

# CHANGING IRELAND

ISSUE 6

The National Newsletter of the Community Development Support Programmes

JAN-MAR '03

## Seal of approval

### INSIDE

- Projects called to national meeting
- President launches  
North-West Network
- Dublin projects key to people's  
development
- Christy Moore backs Ennis group
- West training evaluate CE
- Men need to talk more

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COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT  
SUPPORT PROGRAMME



# Smile for the camera!

In 2003, the CDSPs will cost the taxpayer €29 million. For the same price you could build seven and a half miles of national primary route and no more. Obviously, for the price of a few miles of tarmac, the Community Development Support Programmes represent excellent value for money. And it is high time we made the public properly aware of this.

As Ministers O'Cuiv and Ahern consider what they will do with the Programmes, it has struck home among volunteers and paid workers that raising the profile of the CDSPs is a priority. The CDSPs might be broken up, or perhaps amalgamated with other programmes or schemes or made junior partners in a new approach to community development.

The 155 development projects funded through the CDSPs may have substantial individual profiles at local level, but the programmes now need a national profile more than ever.

We should be shivering in our boots because the CDSPs is the 'invisible man' of the community/voluntary sector. Well perhaps not invisible, but certainly the many, serious successes achieved by the Community Development Programme and the Programme for Core-Funded Groups are hidden behind a shroud. There is unnecessary modesty, a distrust of the media and many projects have not viewed media-work as important to their future. It is crucial now for projects to rise up in a chorus and promote, in a co-ordinated and spirited manner, what, how and why they do what they do.

In recent years, the level of networking between projects has increased hugely. This gives projects the opportunity at last to mount an ongoing publicity campaign to alert the general public, politicians and the cabinet to the importance of the CDSPs.

Say some people, "Community development is so difficult to explain, I can't even explain to my mother what I do at work all day."

Nonsense! Tell the stories.

Of individuals - off drugs and now a leader in a youth club. Of groups - single parents, supposedly 'a lazy shower', getting together and doing a county-wide survey that showed only 2% of single parents never had a job. Of children - passing their ECDL at the age of 11 in a portocabin computer school in rural Wexford.

Of men - "happy with my life for the first time in 40 years" because he joined a men's group. Of working class women - doing art as a means of breaking away from the shackles of dreary farmwork and housechores or (in the case of one middle-class woman) addiction to television. Of Travellers - completing university courses and breaking the mould.

Of older persons - organising their own rural transport schemes.

This is only a taster of what is happening. The point is that the CDSPs delivers (a case proven by Nexus). It's time to promote that message.

We need to shout our successes from the rooftops. Not alone so the Minister will hear - he is incidentally touring around to see for himself. No, we need to shout aloud so that our sector gets more recognition from the public. Logically speaking, there should follow a greater commitment by government to fund development in our communities.

\* \* \*

Finally, as Minister O'Cuiv told 'Changing Ireland' in the winter issue, he is only a phone-call away if anyone has a point to make. How many people phoned him?

**P.S.** Read pages 20/21 for tips on how to write your news story.

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### DISCLAIMER

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# President praises 'Radiant' volunteers

## - as North West Regional Forum is launched

By Sandy Holland

**V**OLUNTEERS and staff from the 21 projects packed out Harvey's Point Hotel near Donegal Town when President Mary McAleese came to formally launch the CDSPs North West Regional Forum.

In a vibrant speech, the President praised the "new kind of intelligence" that volunteers had brought to their community work and to their communities. "People divide into two categories", said the President, "radiators and drains! – The 'drains' sit around giving out about all the things that are wrong, the radiators get out there and fix them. 'I'm glad to be amongst radiators,' said the President. She then went on to describe community volunteers as people who have given a new source of power to others, without taking away from themselves.

The President explained that community initiatives and facilities don't happen by chance, "somewhere along the line somebody decides that they care enough".

In describing the changes that have taken place in Ireland over the last few years as a tremendous opportunity, the President acknowledged that not all resources available to Irish society were distributed evenly. "To shift these obstacles", explained the President, "many heads are always better than one." The President went on to say that volunteers in community work have made "highly intelligent connections" to create the future they want for their communities.

Two or three Forum seminars will be held annually to provide opportunities for joint working between projects, networking and discussion on common areas of work. The Forum should also act as a platform for campaigning on issues crucial to the sustaining and on-going development of projects tackling the causes and effects of poverty.

"10 years from now, you will come back and you will be amazed at what has been accomplished," she President McAleese. Her speech was warmly received, as was the time that the President allocated to speaking to all those present.

The day included a lively and topical drama by Siobhan McGloin and Ann McGowan of Atlantic View CDP and Anne McNulty of the Twilight Zone Active Age Group, all based in Ballyshannon. This well researched and feisty drama highlighted the inequalities that still exist for women throughout Ireland.

The scene dramatised that even with the

excellent progress that has been made, there is still much work to be done. "Why," asked this animated cast, "despite gender balance legislation being on the statute book, have many of such measures still not been implemented? – In the Borders, Midlands and West Region 88% of politicians are men and only 12% are women". This story is set to run and run...

The launch of the Forum was also marked by four speeches from representatives of projects in the North West. Rosemary Kerrigan of the Forum's co-ordinating group explained the role of the Forum in giving an opportunity for, "projects working on similar issues to learn from one another and establish working partnerships, so avoiding 'having to re-invent the wheel'". Rosemary went on to say that the Forum will, "give the voluntary management members, and their staff a venue to meet, where they may avail of the opportunity to 'pick one-another's brains' and to chat outside their own individual patch. It is also where support and assistance in the development of policies and lobbying will be available from the Regional Policy Workers, and where 'Campaigns for Change' will be born."

A speech in both Irish and English by Brendan Byrne of South West Donegal Communities Partnership CDP along with speeches by John Cawley of Ballymote Family Resource Centre and Paul Kernan of Pobail Le Chéile CDP all outlined the importance of addressing society's imbalances and in so doing so creating equal opportunities for all citizens. Mr. Kernan talked of the Forum being

the opportunity for an 'across the hedge' style discussion and for the Forum to function in a learning and enabling way.

In commenting on the launch Mary McGowan of Donegal County Childcare Committee expressed the importance for her committee of working in close association with CDSPs projects.

The North West Regional Forum, although only newly launched, has been working in the background in the North West for some time. Links have been developed between projects and collaborative areas of work encompassing a number of projects have been developed, including strategic and lobbying-based work on combating domestic violence. That work has been supported by Women's Aid, one of the Specialist Support Agencies supporting projects on the ground.

A co-ordinating group for the Forum has now been established. The challenge for that group is to see that the Forum becomes all that it aspires to. It is also important that the time spent by projects in collaborative work does not take away greatly from the time each project spends working at local level.

• For more information on the North West Regional Forum contact:  
The Secretary, The Co-ordinating Group, North West Regional Forum,  
c/o Holywell Trust Support Agency,  
Old Laghy Road, Ardeskin, Donegal Town .Tel: 073-40830.  
E-mail: holywelltrustsa@eircom.net  
Website: www.holywelltrustsa.com



• CDP members attending the launch





● "The joys of supporting each other": Members of ACCESS 2000 - Rose Ahearn, Olivia Storan, Denis Byrne, Dolores Treacy, Terry Carton and Natasha Griffiths.

# Passion for women's work led Pauline to volunteer

**L**IKE many of the other women who have come to training through ACCESS 2000 (a Core-Funded Group within the CDSPs) in Wexford, co-ordinator Pauline Ennis started out as a volunteer in a community setting. As part of the local ISPCC programme, Pauline found herself "listening to children who had absolutely terrible struggles in their early childhood and were beginning to reach adult life with all this baggage".

Working in a well paid job at the time Pauline through her experience was moved to another way of looking on life. "I knew that with a little bit of extra support these young people would continue in education", she said, "but after five years of volunteering I didn't have the appropriate qualification to stay in community work and I needed them and that's where ACCESS came in."

Access 2000 works with women's groups. Starting back into education through community training, Pauline along with many other committed women started on a journey that would eventually lead to three innovative courses: the National Cert in Community Education; Women Making Choices; and Training For Trainers.

The courses were to transform their lives and lead them in many new exciting directions. The culmination of that educational journey hit a really high celebratory note in November '02, when the Lord Mayor of Wexford, Cllr

Philomena Roche, and Molly Brennan made presentations to a large group of graduates in the Heritage Park restaurant. To add to the speciality of the evening groups of women tutors and students had travelled from Budapest, Germany and Denmark, as part of a European exchange programme.

In making her address, the Lord Mayor reminded her listeners, "The 'Women Making Choices' course was designed for women who want to make a break from the home and 'Training For Trainers' was for women already active in their communities."

Molly Brennan, now a support worker with FRAMEWORK Support Agency (based in Waterford) said she was only able to stand there and present the certificates "because I started out on the same journey as you."

For Francis Roche, a graduate of the trainers' course the graduation ceremony marked the first time she had spoken in front of a large group publicly: "I'm Francis, a loving house wife, mother of nine and grandmother of fourteen," she declared. "That was my life before I spoke to a friend who put me in touch with ACCESS 2000."

For all associated with supporting the women on both courses it was a proud moment to see them celebrating their educational achievement. "You have to remember," noted Pauline, "that we work with women who have really experienced the affects of educational disadvantage,

who need to be encouraged and supported before they will even consider going on an education programme. The participants in ACCESS would have had very negative experiences of formal education, though that changes completely when they get involved with education at this level – which then impacts positively on their children who maybe also would potentially become early school leavers, so there is a positive knock on effect".

When asked about value for money in an new age of cutbacks Pauline is crystal clear on how good the value really is: "This educational work has immense positive impact on the lives of the women involved, on all around them and within their communities. The amount of money it takes to deliver community education is minute compared to its impacts and it prepares women to go back in a new confident way into their families, communities and employment."

Listening to Pauline's passion for the work and hearing the evidence of its success leaves one in no doubt that the work of ACCESS should continue for many years to come. Because of the work, the quality of lives for women will continue to improve dramatically.

• For more information, contact ACCESS 2000. The co-ordinator is Pauline Ennis, the project worker is Nuncie Murphy and the administrator is Marian Donegan. Tel: 053-21200. E-mail [accesswex@iol.ie](mailto:accesswex@iol.ie)



# School kids pilot new way of learning about poverty

## - via CDP and school partnerships

By Sandra Gowran

**I**F YOUR Community Development Project or Core-Funded Group is finding it difficult to involve teenagers in your activities, a way has been forged. For the first time, poverty in Ireland is becoming part of the school curriculum and students are getting the chance to learn, through active participation, about what causes it.

In a pilot-partnership called '*Poverty, the Curriculum and the Classroom Project*', organised by the Curriculum Development Unit of the City of Dublin VEC, schools and community projects in Dublin, Kilkenny and Westmeath have begun working together. Students in second-level are learning about the real nature, causes and effects of poverty and are gaining experience as volunteers in homework clubs.

And teachers are delighted to find their charges fully absorbed and interested in the tasks. "It makes the classroom theory real and challenging for the students. Their interest is really being held," said one teacher (speaking anonymously as part of an evaluation).

Another teacher remarked, "Pupils are really enjoying the homework clubs. They feel they are contributing but also find it a challenge that keeps their interest which makes my job easier."

From the community worker perspective there has also been an enthusiastic response: "Our project is now supported by transition year students and the partnership process of preparation has ensured a quality commitment by the students which is well co-ordinated at school level," said one community worker.

North Clondalkin CDP is the first CDP to become involved - they are at the planning phase. Now the organisers want more CDPs to

### INVITATION TO PILOTS

People working on pilot projects under the CDSPs umbrella are invited to inform 'Changing Ireland' readers about their work. We hope to hear from policy workers, co-ordinators, development workers and volunteers. Only pilot projects involving Community Development Projects or Core-Funded Groups (ie within the CDSPs) can be featured. Contact your Regional Reporter or the Editor (see pages 20/21).

become involved as the scheme takes on a more nationwide focus. Currently there are seven partnerships operating around the country: two in Kilkenny, and one each in Mullingar, Co. Westmeath, and in Rathmines, Rush, Clondalkin and Clonsilla in Dublin.

Funded by the Combat Poverty Agency, the project aims "to develop and implement strategies and mechanisms to establish the teaching of poverty and related social justice issues within second level education."

The project worked by inviting second-level schools and community groups to form partnerships in poverty awareness education. Schools identify community groups that have an anti-poverty focus and who adopt community development principles; so, where they exist, CDPs or Family Resource Centres are often the first choice.

Increased awareness of poverty and social exclusion is the ultimate aim of the project and it should also help to build stronger communi-

ties.

A partnership has been operating since September between two schools and three Family Resource Centres in Kilkenny. The three resource centres are New Park Close FRC, Loughboy Area FRC, Fr. McGrath FRC, while the schools involved are Kilkenny College and Colaiste Pobail Osrai (part of Kilkenny City Vocational School).

In effect the schools are providing a module in 'poverty awareness education' that consists of a volunteering experience for the students. The students are offered the opportunity to share their knowledge and themselves with younger students in after-schools programmes being run by the resource centres. The students also engage in classroom activities so they can understand the nature, causes and effects of poverty. They are gaining hugely from the experience of working with the younger children and developing empathy and understanding of their backgrounds.

"The rationale for school-community partnership in poverty awareness education is clear, the challenge however of forging partnerships is great, but the benefits far-reaching for all concerned," said a spokesperson for the CDVEC Curriculum Development Unit.

Soon, the organisers will be inviting more partnerships to develop. Obviously CDPs and Core-Funded Groups stand to benefit should they become involved.

**• If you would like to receive more information about the project, contact Sandra Gowran at: CDVEC Curriculum Development Unit, Sundrive Road, Crumlin, Dublin 12. Tel. 01-453 5487. E-mail sandra.gowran@cdu.cdvec.ie**

## THE VOTE IS A POWERFUL WEAPON

It costs nothing, is available throughout the country, it's very powerful and it's the one thing politicians respect and fear. The vote. And, according to Minister Eamon O'Cuiv, a politician will always give the time to listen to the rural old. Because they vote. It could be the same for other groups if only they did the same.

Said Minister O'Cuiv: "The old people in rural Ireland have disproportionate clout for the simple reason that they go down and mark the ballot paper. And I would honestly say that groups like Travellers, groups in the low-voting areas which tend to be the socially-excluded areas of the city give away the most powerful weapon they have because very few of them vote."

He said politicians will work even for those who do not generally vote because the politicians believe in the cause, "But I would honestly say here today that, if you could convince the people who feel excluded to vote, you would actually give them the greatest weapon they will ever have and they would multiply (their power) by four."

"And remember one thing about the vote - it's free, you don't have to pay for it. And it's the one thing that is universally available to everybody. It is the one thing

that the richest person in this country is brought down to the level of the poorest person. And the only qualification is that you have to be 18 years of age.

"One of the great tragedies I find as a politician going round my constituency is that I know that all of us (politicians) would be able to spend much more time in the areas of social disadvantage if there was a higher rate of vote and I would put the challenge to you [development workers and volunteers] that there is no greater service you could provide than to make sure that those basic rights are used and I commend you for bringing it up as an issue. It is so simple to do it, it takes fifteen minutes, yet people give it away, they don't understand the value."

He gave the example of the three thousand people living on Irish Islands who are known for their determination to cast their vote: "They have made their cause so important because they knew the power of the ballot box."

"I just think that it is a very important thing to get across... helping people to realise that the power is within their own grasp so use it. If we do that we suddenly find that those who believe in themselves actually become very powerful."



## NORTH-EAST REGION

# Youth issues on film

Youths are to make their own video in Dundalk. A group of young people from the Cox's Demesne area of the town are to make a video highlighting the main issues for them. The video is supported by Le Cheile CDP and is part of a process to establish a Youth Forum locally.

"Young people do not often get a chance to make their views known and the video is an opportunity for them to express themselves," reported the lead story in the most recent edition of 'The Four Trees', a local newsletter produced by Le Cheile CDP.

# Radio licence granted

The Broadcasting Commission of Ireland has awarded a joint licence to Dundalk Media Centre and Louth Youth Federation.

The station manager, Alan Byrne, was featured in a report by 'Changing Ireland' a year ago, when plans were still at the drawing-board

stage. Dundalk Weekend Radio – DWR – now broadcasts popular shows such as 'Magic Moments', 'Chatterbox' and 'Talk of the Town'. For more information:

Tel. 042-9357496;

E-mail [info@dundalkmediacentre.ie](mailto:info@dundalkmediacentre.ie)

## MID-WEST REGION

# AONTAS, CAN and Meitheal organise course

AONTAS, CAN and Meitheal will deliver a course in Community Development Consultancy, with a specific emphasis on promoting equality over 2003-'04. The

course will be held in Nenagh and organisers hope it will develop the skills and knowledge of community-based women who wish to work as consultants.



