

**A Framework
for
Community Participation
in
Integrated Development**

Combat Poverty Agency

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This document was prepared as a follow-up to the Agency's submission on the National Programme of Community Interest for the Greater Dublin Area (December 1988). The Agency would like to acknowledge the assistance of SUS Research in the writing of this document.

Introduction

The main submission made by the Combat Poverty Agency to the Working Group of the Dublin NPCI has highlighted the special development needs of those areas in Dublin suffering from multiple social and economic deprivation. The submission stresses the need to tackle very important development issues in these areas as a matter of urgency under the Dublin NPCI. It also refers to the very pressing needs of particular marginalised groups in Dublin not necessarily confined to particular geographical areas of the city.

Many of the recommendations in the submission are dependant on the implementation of the first proposal - i.e. that community groups already involved in these areas become meaningfully involved in identifying needs, drawing up plans and implementing development proposals in their own areas. This appendix to our submission elaborates on this idea and shows how it can be implemented in practical terms as a project to take place in Year One of the NPCI.

As such it is one possible model for community participation which should not be seen as definitive. Details should be the subject of consultation with relevant marginalised and community groups; it should be open to change as a result of this. It is also stressed that what is being proposed is very much an innovative approach to development in areas of need and should be assessed in the context of pilot work for Ireland.

1. The Need for Community Participation

Public participation, citizen rights, community action and access to local decision making structures have been central themes in urban community development over the last two decades.

The Council of Europe, for example, has a long-standing concern with involvement of individuals and particular communities in the development process. Much of the Council's Urban Work Programme - as expressed for example in the European Campaign for Urban Renaissance or in Architectural Heritage Year - is concerned with encouraging and developing a capacity for community involvement and participation.

Many urban development projects have already been drawn up and implemented with widespread participation in mind - in the realisation that a truly integrated approach can be achieved only in a situation where all interested parties are involved and where all needs can be considered. Although such approaches are numerous and reflect a wide spread of European

urban centres, the following are cited only as examples where participation by local community groups has led to successful urban development programmes in disadvantaged areas:

In West Berlin a strategy was drawn up for the revitalisation of a large part of the city which had been suffering from long-term decay; central to the implementation of the proposals was a community council of up to sixty residents and other land users established at the neighbourhood level, and local community involvement in the renewal process through the preparation of local plans and their implementation¹

The involvement of residents in the housing programme and in the planning of the future of their area was also a central objective in the Glasgow Eastern Area Region Project (GEAR). The programme aimed at improving the social, economic and environmental fabric of Glasgow's east end - an area suffering multiple forms of deprivation. There is general agreement amongst those who have assessed the work of GEAR that the project has been successful and that this success is due, in no small measure, to the consistent efforts to involve local communities²

Urban renewal in Rotterdam has largely been the responsibility of eleven project groups which contain local residents and officials from the relevant departments of the local authority; residents in all cases form the majority. The city provides resources so that residents can hire professionals to give them technical advice and assistance. A local planning centre is located in each renewal area³

Each of these development strategies are responses to deprivation and decay experienced in urban centres on a European-wide scale. Each has recognised the importance of the local community in the planning and development process. Participation in each case has meant more than a communication process involving local residents. The Dutch example in particular demonstrates the benefit, in terms of balanced development, which can accrue from giving actual planning power over to people at a local level.

2. Community Participation in the Development of Dublin

The NPCI for Dublin offers a unique opportunity for the involvement of community groups in developing their own areas in a way which would allow for the integration of physical, social and economic planning and lead to balanced development.

The 1987 Dublin City Development Plan recognises the need for consultation with community interests in this regard:

"There has been a growing number of community based groups and organisations seeking to influence the planning and development of their areas. It is necessary to develop a

framework to ensure that the valid needs and aspirations of the community can be taken into account".
(Dublin City Development Plan, 1987)

In line with this and with the submission we have already made, it is therefore proposed that:

The first year of the Dublin NPCI should allow for the formation of representative groupings or "Project Teams" for areas of special need in Dublin based both on identified geographical areas and identified deprived sections of the population. (The composition of these teams is detailed in section 2.4).

