

# CHANGING IRELAND

Issue 57 - COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT - COLLECTIVE ACTION - EMPOWERMENT - SOCIAL INCLUSION - [www.changingireland.ie](http://www.changingireland.ie)

## AT LONG LAST!

State recognises the unique ethnicity of 36,000 people  
and many centuries of history & heritage



While an apology would have been  
welcome:

## Policy of assimilating Travellers must now come to a halt



Elevations, Celebrations & Kumi Naidoo... Sligo Angels, Volunteering & Vietnam... Kilorglin to Pakistan...



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# LGBT PEOPLE AT WORK

## Discrimination:

In the workplace can happen when your employer, workmate, or a company you are applying to, treat you less favourably than another person, because of who you are.

## Types Of Discrimination

### DIRECT DISCRIMINATION

Is when someone is treated less well than other people, because of who they are. It is also direct discrimination if a manager tells a worker to treat another worker less well than other people.

**EXAMPLE**  
John applied for a training post as a nursing assistant but was unsuccessful. When he asked why his manager said it was due to concerns that, as he was openly bisexual, elderly male residents would be uncomfortable with him carrying out the personal care duties the role required.

### INDIRECT DISCRIMINATION

Is when someone is treated less well than other people because there are requirements which they would find harder than others to fulfil.

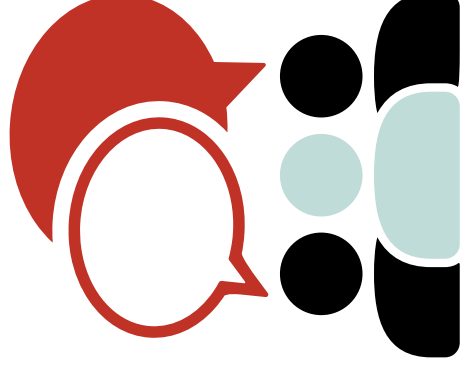
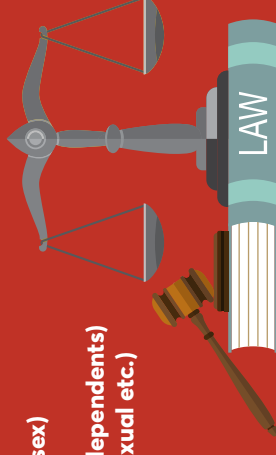
Rachel works in a call center which offers 24 hour customer

The laws which deal with discrimination in the workplace are the

## EMPLOYMENT EQUALITY ACTS 1998-2015

The EEA outlaw certain kinds of discrimination under 9 grounds:

1. Gender (woman, man, transgender or intersex)
2. Civil status (married, single, divorced etc)
3. Family status (whether you have children/dependents)
4. Sexuality (Lesbian, Gay, Heterosexual, Bisexual etc.)
5. Religion
6. Age
7. Race (nationality, ethnicity, skin colour)
8. Traveller community
9. Disability



When people don't feel comfortable disclosing their sexual orientation or talking about their personal life it can make it harder to bond

# 177,000

## LGBT PEOPLE AT WORK IN IRELAND

**Sexual orientation and gender identity based discrimination occurs in many workplaces.**

Research shows that discrimination has negative impacts on LGBT employees in terms of:

- physical health
- emotional health



## 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,  
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Department of Housing, Planning,  
Community and Local Government

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“Perfect for your canteen  
or staff room”

# FREE GLOSSY PULL-OUT POSTER!

“The referendum didn't magically change the world,” says Siobhan O'Dowd, experienced activist and community worker.

She chairs Cork City's LGBT Interagency Group and, this year, the group came up with a well thought-out poster that could be used in any place of employment.

Her committee was aware of “snide jokes” being made in the workplace, behind the backs of LGBT people.

“So, we thought, wouldn't it be useful to have something on display in canteens and staff-rooms to say that wasn't on.

“Two people designed 'LGBT People At Work', then we passed it onto a local solicitor to proof it, so it's legally sound,” she said.

“Challenging homophobia is not really the job of our group alone; It's also the job of the city, its agencies and communities.

“It was probably the first time our group

linked with the business community. We engaged with the employers' group, IBEC, and the local chamber of commerce and they were really supportive.

“The referendum didn't magically change the world.”

“If someone has to hide what they did over the weekend, it impacts on their work and employers are conscious of that and of people's mental health. They know there is a cost to not embracing diversity,” she said.

Her group also linked up with Traveller organisations to join in Traveller Pride Week.

The interagency join-up came through a seminar on what makes interagency work so powerful, organised by the Cork Equal and Sustainable Communities Alliance.

“There is a long tradition here of LGBT and



**Launch Night:** Kate Moynihan of the LINC project, Justin Cronin of Coolgrey Design and Siobhan O'Dowd of Ballyphehane/ Togher Community Development Project.

Traveller organisations working together,” she said.

“Our focus was to show there are links across communities and that identities are not always, even often, singular,” said Siobhan.

One of the other events they organised was a screening of a short film called 'Breathe'.

“It's about a Traveller man worried about his son's femininity and the father wants to toughen up his son through boxing. It's strong, forceful and harsh, but the end is beautiful,” said Siobhan.

We republish the poster here, in the hope readers will tear it out for display in their workplace (after reading the magazine).

**For more information, email: [siobhan@btcdp.ie](mailto:siobhan@btcdp.ie)**

**Note from Ed (Corkonian):** If you absolutely have to (eg if from Kilkenny or Tipperary) you can replace the 'Cork' label with your own!

## NOT BEFORE TIME: Nomads preceeded settlers



Travellers and rights activists are still celebrating after the State formally recognised Traveller ethnicity in March.

It wasn't before time. As a Traveller in a halting site in Limerick points out to us, nomadic lifestyles are the norm worldwide. In historic terms, Travellers have also been here for much longer than has the State.

Recognition is a 360 degree turnaround from past policies of assimilation. Most of us have heard about how Aboriginal people were forced by the Australian state

to assimilate, with children taken from their families as part of that failed approach. Decades later, the Australian government apologised.

But, credit where credit is due. With the formal recognition of Travellers' ethnicity, pressure can now be placed on local authorities, government agencies and public representatives to make a fresh start.

Meanwhile, it was super to see a university present an award to one Traveller for her activism. The same person featured on these pages in the past for challenging racism. Well done to the university for seeing the value in activism and to the recipient of the award Brigid Quilligan.

### \*\*\* NOT 9-5 WORK \*\*\*

For years, South African-born activist, Kumi Naidoo, has been saying the world needs more people like Brigid, to engage in civil disobedience. A global activist on climate change and income inequality, Kumi was speaking at a recent Dochas conference. He said you cannot fight poverty from "9-to-5", that it has to be "24/7" and you must be willing to say unpopular things. Listening to him is an antidote to Trump's tweets.

### \*\*\* HIGHER OFFICE \*\*\*

The two ministers most recently closely associated with supporting communities and people in poverty have assumed higher office. May An Taoiseach, Leo Varadkar, and foreign affairs and Brexit minister, Simon Coveney, continue to work hardest for those on the margins.

### \*\*\* RING GOOD FOR COMMUNITIES \*\*\*

With the changeover, it was encouraging to see the term 'Community' rise in stature. Our new Taoiseach is reconfiguring government departments so that 'Community' and 'Rural' functions are brought together under the one roof, as before. Many will welcome that move.

Minister Michael Ring will bring great enthusiasm to his work on behalf of people living in disadvantaged communities, both rural and urban. So long as the Covies (see page opp.) get no more and no less than their due!

Minister Ring's appointment has been a long time coming - I accompanied him and his entourage to the Dáil for his first day at work after he won a by-election in 1994. It was a great day out, not least because the Mayo man had shocked Dublin pundits, although I'll not forget being refused entry to the press gallery until I found a tie.

However, Westport in 1994 wouldn't have been the best place for Travellers to go to celebrate. On that, I could write at length.

Today, we live in a better society, one that aims to provide disadvantaged communities with increased levels of support so that no individual is held back by where they come from. Whether urban, rural or from a suburban housing estate such as Moyross. We watch with interest to see what 'SICAP 2' (see inside) will bring. For now, it sounds like a B-movie, but sometimes they're the best.

*Allen Meagher*

PS

Good luck to whoever gets to volunteer in Uganda (see page 6 for details).

## FILE A REPORT FOR US!

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



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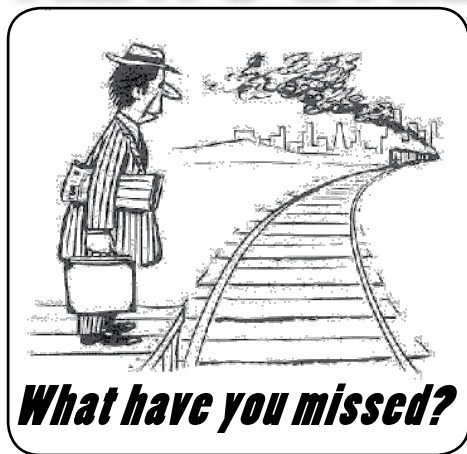
'Changing Ireland' thanks everyone involved in the production of Issue 57.

## 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.

**MADE IN MOYROSS  
LIMERICK**





## FREE CHILDCARE FOR HOMELESS

**€8M scheme offers 25 hrs per week; More local authorities sign up**

An €8m scheme that offers free childcare to homeless families is being extended to nine areas beyond Dublin.

In April, just over 50 children in emergency accommodation were availing of the scheme, but Councils in Clare, Cork City, Cavan, Donegal, Kildare, Kilkenny, Leitrim, Offaly and Wicklow have since come on board.

Under the scheme, children aged under-five can receive 25 hours childcare per week and the support is available 50 weeks of the year. Each child must also be fed one meal per day by the childcare provider.

Calling on all local authorities to support the scheme, Dr Katherine Zappone, Minister for Children and Youth Affairs, said:

"Expensive childcare is stopping parents from taking up jobs, training and education opportunities. This scheme is aimed at lifting that barrier for those families in greatest need."

W: <http://bit.ly/ChildcareHomeless>

## ASYLUM-SEEKER GAINS RIGHT TO WORK

**"Significant development"**

The Supreme Court has found that the ban on asylum-seekers looking for work is "in principle" unconstitutional.

The ban was appealed by a Burmese man who lived in Direct Provision for eight years, prior to being granted refugee status.

He had been offered work in his direct provision centre in 2013, but could not take up on the offer due to the ban on seeking work.

Leonie Kerins, CEO of Doras Luimní, which supports migrants, described the ruling as "a significant development".

"We hope to see swift progress in the coming months, to bring Ireland in line with the rest of the EU," she said.

While the Court ruled in the applicant's favour, it adjourned the matter for six months to allow the legislature to consider the matter.

## €1M TO THINK-TANK TASC

**While Equality & Rights Alliance shuts**

The think-tank TASC earlier this year secured a €1 million grant from Chuck Feeney's Atlantic Philanthropies, to continue focusing on economic inequality in Ireland and the EU. AP has provided over €4m to Tasc since 2008.

Meanwhile, the Equality and Rights Alliance (ERA), formed during the "dark days of 2008", is to "pause" operations as funding has dried up for its work.

ERA will hold a "special seminar" on June 30th in Liberty Hall, Dublin, to look at how best to develop Ireland's human rights infrastructure. This event will be its final event under current funding arrangements.

W: [www.tasc.ie](http://www.tasc.ie)

W: [www.ericampaign.org](http://www.ericampaign.org)

## MICHAEL RING IS COMMUNITIES & RURAL MINISTER

**Covey\* first elected in 1994**



An Taoiseach, Leo Varadkar, has appointed Michael Ring as Minister for Community and Rural Affairs, in a move that sees the functions of two government departments come under the one roof, as before.

Minister Ring (above) from Westport, Co. Mayo, most recently served as Minister of State for Regional Economic Development.

With the reconfiguration of Departments, Heather Humphreys is now Minister for Arts, Heritage and Culture.

Former Minister for Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government, Simon Coveney, has been appointed to foreign affairs.

Meanwhile, with Mr Varadkar's elevation to Taoiseach, the new Minister for Social Protection is Regina Doherty.

\*A "Covey" is someone from Westport.

## €250M LEADER FUNDS DELAY

**Minister "anticipates" increase in funding approvals shortly**

Three years into funding under LEADER 2014-2020, less than half a million euro has been pledged to projects intended to benefit communities.

Concerns have been expressed across the political sphere, while interest in the €250m fund (including EU co-financing) remains strong, with almost 4,000 expressions of interest recorded.

Niall Collins (FF) said it was "almost inconceivable" so little had been spent so far.

Donegal TD, Charlie McConalogue (FF) called for an "overhaul" of the delivery structure, while Mayo Senator Michelle Mulherin (FG) criticised the amount of red tape.

Liadh Ni Riada, MEP (SF) lamented the loss of delivery by "community-led local development companies" saying the process had become "needlessly complicated".

In March, Minister Heather Humphreys, said 3,953 expressions of interest had been received nationally, but only 15 projects had been approved. She anticipated "a significant increase" in approvals over "coming months."

LEADER funds support economic development, job creation, social inclusion, and the environment, in rural areas.



What happens in communities when we invest in the arts? Speakers at the 'Place Matters' conference watch a video on screens in front of them - shown overhead for attendees - of a local theatrical production. Over 280 people attended the first national conference under the auspices of the new Arts Council / Local Government agreement, 'A Framework for Collaboration'.

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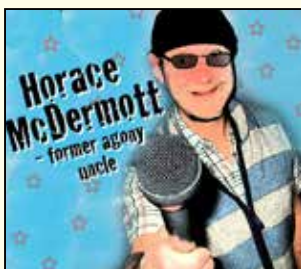
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## Horace's Diary

### THE FUTURE IS ORANGE!



I know, I work tirelessly on behalf of others - I have recently returned from a holiday in Machu Picchu, paid for by my darts-team, to raise awareness for the blind. It felt good to have a holiday on behalf of people who would obviously be a liability along the trail.

I extend the same support to my Traveller friends, who, after a long campaign for freedom from people like me, who have nothing to do with anything, finally had their ethnicity recognised. As one high-profile Traveller said after being refused entry to the Dail where it all took place, "Jaysus, buff, you even did

the celebrating for us."

As I deserved a treat. I decided to paint the outside of my house in this season's must-have colour. It was hard to choose from Dulux's new 'oppressive' collection of vomit-inspiring shades which includes 'Presidential Apricot', 'Paisley Carrot' and 'Atomic Tangerine'. The future is bright - the future is Orange.

