

CHANGING IRELAND

ISSUE 7

The National Newsletter of the Community Development Support Programmes

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Pride in committees

Pride is one thing that community development projects generate that cannot be easily measured. Yet the pride among people living in the dismal-looking Fitzgerald Park, in Dun Laoghaire, Co. Dublin, was clearly visible on February 22nd when local children sang in a concert with famous musicians.

The concert was titled 'Pride for Fitzgerald Park' and it was supported by Christy Moore and Sinéad O'Connor. The aim was two-fold, to highlight the needs of a disadvantaged area in a suburb of overwhelming wealth and to raise some funds towards the cost of a new community centre. But government funding is crucial and the community are certainly not going to give up. This was just the beginning. A Late Late Show appearance by members of the community singing with Christy followed. Pride must be bursting, even if facilities remain lacking.

Community development projects throughout the country are there to tackle the causes and effects of poverty and exclusion. Holding a concert might at first sight appear an odd way of approaching this work, but in the above-mentioned case, it was very much a political act. The invited politicians sat a few rows back from the local people attending, showing who must get priority.

Other projects around the country are continually battling on behalf of their communities - not always in public, often through inter-community meetings and in negotiations with officialdom. Progress is slow in this field, but progress there is.

Nationally, projects are currently campaigning to promote and protect the work done by the 170 projects working under the umbrella of the Community Development Support Programmes. The Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs is this year reviewing the various anti-poverty government programmes and changes are likely. However, the projects are close to agreeing where they stand - the consultation takes time, but is nearly there. Of course, some things are sacred to community development projects - local autonomy and the restoration of tri-annual funding, for example.

Certainly, the CDSPs represents excellent value for money and it is the most important 'layer' in the government's efforts to tackle poverty, because it is the ground layer. The work carried out through the CDSPs, much of it by the thousands of volunteers running the projects, has been evaluated and measured in a Nexus report which was published last year. Undoubtedly, the actual cash worth of the work done through these programmes is many times more than the amount of money the government actually spends on them. This is all down to the volunteers. May they be proud and long may their projects last!

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Fitzgerald Park in proud fight for recognition

By Nick Murphy & Allen Meagher

MOUNTWOOD/FITZGERALD Park Community Development Project in Dun Laoghaire, Co. Dublin, have got Christy Moore to put his passionate voice behind a campaign to raise awareness of the needs of their community.

The results - Christy sang with local children in a concert aimed at raising the pride of the Fitzgerald Park people. And pride was raised - following the concert Pat Kenny invited them onto RTE's Late Late Show. The children again sang with Christy while project co-ordinator Marian White argued vocally for recognition for the people in their community, who for many years have been living in dire conditions in high-rise flats. The audience gasped as photos from the area were flashed across a screen; the scenes of dilapidation were a reminder that poverty in Ireland might be more hidden than before but it is still there.

Most of the flats have been knocked and replaced with housing, but not the flat complex containing the community centre. Despite a campaigning trip last year to Donegal to the former Minister McDaid's constituency, and despite pleas to the local authority for proper financial backing, the centre remains a community-dream.

Rather than accept defeat, however, the CDP are persisting - they invited many politicians and notable public faces to the sell-out concert in Dun Laoghaire that featured Christy Moore (and special guest Sinéad O'Connor). Both performers and CDP staff denounced the poor treatment meted out to the people of Fitzgerald Park.

Minister Hanafin, MEP Patricia Mc Kenna, and local councilors Eamon Gilmore T.D. and Jane Dillon Byrne were among the notables who attended and CDP chairperson Susan



● Christy Moore

Stevenson, and the project coordinator Marian White joined Christy, Sinéad and guests in a plea for equal treatment for Fitzgerald Park residents.

Christy even interrupted the show to say, "If the sons of bank managers and the daughters of TDs had holes in their bathroom walls and mushrooms growing from their ceilings, buttons would be pressed and rules would be broken and invisible fingers would mould palaces of gold for their sons and daughters!"

He had been living in Dun Laoghaire for 17 years before he became aware recently of the 'pocket of poverty' in one of Ireland's richest suburbs. Fitzgerald Park, nestles in the heart of Dun Laoghaire and has problems that many would like to dismiss on the grounds that only a few hundred people live there. But the community is having none of that. They turned out in

force for the 'Pride for Fitzgerald Park' awareness-raising concert.

As co-ordinator, Marian White, said: "The people of this community live in appalling conditions and have huge need of investment in housing and service provision but are ignored because we live in an affluent area like Dun Laoghaire. People speak of us as a pocket of disadvantage as though, because we have a small population, the marginalisation we suffer is somehow lessened."

The concert highlight featured six local children who sang 'Ride On' and 'Molly Malone' with Christy and Sinéad. The children were conscious they were ambassadors for their community and worked hard to impress the crowd.

As co-ordinator, Marian White remarked, "It was a true community effort and the whole community was behind it and took ownership of it. Even the children saw the need and helped get the message across"

This was certainly borne out when one of the children was asked what it meant to him, personally, to sing with Christy "It means we might get our new centre" was the reply.

As to what follows, Marian warned those ignoring Fitzgerald Parks needs: "This is only the beginning!"

Mushrooms growing inside damp flat

At the 'Pride for Fitzgerald Park' concert, Christy mentioned a local flat with mushrooms growing in the bathroom. That flat belongs to Sharon Callaghan. But did Sharon think that by having Christy mention the mushrooms in her bathroom, the Council might come out and damp-proof her bathroom?

"I doubt it, but if they do they can fix the broken toilet while they're at it. I've been reporting that for eight months now," she said.

Sharon's son was one of the six children chosen to sing with Christy and Sinéad: "I'm very proud of course. We want officials to realise we are real people with real lives, not just numbers on flat doors. Maybe seeing the children performing with Christy might make them think what it might be like to have their children up there on that stage. If they can do that, they might start to think what it might feel like to live in these conditions."



● Children from Fitzgerald Park who sang with Christy Moore and Sinéad O'Connor recently - outshining the pair of them!

New CDSPs projects bring total to 170

FUNDING for 15 new Community Development Projects around the country, particularly targeted at RAPID and CLAR areas, was approved by the Department of Community, Rural & Gaeltacht Affairs in late March. The funding was valued at €900,000. This brings to 170 the number of projects now funded under the Community Development Support Programmes (CDSPs).

While close to 30 pro-actively targeted groups (otherwise known as pre-development groups) were ready and awaiting funding approval, the 15 that have been approved is more than had been expected following earlier budget cutbacks to the Community Development Support Programmes. Another 15 project start-ups are scheduled for 2004, subject to funding being available.

Noel Ahern T.D., Minister of State (with special responsibility for Community Affairs and the National Drugs Strategy) made the announcement allocating funding to the following projects (RAPID or CLAR is mentioned where a project falls within one of these areas):

- 1 Achill CDP, Co. Mayo - CLAR;
- 2 Bluebell CDP, Dublin 12 - RAPID;
- 3 Dolphin House CDP, Dublin 8 - RAPID;

- 4 East Clare CDP - CLAR;
- 5 Inchicore CDP Dublin 8 - RAPID;
- 6 Longford Town CDP - RAPID;
- 7 Merchants Quay/Ushers Quay CDP, Dublin - RAPID;
- 8 Newbridge CDP, Co. Kildare;
- 9 Erris CDP, North West Mayo, CLAR;
- 10 NW Roscommon CDP - CLAR;
- 11 SE Galway CDP (Portumna) - CLAR;
- 12 SW Cavan CDP - CLAR;
- 13 Thurles CDP, Co. Tipperary;
- 14 Tipperary Travellers Core-Funded Group - RAPID;
- 15 West Limerick CDP.

Each project will receive a renewable one-year contract for funding totalling €60,000. This funding will be available from September 2003. The Department is in discussion with these projects to organise their start-up and to explore possibilities regarding appropriate linkages and supports with other local agencies.

The aim of the Community Development Programme is to develop resource centres or projects in communities affected by high unemployment, poverty and disadvantage. The projects provide facilities such as meeting rooms, creches, office facilities and training or education projects to meet the needs of disadvantaged

groups in their communities. These tend to include lone parents, people with disabilities, Travellers, homeless people or the long-term unemployed.

Minister of State Ahern T.D., said the funding for the projects "demonstrates the Government's commitment to focusing resources on areas of greatest need. Through prioritising funding in RAPID and CLAR areas, we will ensure that the areas most in need of this support get a head-start in the queue when it comes to accessing it."

The RAPID (Revitalising Areas through Planning, Investment and Development) Programme identifies the most disadvantaged areas in the country and targets a proportion of the social inclusion funding provided in the National Development Plan 2000-2006 towards these areas. There are two Strands of the RAPID Programme - Strand I which was launched early 2001 targets 25 urban areas while Strand II which was launched early 2002 targets 20 provincial towns around the country.

CLAR (Ceantair Laga rd-Riachtanais/ Programme for Revitalising Rural Areas) is a programme designed to tackle the problem of depopulation, decline and lack of services in rural areas.

Volunteers in Clare - what motivates them?

EAST Clare CDP were one of the 15 proactively targeted groups that will now receive funding in September after Minister of State, Noel Ahern, announced which projects were getting the go-ahead. East Clare is typical of the new projects. It was established four years ago and the project has developed, with support from the Mid-West Support Agency, a three year work plan that covers all aspects of rural and social issues in the area. To get this information, the volunteers involved intensively researched each of the thirteen parishes in the area and held public meetings to gauge needs.

Shortly, the volunteer management committee will be recruiting staff to get to work on issues in the area. At last, say the committee, ordinary people are going to get the support they are entitled to.

The following is a profile of the eight members of the management committee who have brought the project to life. The profile focuses on their interests and motivations for becoming involved in their community: Their stories are reflective of volunteers throughout



● *Rural Ireland may be beautiful, but there are many challenges.*

the country.

Laura Ward is the committee chairperson and lives in Tulla. She has young children, has been unemployed and feels the lack of transport is a real problem - she is currently a member of East Clare Accessible Transport.

Teresa Hickey is a carer living in Feakle and she got involved in

the East Clare CDP as she would love to see more services, supports and amenities in East Clare, especially for young people and the elderly.

Thomas King is from Tulla and believes that his experiences can be of value and he will give inputs based on the difficulties and problems he has experienced - he has a

long-term lung disease.

Thomas Noonan Ganley is 18 and would like to see the CDP support the establishment of more services for young people.

Anne Malone is from Whitegate and is a mother of a child with a disability. She believes passionately in the need for improved services for children with disability and believes that these should be locally based.

Nick McMahon has been a fishing skipper and a company director. He has also been unemployed and participated on community schemes. He currently works as a job mediator with the Local Employment Services.

Laura O'Brien lives in Tuamgraney and has a background in youth and community development and is currently studying to become a social worker. She is particularly interested in issues relating to the youth and elderly.

Carmel Keenan is a mother with small children living in Whitegate and like Laura she knows too well of the difficulties relating to rural transport facing people living in rural areas. She wants to see more services and support for young people.

54 Dublin women challenge racist views

'In Your Face' is the theme of an exhibition of photographs of 54 women, both Traveller and settled, currently being shown in Priorswood, Dublin.

The exhibition was organised in conjunction with the European Week Against Racism and the women photographed are all familiar faces in the Outreach Centre, in which the CDP is based.

"These are images that are real and that capture who we are", says Maeve McIvor, Anti-Racism Arts Worker Artist with CDP Priorswood.

The images, shot in black and white by Derek Speirs, celebrate the diversity of the community of workers and local residents who use the centre.

In a statement released by the CDP, the management said that European Week Against Racism, which took place this year from March 15th to 23rd, provided an opportunity for projects to challenge racism and promote a more intercultural society locally and nationally.

Throughout the country, CDPs were busy organising events in conjunction with the European Week Against Racism.

