

CHANGING IRELAND

ISSUE 8

The National Newsletter of the Community Development Support Programmes

SUMMER '03

Let's build on our Olympics experience

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- **Work on accessibility**
- **Reviewing the review**
- **News from Cavan to Cork and the capital**
- **Are all Indians poor?**
- **Ó Cuiv supports plan**

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Irish poverty is now embarrassing

The ongoing review by the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs will hopefully yield gold. Because the community and voluntary sector has to become better at tackling the causes and effects of poverty and exclusion. Here civil society and government are working together; they just have to work harder at it and with a commitment from government that poverty and exclusion in this country is the number one enemy. Our poverty is an international embarrassment. How could so many people be poor in a country so rich? And the United Nations is watching.

The UN's latest statistics show that 15.3% of people in Ireland continue to experience poverty - that's a lot of people experiencing hard lives. And, the gap between rich and poor in the Emerald Isle remains the 2nd worst in the 'developed world', despite the years of economic boom. We are now at a stage where the richest 10% of people in Ireland are 11 times richer than the poorest 10% of our population.

Of course, we live long lives, unemployment is very low, we give more development aid than before and our GDP is growing. There are positive points in the 2003 Human Development Report released in Dublin on July 9th by the United Nations Development Programme. Our health is our wealth and average life expectancy at birth is a high 76.7 years in Ireland. Long may we live!

But we live with the gaps between us - women are much poorer than men for example. Where an Irish man earns US\$100, the average Irish woman earns US\$40. There's a big enough gap there for a Munster Final match-crowd to pass easily through. Even Cambodia is ahead of us here - while incomes there are much lower and many conditions for women are worse - a Cambodian woman earns US\$77 for every US\$100 earned by a male there. No wonder people

are setting up Women's Networks in Limerick and elsewhere.

Low literacy was a hidden aspect to poverty in Ireland until the UNDP's statistics exposed our weaknesses some years back. Embarrassed, the government began to take the issue very seriously. Money and resources were poured into adult education, particularly to increase literacy skills, but progress takes time and nearly one in four people (22.6%) in Ireland would still have difficulty reading this - because of low functional literacy skills.

The long-term unemployed make up 3.2% of the labour-force. People fall into that category for many reasons - lack of transport, childcare issues, ageism, generational poverty and others - these are typical of the problems which CDSPs projects tackle on the ground.

Growing urbanisation is a feature globally and, by 2001, 59% of the Republic's population lived in urban areas. Among the results are rising house prices in towns and 'population meltdown' in rural areas, as Minister Éamon Ó Cuiv aptly terms it.

Overall, the UN figures assist those of us, including the Minister, fighting for more resources for the poor and excluded. But, how with all our recent wealth has it happened that 15.3% of us are still experiencing some form of poverty? Yes, effectiveness in the community and voluntary sector must be improved and everyone prays Minister Ó Cuiv's initiative will meet with success. But, the UN statistics will not improve for us until the government commits much more to tackling poverty and exclusion. Maybe the government needs to feel as embarrassed about poverty as it did before about literacy.

For the world report, check: www.undp.org/hdr2003

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Three Dublin community projects win top award

THREE CDSPs groups from Dublin scooped a Metro Eireann/RTE award for helping schools to develop anti-racism protocols and procedures with the help of people from ethnic minority groups.

The award, presented in May, went to Tallaght Travellers' CDP, the Clondalkin Travellers' Development Group and Draiocht Support Agency who were over the moon to get national recognition for their efforts.

"This project shows not only that solidarity can be built between different groups experiencing racism but that agencies working together can take imaginative leaps that one agency on its own could not even dream of," said a spokesperson for the CDSPs Equality and Anti-Racism sub-committee.

The groups' intercultural initiative was called 'Ethnic Minorities and Education' and it was run in schools last year in conjunction with Tallaght Partnership, Tallaght Intercultural Action, the Anti-Racist Education Group and the Visiting Teacher service in Clondalkin. The initiative, which picked up an award in the community section, arose out of demands from school staffs for assistance from members of ethnic minorities on how best to develop school anti-racism procedures. The request was answered with a 10-module training course for 15 participants, all of whom happened to be women, from the Travelling community and the new communities living in Tallaght and Clondalkin.

The training programme covered: the theory



● Some members of the Education and Ethnic Minorities Project (from left) Anne McCluskey (VTT, Clondalkin) Mildred Okolie, Julieanne McDonagh, Catherine MacDonagh, Geraldine Hanley, Emily Mpoy, Mineko Saito (and Kids!), Bola Ogunleye, Margaret Doran, Biddy Connors, Omolabake Ayoade, Muriel Julia Okafor and Ronke Adebawale.

of racism, presentation skills, structures and practices in Irish education and current developments in interculturalism and intercultural education. It also provided an opportunity for the two groups of women to get to know each other and to develop a common understanding of racism and build solidarity between the two groups.

Once trained, the women visited six schools in the Tallaght/ Clondalkin area and participat-

ed in several educational seminars and contributed to the development of many school protocols and policies on anti-racism. They have also made four inputs to voluntary groups in the area, as part of their process of drawing up an anti-racist code of practice.

● For more information, contact Molly O'Duffy of the Equality and Anti-Racism sub-committee: Tel: 01-4146979. Fax: 01-4146980. E-mail: molly@draiochtltd.ie

Viewing Ennis depends on your frame of mind

An exhibition of community photographs has gone on tour following its launch on July 3rd by Ennis CDP, Co. Clare. The photography project was organised by the CDP in association with two local youth-orientated groups (Clare Youth Services and St Joseph's Training Centre), Clare County Council Arts Office, and photographer Mike Mulcaire.

'Frames of Mind' came about in an effort to "capture a snapshot of the 'extraordinary in the ordinary' of everyday life from the perspective of people living in the local community in Ennis, Co. Clare," explained Deirdre Toomey, CDP co-ordinator.

"It is important that the diversity of cultures here in Ennis is reflected in what is the similarity of everyday life for most people whether it is kids playing, local surroundings or family events," said Orla Ni Eili, a member of Ennis CDP management committee.

"We are sure that people will enjoy the exhibition for what it brings in terms of highlighting everyday life across communities here in Ennis," she added.

Four groups, involving young people and adults from Settled, Traveller, Refugee and Asylum Seeker communities worked with photographer Mike Mulcaire over a period of



● A photograph from the 'Frames of Mind' project run by Ennis CDP and currently on tour.

eight weeks. Using disposable cameras participants explored the use of the camera and how it could be used to create different images.

"I really enjoyed the project," said Julia Faulkner. "I am delighted that our photos are going to be on exhibition. I never thought it would get this far".

"It's been really fantastic," said Valintyna Danishevskaya, "and it's great that the exhibition is going to be part of the Festival of Cultures in Dublin."

'Frames of Mind' is in Glor Irish Music Centre until the end of July. Then it will tour

a number of locations until October, including the Festival of Cultures in Dun Laoghaire, Co. Dublin (August) and a number of local locations such as Clare Museum, Ennis Motor Tax Office, Ennis Library, Ennis Post Office in Market Square and Clarecare.

Ennis CDP works with, and for, people from Traveller, Refugee and Asylum Seeker communities. One of the key aims of the organisation is to promote acceptance, understanding, tolerance and equality in relation to different cultures and the way of life of different communities in Ennis. It was against this backdrop that the idea of presenting a visual exhibition from the perspective of people of different ages and various backgrounds living locally was developed.

'Frames of Mind' was funded by KNOW RACISM under the National Anti-Racism Awareness Programme and by Clare County Council under the Arts Act. Noel Crowley, County Librarian, officially launched the project.

● For more information contact: Deirdre Toomey / Colette Bradley, Ennis CDP Unit 2, Mill House, Mill Road, Ennis, Co. Clare. Tel: 065-6869026. Fax: 065-6869052. E-mail: enniscdp@eircom.net

National reps present plan to impressed Minister

THE Minister for Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs, Éamon Ó Cuiv, has been officially presented with the Community Development Support Programmes' Strategic Plan. He expressed support for the plan and hopes to see progress on the main aims within the coming 12 months. He also allayed fears that the CDSPs would be swallowed-up by bigger agencies.

The presentation was made at a meeting of the National Advisory Committee of the Community Development Support Programmes, on July 4th, in Dublin.

The Strategic Plan was written after a round of regional meetings, attended by hundreds of volunteers and workers

in community development projects and core-funded groups (the two types of projects which are incorporated under the CDSPs title). The consultative process took almost two years and marked the first time for many projects where they met with all the other projects in their region. Minister Ó Cuiv complimented those involved because it shows "you were interested in evaluating yourselves and in looking ahead."

Added Minister Ó Cuiv: "The presentation was very good and you made very good suggestions which we hope to implement within the short term, within the next 12 months."

He told members of the NAC they have to drive the Strategic Plan forward and said he was also happy with

the Nexus evaluation.

Minister Ó Cuiv urged projects to "get out there and publicise your work," especially at national level.

The Strategic Plan was presented to the Minister by Emer Dolphin on behalf of projects throughout the country. David Brennan, Principal Officer at the Voluntary and Community Services Section of the Department was among those present and there was a very good turnout of project representatives who are members of the NAC at the meeting.

The NAC includes representatives from the CDSPs regions who report back to inter-project meetings and take suggestions from those meetings to the national committee.

LETTERS SECTION

Wexford project wants class discrimination outlawed

Dear editor,

Maurice McConville (our NE Regional Reporter) really started the ball rolling and it rolled right in to Wolfe Tone Community House in Wexford town. After reading his article 'Class Discrimination Should Be Outlawed', our local women's group decided it was time to speak out. Kathleen Walsh, of the management committee, said, "After distributing the article, we decided we should reply as it did require a response about discrimination on the grounds of class, because of your address and how it impacts on your life chances."

A small housing estate in Wexford Town, Wolfe Tone Villas is built in a Y-shaped cul-de-sac. With just over 80 houses in the estate unfortunately a number of houses are boarded up with sheets of plywood. The two-bedroom houses built in 1932 only had bathrooms installed by the corporation in early 1990s.

Like in Maurice's article, the residents of Wolfe Tone have suffered discrimination in schools, local shops, with employers and statutory authorities and also from people in our own surrounding local area. Children from the estate have been asked to leave shops, had bags searched and residents have had experience of being watched in shops, giving a false address when looking for a job and being at the receiving end of negative comments at school and at work".

Wolfe Tone Villas feels it has a 'name' in the town, and residents feel that they are not given

a chance. They are not responsible for the run-down condition of the street and estate.

Residents of Wolfe Tone Villas have struggled across the years with dampness, rotting windows and doors, inadequate bathroom facilities and within an environment in a general state of disrepair.

As a cul-de-sac, residents felt the estate was ignored because it was hidden from the general public. It now looks hopeful that, after continuous discussions and negotiations with the Borough Council, work on the street may begin in the near future.

Despite the negatives the group says the future looks bright. Wolfe Tone is an active community, with excellent community facilities and community participation and true community spirit. The Community House provides childcare including a playgroup, after schools group and a Youth group. The Women's group is core funded under the CDSPs. The house also provides home to a Men's group, a Residents Association and a FAS CE Scheme.

Residents have actively campaigned, meeting the Borough Council on numerous occasions and negotiating plans for the upgrading of the area and houses. Some locals formed a Residents Association and undertook Estate Management training. Residents have also carried out research and lobbying to promote their case for improving their environment. One resident is now involved in the local Area Implementation Team of the RAPID initiative

keeping local issues high on the agenda.

Through the Community House many courses have been facilitated and people from the area have gone back to education.

But we still feel that we have to prove ourselves, and to work hard to overcome others views of us because of where we are from. Everything we do is for our children to make their lives better so that they won't have to overcome this prejudice.

Residents here still identify one of the major hurdles they have to overcome in seeking employment, work, school, relations with statutory agencies is the stigma attached to their address".

A way of challenging these attitudes and perceptions might be through adding discrimination on the grounds of socio-economic status to the 9 grounds for upholding equality - it would provide a means of challenging this insidious form of discrimination.

