost forced to leave."

According to socialentrepreneurs.ie the current national average re-offending rate among drivers is one-in-three, but for graduates of the pro-social driving course that figure is cut to an almost unbelievable 1-in-100.

Expansion to other counties is in the pipeline, as Gary continues to talk to judges.

Most people are nervous when meeting judges but not Gary.



*The Pro-Social Drivers Programme takes a person-centred approach and covers four modules: (1) social responsibility, (2) emotional control, (3) driving under the influence, and (4) the consequences of anti-social driving (which includes an element of restorative justice).*

## New Community Education 'Campus' opens in Limerick



St Leila's Age Friendly Community Education Campus in Kileely, Limerick, opened in October. It aims to promote a positive approach to age-friendly education and hopes to expand into education for early school leavers, merging youth and elderly educational services. Among those pictured here at the official opening are Jan O'Sullivan, TD, Clodagh McDonnell from the Department of Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government, Cllr Michael Hourigan, Mayor of the Metropolitan District of Limerick, and Linda Ledger and Brenda Gardiner from St Munchin's Community Centre.

# TOP TIPS

## BRANDING TIPS OF RELEVANCE TO COMMUNITY ORGANISATIONS & SOCIAL ENTERPRISES

# COMMUNITY BRANDS



The pressure is on community groups to engage more and more in branding, marketing and generally raising awareness about their existence and interacting with their target community, especially online.

The following branding tips were given by Gillian Horan to a hall full of community workers and small business entrepreneurs:

**1. Look at your reputation, your values and who you are and what you're about.**

2. If you build a brand – your brand is your reputation. A logo can be developed overnight, but a brand is built over time.

**3. Without a doubt, have a very clear understanding of your business and what makes you different from your competitors. Having a good name and a nice design is important, but having clarity is the biggest thing.**

4. Instead of being bland and blending in, make sure you're standing out.

**5. Do market research... get out there, not just when you're starting your business, but regularly. You need to make decisions about new products and new target audiences. Everything keeps changing and Information is power. It's very important to constantly do market research.**

6. Digital marketing is very trendy and it's really important you're online.

**7. But don't forget offline. People like to speak to people. They pick up phones, call to your premises, they meet you in person.**

8. Watch because sometimes you can tweet and you can be online ... but there's one personality online and another one that people see in real life. You need to have a consistent brand and don't forget the human side.

**9. If you're starting to hire people, it's your**

**responsibility to let them understand what your brand is. So, you have to understand what your brand is. If you don't understand it, how do your staff know either. So, it's back again to having clarity about your brand.**

10. And they're your brand advocates – your customers, suppliers, partners, the guy who delivers something to your office, everyone you interact with. Marketing and branding is no longer about just the customers. It's about all the relationships you have.

### GILLIAN HORAN'S STORY

Gillian is a self-proclaimed "brand fanatic", a brand consultant with over 12 years' experience and a lecturer, trainer and author on the subject.

Ten years ago, she came up with a framework for building brands for small companies.

Oddly enough, she was stuck for a name for her own company. Eventually, she came up with a name that everyone thought was iffy: The Pudding Brand.

Everyone gets it once she asks them where the proof is.

"It's too easy to blend in... Sometimes we have our own vision, but it's only when you put it together that it makes sense to everyone else," she said.

As the force behind a business now employing six people full-time, with offices in Dublin and Limerick, and national and international clients, she recalled help she got along the way.

Gillian credited all three local development companies in the region with lending her invaluable support when she started up her new business two years ago.

"I never excelled at school, but I was creative," she added.

**Gillian Horan was the guest speaker at an enterprise awards event organised by local development companies in the Mid-West last year.**



### CASHEL AIMS TO BE 1ST

Sweden's recycling is so effective that the country has to import rubbish from abroad to keep its recycling plants going.

In time, we may look back and recognise Cashel for setting the example in Ireland.

The Tipperary town is soon to become this country's first 'Towards Zero Waste' community, with interviews planned for this January to choose a project manager to lead the community in an 18-month pilot.

In Cashel, they've already begun to recycle bicycles, clothes and children are learning to turn 'waste' into art.

The project is being supported by Voice Ireland which is working with the Environmental Protection Agency and the Southern Region Waste Management Office to ensure the pilot is successful.