● Christy Moore visited Ennis in December to express support for Travellers in the town who have nowhere to live. Ennis CDP is supporting the campaign which has seen Travellers mount a regular protest outside the local authority offices.

# 'Changing Ireland' media skills training

**A**T local level, many project workers and volunteers have received media training of various sorts over the years. In recent months, the 'Changing Ireland' Editor, Allen Meagher, has given training, particularly focussing on the publication of local newsletters, to project people around the country.

Over the coming year, plans are afoot to hold training workshops, possibly in the four provinces and in the capital, the aim being to provide specific media skills training for CDSPs staff and volunteers. Due to time-presures, the scope for providing local-level training days is extremely limited. (An exception is made for projects who employ people working as Regional Reporters for 'Changing Ireland' in appreciation of management backing for their involvement in this national project.

The Editor has in recent months facilitated

newsletter and general media skills training days in counties Louth, Cavan, Waterford, Wexford, Limerick and Dublin. Further requests, especially for newsletter training, have been received and plans are being prepared.

A media skills training day for our Regional Reporters was held at Mountwood/Fitzgerald Park CDP in Dun Laoighre, Co. Dublin, in November. Newly-appointed Dublin Regional Reporter, Nick Murphy, is based there and he will be contributing to the magazine from the next issue onwards. On-site training at one-to-one level between the editor and reporters takes place intermittently.

A final piece of good news - Noelle McNamara has taken up the position as part-time administrative assistant with 'Changing Ireland'. She is employed through the Community Employment scheme.

# Previous research on CE

The work of projects under the CDSPs is heavily dependent on the support of the CE scheme. In 2000, prior to West Training's new piece of research (referred to elsewhere in this issue) Kerry Travellers apparently produced some research on the impact of the CE cuts and this was distributed within the Programmes.

The Department then issued a tender for further research to assess the full impact of the cuts on the CDSPs and to inform the White Paper on Voluntary Activity. There were no responses to the advert to tender. It does not appear that the issue was taken any further as it was recognised that recommendations in relation to the CE scheme were (and still are) the responsibility of the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment.

# CDSPs strategic planning update

The CDSPs Strategic Planning subgroup submitted a draft copy of the Strategic Plan to the National Advisory Committee on December 10th last, thereby completing their role as set down by the Advisory

Committee. The submission was backed up by a presentation on the day.

The Advisory Committee discussed the draft plan at length but the consensus was that more time was needed by individual members for reflection before the draft could be ratified. A special meeting of the Advisory Committee was scheduled for January 21st, at which it was expected that decisions would be made in relation to any amendments necessary to the draft and as to the next steps in progressing the Plan. The outcome of this meeting was not available at time of going to press.

# Year for people with disabilities

2003 is the European Year of People with Disabilities and information on activities can be downloaded from the website: [www.eypd2003.org](http://www.eypd2003.org) An Taoiseach, Bertie Ahern will officially launch the year on January 28th.



# Profile: David Greene

- age 18 and at the heart of voluntary management

Interview by Sandy Holland

**H**AVING just turned 18, David Greene of The Rosses CDP, in County Donegal, must be one of the youngest people in the country to be a voluntary management committee member. He has been involved at The Rosses for almost four years now as the project has worked its way through its pre-development phase of identifying committee members and the areas of work it is going to concentrate on along with the development of its first 3-year work plan.

This is no mean feat as David explains, "There are times you really think this is just too much hassle, too time-consuming, and that there's school work and other commitments to think of." Despite difficult times, David along with the rest of the The Rosses CDP committee have stuck it out and were recently approved by the Department for funding under the Community Development Programme.

David is originally from Dungloe where The Rosses project is based and is studying for his Leaving Certificate. He has been involved with the Civil Defence. He has also completed his Bronze President's Award fulfilling the four aspects of the award in community involvement, personal skill, physical activity and adventure skills. To achieve his award he taught Information Technology to a class of primary school-children, cycled every day over a twelve-week period and spent three days camping on Gola, an island off the Donegal coastline. Incidentally, he used his involvement with The Rosses CDP to achieve the community involvement aspect of the award. David is also involved with The Red Cross and currently holds both basic and intermediate first aid certificates – a skill, which may well come in handy when resuscitating stressed out development workers on the project!

I caught up with David recently to ask him more about his involvement as a voluntary management committee member and to see what his thoughts were on future developments at The Rosses CDP.

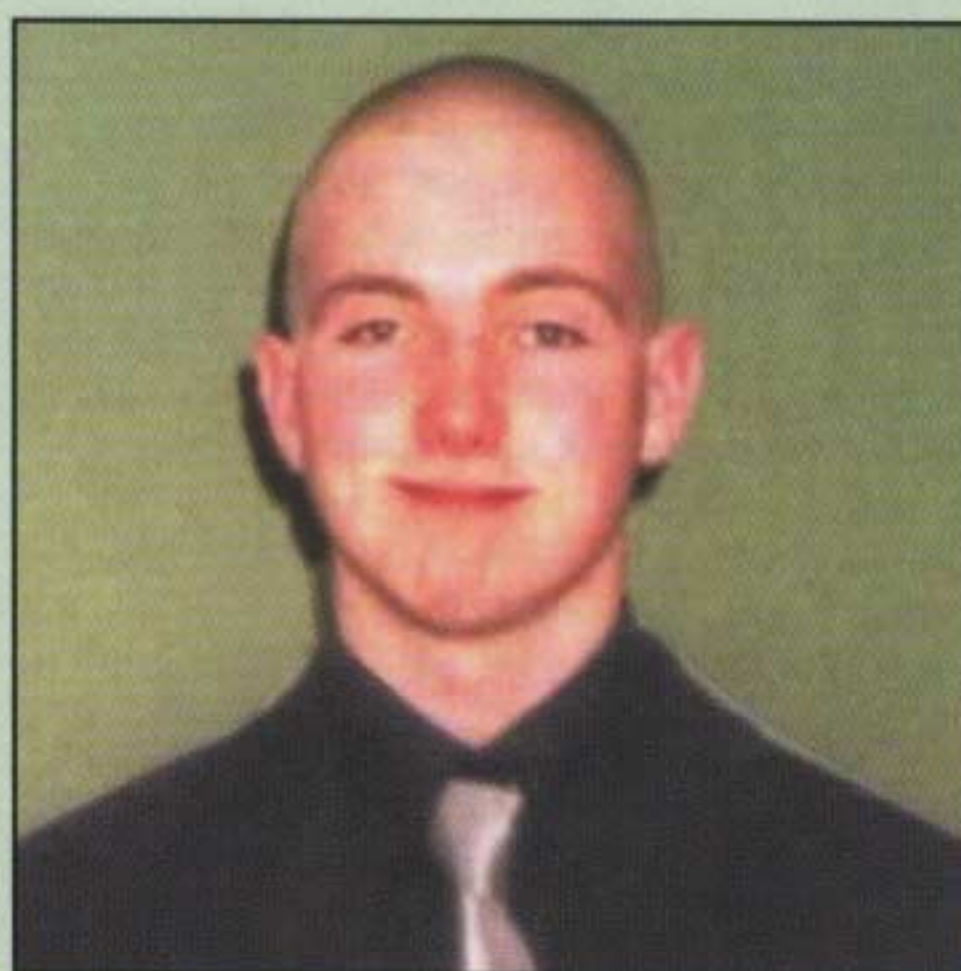
How did you first become involved in The Rosses CDP management committee?

Well, my dad and myself went along to one of the initial meetings concerning the project to see what the whole thing was about. After the meeting my dad decided that it wasn't for him and that the project seemed 'too much bother', but I liked the idea and decided to go back to the next meeting.

What was it that particularly attracted you to the project?

The idea of the project addressing the disadvantage of the area seemed great. I know the area has its problems and the idea that local people were being given the opportunity to do something about it themselves was appealing.

How do you find working as part of a voluntary management committee?



● David Greene.

We've had visits from two other more established projects in the Northwest and they really helped us see where our project is going. It made a real difference when the set-up of the project seemed a long way off.

And on the down side?

We're in our fourth year now and we've been at this a long time. There's been times when it's been hard to see how the project was going to get off the ground.

Does Youth Work form part of the 3-year Work Plan?

Yes, We've identified four main areas in our plan that are to be addressed, namely, rural transport difficulties, improving childcare facilities, older people's needs and providing activities for young people. However, older people and young people will remain high on our priority list.

What do you think are the current state of affairs and future prospects for young people in The Rosses?

Very poor. At present there is no further education facility and employment opportunities remain poor – there is only one factory and other jobs available are in the general service field. It really leaves young people only 3 options, to move away for further education [which usually means staying away for employment as well, as there is a lack of employment opportunities to come back to after further education], to go on the dole or to emigrate.

How do you think The Rosses CDP can contribute to the well being and development of young people?

I think it's too early to say, but I feel that one area might be providing after school and weekend activities. Young people are in desperate need of an alternative to the pub – there can often be a vicious circle of violent behaviour as a result of too much drink which leads to the Gardai becoming involved and sometimes a young person getting a criminal record. This leads to even less opportunities for the person and so the cycle continues. So, there's a real

need for an alternative.

The Rosses are currently recruiting – how do you feel about being responsible for directing and managing workers?

Okay really. I think it will be excellent experience and worth a lot for my own development. The structure of the project with its Company Limited by Guarantee status limiting the committee's financial liability brings a lot of security so I'm looking forward to it.

Do you think you'll make a responsible employer?

I'll tell you in six months!

What are your hopes for The Rosses CDP over the next year?

Once we cross the initial hurdle of getting staff, using our funding and getting the office set up I look forward to seeing the work starting on the two areas of work we've prioritised. A big thing will be to get known locally and that will draw in more people to the project and possibly lead to the expansion of the management committee.

In what way would you like to see young people involved in the Community Development Programme?

I think it is vital for more young people to become involved. All too often it is people of an older generation involved in most of this type of community development project, and through no fault of their own they can make ill-informed decisions which concern the youth. If more young people were involved then real issues affecting them could be tackled.

## The Rosses CDP

The Rosses is a rural area of northwest Donegal, stretching from Carrickfinn to Gweenbarra Bridge along the Atlantic coast and from Crolly Bridge via Doocharry to Gweenbarra Bridge. There are also a number of inhabited islands off the coast, the largest of these being Aranmore (population 700). The area is characterised by prolonged denial of supports and services leading to the area becoming disadvantaged. The area has one of the highest unemployment rates with few career opportunities.

Aims of the group:

Short term – to establish the group as a CDP, undertake training with Holywell Support Agency and to recruit a development worker and administrator.

Medium term – to research the level and causes of social exclusion in the locality, working to reduce unemployment, provide accessible information services, to develop a media strategy and to outreach and target services to disadvantaged groups.

Long term – to develop inclusive services for the target groups of children, young people, women, lone-parents, disadvantaged men and women, people with disabilities, older people, Travellers and ethnic minorities.



# Minister O'Cuiv defends lower budget allocation as "adequate"

**T**HE Minister for Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs, Eamon O'Cuiv, confirmed to the Dail in early December that there would be reductions in funding for voluntary and community activities in 2003. Questions to the minister spoke of a 17% cut in the department's budget and 25% in the CLAR programme. In response, Minister O'Cuiv said that the allocation would be adequate to meet existing commitments, but the overall pace of the expansion of the Community Development Support Programmes would be affected. He had decided to wind down the CAIT programme but would look at other ways to implement access to information technology for those in disadvantaged areas. He added:

"With responsibility for both community and local development now in the one department, streamlining can take place to ensure more efficient delivery of services and better value for money. In the longer terms, this will ensure enhanced and more efficiently delivered services to those most in need of assistance. I recognised the need to prioritise funding in certain cases - an example being the drugs initiative, for which an increase in funding of 16% has been provided in 2003."

The Minister said that this year the government would spend €265m on Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs. The provision for Community Affairs in 2003 was set at €100m, a decrease of 9% compared to 2002. Of that, €29.538m had been allocated to Community and Voluntary Services (which primarily covers the Community Development Programme and the Programme for Core-Funded Groups). This allocation would enable his department to meet its current core commitments to Community Development Projects in 2003.

Regarding existing contracts due to expire at end 2002, these groups would be offered interim funding for January and February 2003 and a one-year contract thereafter subject to satisfactory progress over the previous period and receipt of a one-year workplan.

Given the tighter economic situation, it was necessary to refocus resources and identify priorities for the continued funding of programmes that benefit local communities. The intervening period would be used to review "optimal coherence" across the range of the department's schemes. It was not envisaged that the reduction in funding would impact negatively on the work carried out by the CDPs, including those that worked with the elderly and disabled. The reduced allocation might mean that they were not in a position to progress the Community Development Programme at the same pace as in previous years. Further expansion would have to take account of existing commitments and resources.

Other programmes were also cut

Generally, the cuts range from 4% to 16% across the European Union programmes such as PEACE II, LEADER, INTERREG; urban and rural programmes such as RAPID and CLAR;

the Community Development Programme and the Local Social Inclusion Programme. Existing activities will be slowed down.

Regarding CLAR, the focus is set to move away from investment in non-national roads and smaller roads. There should follow a definitive work plan for water sewerage, capital health, community projects and telecommunications.

The Partnerships are effected. "The reduction in funding available will result in some slowing down of the work of the Partnerships in 2003," Minister O'Cuiv acknowledged.

Funding for LEADER and rural development measures in INTERREG and the PEACE II programme is down 4% for 2003, though it is not anticipated by the Minister that the pro-

## BUDGET AT A GLANCE:

- Cuts in funding for Voluntary and Community activities.
- Cuts range from 4% to 16%.
- Pace of development will be affected.
- Interim funding for community and voluntary groups for January/February 2003: one-year CDP contracts thereafter, subject to satisfactory progress.
- Of the Department's €265m budget, the Community and Voluntary Services Section of the Department (which primarily covers the Community Development Programme and the Programme for Core-Funded Groups) received €29.538m.

gramme cuts will have any negative impacts over the lifetime of the programmes.

All contractual commitments entered into under the CAIT programme would be honoured. However, the programme itself is no longer running.

Minister O'Cuiv, speaking in the Dail, referred, very briefly, to the fact that he was considering "how a rural social economy, as referred to in the agreed programme for government, might best be established."

## RE-THINK ON WHITE PAPER GRANTS

White paper grants for voluntary organizations: networks and federations scheme are to be readvertised, but with less funding available. The scheme for training and supports is to go to consultants and a research funding scheme has been deferred beyond 2003. The matter was debated in the Dail in December.

€7m had been put in place following the white paper, but none had been spent. The Minister for Community, Rural and Gaeltacht

Affairs, Eamon O'Cuiv, said that regarding the networks and federations scheme he "felt that there were some very serious legal issues arising from the methodology involved." He said the scheme would be readvertised at the earliest possible date. There were issues such as the definition of networks and federations that were quite tricky to codify in a fair and equal manner. The scheme would be funded in 2003. He had set aside funding for the scheme, but it would be at a reduced level, not the level outlined in the white paper.

The situation was slightly different in regard to the scheme for training and support. Here, 540 applications had been received. In order to expedite the process, consultants would be recruited to make an assessment of all applications and make recommendations at the earliest possible date. The Minister added that the programme of research funding in the white paper would be deferred until after 2003.

## MINISTER WANTS SIMPLER FUNDING SCHEMES

The Minister for Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs, Eamon O'Cuiv, told the Dail in December that one of the most significant problems he encountered was the multiplicity of options for funding, all of which comes from the state in the first instance.

"This causes a significant amount of unnecessary work for small communities....I would like to see greater simplicity and a much better focus on the schemes available," he said, reiterating a point he has made before.

## RAPID PROPOSED 8 NEW CDPs

Minister O'Cuiv gave details of RAPID plans relevant to the Drugs Task Force activities. Eight priority areas had been identified by RAPID for a community development project: Loughlinstown, Shankill, Crumlin, Bluebell, Dolphin House, and Inchicore in Dublin; a CDP for the arts; and Waterford city.

Pre-development work was already under way. The full establishment of these groups as CDPs was subject to available resources and competing commitments within the programme. In the case of Waterford city and the CDP for the arts, the application had yet to be assessed.