The exhibition in Priorswood was organised by the CDP-instigated Community Arts Project which aims to use creative and arty ways to address racism and strengthen community solidarity between the settled community, Travellers and other minority ethnic members. Anti-racist artwork aims also to encourage talk within the community on culture and identity.

A 'Totem Pole' is also being currently exhibited; it is the finished product of an arts project with St. Francis' Junior National School. The Totem Pole represents diversity within the community, using images of family, accommodation, spirituality and school, as painted by the children.

The exhibition began on March 20th and continues from 1pm - 7pm every weekday afternoon until Easter.

For further information contact Priorswood Community Development Project, The Outreach Centre, Clonsaugh Drive, Priorswood, Dublin 17. Tel. 01-8486458. Phone: 01/8486458. E-mail: Colette.outreach@oceanfree.net



● Traveller women and settled women who took part in the 'In Your Face' event.

Mahon youths active against discrimination

By Martine Brennan

"PEOPLE can really discriminate against people without even noticing," exclaimed one Cork youngster earlier this year, having taken part in anti-racism training at Mahon CDP. Hundreds more were similarly awakened to the dangers of racism and discrimination, after the local CDP began a wide range of efforts to promote interculturalism. Financial backing came through the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs enhanced funding scheme and Elaine Fahy was employed as the anti-discrimination worker.

As a "small" part of their work against discrimination, Elaine got together with other projects in the area namely Mahon Youth Development Project, Mahon Action for Youth Project, Mahon Schools Completion Programme and the Y.M.C.A. This ensured that an anti-racist model was built into a summer programme for young people in July of last year. 200 young people aged 8 to 16 years took part in the summer programme. For the first time ever, workshops took place in Mahon in two secondary schools and one primary school, from September to December '02. Both the young people and the school principals enthusiastically welcomed the programme and strongly felt, "It should be ongoing".

Mahon CDP has a long history of close ties with the Traveller Community and with local people with disabilities. It became clear quickly that there was a real need to address discrimination in all its guises. Once the three years of funding was secured, Mahon CDP set out to spend the money well and the following are just some of the paths the project has taken:

- Trained all staff, part-time and full-time.
- Outreach was organised for young people through schools and the summer programme.
- Networked with other groups locally and

nationally.

- Organised multi-cultural workshop for parents.
- International links developed in Wales, France and Norway.

The ripple effect of the work has been enormous. Local young people have established an anti-racism and equality youth group. Twenty-six transition year students signed up for the group and attend meetings once a week. The young people are currently developing a youth video on racism. They have already written a song and are also writing a drama piece. Their comments show how deep the impact of the training has been.

Said one youth: "We learned about the rights of people and they made us understand by playing games which were much better than having our heads stuck in books."

And another: "It was good, I got to say what I felt about things going on around us."

Sadly, for the people of Mahon, the anti-racism project will close at the end of July unless more funding becomes available. Said one young person for whom the workshops had a special meaning: "I am sad because we are not going to do it again."



● Pupils from Mahon in Cork City demonstrate what homelessness is like.

Arty anti-racism work in Southill

THE culmination of a years work with an asylum seeker group in Southill, Limerick, led to an exhibition that has been on tour in recent months. The exhibition of work was first shown at Limerick Print makers for a fortnight before travelling to five community action centres in the city, and on to community art spaces in Kerry.

The project originated through the O'Malley Park Family Resource Centre in Southill which works closely with the neighbouring CDP.

The participants used a 'past-present-future' theme as a framework within which they could creatively document their own identities. Each person created several digital art pieces. The artists' images challenged preconceptions which align with racist opinions while simultaneously evoking powerful images of their countries of origin.

Back in 2001, computer classes had been provided for locally-based asylum seekers.



● Claire Casey, Patricia Quinn (bottom left), and community development colleagues were more than cheerful after they brought CDSPs Projects together for an important national meeting.

CDSPs developing collective response to review

Juan Carlos Azzopardi reports

THE workers and volunteers running projects funded by the Community Development Support Programmes are working together like never before. They are motivated by the need to respond to a government-initiated review of the community sector. At present, they are in the final stages of co-ordinating a nationally agreed response - in the form of a strategic position paper.

This work has its origins in an historic national CDSPs meeting held in Dublin, on February 4th, well before the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs sent out letters regarding the review. Over 200 people from 120 CDPs, CFGs and Support Agencies around the country attended the meeting and it was agreed to elect a National Working Group with a mandate to act as a voice for the CDSPs nationally. The national group were also to draft the strategic position paper from the CDSPs and to negotiate with relevant bodies outside the programme. This group was seen as a support to the existing regional representatives on the National Advisory and Standing Operational Committees most of whom expressed that they would not be able to take on the extra workload.

The group has met 5 times and is representative of the projects in each region, support agencies, specialist support agencies, core funded groups, the proactively targeted groups yet to receive funding and 'Changing Ireland'.

Projects should by now have received a draft response from the National Working Group to the Department's review questions. Projects should therefore ensure they attend their next and subsequent regional meetings where this will be discussed as it needs to be finally agreed by May 1st. Project people with queries should contact the people involved from their area or region (see below).

The National Working Group are convinced that a collective response will be of benefit to both the CDSPs and the Department. It will:

- provide clarity on the key issues agreed within the programmes.
- strengthen the voice of each individual component of the programmes.
- hopefully offer some clear insight into the role CDSPs wish to play and the relationships it wishes to maintain and develop with the various initiatives and agencies operating under the Departments remit and the local government structures.

However this attempt at collective action and unity does not prevent projects and regions from putting forward their own individual positions directly to the Department particularly if it

is at odds with the general view. An earlier request (from the National Working Group) to projects to refrain from submitting individual responses immediately was intended to facilitate the development of our collective position first. Then we can see what agreement we can reach together to present to the Department if any. The group's request should be seen in that light.

The review has exercised everybody and possibly diverted project energy from the local issues but has also focused minds in terms of the future direction of community development and social inclusion work.

The current people on the CDSP National Working Group are:

Eastern Region, Claire Casey, Patricia Quinn, Lorraine McMahon and Marie Therese Kenna O'Dowd; **North Eastern Region**, Ursula McKenna, Patricia Hayes; **South Eastern Region**, Breda Murphy, Murt Flynn; **Southern Region**, Karen Gearon, Anna Fitzgerald; **Western Region**, Peigi Ni Chonghaile, Loretta Needham; **Support Agency Network**, Catherine Drea, Julie Howley; **Travellers Projects**, Alison Fox; **North Western Region**, Ann Donegan, Brendan O'Byrne; **Mid Western Region**, Juan Carlos Azzopardi, Edel Geraghty; **'Changing Ireland'**, Allen Meagher.

"You cannot take local ownership away"

- say 20 projects in the South-East region

"YOU can't take local ownership away because in my experience of the Community Development Support Programmes (CDSPs) it's about local people coming together and responding to their own needs," argued Teresa Wright, a spokesperson for projects in the South East Region.

Teresa, a community development volunteer for 25 years and currently a staff member with Dungarvan CDP, in Co. Waterford, made her remarks at the launch of the CDSPs campaign launch in the South East Region this Spring. The launch followed a coming together by community development and core-funded projects to highlight and document their crucial work. They felt the need to publicly profile their work as an initial response to the review of the community development sector currently being carried out by the Department of Community Rural & Gaeltacht Affairs.

The 20 south-eastern projects are part of the

national programme and are supported by Framework, a Regional Support Agency. Each project works with diverse sections of society concentrating on people experiencing poverty and social exclusion.

Teresa was adamant that "One of the great strengths of the programme is its voluntary base and the fact that projects are locally owned and managed and support communities to develop their own skills and confidence to overcome the issues that impact on their lives."

■ If it isn't broken, don't mend it

People within the CDSPs in the South-East feel strongly that they have established the right to participate in any process that will influence the future of the programmes. Campaign organisers point out that the CDSPs continues to

demonstrate that projects owned by locals, in communities that experience disadvantage, "can effectively contribute to the civic, social and economic well-being of the country, provided they are adequately resourced."

Despite the present time of uncertainty within the community sector, Teresa said, "It is often the case that good comes out of challenge. Going to the general CDSPs meeting in Dublin on February 4th, I saw over 200 people in a room representing projects from around the country. And I thought we are really on the way to recognising in a real way that we are a national organisation filled with people experienced from working on the ground. I think this kind of networking is very important both regionally and nationally and might help the Minister to take on board that these are local people saying, 'If it isn't broken don't mend it!'"

To contact Teresa Wright, Tel. 058-45283.

Mid-West seek politician's support

Over 200 volunteers and staff running 21 Community Development Support Programmes projects in the mid-west held a public meeting in Shannon on March 31st. There they called on politicians to support them in the face of a review of the community sector that could threaten the projects local independence. The review is being carried out by the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs and projects in Limerick, Clare and Tipperary were all represented at the Shannon meeting.

The projects - based in the most disadvantaged areas, from Kilrush to Moyross - work to combat the often-hidden effects of poverty and exclusion and to challenge the causes of poverty. All projects in the region are adamant that any changes should not affect the independence of local man-

agement committees who largely decide for themselves what the issues are and how they wish to handle them.

Item number one on their list is "that the local autonomy of the community projects be maintained."

They also sought politicians support for retaining Programme emphasis on: "a strong focus on local action; regional support, monitoring, co-ordination and policy development; national appraisal, approval and management."

The projects are seeking a restoration of 3-year funding. They also want an evaluation undertaken of projects that received 'enhanced funding' for special projects, such as the work in Southill, Limerick, against domestic violence. After the evaluation, projects expect the government would

continue the successful and vital works.

Finally, the projects are anxious "that the co-ordination of all social inclusion initiatives be undertaken in a manner that ensures the engagement of all parties on the basis of good faith and equality at local, county and regional level."

Projects involved in meeting the politicians included, for example, St. Munchin's CDP, the Community Development Network Moyross, Limerick Travellers Development Group, Kilrush CDP, Ennis CDP, Thurles CDP and Southill CDP. Last week, Minister of State, Noel Ahern, TD, announced the funding for at least one year of four new projects in the Mid-West starting in September. This news was well received in the region.



● Volunteers and staff from 21 projects in the Mid-West region who held a 'Meet the Politicians' day in Shannon, Co. Clare.

INTRODUCTION

A number of projects funded through the Community Development Support Programmes contacted local TDs and went through the Dail to ask questions about current issues. The CDSPs is currently under review as are other programmes administered by the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs and the following discussions throw some light on the review process.

Programme value highlighted

PAUL Gogarty (Greens) drew further attention to the Nexus review of the Community Development Programme carried out in 2000. He asked if the very positive findings in the evaluation were not reason enough for the programme to be given continued, and indeed additional, funding.

Meanwhile, Dan Boyle (Greens) described it as "ironic" that, despite the Nexus report finding that the Community Development Programme represented "good use of and value for public money", the Government still cut the budget. Mr. Boyle said it was "as if somehow they are being rewarded for being efficient."

Ciaran Cuffe (Greens) followed by asking what the Minister had planned in terms of secure long-term funding for CDSPs projects.

Minister of State, Noel Ahern, replying, said the Nexus report confirmed "that the Community Development Programme has contributed significantly to changing circumstances and creating opportunities in some of the most disadvantaged communities in the country."

He added that "any decisions regarding the future development of the community development programme, including decisions relating to long term funding, will be taken in the context of (the Department's current) review."

- *Dail Debates February 12th*

Minister eager to dispel fears

"I MUST dispel the idea that the Minister of State or I want to do down community development," said Minister Éamon Ó Cuív, during a Dail debate recently.

"We want to listen to what we are being told by the community developers and to make the schemes responsive to what they see as the requirements in their daily work. They are not uniform across the country. We want to get away from a uniform prescription by Government as to what CDSPs, Gaeltacht co-operatives or partnerships are about and to devise a more locally flexible model," he added.