Fine Gael already have a solution to challenge the work ethic of our neighbours. Thousands of social welfare recipients are being "Work- Activated". I presume from the strange terminology that nano-chips have been implanted in their heads, presumably while they slept late again, ready to be turned on as soon as Leo declares the latest boom officially underway.

Already underway is the social enterprise awards season. First up was the Community Of Coastal Kelp Salesmen (acronym deleted - Ed). The annual event, held in Portlaoise, celebrates the

achievements of seaweed gatherers, who struggle to collect the coast's most plentiful bounty, before packing it in nylon net bags, then selling it for the same price as weed in pharmacies and health stores beside the beaches they gathered it from.

"This is a vital step in reducing the poverty of busy tourist hotspots in an ecologically sound way," said the Minister for Turf and Trade as she tossed away the packaging which then became the death noose for a passing petrel.

#### 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.

## VSO Ireland needs Community Development Specialists

Do you have experience working for community organisations in Ireland and want to use your skills overseas? If so, VSO Ireland wants to hear from you!



We are urgently seeking qualified Community Development Specialists to volunteer on a new inclusive education programme in Karamoja, one of the poorest and least developed regions in Uganda. These volunteers will help to ensure local communities have a voice in decisions affecting education services, particularly in relation to girls' education.

#### A typical working week might include:

- Facilitating community consultations so more local people can voice their views on inclusive education
- Implementing and monitoring an agreed community development operational plan
- Ensuring community mobilisation and education promotion is conducted at sub-country and school level
- Planning and organising outreach support services to girls and boys in the community

These roles are ideal if you have a degree in social sciences, social work, community development, gender or special education and at least five years' experience in the sector. The successful applicants will receive pre-departure and in-country training to ensure they develop the soft skills required to thrive in their new working environment. Costs, including flights and accommodation, are covered and a monthly volunteer allowance is also provided.

As a community development expert, you can help more marginalised children, like these schoolgirls at Kasimeri Primary School in Uganda, get the education they need.



Interested in hearing more or making an application?  
Please email [volunteer@vso.ie](mailto:volunteer@vso.ie) or call 01 640 1073 now!

@VSOIreland





# CAMPAIGNS / HUMAN RIGHTS

## AT LAST!

*- Travellers celebrate after long wait*

BY SABA FATIMA

It could well be the social inclusion highlight of 2017.

Community workers and activists were celebrating in March after the State formally recognised Irish Travellers as an ethnic minority.

At grassroots level, Breda O'Donoghue, Chair of the Traveller Visibility Group in Cork, said, "I'm sad that it took so long," yet she was "hopeful that it will have a good impact on Travellers health."

Bernard Joyce, director of the Irish Traveller Movement, captured the historic nature of the occasion, "I wasn't sure it would ever happen in my lifetime."

"This is a new chapter in our history," he said. "We now need to make this count for every Traveller living on this island and build and strengthen our movement, to ensure that we meet the challenge for tomorrow and make equality real."

Speaking outside the Dail - there was not room for everyone inside - he applauded "our brother and sister organisations, Pavee Point, National Traveller Women's Forum, Mincéir Whiden (Cant for 'Travellers Talking')." "

Many campaigners travelled to the capital for the announcement, coming from Cork, Waterford, Carlow, Limerick, Dundalk, across Dublin and elsewhere.

Pavee Point director Martin Collins said the announcement brought joy to all those community organisations who have been working hard on issues facing Travellers for generations.

"This announcement shines a light on Traveller's rich distinct history and culture and sends out a message of respect and inclusion," he said. "It also lays to rest notions that Travellers are a primitive, dysfunctional, failed settled people who originated from the famine and who just need to be normalized and civilized by the State."

Tehmina Kazi, spokesperson for CESCA, an umbrella group for equality and human rights organisations in Cork, said, "There are many reasons why this recognition is such a positive development: it acknowledges the uniqueness of Irish Traveller culture, and the valuable contributions Travellers have made to Irish society."

"Acknowledging the dual identity of Irish Travellers - with positive references to their culture - will make them feel respected and included, a part of Irish society, rather than apart from it," she said.



An Taoiseach, Enda Kenny, made the announcement (see below) saying the recognition should ensure Travellers have a "better future with less negativity, exclusion and marginalization".

### ENDA KENNY - WHAT HE SAID AS TAOISEACH IN RECOGNISING TRAVELLERS



On March 1st, An Taoiseach, Enda Kenny, said: "I wish to now formally recognise Travellers as a distinct ethnic group within the Irish nation."

While he accepted that the recognition of Travellers "will create no new individual, constitutional or financial rights", he believed it could have "a transformative effect" and would boost Travellers' self-esteem and pride.

"Our Traveller Community is an integral part of our society for over a millennium, with their own distinct identity - a people within our people," he acknowledged.

Outside the Dail, there was an outpouring of joy as many hundreds of people gathered where oft times before people stood to protest at the inhumane treatment by the State of Travellers.

In his speech, An Taoiseach paid tribute to those who campaigned for recognition, including Pavee Point, the Irish Traveller Movement, the National Traveller Women's Forum and Mincéir Whiden.

He was "deeply moved" as members of these groups told him their stories and spoke of their hopes and dreams for their children.

"No one should have to hide their religion, their sexual orientation, their race or culture to be respected or even accepted in society," he said. He described the recognition as "a symbolic and positive step in acknowledging the uniqueness of Traveller identity."

Read his full speech here: <http://www.paveepoint.ie/taoiseachs-statement-on-traveller-ethnicity/>

# CAMPAIGNS / HUMAN RIGHTS

“Keep up the fight. Nothing comes easy”,  
- say veteran Traveller rights activists



*Honoured by UCC for her activism: Brigid Quilligan, manager of Kerry Traveller Health Community Development Project, received an honorary doctorate in June. She thanked the college, saying, “Activism has almost become a dirty word. But without activism, you get no change.”. She used the occasion to call for the restoration of funding to support Travellers in education, which was cut during the years of austerity.*

## SIGNS OF PROGRESS SINCE MARCH

*- Though some suspect recognition was forced and an apology is overdue*

BY BEN PANTER

**“It is an historic day for our Travellers and a proud day for Ireland,” said then Taoiseach, Enda Kenny, on March 1st, as Ireland as a sovereign state finally recognised Travellers’ distinct ethnicity.\***

At the end of Mr Kenny’s speech, activist and recent Seanad candidate, Bernard Sweeney, shouted from the public gallery: “Taoiseach, offer an apology on behalf of the State to the Travellers.”

The fight had been a long one.

Forced evictions had been underway since the late 1940s. Initial resistance came from an unlikely source, English journalist, Gratton Puxon. Fleeing from military conscription, he arrived in Dublin in 1960 and - struck by the plight of the community - he began organising protests and eviction resistance until he left the country in 1964.

More than half a century later, he told ‘Changing Ireland’: “This new status should help us win respect and end discrimination.”

Nonetheless, he warned that the struggle was not over: “We’ll need to keep up the fight all the way, as nothing comes easy.”

These sentiments were echoed by Traveller spokespeople across the country.

Three months after the recognition, co-director of Pavee Point, Martin Collins said: “The recognition of Traveller ethnicity by the State has great symbolic significance.”

“It is not a solution to all the problems that Travellers face in accommodation, education, health and employment, but we can now

challenge the process of assimilation,” he said.

Well known comedian, Martin ‘Beanz’ Warde, keen to point out that he was not speaking on behalf of any organisation said:

“While there will be a noticeable difference in regards to legally being recognised as a distinct ethnicity, I would think that change, for the most part, will be seen in policy making and governmental strategies.

“The recognition will be merely a stepping stone for the next generation.”

Bernard Sweeney was cynical of Government motivations: “Recognition of our rights was forced on the State by the EU Commission of Human Rights, it was not out of kindness.”

Clearly, now is not the time to rest and Martin Collins was keen to point out some early, developments: “We are continuing to lobby the Department of Justice in relation to the National Traveller and Roma Inclusion Strategy, which is due for publication shortly. Also, the Government has agreed just recently to review the 1998 Traveller Accommodation Act to see what improvements can be made.”

Despite this progress, there was a nervousness about how any increased funding for the community could be spent.”

Martin Warde said: “Unfortunately, what I believe will happen, is that more non-Travellers with third-level education will seek funding to research my community.”

“I am heavily invested in the LGBT side.

More mainstream Traveller and LGBT organisations will inevitably draw down funding

### Our Take on Legislation Since 1963:

- 1963 - The solution is assimilation of Travellers, say leaders from the settled community.
- 1983 - Yes, they must integrate.
- 1988 - Hold on! How about letting them live in caravans after all.
- 1991 - Don’t incite hatred against Travellers.
- 1992 & ‘93 - Local authorities can move Travellers on and Gardai can take their caravans.
- 1995 - Traveller children should fully participate in school life and Traveller culture must be respected.
- 1995 The good news first: An important report acknowledges the distinct culture and identity of the Traveller community. And the bad: The days of casual street trading are over (unless you’ve a license).
- 1997 - No horse, unless you’ve a license (they’re impossible to get).
- 1998 - Local authorities told to accommodate Travellers. Most don’t.
- 1999 - Discrimination in the workplace is now illegal. Also, an Equality Authority is set up and proves very effective. Later, its funding is halved, its powers are diluted and eventually it disappears.
- 2000 - Discrimination by service providers (shops, etc) made illegal.
- 2002 - The Housing (Misc. Provisions) Act is introduced and immediately places over a thousand families on the wrong side of the law. Travellers get criminal records and have caravans impounded. This law ended much Traveller nomadism.

***The above interpretation is derived from information on this website where more detail is provided: <http://bit.ly/SuasAgusSios>***

on our behalf, the issue there will be a larger pool of European funding.”

Bernard agreed: “Travellers are more than intelligent enough to run our own Traveller Movement, but unfortunately we seem to be lacking something or another. It’s like a secondary oppression only experienced by Travellers, who are working under the influence of settled people running the movement.”

It is obviously too early to tell how Travellers will benefit in daily terms, but Martin Collins explained how good-will towards the community had been high since the announcement: “We received messages of support from all around the world and from lots of different sectors.”

“There has been a growing awareness of the issues that face Irish Travellers and a deepening understanding of what ethnicity is and what equality means,” he said.

The cause has come along way but the message is clear, there is a long road ahead.

**\* Read more from the formal statement marking the occasion on the previous page.**



# STATE RECOGNITION THE VIEW FROM CLONLONG

BY ALLEN MEAGHER

I went to Clonlong (temporary) halting site near Southill, Limerick, to speak to ordinary Travellers about what the State's recognition meant to them.

An advocacy worker with a national Traveller organisation lives there, but I went unannounced mid-week to hear what others - not involved directly in campaigning and rights work - thought of then Taoiseach Enda Kenny's move.

Timmy Casey asked why it had taken the State "so long" and pointed out that there are nomadic peoples all over the world, that "Gypsies are Travellers too". He condemned the introduction in 2002 of laws that made living a nomadic lifestyle almost impossible.

His wife, Geraldine, welcomed recognition: "It's good for Travellers in one way, it's recognising who they are. But, even though they've recognised them as an ethnic minority, my honest opinion is there's still nothing being done for Travellers. It's some months ago now since they recognised us."

She spoke of "brutal conditions" for some on their "temporary" halting site, where people go sometimes years "without electricity" or "without flushing toilets".

While her family had those basics, Geraldine said, "It's very cold here in the winter - there's no proper heating."

Clonlong was, like many other sites around the country, supposed to be only temporary, for five years. Some families are there now 10 years awaiting proper accommodation. Increasingly, the preferred option would be standard housing. However, that is partly because people are desperately worried after the tragedy at Carrickmines last year when 10 people died in a fire caused partly by mobile homes and caravans being placed too closely together.

Most people I spoke to in Clonlong would now prefer - feel safer - living in houses.

"This is a fire hazard. Look at how close they are. They're supposed to be 15 metres away from each other," said Timmy. "Four caravans here are too close and if a spark comes from one and lands on the roof of another, it would go up very quickly."

"In the summertime, we'd like to move out for a few weeks, to give the kids a break from home, but they've stopped Travellers from travelling, they took it away from us," he said.

Every year he thought about the 2002 law.

"Not everyone can afford a holiday abroad," he said.

The importance of education came across clearly in conversations with many.

"We've a young lad studying the Leaving Cert - something I never got to do - and I've daughter doing her Junior Cert. Travellers are getting more education these days than they did years ago," said Timmy.

Enda Kenny was well regarded by those we spoke to.

Geraldine and others said, "Kenny was very good to do it."

Timmy said, "He'll be missed bigtime. He brought the country back from the stone age. He'll be well regarded by all, not just by Travellers."

However, former politician, Mary McAleese, in her role as president, is remembered with bitterness as the person who signed into law the ban on Travellers travelling (since 2002, caravans on the roadside can be impounded).



*"This is a fire hazard. Look at how close they are," said a resident pointing to caravans in the bays at Clonlong (temporary) Halting Site. Residents are mindful of the tragedy at Carrickmines last year when ten people died.*

"Wasn't it she who signed her autograph to stop the Travellers from moving around. She shouldn't have done it," said Michael Casey.

A father and his two young children approached. He was a boxer and he was rightly suspicious of saying anything much to a journalist. I had received a black eye myself only a week earlier - from gardening. He sussed me out, asking did I know of a field near me that he could rent to keep a horse.

His main long-term interest was in ensuring his

**"Kenny will be well regarded by all, not just by Travellers"**

children got a proper education.

Asked about the State's recognition, he said only that his family "had a bit of a chat about it".

A teenager shrugged and kept going when asked about recognition, but most people wanted to talk.

Clonlong halting site today is a credit to the occupants. While they await long-term accommodation, they keep their homes spic and span and the yards are spotless. Horses are well groomed and the few dogs about were friendly. I nearly stepped on a puppy.

From listening to community workers over the years and from chatting to Travellers in Clonlong, a number of facts - or trends - are clear:

Travellers remain proud, yet well aware of the discrimination they continue to face for example in going to pubs, even as couples.

Travellers may have partly integrated by choice into mainstream society, but part of the 'integration' was forced.

Travellers' nomadic lifestyle and culture has been squeezed tight. At the same time, the nomadic lifestyle has lost some of its allure, with some recalling life on the road as being "too hard".

Clonlong residents highly value education and are determined that their children receive a full education, including third level.

Many would now be more than satisfied - even relieved - to live in a house, rather than a caravan.

"Who wouldn't say no to a five-bedroom house?" asked one mother, pointing out that when children become teenagers, there's not much room left for everyone to live together in a caravan.