- Dail Eireann, Debates, 3rd December 2002

## FAMILY GETS €1 EXTRA SIMPLE

The Minister for Social and Family Affairs, Mary Coughlan, during Dail debate on the recent budget, said that an additional €1m had been allocated to the Family Support Agency for 2003, bringing its budget to €17.1m. Note: remember that the Family Support Agency has responsibility for other important areas other than the Family Resource Centres Programme.



## When horse law becomes an ass

Dear Editor,

The Control of Horses Act 1996 was introduced to address the problem of wandering horses and their irresponsible owners. The purpose of the Act was to allow Local Authorities set bye-laws to control the keeping and movement of horses within their area but is this what the law is being used for? I don't think so! Up to now Local Authorities and the Gardai have interpreted it in order to eliminate all horses from cities and towns particularly local authority housing estates.

Implementation of the law has focused on removing and impounding all horses from within control areas. For the first 4 years the idea of people wishing to comply was never considered. Indeed until 2002 Local Authorities had no mechanism to process any application for a licence and horse owners who have applied since find that regulations regarding land ownership, stabling and insurance make it virtually impossible to meet the criteria. To the best of my knowledge no horse licences have yet been issued in the country since the introduction of the Act.

The legislation was needed because horse owners could not be identified or held liable for damage and injury caused by their animals or prosecuted for mistreatment or neglect of their horses. In response horse owners in Limerick set up a club, micro-chipped and insured their horses, submitted their details to the Local Authority and undertook to keep their horses off the greens and under control in a suitable field close to the estate. This means they are now identifiable and accountable. But they still fall short of total compliance and therefore are at risk of having their horses impounded when stray horses causing nuisance and posing a danger to children on the greens in the estate are ignored because they are too difficult to catch.

There is some evidence in Limerick that a more stringent crackdown on unlicensed horses may be accompanied by a greater degree of openness to licensing horses that are clearly trying to follow the spirit of the law. This is to be welcomed but all groups effected by this need to highlight the futility and flaws of any eradication policy. Such a policy is discriminatory in nature and ignores any possible benefits that horses can bring to communities. To use the Control of Horses Act to get rid of horses in certain areas would leave it open to the accusation that the "Law is an Ass"!

Yours sincerely  
 Juan Carlos Azzopardi  
 Community Development Network  
 Moyross  
 Community Centre,  
 Moyross, Limerick

## RE: National Meeting of projects & Support Agencies in the Community Development Support Programmes

8th January, '03

Hi Folks,

As you know, we now have a new Department and a new Minister who has decided to review how his Department will administer the CDSPs and the other Programmes within his remit (including the National Drugs Strategy, Young Peoples Funds and the Partnerships). In addition, the last budget has resulted in a 16% cut in funding for Voluntary and Community Services. Thus, in 2003, the CDSPs may face its worst crises to date with regard to both funding and how the Programme will be delivered.

So far we have no idea of how the forthcoming 'review' will be conducted. It is vital that the CDSPs is actively included in any negotiations about our future role and work. To this end, we urgently need to raise our profile both locally and nationally and to devise an action plan to ensure the years of development of the CDSPs are not lost in the coming months. If we don't act now, our voice will not be heard and changes will be imposed on us anyway.

The CDSPs Eastern Region is organising a national meeting to bring all projects and support agencies together in an effort to devise a national strategy which will allow us to effectively respond to this crisis. The meeting will take place on:

Tuesday the 4th of February, 2003, 11am – 4.30pm

In the Royal Dublin Hotel, O'Connell St, Dublin

We believe that it is of utmost importance that you attend this meeting and are asking for you to send up to two people along. An outline agenda for the day is attached.

In order to cater for the day, I would be grateful if you could contact me before the 28th of January to let me know if your group can attend. If you need any further information, please get in touch.

Thanks!

Claire Casey, Manager,  
 Community Action Programme Ballymun,  
 C/o AXIS, Main St., Ballymun, Dublin 9.  
 Tel: 01-8832162. Fax: 01-8832161.  
 E-mail: info@cap.ie

## National Meeting of CDSPs projects and support agencies on Tuesday, February 4th, 2003, Royal Dublin Hotel, O'Connell St., Dublin

**Purpose of meeting:** To agree a common, collective strategy to deal with the forthcoming changes in the administration and funding of the CDSPs.

## Guidelines for letter-writers

- Readers are invited to submit letters to 'Changing Ireland', but this does not guarantee publication.
- Letters must relate in some way to the national Community Development Support Programmes or something that impacts on it.
- It is only possible to find space for only a small selection of letters. Short letters are preferred. The Editor and Editorial Team reserve the right to edit out waffle and to cut the length of the letter if necessary.
- All letters for publication should be clearly marked 'Letters to the Editor' and must be sent by post.
- All letters should have the full name, address and telephone numbers (day and evening) of

the writer. Letter writers may receive a follow-up phone call and/or postcard. This is to ensure that the letter is authentic and this does not amount to a commitment to publish.

- We require writers to put their names to their opinions and therefore we do not publish anonymous letters. Pseudonyms are only used in extremely exceptional circumstances and in such cases the writer's name and address will remain with the Editor.
- We regret that we cannot give prior notification of when the letter will be printed, nor can we respond to unpublished letters.
- It is our policy to represent as wide a range of views as possible within the constraints of libel and good taste.



# The Diary of Horace McDermot

(Community Development worker and former faceless bureaucrat)

## ■ MONDAY, 2.20 pm

Back at work and at this stage Christmas and New Year seem like a blur now - mind you they were a bit of a blur at the time too. At least I had my Christmas shopping done way back. It was mostly books and CDs. It cost me €30 to buy 30 copies of the Flood Tribunal Interim Report. I got it in paperback for my parents, aunts and uncles and on CD Rom for my brothers, friends and the lads in the project. Shure it's the thought that counts.

## ■ TUESDAY, 10.50 am

Everybody in Ballybog CDP is very anxious about the switch to one year funding and we were all involved in putting a one year plan and budget together. Penny, the administrator, was very stressed getting accurate projections. I told her not to worry about what you need as there is in fact a very sophisticated method of calculating the funding that goes to projects. First they take the amount sought this year and subtract the amount received last year. Then subtract the amount of unutilised allocation left on 1st January. Then multiply it by the expected rate of inflation for next year. This is figure A. You then take the Department's 2003 budget and divide by the number of projects in the programme. This will give you figure B. Compare A to B whichever is the smallest figure that's your budget for the year.

## ■ WEDNESDAY, 4.45 pm

I asked Penny why it's 'a problem' for us if we end up with a surplus over €5,000 yet the Minister for Finance is 'a genius' when he manages to end up with a surplus of a few hundred million. She said we are a "not-for-profit" organisation which I suppose is the same as the saying "A profit is never welcome in his own country."

## ■ THURSDAY, 7.00 pm

There has been a huge lift in community spirit and pride around Ballybog since the penalty points for speeding were introduced. More people are spending longer in the area now because it takes them over 30 seconds to pass through the 30-mile zone when they used to bomb through in only 10 seconds. I notice too that there is more pressure on the peace process now that paramilitary prisoners released under the Good Friday agreement will no longer be allowed out on the road with a Provisional Licence.

## ■ FRIDAY, 9.30 am

The CDSPs, CORI and Combat Poverty keep complaining that the gap keeps widening between the rich and poor in this country. This is surely a good thing as neither rich nor poor can stand the sight of each other. The further away they are from each other the less trouble there is likely to be.

## ■ SATURDAY, 6.10 pm

George W is definitely my hero. He so knows how to get the job done. The USA says "We know you have weapons of mass destruction" so if weapons inspectors find weapons then the Iraqis have obviously lied and are in material breach of the UN resolution. If the inspectors can't find any weapons then they must be well hidden and the Iraqis have obviously lied and are in material breach of the UN resolution. The Gardai could try the same approach. Then again maybe they already have in Donegal.

Mick Savage the co-ordinator decided to lose weight for the New Year. When we were moving some boxes in the office he bent down and ripped a hole in the arse of his trousers which was a most obvious material breach of his New Year resolution.

## ■ SATURDAY, 9.30 am

Ann Archist and Gail Gore, my buddies from college are involved in the Anti-War protest in Shannon over US planes and troops but I'm very unclear on this. Are the soldiers heading to the Middle East and stopping off in Shannon on or off duty? Obviously only off-duty soldiers should be allowed as Shannon is a Duty Free Zone.

## ■ MONDAY, where'd I put my watch?

The IRFU have come up with a really novel way to combat disadvantage and increase voluntary participation in their organisation. Because Connaught has traditionally been the weakest and is still the least successful team, they are going to scrap Connaught and make sure the other provinces can maintain current funding and performance. It's definitely a great idea and one I'm sure the Minister will consider in reviewing the Community Development Support Programmes. If he was to scrap the projects in Connaught (nope, Ballybog CDP isn't in Connaught, I thought of that) then the rest of the projects can maintain funding and performance.

## ■ TUESDAY, 10.45 am

I see Kerry people are pretty mad at Paidi O'Se for his animal reference. It's a wonder the late John B Keane's play and the film, "The Field" wasn't banned what with characters such as the Bull McCabe and Bird. Anyway, who does Paidi think he is? The man is as grey as a badger, as thick and stubborn as a donkey, as cute as a fox, as strong as an ox, eats like a horse, drinks like a fish and has the cheek to call Kerry supporters "f\*\*\*ing animals". But then we know what Paidi is like and you can't teach an old dog new tricks or expect a leopard to change its spots.



■ **AND YOU THINK YOU'RE HAVING A BAD DAY . . .** though this looks like a picture taken from a Hollywood movie, it is in fact a real photo, taken near the South African coast during a military exercise by the British Navy. It was nominated by Geo as "The photo of the year" in 2002.



## INTRODUCTION

'Changing Ireland' Editor, Allen Meagher, recently visited three Community Development Projects in Dublin to highlight the work being typically carried out by projects in the capital. The projects were chosen randomly - two in the inner city and one in the suburbs. Interviews were carried out with co-ordinators and other staff and management who were present. A CDP in County Wicklow is also featured - the Bray project being proactive in inviting the magazine to profile its work.

# Famine victims cemetery lies beneath new MACRO centre

By Allen Meagher

**I**T is four stories high and occupies a full block - the new community centre housing MACRO CDP in the Markets area of Dublin (behind the Four Courts) offers an amazing contrast to the sometimes cramped and stuffy conditions that development projects operate from. Opened last year, it was built by Dublin City Council at a cost of £5.5million and replaced a youth centre which had lain derelict since the 1970s.

However, the site is truly historic.

During construction, a burial ground with up to 800 skeletons, many of them children, was discovered - it was an old famine cemetery. The find was not a total surprise given that the new MACRO centre is built on a site adjacent to the old Debtors Prison and a former Workhouse.

"Many of the children had died from rickets," noted co-ordinator, Larry Byrne.

Of course, it more than ironic that the CDP, a 21st century project aimed at tackling the causes and effects of poverty and exclusion, should be housed, inadvertently, over the graves of famine victims. After the cemetery was found, the plans were altered and the new building has no basement as it was decided to seal over the cemetery with a raft foundation.

Speaking of modern times, Larry said the

Markets area was largely a 'green-acre' site from a community development viewpoint when MACRO CDP was established in '95. That meant that from the beginning there was a need to train people in community development work, establish badly-needed services and cater properly for the area's senior citizens. MACRO facilitated setting up groups in each of these areas, and before people had finished their training, the MACRO staff helped manage each of the groups.

"Everything started happening at the same time," noted Larry.

Since then the CDP can take credit for: a creche for 16 children; a youth service; a counselling service for recovered drug users; training for recovered drug users; a community newsletter; and much more.

The new community centre is a major achievement to top off the list. However, it was a long time coming and the community wants to retain management control of the centre.

"Part of our remit when this building was being planned was that our community and our management committee expected the CDP to run the building. We (staff) said that we wouldn't have time, so we set up a separate management committee to run the building," said Larry.

"The community representatives on the MACRO centre management committee are

there to ensure the building retains its original ethos as a community resource centre. Our job is to retain control of the building on behalf of the community."

\* \* \* \* \*

The people living today in the Markets area a real mix of old and new. Many families are there so long they can trace their way back five or six generations, while another section of the community is made up of complete newcomers to the area.

As is typical of CDPs, most of MACRO's work is about supporting local people to get groups up and running, for example the MACRO Men's Group.

Regarding the management committee, the CDP has "a nice number of people working as volunteers," according to Larry, "but not the huge numbers you would have had years ago."

Danny Pender, one of the volunteer management members, was involved recently in negotiating for 'community gain' with the commercial owners of the temporary ice-rink opened in the area during Christmas. (Given the extent of commercial developments in the area, the CDP is determined that part of its remit is to ensure there is 'community gain' from the developments).

As a result, Danny explained, seven local schools got reduced rate access to the ice-rink and certain hours were set aside solely for use by members of the community.

"Wealthy people from outside here could afford the prices, but local people couldn't," he pointed out.

The area is disadvantaged, for example there is exclusion from education and re-training, but poverty is not as bad as it was years ago. That was mainly because the area didn't have a voice and so it was passed over by funders. While soccer and the majorettes were popular, there was no community organisation that could speak with a community voice until MACRO was established.

Said Danny: "I'd see MACRO as the voice." He gave as an example the fact that local people with a query will always call first to MACRO. "The best thing is that access is easy and they will listen no matter what is going on and people know that (the CDP) will put you straight through to the right people to sort you out."

• MACRO CDP, MACRO Community Resource Centre, 1 Green St., Dublin 7.

## History of Markets CDP

The Markets area is one of the oldest and most historical areas in Dublin stretching from Capel Street to Blackhall parade and from Constitution Hill to the Liffey Quays. The area derives its name from the different markets within it.

Over the last 20 years, the Markets area has experienced significant decline with the closure of factories, hospitals and warehouses leading to a high level of unemployment and deprivation.

The Markets area is nonetheless designated or rejuvenation through the HARP (Historical Area Rejuvenation Project) which has led to major developments including commercial outlets, offices, restaurants, residential apartments and cultural venues. However, these major developments, along with the influx of people to private-owned new apartment and townhouse developments, has caused local people to feel excluded from what once was a close-knit community.

It was against this background that, following a public meeting in early 1995, the Markets Area Community

Resource Organisation (MACRO) was established. As a community development project, its aims are:

- to raise awareness, to identify local needs and to build a community response in the markets area.
- to create a resource to assist the development of groups and individuals in the area.
- to create links with local authority, state Agencies, local developers and businesses.

### MACRO is involved in:

- the development of Citizens Information Centres (CIC) in the area; a CIC is located in MACRO's new premises.
- managing the local CE and JI schemes in the north-west inner city.
- developing an area network structure in conjunction with other nearby projects.

Supporting community representatives sitting on the Dublin Inner City Partnership, North Inner City Local Drugs Task Force, and on the HARP Steering Committee



# Ringsend CDP have 250 members in housing association

**R**INGSEND CDP successfully and simultaneously initiated three big projects in the early '90s – in housing, money advice and youth work. Many would be surprised that the CDP identified housing as an issue the project should work on.

Co-ordinator, Joe Grennell, who worked in the Larkin Centre for the Unemployed, before coming to Ringsend, explained: "Housing is a huge issue in the country and in urban areas. We were the first CDP to look at housing and from talking to people here we identified it as a core issue in 1990. Some people didn't see it as a community development issue believe it or not! Yet on the internet, housing comes up all the time in community development sites, especially in the U.S. We looked at different models of how to do it and how that would include a community development element. So we established a City Housing Initiative, a local housing association run exclusively by local people for local people. It's got 250 members and they are about to build a housing project with 62 apartments."

Also, as far back as '92, the CDP was involved with the Inner City Renewal Group and got involved in setting up a Money Advice and Budgeting Service locally. Around the same time the CDP established Ringsend Youth Action Project and identified people in the area with the potential to become youth workers. They trained them up, employed one of them full-time, availed of a CE scheme and opened a small drop-in centre.

Aileen Foran is there two years as a development worker, having worked with Lourdes

Youth and Community Service (another Dublin-based CDP) for 16 years. She married a Ringsender and is now a local: "Community development work is fantastic, challenging, open-ended and creative," she said.

Aileen does have no fear of stale, having in recent times become involved with the CDSPs National Advisory Committee and with the Eastern Regional Policy Network. She believes "that everyone has human rights and there is a lack of equality in Ireland and in the world and this is the only work where I can make some change."

Joe notes that "75% of people in Ringsend leave school without any qualification and they are sitting beside the biggest labour market in Ireland but are unable to participate."