Those areas suffering from the most serious deprivation through unemployment, lack of services, physical decay etc. should be designated and made up in the main of the inner city and the peripheral local authority estates.

Those sections of the population suffering from the most serious forms of deprivation throughout the city should be subject of more specific development procedures. While the programme should be open to all disadvantaged groups in this context, it is proposed that Travelling, Homeless and Disabled people have immediate needs which should be addressed through the NPCI.

The principle task of Project Teams will be to draw up a development plan, based on researched needs, to be completed within twelve months and implemented over the subsequent three years.

2.1 Defining Areas of Need

Our original submission presents a summary of relevant studies which have addressed the problem of defining areas of social need in Dublin.

In selecting areas of special need, four basic indicators of deprivation are relevant:

- Levels of unemployment (particularly the extent of youth, long-term and female unemployment).
- Proportion of residents in the local authority rented sector.
- Level of provision of basic services and amenities (judged in relation to total population figures).
- Total population of defined area: whereas deprivation can be experienced by many households located in small clusters throughout the Dublin urban area, the most pressing needs

have been identified where multiple deprivation exists within large concentrations of population.

Ample evidence exists to confirm that these indicators are very much interdependent in the Dublin situation (this is particularly clear from the County Dublin Areas of Need Study) and that they in turn are linked to other indicators of deprivation such as educational opportunity, health and low-paid employment.

Communities should qualify as special areas of need under the Dublin NPCI where unemployment levels and local authority tenancies are significantly higher than the corresponding averages for the city and county as a whole; where the provision of services and amenities per head of population is significantly inferior to general provision for the programme area; and where the population of that section of the community identified as having special needs exceeds 10,000 people. Minimum population size here should be open to discussion but priority should be accorded to areas with the highest concentrations of deprivation in the pilot planning phase. (Less populated areas of need should be targeted in a subsequent development programme based on achievements in the pilot scheme).

An initial application of these criteria to the project area, informed by recent research⁴ would specify the following as areas of special social need in the Greater Dublin Area:

- (A) The peripheral estates of Blanchardstown, Clondalkin, Tallaght, Ballymun and Darndale.
- (B) The Post-war developments in Finglas, Ballyfermott, Inchicore, Cabra, Coolock, Rialto and Crumlin.
- (C) The North and South Inner City areas.

Further definition of these areas needs to take place in terms of the boundaries of each and the possibility of amalgamation of some of the areas with others where populations are relatively small and communities adjacent to each other.

2.2 Brief and Constitution of Community Project Teams

The serious underdevelopment of the selected areas is the result of a number of economic, social and political processes over a period of years. While these are all interrelated, a central concern for development purposes is with building a local economic base. Widespread impoverishment is related most directly to the failure to create sustainable local employment.

Economic development is therefore accepted as a priority, and undoubtedly central to the NPCI. However, the areas in question have urgent social needs which cannot be met by

The First Phase will involve definition work on identifying groups at risk and the boundaries of special areas of need. In this, help should be available, if required, from professional Community Workers and Researchers. The Committee will also be responsible for overseeing the setting up of project teams.

Throughout The Second Phase, the plan-development stage, the Co-Ordinating Committee will be responsible for monitoring progress of project teams and administering finance necessary for plan formulation.

Before final ratification, plans should be exhibited both to inform and to maximise participation at the level of planning and local implementation.

All plans should be submitted to the Dublin NPCI Working Group not later than 12 months after the commencement of the NPCI itself. It should be the responsibility of this Group to co-ordinate local area plans and special issue plans into a comprehensive social development plan for all areas of special need. The level of Departmental involvement on the Working Group should ensure an integrated approach to development at government as well as local level.

The final and Third Phase will involve the Co-Ordination Committee in monitoring the implementation of the development plan for Dublin in accordance with the objectives and strategy laid down by project teams. The committee would be uniquely capable of doing this given representation of all project teams and Government Department representatives through the Working Group.