The scarcity of appropriate accommodation is a huge issue for Travellers nationwide. Shamefully, some people continue to go without access to electricity or running water.

State recognition is but a big stepping stone across a wide stream.



*Above: Some of our front covers since 2001 concerning Travellers, including one (the Obama cover) that led with a report about early days in the campaign for State recognition.*



# INTERNATIONAL

## Vietnam's 'Super Leader' on tour

- Winner of top reality TV competition calls for replica here



**Above:** Vu and camera operator/journalist Pham Thunga from Vietnam visit St. Munchin's Community Centre.



**Top right:** The show's finale. **Btm right:** Vu speaking

The winner of a wildly popular Vietnamese reality television show toured Ireland for a fortnight, in May, viewing community projects and 3rd level institutions here as part of his prize.

Nguyen Le Huy Vu spent a week with community projects in Ballymun supported by Global Action Ireland. He also visited third level education establishments in Dublin and Limerick and at least one community project in the mid-west.

During his visit, Vu called on television producers here to replicate Vietnam's 'Super Leader' programme in Ireland.

"You should have 'Super Leaders' here to encourage the young people," he said.

It is one of the most popular programmes on Vietnam's TV6 and the finale is broadcast at prime-time on New Year's Eve, on a dedicated channel for young people.

The reality show aims to train youths and students to become community leaders, to solve social problems in their communities.

The series is broadcast in weekly 45-minute episodes over six months, showcasing the best of voluntary and community work.

About 30 online and printed newspapers

follow the competition.

Vu emerged the winner - against stiff competition - after organising a massive clean-up of polluted lakes near Hanoi.

Since the programme is sponsored by Irish Aid, there are strong connections between the two countries if any production company wishes to take up Vu's challenge.

"The show is so popular, because it encourages people to think outside the box and it gets young people to think more about their communities," Vu told 'Changing Ireland', while on a tour with Linda Ledger, manager of St. Munchin's Community Centre in Limerick.

Linda - immensely proud of her own community - believes her centre is a model that the rest of the country could and should emulate. Soon, viewers in Vietnam will be also able to say if the centre impresses, because a Channel 6 TV journalist, Pham Thunga, accompanied Vu throughout his trip around Ireland, filming as he toured.

Vu said that, in Vietnam, parents oblige their children to watch the 'Super Leader' programme and push them to take responsibility for their communities.

Clearly, Ireland has lessons to learn from

Vietnam.

Meanwhile, the television crew's recording of his visit to Ireland is expected to promote awareness of this country's achievements in the fields of community development and third-level education.

- Allen Meagher

## Vu's project

While in Ireland, Vu presented his project to many groups, explaining how his team cleans lakes in Hanoi (Hà Nội) by using environmentally friendly Redoxy 3C imported from Germany and by reducing pollutants entering the lakes.

According to recent news report, most of the 117 ponds and lakes in the city are contaminated, though Redoxy 3C helps greatly.

As well as leading his team of environmental volunteers, Vu is also the President of the Students in Social Enterprise group at his university in Ho Chi Minh City. He is now a national role model.



## CONTRIBUTOR / INTERN SABA FATIMA

Our sincere thanks to international student, Saba Fatima, who was on placement with 'Changing Ireland' from her Social and Community Studies degree course at the Limerick Institute of Technology (LIT). Saba is pictured here with her lecturer Catherine Corcoran on a site visit to check on her progress.

Saba, from Karachi, Pakistan, helped immensely in preparing the ground for future events. She also contributed articles to this edition.

She proved to be gifted with people, young and old, and we await with interest her next move in the field of community development.

More than 30 million people in Kerala, India, will be given right in March. The UN believes it should be an universal

access to free WiFi after the state declared it a basic human right. Sources: India Today & Positive News.



## TEENAGE ACTIVISTS

# Two top youths target organ donations & homelessness

- Antrim teen wants organ donation brought into schools
- Limerick teen invented sleeping bag for homeless folk

Going since 2006, this year's top All-Ireland Youth Volunteers are Emily Duffy and Lucia Quinny-Mee, sixth year secondary school pupils from Newcastle West, Co. Limerick and Ballycastle, Co. Antrim, respectively.

Emily volunteers with the Mendicity charity and developed the fireproof Duffily bag designed to protect homeless people that is now manufactured by service users of the charity. She also had 75 bags delivered to refugee camps in Calais and Dunkirk.

Meanwhile, Lucia wants to encourage young people to talk to family and friends about organ donation and is campaigning to get organ donation onto the national school curriculum.

Two years ago, she launched the campaign 'Live Loudly Donate Proudly'. Lucia had a liver transplant at the age of eight and has had two more transplants since then.

As part of their prize, Emily and Lucia flew to Washington, USA, in May to meet other youth volunteers from around the world.

The two were among 20 finalists in this year's 'Pramerica Spirit of Community Awards', which recognizes "outstanding acts of volunteer service by second level students".

The deeds do not need to be utterly extraordinary, but must embrace the spirit of volunteerism that binds communities:



Top All-Ireland Youth Volunteers for 2017, Emily Duffy and Lucia Quinny-Mee.

For example, Dylan Nesbitt from Convoy, Co. Donegal, began helping out at the local GAA junior teams' training because he knew the club was short of coaches. <http://bit.ly/2IMkBI5>

In Waterford, Eimear Mansfield was inspired to volunteer after a visit by Jonathan Irwin of the Jack and Jill Foundation to her school. She went on to raise €14,000 for the Foundation

Open to students who volunteer in their community, at school or abroad, the annual awards are supported by teacher bodies, Volunteer Now, Volunteer Ireland, Scouting Ireland and Foróige.

The two top prize-winners, as well as going

to Washington all-expenses paid, received €1,000, a gold medallion and a crystal trophy for their school. Runners-up received €500 and a silver medallion at the gala awards night in Dublin on March 23rd.

Multinational sponsor, Pramerica, which employs over 1,200 people in Ireland, mainly in Co. Donegal, is a division of US-based Prudential Financial.

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



Lucia Quinny-Mee sought a simple way to encourage more people to become organ donors.

## Why the 'Duffily Bag' wins on every level

When she was 15, Emily Duffy decided to create a high-tech sleeping bag for the homeless.

Inspired by a day of "living rough" in Dublin for a charity event, she got bubble wrap, Velcro and metallic tape and came up with the "Duffily Bag".

Emily's invention was soon in use on the streets of Dublin.

Her idea was picked up in January, 2015, when Emily exhibited at the Irish BT Young Scientist and Technology Exhibition.

The Mendicity Institution, a homeless charity in Dublin, spotted the "Duffily Bag" and offered her a deal: They would set up a workshop where 20 homeless people would learn how to make the sleeping bags and get paid for it. Production continues today with the bags costing €50 each, or €40 when bought in bulk.

The bag's design also makes it a suitable candidate for use in disaster relief situations, Emily believes.

FB: [www.facebook.com/Duffilybag/](https://www.facebook.com/Duffilybag/)



The "Duffily Bag" offers a safe alternative to traditional cloth bags, which are flammable, have limited visibility at night and are prone to becoming wet and dirty. Its metallic fireproof bubblewrap provides a waterproof layer for people sleeping on rain-soaked streets. Reflective strips improve visibility, and velcro fastenings mean users can enter and exit the bag easily. Here it is, being tried out by a journalist for one of the many media organisations captivated by Emily's invention.



# No budget - No problem!

## SLIGO IS EUROPEAN VOLUNTEERING CAPITAL 2017

**S**ligo this year is following in the path of Barcelona (2014) Lisbon (2015) and London (2016) by being the European Volunteering Capital, for 2017.

Sligo County Council and Sligo Volunteer Centre made a joint bid and the jewel of the North-West was chosen by an international jury from eight competitors.

"It is an enormous achievement for Sligo to be selected for this designation, to host a European Capital event which has national and international significance," a spokesperson for the bidders said.

The competition - now in its fourth year - aims to promote and develop volunteering at local and regional level and is run by the European Volunteer Centre, based in Brussels.

The uniqueness of Sligo's successful bid was the ability to involve all levels, ages of local society and both urban and rural communities in the year-long celebration. The judges were also impressed by the level of local authority support for volunteer-led events and the calendar of events.

Sligo got the year off to a roaring start with the Spirit of Sligo Gala Celebration Concert, attended by 1,200 people in January. The

occasion saw Sligo County Council welcome European, national and local guests to a civic reception at the Institute of Technology Sligo.

There is a year long, largely volunteer-led calendar of events, rolled out by a steering committee including the council chairperson, officials from the council, staff and management of the volunteer centre, the local Public Participation Network, St. Angela's College, Marian Harkin MEP, Fáilte Ireland, Volunteer Ireland and others as required to work or give advice on planned events.

In March, Minister of State Catherine Byrne chose Sligo to officially launch the €2m Community Facilities Scheme, which is aimed at community groups and organisations, the majority of which involve volunteers.

On May 30th, the National Volunteer Management Conference was hosted by Sligo Institute of Technology.

The designation really is an award 'of the people' and one that recognises that the generosity of spirit of the people of Sligo had a role to play in its success. A factor in receiving the award, was a recognition that Sligo County Council offers strong support to the Community and Voluntary Sector

(highlighted by the jury) and to major events using volunteers such as Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann, Cranmore Regeneration, to mention but two. These helped swing the decision Sligo's way. The fact that Sligo Volunteer Centre, a strong and vibrant contributor to the community, was initiated by Sligo County Council some 10 years ago, was also important.

While volunteers can do almighty things, there are clearly costs associated with the designation, but the award does not come with a budget. Not to be daunted, the Council set aside a small budget while the steering group continues to seek out small and large sponsors.

As they now say, anything Barcelona or London can do well, so too can Sligo!. If not better!

**For more information and to keep up to date on the calendar - to which events are being frequently added - check out: [www.volunteersligo.ie](http://www.volunteersligo.ie) and [www.evcsligo.eu](http://www.evcsligo.eu)  
Twitter: @VolunteerSligo and #EVCapital.  
FB: [sligovolunteercentre](https://www.facebook.com/sligovolunteercentre)**



*That's what you call engagement! The Headstart Expo in Sligo held talks on volunteer journeys, on how to start as a volunteer and had an array of stands. PICS: ©Colin Gillen/framelight.ie*



## SLIGO'S AIMS FOR 2017:

1. Recognise the culture of volunteering and community spirit in Sligo and in Ireland.
2. Create pride among volunteers about the value of their contribution to improving the quality of life in the community and combating social exclusion.
3. Showcase, promote and celebrate volunteerism in the wider community.
4. Explore the development of a Sligo diaspora initiative from the raised profile from winning the designation.
5. Showcasing Sligo, its natural beauty, culture, sport, arts, music, community spirit, enhanced by volunteers.
6. Maximising the economic benefits that can be derived from the designation.







## EVC Award 2017

Sligo holds the European Volunteering Capital Trophy for 2017.  
PIC: Linda Sheridan.



Sligo volunteers annually take a 'dip in the nip' to fundraise for Sligo Hospital Oncology Trust Unit. PIC: Suzanne Collins Photography.



Keep an eye out for Sligo's 'Volunteer Angels' at European Volunteering Capital events in the county throughout the year.



Sligo-Bay RNLI hosts the International Sea Shanty Festival bringing shanty singers from across Europe to Rosses Point and Sligo town from June 16 - 18th.  
W: <http://www.wildatlanticshanty.ie/>

Sligo Tidy Towns volunteers. The widest variety possible of volunteer events take place across the county this year.





# ICE TO BE IN BUSINESS

## AWARDS PRESENTED TO ONE-TIME-JOBLESS, NOW FLAT OUT ENTREPRENEURS



The nine finalists at the Ice Awards: Holly Pereira of Hyper Pictures, Shane Sutton of Teddy Bots, Helen Walsh, health coach, Daniel Cantwell of Ben and Anvil, Siobhan Hargis, Stroll Dublin, Karen Tynan, K-Star Academy, Shane Burke, The Stylish Guy, Melissa Curley, Social Bee and Russell Simmons, The Greedy Pig. **PIC: Orla Murray.**

**T**he second Inner City Enterprise Awards were presented on May 11th by then Minister for Social Protection, Leo Varadkar, in the Jameson Distillery, in Smithfield, in Dublin. The Minister - now An Taoiseach - suggested it could be “a model for other cities to follow”, **REPORTS ALLEN MEAGHER.**

The new annual awards are organised by Inner City Enterprise (ICE), a not-for-profit organisation, set up to advise and assist unemployed people in Dublin’s inner city to set up their own businesses or to create direct self-employment.

The winners were Helen Walsh, Daniel Cantwell and Russell Simmons and they were presented with their awards by Minister Varadkar. In his speech, he drew attention to the fact that 60% of ICE’s clients are still trading after two years in operation and a further 15% have secured full-time employment.

“A 75% success rate in any programme like this is very high. It’s double the kind of results we see in some other programmes,” the Minister said.

He “respected” the self-employed and entrepreneurs, who range from farmers to professionals, traders and small business owners, saying they take an “enormous risk”: “It is difficult to do things that employees find very simple, such as taking annual leave, or a sick day, or a half day for a first communion or a funeral.”

As Minister for Social Protection, he sought to improve their lot, building on supports such as the Back to Work Enterprise Allowance.

“Last March, I extended dental and eye exam benefits to the self-employed. From December, if people who are self-employed are injured or get a long-term illness, they will for the first time be able to apply for an invalidity pension on the same basis as someone who is employed,” he said. People can qualify having paid social insurance contributions and there won’t be a means test.

He thanked ICE’s volunteers, sponsors and the Department of Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government for SICAP funding.



The award for Best Female Entrepreneur went to Helen Walsh who set up Fitness, Wellness and Coaching in 2014. She is pictured here with Melissa Curley of Social Bee and Holly Pereira of Hyper Pictures. **W: www.helenwalsh.ie PIC: Orla Murray.**



Minister Leo Varadkar with Russell Simmons of The Greedy Pig, Sinead Smith of A & L Goodbody Solicitors and Evanne Kilmurray, Inner City Enterprise CEO. The Greedy Pig is a branding and design agency. **W: www.thisgreedypig.com PIC: AM.**

Evanne Kilmurray, Inner City Enterprise CEO, said the awards were to recognise their clients’ efforts, many of whom “have struggled against the odds to get a business established and then keep it up and running”.

She said the winners and the runners-up, nine in all, gave a true reflection of the work of ICE, and also of the determination, creativity and truly positive mindset of the entrepreneurs. They are all winners.”

Since 2011, ICE has registered over 1,811 clients, helping 740 new businesses get up and running and creating approximately 770 new jobs.