The statistic partly stems from the fact that in the past, when there were plenty jobs available on the docks (before it became mechanised) and people did not need to be educated to secure work.

One big problem for the community came in 1990 with the establishment by government of the Partnership areas – Ringsend was defined as being outside the inner-city because it was not within canals. As Joe explained, it took much negotiating by the CDP – "a lot of work, time and politics but there were a lot of spinoffs for the local community" when the situation was rectified. The community was disadvantaged in that it was seen as part of Dublin 4, a generally wealthy area.

Joe had some lengthy discussions at management meetings to press home his point that Ringsend was a ghetto. He defined a ghetto as a concentration of one thing or another in one geographic area, in this case poverty in an area of wealth, with no social mixing between the classes. Ringsend has no shopping centre because local people are known not to have big average incomes; and even the wealthier newcomers of recent years prefer to do their shopping elsewhere. Another sign of poverty comes from the fact that no free newspapers are distributed around Ringsend because the marketing people reckon there are not enough people with disposable income to make it worthwhile.

The Celtic Tiger has had a very low impact on the area and a list of industries that have left the area or closed include:

- Dock jobs: Even though port turnover has increased tenfold, there is less employment than before because the port has become mechanised.
- Dublin Gas has gone.
- The Irish Glass Bottle Company has closed, with 350 jobs lost.
- Some industries such as Heaton's have

moved location to industrial estates on the city's fringe and people are not travelling with these industries and so lose the jobs.

- Smaller industries and shops have also declined over the years.

Nonetheless, there is a great community spirit – evident during the recent floods when neighbours were there to help each other out.

"Ringsend people are 100% genuine," said Joe.

Added Aileen: "Really genuine, especially when there is a crisis." She gave an example from late last year when local people boycotted a local business in support of friendly foreign staff working there who had encountered difficulties with the employer.

Drugs is a big issue, with heroin, Ecstasy, some cocaine, enormous consumption of marijuana, and alcohol all popular drugs.

The CDP has been hard at work to tackle the problem.

Said Joe: "We have developed a protocol between doctors, the Gardai and ourselves and got the doctors to prescribe methadone to drugusers. We have set up Parent Support Groups and set up a satellite clinic in the area to supply methadone. There was loads of work in that. There was hysteria at first."

Aileen: "People were afraid that people would be coming into this area from all around (to visit the methadone clinic)."

Joe: "As a result – five years later – we have the Ringsend and District Response to Drugs and it is working, they have got a huge client base."

Aileen works with Travellers groups and with Women's groups especially on the issue of domestic violence. She received national media coverage before Christmas with the a community arts project.

Nevertheless, not everything they do in their day-to-day work is clear-cut. As Joe's daughter said to him the other day, "I told the teacher today that you are an architect, 'cos nobody knows what you do!"

## CHEAP CAMERAS CATCH CULPRITS

Aileen Foran of Ringsend CDP came up with a unique way to deal with complaints against Travellers that they were littering the area: "We gave disposable cameras to Travellers."

They in turn took photographs that clearly showed the majority of people throwing rubbish in the area are people driving by in cars and stopping near where the Travellers live to dump loads.

The disposable cameras only cost €5 each.





## Mountwood/ Fitzgerald Park CDP's record of success

By Nick Murphy

Mountwood/Fitzgerald Park CDP came into being following a 1985 summer project during which concerns were expressed for the needs of children in the area. The centre obtained premises from the Dun Laoghaire Rathdown County Council and was funded in 1988 by the Department of Social Welfare. The project first sponsored a FAS Community Employment (CE) scheme in 1993.

Over the years the CDP has risen to the many challenges posed by changing conditions and attitudes and in 2002 it expanded its range of services to the community to include childcare, after-school programmes, 'wimmen's space', adult education, youth programmes, homework clubs and study support programmes.

True to its tradition of finding new ways to tackle old problems, the project has enthusiastically embraced new initiatives. The management committee of the CDP has met the difficulties of providing a range of services by creating stand-alone projects to continue work which was beyond the scope of the organisation itself. These projects, set up in conjunction with relevant agencies and organisations, include the Neighbourhood Youth Project, Oasis drugs rehabilitation and prevention project, and L.I.F.T.S. (a social economy project to tackle the difficulties posed by the lack of accessible transport).

The CE scheme grew to 22 places before being reduced by cuts. It boasts a progression rate of almost 70% over its life in Mountwood. The project also hosts four Jobs Initiative (JI) positions which have enjoyed a similarly high progression rate, but which are also under threat from cutbacks. The centre's commitment to progression is plain in that of the 32 employees presently working there, only three have not progressed from CE or JI.

In the creation of the FAS social economy programme, the CDP has recognised a suitable support to help it build sustainable jobs within the community which match the skills of unemployed people in the area and which allows the centre to become self-sustaining in the future.

- Nick Murphy is attached to Mountwood/Fitzgerald Park's community centre and is a newly appointed Regional Reporter for 'Changing Ireland' in the Dublin Region.

# Pocket of poverty in Dun Laoghaire

**W**ALKING through Mountwood Park and Fitzgerald Park – corporation flats complexes in the most-wealthy suburb of Dun Laoghaire, Co. Dublin – would give you the feeling that you were in some forlorn part of communist Eastern Europe. However, since last year most of the flats have been demolished and replaced with 'proper' houses. The demolition men will leave a couple of flat complexes standing however – they will be renovated. One such complex houses the local CDP offices and community centre.

The centre is in effect a number of flats that were joined up – former toilets now do for individual staff offices, where there isn't room to swing a biro not to mind a cat.

Always ambitious, Mountwood/Fitzgerald Park CDP are however looking for a multi-million euro modern community centre. They hope it can be built before the population – which was halved during the demolition of flats – rises again.

The CDPs story began in 1985, when there were 300 homes without a bathroom/shower and next to no community services. There is a strong perception of Dun Laoghaire being an affluent area, yet there is poverty and exclusion in the area.

Now things have improved and there are 30 staff funded through various government programmes and schemes in the area.

Marian White is the CDP co-ordinator: "We are constantly looking for new ways of engaging with the community. For example, we have just set up a computer room through an AIB Better Ireland Award."

The CDP takes pride in the fact that it provides a supportive environment for everyone to progress from the age of 6 months old up to 23 years and beyond. The CDP has put education and training services and supports in place and ensured that all are linked.

Beginning with the creche/playschool, this is followed up for primary school pupils by homework clubs. Meanwhile, secondary pupils can avail of a study support programme. The Youth Groups are different to regular youth clubs where the main aim often appears to be simply to keep youths from hanging around on the streets. With the CDP's Youth Groups programme the aim is to give young people life-skills or training.

If people are unemployed, they can come back and do adult education, or join a women's group which includes training courses. Then employment may be available through the Community Employment Scheme – and the CDP focuses on providing training so that people have some skills to qualify coming on a scheme. There are also Job Initiative opportuni-

ties and the CDP will support people in applying for education bursarie.

"It is all about continuity and progression – this is very important to us," explained Marian. "We are constantly striving to do things better."

Neither Marian nor her work colleague Nick Murphy who is a CE supervisor are locals.

"We are trying to work our way out of a job so that local people can have the positions," said Nick, who spent eight years with the Ballymun Task Force.

Marian was involved in party politics before starting work through the Community Development Programme: "This is real politics, what I was involved in was not."

About 70% of residents would have some involvement with the CDP or with some service set up by the project. However, the CDP are frustrated with their local authority, the Dun Laoghaire/Rathdown County Council, feeling there is no recognition for the value of the work carried out by the project. It is an examples of the clash between representative democracy and participative democracy.

CE, meanwhile, represents a 'Catch 22'. Local people often get work cleaning the homes of their wealthy neighbours, which allows the wealthy to carry on uninterrupted with their social lives.

Said Nick, with Marian in agreement: "Through CE we felt if we could coax people away cleaning – not that there is anything wrong with cleaning work – but at least we could give them choices and maybe broaden their horizons. But, by bringing the greatest number of people as was possible through the CE scheme, we have limited our capacity to attract community volunteers."

Incidentally, Mountwood/Fitzgerald Park CDP have used the Freedom of Information Act to uncover information relating to a funding application. As Nick Murphy explained, "The trick is to be clear what you are asking for. Or if you are not sure whether a document exists then ask for everything."

The process takes at least 21 days.

The big question for the CDP at the moment is will they get approval for the full amount of funding required to build a community centre to match the population's needs. A recent survey of the half-population remaining found that of 114 people resident in Mountwood Park and 50 in Fitzgerald Park, 86 of them were in receipt of some form of social welfare. A total of 62 were lone parents, while 16 were senior citizens.

• Mountwood/Fitzgerald Park CDP,  
71/73 Maple House, Mounttown,  
Dun Laoghaire, Co. Dublin.  
Tel. 01-2845722/2842332.  
Fax 01-2845722.



# Ethnic group wants 'integration, not assimilation'

"My policy is integration, not assimilation," stated Jim O'Brien. Not a surprising attitude for the co-ordinator of a CDP for Travellers in a county where the majority of the target group have been bundled into standard housing without a choice.

There are 122 Traveller families in County Wicklow, roughly translating into a population of 550 people and accommodation is therefore one of the three key issues for the Bray Travellers Development Network. (The other two issues are health and education).

Explained Jim O'Brien, the project's joint-coordinator: "There are only two official halting sites in the county, covering 12 families. A lot of Travellers are living on the roadside, while the majority are in standard housing which they never got a choice about and they don't want to be there at all."

"Years ago, things were better for Travellers because they had a freedom to go from Mayo to Cork without being harassed," recalled Jim. "Now the traditional places are all gone - boulderised. All I see local authorities doing is forcing Travellers into standard houses. I feel that is bad, they are losing their culture and nomadism. I am living for 14 years in a house, but from every March I moved out into a caravan. Now I can't travel at all because where can I go with the trespass law? We used to go to the Sugarloaf mountain."

## ■ DIE 12 YEARS EARLIER

Jim and Roisin Mangan are joint co-ordinators of the CDP, a project which originated in a 1994 development plan for Travellers in Bray.

"All community development projects are working for the disadvantaged," said Jim. "And for Travellers we are far behind the settled population in terms of education, accommodation and health. These are the three most important issues in Travellers' lives and you cannot separate the three or say one is more important, they are all linked."

He and his wife lost three children to a very rare disease, a heart-breaking story that could have happened to anyone.

While their's was an exceptional case, generally Traveller health is not as good as that among the settled population.

"It could have a lot to do with neglect by themselves and or the state. I always say - regarding the neglect of the Traveller man - he won't go to the doctor unless a problem is very serious. That's my personal view," said Jim. "There's a fear factor. A lot of men don't know where to go or what they can get."

"I know an awful lot of Travellers that have

lost loved ones - the biggest causes are heart disease and cancer. So it doesn't shock me when you read statistics saying that Traveller men and women die on average 12 years younger than settled people."

## ■ SMILING FACES

Both Jim and Roisin agreed that it was often difficult to work with the Traveller community because as Jim explained, "Travellers used think I was like a councillor or a doctor - because they didn't understand what community development is about, though they understand it better now. I haven't got a magic wand in my pocket and now people know we can only do our best as a community voluntary organisation. Though the last six months have seen us achieve our greatest success - getting a good profile locally and this has definitely put a smile on Travellers faces."

The joint co-ordinators wrote articles and took photographs to show off the work of the CDP and got a page in the local newspaper. Combined with ongoing networking with government agencies, local authorities, and other projects, this work was rewarded with the CDP having a better standing among the Traveller population and the Traveller population itself earning a more positive local profile.

Added Roisin: "They feel more confident than even a year ago. More and more people are calling into the project's office. Jim's outreach has increased and trust is developing over time. Plus we built up a lot of links with the health services, FAS and the local authorities; communications have opened up big time."

## ■ FRESH OUTLOOK

The timing is good as Travellers are now beginning to demand action. Through a health programme for women, the Traveller population have become increasingly aware of new issues and, with that fresh outlook, they want changes.

"The East Coast Area Health Board has been absolutely wonderful, the Traveller public health nurse is doing a great job and that job has just started this year," continued Roisin.

Over 50 Traveller women have taken part in pre-primary health care courses and one group has researched the health needs of Travellers locally by interviewing two dozen people. Carmel O'Brien was part of the research group: "I learnt more about cancer, smear tests and cholesterol."

Jim noted that depression is a problem for Travellers, especially for women living in isolation, but also for women generally: "The

## Keeping Traveller issues on Bray's agenda

Bray Traveller Development Network is involved in various policy-making areas. This networking helps keep Travellers' issues on the political agenda. The CDP also offers information, advice and support to Traveller families and this outreach work is a key focal point. Among the groups that Bray Travellers work with are the following:

- ✓ Local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee.
- ✓ Wicklow Planning Forum.
- ✓ Traveller Employment Forum.
- ✓ Local Employment Service Network Committee.
- ✓ County Development Board Sub-group.
- ✓ East Coast Area Traveller Health Unit.
- ✓ Local Traveller Education Projects.
- ✓ Irish Traveller Movement central committee and various sub-groups.
- ✓ Horses Committee.
- ✓ and more.

- By Jim O'Brien and Roisin Mangan

Traveller woman with a family is always worrying about tomorrow, thinking 'I could be in a mucky field and how will I get the kids to a school?' She might have to move at short notice because the man wants to move."

## ■ TARRED BY MEDIA

On discrimination, while there is increased pride among Travellers thanks to the CDP creating a positive profile in the locality, Roisin noted that almost ten of the 122 Traveller families in the county "do not want to be classed as Travellers because of the shame they have experienced as Travellers, such as having seen a lot of discrimination directed against, for example, their parents."

Commented Jim: "We hate it when we get tarred with one brush - with headlines like 'Hotel Broken Up By Travellers'. A lot of Travellers are living in poverty and we do not all have Hiace vans."

The CDP itself has been subject to discrimination. While the project has a superb location in the town-centre, the office is too small for group-work activities. Bray and North Wicklow Women's Network have been "great" to give space for training over the years, but the real priority is to secure a premises that would house all the CDP's activities under one roof.

"The whole project faces discrimination - we had a portokabin, but nobody would rent us the space for it," Jim stated.

If, by a miracle, the discrimination disappeared, then so too could the Bray Travellers Development Network. In the meantime, while the community smiles more as a result of the project's work, the CDP is obviously working in the right direction.



# West launches timely evaluation of CE scheme

**D**ECEMBER 9th, 2002, saw the publication and launch at FORUM, Letterfrack of an Evaluation Report on the Community Employment Scheme. The report was aimed at:

- assessing what CE has achieved so far,
- the impact and effectiveness of CE in terms of anti-poverty and anti-exclusion work, and
- the key learning points from the experience to date.

Compiled by independent consultants Alison Milton and Paolo Magnetti, the study was commissioned by the following seven projects operating in the Western Region of Galway and Mayo, the second and third largest counties in the country.

- Kiltimagh CDP;
- Parkside CDP, Ballina;
- FORUM, Letterfrack;
- Westside CDRC, Galway City;
- Galway Traveller Support Group;
- Tuam CDRC;
- Pléaráca Teo, Rosmuc.

In order to achieve their purpose, the authors interviewed all key stakeholders as well as carrying out a detailed and extensive survey of all those participating in CE schemes across the seven projects. Some of these participants were also invited to take part in two focus groups, one in Mayo and one in Galway, and these were used to expand on and clarify some of the points raised by the questionnaire.

The report's Executive Summary acknowledges the many changes that have taken place throughout the country since CE initially was introduced to provide job training and income opportunities for the long term unemployed. The scheme's positive impact across a wide range of groups is also highlighted, with stakeholders who participated in the study identifying the main strengths of CE as the benefit to both worker and their community.

One of those seven, FORUM, sponsors three CE and one Job Initiative Scheme in North West Connemara, and its total number of participants has recently been reduced from 63 to 49, a cut of more than 20%. These reductions or adjustments are exactly the issues that concern those who turned up to the official launch of the report, as well as the 236 people employed by the projects during 2001 in both counties.

Explaining the background to the report, Jim Power of Parkside CDP commented that he and his colleagues in the region had been becoming more aware that CE was under threat. Also, they were having difficulty reconciling the difference between their local positive experiences and criticisms that were being leveled at CE in the media. As a result, they got together to engage independent consultants to critically evaluate the true work of CE in the Western Region.

Specifically referring to Parkside, Jim praised the 'stepping stone' aspect of bringing the long term unemployed back into the work-

place by first providing training through CE. Parkside now employs eight local people – all previous CE participants – to provide a local service to their own community.