Yours sincerely,
Wolfe Tone Villas Women's Group

• **EDITOR'S NOTE:** Long letters are not normally encouraged. However, there is always an exception to the rule. To increase your chances of having a letter published in 'Changing Ireland', keep it brief. Letters may be edited for clarity. For full guidelines for letter-writers, consult issue 6, page 9.

10% of us have a disability

Declan Weir reports

An estimated 600 million people worldwide have a disability. That's ten per cent of the global population, and it's a statistic that's mirrored here in Ireland. In recent months a massive wave of publicity has accompanied the build up to Ireland hosting the Special Olympics during the summer of 2003. That, together with this being designated the European Year for Disabled People, has led to a significant increase in awareness about disability.

Not all of the publicity is good. While the

government was willing to provide funding for the Special Olympics, it has been attacked for not meeting the basic needs of disabled people. While the Taoiseach and Government representatives launched the European Year of People with Disabilities at the Mansion House, between 100 and 150 parents and representatives of disability groups protested outside.

Worrying statistics about disability are all too easy to come by, for example, as many as 80 per cent of people with disabilities are unemployed. Improvements need to be made to residential and day-care homes around the

country.

"There are standards for nursing homes and children's homes but none for people with disabilities in residential care," said Deirdre Carroll of NAMHI, adding that extra funding was needed urgently to ease the crisis. "The Government is spending around €50m a month on the Special Savings Incentive Accounts, yet around €20m would provide place for emergency cases which will arise over the year."

In this issue of *Changing Ireland* we focus on how CDSPs projects can and are taking on the issue of disability.

Three times more complaints to the equality authority

STATISTICS made available by the Equality Authority reveal that there are still flagrant abuses of equality legislation taking place concerning people with disabilities. Figures for 2002 from the Equality Tribunal point to almost three times as many claims from disabled persons claiming discrimination as there were in 2001.

The total went from 18 to 50, and included a complaint from a visually impaired man who wasn't allowed to bring his guide dog into a pub. Discrimination against people with disabilities in the workplace rose by 69 per cent over the same period, from 26 claims to 44.

Tips for easily improving accessibility

- A smooth circular doorknob is difficult to use if someone has poor grip.
- Even a single step can make entry for a person using a wheelchair, almost impossible.
- Make sure the first and last step of a flight is clearly marked, - then a person with impaired sight will find a stairs easier to use.
- An induction loop in a busy environment will enable communication with people whose hearing is impaired.
- A threshold with no step provides access for everyone.

National CDSPs committee is working on disability

A CDSPs sub-committee has been working hard with projects on the issues of anti-racism, disability and sexual orientation and is becoming increasingly well-known around the country. 'Ears', the Equality and Anti-Racism sub-committee is an offshoot of the National Advisory Committee of the Community Development Support Programmes (CDSPs).

The subcommittee is there to encourage the inclusion of anti-racism issues and equality issues on the agendas of CDSPs projects. Throughout the country, they support projects to focus on these issues and to implement a code of practice. To date, the subcommittee has achieved the following: devel-

oped and launched an Anti-Racist Code of Practice, undertaken Anti-Racism training and been involved in two strategy days - on disability and on sexual orientation.

So who is on the Ears sub-committee? It consists of people from projects, support agencies and specialist support agencies in the CDSPs. Representatives of groups working on Equality and Anti-Racist issues are also invited to attend meetings. The subcommittee meets every two months and the location changes to suit the geographical spread of the people involved.

If you want more information or are interested in joining, contact Molly O'Duffy, Draiocht, An Tobar, Elm Court, Kiltalawn, Tallaght, Dublin 24. Tel: 01-4146979. Fax: 01-4146980. E-mail: molly@draiochtltd.ie

Mid-West concentrating on equality training

THE Mid-West Community Development Support Agency has received funding to extend the focus of its Equality Training, developed in partnership with PAUL Partnership Limerick and the 'Mid West Anti-Racism Training Group' (MWARTG) to concentrate on disability issues.

MWCDSA and MWARTG are currently in the process of delivering this training to the CDPs, FRCs and CFGs in the Mid-West region, while PAUL is delivering to Action Centres, and other local community groups. Further training of trainers is planned in the latter part of the year.

The two-day package, which supports par-

ticipants to explore their own values and attitudes, and the personal, societal and institutional levels at which racism occurs, was purchased from OSDC Ltd., and delivered as a training of trainers course by renowned anti-oppression trainer, Ashok Ohri.

Steve McNamara of MWCDSA informs us: "This Training Package doesn't end at the personal level, but asks participants to identify the process in which they will engage with their own organisations to move forward on proofing their work against discrimination and oppression. It combines personal exploration with action planning, development of understanding with real practice, and values with ideologies. We look forward to further developing our focus on Disability Equality."

Newbridging the disability gap

By Anne and Martin Kelly

ANNE and Martin Kelly are management committee members of 'The Bridge CDP', Newbridge, Co. Kildare. Both are registered blind and have written the following article from the point of view of people with disabilities becoming involved in CDP work. They, with the other management members, went through the trials and tribulations of working with the Pobal Support Agency, to have their project given CDP status. (They were one of 15 new projects recently incorporated into the CDSPs).

"And, despite, or perhaps because of the various initial difficulties, we are now a well-fused group, who are always conscious of equality," report Anne and Martin. Here follows their story, warts and all!

"In a recent study conducted by the National Disability Authority (NDA) 'in excess of 3 in 5 people agreed that Society disables people by creating physical and mental barriers.' Moreover, most public places and buildings in the country are inaccessible for people with disabilities. Despite the 'barriers, we have stayed fully committed to developing a work-plan and contributed to the moulding of an indomitable team.

"Having disabled people on the steering/management group created challenges for the other members, none of whom had previously worked with people with disabilities. This was for them a totally new experience and meant that they had to take disability into account at all times.

"For example, since one of the management members with a disability is a wheelchair user, the group meetings or work on capacity building had to take place in an accessible venue. This meant that whoever was organising a training session or meeting had always to be conscious of the need for accessible premises. In addition, accessible transport needed to be arranged in advance to accommodate our wheelchair user.

■ Hilarious flipchart situations

"Us two members are registered blind and written information has to be provided in suitable formats for us, as neither of us is a competent Braille reader. Can you just imagine the hilarious situations that invariably emerged when material on overheads or flip charts, or role-play during training needed to be described?"

"Surprisingly, given a little bit of forethought, and common sense, these 'problems' were overcome. Ironically, rather than creat-

ing difficulties, our participation appeared to improve the group dynamic. This clearly demonstrates that with an element of awareness, inclusion was a reality and not just an aspiration.

"Naturally, there are additional costs to being inclusive: such as the provision of accessible transport and, as people with disabilities know only too well, the task of finding suitable premises to hold meetings or training sessions. Accessible premises seem to be available only in the most expensive places.

■ Positive attitudes

"Nevertheless, where there's a will there's a way and through participation and positive attitudes, people with disabilities will have an opportunity to contribute to more inclusive community Development.

"As people with impaired vision, we had a few difficulties at the outset, but these were overcome as time went on and people began to understand the ways in which they could smooth the path for us, i.e. providing information in large print, or on computer disk, to enable us to read the large amount of material related to the project. At the beginning of each meeting or wider group work session, each person would introduce themselves, thus enabling us to know who was in the room, without the embarrassment of us having to ask.

■ Where's the toilet?

"Nevertheless, the members of our management committee, just to prove they are only human, might occasionally forget to tell us about a step, and if it is up or down, or would say, 'The toilet is over there.' (Such directions are no help to a blind or partially sighted person. In fact, 'Over there' could be considered the most hated words in the language by people with impaired vision). Nevertheless, we should compliment all of our fellow management committee members and the Pobal staff, who have been fast learners. Lapses like these are rarely made now.

"Now that we have secured our funding, after a great deal of lobbying, we can all look forward to a long and happy working relationship with the target groups of the Bridge CDP in Newbridge."

Editor's Note: 'Changing Ireland' administrator, Noelle McNamara is currently designing a website for the magazine. It will make it easier for people with visual impairments to access our news and features. The website should be up and running in the coming months.

More accessible buildings

By Declan Weir

MANY of us work for, or are involved with, projects whose premises are far from ideal when it comes to access for people with disabilities. We also tend to believe that our premises can only be made accessible if huge amounts of money and time are invested.

This is not the case, according to the National Disability Authority (NDA) who launched a book, 'Building for Everyone' late last year which argued that, "Buildings and the external environment can reach universal access standards for little or no cost."

The aim of the book - a 'best practice publication' - is to promote universal access to buildings and the environment. To do so it shows how to design, make and manage the built environment for the inclusion, access and use of everybody. It is all about ensuring that everyone can make full use of the buildings and environments they live in, work in and visit.

"Everyone deserves equal consideration from those who commission, design, construct and manage buildings and the environment," said Angela Kerins, NDA chairperson. "For example an elderly person or someone who is short of breath or has a broken ankle or a bad back will find a stairs difficult or impossible. The universal right of access seeks to improve accessibility and usability for everyone and ensures that people with impaired sight, mobility or hearing can participate fully in society."

"If this gives rise to an initial extra cost, the benefits which accrue through the lifespan of a building can far outweigh the outlay. We will all grow old and be grateful for an environment that has been planned to include us. The cost of providing facilities when a building is being constructed is usually very much less than that of adding the same facilities after the building has been completed," she concluded.

'Building for Everyone' offers a range of ideas that can be easily incorporated into design and construction, and covers all aspects such as corridor-width, signage, fire alarms, shower rooms, and light switches to name but a few.

'Building for Everyone' is available from the National Disability Authority priced €45. Tel: 01-608-0400. Fax: 01-660-9935.

Manual to aid projects fight disability issues

A MANUAL for projects on why and how they should take up disability issues will be published shortly, after a new Disability Equality Steering Committee (DESC) in greater Dublin has received a grant from the European Year of Disabilities funding scheme.

The committee decided to put their energy into publishing after a brief survey revealed that there is little awareness of disability among

most projects, and little knowledge of how to go about raising disability issues. The manual hopes to go some way towards encouraging projects to take the first steps.

Projects in the Tallaght and Clondalkin area, and their Support agency Draiocht, last year set up the DESC committee. The committee aims to improve the levels of participation of disabled people at all levels in projects and to support disability organisations in their struggle to secure rights for all disabled people.

Around one-in-ten of the population has a

disability and the vast majority of disabled people are unemployed and live in poverty. They are one of the most socially excluded groups in Irish society, facing many barriers to full participation – not just physical barriers but barriers of communication and attitude. It is for these reasons that People with Disabilities are named as a target group of the CDSPs.

• For more information contact Tracey Reddy at the Special Project on Long-term Unemployment, tel: 01-4623101.

Focus on - Orla Parkinson

Interview by Sandy Holland

ORLA Parkinson features in the first of a new series of articles on the lives of the volunteers and staff in the 188 CDSPs projects nationwide. Originally from Donegal, Orla has lived in Dublin, Scotland, England and California and now lives near Manorbhamilton, Co. Leitrim. She is married to Scott Coombs and they have three children Oisín (7), Nuala (4) and Olivia (2). She juggles family life with work as a part-time freelance editor. She has been a volunteer on the management committee of the North Leitrim Women's Group, a Core Funded Group under the CDSPs since January of this year.

What is your greatest strength?

I'm sociable.

What is your greatest weakness?

A total lack of sense of direction and useless when things break.

What has been your best day as a volunteer?

Being asked to join the group.

And your worst day?

Going through the memorandum of association.

What was the happiest day of your life?

The days our kids were born.

What period of time would you have liked to have been born in?

Although it wasn't an easy time, around the time of the First World War when the men went off to war and women got the opportunity to do work they wouldn't have had the chance to do.

Where is your favourite holiday destination?

Tuscany in Italy or anywhere you can travel by train ñ you see the backs of people's houses and see how they really live.