2.5 Assistance in Formulation of Plans

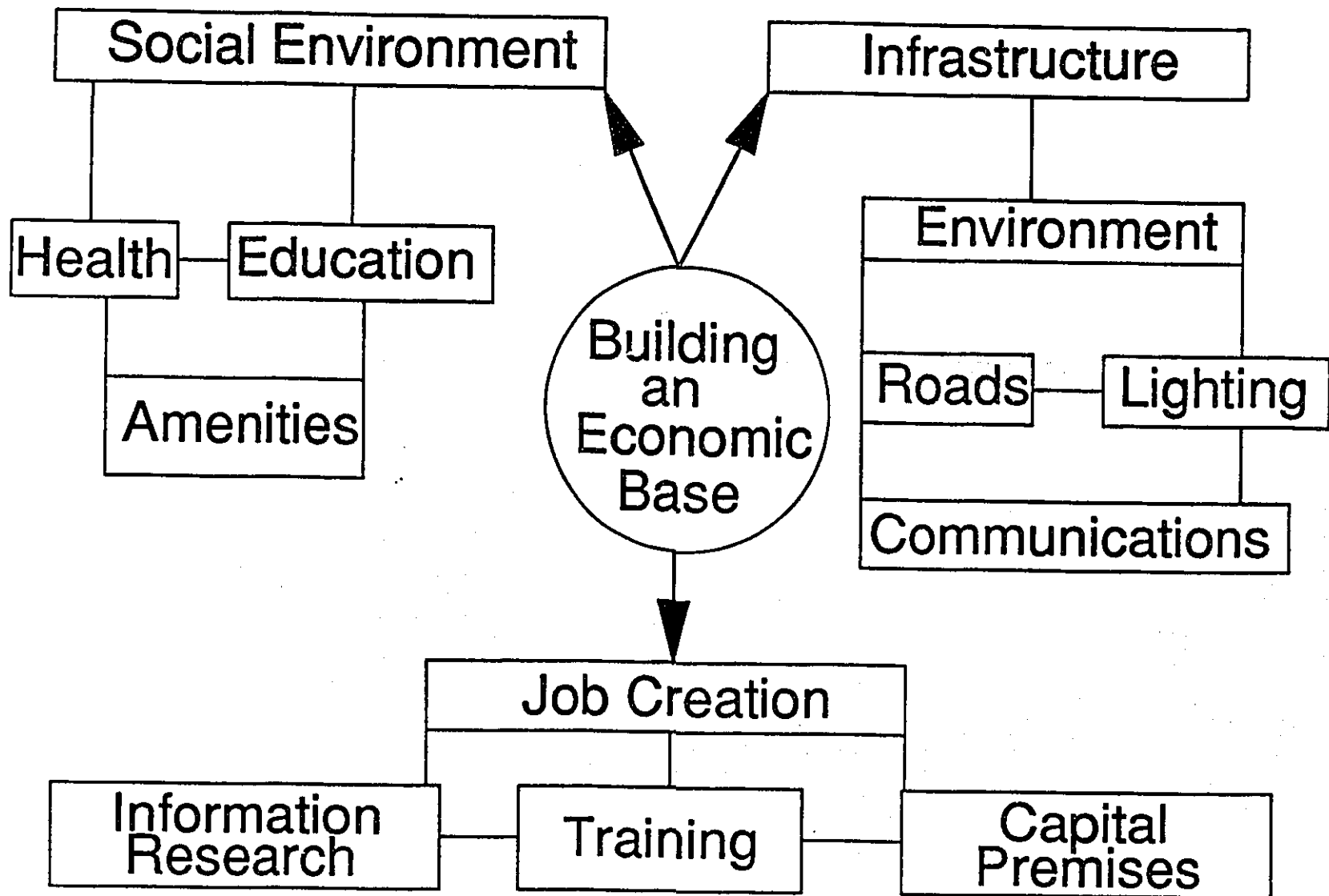
Degrees of community organisation can vary between these areas as can the amount of relevant local research already undertaken. The needs of local groups in drawing up their own development plans will not, therefore, be the same for each area.

For example, some areas may require technical aid throughout the entire twelve-month period in drawing up development plans. This will be the case where little or no research has been undertaken into community needs, and where no significant level of co-ordination between local development groups has been attained.

More selective aid over a shorter period may be requested where initial research into needs has been undertaken (but results may need to be analysed or integrated) and where some levels of co-ordination between local development groups is in operation.