Among the points and recommendations made in the detailed yet accessible report are the following:

- The numbers of CE participants in the seven CDPs in the study should be maintained until such time as an alternative means of sustaining the very positive benefits it brings to both participants and the recipients of services provided through the schemes is developed.
- Policy makers should not base the contraction or discontinuance of the CE programme on the basis of reductions in the numbers of long-term unemployed. Due to the cyclical nature of the economic climate, there is no guarantee that current reductions in the numbers of unemployed can be sustained and that we will not once again return to high levels of unemployment, especially among the most disadvantaged.
- Those who will never be able to work in the open job market due to personal, emotional or educational barriers should be provided for through an approach that seeks to avoid further stigmatisation or exclusion.
- Social Economy at present would not appear to be a viable alternative to CE as it has the potential to be exclusionary and may not be suited to certain groups of long-term unemployed.



• Back row: Danny Carr, FÁS; Mary Seale, West Training; Jimmy Glynn; Jim Power, Parkside CDP, Ballina; John Coyne, FORUM; Breda Lymer, West Training; Ray Kelly, FÁS; Frank Kelly, FÁS. Front: Mary Gannon, FORUM; Minister Frank Fahey; and Mary Ellen Aspell.



# "What's being done is for the best" – Minister Fahey

"What's being done is for the best." Those seven words from Frank Fahey, T.D. and Minister for Labour Affairs at the Department of Enterprise, Trade & Employment went some way to reassuring many of those who gathered recently in Letterfrack, County Galway, to launch a report on Community Employment in the Western Region.

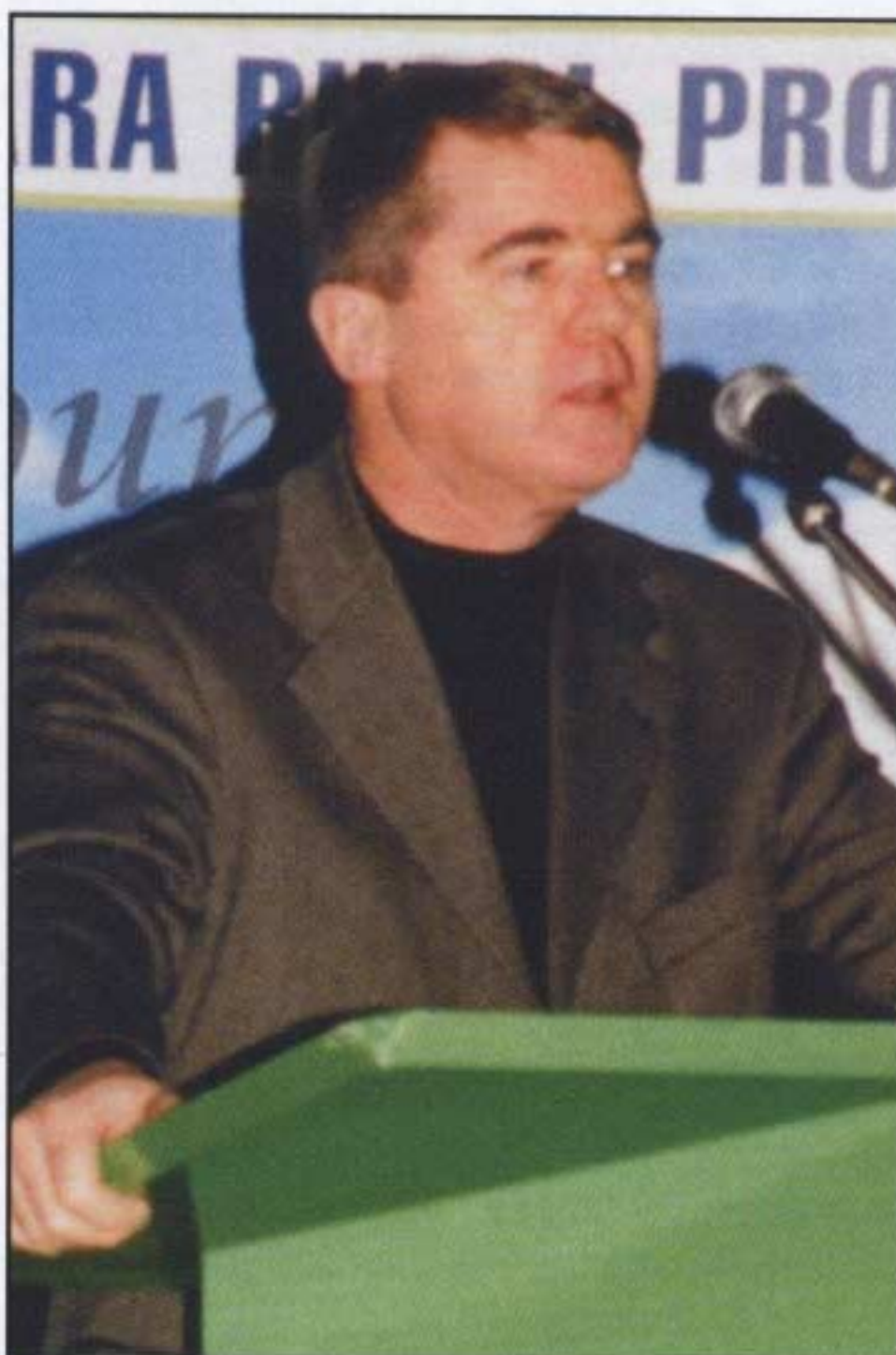
**A**s anyone involved with CE knows, this is a time of great uncertainty for scheme participants as well as the communities who benefit from their work. While new Government departments have been set up and departments names changed, more and more people are finding it difficult to work out just who is responsible for what. And, in the middle of all the confusion and the bandying around of numbers of actual and proposed cuts or adjustments, it is important to remember that those numbers are individuals with bills to pay and lives to lead. The timely launch of this report, so close to budget time, provided the perfect opportunity for concerned groups and individuals to find out exactly what was going on from someone in the know.

Mary Seale of West Training and Development, the Regional Support Agency who designed and produced the report, wasted no time in emphasising the value to local communities of CDSPs and CE schemes. Providing an overview of the national situation, she looked back to the time of the programme's inception and the time when CE was introduced to combat high unemployment. Noting the countless changes that have occurred since those days, she reflected on the ingenuity used by many local groups and organisations in adapting the schemes to best suit their situation. She paused to praise "the only national programme that uses community development practice and principles to address issues in relation to poverty and disadvantage," before directing three key questions to Minister Fahey:

- 1) What provisions will be made to support rural communities where there are limited opportunities for alternative employment?
- 2) Who will continue to provide the services that are currently being provided to disadvantaged communities through CE schemes?
- 3) What employment alternatives will be made available to people who may never work in the open job market due to personal, emotional or educational barriers?

Minister Fahey praised FÁS, the Government, and the schemes themselves, making it very clear that there would remain "a very significant CE scheme across the country." Playing down recent media hype and headlines, he dismissed reports of 13,000 cuts yet went on to confirm that the number of CE participants would decrease from 30,809 at the beginning of 2002 to 20,000 by the end of 2003.

In defence of the changes Minister Fahey



● Minister Frank Fahey.

referred to the 'current very favourable labour market environment' and hinted at "a number of other key evaluations of CE which are in progress at present, and which will inform Government policy on CE continuing into the future." He also said, "It's worth noting that some 36,000 work permits have been issued by my Department so far to date this year to non-EEA nationals to meet current labour market shortages." It wasn't clear how many of these work permits (most of them renewals of existing permits) were issued to individuals to undertake the type of community work being undertaken by the CDSPs who had commissioned the report.

Acknowledging the role played by CE in significantly reducing long-term unemployment from 5.5% in 1997 to 1.2% last year, he pointed to almost €275m being provided for CE under the Estimates for 2003. The Minister then acknowledged the contribution made by CE to the development of services for local community groups and organisations, and noted the establishment of the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs as evidence of the Government's awareness of the importance of support for such community services. He also promised greater interdepartmental co-operation and cohesion in the future.

In answer to Mary's three questions, Minister Fahey made assurances that CE and CDPs will continue to provide services in rural areas, and with specific regard to the third question he commented that "we're looking at a new way of dealing with people who are not able to go back into the open job market." In a later interview with Mary Ruddy of Connemara Community Radio, he elaborated on this, speaking about his keenness to 'create a new sector' for such people when schemes come to an end. "Efforts," he said, "will be made to enable people like that in places like this to continue on in CE and if not in the specific scheme then certainly in linked schemes."

The minister was eager to announce that policy regarding the participation of older persons, particularly those in rural areas on CE, will form an important part of the CE review currently being chaired by his department under the PPF. He also confirmed that FÁS is undertaking its own internal review of CE, assessing its role from a labour market perspective and that of providing for community services.

He then unveiled the three objectives that are part of his department's review:

- 1) to establish "long-term structured community services using CE and indeed some of the other schemes..."
- 2) to ensure that every scheme provides the best service possible and is as cost effective as it can be.
- 3) to improve training and support to those capable of going into employment.

Minister Fahey's overall tone was upbeat, and on the subject of time he optimistically stated: "By the time of the estimates next year (2003) we'll have a new programme in place and we'll be able to have that new programme ready to run."

Acknowledging the difficulties that lay ahead, he realised that any proposed changes to existing practices and systems, whether aimed at inefficiencies or not, would doubtlessly meet with resistance. While referring to the multi-funding situation he alluded to the existence of "an awful lot of waste" across the country and told everyone present "you've got to improve your efficiency."

In conclusion he remarked that "There will be a reduction in the total number of people but that doesn't say that schemes are going to be ripped apart...I'm satisfied that with less people we can have just as good if not better schemes through getting even greater efficiency through their being on a more permanent structure than they've been up to now."



# Fear as CE cuts hurt

**A**mong the other speakers on the night of the report launch was Mary Gannon, chairperson of FORUM, who eagerly spoke of the positive aspects of CE on a geographically isolated area such as Connemara. More than a hundred older people in the area now benefit from such initiatives as the Carer Companion programme and visits to Clifden Day Care Unit.

Worryingly, though, Mary also remarked on the difficulty in maintaining the rural population in an area where job opportunities are limited. There were even examples, she noted, of people once again talking about whether or not there would be a return to the days of mass emigration from Connemara, and other parts of rural Ireland.

While introducing the report, **Jim Power of Parkside CDP, Ballina**, provided an overview of the recent uncertain situation and spoke proudly of being involved in the provision of "high quality, low-cost social care." He emphasised how critical this value for money aspect is at a time when cuts and adjustments are so prevalent nationally.

Yet, if we consider CE purely on economic grounds then we are surely missing the point, and a couple of the other speakers on the 9th December simply yet eloquently put across the viewpoint that there is much more to the subject than the balancing of books. **Tom Mongan of Letterfrack** has been working on a CE scheme in North West Connemara for two years now, and spoke passionately about his involvement with older people and people



● **Mary Seale, West Training**

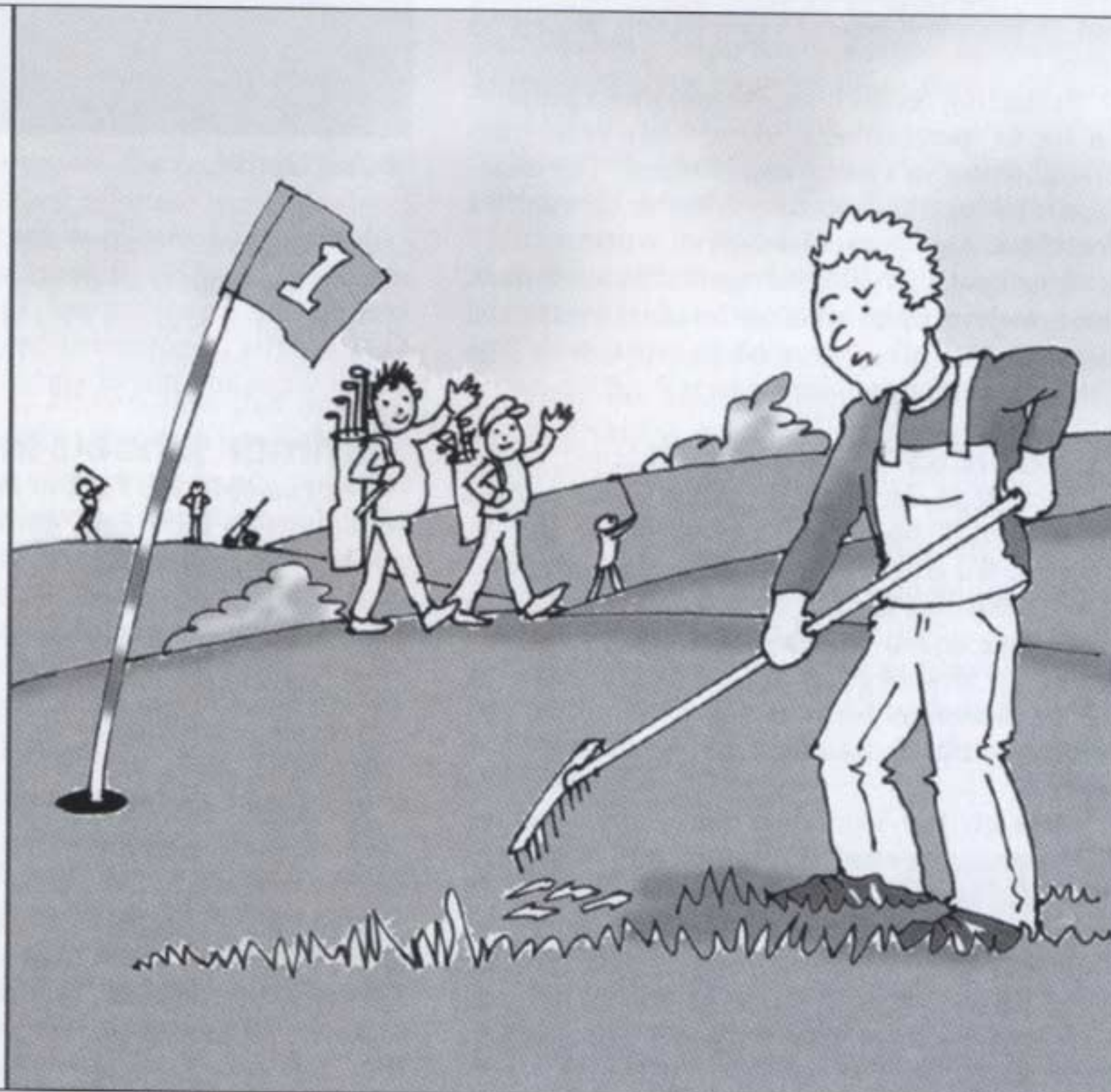
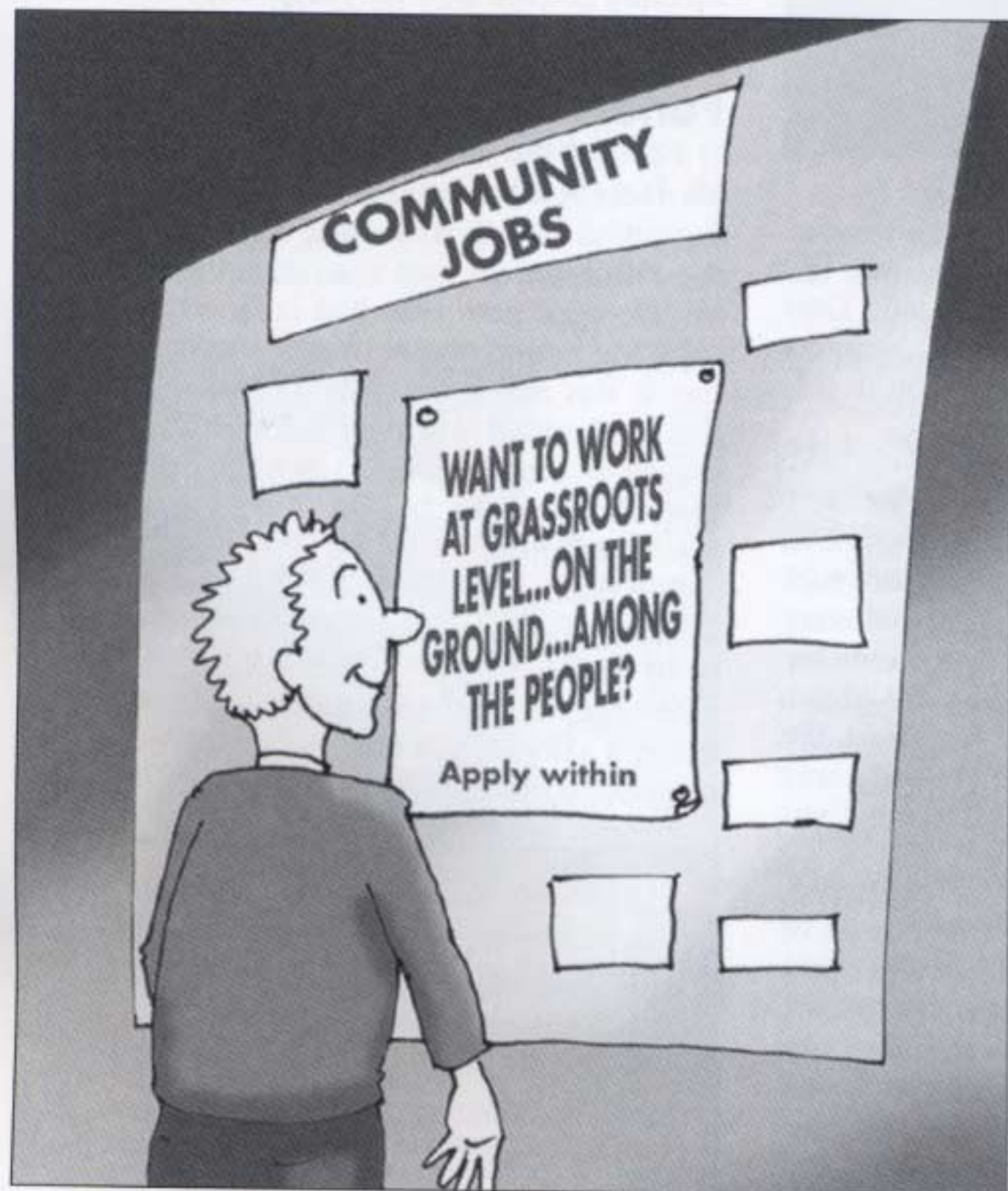
with disabilities and the benefits to himself and his community. As a result of poor health, Tom described himself as "pretty unemployable" before embarking on his CE work and praised the training and personal development he was allowed by taking part in such a scheme. Pausing briefly to highlight the difficulty in planning for the future when such uncertainty prevails, Tom looked forward to continuing to be of value to a community of which he has been a part for many years.