Which person (apart from your family members) has had the most influence on your life?

An older neighbour who kept herself and



• Orla, her three children Oisín, Nuala and Olivia and husband Scott. Photo: Susan Gadsby (sgadsby@eircom.net).

ideas young by associating with young people.

What is your favourite book and film?

My current favourite is 'That they might face the rising sun' by the Leitrim writer John McGahern and the Italian Film 'Cinema Paradiso'.

What makes you angry?

Poverty, injustice and spelling mistakes. Also, the person who eats the last square of chocolate from the packet in the kitchen cupboard.

Describe yourself in four words?

Friendly, anxious, food-lover and full of self-doubt.

What do you miss about Leitrim when you're away?

The peace and quiet.

How would you like to be remembered?

As a good friend and a famous author.

If you could swap lives with someone, who would it be?

Someone starting off.

What would you like on your headstone?

Died laughing.

Not all Indians are poor

INTRODUCTION - Noelle McNamara, 'Changing Ireland' administrator, returned to India recently for her second visit to Indian friends. She is in love with the country and its people and here gives an account of the tough lives some people face daily and the many surprisingly good things about life there. Her article aims to challenge many of the stereotyped ideas people may have of India, a 'developing country'.

CONTRARY to popular belief, not all of India's people are poor. Figures released show that three-quarters live above the recommended poverty line (equal to about 786 million people). Therefore, approximately 262 million people live below the poverty line. So, does this mean that 262 million people living in India are starving- yes, it does.

■ Highly skilled homeless

The gap between rich and poor is very wide and I met mostly with those in the middle. And I saw that even the middle-class were living with 2 or more maids, marble floors, big feasts and very well educated children. On the other hand, people with no shoes and wearing dirty rags, were living simply by lying down on the pavement to sleep and working all day in the market-place. Yet, these were not the people living below the poverty line - these are highly skilled people that could make almost anything right before ones eyes. Like a suit that I had made - the fabric was dyed, I was measured up, the fabric was cut and tailored, packed and ready for collection less then 2 hours later.

Calcutta, India's largest city, has a population of 15 million and is approximately the size of Dublin - there are 200,000 children living on the streets with absolutely no shelter and another 200,000 with very little shelter, that is they have cardboard mattresses.

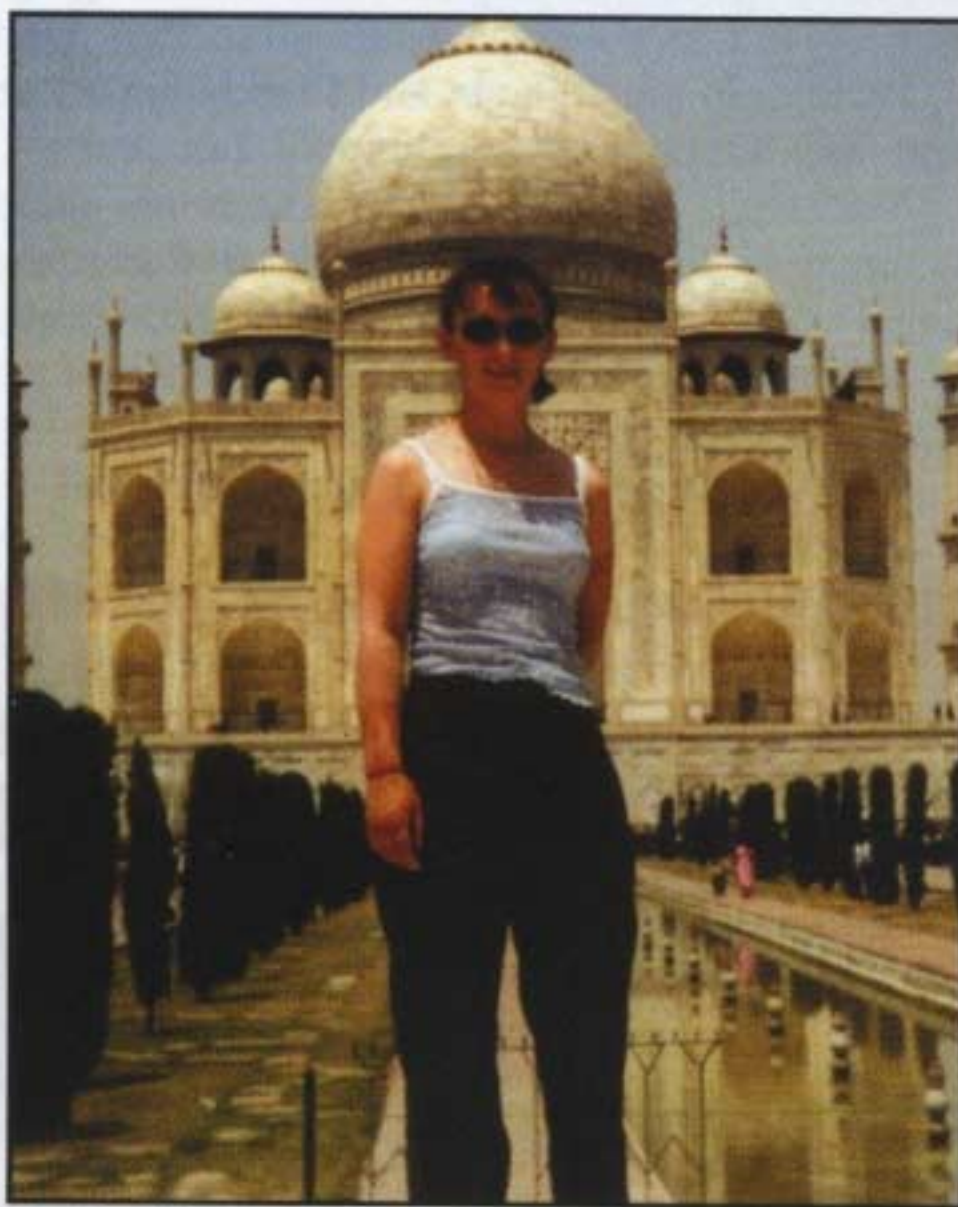
In Delhi, mothers and fathers stand at junctions with their newborn babies on their hips begging in order to collect prescriptions for their children, which may in turn save their lives. At every junction, children can be found begging, selling balloons, newspapers and so on. Each newspaper vendor has an average of 10 papers to sell costing 2 rupees per copy. They might sell the lot on a good day, after 15 hours on their feet, and make 10 rupees (equal to 20 cent).

■ 16 hour daily study

Only a mere 2% of government funding is spent on the educational system and because of this college places are scarce. Middle-class children study around the clock, 16 hours per day. The majority of families that I met had children with either an MBA degree or a professional degree. On the other hand, the vast majority of India's poor will never have the privilege of going to any school and are sent out to work to feed the family, although statistics reveal that over 50% of children over 15 years old can read and write.

Apparently, 42% of Government funding is spent on arms. However many Indian nationals I spoke with assured me that this figure is false and more likely to be in the region of 80% plus.

There are many other surprising things about



● Noelle McNamara outside the Taj Mahal, India

India that Irish people may not appreciate:

- Work colleagues, from multi-national companies, can be found all over India in parks, with shirt and tie, practising some form of meditation be it yoga as part of their working day.
- India is one of the top 3 countries in the world to supply software technology. There are some 562 television stations in the country and 7 million people use the internet.
- India is the world's largest producer of licit opium for the pharmaceutical industry. Although it is widely believed that people sit around at comers smoking pipes; this I assure is not true.
- Get together with friends and family are always about prayer, eating good vegetarian food, music and dance and never with pubs and alcohol. I certainly never saw a woman smoking or drinking; it is taboo.
- It is rare to find people eating meat and particularly cow products such as beef.
- The very young and the very old are cherished in India.
- Here in Ireland, people follow religion; in India they live it. To get to one temple I visited, the route took me some hundreds of miles north of Delhi by bus and hundreds of miles up the mountains with views of the Himalayas. Here visitor-books have been kept for thousands of years.
- India is a land of many diversified cultures and religion including - Hindu 81%, Christian 2.3%. Never did I encounter racism of any creed instead I found the people to be extremely eager and willing to help. We could learn a lot from India's example.

He was the only man on the parenting course

By Lorcan Brennan

MICK Kavanagh knows from experience that getting involved can and does make all the difference. A resident of Ferndale Park in Coolcotts, Wexford, Mick has for many years been involved with different aspects of developing his community.

His most recent involvement through the FAB Community Development Project is focused on trying to develop activities and supports for men within the surrounding area. Mick knows this is not easy work, men are slow to get involved for different reasons.

"They are afraid to get involved if there's not a social side to the project, there's fear that other things might come up like discussions around personal things," says Mick. "The best way to get started might be to simply get the group together, get them meeting fairly regularly and let discussions and topics of interest come up by them selves. Men might also be interested in practical things like doing woodwork or computers."

Mick's own broad interests have lead him to interesting places, one being the taking on and completion of a Parenting Diploma run through the local school. "The parenting course was hard to start on," says Mick. "I was unemployed at the time and I wanted to do something about it. I was the only man involved along with 43 women. It focused on supporting your child in school, facilitation skills and personal development."

When asked why more men were not involved in the course Mick feels that it might have something to do with going back in to the school atmosphere. "A lot of men won't go back to school due to bad experiences they had when they were younger. But I'm glad I did it and I even went on to do more courses around youth training."

Mick says "that for any man thinking of starting back to education the first thing is to look at doing something you might be happy with. There's no point in doing something you're not interested in. Then follow your ideas and get satisfaction from them. And regarding coming to a men's group, go down and see what it's about before making up your mind. People are going to welcome you. The first one will be the big one. Then once you're in, relax".

- For more information about getting involved and to contact Mick, call the FAB Project on: 053-42018



● Tom Sweeney (Supervisor) and Jane Thompson (CLASP Administrator) in the office at Gleann Community Centre.

'Quality of life' flourishes in north-west, for now

Martin Reading reports

A PROJECT that aims to enable older people to stay in their homes for as long as possible, in safety and comfort, this year celebrates six years in existence in rural Sligo. The 'Quality of Life' project has been supported all along by a CDSPs group - the Community of Lough Arrow Social Project (CLASP) and is staffed by FAS trainees. While it is identified for mainstream funding by the North-Western Health Board and the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment, it is proving increasingly difficult to recruit workers since FAS introduced stricter eligibility criteria for trainees. Now people can only stay on schemes for a maximum of three years. Where other communities struggle with FAS cuts, the new criteria is a problem particularly in rural areas..

CLASP has been running successive Community Employment Projects for six years. The effectiveness of the work has been recognised by the Health Board and government

departments.

When launching an in-depth evaluation and report in April, Minister Éamon Ó Cuiv praised the project as, "a fine example of a community-managed project that utilises the skills and resources of a local community in partnership with state agencies to meet the needs of older and vulnerable people."

An ideal candidate for Social Economy Project funding, the Quality of Life Programme has been declared ineligible because of its status as 'identified for mainstreaming'.

However, the project is dependent for now on continued availability of FAS workers.

As Tom Sweeney, supervisor, points out, in this very rural area the restrictions on long-term eligibility of participants means that the specific qualities of caring and maintenance will become increasingly hard to find.

"Older people don't like change and there are unemployed and under-employed people in a rural area who can provide the very services they need," he said.

■ Real value for money

"The client base of 44 older people in 1997 has now expanded to 120, and with an annual budget of 120,000, this is real value for

money," says Jane Thompson, CLASP's administrator and erstwhile acting project co-ordinator.

Jane also pays tribute to Tom's care for these clients: "A huge part of the success is that Tom has time for them, and keeps the CE participants motivated".

The core services of the Quality of Life Programme are home visits, meals on wheels, Active Age Groups, home and garden maintenance and the provision of home security devices. Advice and assistance is also given on, for example, obtaining grants for home improvements.

A significant aspect of the original project was the provision of transport, enabling clients to travel the long distances necessary to use the health and social services in Sligo. This is now undertaken by CLASP Community Transport, an innovative RTI-funded project, utilising volunteer drivers and ensuring that insurance and expenses are fully covered.

