

WORK PROGRAMME, 2008

Introduction

In light of the forthcoming High-level Review of Combat Poverty, it is not possible to develop a three-year Strategic Plan for 2008-2011 in line with normal practice. Instead, we plan to develop an interim work programme for 2008. The intention is that this work programme would provide a link between the present Strategic Plan (2005-2007) and a new plan that will not be in place before 2009.

The Work Programme 2008 will build on the work of the current Strategic Plan, but will also explore some new areas which may then be incorporated into the next Strategic Plan. The Work Programme 2008 presents an opportunity to take a step further along the road towards more cross-sectional work, building on the experience gained during the present Strategic Plan period.

The Work Programme 2008 will continue to have the general objective of 'Working for a Poverty Free Ireland' as in the current Strategic Plan. However, there has been a major shift in the policy framework within which Combat Poverty has worked since the drafting of the current Strategic Plan in 2004/5, with the adoption of a range of national social, economic and infrastructural policies, outlined in:

- *Towards 2016 – Ten-year Framework Social Partnership Agreement, 2006-2015;*
- *National Action Plan for Social Inclusion 2007-2016;*
- *National Development Plan 2007-2013: Transforming Ireland;*
- *National Report for Ireland on Strategies for Social Protection and Social Inclusion, 2006-2008 (to the European Commission);*
- *The Programme for Government, 2007-2013.*

This new policy infrastructure has its basis in the NESC report *The Developmental Welfare State* and the three overlapping areas of *services, income supports* and *activist measures*. With this new policy framework, the commitments, programmes and actions necessary to eradicate poverty and social inclusion in Irish society are agreed. However, what is needed is to put in place the Public Services and structures to facilitate the successful implementation of these policies. The Work Programme 2008 is focused on

identifying where the problems are within the Public Services, the impact of these services on vulnerable individuals and groups and on disadvantaged communities, proposing solutions and working with the Public Sector to ensure there is a focus on poverty and social exclusion issues in the delivery of public services, nationally and locally.

While taking this new policy framework into consideration, the Work Programme 2008 is also framed within the statutory remit as set out in the Combat Poverty Agency Act, 1986, which must continue to guide the work of Combat Poverty. These are:

- Advising and making recommendations to the Minister on all aspects of economic and social planning in relation to poverty;
- The initiation of measures aimed at overcoming poverty in Ireland and the evaluation of such measures;
- The examination of the nature, causes and extent of poverty in Ireland and the promotion, commission and interpretation of research;
- The promotion of greater public understanding of the nature, causes and extent of poverty and measures necessary to overcome such poverty;
- Fostering and assisting projects of community development and activities to overcome poverty

Framework for Work Programme 2008

The activities in this work programme will build on the outcomes of the Strategic Plan, 2005-2007, namely;

- To promote a fairer distribution of income and employment by providing evidence-based advice on tax, welfare and employment policies
- To develop and promote policy proposals for people in poverty to have access to quality health and education services
- To support local and regional responses to poverty, including border areas affected by the Northern Ireland conflict

However, these activities will be linked to the Developmental Welfare State policy thrusts. For example:

- **Services**
 - Mainstreaming social inclusion at local level
 - Mainstreaming social inclusion in the NDP
 - Access to quality education at all levels
 - Access to good quality healthcare for all

- **Income supports**
 - Low income working families
 - Pension reform
 - Tackling financial exclusion
 - Tax and welfare policies

- **Activation measures**
 - Strengthening Community Development
 - Individual and community rights
 - Measurement of Poverty
 - Shared learning at national, all-island and international levels
 - Communications and public education

A number of supporting measures will also be undertaken to fulfil Combat Poverty's statutory remit, meet governance requirements and ensure the effective delivery of its work programme.

- **Enabling Measures**
 - Poverty Research Initiative
 - Compliance with best practice in corporate governance
 - Management and Organisational Development policies
 - Information technology policies

All activities in the Work Programme 2008 meet the following cross-cutting principles:

- **Thought Leadership** – The work of the Agency will add to the available knowledge base and contribute new thinking. Each project will have as its starting point the identification of new ideas to tackle poverty and social exclusion. They will strive to identify emerging forms of poverty and social exclusion and/or new developments in known and existing forms of poverty and social exclusion. They will test myths and ask hard questions.