- *Dail Debates February 12th*

'Optimal coherence' means tailoring schemes

'OPTIMAL coherence' is a beautiful phrase but what does it mean? So asked Dan Boyle (Green) in the Dail on February 12th. He also asked how projects would know when they have achieved it.

Replying, Minister Éamon Ó Cuív said he first used the phrase last September. Noting that there were many schemes in many different areas, he wanted "to tailor schemes to the people's requirements and this is what people who are involved in community development tell us to do when we go around the country. There are differences between the requirements of differ-

ent communities, whether rural or urban. Deprived urban communities have totally different requirements from some of the rural communities."

He said schemes originated in different Departments and "one must always question which scheme is best for each community." He pointed, by way of example, to Gaeltacht co-operatives and CDPs on islands, saying they were "chalk and cheese operations" and it was his job to choose an optimal model.

"Maybe the optimum is half way between the two but the question must be answered," he added.

- *Dail Debates February 12th*



● Minister Éamon Ó Cuív at the opening before Christmas of the Mid-West Support Agency's new office on the Dock Road, Limerick.

Community sector 'doing incredible work' - Minister

MINISTER Éamon Ó Cuív has acknowledged that programmes and agencies in the community sector are "doing incredible work on the ground." However, there is "a great disparity in the methods applied" by different programmes.

The Minister compared the spread of programmes and agencies active in the community

sector to "electric cables going all over the place."

"Half of the power (is) being lost in the transmission," he continued, "and not too much of the electricity (is) getting to the end user."

"There are partnerships working in one direction and CDSPs in another. CDSPs receive money directly from the Department and via ADM on a partnership basis. This has been a

wasteful way of doing business."

"When I talk about rationalisation, I am talking about using the money we have in such a way that less of it is lost in bureaucracy and more (goes) on services for those in the target areas who need it," added Minister Ó Cuív.

He was speaking during a Dail debate with Labour's Pat Rabbitte.

- *Dail Debates, March 11th*

New Community Development agency?



● Minister Ahern

DAN Boyle (Greens) asked what consideration has been given to the establishment of a single national agency for the promotion of community development.

Minister of State, Noel Ahern replied, suggesting that "the Department is the national co-ordinating agency."

"Perhaps that is why the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs was set up last June," he continued. "I agree that up to then community development was being done by many agencies who answered to different Departments. They are all under the one Department now and we are trying to pull them

together. We do not intend setting up another new agency. We are trying to rationalise and pull together what is there, trying to see where the gaps or overlaps are and trying to give a better service to the community."

He later acknowledged there was the possibility of "a new lead agency" for community development, but added that, "For the moment that is not the intention."

"We intend consulting widely with the various groups involved to develop a plan to improve the service to the community," he added

- *Dail Debates February 12th*

New Department's strategy statement

BRIAN O'Shea (Lab) asked Minister Ó Cuív when he expects to publish the promised Statement of Strategy 2003-2005 for his Department, which he indicated would be published early in 2003.

Minister Ó Cuív said a draft strategy statement was presented in December and he was "at an advanced stage" with the full document. When published, it will be the first strategy statement to be published by the newly-formed Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs.

Mr. O'Shea pressed him further.

Minister Ó Cuív: "As the Deputy will appreciate, it has been a complex task because we are setting a totally new vision for a Department of many parts. It has been

quite a task to pull this together, not just to produce the normal statement but to make sure also that it is a clear statement of strategy which includes the politically driven strategy of the Department. Ultimately, a Department without a politically driven strategy would not be much good - that is what democracy is all about. I want to make sure that the strategy fully reflects the clearly stated aims of the Government in terms of developing rural areas, the islands, social inclusion, areas of rapid expansion and so on. I hope to publish the statement as soon as possible and I will be bringing it to Cabinet in the near future."

- *Dail Debates February 12th*

Programme cuts criticised

MR. Eamon Ryan (Greens) asked the Minister for Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs the reason for the cut in funding to the CDSPs.

Minister of State, Noel Ahern did not give a direct reason, but replied that while there was a decrease, the Departments were still able to meet their core commitments to existing projects.

Dan Boyle (Greens) said the cuts "in effect denies many who are dependent on this programme of the real support which they require."

Fergus O'Dowd (FG) said: "It is 16%."

Minister of State Ahern replied: No. In relation to community development that whole area is about 7%.

- *Dail Debates February 12th*

Quick quotes

Dan Boyle, Green TD: "Community development...means people inform themselves and challenge systems around them, including the political system." - *Dail Debates February 12th*

M.O.S. Noel Ahern: "There is concern that the Community Development Programme might be swallowed up by the area partnerships or some such group. We have to be careful that that does not happen. The Community Development Programme did great work on the ground and it is my intention to make sure it is preserved in any changes that come about."

- *Dail Debates February 12th*

Minister Éamon Ó Cuív: "I am fully committed to securing the most positive impacts for communities arising from expenditure through programmes under the aegis of my Department. This will be a guiding principle throughout the review process."

- *Dail Debates February 12th*

M.O.S. Noel Ahern: "Many of those involved as community activists for years admit that there are gaps and overlaps and that matters could be improved."

- *Dail Debates February 12th*

Ground-up debate

DAN Boyle (Greens) argued in the Dail that, "There is no promise of ongoing funding (for CDSPs projects) and funding is subject to renewal and discussion on what the Government agrees each project will perform. That is no basis on which to run a community development programme."

He added, "There is a distinct difference between community development and the imposition of a Government policy...It is the difference between development from the ground up and decisions being imposed from the top down."

- *Dail Debates February 12th*

Mini World Cup combats racism

By Juan Carlos Azzopardi

ON June 7-8th, Limerick plays host to 20 teams with players representing up to 40 nationalities as part of the city's Mini World Cup and Family Fun Festival. The two-day event taking place at the University of Limerick was launched on April 16th as part of the KNOW RACISM Awareness Programme. At least 50 people attended the launch and it is the second year the event has been run.

The festival is co-ordinated by Sean Ward, a drug awareness worker employed jointly by two community development projects in the city, one based in Moyross and the other in St. Munchin's Parish.

Apart from the football, the novel event includes a 'Parade of Nations'. Youth clubs and schools were invited to Adopt a Country and learn more about the place and its young people. People originally from the chosen countries and now living in Limerick were scheduled to visit and help the groups. All the clubs and schools are involved in the Parade of Nations



● Two players who took part in the first 'Limerick Mini-World Cup' last year. The event promotes inter-culturalism and healthy living.

with 100 young people carrying the colours and costumes of their "adopted" countries.

Dutch student Emma Hoogerwerf, co-ordinating the Parade of Nations explained: "It is about getting to know each others cultures and experience and breaking down barriers"

The Mini World Cup involves soccer teams from community groups in Moyross, Southill, St. Munchin's and St. Mary's playing teams from Knocklisheen, Clyde House, Doras Luimni and people working here from countries like the Philippines, Poland and Morocco.

"Some teams have already played each other and started to develop friendships," said Joe Clarke, one of the organisers of the Festival.

The MiniWorld Cup and Family Fun Festival is organised by a range of groups including Community Development Network Moyross, Moyross Action Centre, Shannonside Sports, Doras Luimni, We're OK Youth Initiative, St.Munchin's CDP, St. Mary's CDP and the Access Office in University of Limerick.

The event is funded by the KNOW RACISM National Anti-Racism Programme.

● For more information, contact: Sean Ward 061-326057.

14% of Glen people love living there

The Glen Leadership & Equality Network (G.L.E.N.) Community Development Project in Cork city has interviewed over 100 households and focus groups in their area. The idea behind the research was to involve people more closely with its work. The G.L.E.N. CDP has been operating for almost three years and from the outset the project has sought to be closely linked with the residents and community that the project was set up to support.

The research was initiated as a means of identifying what local people felt were the key issues within the Glen community. The issues identified will assist the project to pinpoint the work that it should focus on over the next 3 years in its effort to meet community needs.

Respondents' views of the Glen area and their attitudes to living there were quite variable. While one-fifth of the interview population stated that they loved/liked living in the area, one-tenth of the group responded that they hated the area. A further 14% of respondents believed the Glen to be a poor area in which to live. The remaining 58% of the interviewees felt that it was an 'alright'/'good' place to live.

Reservations about living in the Glen

and problems associated with the area were identified in three main ways:

- Issues relating to vandalism and anti-social behaviour
- Complaints regarding the general appearance of the Glen area
- And a lack of basic facilities and services within the area.

In relation to the more positive aspects of living in the Glen area, the majority of respondents (78%) replied that closeness to family and friends was the best thing about living in the Glen. Many suggested that support from family, friends and neighbours was essential to filling the gaps in service provision, particularly in terms of childminding, borrowing money (or a 'cup of sugar') and assistance in times of illness or personal upset.

The other main positive aspect of living in the Glen is its central location and closeness to town, to schools and to local amenities such as Blackpool and Ballyvolane shopping centres. This is particularly important in view of the identified lack of services and facilities within the area itself. Thirdly, the new resource centre was identified as a positive development for residents of the Glen area.

Tackling violence against women with disabilities

WOMEN with disabilities must at all times be central to the development of responses to violence and abuse and must be supported to take leadership on this issue.

This is the central message of a new publication by the National Disability Authority (NDA) and Women's Aid entitled 'Responding to violence against women with disabilities'.

As specialist support agency on violence to the CDP programme, Women's Aid feel it is of vital importance that as many projects as possible are informed of this issue.

The booklet outlines steps involved in developing a good practice response by both disability organisations and organisations addressing violence against women, including statutory, voluntary and community service providers. It also includes useful contact information to support organisations in progressing this work.

It was found that women and men with disabilities experience a range of violence and abuse, in different settings. These include

- medical settings,
- institutions, care services, day centres and schools, and
- family and intimate relationships.

The booklet and a seminar report are available from:

Women's Aid, Tel: 01-8684721; Email: info@womensaid.ie

National Disability Authority, Tel: 01-6080400; Email: nda@nda.ie

The booklet can also be downloaded from the following web sites: www.nda.ie and www.womensaid.ie

Volunteers have the freedom to speak out

By Martine Brennan

"As a volunteer I have the freedom to speak my mind. Sometimes paid workers don't have that chance because of fears about funding. Being a volunteer means I have my independence."

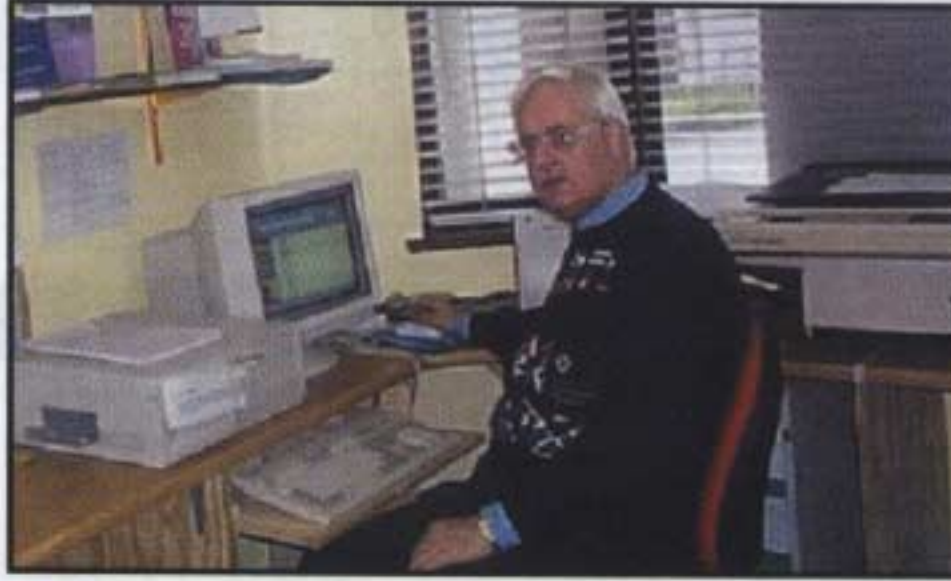
THESE are the words of volunteer community activist Tom Walsh after ten years in the Mayfield area of Cork City.