For more about the thinking behind zero waste, see page 13.



### CAPTION WINNER



*Congratulations to Phil O'Rourke from Wicklow who won the caption competition. It was a close run affair. In second place was Bernie Kiely-Prendergast from Dungarvan. For their cheekiness, both will receive prizes. We believe the two Ministers have a good sense of humour! - Ed.*



# Supporting National Organisations

## 70 groups share €16m over 3 years

**L**ast year, Simon Coveney, Minister for Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government, announced funding of €16.409m over 2017-2019 for 70 national community and voluntary organisations.

The overall aim of SSNO is to provide multi-annual funding towards the core costs of national organisations in the community and voluntary sector to assist them to operate and fund core staff positions. The following are the allocations under the Scheme to Support National Organisations:



Amen is receiving €181,000 through the SSNO programme. The project supports male victims of domestic violence and it won top prize in the Community Group section at the 'People of the Year Awards' run by Rehab, last year.

Organisation	Allocation over 3 year period
National Youth Council of Ireland	€253,122
Children's Rights Alliance	€269,844
Children In Hospital Ireland	€269,952
Care Alliance Ireland	€253,036
Irish National Organisation of the Unemployed	€268,500
National Women's Council of Ireland	€270,000
Migrant Information Centre	€267,926
Age Action Ireland	€216,265
Free Legal Advice Centres	€270,000
Carmichael Centre for Voluntary Groups	€266,126
Irish Penal Reform Trust	€268,874
Rotha Teoranta	€269,768
Cherish Limited	€270,000
Disability Equality Specialist Support Agency	€270,000
Community Workers	€269,648
Rape Crisis Network Ireland (RCNI)	€269,960
Parents Plus	€179,609
Irish Rural Link Co-Operative Society	€267,058
Irish Refugee Council	€268,752
European Anti-Poverty Network Ireland	€260,503
The Men's Development Network	€264,784
European Network Against Racism Ireland	€225,780



National Network of Women's Refuges & Support Services	€266,528
Arthritis Ireland	€184,502
Simon Communities of Ireland	€269,602
Mental Health Reform	€269,085
Irish Deaf Society/The National Association of the Deaf	€269,700
Inclusion Ireland / Nat. Assoc. For People With an Intellectual Disability	€270,000
Active Retirement Network Ireland	€262,951
G.L.E.N.	€265,788
Focus Ireland	€174,358
Nat. Assoc. for Spina Bifida & Hydrocephalus	€204,806
Disability Federation of Ireland	€232,338
Special Olympics Ireland	€270,000
Irish Foster Care Association	€166,213
Down Syndrome Ireland	€260,124
Immigrant Council of Ireland	€250,358
The Neurological Alliance of Ireland	€269,402
Volunteering Ireland	€210,354
Women's Aid Ireland	€239,584
Social Analysis and Action for Justice Ireland	€269,870
Breaking Through	€214,440
Dyslexia Association of Ireland	€204,970
Family Carers Ireland	€270,000
Barnardos - Republic of Ireland	€261,818
Chronic Pain Ireland	€110,635
Community Action Network	€266,224
Asthma Society of Ireland	€208,028
Anam Cara Parental and Sibling Bereavement Support	€269,920
Irish Senior Citizens National Parliament	€265,066
New Communities Partnership	€194,186
Irish Association for Palliative Care	€150,428
Belong To Youth Services	€269,990



Photo courtesy of the European Anti-Poverty Network Ireland which receives €260,503.

M.O.V.E. Ireland	€236,500
Grow in Ireland	€153,576
Irish Council For Social Housing	€84,445
Amen Support Services	€181,707
Migraine Association of Ireland	€102,996
Medical Research Charities	€242,344
Autism Spectrum Information Advice And Meeting Point	€200,707
Educate Together Ag Foghlaim le Cheile	€268,994
Community Creations	€172,500
The Irish Hospice Foundation	€265,926
Co-operative Housing Ireland Society	€219,426
The Multiple Sclerosis Society of Ireland	€270,000
Spinal Injuries Ireland	€265,800
Irish Athletic Boxing Association	€172,514
Irish Environmental Conservation Organisation for Youth-Unesco Clubs	€210,894
Irish Stammering Association	€118,010
The Irish Local Development Network	€262,000