CLASP is core funded by the Department of Community Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs under the Community Development Programme and is managed by members of the local community. Copies of the report 'The Quality of Life Project' can be obtained from Community of Lough Arrow Social Project, Gleann, Co.Sligo.

Seminar is not final part of consultation

'Changing Ireland' brings readers a special report on the ongoing review process concerning the Community Development Support Programmes and other programmes and agencies in the sector. The report is based around the 'Review Seminar of Community and Local Development Structures' which was held in Dublin on June 18th. The various programmes and agencies were invited to send representatives and make presentations, focusing on the questions the Department has raised regarding increased effectiveness in the community and voluntary sector. Hundreds of representatives from the programmes attended, as did Ministers Éamon Ó Cuiv and Michael McDowell and Minister of State, Noel Ahern.

The seminar was scheduled as a half-day session (though it ran until 3pm) and was a major part of the Department's consultative process. In the case of the CDSPs, a National Working Group set up by a national emergency meeting of projects, held in March, had developed a position paper - this was an historic move, as it was the first time that all the local groups in the CDSPs came to an agreed national position on an issue. The national position was largely based on the conclusions of the Strategic Plan which was two years in the making.

Gerry Kearney, secretary general to

SPECIAL REPORT ON REVIEW PROCESS by ALLEN MEAGHER

Minister Ó Cuiv's Department opened proceedings by explaining the purpose of the seminar.

"We would see today as marking a continuation of the consultation and learning process on the review of the schemes," began Mr. Kearney. "The process commenced last February with a decision by three ministers, the Ministers for Justice, Environment, and our own Minister for Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs who advanced this review. The intention is that today would afford key participants in community and local level development the opportunity to have their voices heard, not just by ministers and government departments but also by their colleagues in the sector. As such, it gives a chance for the key providers to give us input and to build upon the submissions they have made. Clearly it is a stage in the consultation process and the consultation must and will continue beyond today," he said.

What happens next?

"What happens after here?" said Minister Ó Cuiv, echoing the thoughts and questions of everyone attending the Review Seminar on community development.

"We will probably do the fundamental things fairly fast, but I would see this as an ongoing process. I want nationally, but more important locally, for people to come forward with ideas for change."

"I think we need to create urban models for urban areas and rural models for rural areas. And we need a third model - one that targets specific groups, that in both other models might get left out - Traveller groups are mentioned specifically in that."

On specialist agencies, he said, "We need those - because there are groups in society that no matter how much the community develops, they might be left out."

"The timescale is we want to be on the road, with all decisions made about phase one of this process, by January 1st, 2004. If we leave it any longer, sometime you'll have a new minister and he'll only start the whole process over again," said the Minister.

Colleague, Minister Ahern said the changes would be introduced over time: "Later in the year we will come up with some changes that have to be. It won't all happen on one day, it is an evolving situation."

Minister McDowell acknowledges 'natural tension' between sides

MINISTER for Justice, Equality and Law Reform, Michael McDowell, in describing the purpose of the review, drew attention to the bigger picture and acknowledged there was some tension about the process.

"There is a natural tension between the ambitions and the methods of participatory democracy on the one hand and representative democracy on the other hand, and my view is that it is in our interest to reconcile those two and to bring them together to make sure they work together in harness rather than to be at loggerheads and that is how I view today's proceedings," he said.

Being specific, he said the aim was "to strengthen the impact and enhance the delivery of our important community and local government programmes... to positively impact on the lives of our communities."

"When you look at the state apparatus and the way it interacts with the community, we always have to bear in mind that it is the interests of the

community that comes first, not the interests of the apparatus. And I always describe that as an emphasis on outcomes rather than incomes in how we deal with our affairs. The delivery of local and community development services is central to the quality of life of citizens and as such it is a fundamentally important element of government policy. And that is the reasoning behind the efforts for the reform of local government, part of which as you know was the establishment of the City and County Development Boards. And as you all know as well, government agencies are under instruction to engage with and to support and to co-operate with the CDBs."

Local drive important

"The government is committed to ensuring the continued support for integration of efforts between the state and the voluntary sector in our society," he continued, giving examples from his own Department.

For instance, 33 city and county childcare committees have been established. And under the NDP, 437 million euro is being spent in Ireland on childcare facilities (280 million euros of that coming from the EU). He said it was important that this work was "driven by local organisations on the ground" and noted that prior to the institution of this plan 80,000 euro per annum was delivered.

"So things have changed," he said.

Tribute to volunteers

Talking of the spirit of partnership needed to expand local and community development initiatives, he saluted the efforts of volunteers involved in the various programmes.

The seminar and review, he pointed out, was driven by Minister Ó Cuiv, "in an effort... designed to bring everybody who is a stakeholder into a common partnership that is aimed at securing" more effectiveness on the ground.

Minister stresses positive aspects to Review

MINISTER ÉAMONN Ó CUÍV, Minister for Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs, opened the Review Seminar of Community and Local Development Structures, held in Dublin, on June 18th, with a speech to the hundreds of people invited from different programmes and agencies. Throughout the speech and indeed the day, he sought to reassure people and allay fears. He said the review process was not at an end and it would be January 1st, 2004, before the changes, which are yet to be decided, are put into practice. Report by Allen Meagher, Editor, 'Changing Ireland'.

Minister Ó Cuív began in Irish: "A Aire, a Aire stáit, a chairde ar fad, ba mhaith liom ar dtosach báire, fáilte a chuir róimh anseo ar maidin agus buíochas a ghlacadh díobh as ucht teacht agus páirt a glacadh sa bpróséis a bheidh thar a bheith tabhachtach do na daoine ar fad go bhfuil muid ag iarraidh freastail orthu. Ag

*"Within all the groups
there is a huge expertise
and commitment
built up over the years"*

deireadh an le 'sé an fheidhm chéanna atá againn inniu, sé sin, maitheas na bpobal go bhfuil muid ag freastail orthu a dhéanamh. I'm delighted to be here, particularly to be here with my two [ministerial] colleagues... I think it is important that we come here and enter an open and honest dialogue."

Recalling that he worked "for a long time in what would now be considered the voluntary sector", he said that as the sector grew, the complexity grew, the number of agencies grew and it became more complicated and more costly for people to interact with it.

He said the first step towards reforming the sector was initiated by the Taoiseach and government when they established for the first time a Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs, bringing various local and community development programmes under the one roof.

"All of the responsibility for all the little programmes, such as LEADER which was in Agriculture, were spread over five different government departments, each with its own way of doing the job, and each with its own structures. The idea of setting up the Department of CRGA was to try to bring this huge energy together and deliver a better product on the ground for those who depend on us to provide services to them," explained Minister Ó Cuív.

"Why the change? Our job is to make sure



● Minister of State, Noel Ahern, T.D. and Minister Éamon Ó Cuív, T.D., at the Review Seminar.

that as much as possible of that money goes into actually delivering services to those who are trying to help. I often liken that to electricity. If you have a generator in one place and a consumer in another and you have low-tension lines, you would lose half the power before it ever got to the consumer. Well, running government isn't much different. We want to make sure that whatever money and energy we produce gets to the end-user. And to do this, I think we have to accept that there is a need to streamline the structures from the top.

■ One department

"The most fundamental decision has of course been made - one department for community, but we also need right through the system to build on that to avoid duplication and undue administrative overheads. Another issue we have to deal with is we need transparency, we need co-ordination, we need improved control of funding and we need improved operation of the local community development measures. Finally, we need improved democratic accountability of agencies and service providers.

"Now, how are we going to do this? It's going to be slow [but] let's keep travelling. We initiated a comprehensive consultation process with the providers of the schemes and programmes, in other words yourselves, and also the social partners, on improving local service delivery.

"The second thing we decided to do was to get an independent review carried out by Area Development Management Limited (ADM), the government departments and other stakeholders.

"The third element is a requirement that various local agencies submit their plans to City and County Development Boards for endorsement. If there isn't co-ordination between what's in the county plan and what is actually delivered within the county, that means that people are going in different directions.

■ Not about scrapping

"We recognise that within this room and within all of the groups, there is a huge expertise and commitment built up over the years. We're not about scrapping that, we're about building on that, co-ordinating, facilitating. We can do it better and I'm sure all of you will take a positive view of the possibilities of change that we're holding out to you.

"I think it's a timely review - new department, new co-ordination, the possibilities that we can pull things together, much better, because a lot of the functions are now concentrated within my own department, and across the very important role of local government and also the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform.

■ Change or die

"I want to make one thing clear here; it is my belief that you either change or die. Demands change, requirements change and we must have flexible, co-ordinated, simple and effective structures to deliver services to the people.

"I want to stress again that what we are about today is about getting better service delivery, it's nothing to do with all those rumours you hear about saving money; it's about better value for money, whatever amount of money we get. The fundamental issue in using the existing money - is there a better way of doing the job?

"What we want to do is not contain existing levels of services, but improve them, particularly from the point of view of the person out there on the street who at the moment looks with awe

*"It's nothing to do with all
those rumours you hear
about saving money"*

and wonder at all the structures we have set up, and they don't know where to start. I have to say as a politician it often happens that people come in and they say to you I'm looking for such-and-such and you get out a biro and start writing out names and addresses, and say 'Contact all those people, I'm not sure which one can help you.' Well, wouldn't a one-stop shop, in certain circumstances, be quite handy?

"At the end of the day, the test is, if in four years time, if those to whom we provide the services say, 'There has been a dramatic improvement in the services'. Well, if they say that, I will take it as the ultimate evaluation of our work here," he added.

He urged the participants to speak openly and honestly.

NOEL AHERN DISMISSES FEARS OF A HIDDEN MASTER PLAN

MINISTER of State, Noel Ahern, T.D., had comforting words for people in projects nationwide who feared the outcomes of the Department's review had already been decided and a plan of action made from on-top.

"I reiterate that no final decision has been taken on the shape and detail of where we go from here. There is no master plan in anyone's bottom drawer. We are in a learning process, we are observing and going through the submissions that come and today is a very important day in that process."

Ultimately, he added, local solutions to problems on the ground "must be supported and affirmed and our task is to ensure that support is provided in a coherent way, through structures that are open and accessible."

He complimented the work of projects throughout the country that he had visited and pointed out that the review "will be informed and is being informed by the views that we hear today and the views that have all been submitted by all the groups."

Regarding the various national programmes, they had been running for quite a number of years and it was time to review and take stock.

"That's why we launched this initiative, which is aimed at maximising the impact of the programmes on the ground, avoiding duplication and overlaps and getting value for money. It's also about ensuring that there is



● A view of CDSPPs volunteers and workers who came from every corner of the country on February 4th for a national meeting to initiate a response to the Department's review plans.

continued accountability and transparency for the substantial public funding that is going into these programmes. And fundamentally the outcome of this initiative must deliver better services for the ordinary man and woman on the street and the communities that they make up," said Minister Ahern.

Government bears 'some responsibility'

"I acknowledge that central government bears some responsibility for creating the many different local and community development programmes and structures over the years. Now that we are all within the one department, it... This joined-up thinking at the centre should now facilitate more joined-up service delivery at local level," he added.

"The CDBs were set up to bring up a more harmonised and co-ordinated approach to the delivery of services at local level... economic, social and cultural development... And it is against this background that the CDBs are given the task of endorsing local development agency plans..

Endorsement fears

"As I see it, the endorsement process should be a relatively straight-forward exercise given in fact that local development bodies will be proofing their plans against the agreed [CDB] strategies, so ultimately the end-result should be that the various plans dove-tail together and are not at odds with each other. It really should be a more simple process than some might suspect," he proposed.

Added Minister Ó Cuiv during the Open Forum: "The proofing is not just one-way, it is also a challenge to CDBs - are they actually implementing the social inclusion measures in the lovely plan they wrote and are they facilitating the Partnerships and CDPs to do it, or are they just glossy words in a plan? So, as much as the Partnership proofing with the CDB, the CDB yearly must check the Partnerships have they [the CDBs] done their bit in delivering in their county on social inclusion?"