Professional assistance required by Homeless, Disabled and Travellers Project Teams will also be determined by the extent

FIGURE 1: LOCAL PLAN CONTENT



- Representative of Local Authority(1) (either Dublin Corporation or County Council) with a working knowledge of local development issues*.
- Area-based representative of FAS(1)*.
- Representative of Industrial Development Authority (1)*.
- Area-based professionals working in Education(1), and Health(1)*.
- A full-time Community Worker, employed specifically to work with Project Teams, who would act as secretary as well as liaison between the Project Team and other interested parties, including those employed for professional and technical assistance.
- The remaining members of the Project Team should form the majority (at least 10), and should be individuals active in community development issues within the area. They should be elected to the Project Teams by community and voluntary groups active in the area.
- A Chairperson who is independent of all other interest groups on the Team and has experience in community development issues. The chairperson should be nominated by the 10 team members active in the particular area.

Representatives of groups indicated with an asterisk should be involved in the planning process primarily on the basis of their development experience in local terms and as a link with the particular Agencies/Departments.

It is recognised that individuals in each case will have particular sectorial interests and could not hope to represent all the aspects of their agency's involvement. It is therefore proposed that Project Teams are open to submissions/representations from other interest groups not directly participating in plan formulation.

Success of development initiatives will depend to a large extent upon the influence accorded to representatives of government and semi-state agencies on the Project Teams. It is vital that participants from these agencies are able to use their own judgement at local level and that their respective agencies have an obligation to implement their recommendations. The problem of real local participation in the context of centralised decision-making has been identified in the Pilot COMTEC Programme by the fact that "... the amount of local discretion permitted within all the provider agencies was extremely limited"⁵ An effective programme for Dublin areas of need will result only if this discretion is formally agreed. Plans can then be drawn up in the context of real participation and not just consultation.

2.3 Special Interest Groups

For identified forms of deprivation in Dublin which are related to particular groups of people rather than to areas Project Teams should be set up, along lines similar to those detailed above. They should be charged with drawing up development strategies aimed at meeting the needs of these particular groups over a three-year period.

Project Teams involved in drawing up development plans for Homeless, Travelling and Disabled people would not reflect the same level of participation by local representatives and the need for involvement of statutory agencies will obviously differ for each target population.

Further consideration must be given to the fact that full participation of the target population may be more difficult for some of the special issue teams than for the local area teams. (For example, in the case of homelessness, the nature of the problem itself makes it difficult for those suffering the consequences to plan for a solution). However, the majority of members of Project Teams for special issues should be either members of the target population or those working directly with them.

The final composition of each team should be decided by the Development Co-Ordination Committee (see below) in consultation with all those groups working with or representing the target population. As with the local development teams, each special issue team should employ a full-time worker and be chaired by an independent person elected by team members active in the social issue concerned.