Another local voice to represent the con-

cerns of many of the area's older people was that of **Mary Ellen Aspell**, a native of nearby Kylemore with first hand experience of FORUM'S Social Care Programme. When Mary Ellen fell ill and was no longer able to look after her sister Agnes, she was safe in the knowledge that they were being visited regularly by a carer/companion. That service was stopped in recent months, leaving Mary Ellen's dignified words to sum up perfectly the human cost of reducing the numbers: "Unfortunately we have nobody now so I don't know what we're going to do...my one wish would be that we would get back a helper to come to us."

**Johnny Coyne, director of FORUM**, in an interview with Mary Ruddy of Connemara Community Radio, remarked that he was "reassured by the commitment" made by the minister that CE would not be abolished. He also asked that the experience of the Projects and the good work of the report be taken into account in any reviews of CE, a point which was acknowledged in the Minister's Press Release on the launch of the report.

**Breda Lymer, co-ordinator of West Training and Development**, also confirmed that she was reassured by the Minister's words. Later in the same radio interview she pointed again to the uncertainty of the times and asked if the Government knew what they were doing as they continued to split up Government departments and projects around the country. That's ultimately a question that only the Government can answer, but no answer was forthcoming on the night.





# Brush with death spurs activist to do more

COMMUNITY activist Paddy O'Sullivan is not a man for using fancy words. He is honest and straight-talking and will tell you, no holes barred, how he has overcome many setbacks and disappointments in life, including a brain haemorrhage and depression.

"Let me say from the start, I am not looking for sympathy from anyone," he says. "I just hope that what I have to say might help people. I'm not telling anyone what to do about depression, I just want to say how I had to deal with it and hope it helps."

Paddy, a native of Waterford city has always held an interest in community activity and for years has been involved in different forms of community development in the Larchville area of the city, home to a busy CDP.

Then he was struck down with a brain haemorrhage that nearly ended his life. Even as part of

his recovery Paddy felt he had to do something that might help others so he started a support group. When asked why, he simply answers, "I felt that when people go through a life and death experience, they're the only ones that know what it's like, so I put an ad in the paper to see if there was anyone interested in starting a group. I was amazed by the response from all over the place." The group started and was aptly named 'JUST FOR ME'. Paddy states: "The name came naturally from how the group worked from the beginning, because all we do is sit and talk and support one another around the problems we have because of what we went through."

Members meet fortnightly and the local priest was so impressed by the idea he loaned the priests' meeting room for gatherings.

As part of the road to recovery Paddy went through a period where he couldn't stop crying. It was a shock to him to be told by his doctor that

he was going through depression. He remembers thinking at the time, "Here I am making progress every day since my brain haemorrhage, the luckiest man alive, with a happy family that love me and I can't stop crying".

Eventually with support from his doctor his family and others Paddy did get his heart and mind around to addressing his health problems and seems today all the better for all he's been through.

When asked for advice for other people who might be feeling down in the dumps as to how they might work their way out of it, he says, "The bottom line is they have got to do it themselves. If you have a loving family it helps. But it's not easy, almost impossible. It's terrifying at times. You can't get involved like you could before. It's important though not to let boredom win. So do get involved in something that will help you and someone else".

# Men need to talk more

**W**HEN it comes to talking honestly and emotionally about his life's Journey Joe Byrne is no stranger to sharing. Originally from Gorey Co. Wexford, Joe has lived with his wife Marian and three sons in Carlow for the last number of years.

Growing up in the '70s introduced Joe to an area of interest that would eventually lead him to join and promote the idea of men getting together for support. "It was only when my father died that I started to hear all the good things he had done," recalled Joe. "When I was growing up looking at all the men around my life I remember thinking to myself how hard it was for them in the society at that time to break out of the stereotypical expectations placed on them."

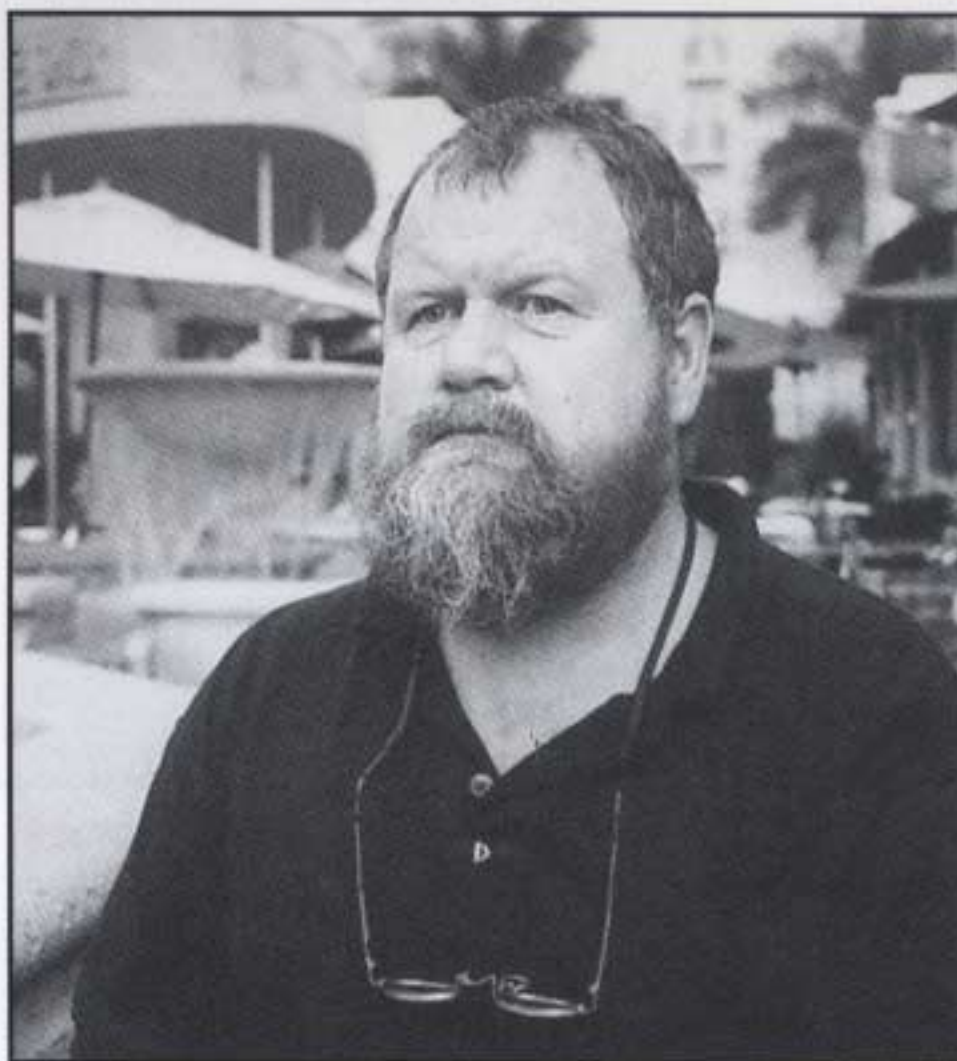
Reflecting on his own life and theirs prompted Joe to spend some of those early years travelling, living in France and Holland. The experience of leaving Ireland proved to be vital for Joe choosing a particular type of work.

"Eventually I realised I wanted to work in an area with people who suffered poverty and more specifically I wanted to work with The Simon Community," he said.

## Homelessness in Cork

Back from Holland Joe approached Simon for work: "I was terrified I wouldn't like it, because if I didn't like it I felt that I wouldn't know what else to do. I started as a volunteer in Cork and ended up staying eight years even returning to college in the hope of developing policy that might break the cycle of alcohol and homelessness I was witnessing through the work."

Through the work and especially working with men, Joe realised something more was needed. "It just seemed to be the case that underneath the issues of alcohol, homelessness and depression suffered by the men was the deeper issue of being emotionally blocked and unable to talk or deal with the heartfelt issues in their lives".



● Joe Byrne.

Joe realised that as a man, in his own life also, real, tangible support was needed. Thus started his involvement in Men's Support Groups. His involvement has carried on in different ways and places since.

## Summer schools in Carlow

For example, the Carlow Men's Group have been meeting fortnightly for a number of years and have been instrumental in running two very successful Summer Schools in Carlow town for large numbers of men. Supported by the Men's Development Network based in Waterford, the weekends saw men from all over Ireland come together to talk about issues affecting their lives.

Regarding the Carlow Group Joe explained, "When we do meet there's usually five or six of us. We talk and share ideas. When we get past talking about football we talk about what's good in our lives and then share some of our struggles. It's a good experience of trust and confidentiality to hear how other men are feeling."

The group is small but Joe is fast to point out that for many men there is fear around sharing with others because it may be seen as a sign of weakness.

"There can also be an unconscious fear of talking about our lives due to trust being betrayed in the past. Also for many men in a group it may be their first time ever talking about their lives".

For men dismissive of the idea of sitting sharing in a group, all Joe says is they should give it two or three nights before passing so harsh a judgement. If they are really interested they should talk to somebody already in a group and find out more about it, maybe then sit in on a meeting and see how they feel. They don't have to talk just sit relax and listen".

## Funeral of suicide victim

For Joe, the bottom line is, it's good to talk. He feels and knows from experience that talking and listening with other men can make all the difference. "I was at a funeral recently of a middle aged man who had committed suicide, says Joe and everyone was saying what a sad day it was and how much it is a pity that men don't talk about how they're feeling". Who knows maybe if that man had talked to someone in trust about exactly how he was feeling it might have been different.

Joe finally highlights that for men in groups the focus is on self development, an opportunity to share in a safe place, it's not about any other agenda, it's not against anyone or anything, it's about men sharing because in the end it's good to talk".

**\* If you are interested in finding out more about supporting men in your life Joe can be contacted through the Men's Development Network, 30 O'Connell Street Waterford. Tel. 051-844260.**



# Men's network react to wave of suicides

By Allen Meagher

**A**FTER a wave of suicides in the south-east region last November, staff and volunteers with the Men's Development Network (MDN), a Core-Funded Group based in the South-East, felt both angry and guilty they could not do more to help.

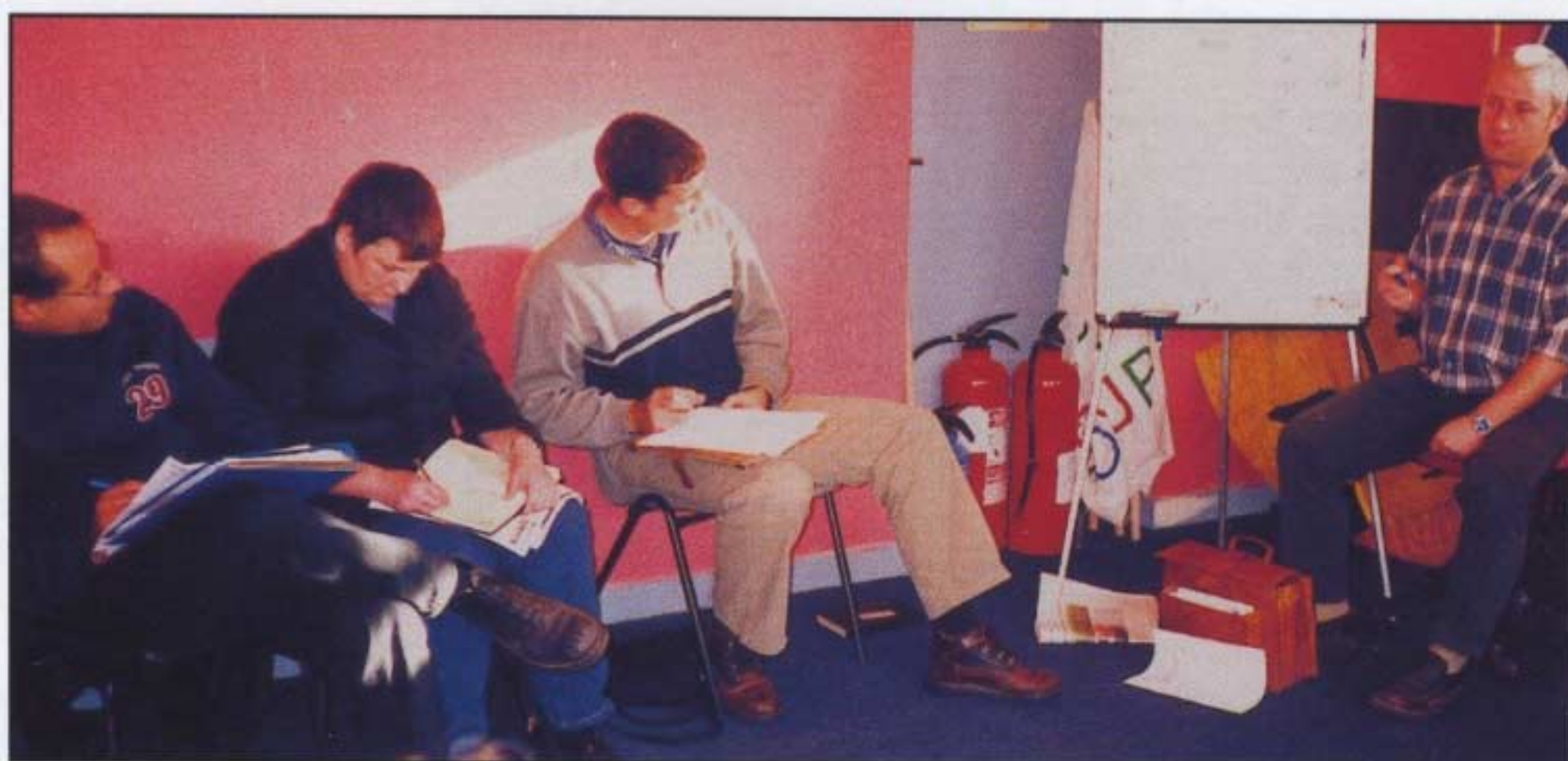
While the Network's main aim is to improve the quality of men's lives, they were devastated by a wave of suicides, concentrated in one area.

Over eight days in November, six people – five of them men – entered the River Slaney; five drowned while one was rescued. Three of the dead came from Enniscorthy, another entered at Bunclody and another at Wexford.