ICE provides advice and support, access to a panel of voluntary advisors, specialised training workshops and micro-loan finance.

The not-for-profit aims to help a further 200 new start-ups succeed in 2017. To avail of assistance, you need to either be an inner-city resident or planning to locate a business in the area.

**www.innecityenterprise.com**



Daniel Cantwell and his wife Ailbhe set up Ben & Anvil, a post production studio, in 2015. Daniel looks after the creative work, while Ailbhe covers the admin. **W: www.benandanvil.com PIC: AM.**



## INTRODUCTION

KUMI NAIDOO ASKS:  
“ARE WE FIT FOR PURPOSE?”

BY ALLEN MEAGHER

**A**ctivist Kumi Naidoo from South Africa says we are living through ‘A Perfect Storm’. He says that, over the past decade, there has been “a convergence of multiple crises” compounded by a collapse of trust in governments to serve the public.

Eight years ago, he came to Ireland saying, “It is time to fight back, to regain rights, and not keep your mouth shut about policies.” \*

This was before he became Greenpeace director, managing activists who boldly boarded oil exploration vessels in the arctic and infiltrated Buckingham Palace in London to spread the word on climate change (and spent a spell in prison for their activism).

In the years since Kumi spoke in Dublin in 2009 - when protests by community groups were at their height - the voices of many community workers and civic society leaders trailed off to a whisper, sometimes because their projects went to the wall (programme funds were halved) or because it was probably deemed easier to just say nothing at all rather than speak out. Energy and resources were depleted. There was also the fear of losing funding - it is common among some agencies to include a no-lobbying clause in the funding contracts.

Into the fray in their stead came ordinary unpaid activists, ordinary folk, as Ireland has witnessed a rise in people power.

They have engaged in peaceful protest, direct action and lobbying over homelessness, vulture fund practices in



*Zzzzzzz! NOT! Colm O'Rourke and Eoin O'Liatháin (top left) among others at the conference who shut their eyes to reflect on Kumi Naidoo's call for much more solidarity work.*

buying and selling property, on issues relating to equality and access to healthcare and people have protested over the shambolic way in which water charges were introduced.

Most people who heard Kumi speak in 2009 were civil society leaders and people engaged professionally in civil society work.

This year, on May 12, he was back in

Dublin, to address people involved for years in human rights and development work abroad, at the Dochas conference. His quest was to get people to ask themselves - and their organisations - “Are we fit for purpose?”

He pointed to those who work 9-to-5 in the poverty arena - also called the ‘Poverty Industry’ by critics - who go home to a life of privilege in the evenings. We should all be living what we believe in, 24/7, said Kumi.

Kumi put his hands up and admitted he too was guilty.

He urged the representatives of 240 non-profit organisations present to let development work slide, in preference for engaging in acts of solidarity with the poor. The in-your-face theme of the day was roundly applauded, though how much people and organisations adjust their headsets remains to be seen.

Prodding people further, Kumi's speech was preceded by a poet who recounted how much she missed “home”, causing many present to reflect on the decades they may have spent abroad in development work.

In the following pages, we feature an edited version of the speech Kumi delivered at Croke Park. There wasn't a whisper while he spoke.

**Dochas**, the conference organiser, is the umbrella group for activists, volunteers and NGOs working on human rights, income inequality and climate change issues, mostly abroad. **W:** [www.dochas.ie](http://www.dochas.ie)

\* Our 2009 recording of Kumi's speech at an ‘Enabling Dissent’ seminar is viewable on our website and on Youtube: <http://www.changingireland.ie/multimedia.html>



*Choctaw Native American, Waylon Gary White Deer, speaking at the Doolough Famine Walk in Mayo in 2015. Kumi Naidoo recalled in his speech (pages 16-17) the donation to alleviate hunger made by the Choctaws to the Irish. He said it was a great act of solidarity as the Choctaws experienced great hardships themselves. Pic: D. Speirs*



# KUMI NAIDOO at the DOCHAS CONFERENCE

## QUESTIONS EVEN HE DIDN'T LIKE

- Solidarity work is supreme and anti-poverty work can't be 9-5
- Activist Kumi Naidoo hopeful of riding out 'A Perfect Storm'

BY ALLEN MEAGHER

Planet Earth will be just fine, it doesn't need saving by us, said Kumi Naidoo, speaking at the Dochas conference in Dublin, where he delivered a message of hope, resistance and change from the bottom up.

Dismissing the well-worn 'save the earth' slogan because it fails to motivate enough people, he said, "The climate change struggle is fundamentally about protecting our children and their children's futures. Nothing can be more important."

He said climate change intersects with every other issue that concerns development workers, making racism, poverty and class inequality worse.

He has two great interests: Climate change and rising income inequality between social classes.

Climate change is a game-changer because there's a time limit on what we can do.

"Bad as gender inequality is, for example, we don't have a clock ticking on it, but, we're right on the cliff-edge of catastrophic, runaway, irreversible climate change. And we can't be content anymore with babysteps.

"Recycling is a great place to start, but it's an awful place to stop. Our strategies are inadequate. Fundamental, structural and systemic change is needed and it needs to be as big as the industrial revolution (if we're to be successful)," he said.

He was appalled by Brexit and Trump's election.

"Donald Trump is a fascist," said Kumi. "Look at what a fascist does. It's easy to blame the Republicans and the Conservatives, but we must ask ourselves what happened our parties that were more people-friendly, more wanting to address poverty? What is our culpability?"

"We have to look at ourselves much more critically. I include myself. If we are to be taken seriously, we must sacrifice more, have more courage and integrity," he said.

He played a recording of Martin Luther King speaking about the word "maladjusted": "We all want to live an adjusted life... but I'd like to say to you today ... there are some things in our society and our world for which I am proud to be maladjusted towards.... I never intend to adjust myself to racial segregation or to religious bigotry."

Kumi emphasised MLK's next sentence: "I never intend to adjust myself to economic conditions that will take necessities from the many to give luxuries to the few, leaving millions of God's children suffocating in an airtight cage of poverty in an affluent society."

"He was talking about the United States in the 1960s," noted Kumi and his statement still applies.

"All of us have adjusted to things we should never have. We should never have adjusted



The South African activist's message at the Dochas conference was to change your thinking and behaviour, prioritise cl

to the amount of money we spend on military. We should never have adjusted to the levels of gender inequality that we inherited," he said, also condemning slavery, colonialism and conquest.

"I say to you people who are optimistic and courageous and thinking of changing the world: Let's refuse to allow (current events) to make us feel vulnerable. This is the time to ask 'How do act we more creatively, more warmly?'"

"We put too much faith in our leaders. We have to build leader-full organisations. Read the book, 'Spider V Starfish'. It's about the unstoppable power of leaderless organisations. If you chop off a spider's head, it dies. If you chop off a starfish's arm, it grows into another starfish. In organisational theory, the most successful 'starfish' organisation is Alcoholics Anonymous - nobody knows who the president is, but there's one in virtually every community.

"Some of the most successful mobilisations in the past decade - of resistance to injustice - haven't come from NGOs, but from informally organised citizen movements.

He talked of the 'The Arab Spring', calling it 'The Arab resistance' after activists pointed out to him that the struggle for justice is not a seasonal activity.

"Democracy and civic space is shrinking globally. And though it's not as bad here as in the US or Africa, I was involved here, 15 years ago, supporting organisations like The Wheel to help ensure you keep civic space open. In that context, it's tactically wrong to have one or two people recognised as leaders, because if

the state wants to move in, they can wipe them out," he said. "We all have a civic responsibility to protect our civic space."

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"We are challenged personally and institutionally," he said. "When you're big and the funding is flowing nicely, you don't feel the need for coalition-building, but we've operated in silos for too long. We need to break out of our echo chamber. Talk and engage with a diversity of (people and organisations). If you spend a lot of time with people who think like you, you can delude yourself into thinking that that's reality."

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"The biggest disease in the world today is 'Affluenza', a pathology where some of us believe we have the right to live an over-consumptive lifestyle, denying the majority their basic needs.

"Don't mistake access for influence. Just because you've been given the right to speak doesn't mean you've been heard.

"Many consultations only happen because some bureaucrat needs to tick a box saying 'civic society consulted', so we need to wise up'.

"When South Africa got democracy, we were invited to many meetings with the government, until we got 'consultation fatigues'. We realised we were spending a lot of time in conversations with those in power telling them things they often already knew. And, 90% of the time, we knew exactly what they were going to say back to us.



# TO THINK ABOUT



**Resilient:** Chop off a starfish's 'arm' and the 'arm' will grow into another starfish.



imate change, act in solidarity and fight facism. PICS: AM.

"You could go home and tell your partner 'I met the minister for health today' and your partner might be impressed, but the people who needed change see no change coming.

"I'm not saying not to engage with government, but we have spent far too much time looking upwards to those with power and far less time looking downwards to those whose interests we say we seek to serve.

"There are many people who talk poverty, but wouldn't be able to have a conversation with a poor person - they wouldn't be able to deal with it.

"We in the NGO sector have the privilege of talking and advocating for the poor in the daytime, but at night-time we can retreat to our communities of privilege, where the lifestyle is closer to that of the 1% in society than the 99%," he said.

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"We put our lives on the line, or go to prison if necessary. But, none of us should want to die for our countries and causes. We should live for them," he said, quoting an old friend, Lenny, who advised Kumi to go into exile for his own safety when he was 22 years old. (Two years later, Lenny was "brutally murdered" by the apartheid regime).

"History teaches us that no issue that was important was won without sacrifice, for example when we confront slavery, colonialism

and oppression. People across my continent are dying daily from government repression. Summon courage, because those of us in the global south look to progressives like you in Ireland, hoping you will act with greater courage, co-ordination and greater strategic sense than you are now."

"As Einstein said, 'The definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over again, expecting to get different results'."

"I totally qualify for that definition of insanity. Think of all the hard work you've done. Some of you started very young (in development work)."

Like others, Kumi said that some days he felt desperate and asked himself did his work add up, but recognised that "the struggle for justice is a marathon, not a sprint."

\*\*\*\*\*

"Our organisations were set up to serve a very heroic and noble process. Have courage, fortitude and persevere. The world would be significantly more pessimistic, if it wasn't for people like you."

"The forces of good in the world are overwhelming in number. If we unite and harness that strength, I believe we can create a just, peaceful, sustainable world.

"New forms of technology have radicalised the way people communicate and, using social

media, young people are able to build new narratives."

\*\*\*\*\*

On why he came to Ireland, he said "you have a most impressive track record in engaging in acts of solidarity". He spoke fondly about the Dunnes Stores workers who refused to handle South African produce during apartheid, saying Ireland was "an outstanding country in our fight".

He urged people to "celebrate and cherish" the country's fondness for standing with the oppressed. He also recalled the Choctaw people's solidarity towards Ireland during the Great Famine.

Kumi recognises that we too experienced and fought against colonialism. He said a young colleague, having recently seen 'The Commitments' for the first time, urged him to go to Ireland because "the Irish are the blacks of Europe". The audience - many of whom began their careers/activism around the time the film was released - lapped it up.

Having led Greenpeace until 2015, Kumi is now helping set up a new movement being "built from below" called 'Africans Rising' which launches in 30 countries this year. **W:** <http://www.africans-rising.org>

To find out more about Dochas, who organised the conference, titled 'Reclaiming The Story', visit: **www.dochas.ie**





# SANCTUARY IN IRELAND

## KILLORGLIN GIVES BOMBED REFUGEES A 'CÉAD MÍLE Fáilte'

*This short story of integration in a small community is an example to be shared. It shows how the local community, state agencies and private business can collaborate and pool resources and expertise to ensure refugees are appropriately received, supported and offered the chance to become part of community life.*

BY PAUL O'RAW

**"When the first bomb landed at 5.00 in the morning I said to my husband 'We must go now'. So we got in the car, left everything we had and went to Kurdistan".**

**Thus began the flight of an Iraqi family away from their home town and country, away from the advancing ISIS, and their beginning of life as refugees.**

For a lot of people, Killorglin, Co. Kerry is a town they might pass through while doing the Ring Of Kerry tour, or the place where the famous Puck Fair is held each August.

During the past year, the local community of Killorglin, a number of state agencies and a local businessman worked closely together to co-ordinate supports for the Iraqi refugee family described above who came to the town through the Irish Refugee Protection Programme.

### INTERAGENCY COLLABORATION WORKING

A total of 760 refugees arrived in Ireland, by the end of 2016, under the Government's Refugee Protection Programme and similar numbers will be afforded refuge this year.

In April, Oxfam CEO, Jim

Clarcken, urged Irish people to reach out to refugees living here, to help them become part of the community.

"We are born with universal human rights and the right to refuge is one of those. In that regard, we have a responsibility to support people," he said.

It is worth looking at the case of the extended family now living in Killorglin.

Though not perfect, interagency collaboration has helped this family and the local community have welcomed and received the family.

#### So how did it come about?

As well as agencies meeting to plan for the reception of the family, a private businessman became involved and bought two small town houses. Kerry County Council then refurbished the houses and made them available for use by the family.

Killorglin Family Resource Centre (FRC) has played a central role in welcoming and supporting the family's integration.

English classes provided by Kerry ETB are held in the FRC building and this introduced the family to other people, as well as to activities and supports available in the centre.

A local man, who volunteers in the FRC, and is a neighbour of the family, took them 'under



*A family picnic in Kurdistan - not all of Iraq is a desert! When peace comes, the Kurdish area of Iraq could become a haven for tourists, not to mention refugees who wish to return. Source: kurdistaniraqtours.com*

his wing'. He engages with them regularly, providing information on local events explaining how things are done locally, how to access services and so on.

### FAMILY REUNIFICATION

I first met the family at a small seasonal celebration in the FRC. The family unit comprises of five adults; the father and mother, their adult daughter and her husband, and a friend of the family who wasn't there that morning as he had obtained part-time work.

FRC staff, local residents and representatives from a number of organisations had gathered for a community coffee morning.

The Iraqi family were also invited and they brought along some of their traditional breads they had prepared.

While they only had a limited command of English, they were keen to share their story and traditions.

"We want to thank everyone who has helped us - our tutor, our neighbours, the family resource centre and the local businessman," said the family through a translator.

They sang a few of their

Christmas songs, the locals sang a few Irish carols and read stories from their childhood.

It was a lovely moment. As we entered the Christmas season, we were meeting the family on a most human level, getting to know them by name and sharing a festival we had in common. They were no longer another category of foreign people to be eyed with caution.