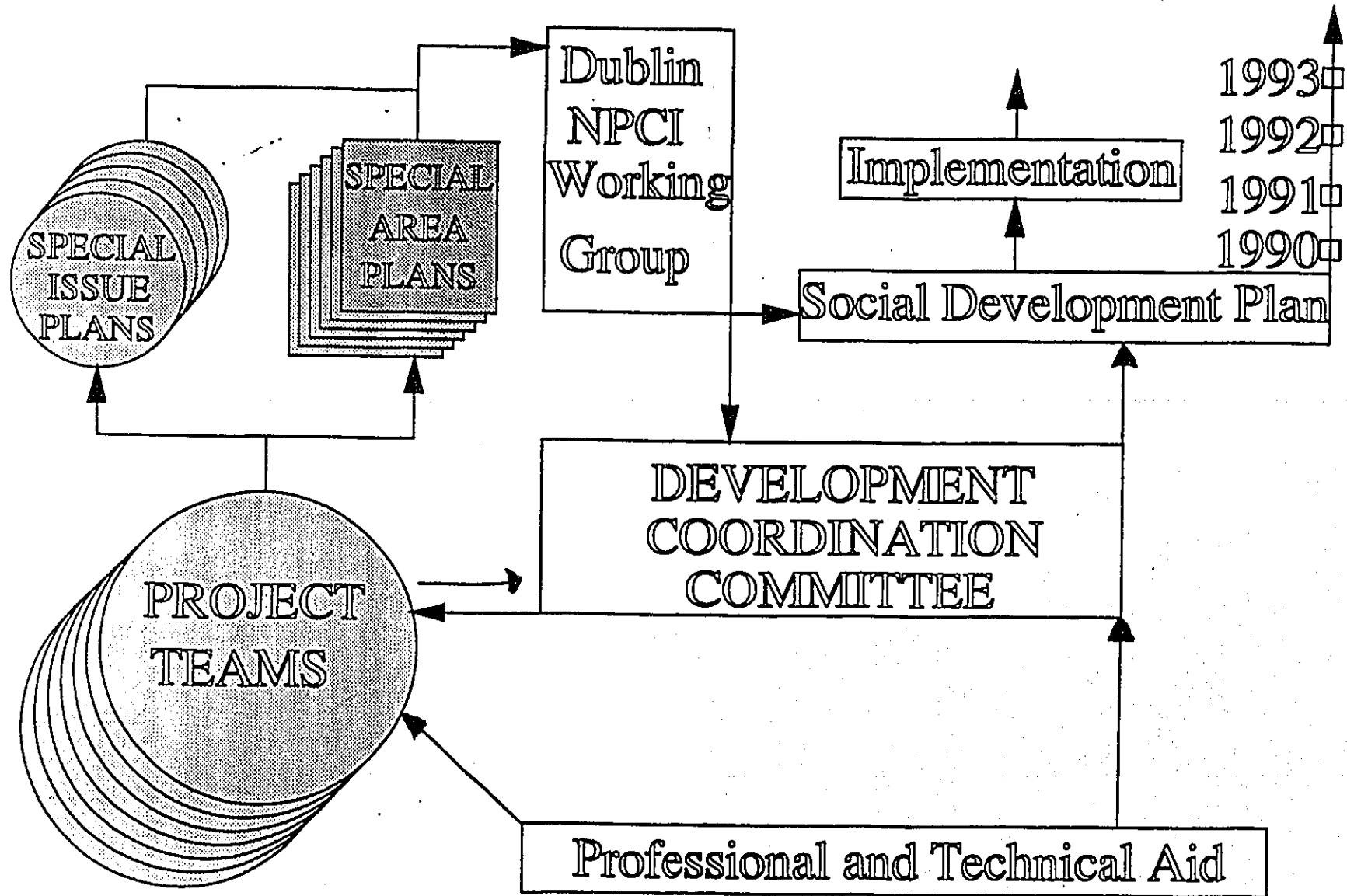
2.4 Co-Ordination of Project

To ensure responsiveness and accountability to local needs, professionals should be employed directly by each Project Team, whether geographical or issue-based, according to specific local or city-wide needs identified. Financial assistance enabling Project Teams to do this should be made available through a Development Co-Ordination Committee.

The Co-Ordination Committee should be made up, in the first instance, of nominees from the Dublin NPCI Working Group together with nominees from Agencies already dealing with community development or relevant social issues on a Dublin-wide basis (these should include the Combat Poverty Agency and the Community Workers Co-Operative). Representatives from all Project Teams should be nominated to the co-ordination committee after teams are set up.

As shown in Figure 2, the Co-Ordination Committee will have a brief relating to three phases of the project:

FIGURE 2: COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION FRAMEWORK



The First Phase will involve definition work on identifying groups at risk and the boundaries of special areas of need. In this, help should be available, if required, from professional Community Workers and Researchers. The Committee will also be responsible for overseeing the setting up of project teams.

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More selective aid over a shorter period may be requested where initial research into needs has been undertaken (but results may need to be analysed or integrated) and where some levels of co-ordination between local development groups is in operation.

Professional assistance required by Homeless, Disabled and Travellers Project Teams will also be determined by the extent

of available research in each case and by the degree of co-ordination already existing between various groups working on each issue.

The nature of existing development structures and relevant information available will, therefore, determine the nature and extent of professional assistance needed in completing development plans.

In all cases, decisions as to the nature and extent of professional help required should be made by the Project Teams themselves.