As one MDN development worker asked, "How many more men's gravesides, young and old, do we have to stand beside as a result of suicide, listening afterwards to people ask the same old questions – 'Why won't men talk more – about how they are really feeling?' and 'Why won't men seek support?'"

In December, the MDN issued a carefully-considered public statement and intend to engage in more media work this year to see what can be done to tackle male suicides – they are rising all the time and Ireland now has a reputation for one of the highest rates of suicide in the world.

The MDN, with its headquarters in Waterford, runs computer classes, skills training, summer schools and weekends – all activities in which men learn to become more



● The PIE networking group in Co. Wexford attending a media skills morning session with 'Changing Ireland' editor, Allen Meagher. Projects are encouraged to engage in media work to increase their profile and reach more people.

vocal and expressive. Men's groups have been established in Waterford, Gorey, Kilkenny and Carlow with support from the Network.

Thanks to funding, primarily through the CDSPs, the MDN has expanded rapidly in recent years, improving possibly hundreds of men's lives, some to a startling degree. The ripple effect of this improves the lot of thousands of people. The work has also quite likely saved lives. Unfortunately, it cannot reach everyone.

The MDN recognises the fact that "men in situations of disadvantage are more likely to be unhappy and depressed, unable to make decisions and unable to face their problems," as reported by the ESRI over a decade ago.

Regarding the river-drownings, the MDN said: "We want it known that that we feel anger and guilt that what we have through our men's development work is not available to all men. We know that every household is haunted by the fear of suicide. We fear for our sons, fathers, husband's brothers," said a spokesperson, expressing sympathy with the bereaved.

"We know from experience that men talk when they feel safe and we have found ways to make it safer for men and boys to talk honestly," he continued, inviting people to contact the MDN and then meetings could be organised to talk about how MDN's work can help.

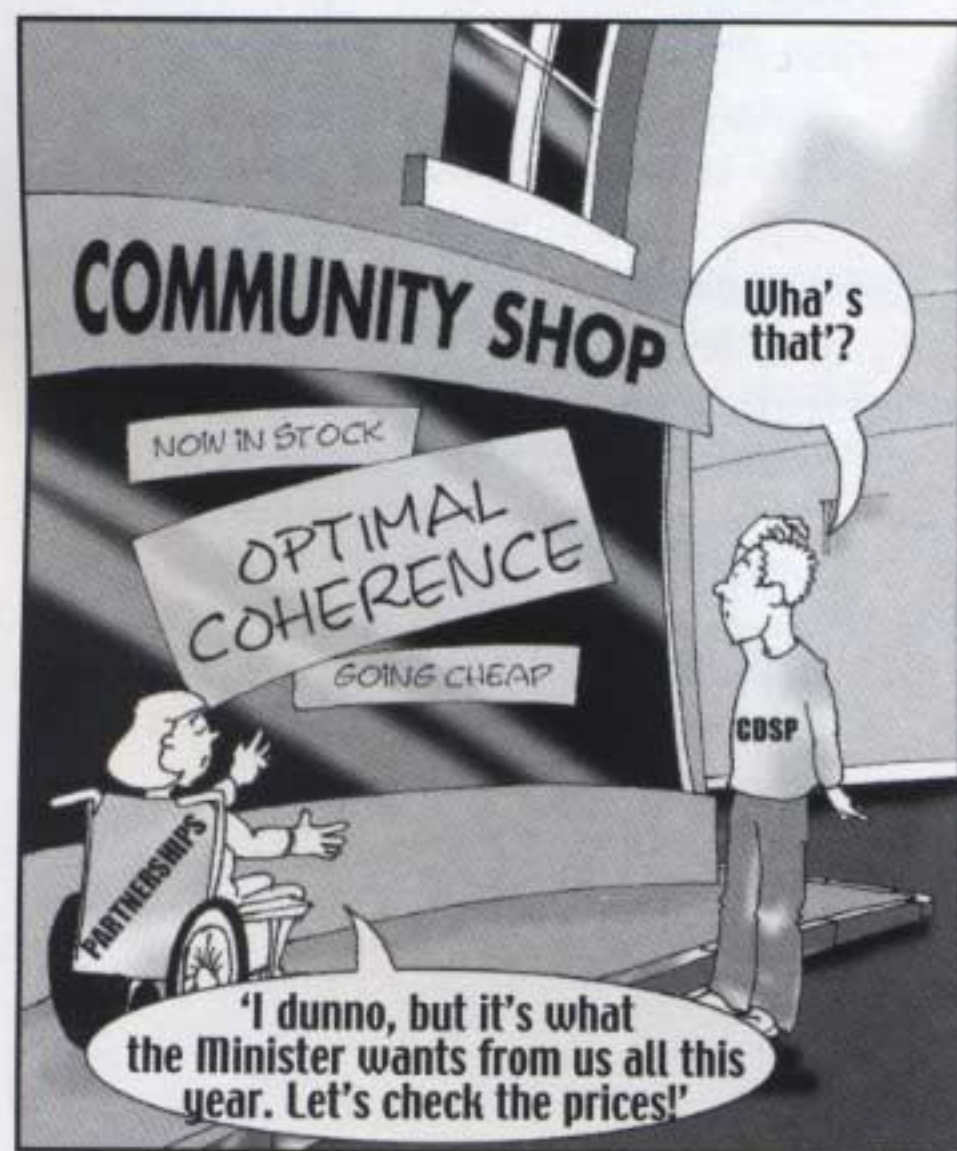
MDN face a difficult task because they are challenging the traditional belief in Irish society that men should keep their feelings to

themselves. Added the spokesperson, "Supporting men to discuss and sit with feelings is difficult work, but it is vital work. In many ways society discourages men from talking about issues affecting their lives so many men feel that talking about their fears and worries to other people, especially other men, will be seen as a sign of weakness. The challenge of our work is to help men realise that seeking support is a sign of courage. Hopefully with support more men will find courage to speak out," he said.

Since its foundation in 1996, the MDN, previously known as *The South East Men's Network*, has worked to raise awareness of the issues affecting men's lives – and spokesmen have been on national radio programmes and in the press to get their messages across.

While the MDN connects with all men, its target group is primarily men who are disadvantaged due to the effects of unemployment, marginalisation, poverty and men's conditioning. The Network's work focuses on building confidence, self-esteem and self-respect among participants.

Incidentally, the Men's Development Network stressed to the public that it is not a counselling agency – it is a development agency.



• For More Information contact: Men's Development Network, 30 O'Connell Street, Waterford. Tel. 051-844260/1 Fax. 051-855264. Email [men@mens-network.net](mailto:men@mens-network.net)



# Time to believe in the

**T**HE technical resources needed to stir up a continuing and effective publicity campaign are in place - we have regional and national networks, the support agencies are well established, policy workers have found their feet and 'Changing Ireland' is ready to play its part. The big question is - are people in projects ready to give time to media work? Using your imagination to find interesting ways to catch the media eye can produce fantastic results.

Many people work in communities that are traditionally suspicious of the media and oft-times-past the attitude has been to keep the head down, ignore the harsh headlines and concentrate on 'the work'. But the work now has to include using the media to promote what we do, the unique way we do it, and just as importantly - why we do the work we do. Otherwise the only place you may read in the future about the work of the CDSPs might be in history books.

The local profile and knowledge of the work of Community

Development Projects may be high, but nationally we have barely a percentage of the profile that, to give the best example, the IFA has.

There is no doubt remaining over the question of 'value for money'. The work projects do costs peanuts, relative to the cost of mending the damage that would be felt in society if the CDSPs were suddenly to disappear. Not that that will happen, but the empowering way in which projects are expected to work may be threatened.

Should a national publicity campaign be launched during the year? If so, some projects will duck, dive and dodge their responsibilities, perhaps feeling 'safe' because they received 3-year renewals of their contracts before the one-year contracts idea was introduced. The 'It doesn't effect us, so why should we stick our neck out' attitude is self-defeating. And I'll say this, if people do not feel the work is worth promoting, and indeed defending, then they might as well turn off the lights, shut the door and hand the keys over to someone else.

- Allen Meagher, Editor

## Write a news story / press release:

1. Use the H5W style of introduction. The first paragraph in any story should explain the following aspects to the story: How?, Who?, What?, Where?, When? and Why?
2. While using the H5W guideline, it is especially important for readers to understand the 'Why?' in the story. eg Your project is organising an ex-prisoners' group. That's great, fair dues, lovely idea. But what motivated you? An ex-prisoner you know cannot get a job because of the stigma and is thinking of going robbing again. Or was it a suicide? Or you see that our Equality Legislation does not protect ex-prisoners from being discriminated against - and one of them thinks it's time they got organised. Perhaps your sister is going out with a prisoner and you have finally realised she is the only thing he has to look forward to when he gets out. You don't have to tell a journalist the names of those concerned, but do tell the story or stories that motivated you and your committee to 'engage in this piece of work' as we say it.
3. News stories should be shaped like an Inverted triangle, full of detail in the beginning and tapering off to the end (to make for easy editing from the bottom up).
4. Include quotes, real ones from real people. For example, you might think you know what a teenager in a homework club might say in favour of the club. But it's better to simply ask them!
5. Keep it simple. Be clear. No jargon. Be authentic.
6. Include contact phone numbers (preferably mobiles) so journalists can quickly get answers to any further questions.
7. The local press and radio is crucial - they are often more popular than national media outlets.
8. Write to letters pages to get your point across.

### ■ TRUSTING THE MEDIA?

- Editors or sub-editors write the headlines to stories, not the journalists. You are wasting your time complaining about headlines to journalists.
- Scepticism can be a healthy attitude; while cynicism can eat you up. But, don't be naive. eg. Be careful what you tell a journalist 'off the record', even when you know them.
- Do thank journalists - most people forget to and they will remember you for it.
- Journalists are not paid a fortune. They just want a good story.
- Bad news sells, but so do new 'cures' and new approaches.

### ■ SOME TIPS FOR USING THE PRINT MEDIA

- A story with a picture ALWAYS has a better chance of being printed.
- Try a catchy headline to capture the Editor's attention.
- Give your own community's local perspective to a national story. eg shortage of creche places; 'trouble' from teenagers; etc.
- Establish a rapport with any journalist who visits your project or writes sympathetically about your community or interests.
- Newspapers are ALWAYS short of stories during the summer, known as the 'silly season' when factories close in July, the courts close in August, the Dail for the entire summer and newspapers themselves are short-staffed (and therefore short of stories) due to staff taking holidays.
- Like it or not, but names and faces sell newspapers.

### ■ SOME TIPS FOR USING RADIO

- If you phone a radio station, don't expect Gerry Ryan to answer the phone - look for a researcher.
- Ask the researcher in advance what questions you should expect. Prepare your answers.
- Don't drink fizzy, sugary drinks or eat chocs before going on air - your voice will be lispy.
- Have nothing to hide. eg If asked, without warning, about teenage joy-riding in the community, think quick - is it really that our children are failures at school and have nothing positive to contribute? It's wrong to steal cars, yes, but it's an even bigger wrong that the state's schooling system has failed some of our children and given them the message that they have nothing to contribute. (Read the story in this issue's 'Pilots Page' to see how schools and community groups are now working together as never before).
- Is there a community radio station in your area?
- If you are serious about this, always refer to the fact that your project is part of a 29million euro national programme called the Community Development Support Programmes. It includes about 130 Community Development Projects around the country (with close to half of those in Dublin). It also includes projects called Core-Funded Groups which usually concentrate on single issues - such as men's issues, women's issues, disability, etc. There are about 60 Core-Funded Groups nationwide.



# power of the media

## Use the web to learn media skills

- 'Changing Ireland' gives you a TOP TEN list of free sites

If you want to write a story for a newspaper about your project or be interviewed on radio, but you don't know how to go about it – well, here is one answer! The following websites provide very useful tips and guidelines, and sometimes exercises, so that anyone can learn how to quickly yet carefully research and write an eye-catching news release. Some of the ten websites listed here are designed especially for use by community activists. Others are websites for community media projects in Ireland. Any project considering adopting a media strategy and intending to appoint one project member as a PR spokesperson will find the following particularly helpful.

[www.mediatrust.org](http://www.mediatrust.org) is the best site of all. It has great advice sheets on everything from 'Writing a news release' and 'Generating local media coverage' to 'Low-cost printing' and 'Make the most of your annual report'. While it is a British website, it is very useful since it is designed specifically for use by voluntary groups and charity organisations.

[www.media-awareness.ca](http://www.media-awareness.ca) is a Media Toolkit from Canada aimed at youth groups and leaders and looking at how the young are portrayed in the media (often negatively) and how to correct this.

[www.notrain-nogain.org/Train/Res](http://www.notrain-nogain.org/Train/Res) is very useful as a guide to writing news reports, editorials and so on.

[www.milligan.edu/Communications/Comm-205/Articles/checklist.htm](http://www.milligan.edu/Communications/Comm-205/Articles/checklist.htm) and [www.milligan.edu/Communications/Comm-205/Articles/interviews.htm](http://www.milligan.edu/Communications/Comm-205/Articles/interviews.htm) provide a tip-top checklists for researching and writing news stories, eg conducting interviews.

[www.journalism.bsu.edu/Journalism/Tutorials/Leads/leads.html](http://www.journalism.bsu.edu/Journalism/Tutorials/Leads/leads.html) gives tips on how to write a decent introduction to a news story among other things. The site includes excellent exercises which make it a fun way to learn.

[www.bartleby.com/141/index.html](http://www.bartleby.com/141/index.html) contains 'The Elements of Style' by William Strunk, Jr, which was first published in 1918, yet remains very popular because it is short, sweet and concise.

[www.cmn.ie/](http://www.cmn.ie/) is the Community Media Network in Ireland.

[www.metroeireann.com/](http://www.metroeireann.com/) is the site for Ireland's first multi-cultural newspaper.

[www.activelink.ie/](http://www.activelink.ie/) is an online magazine which is free to sign up to – they will e-mail you diary dates relevant to the Community and Voluntary sector regarding events, courses, protests, jobs, etc. You can also send information to be displayed on the website and it covers the island of Ireland.

## Subscribe to national development magazines – many for free!

**C**HANGING Ireland', Planet (the network for the Partnerships) and the Combat Poverty Agency together hosted a networking day for editors of national magazines fighting poverty and social exclusion.

Held in Dublin in November, it marked the first time these people had met as a group.

Guest speakers were Jim O'Brien, Editor of Journal 2 of the 'Irish Farmers Journal' and Pat Montague of Montague Communications. Another meeting should follow in good time and currently the contact people for the group are Joan O'Flynn ([oflynnj@cpa.ie](mailto:oflynnj@cpa.ie)) and Allen Meagher ([allenmeagher@eircom.net](mailto:allenmeagher@eircom.net)). Elaine Mellon of Planet has moved onto a new job.

One of the ideas agreed on was that editors would promote each others publications, many of which can be subscribed to without charge. The following is a sample:

**GCN (Gay Community News)**, Unit 2, Scarlet Row, West Essex St., Temple Bar, Dublin 8. Editor, Marie Mulkearn: [editor@gcn.ie](mailto:editor@gcn.ie)

• **'Local Solutions to National Issues'**, Planet, 68 Main St., Gorey, Co. Wexford. Editor: [info@planet.ie](mailto:info@planet.ie) Tel: 055-22788. [www.planet.ie](http://www.planet.ie)

• **'Poverty Today'**, Combat Poverty Agency, Bridgewater Centre, Conyngham Road, Islandbridge, Dublin 8. Joan O'Flynn, Editor: [oflynnj@cpa.ie](mailto:oflynnj@cpa.ie). Tel. 01-6706746.

• **NALA publications**, National Adult Literacy Agency, 76 Lower Gardiner Street, Dublin 1. Tommy Byrne, PRO: [tbyrne@nala.ie](mailto:tbyrne@nala.ie) Tel: 01-8099195.

• **'Breaking Through Newsletter'**, (RE: interventions with young people at risk) Unit 2,

Westside Centre, 51 Main Street, Leixlip, Co Kildare. Trevor Barr, Editor: [breaking.through@may.ie](mailto:breaking.through@may.ie) Web: [www.breakingthrough.org](http://www.breakingthrough.org)

• **'Metro Eireann'**, (multi-cultural newspaper) 213 North Circular Road, Dublin 7. Chinedu Onyejelem, Editor: [chinedu@ireland.com](mailto:chinedu@ireland.com) Tel: 01-869-0670

• **Bóthar magazine**, (Development agency) 99 O'Connell St., Limerick. Ali McNamara, Publications/Editor: [bothar@eircom.net](mailto:bothar@eircom.net) Tel: 061-414142.