- **Evidence based** – All projects will strengthen the existing evidence base. The starting point will be to identify relevant data and information gaps with a view to informing and providing solutions to priority policy areas at both national and local levels.

- **Policy Framework** – It will seek to support the effective delivery of national policies. In particular, it will support the implementation of policy thrusts in the *Developmental Welfare State*. Under recent national policies, many state bodies and agencies have been required to take on new poverty reduction and social exclusion objectives. Combat Poverty is well positioned to support these organisations to meet their objectives through its research programme and technical expertise.

Activities in the Work Programme 2008 will also support the life-cycle framework agreed in the National Partnership Agreement Towards 2016, and reiterated in the NAP/inclusion 2007–2016, the National Development Plan 2007–2013 and in the Programme for Government 2007–2013, to ensure that all activities are relevant to this aspect of the new policy framework.

Cross-functional Project Teams will be established within Combat Poverty to deliver the tasks or programmes of work associated with the activities in the Work Programme 2008 (replacing Goal Teams). Some of these will be standing teams that will be responsible for a particular programme area over the full year. Others will convene and disperse to fulfil particular tasks. These Project Teams will, where appropriate, include external experts. ¹

Policy Advice Remit

The activities in the Work Programme 2008 will focus on drawing lessons and identifying solutions to challenging policy questions relating to poverty and social exclusion (and associated issues). Combat Poverty's policy advisory role will be strengthened within the present structures, with the appointment in Projects Section of someone with a designated role in drawing out policy learning from the local government, community and health work programmes. This person, together with the Policy and Research Analyst and the Policy Liaison Officer, will take responsibility for co-ordinating policy messages, through the Policy Forum ², and in advancing policy briefs, policy statements and submissions.

Collaborative Work

Collaboration provides an effective way for Combat Poverty to acquire and share expertise and support policy and operational changes in a constructive way. It also supports joined-up thinking and ensures that inter-organisational synergies are maximised. As the landscape within which Combat Poverty works continues to change, it is important that the complementary strengths of different actors and organisations within the social inclusion arena are recognised in the Work Programme 2008. A key aspect of the work programme, therefore, is to seek out opportunities to work with other organisations, both in identifying issues, commissioning research studies and initiating programmes of work. This builds on the positive experiences of working with other bodies during the current Strategic Plan to jointly identify issues of concern to people experiencing and at risk of poverty, to study these issues and to jointly identify policy solutions.

¹ Figure 1 provides a schematic of the relationship between the different structures for the implementation of the Work Programme 2008.

² The Policy Forum is a Combat Poverty structure which brings together all programme staff within the Agency four times a year to discuss key issues and identify appropriate policy solutions.

Continuity and Innovation

While incorporating some new elements, Combat Poverty's Work Programme 2008 will largely build on existing areas of work, such as local government, health, community development and financial exclusion. It will, however, attempt to consider these issues in a fresh way and in the context of the new policy environment. New issues proposed for the Work Programme 2008 include a study of the addiction services available for low income groups, policy proposals on pension reform, a study on barriers to better education and a pilot study of community workers in Ireland.

Shared Learning / Communications

There will be a strong focus on shared learning and effective communications in Work Programme 2008. This will include building in scope within the work programme to ensure that there is sufficient time available to promote findings, develop accessible communications products and channels, host promotional events, such as seminars, conferences and focused round tables and undertake one-to-one meetings with relevant stakeholders and audiences. The Communications and Public Affairs strategies will seek to maximise the accessibility and impact of research, project learning and policy advice and efforts will also be made to demonstrate the lived experience of poverty through case studies and imagery.

Organisational Capacity and Effectiveness

Combat Poverty will comply fully with governance requirements and will ensure the effective and efficient use of financial resources. In addition, it will provide a high standard of people management and development to ensure that issues are resolved constructively and that all staff have the capacity and skills to deliver Work Programme 2008.