As well as being chairperson of Mayfield Community Development Project, Tom is also chairperson of the Cork Money Advice and Budgeting Service, a member of Cork City Development Board representing Cork City Partnership, an information officer in his local Citizens Information Service.

Last but not least Tom is a representative on the South West Regional Forum of the CDSPs. He was a founder member of this forum and was the first representative for the region on the National Advisory Committee.

Tom's work and achievements to date deserve a book.

"My proudest achievement has been my involvement through the Regional Forum in the setting up of wage structures for workers in the community development projects, the establishment of contracts of employment, and lobbying for pension



● Tom Walsh, volunteer.

funds for community workers."

He continued, "Before the Regional Forum was established there were no proper wage structures, no contracts, no unions and pension funds for community workers weren't even heard of. We still have a way to go especially with pension funds but our core staff here in Mayfield CDP now have pension funds, proper contracts of employment and clear wage structures."

Tom was also proud of his involvement in the work that led Cork Money Advice and Budgeting Service having its own premises.

His third proudest achievement is "my own development."

"In the early days of the CDP's Advisory Board in Dublin I did facilitation training with the Combat Poverty Agency. Without the training you won't advance. You won't make a difference on your own. You need to join a group and do training. The training gives people confidence. I feel I can

talk to anyone now if I see something needs doing."

The confidence is wonderful and Mayfield CDP volunteers, Tom included, had no problem, for example, securing a bank mortgage to pay for their new premises.

"The local AIB branch here recognised the continuity involved in me being a member of the Mayfield CDP for the past ten years and said that this was crucial in the granting of the mortgage."

This year, Mayfield CDP moved to the new premises which gives them a lot more space for their activities and is wheelchair and buggy-friendly: Minister Éamon Ó Cuív officially opened the premises on April 17th.

To people out in the community who feel that they don't have anything to offer, Tom offered the following advice: "For a lot of people literacy is a problem, if they haven't looked for help, now is the time, there is help available. Don't hide it anymore. And to anyone out there, I'd say get involved in something locally, do it for a short time, a woman's group, a men's group. Look for what you want. Do the training and make a commitment. It's not about going down the pub to hit your chest. People say to me 'Why do you do it?' and 'You get nothing out of it'. My answer is 'I like helping people and making a difference' so my advice to anyone is just get started, start slowly but get started."

She found freedom on a 6-week course

A LONE-PARENT in Carlow who took part in a personal development course found her life changed by the experience and has written about her experience in the hope it might help others like her.

Jackie Fitzgerald was one of seven lone parents who took part in a six-week course held in Tullow and along the way she discovered the "freedom to change."

She had previously "personally hit rock bottom", after which she sat down and told herself, "Right, I have two beautiful girls who will always be my life. And, I want a good career for myself." So I pulled myself together. From being at rock bottom, I've started to climb one step at a time and I refuse to stop until I have accomplished what I want from life. You do the same," she urged others.

"We tend to see ourselves trapped when, in fact, we are free. We are free to 'change'. It can take a shock like unemployment or a personal catastrophe to open our eyes," she wrote.

Projects throughout the country regularly hold personal develop-

ment courses. They are popular in Community Development Projects and in Family Resource Centres alike.

Such courses, Jackie reported, bring together people who want to boost their confidence, to recognize how to make the most of their abilities and to motivate themselves to take charge of the way they live their individual lives.

The course held in Tullow, Co. Carlow was run by the Forward Steps Resource Centre (the local Family Resource Centre) and was funded by the 'Community Foundation for Ireland'. The course covered: self-esteem, personal presentation, positive communication, interview skills, confidence-building, and life-skills Eddie Dawson, management committee member with Forward Steps felt the course was a great success.

• For more information about the course contact: Co-ordinator, Jen Dawson, Forward Steps Resource Centre, Tullow, Co. Carlow. Tel. 0503-52776.

INTRODUCTION

Community Development Projects throughout the country often serve to lay the groundwork for other government-funded or EU-funded programmes that follow. In the examples highlighted here, CDPs have been involved in supporting Rural Transport Initiatives - in one case, centrally, in another, as part of a regional team. One transport project is based in Cavan, the other in Galway and both make a real and tangible difference to the local populations. At last, in rural areas, the free travel pass is worth something to those who qualify for it.

Cavan shows how CDPs give birth

- as paid workers and volunteers combine energy

By Sandy Holland

RURAL LIFT, an offshoot of Community Connections Community Development Project (CDP) in Cavan, is celebrating its 1st anniversary as an independent project in May of 2003. There is a tangible sense of accomplishment in Rural LIFT these days as the project has recently launched 9 additional bus routes to the 10 that have been in existence in Leitrim and West Cavan for some time.

The Rural LIFT project illustrates the ability of CDPs to develop innovative ideas and new ways of working. It also shows how CDPs can often take the lead in developing projects that, through their flexibility and responsiveness, meet the needs of people locally in a way that is more difficult for larger organisations.

And the project is also a good example of how CDPs can work in partnership with County Development Boards and Partnership companies for their mutual benefit and for the benefit of the local community.

Today, Rural LIFT runs 19 bus routes in rural and isolated areas of West Cavan and Leitrim and is responsible for some 3500 passenger journeys each year. One of the innovative features of the project is the way in which the project contracts existing local bus operators and therefore promotes local businesses rather than competing with them. Bus passes are accepted on a majority of the routes making it a big favourite with older people as well as students, school children and other members of the local community.

It's some eight years since a group of volunteers within Community Connections CDP sat round a table, racking their brains as to how to solve the very real transport difficulties that faced their area. The discussions that followed over the next few years were the foundations on which the Rural LIFT project was built.

The subsequent employment by Community Connections of two development workers dedicated to transport development was a catalyst in the growth of the transport initiative. The workers were employed with funds from the



● 'If it wasn't for Rural Lift, where would be be?'

Programme for Peace and Reconciliation. They co-ordinated the research that was needed into the actual needs of the area documenting the individuals and groups of people who would most benefit from the provision of bus routes.

One of the key stages of the development of the initiative was the way in which Community Connections expanded its transport working group (a sub-committee of the voluntary management committee) from a membership of purely volunteers to include input from the County Partnerships in Cavan and Leitrim. Subsequent input was gained from the County Development Boards in both Cavan and Leitrim as the process of local government reform evolved. The blend of paid community workers and statutory agency staff teaming up with volunteers has proved productive.

Both Cavan Partnership and Leitrim

Partnership have played a major role in subsidising bus routes and their commitment in this respect has been an essential element contributing to the success of the project. The project has also received financial support from Cavan County Development Board.

Now that the project has been established as an independent project in its own right, nominees of the County Development Boards, the Partnerships and nominees of voluntary community organisations have joined together in taking responsibility for the management of the project.

Community Connections, for their part, have not gone away. The CDP has retained 2 seats on the new management committee of Rural LIFT and will seek to guide the project with the sense of purpose and voluntary input with which the project originated.

Free Travel Pass gains value in Galway

By Declan Weir

THE usefulness of 'chocolate teapots' springs to mind when you talk about the benefits of a Free Travel Pass where no public transport system exists. City and town dwellers may be well enough catered for in this respect but when you head out into the country you come across plenty of people who would be only too keen to avail of free transport. That's especially true for pass holders in Connemara who are sick and tired of being penalised because they happen to live in rural Ireland. Just as the old joke says 'aye, but you can't eat scenery,' so a magnificent view of the Twelve Bens isn't much use if you live more than an hour away from the nearest town or city and you have a dental appointment or you just fancy a wander around the shops.

Those days of inadequate transport are now over for many living in the western reaches of County Galway, with the recent establishment of Bealach, the Connemara Local Transport Partnership. Meaning 'way' or 'road' in Irish, Bealach has been set up to introduce a local transport pilot project to the area under the Rural Transport Initiative of the National Development Plan. A total of €6 million is to be spent nationally on rural transport schemes like Bealach between July 2001 - when the initiative was launched - and the end of 2003. Like many other initiatives in Connemara, this one has come about as a result of co-operation from several organisations, including local CDPs. Among those also involved are FORUM, Údarás na Gaeltachta, Cumas Teo, the Western

Health Board and Galway County Council.

It's also worth noting that Bealach is the demonstration project in ARTS, one of those delightful acronyms that actually means 'Actions on the integration of Rural Transport Services in low density areas.' This is part-funded by DGTREN (Energy & Transport) of the European Commission as part of the Competitive and Sustainable Growth Programme.

Operating and taking bookings out of the recently renovated and upgraded Cashel Health and Resource Centre in South Connemara, Bealach covers a large geographical area stretching north to the Galway border with Mayo, up into Mayo itself, and west to the Atlantic waters. Split into several routes within that area, locally operated buses cover the distance between Leenane, Letterfrack and Clifden or Cornamona, Cong and Ballinrobe, and a network of routes in South Connemara connect villages like Ros Muc and Carraroe, Carna and Camus. All the buses used by Bealach are wheelchair accessible.

It works simply enough, offering local people without their own means of transport the chance to get to the shops, access services and connect with other public transport systems. Journeys are free for Travel Pass holders, otherwise fares range from €1 to €3, and if you want to use the new service, you need to become a member of Bealach. Membership costs €5 for the first year (€1 if you hold a Free Travel Pass) and tickets can be bought in advance from local outlets.

• For further details contact Marian Ridge on: 095-31966.

Public awareness worth more than money

THE Mountwood/Fitzgerald Park CDP management committee realised early on that the main value of their Christy Moore concert was as an awareness raiser. While the ticket sales would bring in much needed funds, the main thrust of the campaign has always been to highlight the appalling living conditions of the residents and the need for a multi-use centre to serve as a base to provide services to those residents.

"The need for the services are clearly recognized by various service providers such as the Health Board, Department of Education etc. and of course the Department funds a CDP here," said Susan Stevenson, chairperson of the Mountwood/Fitzgerald Park CDP.

"But the providers seem blind to the need to house these services. Childcare for instance has strict guidelines regarding space and safety which can only be met by investment in premises," she added.

As to the concert, Susan said, "We sat down and thought this through. We were never going to raise the money we needed through fundraising if the government departments were going to pretend we didn't exist. So we decided to go

another way. We sought out people who were willing to help us raise our profile and Christy and Susan were willing to do that."

It is a measure of the project's success in raising public awareness that the concert held in Dun Laoghaire led to an invitation for members of the community to sing with Christy Moore on the Late Late Show. The project co-ordinator also got to have her say on the show which is one of the most popular programmes in RTE's schedule.

"Last year we were forced to chase Minister McDaid to Donegal when he refused to allocate money to help us provide a sports facility here. We felt the money had been made available by Europe but not put into facilities where they were really needed like Mountwood/Fitzgerald Park," continued Susan. "Now we have invited the MEP's out to have a look around the estate and we plan to appeal to Europe if need be, as well as organizing other awareness raising events. We feel that when people realise that we are living in these conditions public opinion will force officials to do something."

• See page 3 for full report.

Sexual Orientation and the CDSPs

A VALUABLE new approach to including and encouraging gay and lesbian people to be involved in the community and voluntary sector was launched by the CDSPs Equality and Anti-Racist Sub-Committee this month.

Since July of last year a strategy group has been working on the subject and the work was piloted in the North East - it focused on the four north eastern counties as well as in parts of Northern Ireland.

To promote their findings, at a public meeting in Dublin in mid-April, The Sub-Committee presented some of the learning that has emerged. It was an opportunity for others within the sector to hear about the development of the strategy from the perspectives of community workers employed inside and outside the programme.