• **People with Disabilities In Ireland (PwDI)**, National Office, Richmond Square, Morning Star Avenue, Dublin 7. Sharon Long, Editor: [slong@pwi.ie](mailto:slong@pwi.ie) Tel: 01-8721744.

• **Irish Traveller Movement**, 4 Eustace Street, Dublin 2. Anne Jennings-Tauciene, Editor: [itntrav@iol.ie](mailto:itntrav@iol.ie) Tel. 01-6796577

• **'Working Notes'**, Jesuit Centre for Faith & Justice, 26 Upper Sherrard St., Dublin 1. Editor, Bill Toner. Tel: 01-855-6814

• **'LAN – Local Authority News'**, Nestron Ltd, 68 Mdl. Abbey St., Dublin 1. Annette O'Riordan, Editor: [local@indigo.ie](mailto:local@indigo.ie) Tel. 01-8720856

• **'Comhairle Leor'**, Comhairle, 4 The Parade, Kilkenny. Ian Coulter, Editor: [ian.coulter@comhairle.ie](mailto:ian.coulter@comhairle.ie) Tel: 056-65176

• **FOCUS Ireland**, (RE: Homelessness) 14a Eustace St., Dublin 2. Roughan McNamara, Communications Manager & Editor: [rmcnamara@focusireland.ie](mailto:rmcnamara@focusireland.ie) Tel. 01-671-2555

• **'Peacemaker'**, Action From Ireland (Afri), Grand Canal Hse, Lwr. Rathmines Rd., Dublin 6. Joe Murray, Editor: Tel: 01-4968595. E-mail: [afri@iol.ie](mailto:afri@iol.ie)

### Competition prize for best CDSPs caption!

Please finish the following sentence. There is no limit on how long your suggestion should be or how many suggestions you make. Tell it from the heart!

**PRIZE: A 'CHANGING IRELAND' BOX**

(includes a silver 'Changing Ireland' pen and a €20 book voucher).

"The beauty of the Community Development Support Programmes is that

.....

..... [please finish].

The closing date for entries is February 14th. Entries should be sent to The Editor, 'Changing Ireland', c/o Community Enterprise Centre, Moyross, Limerick. E-mail: [allenmeagher@eircom.net](mailto:allenmeagher@eircom.net)



## ● **Permanent Traveller base for 2004**

THE Traveller Visibility Group in Cork City have just appointed a new worker to their women's health project. Dolores Mollahy can be contacted on 021-4503786. Dolores will be working on the Primary Health Care Project in which community women will be trained to provide health education for women in their own community. She will provide training in conjunction with Cora Williams, a public health nurse.

In 2004, the Traveller Visibility Group will be moving into their own premises at 25 John Street, Cork City, next door to the Vincent De Paul shelter and day centre. The funders are numerous: the Traveller Health Unit of the Southern Health Board, ADM through Equal Opportunities in Childcare, the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs and the People In Need Trust. Congratulations to all those who sweated over funding application forms.

## ● **Queues for health course in Tralee**

The Kerry Travellers Development Project began their pre-development course in Dec. 2002 with 12 women participants. There is already a waiting list for the next course! Carmel Gornal from KTDP and Mary B. O'Sullivan, a public health nurse, are running the training. KTDP are now looking to secure funding for a four-year diploma course in health education and jobs for the graduates.

Work has begun on the setting up of a Traveller Task Force in Tralee, similar to those already in operation in Killarney, Listowel and Castleisland.

## ● **Students helping other students**

The Farranree CDP has been funded by the Department of Education under the Back to Education Initiative, to run a 34 week course,

five mornings a week for those who left education early in life. This course will take place in the CDP which makes it very accessible for everyone. A second group will start the course in 2004 and negotiations will begin soon with UCC so that students can feed into a diploma course.

Basic English classes are now available to refugees and asylum seekers at the centre and also ECDL training. Students from these two groups are now offering their skills to other community groups in the area.

## ● **Co-ordinator wins PhD scholarship**

Congratulations to Margaret O' Keefe of We The People, Knocknaheeny who has won a Government of Ireland scholarship to complete her Ph.D on the dynamic relationship between community professionals and young women. During Margaret's year one leave of absence Christine Ormerod will act as project co-ordinator. Administration will remain in Noreen O'Regan's capable hands.

## ● **Poster campaign dismissed myths**

The Open Door Network, Kerry's response to violence against women had an exceptionally busy lead-up to Christmas. They launched a new series of posters informing the women of Kerry about the services available to them and dealing with some of the common myths associated with violence against women. A woman who had made a new life for herself and her children gave an interview on radio. Two workers also spoke on Fr. Rory O'Sullivan's radio programme. Then for five days during the sixteen days of action against violence against women the "thought for the day" on Kerry radio was on the subject of violence against women and our community response. Workers interested in training to support women experiencing violence can contact Catherine Casey on 087-6169704.

## ● **Women's Centre sponsored radio ads**

The Tralee Womens Resource Centre who offer a drop-in service for women, Mon.-Fri. 9.30-2.30 funded radio community diary advertisements on Radio Kerry during the sixteen days action. This has helped to raise awareness and Joan and Jo have been busy with the increased number of callers to the centre.

## ● **Looking out for the windows**

Mayfield Integrated CDP are in the midst of packing boxes and waiting on new windows for their new centre. Their new address is 328 Old Youghal Road, Mayfield, Cork City. Good luck with the move Brenda and all the gang. May all your boxes arrive with their labels intact!

## ● **Media training in Bantry**

Bantry Community Resource Centre who were instrumental in bringing the Youth and Community Work Diploma to West Cork in 2002 are bringing Media Skills and Influencing Policy training in the Spring of 2003. Pat Montague of Combat Poverty will be delivering the training to 15 community people. Tel. 027-51315.

## ● **500 hours of volunteering**

Twelve people have emerged from a joint FAS and SPICE computer-training initiative to become the Tralee IT Network. With support from the Tralee CDP and Partnership Tra Lí, the dozen people will join with others from Tralee Women's Resource Centre and TRASNET to provide 500 hours of volunteer computer training at centres such as the CAIT centre at Cumann Iosaef, Balloonagh, Tralee.

## ● **Changing attitudes to litter**

Mahon CDP celebrated their tenth anniversary before Christmas with a visual history of their project and all the work undertaken within the community. They had a houseful! Combat Poverty have funded an environmental awareness campaign targeting young people and other groups in the Mahon area. Cork City Council have partnered with Mahon CDP for this campaign aimed at litter reduction and recycling.

Thanks again to Mary A., Brenda, Catherine, Jo, Chris, Dave, Noreen, Margaret, Viv, Sharon and Karen for taking the time amid work plans to answer my calls and questions. The following is some news from Ballyphehane and Togher CDP my thanks to Siobhan O'Dowd.

I will be back in touch with you all in two months time but if you have any ideas for articles in the meantime you can contact me on 086-8385345 or martinebrennan@eircom.net

# Child-friendly developments in Ballyphehane/Togher

2002 was a time of major transition for Ballyphehane/Togher CDP; changes in staff and voluntary management committee members, intensive development of our management and community education sub-committees and securing and drawing down 3 year funding for our crèche facility from ADM has kept us busy. During the year Siobhan and Andrea took up positions as Co-ordinator and Development worker respectively, Maggie was recruited to the new post of Childcare Team Leader and we hope to have a Child-Care Manager in place early in 2003. Our Management Committee held its first ever residential training week-end (10 years on and still counting) to look at Management Structures and management of our new 3-year Work Plan.

In 2003 we hope to consolidate the work already begun by supporting the Management Committee to lead this organisational growth and change, intensive development of the Crèche facility, and maintaining the development work of the project by securing funding for the Development Worker post.

- By Siobhan O'Dowd of Ballyphehane/Togher CDP

N.B. A list of contact phone numbers for Regional Reporters is published on pages 20/21 for projects seeking to have an item included in 'Regional News'.



## Noel Ahern praises graduates from community groups

An Awards Ceremony was held in the Garda Club, Dublin, in late Autumn for 32 participants who received awards for completing CAN's Community Development courses. The awards were for FETAC Level 2 and Level 3 and the ceremony was attended by Noel Ahern, Minister for State at the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs.

The Minister highly praised the work of CAN and the work the participants are doing in their communities. Olivia O'Leary from RTE presented the certificates. Afterwards, the graduates partied with family and friends into the early hours.

## Irish want equality central to any European constitution

A new publication entitled 'Guide to Equality and the Policies, Institutions and Programmes of the European Union' was launched last month by the Equality Authority.

"We need to stimulate a leadership from Ireland to support a focus on equality in the draft constitution for the European Union now being prepared. Initial drafts are not encouraging in this regard," stated Senator Maurice Hayes.

As Chairperson of the National Forum on Europe, he launched the publication: it describes policies and legislation in Europe that contribute to equality, institutions and organisations that drive forward the equality agenda, and programmes that provide funding to promote equality.

"Any new constitution needs to ensure that the promotion of equality", stated Niall Crowley, CEO of the Equality Authority.

He added, "We (in Ireland) can take some credit for providing a leadership on equality within the European Union. This flows from our equality legislation which, with its coverage of nine grounds, places us significantly ahead of the other member states. Many are now looking to our experience as they incorporate further grounds into their legislation."

# West's '16 Days of Action' against violence

**B**ETWEEN January and June 2002, the Women's Aid Freephone Helpline received 8,700 calls. During 2001 almost 10,000 calls were made to the Dublin Rape Crisis Centre, and in 2000 there were 10,877 Garda call outs to domestic violence incidents. These are just three of the worrying statistics that show domestic violence continuing to be a very real, very brutal problem for many people in Ireland.

The effects of domestic violence permeate all aspects of everyday life; apart from the physical danger, it often leads to fear and anxiety, low self esteem, depression, isolation and suicidal tendencies. It can frequently involve sexual violence, it occurs among all sectors of society, and it is a crime.

As part of the international campaign '16 Days of Action against Violence against Women 2002,' a regional seminar on violence against women took place on Wednesday 27th November in Kiltimagh, County Mayo. The seminar's aim was to raise awareness of violence against women within the Western Region, and speakers focused on two areas:

- the issues facing women and children experiencing violence

- the issues for organisations providing supports and services for those experiencing violence

The big event was organised by Community Response to Domestic Violence Network, which established in 2000 by members from seven CDPs across Mayo and Galway. The Seminar was officially opened by Kate Walsh, Chairperson of 'The Regional Planning Committee on Violence Against Women.' Speakers on the day included representatives of Mayo Women's Support Services, Mayo Rape Crisis Centre, Galway Rape Crisis Centre, Waterside House Refuge, Galway, Women's Aid and Boyle Family Life Centre.

One of the network's major commitments is to enable the real voices of those who have experienced domestic violence to influence practice and policy at local, regional and national levels, and it hopes to promote a change in attitude towards the issue by informing and educating service providers, statutory agencies and the wider community. After all, it really is an issue that continues to directly affect a huge number of Irish people on a daily basis.

The Women's Aid Freephone Helpline number is 1800-341-900



● Part of the group who attended the Regional seminar on Violence Against Women.

## Cork gay/bi-sexual conference aimed at projects

A CONFERENCE on 'Service Provision for Gay and Bisexual Men' will be held on Wednesday, February 19th, at Jury's Hotel, Western Road, Cork. It should be particularly interesting to people in CDSPs projects.

The conference is being organised by the Southern Gay Men's Health Project with the support of Cork City Partnership and the Cork Gay Community Development Company.

It was called as a result of many requests for training and information. The project and company involved receive "many phone calls from workers who are dealing with sexuality issues but feel that they need more support and training in this area." Both organisations work closely with Community Development Projects and Core-Funded Groups.

The conference aims include:

- Increasing awareness of the importance of

visibility in relation to Gay and Bisexual men (GBM).

- Helping organisations/individuals develop appropriate skills in relation to working with GBM.
- To identify specific issues in relation to emotional, mental, physical, social and sexual health that affect GBM.

The main speakers will be Cllr. Peter Kelly, Brian Sheehan and David Wyse and the conference will include a comprehensive series of workshops.

**Costs: Non-Government Organisation €30 per person; Government organisation €80 per person. Places are limited. For further information phone 021 - 4278470 or e-mail [gayswitchcork@hotmail.com](mailto:gayswitchcork@hotmail.com)**



# A milestone for Kiltimagh CDP

By Declan Weir

**F**EW of us are at our best on Monday mornings, but there was no slacking by Éamon Ó Cuiv, Minister for Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs, on a recent visit to the Mayo town of Kiltimagh. Having already been hard at work since early that morning, the minister seemed impervious to the vicious wind that whipped through the town, as he turned up for the official opening of Kiltimagh Community Development Project's new office on Main Street.

A sizeable crowd of community and business representatives from the area and further afield were present, everyone eager to get the official stamp on what would be a milestone for those involved in bringing the project to its present, vibrant position at the heart of a community of some 3,500 people.

The story goes back more than six years to the establishment of the Kiltimagh & District Community Development Project in June 1996. A group of local volunteers – who would go on to become the first management committee – developed a three year work plan with the help of West Training & Development Support Agency. Fast-forward to 2002, and the project is still managed voluntarily by a core group of concerned local people.

In accordance with community development practice and principles, the project aims to develop a dynamic community facility which is both accessible and user-friendly to everyone, especially those experiencing isolation and social exclusion. The fact that it now operates from a high profile location in the middle of town shows that practical steps have been taken



● **Back row:** Loretta Needham, Tuam CDP; Jimmy Glynn, Dept.; Kate Donnelly, Mayo Women's Refuge; Jim Power, Parkside CDP; Neil Sheridan, Co. Dev. Board; Breda Lymer, West Training. **Front:** Bridie McMahon, Kiltimagh CDP; Pat Higgins, VEC; Minister Eamon O'Cuiv; Dr. Gerry Cowley, TD.

ensure it succeeds. The CDP works and co-operates with Mayo Citizens Information Service, Mayo Vocational Education Committee and a number of other organisations and agencies. (The project's work had also expanded into rural areas such as Kilkelly and Bohola, although sadly the 'Enhanced Funding Scheme' which facilitated such expansion was discontinued last year).

Mary Jackson, chairperson, welcomed the Minister and everyone in attendance, before handing the podium over to Bridie McMahon, project co-ordinator, who outlined the work of the CDP over the last six years. Bridie went on to detail some of the challenges facing future work – inadequate resources, demands on volunteers and the importance of getting involved in policy work at county, regional and national level. She finished by thanking the management committee, local people and staff for their hard work, support and dedication.

In his speech, Minister Ó Cuiv congratulated everyone involved and took the opportunity to re-emphasise the importance of the national network of community development centres acting as "a real resource for communities affected by disadvantage." He spoke of the importance of volunteer involvement, and the strengthening of local communities, before finishing with words to encourage many of those present in the light of current economic concerns. "This community has led the way in self-development and I promise you as Minister that the more communities help themselves the more help they will get from Government."

Terence Flanagan, a volunteer, spoke of the rewards of involvement in community development work. Finally Michael Munnelly, on behalf of the Management Committee, thanked Minister Ó Cuiv for visiting and presented him with a video and booklet, both of which were initiated by Kiltimagh CDP.



● **Minister O'Cuiv addressing the audience.**



● **Bridie McMahon and Minister O'Cuiv.**

## Protesting is empowering and healthy – study

Researchers have found that taking part in protests and demonstrations may be good for your physical and mental health. Psychologists at the University of Sussex, England, were eager to identify what it is about protesting that makes those involved feel empowered.

They discovered that people who get involved in campaigns, strikes and political demonstrations experience an improvement in psychological well-being that can help them overcome stress, pain, anxiety and depression.

The finding fits in with other studies suggesting that positive experiences and feeling part of a group can have beneficial effects on health.

London researcher Dr. John Drury said, "The take-home message from this research therefore might be that people should

get more involved in campaigns, struggles and social movements, not only in the wider interest of social change but also for their own personal good."

Nearly 40 activists belonging to various groups were interviewed.

"Empowering events were almost without exception described as joyous occasions. Participants experienced a deep sense of happiness and even euphoria in being involved in protest events," said Mr. Drury.

• Thanks to Joe Sheehan, a member of the [www.limerickforchange@topica.com](http://www.limerickforchange@topica.com) social and environmental group for sending us this piece. Regional Reporter, Maurice McConville, also sent us the same item for inclusion. Great minds think alike!