All Teams, however, will require access to relevant expertise at some level and this should be made available in a way which will act as a resource to groups rather than as a controller over the content of development plans. Only in this way will the needs addressed in the plans accord with those identified by people active in development issues on a day-to-day basis.

We, therefore, propose that professional and technical resources should be made available in the fields of Urban Planning, Social Research and Community Development. This help will be needed, during the first year's operation of the NPCI, to set up Project Teams and to subsequently support them in researching needs and drawing up Action Plans. It may also be needed in defining boundaries of geographical areas of need in the initial stages.

2.6 Implementation and Costing

It is important that an integrated approach is maintained throughout the implementation period. All plans should incorporate a strategy for evaluating and monitoring the execution of development proposals and the Dublin Working Group for the NPCI should be involved in administering this strategy as Figure 1 shows.

All local plans should include approximations on the cost of implementation over a three year period as well as the approximate cost of evaluation strategies proposed. (Costings should include wages of full-time Development Workers where this is relevant).

Initial NPCI estimates should allow for a significant amount of resources for the implementation of all development plans over a three-year period.

The approximate costing for a one-year participatory planning project is as follows:

EMPLOYMENT OF PROFESSIONALS	£156,000
EMPLOYMENT OF LOCAL PROJECT WORKERS (12 AREAS)	£174,000

EMPLOYMENT OF SPECIAL ISSUE WORKERS (3)	£ 43,500
MATERIALS BUDGET (OVER 12 MONTHS)	£ 24,000

TOTAL	£397,500
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Funding should be made available to the Development Co-Ordination Committee after its formation and this group would be responsible for administering resources to all project teams throughout the planning period.

3. Conclusions

This approach to development is proposed with a number of key points in mind:

- (1) The overwhelming evidence, already referred to in our submission, pointing to increasing polarisation in the Dublin urban area and the consequent social and economic costs of this.
- (2) Even an increase in resources to the most deprived areas and groups under existing development infrastructure will not reverse the trend towards increasing segregation. Development must take place across a wide range of sectors and this demands a co-ordinated approach between all those with an established interest in that development. In this co-ordinated approach, the local community and the disadvantaged must play a central role.
- (3) Proposals are put forward in the knowledge that a truly participatory approach to local development has proved a successful means of intervention in urban renewal projects throughout Europe and that movements towards a strategy of this nature are ready established closer to home. For example, both the Task Force in Ballymun and the Tallaght Welfare Society are already involved in comprehensive development plans for their areas. Also, the "Community Technical Aid", group in Belfast were successful in helping 140 community groups make a comprehensive submission to the Belfast Urban Area Plan.
- (4) Finally, the strategy proposed should be implemented for Dublin under the NPCI but is also applicable to other disadvantaged areas and should provide the foundation for all integrated community development projects.

Notes

- 1 See GROSSTIANS, H (1985) Tenant Participation in the Federal Republic of Germany, paper presented to OECD/SWEDEN Seminar in Community Involvement in Urban Service Provision.
- 2 See LECLERC, R. and DRAFFAN, D. (1984) The Glasgow Eastern Area Renewal Project, in Town Planning Review, Vol. 55, No. 3, p.p., 335 51/DONNISON D. and MIDDLETON, A. (1987) Regenerating the Inner City, Glasgow's Experience, Routledge & Kegan Paul, London.
- 3 See VAN DEN BERG, L, KLAASSEN, L. VAN DER MEER, J (1983) Urban Revival? An Investigation into Recent Trends in the Urban Development of the Netherlands, Foundations of Economic and Empirical Research, Netherlands Economic Institute.
- 4 See especially NESC REPORT NO. 55 "Urbanisation - Problems of Growth and Decay in Dublin", (1981/BYRNE, D, "Dublin - A Case Study of Housing and the Residual Working Class", International Journal of Urban and Regional Research, Vol. 8 pp 402-420 (1984/DUBLIN COUNTY COUNCIL/SUS RESEARCH "County Dublin Areas of Need", (1987).
- 5 JOYCE, L and DALY, M, "Towards Local Planning - An Evaluation of the Pilot COMTEC Programme", Institute of Public Administration (1987).