Minister Ahern backed up the many other points made by his ministerial colleagues and he passed on Martin Cullin's apologies for not being able to be present at the seminar.

Voices from the floor

THE following voices came from the floor during the Seminar's Open Forum session. The talking time allotted was short and many of the comments were critical of various things, including that the Review Process did not include a proper form of consultation with community workers and volunteers.

Phil Callear, West Clare: "Multi-annual funding was the mainstay of the government's white paper on supporting voluntary groups in the community sector. It is essential."

Tony McCarthaigh, of the Drugs Task Force felt slightly uncomfortable because the seminar "falls short of consultation as such" and he suggested another gathering where the programmes could "make decisions together".

Minister Ó Cuiv addressed the question by pointing out that the timeframe to move forward is short: "The door is open for continuous dialogue and consultation, but setting up steering groups at this stage would not add an awful lot to the process"

A LEADER speaker said it was "unfortunate that this seminar was confined to a half day" as it appeared obvious that people had more to say

than there was time for. Minister Ó Cuiv replied, saying, "A half-day was all we could give it," though "of course it is worth more than that." He pointed out that that three Ministers had been involved in the day.

The president of the Association of Municipal Authorities of Ireland said she was, "extremely disappointed at the negative comments in respect of elected representatives and the attitude towards local government." Later, Jack Roche, IRD Dunhallow, noted, "One thing that did come across [today] is the wariness of some groups of local authorities. I want to say that I was a member of a local authority for 21 years and I too would be extremely wary of local authorities."

Joan Byrne, manager of the Saol Women's Drug Project in the north inner-city of Dublin:

"Minister McDowell - he put the issue of participative versus representative democracy squarely on the agenda and he acknowledged the tension and he was the most honest contributor this morning."

She added that she welcomes change. However, she warned that "if this review does not involve state service delivery and the failure

by the state to take up the integrated action plans that the local drugs task force and other local development initiatives have spent years putting together, then it's a farce."

A support agency worker from the CDSPPs, Julie Howley, expressed frustration that most projects were not invited to attend the Review Seminar.

"I would like to convey the deep anger within the CDSPPs about the exclusion from being able to participate in this forum by about 85% of the projects," she told the seminar. "I think it is really important to say they have participated through the national working group in coming up with a constructive submission. They anticipated they would be invited to participate and feel they have been excluded."

"The CDSPPs groups, and Claire referred to the 2000 people on voluntary management committees in the disadvantaged areas, they are the people who I think the Minister is constantly telling us that he wants to reach. Just to make a point - that [most of them are] not here," she said.

There were, in total, two to three CDSPPs volunteers at the seminar.

CDSPs respond to Review

- Historic day as projects speak with one voice

CLAIRE Casey, a CDP worker from Ballymun, spoke on behalf of the temporary National Working Group at the Review Seminar. The group had been set up at an emergency national meeting of projects, held in March, to develop a response to the Department's review questions. In outlining the Community Development Support Programmes position, Ms. Casey made history as it marked the first time that all the local groups in the CDSPs have come to an agreed national position on an issue. The position paper was developed after numerous regional and national meetings of project volunteers and workers.

Ms. Casey began by explaining briefly the make-up of the CDSPs. The programmes began in 1989 as 15 development projects and there are now over 170, plus 14 regional and six specialist support agencies. They all work on the causes and effects of poverty and social exclusion and over 2000 volunteers are involved in the CDSPs.

An evaluation, in 2000, had found the CDSPs "contributed very significantly to changing circumstances and creating opportunities in some of the most disadvantaged communities in the country" and that the work and impacts of the CDSPs are "essential to the successful implementation of a whole range of other initiatives".

She said the presentation she was making was based on the CDSPs National Strategy Plan, developed over two-and-a-half years, and also on the work of the National Working Group this year. She expressed disappointment that 95% of groups (from the programmes) had not been invited to attend the seminar.

Substantive Questions

"Firstly," she said, "the CDSPs entirely agree that greater coherence within and between all of our programmes will be of benefit to the people we work with.

"We understand that 'coherence' means formalised structures and processes that everyone can buy into and assist us all to work more closely together... and we have a number of proposals in that direction.

"It is important to stress that there is already a great deal of co-ordination at local level. Maybe at this point it is just a question of how to formalise existing structures."

As to which agency should take responsibility for co-ordinating the work, Ms. Casey said, "this should be negotiated between all parties over the coming year."

"At a regional level, the CDSPs is already organised on a regional basis and it is important for us that these regional networks be maintained and strengthened. We have some proposals in our strategic plan about how to do so. Those networks will provide us with the platform from which we can realistically participate in regional and national co-ordination structures."

Social inclusion groups

Ms. Casey spoke of working more closely with CDBs and assisting the work of the CDB's 'Social Inclusion Measures' (SIM) groups: "We have a number of proposals and these are based on how these structures, we believe, would need to be radically developed, to both enable participation by

CDSPs groups and the people that we work with and to benefit from the experience that we can draw on."

One proposal was that "50% of the community sector representation on CDBs be drawn from anti-poverty groups within the sector and the SIM group should be expanded to include representation from the CDSPs and from the range of social inclusion programmes and measures present in that city or county area."

The make-up, processes and co-ordinating role of the SIM groups should also be expanded after negotiation between the groups involved. And the expertise of the CDSPs could be called upon "in both the development of the groups... and in planning and evaluation systems, decided at a national basis."

This SIM's expanded co-ordination role could be made easier by adopting standardised planning and evaluations and the National Working Group had a proposal in this regard.

"If we are all using the same system, then any duplication can be eliminated, gaps can be seen, blockages can be identified, things that don't work could be stopped and successes could be built upon.

"At the moment," noted Ms. Casey, "for us to participate in any meaningful way in greater local, regional and national co-ordination, it is absolutely vital that the CDSPs develop national structures that we have envisaged in our strategic plan."

Autonomy must remain intact

There were a number of key issues for the CDSPs which everyone involved feels strongly about.

"First and foremost for us in the CDSPs is the autonomy of the groups and indeed of all the programmes that are working on social inclusion, equality and anti-poverty measures around Ireland. Impinging in any way on our ability to decide for ourselves what should be done will have extremely negative consequences," said Ms. Casey.

"Our voluntary management committee system is a key mechanism that is implemented throughout the CDSPs, engaging the most excluded people in society. We will not tolerate being dictated to by anyone. We do and we will work with other organisations. We do not, we cannot and we will not work for other organisations. I want be clear about this - this is not about us being bolshie or obstructionist or hurlers-on-the-ditch, it's just not about that. (It's about) what we know works for people who have traditionally been excluded from society. It won't work to ask people to volunteer to work for someone else.

Endorsement concerns

"In addition, CDSPs groups are deeply concerned about proposals that the City/County Development Boards (CDBs) will endorse their workplans," said Ms. Casey. There was particular concern relating to rights-based work, such as work by Travellers or refugees' groups and the relationship they have with their local authority.

"It is vital that clear guidelines are agreed for how this endorsement process would happen and how plans would be assessed. The guidelines should be agreed at national level with the CDSPs in dialogue with yourselves. Transparent and



● The CDSPs position paper was outlined by Claire Casey. Her management team at the Community Action Programme, Ballymun, Dublin, agreed for Ms. Casey to work full-time as organiser for the National Working Group over the last few months.

accountable mechanisms should be established with the local authorities for the arbitration of disputes by the Department. Furthermore, if there is to be a role for the CDBs and their SIM groups in co-ordinating and/or endorsing our work, then our agreement to such arrangements will be only on the basis that the functions of the CDBs are clearly separate from and independent of the local authority," stated Ms. Casey.

There are other issues, apart from the main ones. Firstly, the CDSPs believes "that a multiplicity of initiatives is actually very important in terms of tackling poverty and in disadvantaged areas and communities. It is a fundamental and necessary thing to have a whole range of services and choices available to people (in poverty)" explained Ms. Casey.

Secondly and thirdly, the designated areas system must be retained and, in association with this, the CDSPs must continue to work with disadvantaged people who live in areas that are not targeted by RAPID.

Fourthly, to increase effective co-operation in the sector, it is essential that the development of a support structure for the CDSPs, as agreed in the strategic plan, be allowed to proceed.

One-year contracts

Fifth and finally, recent cuts to the various local and community development programmes are having "a serious detrimental and demoralising effects in the communities we have been working with."

The problems with one-year contracts were also outlined, because the temporary withdrawal of multi-annual funding "was seriously undermining the effectiveness of our work."

Ms. Casey noted there had been "deep concern" that perhaps the seminar marked the end of the review process and said it was necessary to continue the dialogue.

"If we are not involved in this decision-making process and have no ownership of it, there is a very good chance at the end of the day that whatever is decided won't work on the ground, and we are very interested in making sure that things do work on the ground," she said.

Ms. Casey thanked the Department for the opportunity to outline some of the CDSPs proposals and concerns.

Department's review questions spelt out

THE Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs are currently asking four questions of the programmes under its remit in the community and voluntary sector. Many of the programmes have been running for a decade or more and the majority of people in the sector agree with the Minister that it is timely that their ways of operating should be reviewed. The questions the Department posed as part of the review were as follows:

Question (a) How can structures be streamlined and rationalised so as to avoid overlaps, duplication and undue administrative overhead?

Q (b) How can on-the-ground services, supports and impacts on local communities be improved from within existing levels of resources?

Q (c) How can [more] transparency, co-ordination and improved control be brought to the funding and operation of local/community development structures?

Q (d) How can the democratic accountability of agencies and service providers in this area be strengthened?

Partnerships confident about their work

NOT every programme represented at the Review Seminar in Dublin offered a crystal-clear response to the Department's review questions (see 'Department questions effectiveness of programmes'). However, some did, including Planet (the national networking office for the country's Partnerships).

The programmes, or projects, who made presentations were as follows: Community Development Support Programmes; Drugs Task Force; Irish Leader Network; Partnerships (Planet); RAPID; National Network of the Community Strand; IRD Duhallow.

Some of Planet's chief proposals are summarised here as an example of the thinking among people in another programme:

Planet's answer to Question (a): It was pointed out that Partnerships have already improved services on the ground. They suggest that a common methodology should be adopted to measure the impact of services. There also needs to be an increase in the capacity of state agencies to respond flexibly to local needs.

Ans. (b): There is "no overlap or duplication of services for Partnership clients at local level." The diverse structures, Planet also point out, "can facilitate development of specialist services to clients." They further say that, "New programmes should build on existing structures," and suggest that "a process should be put in place at local level to negotiate and agree structures and roles so as to maximise effectiveness."

Ans. (c): Planet point out that they are already co-ordinating structures, have transparency and are accountable.

Ans. (d): Partnerships have increased their democratic accountability since Boards are allowed to have elected representatives as members. They will continue their "positive relationship with City/County Development Boards."

In addition, Planet proposed a number of initiatives, including one which others also wanted - A national representative structure to be established to agree the process (and timescale) for endorsement of plans and similar co-ordination issues. They also would like the "Partnerships mandate to co-ordinate social inclusion measures to be locally renewed." They also want "Partnerships to convene meetings of key agencies locally to negotiate and agree possible areas of co-operation and support." They point out, finally, that, "State agencies...must co-ordinate and work effectively at local level to respond to local needs."

Ministers respond to open forum questions

■ Multi-annual funding crisis to end

Minister Éamon Ó Cuiv explained the background to the temporary stoppage in multi-annual funding for projects.

"In relation to the CDSPs, most of you got one-year contracts this year, the ones that were up for review. The reason is quite simple - the Partnerships, the Leader companies and so on are working on three-year contracts to the end of the development plan. By deferring giving 3-year contracts for now, we are going to line up the CDSPs projects with 3-year contracts so that every programme will come to an end at the same time and get renewed together, rather than having different sequences for different programmes," he said.