Combat Poverty will continue to provide a quality working environment, supported by an up to date information technology system and software packages necessary to undertake the activities set out in the work programme. It will continue to assess and revise its Risk Management strategy in line with good management practices.

High-level Review of Combat Poverty

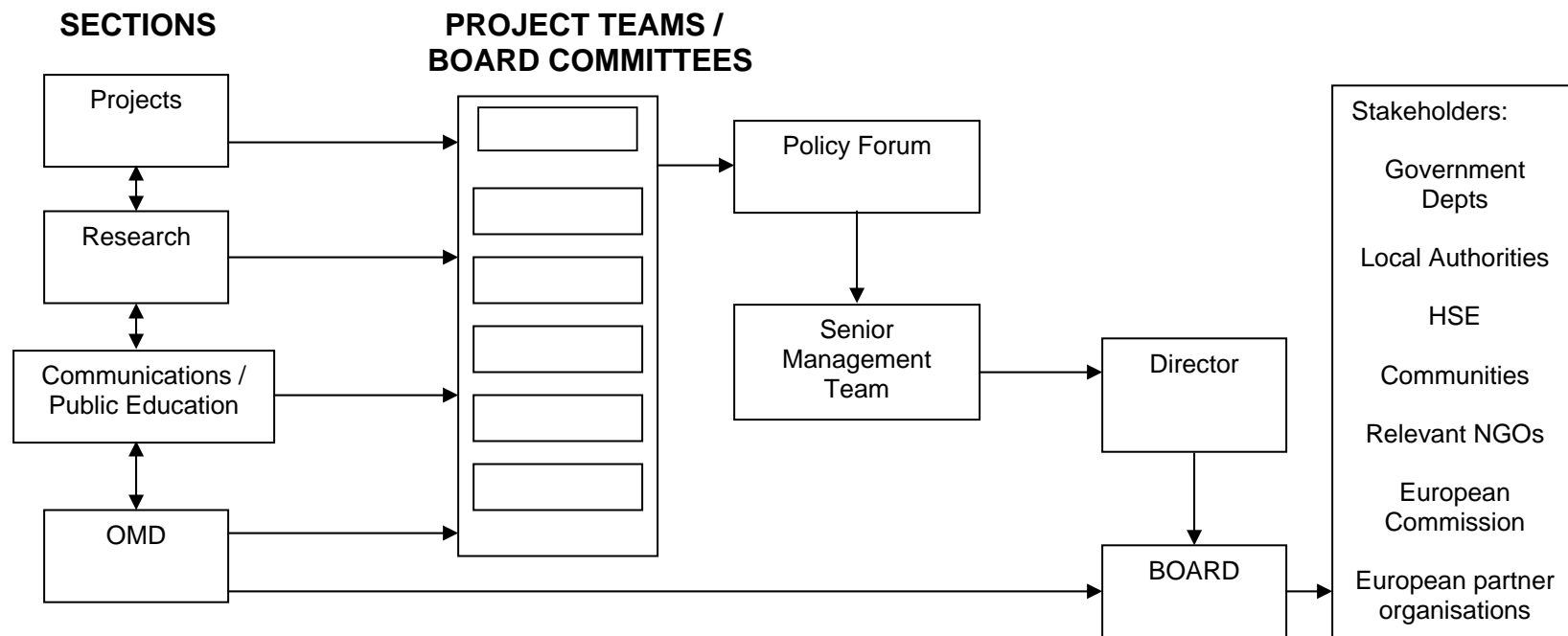
Under Government Decision S132/60/0002B of 6 June, 2007, it was decided to undertake a High-level Review of the work of Combat Poverty as part of the Value for Money and Policy Review Initiative, 2006-2008 of the Dept of Social and Family Affairs. This Review will examine the role of Combat Poverty, as set out in the Combat Poverty Agency Act, 1986, and its work programme and

operations in the context of recent developments in institutional structures and policies.

It is envisaged that this Review will have a significant impact on the day-to-day operations of the Agency during 2008 and, in the context of the Work Programme 2008 it will place a heavy burden on staff in terms of time and resources. It will be necessary to facilitate those carrying out the Review through the provision of all relevant documentation, across a range of projects and services, so that there is a satisfactory completion to the Review.