They told us their story of being refugees and we learned how their village was bombed, how they had to flee overnight and keep on the move for a month until they arrived in a refugee camp in The Lebanon. They lived there for 13 months before accepting a placement in Ireland.

Their family was split up. Another adult daughter is in Germany and her own 17-year-old daughter remains in a refugee camp in The Lebanon.

While we were all sitting round the table taking in their story, they took a call from their daughter in Germany. The call was put on speaker so they could all hear the conversation, spoken in their native Arabic. It was an emotional conversation for them as she explained that she had just been granted the right to stay in Germany, thereby



*Refugees in Kawrgosk refugee camp, Irbil, Northern Iraq, in 2013. Source: IHH Humanitarian Relief Foundation.*





\* Paul O'Raw is a freelance community consultant who previously worked as community development co-ordinator with South Kerry Development Partnership. He is a member of the staffing sub-committee of Killorglin Family Resource Centre.

**The global migration and refugee crisis will not go away in the short term and political leadership is required, a leadership that puts people first.**

allowing her own daughter to join her through the Family Reunification process.

This moment of mixed emotions played out before us live. I witnessed the reality of families scattered through war. I also witnessed the open sharing of their story with a community they felt they could trust. A place where they could settle for a while as global events and politics determined their fate.

## SCATTERED BY WAR

As well as destroying property and infrastructure, war destroys human relations. It was very evident from listening to their story that trust between Christian and Muslim communities has been broken, though they did say, 'We do not hate Muslims, because as Christians we cannot hate our enemy'.

Families, communities and friendships have been disrupted and scattered. One of the women explained to me that she would travel to work each day with a group of friends, they would have coffee and cake together – as people do. Now they are



Killorglin, Co. Kerry during summertime.

dispersed throughout the world; in Ireland, Turkey, Germany, Canada, Bagdad and Australia.

'I miss my friends. I don't think we will have coffee together again...who knows, maybe one day,' she said.

Home is home. Most refugees yearn for the home they abruptly left behind. They have been traumatised by their experiences and live with uncertainty, not knowing what will become of them in the long-term. The least we can do is to receive them and welcome them to Ireland - their temporary home. We can offer a level of sanctuary in a time of crisis.

## BAD POLICY CHOICES CAUSE HOMELESSNESS & REFUGEES

And what of our own homeless problem, people may exclaim! How wrong it is to pitch one disadvantaged group against another! It is not a case of 'either or'. It is about political priorities. Homeless Irish and homeless refugees are brought about by policies.

The global migration and refugee crisis will not go away in the short-term and political leadership is required, a leadership that puts people first.

We can all play a part in welcoming people coming to Ireland for sanctuary.

## IRISH REFUGEE PROTECTION PROGRAMME

The Irish Refugee Protection Programme was established by Government in September 2015 as a direct response to the humanitarian crisis in Southern Europe as a consequence of mass migration from areas of conflict in the Middle East and Africa.

Under this programme, the Government pledged to accept 4,000 people into the State, through:

**Relocation:** 2,622 asylum seekers were to come from Greece and Italy, by agreement with the EU.

**Resettlement:** 1,040 programme refugees (519 by the end of 2016 and the remainder in 2017) were to come via a UNHCR resettlement programme focussed on refugees from Lebanon.

**Other mechanisms:** The balance of the 4,000 refugees were to come through a variety of mechanisms, including for example accepting 200 unaccompanied children previously living rough in the unofficial camps in Calais.

**More information:** <http://bit.ly/RefugeeIrl>



**NOTICE:** Due to circumstances beyond our control, 'Changing Ireland' postponed the 'Durty Words' Conference, due to have been held on May 11th.

With the postponement, we may take the opportunity to rethink the event and team up with a suitable partner (enquiries welcome). The focus will remain on Community Development and its theory and practice.

There was strong interest in the event. We thank you for your support and thank everyone who has helped out to date.

We will keep you updated. Keep an eye on Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, etc.

Those who purchased tickets have been refunded.

- Changing Ireland staff & management

# COURSE

## M.A./Postgrad Dip in Leadership & Management in the Community & Voluntary Sector



LIT has launched a new course designed to equip experienced community and voluntary workers with the knowledge, skills and insight required to be effective managers in non-profit settings in the context of a changing community and voluntary sector environment.

The programme examines the practice of management in the community and voluntary sector, informed by an analysis of wider management theory, and the changing role of community organisations.

### Participants will:

- engage with current policy issues and social administration systems as they affect the delivery of activities in the sector.
- be able to analyse management issues specific to the policy areas of their particular service(s).
- develop skills such as strategic management, financial management, governance as well as HR, management and staff support skills.
- develop their knowledge and skills in managing change and risk.
- be conversant with strategic, operational and ethical issues.
- be equipped to maximise the possibilities in the digital environment.

This programme serves to equip graduates with the necessary insight to manage themselves and staff in an effective manner building on the values and goals of an effective and empowering Community and Voluntary Sector.

Who is the programme aimed at?

Participants of the programme will be managers of projects, programmes or organisations and all participants must be currently working in a community and voluntary sector organisation in either a full-time or part-time employment or voluntary capacity.

**Contact Person: Dr Bridget Kirwan**  
**E: Bridget.Kirwan@lit.ie**

# SMALL GRANTS

## HOW WOULD YOUR GROUP SPEND €1,000?

- €2m Community Facilities Scheme launched
- Aimed at, but not just for disadvantaged areas

What would your community group most like to invest a thousand euro in?

The clock is ticking as the deadline for the 2017 round of a new grant scheme fast approaches. Groups have until June 30th.

The Communities Facilities Scheme was launched in Sligo, in March, and is aimed at community groups nationwide. There is a preference for applications from groups in disadvantaged urban and rural areas, but it is open to all regardless of geography.

The Scheme has a national allocation of €2m for this year, with €64,500 allocated to each local authority area, and up to €1,000 available per project.

Launching the scheme, Catherine Byrne, Minister of State for Communities and the National Drugs Strategy, said it followed on from a commitment given in the 'Programme for Partnership Government'.

The idea is to provide small-scale grants to community groups for capital funding for items such as (these are only examples):

- Renovation of community centres
- Improvements to town parks and common areas and spaces
- Sports/recreation facilities
- Office equipment.
- Research facilities.
- Project resources.
- Energy efficiency equipment

The application form is deliberately simple and straightforward, with just five pages to complete.

It's not always possible to fundraise and, unlike some other schemes, there is no need to get match-funding from other sources.

However, the scheme does not provide funding for employing staff.

The proposed spending must benefit the local community, ideally groups that support



*Volunteers can give a place a fresh look with paint, but who pays for the pots? Pictured above, volunteers painting a community premises in Sligo.*

one or more of the following: Youths, older people, immigrants, refugees, Travellers, people with disabilities, lone parents, ex-prisoners and families of prisoners/ex-prisoners.

The scheme is also designed to support community development projects and initiatives promoting cultural activity, equality or integration. Projects which are part of the Creative Ireland initiative also qualify.

Groups working with marginalised groups are also eligible to apply for funding.

The Scheme is being administered by the Local Community

Development Committees (LDCs) along with the Municipal Districts under the remit of local authorities nationwide.

While, in general, the maximum amount to be approved for any one project is €1,000, the LDCs can use their discretion to exceed this.

**For more information, including application forms, log into the Department's website via this link: <http://bit.ly/CFSinfo>**  
**Also, check your local authority website.**

**Deadline June 30th**



*The Community Facilities Scheme was launched in Sligo in March by Minister of State, Catherine Byrne, TD (3rd from right) who is pictured here with (l to r): Clodagh McDonnell and Linda Sheridan, both from the Dept. of HPCLG; Dorothy Clarke, Director of Planning Community & Economic Development, Sligo Co Co; Cllr Sinead Maguire, Sligo Co Co; Margaret McConnell, Community & Economic Development, Sligo Co Co.*



# MOVED TO LIMERICK

## WHAT'S NATIONWIDE & HAS 48 MEMBERS?

- Get to know the Irish Local Development Network

**W**orking together, Local Development Companies (LDCs) are the largest provider of local and rural development, social inclusion and anti-poverty services in the state.

There are 48 LDCs operating around the country and their representative body is the Irish Local Development Network (ILDN).

These community-based, not-for-profit organisations serve thousands of communities by delivering multiple social and economic programmes funded by Government and the EU.

Among the better-known programmes they deliver nationwide are the Social Inclusion Community Activation Programme (SICAP), Tús and the Back-to-Work Enterprise Allowance Scheme. Many also deliver Jobs Clubs and Community Employment and the rural members deliver the long-established LEADER Rural Development Programme as well as the Rural Social Scheme. Local Employment Services are delivered by 22 ILDN members.

Marie Price Bolger from South Dublin County Partnership is the ILDN's chairperson and Joe Saunders, recently appointed, is its co-ordinator.

He said the ILDN's mission is "to promote and support the work of the members in the areas of social inclusion and local and rural development."

The ILDN divides the country into six regions and each region nominates a rep to the board. \*



In its work, ILDN sub-committees focus on: social inclusion, rural development, enterprise and employment, research and evaluation, social economy. It also hosts a Local Employment Service Co-ordinators Network and a Mediators group.

The Network regularly interfaces with government departments and funders on the various programmes. For instance, it liaises closely with the government departments responsible for the Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme and the LEADER Programme. There is

also a focus on the Department of Social Protection.

This Spring, the ILDN head office moved from Dublin to Limerick [also home to Irish Aid - Ed] while meetings continue to happen around the country as required.

The ILDN is funded by the the Department of Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government, under the Support Scheme for National Organisations, as well as through membership subscriptions.

\* Besides Marie Price Bolger, the other board members are: Michael

Bowe (CEO, Dublin North West Partnership), Brenda Cahill (CEO, Cork City Partnership), Jim Finn (chair, North Tipperary LEADER Partnership), Anne Kavanagh (CEO, PAUL Partnership), Terry Keenan (chair, FORUM Connemara), Dermot Leavy (chair, Westmeath Community Development), Gerry O'Neill (CEO, South West Mayo Development), Eamonn O'Reilly (CEO, North East West Kerry Development), Ciaran Reid (CEO Louth LEADER Partnership), Jack Roche (IRD Duhallow), Cormac Shaw (CEO Southside Partnership) and Jim Slevin (chair, Donegal LDC).

**Address: Tait Business Centre, Dominic Street, Limerick.**

**T: 061-404923.**

**M: 087-937-9572.**

**E: info@ildn.ie**

**W: www.ildn.ie**



## JOE SAUNDERS TAKES ON LEAD ROLE

**S**ince March, the ILDN has been managed by Joe Saunders who is well-known in the community and local development sector, having spent 30 years in roles ranging from youth worker, community worker, animator and advocate, to trainer, researcher, consultant and manager.

He has held positions with Dublin Corporation's (now City Council) Community Department, Clare Youth Service and North Tipperary LEADER Partnership and lectured part-time in community and youth work with UCC's Adult Education Department. He's conducted hundreds of research, training and project management assignments in the not-for-profit sector over two decades.

With the ILDN, Joe has been busy from the off, helping prepare position papers on 'SICAP 2' and addressing current blockages in the LEADER programme due to new rules outside the control of Local Development Companies



*Joe Saunders, outside the offices of another national project based also in Limerick. You know where! Hint: Keith Earls grew up around the corner.*

(LDCs).

"The sustainability of LDCs themselves is also a very real challenge in an era of tied funding and increasing marketization of community services," says Joe.

For the past few years, Joe has also been a valued member in a voluntary capacity of the editorial team for this magazine.

He was hard to ignore!

We first asked him to join the team after he lambasted us for not producing an edgy enough magazine. He outlined his criticisms in writing and his passion for the sector was obvious.

A fluent Irish speaker and a proud Dub, Joe enjoys hill-walking in his spare time.

In welcoming Joe formally to Limerick - the ILDN's new base - we wish him well in his new role with the Network which we've given a well-deserved plug on this page. - Ed

# CONSULTATION

## “Fresh thinking” sought on “vital” programme for people in marginalised communities

BY ALLEN MEAGHER

Many of the changes sought by community workers are likely to be granted, in relation to the follow-up programme to the national Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP).

Earlier this year, development workers, local authority staff, councillors and community activists travelled from far and wide and turned out in their hundreds for four consultation events.

Heralded as a big success story - although some argue with that important point - SICAP is, in the words of Minister of State, Catherine Byrne, “a vital support for communities”.

“It is our key social inclusion and intervention programme,” she says.

She points out that, since its launch in 2015, the programme has supported over 85,000 individuals and assisted over 5,500 local community groups. It supports people to become “more job-ready” and, last year, it provided 47,000 people with one-to-one supports.

While everybody would agree that successive governments were right since 2008 to focus on unemployment - and SICAP works with the hardest-to-reach groups - funding for community programmes was cut in half.

Three years ago, SICAP was launched, to address poverty, long-term unemployment and social exclusion. It became best known for its role in “labour activation” which is no bad thing, but many people I have spoken to felt there was too great an emphasis on one-to-one work and not enough on community development.

As the consultations have shown, however, everyone sees potential in developing SICAP. Take the event in Cork - it attracted people from as far away as Wexford, Waterford, Tipperary, Kerry and Limerick.

And, at each event, the same issues came up (more details on pages 22-23 & 34).



In Dublin, a full line-up of male participants volunteered to feedback from small group discussions, providing the perfect opportunity to photograph men appearing to dominate. Women were strongly encouraged - in later consultations - to volunteer to feedback to the larger assembly.

Afterwards, a senior department official confirmed that while some suggestions will be more easy to implement than others, “most will be taken on board”.

In the meantime, a summary of the feedback on the headline issues that emerged during the consultations, as promised by Minister Byrne, awaits publication.

However, there seems to be no getting away from tendering, a process that allows for-profit private sector companies to ‘bid’ for work to support the most vulnerable communities in the country. For decades, grants were simply awarded to reputable community groups to provide support.

Ideally, community workers might like to turn the clock back a few years - to a time when community-led local development was applauded from on high and before the term ‘labour activation’ had been thought of. At the same time, SICAP has exceeded many of its targets.

The new programme, called ‘SICAP 2’ (there’s a movie buff somewhere in the Department) will launch on January 1st, 2018, with public tendering documents to be issued later this summer.

The shape of the new programme will also be influenced by an in-depth evaluation by the Department in collaboration with Pobal and the Economic and Social Research Institute. Surveys and face-to-face, focus group meetings with ordinary people that the programme has supported also feed into the process.

The programme is subject to further evaluation as it receives co-funding under the European Social Fund’s Programme for Employability, Inclusion and Learning (PEIL) 2014-2020.