"I say 'Yes' to multi-annual funding if we are talking about three year contracts, and a reasonable understanding that when the three years are up that you get another three-year contract. I think that is also important for people who work in the sector, so they have stability, have proper wages, have proper pension rights, etc."

■ 'Equal partners, most of the time'

Minister of State, Noel Ahern, openly observed that while the community sector and government strive to work together as equal partners, it did not always work like that.

"We spoke [today] about the state and civil society and we have the white paper on that and, yes, we are all equal and we are committed to that policy and want to work with that policy. But, it is a bit like the relationship between different government departments and the Department of Finance - we are all equal, most days, sitting around a table, but there are the occasional day when we are not quite all equal partners. And our relationship with some community development groups might be something of the same - yes you represent civil society, we want to work with you, we want to develop matters with you and we are all partners and equal partners, most of the time."

■ Ó Cuiv worked for 20 years in a co-op

"What informs me as to where we should go? Well, I was 20 years doing the job (as a community co-op manager) and I know what it feels like. And I know what I would have liked during that 20 years. Yes I would have liked stability of funding, definitely, and to know where I was going. Yes, I would be looking for state support. Yes, I would like simple reporting structures and simple ways of accessing the funds. Yes, I would have liked one main source of funding from the state, I would have rathered that than 20 sources of funding from the state. So, I look at the things I would have liked when I was there and I see that in a lot of cases they don't exist."

■ Why so complicated?

Minister Éamon Ó Cuiv: "I look at somebody building a community centre and they had to go to nine state agencies to get the few bob to do it. Why does it have to be that complicated? These are the things that I would like if I was back doing the job."

■ Ó Cuiv accepts plans 'doomed' without consent

Sitting at the top table, Minister Ó Cuiv openly acknowledged that the Department's review process and the changes that will follow were "doomed" if the changes were forced on people.

"We are more than aware that structural change brought about without the consent of those who its effecting, be it the community or delivery agency, is doomed to failure. On the other hand, there is also another disease we have to avoid and that's paralysis by analysis. And let's be honest about it, I get a lot of community groups coming to me and saying 'Look, it's so obvious what needs to be done, will ya stop talking about it and quit consulting and just get on and do it.' I think somewhere in between is the happy medium between confrontation and an ability at some stage to say 'Let's get on with the job, it's not fixed in stone, we will adjust our tack as we go along, but let's get on with the job'."

The Diary of Horace McDermot

- Community Development Worker -

■ Monday, 1.30pm:

Went for lunch with Mick Savage and Penny Pincher. Penny bought a bottle of the new 'Caffeine and Sugar-Free Coca-Cola'. What is the point of that? Why not just call it fizzy brown water? It's like your meat-free burgers, your herbal cigarettes, dairy-free milk and non-stick glue. If they don't have all the unhealthy bits then don't call them Coke, burgers, cigarettes, milk or glue.

■ Tuesday, 6.07pm:

Went to a seminar on rural development organised by Bogs, Marshes and Wetlands (BMW) Region. There were a number of speakers who outlined the different phases and elements of the LEADER Programme. It reminded me of shopping for Persil you can get it in bio, non bio, powder, liquid, tablet, colour, gentle or max strength. So we heard about LEADER, LEADER+, LEADER Light, Longer Lasting LEADER and the CD Now That's What I Call LEADER 54. It's just like the Poverty 1, 2 and 3 Programmes that led to the establishment of the Local Area Partnerships. Poor as they were in the beginning, are now and ever shall be world without end. Amen.

■ Wednesday, 10.54pm

The war is over but the killing continues! The threat was real but the intelligence wasn't! Will someone tell me what's going on? More American and British soldiers are now being

killed by the Iraqis than while the war was on. Now they have offered a reward of \$25m for Saddam's capture. Why didn't they offer \$50m at the very start before they spent twice that on bombing the place and making it harder to find him. Blair is in such bother he should replace Alastair Campbell with Comical Ali as his Minister of Spin.

■ Wednesday, 7.19pm

As luck would have it I was on Tory Island visiting Gail Gore when Cabin Fever went down.

I hope nobody tries to blame me as I had given the lads a six-pack of 'ROXXOFF' to drink but never dreamt they'd drive onto the rocks off Tory.

My friend Dec Hand is a lifelong sailing enthusiast and had a really fab experience when he auditioned for the Cabin Fever show. Every time the Captain called for "All Hands on Deck" the women wouldn't leave him alone.

■ Thursday, 5.55pm

■ Friday, 6.43pm

Louie Wallie is a pal who is part of the music industry. Actually he sells second hand tapes at the local market and does a bit of Karaoke. He made an awful eejit of himself by saying the Special Olympics were of no real interest to people. Mind you Louie has a learning disability - he still can't learn to keep his big mouth shut.

■ Saturday, 11.00am

Travelled up to the north and had to pay a toll on the new Drogheda Bye Pass. I would have thought Drogheda would be paying people to come into the town not charging them to avoid it.

■ Sunday, 8.23pm

The Vintners what a shower. The Intoxicating Liquor Act has been passed with a massive lobby from the vintners and means that they are now freer to discriminate again as they did in the past.

■ Monday, 12.10pm

Just got another dressing down from Mick (mind you nobody dresses down better than Mick with his frayed 'Bob Dillon Slane '92' t-shirt and his worn corduroys) for my 'Once-off Grant Application'. I had thought hard about it - something you'd only wanna do once. And I recalled Arthur McGuinness always said, 'Never trust someone you haven't got drunk with'. Inspiring stuff. So, I put in for 6500 euros to run an 'Out-Of-Your-MInd' weekend for the whole community. The idea was to provide drink, some soft drugs, a few strippers and those illegal Chinese fireworks and let the whole place go stone mad for the weekend. It was a form of 'team-building exercise. I thought everybody would be so hungover after it they'd never want to do it again, so it would be a real once-off. I can't understand Mick putting in proposals for worthwhile stuff - shure if it's worthwhile once, it's worth doin' again so it shouldn't qualify for once-off funding.

'Helping Children Feel They Belong'

- a guide to good practice in community

A NEW handbook has been produced by the Children's Research Centre at Trinity College Dublin, in association with the Combat Poverty and other knowledgeable groups.

"Helping Children Feel They Belong - a guide to good practice in community based prevention and support work with children and young people at risk of educational disadvantage" was published in June, by the Children's Research Centre in TCD.

The handbook was produced in association with a number of organisations

including the Irish Youth Foundation, the City of Dublin Youth Service Board and the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform.

The handbook summarises some of the lessons for practice which emerged from a major study undertaken by the Centre. The study focused on the work of six community based projects tackling the problems of educational and social disadvantage throughout Ireland.

"We see this handbook as being particularly useful to new groups starting up with an aim of supporting children

and young people in local communities," said Colm Smyth of TCD.

The Children's Research Centre, which is headed by Professor Robbie Gilligan, conducts research into areas that affect the lives of children and young people - particularly those who are coping with disadvantage.

- For information on receiving a copy of the book, contact: Colm Smyth at TCD. Tel: 01-6082982.
E-mail: smythco@tcd.ie

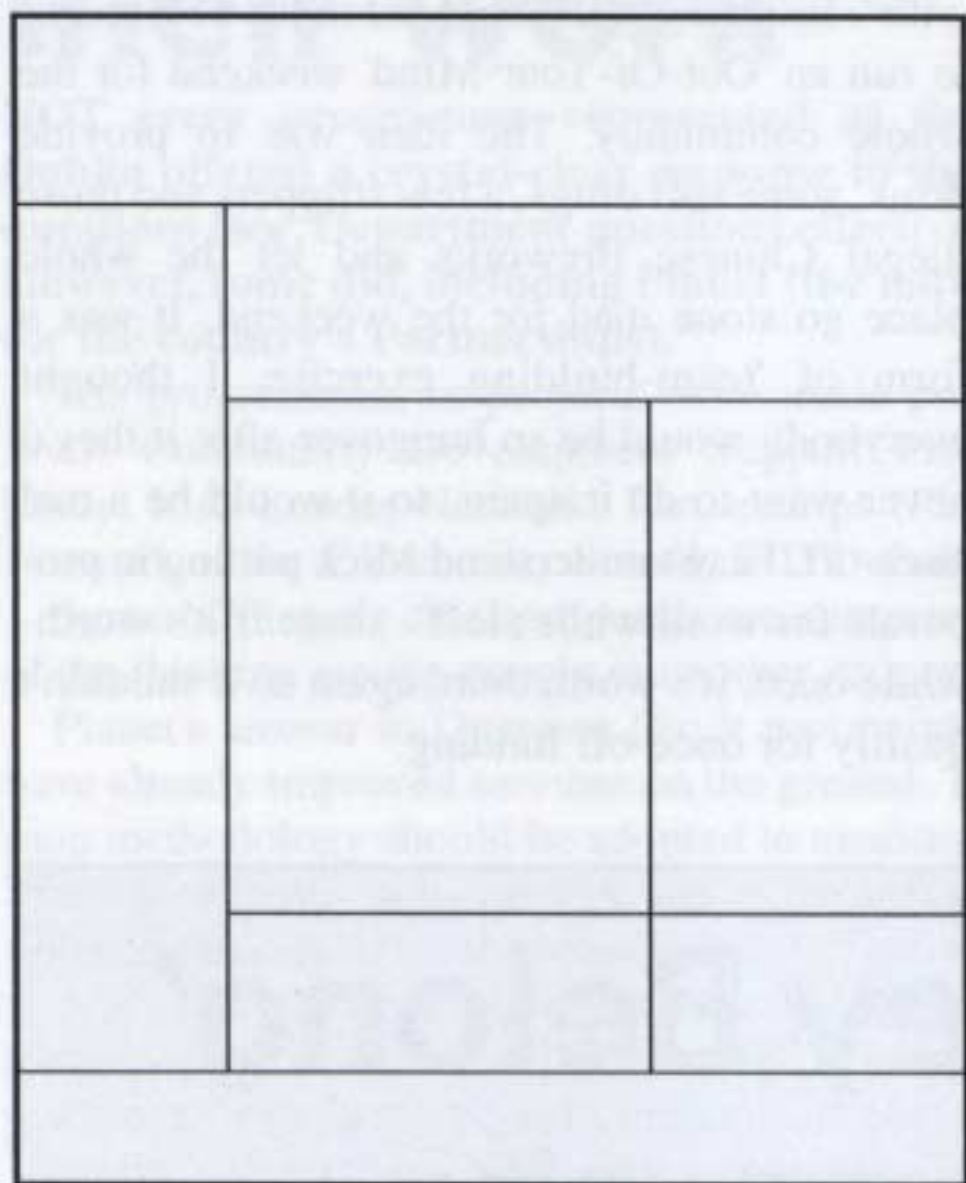
INTRODUCTION TO NEWSLETTER/MEDIA SKILLS

In 2000, a fifth of CDSPs projects produced a local newsletter. Today, that figure is even higher and there is far more demand for newsletter training than 'Changing Ireland' staff (an editor and part-time administrator) can directly provide. Now, we present a Newsletter, Writing and Media Skills Resource Section - it will be spread over this and the next issue of 'Changing Ireland'. We hope it assists the many projects throughout the country who use newsletters to involve and link the entire community. Here editor Allen Meagher looks at layout and headline-writing; Sharon Browne shows how to best use the media. In the next issue, we will give tips on news/story-writing.

Is your layout cool and modern?

The layout look of magazines changes over the years and the modern trend is for publications to be laid out with rectangles in mind. Each story, including text, headline, artwork, photography, etc, is contained within a single rectangle. One rectangle usually dominates and contains the lead story. Each page may be made up of a number of rectangular modules. Have a look at the Irish Times to see how the design works in practise.

Can you see influences of this 'rectangular' trend in the design you adopted for your newsletter?



Layout for newsletters

Layout is the design of a page destined for publication - you can design a mock-layout on a sheet of paper and use it as a guide when you begin laying out items on a page on your computer screen (a skill called desk-top publishing, or DTP for short).