The Work Programme 2008 is drafted in the knowledge of this additional workload while, at the same time, the challenge of undertaking a full range of research and other projects in keeping with the Agency's remit.

Figure 1 The relationship between the different structures for the implementation of Work Programme 2008.



WORK PROGRAMME BY CROSS-CUTTING PRINCIPLES

Services	Thought Leadership	Evidence Base	Policy Framework	Life-cycle Stage *
<u>Access to Quality Health Services</u>				
➤ Research access to addiction services for low income groups to identify gaps, document best practice and determine priority areas for future investment.	X	X	T16; NAP inclusion	All
➤ Undertake research into Medical Cards for Low Income Families: Profile (EU SILC) and Barriers to Take-up (Qualitative) to determine the profile of people living in poverty without a medical card, and reasons for this.		X	T16; NAP inclusion	All
➤ Support HSE to improve delivery of services for low income groups <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Collaborate with HSE to establish HSE anti-poverty Network ○ Provide support to the DOHC and Transformation Development Officers to enhance community participation in Primary Care services 	X	X	T16; NAP inclusion	All Communities
➤ Arising out of the evaluation of the Building Healthy Communities Programme identify possible areas of improvement in health service delivery.	X	X	T16; NDP; NAP inclusion	All Communities
<u>Social Determinants of Health</u>				
➤ Convene round table to identify policy areas where poverty and health interlink to inform the agenda of the interdepartmental group.		X	T16; NAP inclusion	Communities
➤ Round table on Social Determinants of Health publications (with CAN & IPH)			T16; NAP inclusion	Communities
➤ Publish audio format “Voices of Poverty” on social determinants of health to provide human insight into the lived experience of social determinants.		X	T16; NAP inclusion	Communities
➤ Participate in the all-island <i>Healthy Food for All</i> initiative to identify policy solutions to food poverty.	X	X	NAPinclusion	All
	X	X		

<u>Barriers to Education</u>				
➤ Undertake round table to consider ways to operationalise proposals in background paper on Early Childhood Care & Education, to inform development of policy statement	X		T16; NDP ; NAP inclusion	Children
➤ Undertake research on the Cost of School Books to inform policies to tackle educational disadvantage.	X		NAPinclusion	Children
➤ Hold national conference on Educational Disadvantage	X		NAPinclusion	Children
<u>Supporting delivery of NAP/inclusion at local level</u>				
➤ Support the development of Local Anti-Poverty Policies across all local authorities by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Training and support for new Local Authority Social Inclusion Units ○ Updating & Disseminating Local anti-Poverty Strategy 	X		NDP; T16; NAPinclusion	Communities
➤ Develop and promote guidelines for undertaking Local Poverty Impact Assessments		X	NAPinclusion	Communities
➤ Work with Local Government Social Inclusion Steering Group to develop a strategic work plan for 2008, setting out objectives and opportunities to strengthen strategic role.	X		NAPinclusion	Communities
➤ Support social inclusion measures in the NDP <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Identify role in supporting OSI on monitoring Social Inclusion aspects of NDP ○ Participate in NDP regional monitoring committee 	X		NDP: NAP inclusion	Communities
➤ Explore with OSI and NESF the development of two regional Social Inclusion Fora which would feed into the national Social Inclusion Forum	X		NDP; T16; NAPinclusion	All
➤ Policy paper on local government <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Summary paper on Mapping Study 	X	X	NDP; T16	Communities