The Sub-Committee had agreed last year to concentrate its mind on three areas - anti-racism, disability and sexual orientation and their work continues on all three.

For additional information contact Will Peters (Gay HIV Strategies) at 01-415 8413, or Emma Jane Hoey (Triskele Regional Support Agency) at 042-3663706.

• The Gay HIV Strategies group facilitates "new programmes, resources and linkages for effective Health Promotion, Community Development and HIV prevention strategies for gay men."

www.eurogayway.org

www.mindthegap.org

Communities advocating like never imagined in 1980s

MAYBE you are a 'participative democrat' and are just about to realise it! Because communities are nowadays advocating for themselves with a gusto and at political levels never imagined back in the 1980s. And, though you are not elected by the community at large, when you go along to a RAPID meeting or a community fora meeting which you attend as a community representative, then you are to the fore in Ireland's move towards a new form of democracy.

Now, as a result, a debate is surfacing: Can non-elected community activists and elected public representatives really work together rather than be pitted against each other?

There is talk from 'above' of community development workers and volunteers in the Community Development Support Programmes having to work more closely in the future with city and county development boards, in other words, with elected public representatives.

The debate, not entirely new, is all about the merits of one system of democracy versus another. The first, participative democracy, is based on encouraging full citizen participation. The second, representative democracy, relies on elected public representatives exerting power on behalf of the people. And this is almost a defining moment in the debate. If we value the increased capacity for people to actively involve themselves in identifying and addressing their own needs, then developments in Ireland over the last decade can be viewed as extremely progressive.

Levels of self-organisation and the capacity for self-advocacy have risen to an extent not imaginable in the mid-1980s. Communities and groups have always striven to represent their interests and are most voiciferous when their interests are being ignored by the mainstream.

In fact, the last decade marked the validation of

Definitions of democracy:

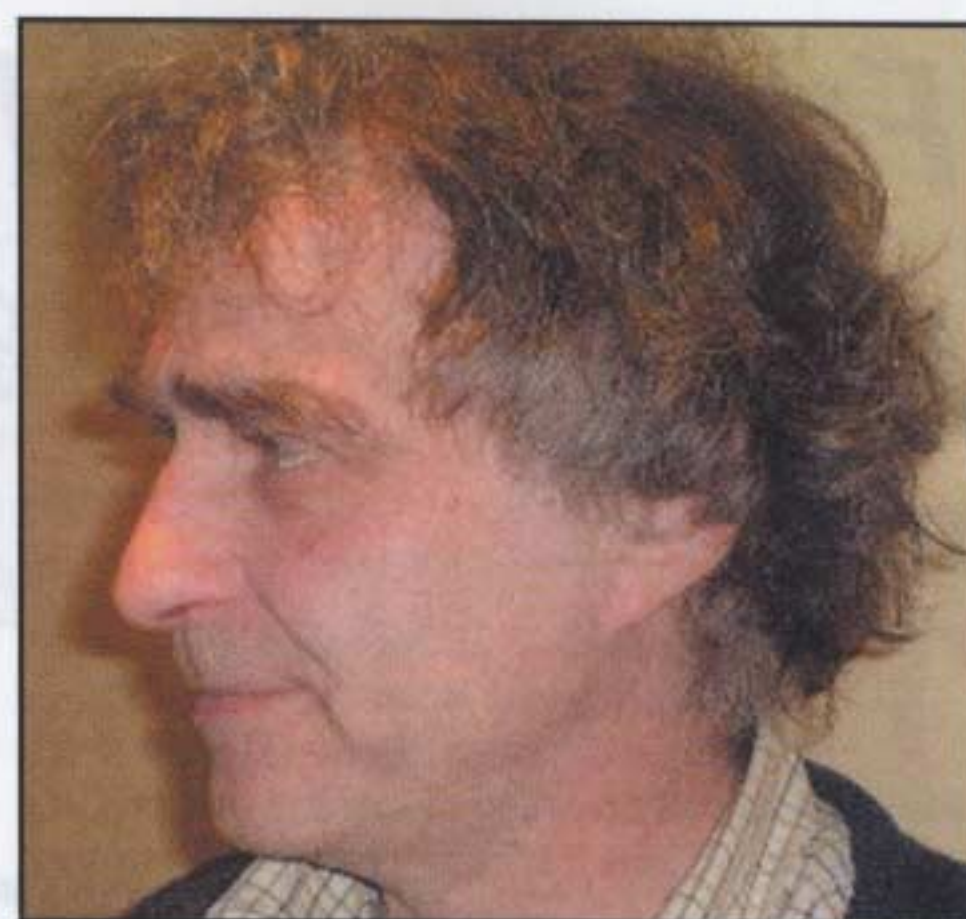
Participative Democracy = Volunteers getting involved in local grassroots actions, for example, in community development projects, county or city development boards, partnerships.

Representative Democracy = TDs, councillors that the people vote in to represent us in local and national politics.

these processes. **Many readers will remember the time when we all seemed to be 'doing' community development, but we all pretended we were doing something else. This was purely a funding ploy.** Groups and organisations delivered local services, offered training courses and cleaned up their environments. At the same time, many community groups became convinced it was time they learned how to identify their own needs, and to develop their own appropriate responses to those needs.

The conviction spread. The 1990s were characterised by 'partnership', 'participation' and 'capacity building' in order to become full partners in 'combating social exclusion'. Both EU and Irish social inclusion programmes were focused on the need for involvement of the excluded. The proposed solutions may not work if the needs of communities were assumed by outsiders rather than directly expressed by the excluded themselves.

During the course of this, the Community Development Programme became a very significant player in ongoing efforts to build capacity, awareness and active community involvement. The evaluation of the Programme noted the greatest success was in "building community development infrastructure" within the most marginalized groupings and the most excluded communities.



At the end of the process, a new participative local democracy has found strength. To explain this using industry words: A cumulative strengthening of the competence and knowledge base of community and voluntary organisations has translated into a recognition of 'the sector's' capacity to inform mainstream programme development and policy¹.

In other words, local community activists seem to know best about how to tackle issues in their area and they will campaign on behalf of their communities for the resources needed. Surely this is a good thing! It is sensible for community people to collect knowledge and know-how about what's wrong and then to feed this information in the right directions so that more effective interventions can be made in the future?

But then maybe not! An elected representative is sure to believe that s/he is the one to listen, understand and put forward the interests and concerns of the community? Who voted for the management committee of the Community Action Project or the Travellers Support Group? Shouldn't the elected representative be making the policy?

These questions are addressed in the accompanying story 'Are community leaders good or bad for 'democracy'?'

¹ The NESF, Social Partnership Agreements, the White Paper on Community and Voluntary Sector etc.

Are community leaders good or bad for 'democracy'

COMMUNITIES in Ireland, geographic and sectoral communities alike, now have a new 'capacity to influence' because bit by bit over the years, community people have become involved in the political process. While, for example, the volunteers on management committees of CDPs and other projects are not elected in a full community ballot, they nevertheless 'represent' their communities. Crucially, their right to be true representatives is viewed in a number of different lights – depending upon the viewers standpoint. And basically, the two extremes of the argument tend to define participative democrats (a CDP for example) as either:

(a) A threat to the 'democratic process' – because there is no accountability through a formal electoral system;

Or (b) A potential replacement for the more formally representative democratic system – because large sections of our more excluded communities and individuals are effectively disenfranchised because 'they have no-one to vote for'.

Those encamped in the 'threat' camp are more likely to understate both the achievements and the process of community development. They are aided by the fact that it is difficult to count or quantify the benefits of increased social participation or awareness. Also, the 'process' is complex, difficult to

define and easy to dismiss as another manifestation of the dreaded poverty industry.

Those in the 'replacement' camp will point to the need for communities to 'get things done for themselves'. They argue that voting for mainstream politicians will not result in the real issues being tackled.

Is polarisation of the debate stopping us recognising and exploiting an opportunity? Perhaps a focus right now on how participative democratic structures and processes can contribute to and shape a new way form of representative democracy might be more fruitful. If we miss this angle, we may also be missing the favourable circumstances and potential for change that exist right now. For example:

1. Experience gained through the Community Development Programme can be seen as unique. There are no comparable examples, even in Europe, whereby a structured and supported approach to community learning and empowerment has been sustained over a similar period of time. We should not lose these lessons, nor dilute the potential, nor view it as a threat. The emphasis should be upon capturing the lessons as a contribution to more informed and equitable system of representative democracy.
2. Most programmes and strategies aimed at tack-

ling social exclusion – again at European as well as Irish level – are still based on the conviction that the most effective interventions are ones that involve the 'target groups'. The Community Development Programme, and other initiatives guided by similar principles and methods, can provide the foundation for a whole range of programmes. The reality is that the representative democratic system is very far removed from the communities and groups targeted by these programmes. If a more participative alternative is not maintained and supported, most programme objectives will remain as wish lists or vague aspirations.

3. Finally, is there not a general consensus that government needs to be responsive to community needs? Does anyone really believe that a five-year electoral mandate will be damaged, rather than enhanced, through a systematic way of tuning into the needs of the most excluded and isolated groups?

• Brian Dillon works for Nexus, is a voluntary management committee member of Community Action Programme Ballymun (a CDP) and is one of the East Region's representatives on the CDSPs National Working Group.

CDP and Comhairle launch pilot information project

By Sandy Holland

SOUTH West Donegal CDP launched a new pilot project in partnership with Comhairle, the National Information Agency, on February 10th, in Killybegs. The pilot project aims to address the need for greater access to Citizen's Information throughout southwest Donegal.

Volunteers trained in the provision of information and advice will deliver the new Information Service. When fully operational, the service, while based in Killybegs, will have outreach services delivered in the more rural parishes of Kilcar, Glencolmille, Ardara, Killaghtee, Inver and possibly Glenties. The CDP were successfully awarded this pilot initiative based on their application identifying the gaps in services currently provided. Funding has also been allocated for necessary equipment enabling them to establish their outreach.

Previous to the new project being established the nearest Citizen Information Centres were located in Dungloe, Ballybofey and

Ballyshannon, some 60 miles and a two-hour return drive away.

The pilot project received support from a number of agencies and bodies, including Holywell Trust, the Support Agency for projects in the region.

Speaking on behalf of South West Donegal CDP, chairman Sean O'Brien said, "We are delighted to have had the support from Comhairle. The need identified through public consultation has been one affecting a very large number of people. In their support of this citizens information project, the Department of Social and Family Affairs are making an attempt to address this problem that they readily admit exists in many other rural counties. The evaluation of this pilot project's success will enable them to adapt formats in other rural and isolated areas".

John O'Doherty of Comhairle said, "It is an excellent project and is the way in which information provision should be developed in the future". He went on to say that, "A major strength of the project is the way in which it is

not duplicating or cutting across other groups and organisations providing information. It is hoped that the project will blend in with future provision of information by statutory agencies planned for Donegal."

The voluntary Information Officers will be available to deal with enquiries both during and outside of working hours and in community or private settings. The emphasis of the project is to ensure that greater access is available to information on services provided by statutory agencies, social welfare entitlements, employment, consumer rights and advice on legal issues.

Other agencies and bodies providing support for the new information service were: Donegal Co. Co., Tir Boghaine, DLDC and MFG.

Note: The South West Donegal CDP operates locally under the title: 'South West Communities Partnership'. The project's new Information Service can be contacted at: The Resource Centre, Killybegs, Co. Donegal. Tel: 073-41972.



● Volunteers and staff pictured with Minister Mary Coughlan at the launch of the South West Donegal Information Project.

Connemara informing people with disabilities

By Declan Weir

If national statistics are applied to the area of northwest Connemara covered by FORUM Community Development Project (CDP), then there are likely to be as many as 1000 people with disabilities living in the region.