While funding to communities has been halved since the crash, as the Department points out, “Over €100 million has been invested in communities through SICAP since it commenced in April 2015. This includes an allocation of €19 million under PEIL and the Youth Employment Initiative.”

It says that, “SICAP has helped provide building blocks for local and community development in Ireland and part of its vision is to improve the life chances and opportunities of those who are marginalised in society or living in poverty.”

Minister Byrne’s determination to see the next programme achieve more for communities was apparent from her attendance at each consultation event.

“We need fresh thinking. Unless we listen to the people doing the work on the ground, we will fail,” she warned.

Speaking at the first event in Dublin, Minister Byrne gave three examples of people she knew who benefitted from SICAP projects: a foreign national who became part of her local community; an unemployed lone parent who set up a business; and a long-term unemployed builder who confided in her that he now walked down the road with his “head held high” after retraining and finding work again.

The consultation meetings - held in Sligo, Cork and Dublin (twice) - were spearheaded by the Department of Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government, in collaboration with Pobal and they were facilitated by consultants, Crowe Horwath.

*(PTO for a report on criticisms of SICAP 1 and suggestions made for SICAP 2).*



Shane McQuillan and Clodagh O'Brien of Crowe Horwath with Sinead Quinn, DHPCLG. Crowe Horwath were engaged to run the consultation process on behalf of the Department.





Many local development companies still work with older people and others not covered under SICAP, notes facilitator Catherine Rogers from Crowe Horwath.

## Cork Carpenters - Re-employed via SICAP



Minister of State Catherine Byrne, TD, was in attendance at every consultation event. In Cork city, prior to the event, she met people who had benefited from SICAP supports.

This included a meeting with a pair of very busy carpenters: Paul Dineen and Graham Waters from Dream Robes Fitted Furniture had been employed for six years, until Cork City Partnership were able - through the Programme - to give them the support they needed to set up in business.

They are pictured here with Minister Byrne and Tony O'Regan from the Partnership.



Clare Cashman, Millennium Family Resource Centre, Co. Tipperary, made her group's points very clearly to all in Cork.



Robert Carey, Area & Programme Manager with North East and West Kerry Development gets ready to give it welly in presenting his group's findings.



Siobhan O'Brien, Wexford Local Development with Vanya Sargent, a consultant with Crowe Horwath.



Looks like fun! If only walls could talk... At the SICAP consultation event in the Metropole Hotel, Cork.





"Great to see you! You'll find your name-badge over there."

## We want more in the new Social Community

**Feedback from people who know the multi-million euro Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP) inside out should help ensure that the next programme is more flexible and bottom-up in its approach to supporting communities, REPORTS ALLEN MEAGHER.**

Speaking about the current programme, Siobhan O'Brien of Wexford Local Development said, "On paper, the programme is really good, it says all the right things, however the timeframes are not always realistic".

She took the example of progressing people into jobs and self-employment, where the targets are high and time is limited: "On the one hand, we're working with the most educationally disadvantaged individuals, but on the other hand we're expected to support those very same people to set up small businesses."

Giving feedback after a group discussion at a consultation event in Cork, she highlighted work that was almost impossible to achieve on the ground without a hidden cost to communities.

The maximum support allowed per individual is two "interventions" (eg meetings/course placements). This, she said, was "a disincentive" to companies to work intensively with people who really need support and might need numerous interventions.

Some critical community work was also not valued.

"Much of our work with parents, early-years, and at community level with families, is not counted. Pre-development work with people who are simply not 'job ready', to use that lovely phrase, but do require an awful lot of help, is not being measured currently."

"We need to find ways to measure the really important social inclusion and community development work that happens, but doesn't fit into the activation box," she said.

The targets relate to what's easy to measure, she said, while her company - like many others - cannot resist lending support and help to people when they're able to do so, even when it's beyond the limits of what their funding is for and what is measured.

Reflecting the views of many, she added, "We need local discretion and flexibility to respond locally to what the needs are in an area. For example - we proposed last year to reduce our community group target from 120 to 80, but to offer each group five interventions, rather than just two. In effect, we were offering to do almost double the work."

To avoid penalties, her company required permission.

"Our Local Community Development Committee supported us, but we got nowhere, we were denied permission. Yet, we believe it's the way to go," she said.

### "WE FEEL WE'RE LETTING PEOPLE DOWN"

A community worker giving feedback on "innovative inclusion" said, "We are innovative every single day. We have to be, because of the parameters we're working within. We're not allowed to work with certain groups. For example, we worked with older people for years and suddenly we were told (when SICAP replaced an earlier programme): 'We can't work with you anymore'."

Her company still did some work with older people, though the work was not counted.

"Older people we had been working with started asking 'Why not?' They didn't understand us. It's wrong and the programme's target groups need to be looked at."



Consultation events on subjects on which you are passionate about can push many an emotional button. Here, the big question of how millions of euro is best invested in communities is at stake.



Tom Gregan, chair, and Aisling Byrne, monitoring & evaluation officer, both from County Wicklow Partnership, at the consultation in Dublin.



# More Community Social Inclusion and Activation Programme

"Ideally, we would focus on projects for maybe a year and put deep and meaningful work into that project. That can no longer happen, because it's about targets and timeframes. It's about getting people in the door and out again. We'd like again the flexibility to do that work," she said.

The strict regime had impacted on staff morale: "The people rolling out the programme are community-development orientated people. We feel we're leaving people down – by sticking to targets, paperwork and box-ticking. That's not where we came from. We want to do quality, meaningful work with people. Staff are feeling a bit isolated, unsupported and that they're leaving down people in communities."

"The programme needs to be locally designed," she said, and there should also be more flexibility about inter-programme funding for community work.

## INVASIVE FORMS

Most of the delivery bodies are rurally-based. Clare Cashman from Millennium Family Resource Centre in Co. Tipperary, giving her feedback, said, "The amount of engagement is phenomenal... but the level of accountability for the programme is draconian compared to other programmes or agencies."

"Some community workers start by apologising for having to ask people so many questions, because the forms that people have to fill out are invasive. That's no way to engage in a proactive way with anybody."

"When people engage with us through a different programme, the first thing we say to them is 'At least you don't have to fill out a SICAP form'."

"If I was a 'bene-fic-arie'," she said, drawing out the word for effect, "I'd be worried".

"Also, the targets are too

high for qualitative work. A couple of interventions is of no value to someone with multiple disadvantage and it could be argued that a combination of the forms and the lack of allowable engagement is leading to exclusion in an inclusion programme.

"The programme should be about social inclusion rather than activation," she said, echoing others who made that point.

She asked, "Is it appropriate for a social inclusion programme to be primarily focused on labour activation?"

She noted the changing economic environment and the introduction of "new players" on the scene such as Turas Nua.

Pointing out that SICAP currently excludes some groups, "particularly small farmers, fishermen and the elderly", she said the programme "needs to be designed locally, not imposed from above."

"What is happening in Wexford or Limerick city is different to the needs people in Cork city have, or those in the village of Gortnahoe in Co. Tipperary where I work, but the challenges are the same."

"I know the plan is to tweak the programme. I would challenge you to change the programme. It should be a local programme for locally-community identified needs," she said, to applause.

## DUBLIN CONSULTATIONS

Going by reports from organisers and our attendance at two events, the issues raised and suggestions made were similar nationwide.

Helen Lowry, community work co-ordinator with Migrants Rights Centre Ireland, attended the consultation in Dublin. She said it was "very evident that there was a lot of agreement in the room" with calls for "change that go beyond tweaking and lean towards an overhaul."

She was in a group that wanted to "reward innovation and dynamism" within the new programme. At present, only penalties are available.

For their part, Community Work Ireland (CWI) noted the following feedback from the Dublin event:

- There is a need to enable work to address structural inequalities.
- There is a need to ensure that community development and social inclusion are the focus of the programme.
- Implementing organisations should be viewed as partners and not contract deliverers;
- The new programme should allow for long-term planning.
- Targets should be set locally (within a national framework) and there should be flexibility to respond to local and emerging issues.
- Expand the target groups that the programme can work with.
- The practice of competitive

tendering needs to be abandoned.

Any hope of the latter happening seems to have been dashed, but it is expected that many of the points raised during the consultations can be addressed in SICAP 2.

For now, people must take heart from the fact that every one of the applicants who tendered successfully in 2014 to implement the programme was a not-for-profit, community-based body, most of which have decades of experience.

Finally, nobody wants to say unpopular things, but we should do so, as Kumi Naidoo points out elsewhere in this magazine. CWI challenged the narrative that, overall, SICAP 1 was a successful programme and asked whether or not "some of the very good work at local level happens despite it and not because of it."

However, the CWI speaker acknowledged that, "Ultimately, SICAP has huge potential."

Mark II is eagerly anticipated.



Minister of State, Catherine Byrne, TD, at the SICAP consultations.

Pics here and on the previous pages were taken in Cork and Dublin, by AM.



# OPINION

## ON THE GROUND ISSUES

# Soft skills development is “crucial”

- To truly reach the long-term unemployed on the Live Register

BY TERRY HYLAND

**T**erry Hyland lives in Co. Cavan, where he co-ordinates teams supported through the Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme. He is employed by Breffni Integrated, a local development company that provides services and supports to the unemployed.

Like any co-ordinator in his position, he works closely with unemployed and disadvantaged individuals who wish to become self-employed and, since 2004, he and his colleagues have helped over 1,500 new enterprises become established in Co. Cavan.

However, self-employment isn't for everyone and he argues we need to do more to remove obstacles to employment and to provide equal access to paid work for all.

**Part-time, seasonal and casual workers doing low-skilled work have no possibility of advancing in their jobs or careers**

The fall in Live Register figures - from 15% six years ago - to the seasonally adjusted unemployment rate of 6.2 percent in April, 2017, is commendable.

However, what is being missed is that a significant cohort of unemployed people on

the Live Register remain stuck for a variety of reasons. These include: low levels of education, literacy issues, learning difficulties, a lack of self-belief, self-doubt, fear, apprehension, concern for family, ageism, social stigma (ex-prisoners for example), anxiety, mental health issues, depression and cultural background.

Furthermore, there are many part-time workers (people who work up to three days a week) and seasonal and casual workers doing low-skilled work and they have no possibility of advancing in their jobs or careers. They are entitled to Jobseekers Allowance and Jobseekers Benefit on the Live Register.

Of course, great work is being undertaken with people on the Live Register to progress them towards the labour market. They are offered training and education, career development, engaging with employers, financial incentives, labour activation schemes, etc.

Yet, one of the key challenges is that, in some cases, people are simply not in a position to undertake the many offerings available to them for the variety of reasons outlined above. Access to transport can also be an issue. Faced with the prospect of being penalised (their social welfare payment can be reduced) these individuals feel forced to make a quick decision that leads them down an unsuitable path.

My current work includes preparing unemployed individuals for self-employment. In my 12 years' experience, there have always been



*The Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme aims to engage those who are the most marginalised.*

individuals who wish to set up their own businesses, but because of fear, apprehension - or what I call the self-doubt mind-set - they are reluctant to stretch themselves enough to create their dream business.

On the other hand, when an individual does manage to break through this mind-set, they gain a sense of independence, integrity, self-belief and confidence. They are no longer financially dependent on the State, their advancement helps to combat intergenerational unemployment and to contribute to society. They pay taxes and they inspire and create opportunities for others, including jobs.

While organisations and state agencies capture data about the personal issues and barriers facing individuals, the majority of frontline workers opt to tackle the vocational or technical skills deficits, aka hard skills.

However, when working with vulnerable adults and those who are most disadvantaged, it is the soft (crucial) skills that need to be addressed before hard skills deficits should be considered. At the very least, they should be tackled at the same time.

So-called soft skills should be labelled as 'crucial', because they range from people skills, social skills and communication skills to working on character traits and attitude. What about people's social and emotional intelligence? Front line workers could be better supported and resourced to help unemployed people to break through the self-doubt mind-set.

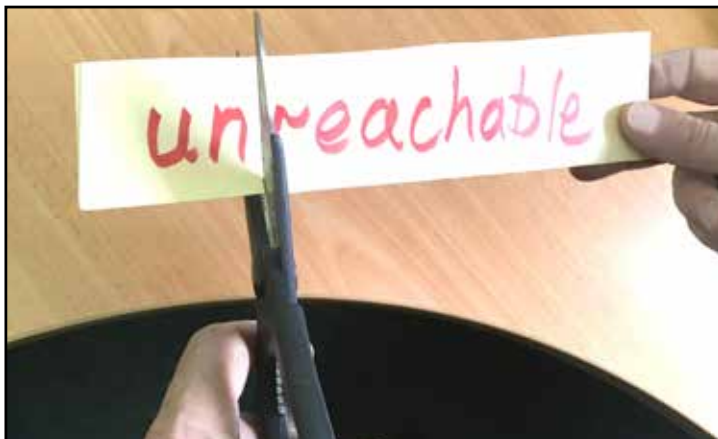
The Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP) is the best programme to deliver in this area, as it aims to tackle poverty, social exclusion and long-term unemployment through local engagement and partnership between disadvantaged individuals, community organisations and public sector agencies.

However, unless adequate resources (particularly financial) are deployed, then the SICAP programme can continue to firefight, but never fully deliver the opportunities that their target groups require.

The organisations, state agencies and departments that work with the unemployed should explore how to tackle the unemployment issue in an effective and co-ordinated way. Now is the time to discuss mind-set, mental capacity, soft skills (crucial skills) development and the provision of training for service-providers to identify and tackle difficult issues.

The Local Development Companies charged with delivering the SICAP programme are best placed to lead the discussions, given their extensive experience working with the most disadvantaged and furthest to reach on the Live Register.

It would be better for society if we could boast that not only are Live Register figures continuing to fall, but that real positive change is occurring in the lives of individuals and communities that up to now we have missed.



*Could it be this easy if we invest in developing people's soft skills?*

We will need to become better at re-training people for new types of work. Oxford researchers say 47% of jobs we know now will disappear in the next 25 years, due to automation &



# GLOCAL

## LOCAL COMMUNITIES AND PLACE STILL MATTER IN A GLOBAL WORLD

BY RICHARD SCRIVEN & RAY O'CONNOR

*"By the time you finish breakfast, you could be wearing clothes made in south-east Asia, have eaten fruit from South Africa, have drunk tea from East Africa or coffee from South America, and heard news from across the world."*

**T**wo Cork Geographers argue that, in coming years, the interactions of local places and global forces will increase and our need to identify with place - to belong to somewhere - will become more important than ever:

By the time you finish breakfast, you could be wearing clothes made in south-east Asia, have eaten fruit from South Africa, have drunk tea from East Africa or coffee from South America, and heard news from across the world.