Income Support				
<u>Low Income Workers/Families</u>				
➤ Analyse profile of low income working families using EU SILC data to identify causes of poverty and supports required (e.g. qualifications, update of FIS)		X	NAP inclusion	All
➤ Undertake research on access to financial services for low income households (e.g. Basic Banking, Credit, Insurance etc)		X	T16 ; NAP inclusion	People of working age; All
➤ Pilot Financial Inclusion Network to assess impact of proposed policies on low income groups at local level.	X			
➤ Round table/expert group: Best practice in financial inclusion	X			
<u>Pensions</u>				
➤ Convene roundtable / expert group on Pensions to inform response to green paper.	X	X	T16 ; NDP ; NAP inclusion	Older people
➤ Respond to Green Paper on Pensions from an anti-poverty perspective.	X			
<u>General Tax / Welfare Policy</u>				
➤ Investigate new process for advising the government on tax / welfare policies, including the annual Budget.	X		NAPinclusion	All
➤ Undertake quantitative (EU-SILC) and qualitative longitudinal study on the impact of budget and other tax/welfare policy changes on typical families (Pilot Study)	X		NAPinclusion	All
➤ Organise research seminar for C&V organisations on how to analyse the budget using the SWITCH model.	X		NAPinclusion	Communities
➤ Development course on understanding Economic and Poverty and seek FETAC accreditation	X		NAPinclusion	Communities
➤ Hold two Regional Workshops on developing Pre-Budget Submissions for community groups	X		NAPinclusion	Communities
<u>Activation Measures</u>				
<u>Strengthen Community Development as an anti-poverty tool</u>				
➤ Assess effectiveness, consistency and overall impact of community development initiatives / programmes to identify areas for more effective delivery, strengthen infrastructure and optimise value:	X	X	NAP/ inclusion CPA Act, 1986	Communities
○ Pilot study of Community Development workers	X	X		
○ Follow up SPEAK analysis – Action research on what works in community development	X			

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Policy discussion document on community development education ○ Collaborate with all-island group to establish national standards for community engagement in local government and other structures ○ Collaborate on international Community Development Conference ○ Pilot and develop poverty/comm. development training with DCRAGA 	X		NAP inclusion CPA Act, 1986	Communities
	X	X		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Finalise evaluation of <i>Having Your Say</i> 	X		NDP: NAP inclusion; T16	Communities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Policy paper on Participation of People in Poverty in Policy Making, including a study (with ATD 4th world) on reaching hard to reach groups. 	X			
<u>Rights</u>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Participate in Participation and Practice of Rights (PPR) Project 	X			All
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Investigate opportunities to collaborate with IHRC for the UN Year to mark the 60th anniversary of the Declaration on Human Rights 	X			All
<u>Poverty Indicators / Measurement & Monitoring</u>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Finalise, publish and promote Local Poverty Index 	X	X	NAP inclusion CPA Act, 1986	All
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Publish annual poverty indicators report to track poverty trends over time. 	X	X		All
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Undertake analysis to show spatial distribution of poverty on an all-island basis (using EU SILC/Family Resources Survey) 	X	X		All
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Participate on Technical Advisory Committee (OSI) 	X			All
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Collaborate with Sustainable Energy Ireland on Fuel Poverty study 		X		All
<u>Emerging Issues</u>				
<p>Foresight Papers on New and Emerging Poverty Issues (short papers to be commissioned)</p> <p><i>Potential Topics:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Linking policies to EU developments on Sustainable Communities ▪ Poverty and transport services ▪ Poverty and climate change (unequal costs e.g. food, fuel, waste for low income families) ▪ Consumption poverty ▪ Rights-based activation approaches for tackling poverty ▪ E-exclusion 	X	X	NDP; T16; NAP inclusion; CPA Act	All