A recent FORUM initiative has seen them team up with Comhairle and Galway Rural Development (GRD) to fund and administer a one-year pilot project. It is aimed at meeting the information needs of people with disabilities in northwest Connemara, and a Disability Information Outreach Worker will provide information, advice, advocacy and referral to people with disabilities, their families and carers. Crucially, the worker will meet people in their own homes as well as in residential homes, community centres and sheltered working environments.

The launch of the pilot project is the culmination of several years of work by the local Disability Support Group. Comprising concerned individuals and organisations, this group were delighted to source funding from

GRD and Comhairle and hope that the project will go a long way towards raising local awareness among people with disabilities of existing services such as Citizen Information Centres, Money Advice and Budgeting Services, Threshold, and so on. It is also hoped that the wider community's awareness of people with disabilities will be raised and the wide range of disabilities the people have will be taken into account.

Using the same database as the country's network of Citizen Information Centres, the worker has access to up-to-the-minute information on rights and entitlements relating to everyday topics such as social welfare, employment, education, housing, health, taxation and consumer affairs.

People living in northwest Connemara who have a disability, and people who care for those with disabilities, can have any questions regarding rights and entitlements answered by through this free, confidential and impartial service.

• **To contact the Disability Information Outreach Worker, Tel. 087-1301100.**

European Year of People with Disabilities

- By Declan Weir

2003 has been designated the European Year of People with Disabilities. For the past decade or so disability was marked with an annual day, which normally took place in early December. Three years ago the Commissioner for Social Affairs, Anna Diamantopoulou proposed that 2003 should be recognised as the Year of People with Disabilities, and six objectives have been set:

- Raise awareness of the rights of people with disabilities.
- Reflect on what should be done to promote equal opportunities.
- Promote the exchange of experience.
- Boost cooperation between the stakeholders.
- Highlight the positive contribution made by people with disabilities.
- Awareness of the difficulties and discrimination endured by people with disabilities.

The official Irish website is:
www.eypd2003.ie, the official EU website is www.eypd2003.org.

Some useful contacts:

- **The National Disability Authority (NDA)**, 25 Clyde Road, Dublin 4. Tel: 01-608-0400, Fax: 01-660-9935, E-mail: nda@nda.ie. Website: www.nda.ie.
- **National Association for the Mentally Handicapped of Ireland (NAMHI)** 5 Fitzwilliam Place, Dublin 2. Tel: 01-676-6035, Fax: 01-676-0517, E-mail: info@namhi.ie. Website: www.namhi.ie.
- **People with Disabilities in Ireland Ltd (PwDI)**, Richmond Square, Morningstar Ave, Dublin 7. Tel: 01-872-1744, Fax: 01-872-1771, E-mail: info@pwdi.ie.
- **The Equality Authority**, Clonmel Street, Dublin 2. Tel: 01-417-3333, Fax: 01-417-3366, E-mail: info@equality.ie. Website: www.equality.ie.
- **Amnesty International**, 48 Fleet Street, Dublin 2, Ireland. Tel: 01-677-6361, Fax: 01-677-6392, E-mail: info@amnesty.iol.ie. Website: www.amnesty.ie/index.shtml

LETTERS

Alarmed reaction to burn-out story

St. Brigid's Family and Community Centre,
37 Lr. Yellow Rd., Waterford City
15-03-'03.

Dear Editor,

Lorcan Brennan's article on burn-out among social workers, (issue 5, Autumn '02) was as alarming as it was relevant. However, surely prevention is better than cure.

Clinical supervision has been long recognised by our British colleagues as the vehicle whereby workers take 'space', debrief, are emotionally supported, listened to in a non-judgemental, safe and confidential environment. It is for people from every occupation that is people-oriented and necessitates good interpersonal skill⁽¹⁾. It provides a holding, though not counselling, a listening to the supervisee's feeling state and an intrinsic supporting element⁽²⁾.

The sooner we rid ourselves of the misconceived notion that clinical supervision is a form of professional judgement/monitoring rather than a necessary support for those in the helping professions the better.

Yours, etc,

Marie Curran,

B.Sc.Dip.Couns., Adv.Dip.Supervision, M.I.A.C.T.

⁽¹⁾ (Clinical Supervision, E.van Ooijen, 2000; p.2.).

⁽²⁾ (M.Bond and S.Holland 1998; p133).

'No Rent Allowance'

Dear readers,

When looking through the newspaper to find accommodation, one thing that clearly stands out to anyone on low income and entitled to a rent supplement is the words 'NO RENT ALLOWANCE'. This is discrimination. Do landlords they think people who are entitled to claim rent allowance, are unemployed, perhaps from a disadvantaged area or not educated to a degree standard maybe are a lazy lot?

Therefore these people are not acceptable to accommodate in their premises? There are in fact many reasons why a person would be eligible to claim a rent supplement from the health board. Some of these include being a part-time worker, a student, having a disabilities, being on a community employment scheme or being unemployed because of the down-turn in the economy. A separate reason for the 'No Rent Allowance' bar might be that landlords are dodging tax.

But if the prospective tenants were instead being discriminated against because of their gender, age or ethnic status for example, then they can use the Equality laws to protest. But if you are discriminated against because of your socio-economic status there is currently no protection.

Tens of thousands of people in Ireland could have written this letter - based on personal experience.

Yours, etc.

Noelle McNamara*

*Noelle is a part-time administrator with 'Changing Ireland'.

White Paper on Supporting Voluntary Activity

- so what's it all about?

The 'White Paper on Supporting Voluntary Activity' is a crucial government document that was published in 2000. It often gets a mention by community workers, but not everyone is aware of what exactly the fuss is about. After all, isn't most paper white? In a nutshell, the publication of a 'White Paper' by government is an important step towards enacting new laws on one issue or another. Such a document gives information or proposals on an issue.

The 'White Paper' in question here paved the way for the voluntary sector and the government to work better together. And in February of this year, Minister of State, Noel Ahern, went before the Dail to report on progress since the 'White Paper' was published. The following is compiled from his statement.

■ What is the 'White Paper on Supporting Voluntary Activity' all about?

- This White Paper sets out a framework for supporting voluntary activity and for developing the relationship between the State and the community and voluntary sector.
- It marked the start of the Government's long-term strategy to develop and support the community and voluntary sector.
- It sets out the rationale for developing the relationship between the State and the sector and the principles which should underpin this relationship.
- The White Paper was published by the Government in September 2000.

■ So what's happening since then?

A unique feature of the White Paper was the establishment of an implementation and advisory group, IAG, to oversee implementation of the White Paper's recommendations.

- This group consists of six members from the community and voluntary sector and six from the statutory sector.
- It is co-chaired by senior officials from the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs and the Department of Health and Children.

Year 3 for 'Changing Ireland'

'Changing Ireland' is the national newsletter of the Community Development Support Programmes, a government-funded set of programmes administered by the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs.

The magazine is published quarterly and is managed by the Community Development Network Moyross, in Limerick, one of the 170 CDSPs projects nationwide.

The magazine is distributed to these projects and further afield. It is intended to be readable and interesting and written by community workers in various parts of the country -

so that it reflects the experience of tackling poverty and exclusion at community level. The newsletter aims to enable projects to network more effectively and should assist in promoting the profile of the CDSPs regionally and particularly nationally.

The articles are chiefly written by the magazine's six part-time Regional Reporters and production is overseen by an editorial team representing projects and the Department.

'Changing Ireland' has been in operation since 2001, has one full-time staff member (the editor) and can currently be subscribed to for free.

■ And what has this advisory group been up to?

The implementation and advisory group was established on 20 July 2001 and has met on 16 occasions to date. Much of the detailed work of the group has been carried out by sub-committees. The group has devised a detailed work plan to help implement the White Paper's recommendations. Matters considered by the group to date include:

- the multiplicity of funding sources through which the sector must operate;
- the designation of voluntary activity units in relevant Departments;
- the development of training and supports in the sector and support for federations and networks;
- accreditation of training in the sector and the establishment of good practice standards in both the community and voluntary sector and the statutory sector.

Note: The White Paper also included a commitment to reform the law on charities and charitable fundraising. ...Work by consultants has been completed and their report is being examined in the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs.

A broad public consultation accompanied by publication of a consultation document is envisaged prior to formulation of legislative proposals. The community and voluntary sector will be consulted through the implementation and advisory group in considering legislative reform.



"We're wiser now!" - Volunteer after 10 years

By Sandy Holland

KATHLEEN French has been in there right from the start. She is one of the founder members of the Lifford/Clonleigh CDP and still sits on the voluntary management committee. She shares a few thoughts on her involvement over the years:

The Lifford/Clonleigh Resource Centre has just celebrated its 10th Anniversary. Which aspect of the project has given you most satisfaction?

Getting the money that allowed us build the centre that is now the Lifford/Clonleigh Resource Centre. We had so many children with nowhere to go. It's a great achievement for this area. Originally it was just Croaghan Heights but we've now expanded out to cover the whole parish.

What, do you think, are the main factors that have contributed to the project being so successful?

The dedication of the committee and the help of the workers. We also had the support of the community. People came in and helped us, volunteering when we were going on trips with the children. It helped us keep the numbers right for supervision.

What were the main events or issues that led to the starting of the project?

We ran summer play schemes for the children with the Health Board. At that time a community worker with the Health Board, Marie McLoughlin, helped us form a committee. We also got a porta-cabin at that time.

Over the years, what have been some of the difficulties associated with volunteering for the project?

In the beginning it was the local community taking part on its own - because we weren't highly educated with degrees or something

like that, it was difficult to get people to take us seriously. We took on training from the Combat Poverty Agency and some of us did a Diploma in Community Development. We had to learn to handle the money and to do recruitment which was new to us.

There have been many offshoots from Lifford/Clonleigh CDP. What are some of the additional benefits that have been felt by the local community?

It's a great asset to the community, for the local children and for the adults. We now have 2 outreach youth groups in other areas of the parish. We also find that people come to us from other groups looking for advice. The astro-turf pitch is never idle - it's not just our own community who use it but many of the

clubs from around the area. People travel over from Northern Ireland just across the border to use it as well.

If you had four words to sum up your involvement with Lifford/Clonleigh, what would they be?

Interesting, Dedicated, Satisfaction and Good with People.

And in the words of the song, "if you had the chance to do it all again, would you, could you?"

I would - the only thing is now, you would need to be 20 years younger. The satisfaction is how far we have come in the 10 years. We're wiser now than when we started and it's a great achievement to get this far - we never thought we would see this day.



● Kathleen French in front of a mural in the Lifford CDP depicting the project's 10 years of activity.

Donegal women form a 'living' resource centre

The Donegal Women's Network has provided an excellent example of how a Core Funded Project in the CDSPs can be a catalyst for improving services in a locality. The project has joined with a number of women's groups, organisations and individuals in the south Donegal area to form a 'Women's Living Resource Centre'. The Centre's chief aim is to seek alternative services in relation to health, education and renewable energy.

While resource centres are traditionally thought of as buildings or services, this group

believe that the 'resource' lies in the people involved in the group. Through using the experience and knowledge of the women involved, the group are developing a 'living' resource centre for women in South Donegal.

The resource group is exploring ways of working alongside existing General Practitioner (GP) and Primary Care Services to give equal status to as many Alternative Practices as prove to be available. This holistic approach to health includes complementary therapies to augment the work of all the resource practitioners. Ways

in which it can be made easier for women to access support and counselling services and information on entitlements are also being explored.

The group has expressed a keen desire to work from green principles including re-cycling opportunities and the potential use of alternative building materials and design structures for community facilities.

Interested in developing a stronger learning approach to education, the group seek to strengthen the existing opportunities available to women.

"We are looking to expand on the services already provided through the Donegal Second Chance Education Project for women, the VEC and FÁS in this region," said one spokesperson.

