



**empowerment**



**for**



**management**

a report on the  
combat poverty agency's  
management development  
programme 1988/89



**by jane clarke**

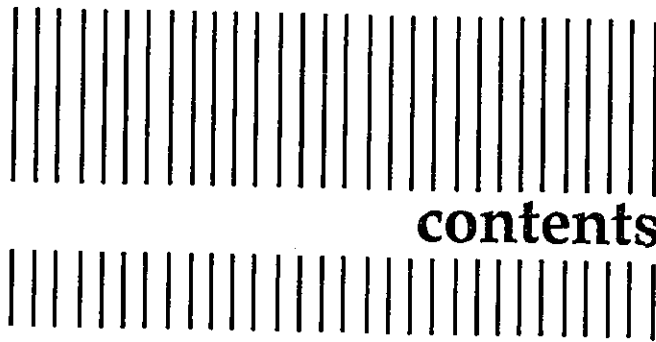
# empowerment for management

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CPA resource series 5





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## foreword



This report gives information on and an analysis of the Management Development Programme which the Agency was involved in running over a twelve month period, (1988-89). The programme was for the nine Irish projects in the second E.C. programme to combat poverty. It was run specifically for members of the projects' target groups, who were on management committees. The programme concentrated on the personal process of management. It was run on an inter-project basis and represents a contribution to the development of strategies to increase the participation and empowerment of local people.

A major objective of those involved in community development work, is the empowerment of poor people to take on the planning, implementation and management of projects for the alleviation and/or the elimination of poverty. One of the key themes in the 2nd EC Poverty Programme was the participation of project target groups in the activities and management of the projects.

Groups and individuals living in poverty usually experience a sense of powerlessness. Empowerment does not occur by chance, it must be part of a planned long term process of community development. One step along the way is when project users move onto project management committees. In recognition of the

importance of this step and of the associated difficulties for poor people the Combat Poverty Agency set up this management development programme to facilitate this process.

The programme had many positive aspects and also many difficulties which arose during the programme which we feel should be borne in mind when undertaking such training. The report gives an account of the background to the programme, the programme content and the evaluation of the programme by the participants and planning group. It also highlights the key issues that emerged during the programme and recommendations arising from them.

The Agency is committed to producing resource materials which can be of assistance to those involved in community development work. We hope publications like this will enhance practice and assist people to learn from others' experiences.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank those involved in the running of this programme and especially the trainers, Pat Brand and Jane Clarke, planning group members, Noreen Byrne (Parents Alone Resource Centre) and Anna Lee (West Tallaght Resource Centre) and the course participants.

Combat Poverty Agency,  
January 1990



# 1 introduction

## 1.1 The Projects

Nine Irish projects were funded under the second EC Programme to Combat Poverty (1985-89). The target groups, or focus, of these projects were the long term unemployed, the young unemployed, single parent families, homeless people, underprivileged urban districts and impoverished rural areas. A common aim of all these projects was to help target group members to express themselves and to regain control over their own lives. Accordingly, an essential aspect of the projects was the participation of the target groups in all project work, including management.

## 1.2 Role of Combat Poverty Agency.

When the Agency was established in September 1986, it was given responsibility for administering the funding of the projects and providing support for their development. An important element of this support was to help the projects identify their training needs and to meet these where appropriate. The Agency funded training at a project level and organised and funded training at an inter-project level in a variety of areas, e.g., facilitation skills and social analysis skills. The training needs addressed were those previously identified by the projects. This training was considered successful by the projects

involved. However, projects increasingly expressed a need for more long term, intensive training, particularly in the area of management.

## 1.3 The Planning Group.

In response to these requests the Combat Poverty Agency invited projects to nominate representatives to form a planning group on training. Two projects sent representatives, the West Tallaght Resource Centre and Parents Alone Resource Centre. The planning group also had a representative from the Combat Poverty Agency. Throughout the programme both trainers attended planning group meetings. Bearing in mind the training needs identified by the projects, the planning group decided that a priority was management development. Local people who were running projects in their community had been looking for this training for a number of years. So the group decided to set up a management development programme specifically for members of the target groups of each project.

## 1.4 Issues Relating to Management of Community Projects

In planning this training programme the group discussed at length the issues and problems of community development management which had come up in many different projects, including the E.C. projects.

A major issue for the group was that the traditional model of management is not appropriate for community development. In fact, in many ways it contradicts what community development is about. It is more to do with giving orders rather than encouraging participation, with checking up rather than empowering, with control rather than development. For many involved in the projects this was their experience of management. From this, the planning group felt there was a need to develop a different style; a style which helps people working in the project to achieve its goals and a style which is consistent with the values and way of working of the project.

Another issue is that in taking on the management role local people, who usually have no experience of management or training, have to take on enormous responsibility and accountability. Low-waged or unemployed people who have had limited educational opportunities take on the management of professional staff and large sums of money on behalf of their community. Most of these people are themselves struggling with the effects of deprivation and injustice in their community; low income, poor services, isolation, feelings of powerlessness. In summary local people managing their projects is a significant step forward for community empowerment, but it is not an easy or simple one.

### 1.5 The Programme

The planning group decided that a Management Development Programme was needed which would lay equal importance on the personal process of becoming a manager as on the practical skills required. They also felt it was important that the

programme be run at an inter-project level. This would give participants from different target groups the opportunity to discuss the issues involved for poor people moving into management and to share their own experiences of this, e.g. how it has affected them, how they deal with professional workers, how they see themselves in the role and how they are seen by other members of their community.