➤ EU SILC Analysis on New Communities	X	X	NDP; NAPinclusion	Communities
<u>Shared Learning</u>				
➤ Liaison with Border Action on Peace III funding	X	X		All
➤ Participate as partner on EU Financial Exclusion project	X	X		
➤ Develop framework for a database of national anti-poverty projects (for use by policy makers, local authorities etc) and Irish poverty research/studies	X	X		
	X	X		
<u>Education Programme (second level schools)</u>				
➤ Promote Combat Poverty Transition Unit (validated by the NCCA in 2007)	X	X	CPA Act, 1986	Children
➤ Submission on new Social Political Education Senior Cycle draft curriculum	X			
➤ Gold Sponsorship – Young Social Innovators	X			
➤ Develop new resources on poverty for second level students	X			
	X			
<u>Communications / Public Education</u>				
➤ Ongoing programme to enhance accessibility of information, <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Mainstream plain English across all printed material ○ Develop guidelines on style / accessibility for external consultants ○ Publish Action on Poverty Today x 4 ○ Redevelop website in response to evaluation recommendations ○ Update fact sheets and enhance accessibility ○ Posters / promotional products to raise awareness about poverty ○ Tender for new media contract ○ Tender for new design/print contract ○ Tender for panel of editors 	X	CPA Act, 1986		All
➤ Media relations programme to support work programme				
➤ Policy Liaison Programme to support work programme	X	CPA Act, 1986		All
➤ Research Seminars x 10				
➤ Provide funding to groups to promote UN Day for Eradication of Poverty				
➤ Engage with partners to develop a Poverty / Social Inclusion awareness week in 2009 to coincide with the UN Day for the Eradication of Poverty.				
➤ Identify and commission three new 'how to' titles for influencing policy online				
➤ Provide bursary or similar to young journalist to research and write an article on 'poverty in Modern Ireland' for publication in Action on Poverty Today.				
➤ Develop guidelines for PRI recipients on promoting research.				

Enabling Measures / Organisational Effectiveness				
<p><u>Poverty research initiative</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Administration of existing PRI awards ➤ Research awards 2008 ➤ Research events 2008 ➤ Post Graduate Internships ➤ Research Fellowship (6 months) ➤ Civil Society Research Scholarship with UCD ➤ Visiting Research Fellowship with Policy Institute and TCD ➤ PhD Fellowship <p><u>Reviews</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Participating in/managing work around High Level Review ➤ Completion of Research Programme Review and implementing agreed changes <p><u>Engaging with Excluded Groups</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Finalise and develop action plan to implement Combat Poverty Code of Practice on dialogue with excluded groups <p><u>Information Technology / Knowledge Management</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Continue strategic development of quality IT systems and services in line with agreed commitments and plans ➤ Develop and improve records management service with new RM consultants ➤ Ensure effective provision of support services, including records management, software and other services as required ➤ Replace the SBS server <p><u>Compliance with governance</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Prepare and publish Annual Report and Financial Statements (English and Irish). ➤ Maintain high standards of financial management, planning and control and fulfil of statutory and regulatory reports and returns ➤ Ensure issue of payroll and of all appropriate deductions and returns ➤ Ensure efficient and effective use of financial resources and reporting to Management and Board and engaging with the Comptroller and Auditor 	X	X	CPA Act, 1986; NAPinclusion	All
		X	NDP; T16; NAP inclusion	All

<p>General's office on that work</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Support the full introduction and further development of the new Management Information System (MIS) on financial information and reporting ➤ Review current Procurement Policy and Procedures in the light of the new MIS ➤ Maintain and develop Risk Management strategies and procedures ➤ Ensure effective support is provided to the Board and its Sub-Committees in fulfilment of its statutory and leadership roles <p><u>People Management</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Positively and continuously engaging with staff and staff unions and maintaining consistent communication on all matters of common interest and concern, focusing on constructive resolution of all potential and real issues ➤ Resource and maintain partnership working and implement the organisational commitments contained in the Modernisation Action Plan agreed under the Towards 2016 National Partnership Agreement ➤ Effectively lead and support initiatives and plans for staff recruitment, retention and development, including implementing Combat Poverty's Development & Training Plan and Priority Actions as agreed by the Management Team ➤ Effectively manage and maintain employment terms and conditions (including superannuation, Leave schemes) ➤ Take appropriate initiatives to ensure that the agreed Performance Management and Development Process is actively resourced at management and supervisory levels ➤ Ensure all HR policies and procedures are updated in line with changes in employment law and other directives and readily accessed by all staff <p><u>Customer Service and Premises Management</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Continue to maintain high quality services and a good quality working environment for both internal and external customers in line with the agreed and updated Customer Service Action Plan and other commitments and plans, including the NDA's Excellence through Accessibility Scheme 				
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* As defined in the *National Action Plan for Social Inclusion, 2007-2016* - Children; People of Working Age; Older People; People with Disabilities; and Communities