We are encouraged to think more globally, we live virtual lives online, and we have never been as mobile. We are more interactive and and more integrated than ever.

\*\*\*\*\*

You might think this would affect our attachment to place and dilute our sense of belonging and identity. But, this has not happened. Instead, in response to globalisation we have become more interested in the local. As retired Professor of Sociology (UCD) Tom Inglis pointed out, our increased

attachment "to the local, the particular, the different is often an equal and opposite reaction to increased globalisation."

Local concerns and issues still dominate individuals and communities. Identity is still forged by where you are from and where you live. We invest time and resources in our communities because the places where we live and work matter to us. Place is important.

\*\*\*\*\*

The global and the local have merged. Nothing is purely global or local any longer and now we live in a glocalised world - where the global reaches into communities and homes. American sociologist George Ritzer defines glocalisation as "the interpenetration of the global and the local, resulting in unique outcomes in different geographic

areas".

Globalisation impacts different places to different degrees and in different ways and is, paradoxically, stimulating greater diversity. For example, while pop-music is being played on radio stations from New York to Navan, and Beijing to Ballina, traditional music and local singer-song writers are becoming more popular than ever. Interest in new foods and cuisines has prompted us to (re)appreciate Irish food heritage and the 'slow food' movement.

Our relationship with place is different to how our parents and grandparents experienced it. Our lives are not as 'local', but that does not mean that place has become less important. We still need to belong - places provide us with an anchor. Place matters and will continue to matter.



About the authors: Dr Richard Scriven and Ray O'Connor lecture with UCC's Department of Geography, and Ray is an associate member of the Centre for Co-operative Studies in the university.

## OPINION

### Why import lettuce? IRISH RESILIENCE: BUY LOCAL, BUY LESS!

BY SUSAN BROWN

I used to wrestle with the dream of being an artisan producer. I was inspired by seeing my veg-growing friends trying different things and working hard to make a living. Alas, the enterprise boards and supermarket shelves mock us. For a small island we're obsessed with big!

Good restaurants clamour for local ingredients and this should be our unique selling point. It would lure in customers and help secure the future of local food.

At the farmers market, I overheard a little boy reason with his mum, "It's a farmers market, mum! Everything is dear!". Why is that the common perception and how do we change it? What would help the producers to reduce costs, but still make a profit?

Lower tax brackets? Increased incentives to grow? Small-scale vegetable cooperatives to do the marketing?

And why do we import lettuce? Lettuce on any scale is cheap and easy to grow!

Why do we pay good money for bad quality food and continue to do so?

When did restaurants start using low-quality imported cheaper food instead of using high-end, often exported, Irish products? Where is the pride?



There should be a rethink in our agriculture colleges, because we farm enough cows and it's not sustainable to continue exporting cattle to Turkey. Dehydrated cows milk sent to China to bottlefeed the babies of the emerging middle class is not sustainable.

Too much dairy production is short-sighted. We have a growing bad reputation for greenhouse gas emissions.

Irish agriculture colleges should teach more about diversification and growing quality organic produce for shops and restaurants.

The supermarket giants have changed the face of food shopping. Ask yourself, how can a bag of apples from Israel cost 39c in Ireland? Is this a result of ethical processes?

Is it us, do we consume too much? Have we forgotten how to cook? How to nourish our bodies, our families and our society? Shopping in big supermarkets lets them log our buying habits, which in turn feeds the marketing machine spitting out a vortex of overconsumption and waste.

Step out of the whirlwind, stew some Irish apples, enjoy cinnamon, think about what your body would like to eat? Buy Irish vegetables, grow vegetables, eat Irish vegetables that are grown down the road. Stop to smell the apple blossom! Breathe! Support our small growers, buy Irish, enjoy your food more, and buy less. This is Irish resilience.

Susan is a Postgraduate Diploma student in Co-operative Organisation, Food Marketing and Rural Development in UCC.



# Stop telling us what to wear!

## EU AND PAKISTAN OBSESS OVER DRESS CODES



BY SABA  
FATIMA

**B**esides Trump's wall and his ban on travellers from seven Muslim countries, a new political wave has started where rules are being passed to tell us how to dress. Irish parliamentarians are even discussing a dresscode. It's a distraction from climate change and other important issues, you could argue. However, as Saba Fatima notes, most of the debate is focused on how women dress, which is more than unfair:

In EU states, employers are entitled to ban staff from wearing visible religious or political symbols, since the EU's top court ruled on March 14th, in a decision that critics said was an attack on women wearing Islamic hijabs at work. Two cases were taken to the court by women in France and Belgium - they had been sacked for refusing to remove their headscarves.

The European Court of Justice ruled against the two female workers, saying rules that ban the visible wearing of clothing with "political, philosophical or religious" symbols "does not constitute direct discrimination."

On the other hand, Pakistan, a Muslim-majority country, has enacted a law to award 10% extra in university exams to women wearing hijabs, though many parliamentarians there argue that this is wrong. Maybe the EU should be thinking twice also.

In Bulgaria, it is trendy to wear short skirts to work, but it is taboo to do so in Germany. Wearing heavy make-up, flashy nail polish and a miniskirt in Bulgaria is normal, but is considered a dress code for prostitution in Germany. In Pakistan, wearing even jeans and a shirt will attract criticism - the country's Council of Islamic Ideology at one time blamed women wearing jeans for the increasing incidence of earthquakes there. Why are women always judged by their dress?

At work places, it is important to judge people by their hard work not by how they dress. Samira Achbita, was a receptionist for the Belgian branch of G4S (incidentally, a company making inroads in the Community & Voluntary Sector internationally). She'd been with the firm three years and decided to start wearing a scarf. That's the only reason she was fired. Her three years' work was kept aside and dress code got the attention.

In Pakistan things are more complicated, a modest woman covers her hair, an immodest does not. Even Pakistani media tends



*The no-bikini duo from Egypt - Doaa Elghobashy and Nada Meawad - shake hands with their Italian beach volleyball opponents at Rio last year. Doaa said, "I believe in freedom of choice".*

**Men wear sagging pants  
that show their underpants  
or butt cracks in public.  
Who makes the rules?**

to support such stereotypes. Countless extremely popular television drama series have revolved around a 'modest' girl donning a long scarf on her head. The 'bad woman' in all these dramas has always been a career-oriented woman who dresses in western attire or doesn't wear a scarf.

Meanwhile, in the US, recently, two teenage girls wearing leggings were barred from boarding a United Airlines flight because they did not meet the company's dress code.

The biggest sin around the world, however, is if a woman's bra strap ever shows in public. God forbid, if you happen to be a woman whose bra strap shows. In some parts of the world, you will get hushed whispers from all other women around you. Some women may even tug at your shirt to protect your modesty. It disgusts me to know that we live in a society where men feel uncomfortable at seeing a mere bra strap, yet feel no shame showing off their underpants to women around them.

Why have we never heard about restrictions on men wearing sagging pants showing their underpants or butt cracks in public places or college or in workplaces? Why no restrictions on men wearing shorts, sleeveless shirts or tank tops exposing their skin? They are not restricted from having tattoos or piercings on their bodies. Who makes the rules?

We live in a society with preposterous

standards. A woman needs to constantly feel uncomfortable with what she is wearing. Whatever they wear - from burqa to bikini - they are made to feel shame. This is a symptom of rape culture and of discrimination. Despite a woman's hard work, her struggles are often ignored because of her appearance.

*Saba Fatima was on placement with 'Changing Ireland' for four months as part of her Social and Community Studies degree course at the Limerick Institute of Technology (LIT).*



*Ayesha Omar is a famous Pakistani actress, model and singer, pictured in February on the cover of 'Hello Pakistan' with fellow film star Ahsan Khan. Their western attire is at odds with the attire preferred by some in Pakistan.*



# OLDER AND BOLDER, OR SO IT SEEMS!

BY DERMOT HAYES, AGE 62 AND 3/4s

In 2013, the Department of Health published the National Positive Ageing Strategy. The Strategy sets out a vision for an age-friendly society through the achievement of four national goals (participation, health, security and research).

Dermot Hayes has joined one of the groups set up under the strategy and he's enjoying himself, though income disparities really get his goat up:

As I approach my 63rd birthday, I'm out of work, but very involved in all kinds of community and voluntary work.

I've noticed the growing interest in the Older People Councils that have sprung up around Ireland. You can now join at 55 years of age, a terribly young age I would have thought, but maybe it's a way of getting one adjusted to the reality of ageing and how to grow older gracefully, if that is possible.

Reality faces us all. It's not morbid or brutalising. It is positive and there are fun things we can do like exercising together, dancing and going on holidays together. And so much more.

These voluntary councils are inspired by government policy being led out by the new 'Age Friendly Ireland', in turn inspired by the UN's convention for older people. To make our local communities age-friendly, we are looking at our streetscapes, our public services, health services, dealings with the Gardaí, and communicating with the local authorities and other important

services we use every day. We ask - are they fit for purpose for older people?

Regularly, older citizens are told by staff in agencies: "I can't hear you." Or, "Do you not understand that!?" Or, "How can I contact you?"

There are more and more of us - the number of people over 60 years of age is climbing and should reach two billion by 2050, according to the UN. It is a tribute to the progress that humans have made globally, thanks to better diet, healthcare and science.

On the downside, will there be enough income to keep all us oldies in good shape? The abuse of older people has become far too common, be it through financial abuse, sexual abuse or physical abuse. With the growing needs for care in the home and in nursing homes, better protocols urgently need to be put in place.

Meanwhile, the growth of Day Care Centres has been phenomenal in Ireland. On a weekly basis, thousands of people attend: They get dinner for a low cost, play games,



"You can now join Older People Councils at 55 years of age, a terribly young age I would have thought."

Dermot Hayes, going on 63 and no letting up.

get their hair or nails done. It helps to counteract the loneliness that has a creeping effect on us humans and hits people living in isolated rural areas and city apartments alike. The Older People Councils locally highlight the issues and services.

Finally, as retirement age approaches, I have noted my different reactions, from "Gee, great!" to "What the hell will I do now?"

With retirement comes a pension. It is commonly known that former TDs who served as Taoiseach / Ministers have the benefits of significant pensions, along with retired TDs and Senators. They have in the last four years acquired €65million.

Meanwhile, many over 66 years

today live on a state pension of €238.

Getting older and bolder we can have a good life, up into our 80s and older. Unfortunately, poor health cannot be legislated for, but let's make the best of it and get involved in whatever you feel happy with. Do not wait for your door bell to ring. You ring that door bell and get on with it.

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

\* Established in 2014 as an intermediary organisation, Age Friendly Ireland brings together, supports and provides technical guidance to the local authority-led, multi-agency Age Friendly City and County Programmes in the Republic's 31 local authority areas.

## 85,000 over 65s living in deprivation - Women "extremely angry" over pension treatment



Patricia Cawley, member, Age Action.  
PIC: Paula Geraghty.

More than 35,000 pensioners had their pensions cut because of changes introduced to the State Pension in 2012 by the previous government, according to a report published, in February, by Age Action, an advocacy organisation for older people.

Women in particular were targeted and Age Action's research has shown how they have lost out.

In 2012, the government changed the eligibility criteria for the Contributory State Pension. While those entitled to a full pension were not affected, many of those who would have been in line for smaller pensions lost out.

"Thousands of retired workers are losing more than €1,500 a year, with women pensioners suffering the most for taking time out of the workforce to care for their families," pointed out Age Action spokesperson, Justin Moran.

He said women who contacted Age Action were "extremely angry" on discovering that they do not qualify for the top rate of the State Pension, a payment they have contributed to throughout their working lives.

While Age Action, in March, welcomed the

€5 increase in the top rate of the Contributory State Pension, it warned that the increase, which brings the top weekly rate to €238.80, is just the first step in restoring the incomes of pensioners.

Mr. Moran said: "More than 85,000 people over the age of 65 are living in deprivation because of rising costs and cuts to income supports. They need a fair State Pension that will enable older people to live with dignity and independence."

Earlier cuts - following the State's rescue of banks - saw the bereavement grant cut.

### Importance of State Pension System:

- In 2012, the State Pension System accounted for just over 63% of income for people aged over-65.

- According to the National Pensions Framework (NPF-2010), the State Pension provides the only income for many people in retirement and, for many others, "it represents the solid foundation on which the rest of their overall income is built".



# Communities on camera

## SEEKING CHANGE

The best way to achieve social change is through community development. It involves taking collective action, strengthening the bonds within and between communities and tackling the causes (and effects) of exclusion, marginalisation and inequality.

While there is no way to take in the thousands of amazing events happening in an average week in communities across Ireland, we hope this spread of snaps gives you some idea.



Enjoying Africa Day in Dublin on May 30th.  
Source: Africaday.ie



Minister Paschal Donohoe visited Pavee Point in Dublin recently.

The Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform (and now Finance) said he was proud to be part of the Government that recognised Traveller ethnicity and how important it is for Traveller culture and identity.

The Minister met with Travellers and Roma and talked about the issues affecting them.

He heard from Kathleen Lawrence how funding for Traveller accommodation is sent back unspent each year by local authorities

and the need for local authorities to be held accountable.

Roma families also spoke about the difficulty in accessing accommodation and how sometimes, they cannot even access basic social protection.

"Investment in targeted services is so important to prevent further suicides among a community where suicide is already seven times the national average," said Patrick Reilly, Mental Health Worker.

- **Pavee Point.**



Mahon CDP Monday morning coffee group, soaking up the sunshine on the Dock beach, Co. Cork, on March 20.



Rugby legend Paul O'Connell (centre) was one of over 16,500 volunteers who took part in the Team Limerick Clean-up, in April. The initiative is co-ordinated by Limerick City and County Council and sponsored by JP McManus (right). This was its third year.



Enjoying Africa Day in Cork on May 30th.  
Source: Africaday.ie



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# RECOGNITION

## VOLUNTEER WITH WOMEN'S REFUGE WINS TOP AWARD

Sharon Byrne - Community Volunteer of the Year 2017



Sharon Byrne from Tallaght won the Community Volunteer of the Year Award. She is seen here being presented with the award by Cllr. Noel Bourke from Offaly County Council, watched on by Cllr. Deirdre O'Donovan and Cllr. Guss O'Connell, Mayor of South Dublin County Council. ALL PHOTOS: Paul Sherwood.