Remember the three basic ingredients of any page are headlines, text and photographs. Each is as important as the other and it is important to get a good balance. You must also plan where to place the following and what size should they be: photographic captions; white space; advertisements. And you also have to choose type-faces (often referred to as fonts) and where and how to use colour. You aim for a layout that is



● Front pages from some of the many regular local newsletter produced by Community Development Projects and other groups, such as Regional Support Agencies, in the CDSPs.

attractive to the eye. For example, it is very important that the text should be readable (9point size minimum, use fonts with 'tails' (see below) plenty of paragraphs, good punctuation and grammar, accuracy and correct spelling).

What do you think then?

Take a few minutes and take notes on your newsletter design:

Are you aware of a deliberate design style used in your newsletter? Look at it.

Write down:

- Number of columns per page?
- Are photos used?
- Are the photos given borders or put in boxes?
- Do you use single headlines, or put sub-headlines beneath?
- Do you *purposely* use white space? It can help to attract the reader's eyes to a piece.
- What size is the text in stories? Do you think it is too small or big?

More interesting questions:

- Who designs your newsletter?
- How could it be better?

- Do you use by-lines (names of authors)?
- Is it reader-friendly in the way it is laid out?
- Do you have a formula for what stories go where? E.g. News to front, sport to back.
- Have you looked at other people's newsletters to get ideas?
- Do you use enough photos? Are they of good quality? Do you include captions?
- Do you use page numbers in your newsletter?
- What fonts do you use, for text, for headlines?
- Have you shopped around to see what prices and quality other printers offer?
- Does your printer deliver on time?

An important tail about fonts

Designers over the centuries have come up with many different printed alphabet styles when it comes to the printed word. Some type-faces, or fonts, look more serious than others, but fonts will always fall into one of two 'types' - those with little tails and those without.

('Serif' is latin for tail; 'Sans' is latin for without. So a 'Sans Serif' typeface font is one without tails, for example the Arial typeface).

There's one more important point - it is easier to read blocks of text if they are set in fonts that include tails. On the other hand, words set in typefaces without tails can be more easily read in larger sizes and so they are best used for headlines, in adverts and for captions.

N.B. The most commonly used typefaces/fonts *for story text* are Times New Roman and Century Schoolbook. Stick to two/three fonts for headlines and two/three other fonts for text. And don't forget that you can use the **bold**, *italic* and underline options for extra emphasis, though you should not over-use them.

A Question: people sometimes wonder, SHOULD headlines always use FULL CAPITALS? Answer: Text set in all capital letters (aka uppercase) is not as easy to read as ordinary text. It can be used for emphasis or special effects, but should be used sparingly.

A final point: There is actually a third category of fonts, but we ignored it until now because it is not an important category - Script fonts. *Script fonts are not good for story text because they are difficult to read.*

Have you made the headlines yet?

Who reads headlines? Everyone! And who reads on; only people who were attracted to the story by the headline!

- Write in the present tense. Use active verbs.
- Put the key words of the story in the headline.
- Get the most important story element in the headline. Headlines should tell readers what happened and why the news is important to readers.
- Avoid puns.
- Be accurate.
- Be interesting and inviting. Headlines should be an advertisement for the story, but they should never be so cute that they fail to instantly tell the news.
- Be creative. Headlines can and should creatively convey a mood or emotion when appropriate, but they must always tell the news in clear and direct fashion.
- Use verbs. They mean action.
- **N.B.** Give time to headlines – who wants to read a story with a boring headline?

The TACT test for headlines

Ask these questions of each headline:

1. **Is it in good taste?** Anything offensive in any way? Can anything be taken a wrong way?
2. **Does it attract the reader's attention?** How can it be improved without sacrificing accuracy?
3. **Does it communicate clearly, quickly?** Any confusion? Any odd words, double meanings?
4. **Is it accurate, true?** Proper words used?
5. **A single "NO" above is a veto.** One "No" vote represents tens or thousands of put-out readers. Start over: rethink the headline from the beginning.

* In the next issue of 'Changing Ireland', the national newsletter of the Community Development Support Programmes, we will focus on Writing and Reporting Skills, including: a formula for writing News stories, how to write the first crucial first paragraph, three types of features, interviewing tips, how to quote people correctly, and accuracy and editing.

Managing the media

By Sharon Browne

A recent experience at Tralee CDP highlights the importance of managing media relations. A community clean up day went horribly wrong when the mountain of rubbish collected was set alight overnight. This led to the fire brigade being called out a number of times. Some of the local press also got to the scene – and just in time to take pictures of a small number of youths throwing stones and other missiles at the fire officers. Bad press indeed for a very hard working community.

The following day community reps involved in the Estate Management &

Community Safety Plan for the area felt understandably disheartened. But with a little persuasion from Tralee CDP they decided to make an attempt to manage the coverage rather than just wait and see how it would all turn out.

While the fires and stoning did make the headlines of the two local papers, there were also statements in the story about all the positive work done in the area by the two residents associations involved in the Estate Management & Community Safety Plan. Even

though there were some errors in the reporting all involved said it could have been worse.

The media obviously felt they had to report it as news. And because the community worked with them to bring a balanced context – rather than trying to stop them reporting it – a relationship was forged. The community then followed up on this and got the Kerryman to promise a full page feature on all the positive work done in the area including the residents associations, organic garden project, all the local youth groups and the Family Resource Centre, along with a minimum of three photos.

A reporter has been on a guided tour of the area with a number of local volunteers and has met with the various groups. We have yet to see how it turns out. In the end of the day we have no control over that. All we can do is provide accurate information, explain our case and build positive relationships. This is an area where CDPs can play a role in training and supporting communities to make the most of all their media coverage – good, bad and indifferent.

• Sharon Browne is Co-ordinator of Tralee CDP. A former national journalist, she is a member of the 'Changing Ireland' editorial team.

€500 prize for a CDSPs logo

Would you like to contribute to the design of a logo for the CDSP and win some extra cash for your project at the same time?

We are inviting CDSPs projects to design and submit what they feel might be an appropriate logo to represent what the Programme stands for.

Submissions for a slogan for the CDSPs which may be used will also be gratefully received, but applicants for the logo competition are not obliged to submit a slogan. The logo will be judged on its own merits.

Applications may be in any format from simple artwork to a computer generated version.

A brief explanation as to the reasons why the application is considered appropriate may accompany the submission.

It is intended to form a judging panel which will be broadly representative of the various strands within the Programme ie. Projects, Support Agencies, VCS Section. This panel will select the winning entry. It may then be necessary to seek Departmental ratification of the winning entry. The Department will retain discretion in relation to official adoption of the winning entry.

A prize of €500 will be awarded to the project which submits the winning entry.

Entries should be submitted to the Voluntary and Community Services Section's new address, to arrive no later than Friday, 26 September, 2003: Claire Walsh, Voluntary and Community Services Section, Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs, 6/7 Hanover St. East, Dublin 2.

Real possibilities in primary health care

KERRY Traveller Development Project has completed their Annual Report. It is a pleasure to read with all aspects of the work of the project laid out in a style that is easy to absorb. Proud mention is made of the pre-development Primary Health Care course with 12 Travellers participating - it commenced on November 18, 2002.

Suitable premises for running the course were found at Collis Sandes House, Tralee and office space was provided at the base in Pembroke St. The course was facilitated by Geraldine Dillon and Carmel Gornall from KTDP and Mary B. O'Sullivan, a public health nurse seconded by the Southern Health Board.

The course content included nutrition, exercise, assertion, parenting skills, information on women's health, environmental health, budgeting and money management, personal development, an introduction to community development, singing, drama and artwork.

- *The aim of the Primary Health Care Programme is to have a lasting impact on the health of all members of the Travelling Community who still have a shorter life expectancy than their fellow settled citizens. All the people involved in the project know that this may take time to achieve but through new initiatives in education like this, changes in legislation and access to housing it can be a real possibility.*

Housewarming at Mayfield CDP

ON April 17, the Minister for Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs, Eamonn Ó Cuiv opened the Community Resource Centre in Mayfield at 328 Old Youghal Road, Mayfield, Cork City. Sixty people attended the day and marked the many achievements of the project.

Mayfield CDP currently supports the Community Adult Learning Project, Lotamore Family Centre, Lotamore Residents Association, RAPID Liaison Group, the Drugs Task Force Youth Project,

Mayfield Matters Newsletter Group and the Mayfield East and St. Joseph's Community Associations. Incredible, but true!

Now, Mayfield Citizen's Information Service, Mayfield Write On Literacy Scheme and the Mayfield Employment Action Project have all achieved their independence.

The new building is wheelchair accessible and local people are cordially invited to make use of the resources on offer such as photocopying, typing, binding, lamination and assistance with CVs.



• Minister Éamon Ó Cuiv, Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs, with the Lord Mayor of Cork, Cllr. John Kelleher, and members of Mayfield CDP management committee, at the official opening of the new premises last April.

Micheal Martin in Ballyphehane/Togher CDP

OVER the last quarter, alongside their regular work, Ballyphehane/Togher CDP have hosted a Ministerial visit, presented 100 community and educational awards, and helped to raise thousands of euro for a local Special Olympics athlete. Busy or what!

Minister for Health, Micheal Martin, T.D., was present when the CDP launched its Annual Report. He commended the quality and range of work undertaken by the project.

A staggering 100 participants received community and FETAC awards from the CDP and the Read Write Now Adult Literacy Scheme.

Members of the local community raised €3298 for the Mary Palmer Special Olympics Tribute Fund. Members of the Palmer family presented the fund to a local athlete competing in the Special Olympics.



• Aine Hamill presenting an Irish jersey to Pedro Herrera, an athlete in the Special Olympics sponsored by Ballyphehane/Togher CDP.

Cromwell and equality

CORK Traveller Visibility Group (CTVG) remains on target for the opening of their new premises in John Street in April 2004. New posts will be opening up especially in the area of childcare. It is hoped that applications will come in from members of the Traveller Community who have appropriate childcare qualifications.

Sadly, CTVG has lost their equality worker Brian Kavanagh due to the lack of follow-on funding. Brian will be sorely missed as he was instrumental in the production of a submission on the Equal Status Act 2000. He and other members of the project met with groups in the other eight categories of people protected under the Act, people discriminated against on the grounds of gender, religion, age, family status, disability, sexual orientation and race.

These meetings were very fruitful for all the participants. Brian also wrote a highly informative article called Travelling Towards Equality. The equality work is temporarily suspended whilst CTVG looks for funding...if anyone has any ideas phone CTVG on 021-4503786.

CTVG has had a funding application in with the Department of Education and Science for three years concerning youth work and advocacy. This application has not succeeded. However negotiations are underway for youth workers in all projects in the Cork area to have special training in the recruitment and involvement of young people from the Traveller Community in existing youth projects under disadvantaged youth funding.

A survey conducted by the Traveller Community in Cork City recently found that only 27 young people out of an estimated young Traveller population of 1,500 are currently involved in youth projects. Shocking!

And, while Official Census figures recorded a mere 850 Travellers in the Cork City area and 1700 in the county, CTVG is aware of at least 200 families in Cork City alone.

The Group workers continue to witness and document housing/roadside problems for Traveller families. I am reminded of Cromwells 'To hell or to Connaught' order which caused my own family to be moved from good farmland to a rocky field by the Shannon. The only problem today is that there is no Connaught not to mind the promised halting sites to go to!

Bantry CDP in health drive

BANTRY CDP have received funding from the Southern Health Board for a part-time family support worker. CVs are in and interviews will be taking place shortly. The family support worker will be in post on September 1 and will be working from a perspective of supporting mental health as opposed to working with mental 'ill-health'. S/he will provide support for lone parents, look into child-care and be involved in devising workable parenting strategies. This new and innovative post is in direct response to the needs identified by the community that Bantry CDP works in.