As the group grows, they will draw input from additional women and women's groups to expand the 'resource centre' and hope to engage with groups working on similar themes elsewhere.

For more Information on South Donegal 'Women's Living Resource Centre' contact Finola at Donegal Women's Network Tel: 074-32023.

- By Sandy Holland



● Members of the South Donegal Resource Group.

Women from Lourdes CDP train on 'Asgard'

By Nick Murphy

WHEN women from the Lourdes Community Development Project, in inner-city Dublin, greeted the captain of the 'Asgard' sailing ship, he was a bit taken aback - due to a misunderstanding he had been expecting five nuns. Lourdes has a certain ring to it.

It is over a year ago now since women involved in the Sean McDermot Street-based CDP agreed to go on a sail-training vessel and they are still reaping the rewards. One of the women became third best trainee of the year, not bad considering that 1000 people train on the 'Asgard' annually.

In all, three local women Caroline, Rebecca and Edel and two leaders Mary and Katie sailed away for nine days.

"Discipline was strict and we always seemed to be wet and we got very little sleep" said Katie McAndrew, one of the leaders of the party. "The high point for me was when we were sitting on the bowsprit and some of the girls were ringing home on



● *The Jeannie Johnston*

their mobile phones and we sighted a group of dolphins. The girls were describing the dolphins to the people at home. It was like a different world."

The five joined 17 other people from different backgrounds to form the trainee crew to learn the skills of crewing a tall ship and the Sean McDermott Street women settled in very well on board ship.

During the nine-day voyage around the coast of Ireland the women who had "never been near a boat before" were required to climb the masts and work on the yards

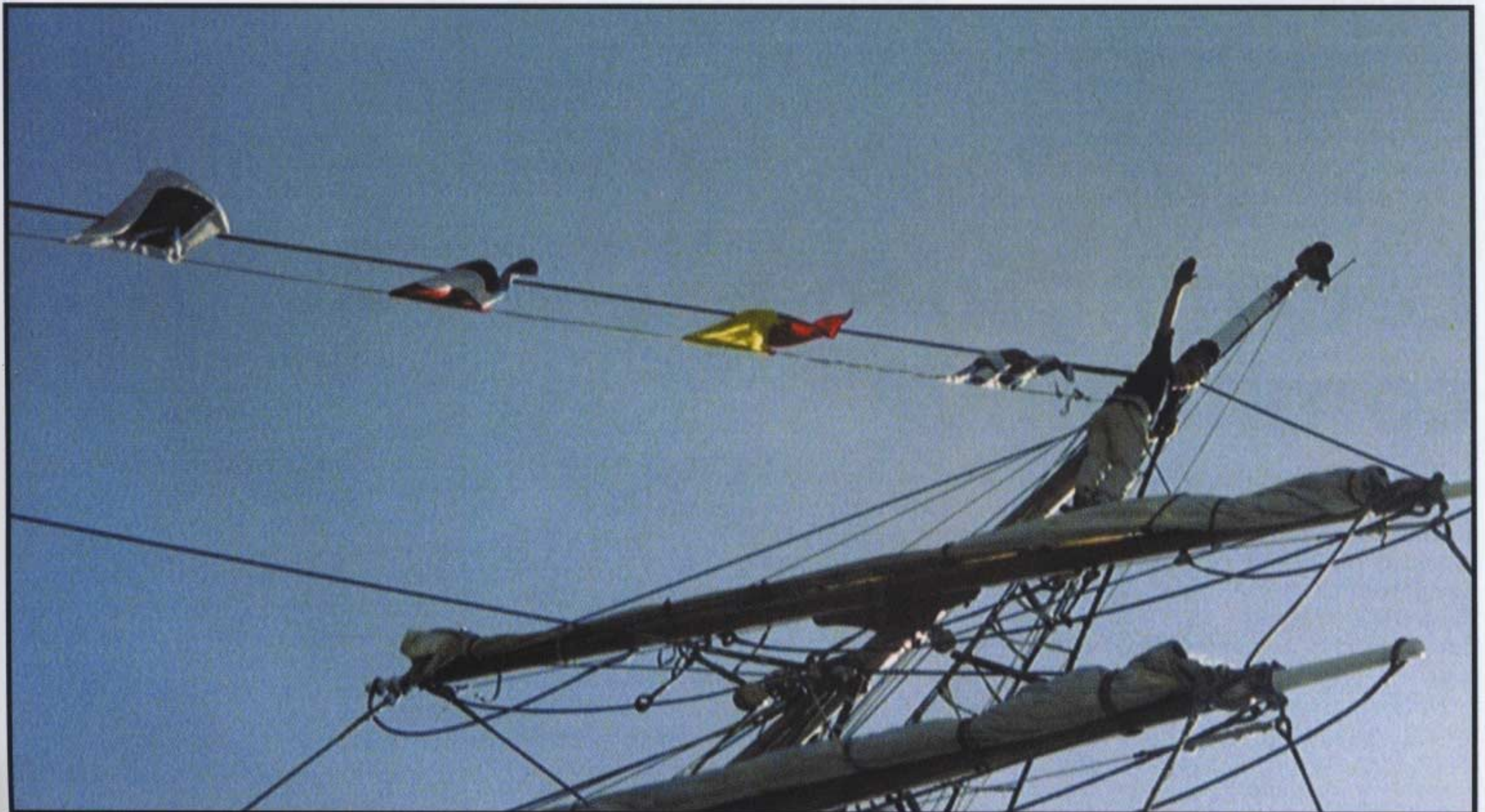
gathering and unfurling sails. They braved October storms which required the whole crew to wear safety harnesses. The shipmates were from various class backgrounds.

Kathy said, "We came back with a great sense of confidence and two of the girls have signed up to do the trip again in separate parties."

"Every year," continued Kathy, "the Asgard trains something like a thousand people and one of our girls came 3rd overall in that year's group. Its great to know that there's another world out there beyond our normal world."

Not bad for a group of "nuns" from Lourdes CDP.

* Incidentally, last month, Tralee CDP's Sharon Browne returned to dry land from the Jeannie Johnston's first foray to sea where they battled force ten gales on their voyage to the Canaries. Sharon was one of the trainees on board the replica famine ship for the first leg of the journey to America. She kept a diary and had it published in the 'Kerry Eye' newspaper - at no stage was she mistaken for a nun!



● *Sharon Browne waving from the mast of the Jeannie Johnston.*

A tale of architects and Amnesty International

By Martine Brennan

THE architect is preparing the final drawings for the Traveller Visibility Group's new premise at John Street in Cork City. The building is going out to tender in April and building work will hopefully commence in June. Building costs have risen substantially since estimates went to the funders so unfortu-

nately the project will not be completed in one clear run.

Workers at the Traveller Visibility Project have been working to raise awareness about the link between the poor state of health of members of the community and the fact that their housing needs are not being met. Places in the city that Travellers have paid for as halting sites in the past are no longer available as a result of commer-

cial development.

Last year a woman died as a result of infection caused by her lack of access to clean water and sanitary facilities. This did not happen in a developing country. It happened right here in Ireland. The Travelling Community has made representations to Amnesty International, as this is a Human Rights issue. Amnesty has agreed to investigate the situation.

Never give up on a good thing!

CONGRATS to Chris, the new co-ordinator at We the People Knocknaheeny CDP in Cork city who has completed the work plan and sent the annual report to the printers. She has been well and truly baptised in the deep end!

The research for the work plan has clearly identified the ongoing needs of people in the community for education and employment. Unemployment in the Knocknaheeny/Hollyhill area remains at double the average in the Cork City area. As one Northsider put it, "We have no shortage of work to be done

and no shortage of generous people working as volunteers, we just haven't got the funding to pay them." We the People have an education group, which we hope to hear more from in the coming year.

TRAFFIC, the drug support group at the CDP, secured funding and will be running drug awareness training in May. Meanwhile, the Environment group are organising a poster competition with local schools to raise awareness among children. Prizes will be awarded for the best entries at the end of May.

Learning in the community

16 women and one man in Cork have signed up for Farranree's Back to Education Initiative. All the different groups in the community are represented, one-parent families, refugees, people with disabilities, travellers and women who have worked in the home for most of their lives.

The course participants will receive two accreditations, one from FETAC and the other from UCC for the Certificate in Community Development. Subjects covered will be the European Computer Drivers Licence, Basic English, learning for learners,

community development and community leaders. Some travel and child-care expenses are available. Each student will have their own mentor which will be of great assistance to the students in dealing with paperwork, application forms etc. and deciding where they want to move on to at the end of the 34-week training course. This course emerged from the work of the Social Policy Group, which identified its own community's education needs and sought accreditation.

Another FETAC course available in Farranree CDP is the 24 week Women in Society course which has 18 students.

Mary Palmer

IN the midst of the audit and preparing the annual report, Ballyphehane/Togher CDP in Cork city have experienced the sad loss of one of their volunteer members, Mary Palmer. Mary was an active volunteer for five years and in the past two years had been a volunteer member of the management committee. Mary brought a wealth of life experience to her work at the project and is remembered for her energy and humour. Mary was highly respected for her openness to everyone and her commitment to ensuring that older people are included and valued in the community.

FETAC Childcare training in West Cork

RAINBOW Childcare together with Bantry CDP in Co. Cork have secured funding from the Department of Education to bring FETAC Childcare Level 2 training to the people of Bantry and the Beara Peninsula. Priority has been given to people who were unable to complete second level education, social welfare recipients, women working in the home and people in employment without a nationally recognised qualification. Two groups will start on April 2 and May 13 and 36 people in all have registered. The training will take two years and will take place on one night each week.



● Alice Street on placement.

Teen view of community work

ALICE Street from Blacklion, Co. Cavan, is currently studying her 'A' Level course at Enniskillen High School, in neighbouring Co. Fermanagh. As part of her course she was taken in by Community Connections CDP for a week's work experience.

In her journal, at the week's end, she noted: "The week was a great experience for me. A lot of the work of the project is outside the office in the community and after office hours and the staff have a lot of meetings to attend to. If these were not held Community Connections and its projects would not run as well as they do."

She said she had gained a lot from the experience and would love to return again.

In my pocket

THE Open Door, Kerry's response to violence against women and children, have now produced information cards for women experiencing violence. These cards are pocket sized and give information about the three main services in Kerry, ADAPT, the Rape and Sexual Abuse Centre and the Tralee Women's Resource Centre. They also list the regional garda stations and social services child protection section. Workers who want to have a ready supply of the information cards can contact Catherine Casey on 087-6169704.

Kerry Travellers

Kerry Traveller Development Project continue to work on their Health Project and we will hear more of that in the next issue of Changing Ireland.

International Women's Day celebration

"**OVER 250** people came to Siamsa Tire, Tralee, Co. Kerry, on Saturday March 8 to help Tralee Women's Resource Centre 'celebrate' International Women's Day," reported Joan Courtney, Support Worker and Editor of the TWRC newsletter.

"It was a multi-cultural event. There was a Seanachai, poetry reading and story telling from locals. Women from different parts of the globe sang and performed spiritual and roma dancing and played bongo drums."

"This is an annual event hosted by the Tralee Women's Resource Centre a confidential drop-in centre for women on Ashe St. in Tralee," she said.

Official opening

MINISTER Eamon O'Cuiv, Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs will formally open Mayfield CDP's new premises on April 17th at 5pm. The new premises at 328 Old Youghal Road, Mayfield, Cork City is a pleasure to visit and is buggy and wheelchair accessible. Disability awareness training was attended two weeks ago by management and staff. People in the community have now requested the same training for themselves.

100% survey

CONGRAT to all residents of Ragoonane, Tralee, Co. Kerry, and the recently formed steering committee of their residents association. They attained a 100% response rate to the recent survey they did for the RAPID community profile in their area.

BOOK REVIEW

Librarians say 'Publish and be damned'!