**Sharon Byrne from Dublin was named 'Community Volunteer of the Year' at the Community and Council Awards recently.**

Ms Byrne, from Avonbeg, Tallaght, was selected for her wide range of volunteer and fundraising work within the community, including with Saoirse Women's Refuge, the VISIT homeless charity and the 'Help the Hills' initiative to keep Tallaght tidy.

"I got involved in volunteering because my mam has always been a volunteer, and I watched her volunteering as I grew up," Ms Byrne told the local 'Echo'. "I won it for Tallaght. I'm very passionate about Tallaght."

She said the area gets "some bad press", yet it is "a great place, full of great people doing great work."

She - and others who won in other categories - were presented with their awards by RTÉ's Marty Morrissey at a ceremony in Dublin, on February 4th.

The event was organised by the Local Authority Members Association (LAMA).

Now in its eleventh year, the Community and Council Awards seek to recognise the best local and national projects in the areas of community development, social impact, recreation and infrastructure.

Councillors nominate people and projects for the awards and, this year, the organisers received over 200 nominations

and shortlisted over 120 entries across 22 categories.

South Dublin did well. The 'Best Educational Building Award' was won by the country's first post primary non-denominational Educate Together school, **Kishoge Community College** in Lucan.

Another project, again in Dublin - **Ballybough Community, Youth and Fitness Centre** - scooped two awards, the 'Grand Prix' and the 'Best Public Building Award'.

"The centre in Ballybough is a testament to how agencies and communities can come together to provide essential services in the area," said judges.

'Council of the Year' went to **Fingal County Council**, while the **Ireland 2016 Centenary Programme** was recognised with a 'National Impact Award'.

Limerick took two prizes - **Limerick City and County Council** was awarded the 'Most Innovative Authority', while Mungret Park and Playground won the 'Disability Access and Inclusion Award'.

The awards are held annually to "celebrate community and councils working together" and "recognise the phenomenal contribution they've made to our lives".

Sponsors included IPB Insurance, Kantar Media, GeoDirectory Ireland and Enterprise Ireland.

### FULL LIST OF WINNERS

**Community Volunteer of the Year:** Sharon Byrne

**Best Public Building:** Ballybough Community, Youth and Fitness Centre

**Grand Prix Award:** The Ballybough Community, Youth and Fitness Centre

**Best Community Based Initiative:** Roscrea Cardiac Responders

**Best Connected Community:** Bray.ie

**Local Sports Club of the Year:** Ballyhaunis GAA Club, Co. Mayo.

**Best Public Park:** Library Park An Clog Mór, New Ross, Co. Wexford

**Council of the Year:** Fingal County Council

**Most Innovative Authority:** Limerick City & County Council

**Emergency Response Person of the Year:** Paul Hennessey of Tramore Cliff and Mountain Rescue Association, Co. Waterford

**Most Significant Contribution to Water Quality:** Coomhola Salmon Trust

**Fáilte Ireland Best Tourism Initiative:** Dublin Fringe Festival 2016

**Best Irish Business Working in the Community:** BASE Enterprise Centre (Fingal)

**Best Health & Well Being Initiative:** Men on the Move Physical Activity Programme (Mayo)

**Best Education and Training Initiative:** I Wish (Cork)

**Disability Access and Inclusion Award:** Mungret Park and Playground, Co. Limerick

**Best Educational Building:** Kishoge Community College, Lucan, South Dublin.

**Best Heritage Project:** St Fechin's Trail and Tale, Co. Westmeath

**Best Road Safety Initiative:** "Check it Fits" Roadshow

**Best Energy Smart Initiative:** Home Energy Saving Kit (Dublin)

**Best New/Micro Business:** InvizBox (Fingal)

**Best Civil Engineering Project:** Leopardstown Link Road & Roundabout Reconfiguration

**National Impact Award:** Ireland 2016 Centenary Programme



# FINALISTS FOR COMMUNITY AWARDS



Supporters of Ballybough Community, Youth and Fitness Centre which won two awards.

These were the national finalists under some of the 22 categories chosen by the Local Authority Members Association. (Winners are listed separately).

## Community Volunteer of the Year

- Ása Ólafsdóttir-O'Hanlon, The Dining Room, Christ Church of Ireland
- Gerry White, Hilltown Environmental Awareness Group.
- Hendrick Verwey, JCI Cobh/Cobh Tidy Towns/See You in Cobh/Cobh Tourism.
- Joe O'Dowd, Ballyfermot Club for Physically Disabled.
- Paul Ryan, Lough Gur Development Co-Operative Society.
- Phoebe O'Leary, Ardcrough Youth Theatre/ Ardcrough Community Council.
- Sandra Dillon, club supporting teenagers under the spectrum.
- T.J Hogan, Traveller Visibility Group, Cork.

## Best Community-Based Initiative

- Burren and Cliffs of Moher Geopark.
- CommunityAlerts.ie
- Courtmacsherry Community Shop.
- Raheny Age Friendly Community Club.
- KBK Community Project - Billy's Tea Rooms and Shop.
- Kiltipper Ramblers - Help The Hills.
- Team Limerick Clean Up.
- Royal Canal Clean Up Group.

## Best Connected Community

- Athboy HUB.
- Clontarf.ie
- Fingal County Council - working in Partnership with local Councillors, Balbriggan Chamber of Commerce and Balbriggan Community Council.
- Limelight Communications.
- Templeport Development Association.

## Best Education and Training Initiative

- Ballivor Community Library
- Dublin City Intercultural Language Centre- English Language and Integration/Community building
- KCETB & Waterford Area Partnership
- Mayo County Council's Jackie Clarke 1969 Collection.
- SOLAS- European Globalisation Adjustment Fund

## Best Health & Well-Being Initiative

- Cavan Sports Partnership - Cavan County Council Staff Wellbeing Programme
- Dublin City Council - The Ballybough Community, Youth and Fitness Centre
- Dungarvan Community Hospital - Go for life
- Fingal County Council- MarathonKids
- Kildare West Wicklow Community Addiction Service – Women in Recovery Programme
- LeisureWorld Cork - The Functional Zone
- Why Weight Ireland

## Council of the Year

- Cork City Council
- Kildare County Council
- Mayo County Council

## Local Sports Club of the Year

- Austin Stacks GAA Club
- Ballyboden St Enda's
- Clondalkin Cricket Club
- Donabate Portrane Community & Leisure Centre
- Westport United Community Development
- The Peace Link
- Whitechurch Boxing Club

## Best Heritage Project

- Cavan County Museum's 1916 Rising Exhibition and Experience.
- Clonmel Enterprises's Refurbishment & Restoration of Beaver Row Footbridge.
- Cork City Council
- Richmond Barracks (Dublin City Council)
- Fingal County Council - Swords Castle: Digging History
- Fore Heritage & Amenity Group - St Fechin's Trail and Tale
- Lough Gur Development Co-operative Society.
- Seamus Heaney HomePlace (Mid-Ulster District Council)
- Waterways Ireland - Landscape Character Assessment of the Grand and Royal Canals

## Best Irish Business working in the Community

- Celtic Ross Hotel.
- Early Career Awards 2016.
- Gweedore Bar – Our Beloved Emigrants
- Kelly's Centra Mountain Top.
- Northside Community Enterprises - Cork City Better Energy Communities 2016

## Best Public Building

- Fingal County Council's County Hall – Atrium Redevelopment
- Shankill Indoor Tennis Centre



Simon Coveney, then Minister for Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government, speaking at the ceremony, in February.



**DOING THE DOUBLE!** Fingal County Council was chosen as Council of the Year for 2017. It had already won a Local Authority of the Year award from Chambers Ireland. Pictured L-R: Cllr. Joe Newman, Cllr. Ed Hearne, Cllr. Mags Murray, Cllr. Darragh Butler (Mayor of Fingal County Council), Cllr. Anne Devitt, Cllr. Kieran Dennison, Presenter Michael Garvey, CEO of IPB Insurance.

# CONSULTATION (cont'd):

## SICAP 2: Give us more Community Development

# 9 changes sought by Network

**The Irish Local Development Network (ILDN) is looking for substantive change in 'SICAP 2', REPORTS ALLEN MEAGHER.**

It acknowledges that the first Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP) had "many successes", but it wants nine changes in all, including: "a wider definition of social inclusion, greater local flexibility, a (stronger) community development approach, additional target groups and enhanced scope to work with the most disadvantaged individuals and communities".

The Network's "comprehensive" paper on SICAP 2 "reflects the experience of its members".

Notwithstanding the successes, SICAP 1 generally was: driven too much from the top down; "not locally responsive"; "under-resourced"; and, was "too limiting" in the way it defined 'social exclusion'.

The submission argues that the current programme has squeezed the definition of the social inclusion problem, focussing on labour market problems, and this has had an inevitable impact on the scope of solutions.

It notes that "If SICAP 2 is to be a true social inclusion and community development-led programme, it must take a more holistic approach to the identification of social inclusion needs and solutions. Our long experience with those most distant from the labour market demonstrates both the value of and the need for pre-development work prior to activation but this work must be given sufficient weight and resources within a social inclusion programme."

The submission seeks new programme goals "giving due regard to raising awareness and knowledge, predevelopment work, local collective action, capacity-building, core skills, lifelong learning, employment, self-employment and the social economy."

ILDN members argue that a one-size-fits-all approach has not worked. It talks up communities having much more of a say about what their needs truly are and the solutions they favour. It calls for "properly targeted local interventions based on collective action".

The ILDN decries an over-emphasis on quantitative targets, saying they are "a disincentive to work with the most disadvantaged and complex cases": "Targets need to be calculated at more realistic levels that reflect the complexities of the challenges faced by many of our service users."

The ILDN believes its voice should be heard, pointing out that, "No organisation is closer to the Programme and the communities it serves than ILDN and its 45 members who deliver SICAP on a daily basis nationwide."

With previous programmes, these 45 community-based organisations directly managed and delivered anti-poverty and community programmes at local level.

Under SICAP, these companies help to "implement" the programme on behalf

of Local and Community Development Committees set up during former minister Phil Hogan's tenure.

The Network is critical of the policy turn whereby social and community-based services can sometimes now be provided by for-profit companies. In Britain, which went down this road before, there were many negative impacts, the Network said.

The ILDN also condemned the closure of smaller community-focused services, resulting in the erosion of community cohesion and loss of local intelligence about the community's needs as well as erosion of the local voluntary base.

While it is common to call for more resources, the point is made that funding today for SICAP is less than half what was invested in communities through a similar programme almost 10 years ago.

The nine key changes sought are:

1. Adopt a Community-Led Local Development Approach.
2. Enhance the programme's capacity for local flexibility and encourage innovation.
3. Broaden its definition of Social Inclusion.
4. Incorporate "thematic, area-based and life-cycle approaches".
5. Link programme outcomes to cross-government commitments to tackle poverty and social exclusion.
6. Widen the monitoring framework.
7. Adequately fund the programme.
8. Modify the resource allocation model.
9. Review the commissioning model (currently open public tender) "to ensure continuity of delivery to disadvantaged communities and individuals".



*LAST CALL FOR THE TRAIN TO CORK: Toni O'Neill and Ryan Howard of South East Cork Area Development made their views clear during the springtime consultations about the Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP). Their community organisation is one of 45 companies currently implementing the Programme whose views were sought on 'SICAP 2'. See pages 22-25 for more coverage.*



## Our Communities Summary Report

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EXAMPLE

service. Her employers promote a work policy which expects staff without young family and children to work more unsociable shifts, for example night shifts and bank holidays. Rachel has noticed that this has led to more of her lesbian, gay or bisexual colleagues working these shifts as they often don't have children.

DISCRIMINATION BY ASSOCIATION

Is when someone is treated less well than other people because of who they know or who they are connected to.

EXAMPLE

A person is harassed at work (for example, called names and made the butt of practical jokes) because a member of their family is gay.

DISCRIMINATION BY IMPUTATION

Is when someone is treated less well than other people because they are labelled as being in one of the groups covered by the nine discriminatory grounds.

EXAMPLE

An employer will not let an employee interact with customers because their supervisor thinks that they are a member of the LGBT community

HARRASSMENT

Any form of unwanted conduct related to any of the protected grounds that has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity and creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for the person.

EXAMPLE

Regular customers in a hardware shop avoid a checkout operated by a trans person and make loud offensive remarks to other checkout staff.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Any form of unwanted verbal, non-verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature for the person.

EXAMPLE

Making sexual innuendos or repeatedly asking someone out, telling lewd jokes or sharing sexual anecdotes, inappropriate & unwanted touching of a person or their clothing.

VICTIMISATION

When an employer dismisses someone, or treats them badly because they have made a complaint related to equality law or supporting someone who has made such a complaint, eg. by giving a witness statement in support of their complaint.

EXAMPLE

Being moved to a position of lower responsibility after making a complaint.

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with colleagues and can lead to feelings of isolation.

# 1 IN 4

LGBT employees surveyed have been verbally abused at some stage in their careers on the basis of their sexual orientation or gender identity.

- wages and opportunities
- job satisfaction
- productivity

When people don't feel comfortable disclosing their sexual orientation or talking about their personal life it can make it harder to bond with colleagues and can lead to feelings of isolation

LGBT employees regularly have to decide if disclosing their sexual orientation or gender identity in a particular work context will negatively impact their working lives. 1 in 4 LGBT employees surveyed have been verbally abused at some stage in their careers on the basis of their sexual orientation or gender identity.

# WHAT CAN YOU DO?

If you believe you have been, or are currently being discriminated against there are a number of things you can do:

- Make sure you're informed. Find out what the organisation's policies & procedures are for preventing & handling discrimination
- Keep a diary documenting everything that happens, including what you've done to try stopping it. This can help if you make a complaint.
- Tell someone. The person to talk to might be a Human Resource Manager. If there isn't one you should report it directly to your employer, a supervisor/manager or health & safety representative. This situation might be able to be resolved informally, without any official complaint.
- The Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission & the Workplace Relations Commission are separate organisations that work to ensure equality at work.
- The Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission is a statutory body set up to provide information to the public on human rights and equality legislation. It can, at its discretion, provide legal assistance to people who wish to bring claims to the Equality Tribunal. The information available at [ihrec.ie](#) can help you decide if you have grounds for making a complaint under the Employment Equality Acts (EEA).
- The Workplace Relations Commission is the place to bring a discrimination claim under the Employment Equality Acts 1998–2015 using the online complaint form available on [workplacerelations.ie](#). It investigates or mediates claims of unlawful discrimination under equality legislation.
- To contact a solicitor for legal advice in cases of discrimination - [www.lawsociety.ie](http://www.lawsociety.ie)

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