Garden Party Invitation

TRALEE Women's Resource Centre along with many others in the community have received an invitation from Aras an Uachtaran to a garden party. This party is being held by President Mary McAleese to acknowledge the work of community groups. TWRC will be represented by their Board of Directors.

Mahon running courses

MAHON CDP, in Cork, have refurbished and properly equipped their computer room, thanks to a grant from the CAIT initiative. Now, eight computer terminals are operating and the CDP will shortly be running courses for target groups such as retired residents, youth groups.

Shadow and Light

THE Open Door Network, Kerry's response to violence against women and children, and the Southwest Kerry Women's Association have launched a competition to raise awareness about the impact of violence on women and children and the courage of all who survive.

Entries can be in the form of short stories, poems, portraits, paintings, sculpture, photographs and multi-media entries. Selected pieces will be displayed in Kerry during the '16 Days of Action Against Violence Against Women 2003' in Autumn. Other selected entries will be published in the form of calendars, postcards and greeting cards.

The closing date for entries is October 17. Entry forms and guidelines are available from the Co-ordinator, the Open Door Network, 2 Denny St., Tralee, Co. Kerry.

Limerick Travellers launch 'Healing Press'

CONGRATULATIONS to the women of Limerick Travellers Development Group who this summer launched a newsletter called 'The Healing Press'. The publication, a cleverly designed, 4-page production aims to wise up people in the Travelling Community to the reality and dangers of drugs. It is easy to read and designed to appeal even to people with low literacy skills.

The first issue explains why people take drugs - "to fit in, out of curiosity or to get rid of pain." It explains how different drugs, legal and illegal alike, work on the body.

For more information, contact the LTDG:

E-mail: thehealingpress@hotmail.com

Website: www.limericktravellers.com

Best of luck with issue 2!

350 attended training

THE Local Development Training Institute of Ireland (LDTI), based in Dun Laoghaire, held their 6th annual Summer School in UCD from June 16th-19th. Providing a wide range of workshops, the Summer School attracted over 350 people from all over Ireland - community groups and statutory agencies working in local development.

The ranges of topics included: Skills Development, Community Development Approaches, Organisation Development, Publicity, Equality, and Stress Management. A new development this year was the national training programme for people working in Social Economy Enterprises.

Contact LDTI: Jacinta Conroy, Manager LDTI, 81 Upper Georges Street, Dun Laoghaire. Tel: 01-2300640; Fax: 01-2304868; E-mail: info@ldti.ie

Campaigns in Cavan/Leitrim

By Martin Reading

COMMUNITY Connections, a rural Cavan/Leitrim-based CDP, will not have to lobby people to buy their newly published 36-page, colour booklet aimed at older people. In fact, the book is all about lobbying and fills a gap in the market - there was little on the bookshelves up to now to encourage older people particularly to push successfully for change. Now, people in the CDPs rural hinterland are armed with information that can help them campaign strongly on the many issues that make life difficult for rural communities.

'Making Changes' offers practical help to those seeking to improve our quality of life. It is aimed at older people and others who are concerned that the provision of facilities falls short of their expectations, but who may be unsure of the best course of action.

The booklet offers practical tips together with examples of successful lobbying. There are also up to date contact addresses for all the relevant elected representatives and government departments. Although these contacts are primarily for groups in County Leitrim it is hoped that the advice will have a wider relevance. The principal research and first draft was carried out by Marie McGloin, a Social Studies student from Sligo Institute of Technology, on a placement initiated and jointly managed by the County Leitrim Partnership.

Older people in particular often find it difficult to get support for a change in the laws which affect their lives. They are often intimidated by the political process and it is hoped that this booklet will help give them the confidence they need to bring about positive changes to policy.

The booklet was published on June 30th with an official launch at the Glens Centre, Manorhamilton, and is available from Community Connections, Blacklion, Co.Cavan

Making Changes

A practical guide to lobbying. For older people and other local groups in Co. Leitrim

With a Foreword by Sylvia Meehan, President of the Irish Senior Citizens Parliament

• 'Making Changes', a practical guide to lobbying for older people and other groups in Co. Leitrim. The booklet was launched in June by Community Connections.

(see below). A copy of Making Changes is available to voluntary groups free of charge; for additional copies, for agencies and other organisations there will be a charge of €3 to cover costs.

Community Connections is a cross-border community development project based in Blacklion and working with individuals and groups in North Leitrim, West Cavan and West Fermanagh. The project has an emphasis on social development and programmes have been developed for Carers, Women, Older People and Men. A rural transport project, Rural LIFT, was initiated and is now a social economy enterprise. Management and development is carried out with the participation and involvement of those benefiting from these activities.

• For more information please contact: Martin Reading, Information Worker, Community Connections, Killycarney, Blacklion, Co.Cavan. Tel: 072-53321. Fax: 072-53320. E-mail: info@communityconnections.ie



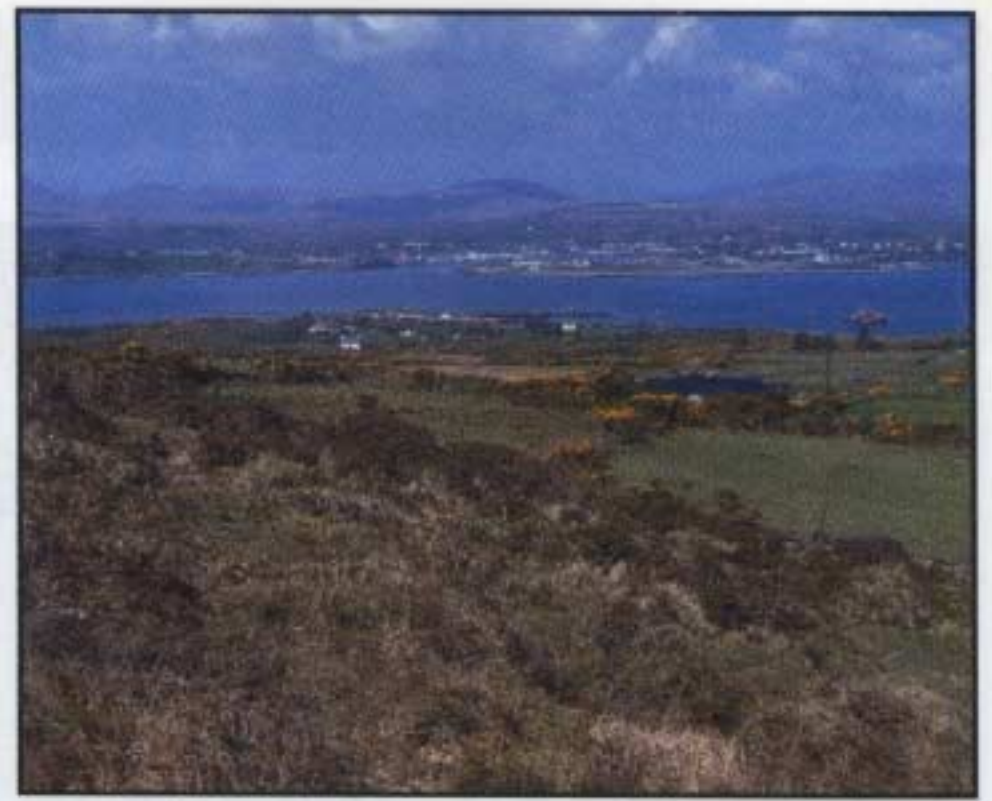
• Sandy Holland and Martin Reading, co-ordinator and information worker respectively with Community Connections. Both men are Regional Reporters for 'Changing Ireland'.

WORKING SINCE 1987

ON Bere Island, off the coast of West Cork, the Bere Island Projects Group (a CDSPs project) have been working since 1987 with the broad aim of improving life on Bere Island socially, culturally and economically. They were first awarded funding as a core funded group under the CDSPs in 1996 and have since then been going from strength to strength.

According to the project co-ordinator Ms. Pauline O'Flynn, "Irish-speaking islands had been supported long before this through Udaras na Gaeltachta, whose main emphasis was on developing employment opportunities, although not exclusively. When the English - speaking islands were awarded funding through the CDSPs, we needed to address almost identical issues to those on the Gaeltacht Islands, but the funding came through the CDSPs whose emphasis is on anti-poverty. This has meant that the supports available to Gaeltacht and non-Gaeltacht islands have differed, and Minister Ó Cuív is now looking at streamlining island structures as part of the overall review of structures under his remit."

In the accompanying article, Pauline explains how project life differs in some ways and is the exact same in other ways as mainland CDSPs projects. She says people are attracted to island-life because of the lack of 'development'. Imagine that being your aim if you're working in a city!



● The west end of Bere Island, Co. Cork, with Casteltownbere on the mainland in the distance across the water.

Island projects focus on upping the population

By Pauline O'Flynn
project coordinator

THE island of Ireland has living on its periphery 3,500 inhabitants. When we talk of rural isolation, then the off-shore islands of Ireland are among the remotest in Europe. People choose to live on these islands for many reasons – a strong sense of community, a sense of security, their natural beauty – the list is long.

They are special places, and as an island itself, Ireland seems to value its off-shore islands and most people would like to see viable populations maintained on them. The choice is between having island museums like the Great Blasket off the coast of Kerry and privately-owned islands like Charlie Haughey's Inis

Mhicilean - or islands with vibrant communities with their own culture and heritage very much alive and well.

On most of our islands there is a very delicate population balance and it is always a worry that the population will drop to the level where the primary school or another essential will be lost. For this reason, the main focus of the island CDSPs projects is to maintain and increase the existing population.

In areas of high population density, it is possible for CDSPs projects to target certain groups within a community but on an island the entire community is your target group. All aspects of life on the island have to be taken into consideration and the population is small enough that you can target people on a one to one. Given the broad scope of our work, it means that we are just as likely to be found helping somebody carry out a business plan as to be providing people with information on educational opportunities or helping in drawing up an island waste management strategy or a housing needs survey.

We also tend to be the main point of contact for the local authorities, the health board and other government agencies in their dealings with the islands, which gives us additional responsibilities in terms of feeding information out to the wider community and representing them accurately in our dealings with these statutory bodies. Being directly involved with statutory agencies and government bodies means that the island community can be kept well informed of what plans are afoot for the islands and they have some influence over what

developments take place.

Island communities are a microcosm of the bigger picture – generally, the same problems arise for an island CDSPs project as for any CDSPs project in a large mainland community. But our problems are on a smaller scale and therefore more manageable.

So what are we at on Bere Island? Our scope of work is broad, and includes addressing issues to do with education, services to the elderly and youth, environmental initiatives, cultural initiatives, infrastructural improvements, childcare, emergency services, employment initiatives, support for other community groups and more. At the moment, we are investing a lot of time and energy into setting up a wind energy project, and building a model for community involvement in wind energy. We're hoping to re-invest all of the profits from the project into a community dividend, which will be used to provide match-funding for future community initiatives on the island. All going well, the blades will be turning before the end of the year.

The island communities of Ireland have a long history of being on the margins so to speak, and a strong self-help and sense of community exists still. The CDSPs projects on the islands are there to support this and to help ensure that the islands of Ireland keep their people into the future.

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Island pilots conservation plan

BECAUSE of the small scale, you can see exactly just how actions in one area impact on another area, and for this reason islands are great places to pilot projects. Recently, the Heritage Council and Cork County Council supported the community of Bere Island off the coast of the Beara Peninsula in West Cork in drawing up a Conservation Plan, the first of its kind in Ireland, to plan for the potential conflicts of interest between protection of the natural and cultural heritage of the island and developments in educational, employment and social opportunities. The entire community were involved in drawing up this plan, and the vision coming from it was:

- People can live and work to their satisfaction, while being able to fulfil their social and recreational needs
- Traditional skills and ways of life are appreciated and built on
- Economic development should go hand in hand with care for the environment and heritage
- The community should have influence over what developments take place

The community are hoping to have their plan included in the Local Area Plan for the area, which will hopefully give it more clout.



● Children play in the crèche on Bere Island, Co. Cork. The crèche operates in the same premises as the island's CDP and they work closely with each other.