By Lorcan Brennan

LIBRARIANS in Wexford have produced booklets that will greatly benefit people in the Community Development Support Programmes who wish to publish books to promote and profile their work. Celestine Rafferty is one of the librarians and she has experience in supporting community projects with profiling and publishing their work. At a time when there is much speculation about transition and change within the CDSPs, Celestine and her colleague Grainne Doran, both workers within Wexford Public Library Service have produced two practical publications that can make publishing and archiving community material straight-forward and professional. The two titles, 'Publish & be damned' and 'Out, Damned Spot', lead the reader through the practicalities of collating important community documents and putting ideas in a public forum through the print medium. They are published by Wexford County Council's Public Library Service. Celestine, who says her idea for the books came from experience of working in the field of editing and publishing is quick to highlight that "Publishing your own book entails much more than sending a manuscript off to the printer. However, as the publisher, you control all aspects of the book, from layout and cover design, through printing and binding, to distribution and sales". Many projects within the CDSPs feel there is much that needs to be said - on behalf of

the communities and the projects themselves. For those interested in saying it in print, both these books have much to offer. 'Print and be damned' (running to only 20 pages in all) has honed its practical hands on advice under such headings as, "Researching Your Readership And Market, Writing And Editing, Design And Layout, Working With Your Print Company and Selling Your Finished Product. From reading the books it is clear to see that Celestine meant it when she said: "When planning the writing and style of the books we wanted to start from the beginning, presuming that people using the books would have little experience in publishing - so the books would act as a resource in avoiding the pitfalls and advice on best practice." Since their publication the authors have received very positive feedback from many different sources. Both authors hope it is the beginning to producing more support/resource books for community and individual use. Celestine is very aware of the crucial role that libraries can and do play in supporting communities regarding their development. These two excellent books are a vital part of that contribution.

For those interested in obtaining the books, contact: Library Management Services, C/o Kent Buildings, Ardavan, Wexford. Tel: 053-24922. Individual copy 7 euro. Both books 10 euro (Postage charge included in that price). The titles are: **PUBLISH & BE DAMNED** and **OUT DAMNED SPOT**.

Drogheda video shows grassroots pride

By Maurice McConville

"A CELEBRATION of the work of volunteers in Southside" is how Drogheda community development worker, Mary McClory describes the video recently launched by Southside CDP. By using the testimony of those involved, the video tells the story of how the project has developed in Drogheda.

Attending the launch was Minister of State, Noel Ahern, Mayor Malachy Godfrey, TDs and councillors, as well as volunteers and agencies. Minister Ahern in his address said, "You won't see the benefits of your work in a day, a week, a month or a year. It takes a long time." Anyone working, whether for pay or as a volunteer, in the community development sector would share this view.

However, Southside have attempted to encapsulate three years of their work into the 15-minute video. This is done through commentary and the testimony of those who developed the CDP and those who have benefited



● Catriona Clarke on tv.

from its work.

One volunteer expresses how she feels about the project by saying "I am not just a mother, a cleaner or a cook, I want to learn more to get a better job. I know I can do better for myself. Before I would have worked at anything. The project has given me confidence."

At the launch, chairperson, Catriona Clarke, herself now in third level education, said that volunteers were "the backbone of the project"

and added that "the structures (of Southside CDP) were deliberately designed to work from the grassroots, supporting individuals groups and communities to work together to improve themselves and the areas they live in."

The Mayor of Drogheda in his address said that it was a pleasure and a privilege to attend the launch of the video and information booklet and that he hoped the Minister would support Southside in their endeavours to secure a permanent base for the project.

Judging by the presence of the large numbers who turned up for the launch on a Monday morning, it was evident that the video has generated a lot of interest and that Southside are well supported within Drogheda and further afield. In the words of Mary McClory, "The video demonstrates how far volunteers have come, through the support of 'accessible education' which is paramount to the success of the programme."

● For further details, contact Southside CDP on: 041-9845184.

Australian Welfare Minister visits Sligo



● Minister Amanda Vanstone, Australia's Minister for Social Welfare recently visited Sligo Northside Community Partnership. The purpose of the visit to the town's Community Development Project was to inform herself first hand of the workings of a CDP and to meet with the local community representatives. She was also interested to hear about the programmes and activities and how they have impacted on people's lives. Pictured are: Seamus O'Boyle, Sligh Northside; Sinead Barrins, Regional Policy Worker; Rita Kelly, Sligo Northside; Joe O'Donnell, Dept. of Social and Family Affairs; Lisa Paul, Secretary to the Minister for Social Welfare; Mr. Tony Vanstone; Minister Amanda Vanstone, Australian Minister for Social Welfare; Martin McTiernan, Sligo Northside; Joan Gordon, Dept. of Social and Family Affairs; Margaret Mooney, Sligo Northside.

Fed up hangin' on the telephone . . .

By Declan Weir

ONCE upon a time people simply answered the telephone when it rang, if they didn't you could assume they were either too busy or they just weren't there. Not any more, though, and every time you pick up the phone these days you risk serious aural trauma.

Call Eircom to check your bill and you get assaulted by an hysterical Whitney Houston, or try to breach the defences of any number of Governmental departments and local authorities and you're faced with a barrage of Phil Coulter style versions of hits of the late twentieth century.

Fair enough, I'm not expecting Slipknot or the Prodigy but there's really no excuse for such blandness.

Whitney, bless her, goes on, and on and on. If you hold for more than 30 seconds, she worms her way in through your ear



before dancing malevolently around the part of your brain that loads a really dire song into your memory banks in the middle of the night, leaving you to spend the entire morning trying to give her the boot, only to have her replaced with the entire works of Westlife.

Wouldn't it be wonderful - a real little slice of customer-care heaven - if organisations actually put a bit of thought into what they played while they kept you waiting. Or maybe they hope that the drivel they pour into your ear will inspire you to replace the

handset and never, ever, bother them again. At least until after lunchtime.

One perfectly relevant piece of music to tap toes along to as you spiral into another minute in phone limbo would be U2's 'Stuck in a moment . . .', or even Johnny Logan's old Eurovision classic 'What's another year?' Then there's Bob Marley's timeless 'Waiting in Vain,' or they could go the whole hog and play Cliff Richard's 'We don't talk anymore'

It needn't stop there. The country's development projects could go even further than mere phone messages, they could get together with the Department of Finance for a timely cover version of 'Money's too tight to mention.' Perhaps it could even be released as a double-A side with the Department of Transport's recent recording of 'The Road to Nowhere.' The possibilities, as they say, are endless . . .

The Diary of Horace McDermot

■ No idea what day it is, 4.40 pm:

I'm just devastated by the events of the last month. So much so I had to just go to bed for the last fortnight. I had to take annual leave because the doctor wouldn't give me a sick note despite me telling him I was just sick of everything since the war started.

■ Still no idea what day it is, but it's dark, 3.20am:

I've decided to stay in bed until it's all over - the war, the tribunals, the departmental review. All my old certainties are being attacked. The USA never start wars, they normally wait until they are nearly over and

then come in and claim all the credit for winning the war. And next thing, there's my hero George adopting a pre-emptive strike policy. My old hurling coach preached the same 'Get your retaliation in first' doctrine. Now I know why I got sent off so often.

■ Sunday, I think, 9.40pm

Can anything else go wrong! War, Our neutrality, No Tom Hanks at the Oscars, worse, No Oscar for Bono, England win the Grand Slam, Return of the 1-Year Funding scourge, an Ombudsman calling herself an Ombudswoman even though Ombudsman is a Swedish word with no gender meaning at all. It's like a Swede saying I'm not a facilitator, I'm a facilitawoman. It's like throwing a life girl instead of a life buoy to someone who is drowning. It's like.... AAAAHHHHHH!!!!!!

Equality Authority acts on nine separate grounds

THE Equality Authority is an independent body set up under the Employment Equality Act 1998 and the Equal Status Act, 2000. The legislation is among the most protective in Europe and outlaws discrimination in employment, vocational training, advertising, collective agreements, the provision of goods and services and other opportunities to which the public generally have access on nine distinct grounds, as listed below.

Discrimination is described in the Act as the treatment of a person in a less favourable way than another person is, has been or would be treated on any of the above grounds.

The 9 Grounds on which Discrimination is unlawful are: gender, religion, marital status, age, family status, disability, sexual orientation, race, or membership of the Traveller community.

The complaints can be made in relation to: employment, disposal of goods and property, and the provision of services and accommodation.

Any person who feels that s/he has suffered discrimination contrary to the terms of employment and equality legislation can make a complaint. The Director of Equality Investigations deals with the complaints.

For more information write to The Equality Authority, 3 Clonmel Street, Dublin 2, Ireland. Contact their Public Information Centre on 01-4173333 or lo Call 1890-245545. Fax 353-1-4173399. E-mail: info@odei.ie Website: www.odei.ie

Class discrimination should be outlawed

By Maurice McConville

THEY may not be Travellers, or 'black', or moving about in wheelchairs or gay, but they are one of the largest groups - in terms of population - that suffer discrimination. Yet it is barely acknowledged that a person's 'Class' can hugely effect their life-chances.

Within the Community Development Support Programmes (CDSPs) the issue of class is rarely mentioned by name in the debate and discussion on how to tackle poverty and disadvantage. Yet the CDSPs probably do more work on this issue than any other government-funded anti-poverty programme.

When development workers and voluntary managers discuss poverty or housing or employment we often talk about the symptoms of a class system which determines how wealth, employment opportunities are distributed in society. However, we rarely identify class by name.

While we may have become much more aware of the nature of sexism and racism etc., 'classism' has fallen off the agenda. Talking about class is not the thing to do anymore. Maybe this is because of the death of ideology and the rise of McDonalds and 'Who wants to be a Millionaire'. Or maybe it is because we believe that class does not exist anymore. But class as defined through socio-economic grouping is still a powerful tool in determining social policy within European states. The winners and loser in education, health and employment can still be mapped out in relation to their class position in society.

Charged with ensuring the implementation of the Employment Act 1998 and the Equal Status Act, the Equality Authority is presently trying to persuade the government to include Socio-economic Status as grounds for discrimination. What this would mean is that a person could not be discriminated against because of their economic situation, where they live, educational background, family background and their housing tenure. These are the factors which determine social class.

The Equality Authority argues that while there is a need for more research, because

"research that does exist suggests that there is a relatively large level of socio-economic discrimination in the job market."

The Equality Authority also quotes from several treaties, conventions and charters to which Ireland is a signatory, that prohibit discrimination on grounds of social origin, birth or property.

■ Class discrimination in housing estates

At the grassroots level discrimination towards people who happen to be from a particular housing estate is legion. In a recent project to define the issues for young people in a council housing estate in Dundalk, Co. Louth, many of them said that they experienced discrimination regularly because of where they lived.

This happens in school from peers and teachers through put-down comments and remarks, at discos where they are refused entry, and later in life when they are refused work because of the perceptions of employers about people of their class (or socio-economic status if you like).

One 15-year-old youth complained of being watched in shops because of his address. Others complained of the poor response to callouts from the Gardai and the emergency services in their area, compared to the 'well off' parts of Dundalk. Some even give a false address to avoid being stereotyped. This discrimination excludes and alienates young people and adults and simply adds to the disadvantage of these areas.

To add Socio-economic Status as grounds for discrimination to the equality legislation would be a major step in empowering people in disadvantaged areas all over Ireland to achieve their basic right to be treated fairly. People would at last have some way to challenge the insidious practices that "keep them in their place."

• 'Changing Ireland' would be very interested to hear your comments regarding this issue. Also, see Noelle McNamara's letter inside this edition relating to socio-economic or class discrimination by landlords.



● Mountwood/Fitzgerald Park CDP, in Dun Laoghaire operates from the ground floor and first floor of this flats complex. The top two floors are derelict.