The group contacted a trainer, Patricia Brand, who had considerable experience in the area of management development and an understanding of community development. After an initial meeting at which the planning group outlined their ideas, the trainer prepared a project proposal. The group met her again to discuss this at length and some changes and adaptations were agreed. A community worker was invited to assist the trainer in the training and thereby increase her own skills for training with community groups. This trainer also took responsibility for writing the report on the programme. The planning group continued to meet throughout the programme acting as advisers to it.

### 1.6 Contacting the Projects

In September 1988 the Agency contacted the nine E. C. projects with information about the programme and invited each project to apply for one or two places. The Agency also informed them of the starting date, 16th November, 1988.

### 1.7 Participants

All of the twelve places available were taken up by six projects before the programme began. However,

four did not attend, three of whom were from one project. Five women and three men began the course, representing four projects. Subsequently two of the men left; the first because of conflict in his project and the second to take up paid employment. Those who participated in the programme were: Anna Horler, Tony Clarke (Youth Contact Centre, Sligo), Kathleen Morgan, Maureen Kenna (Parents Alone Resource Centre, Coolock), Annie McCluskey, Con Kennedy (SICCDA, Dublin), Marie Ingle, John Delaney (West Tallaght Resource Centre). Participants were nominated through a number of means - selection by management; interviews; or self-selection.

### **1.8 Profile of Participants.**

All the participants were members of the projects target groups, unemployed and/or single parents and

lived in urban areas which had a high level of social and economic deprivation. Their ages ranged from the early 20s to the late 50s. They were involved in different ways in the work of their projects, including:

- \* membership of a management committee
- \* managing a community centre
- \* chairing a community council
- \* helping to run a coffee shop in a drop in centre.

Six of the participants were also involved in other community projects outside the EC Projects. They were all unpaid workers (mainly part-time) in their projects and have dedicated invaluable time and energy to the development of their communities. A number of participants were not members of their management committees at the beginning of the programme. However, it was envisaged that the training would help them take on that role.

## 2 the programme

This section of the report looks at the Management Development Programme itself. Included in this is a breakdown of each module and some of the participants' comments on each module.

### 2.1 Objectives

The advisory group set the programme objectives on the basis of the perceived needs of local people managing community development projects.

- \* To prepare members of project target groups to take on greater managerial responsibilities.
- \* To enable participants to manage effectively, with increased knowledge of management skills and increased confidence in using them.
- \* To explore the use and sharing of power.
- \* To explore values relevant to the management of professional staff and the management of finance.
- \* To offer this training to those who have not previously had access to such training.
- \* To run the training at inter-project level, to assist representatives from different projects to network and learn from each other.

### 2.2 Philosophy

The trainers worked from the philosophy that for an individual or

group to manage development and change at an organisational level it was essential to manage development and change at a personal level. Also, in the training they aimed to combine a process of personal development with a process of increasing skills and information.

### 2.3 Working Methods

The group's learning was facilitated by short teaching inputs, group work, role plays, simulation games, questionnaires, counselling and group discussions. As the programme progressed the group was given increasing opportunities to take on responsibility for their own learning, as a group and individually. The programme was facilitated by the two trainers. In addition, three other trainers with expertise relevant to the programme gave inputs.

### 2.4 Structure

The programme consisted of 6 modules of 2 or 3 days duration. The first 5 (12 days) were held at monthly intervals over 5 months with a follow up module 6 months later. The time between modules was planned to allow the participants to have practical experience of the skills and approaches covered in the modules and to have time to absorb, reflect on and get feedback on their learning.

## 2.5 Content

### MODULES

- 1 Personal Development Nov '88 (2 days)
- 2 The Organisation Dec '88 (3 days)
- 3 Shadowing Project Jan '89 (2 days)
- 4 Management Skills Feb '89 (3 days)
- 5 Planning for Change April '89 (2 days)
- 6 Follow - up Oct '89 (2 days)

### PROJECT WORK

The participants were asked to do two projects during the programme. The first involved shadowing (i.e. observing closely) a manager for a day and one management committee meeting, outside the E. C. Programme. The second involved working on a theme and making a presentation which was

- (a) of interest to themselves
- (b) useful in developing their skills as a manager
- (c) useful to their projects

### MODULE 1

Personal Development (Nov '88)

*"I feel stronger and more determined"  
"I have an increased awareness of my capabilities"* (- extracts from participants evaluations)

In the first module the focus was on personal development. The areas covered were:

- \* life cycles and work patterns
- \* our development as a resource
- \* barriers to our achievements
- \* using our resources
- \* self-image
- \* interpersonal communications
- \* working in a group

Each participant gave a short presentation on their community project. Participants also had an interesting

and informative visit to SICCDA.

### MODULE 2

The Organisation (Dec. '88)

*"Now I have the ability to stand up and speak in front of a group"  
"I'm not so scared of pushing myself forward"*

The areas covered in this module were:

- \* self-presentation
- \* power
- \* shadowing
- \* cultural conditioning

**Self-Presentation:** During the first day of module 2 there was an input on public speaking and practice at preparation and delivery.

One of the participants gave the following speech on self awareness, with the aid of a soft toy, ALF.

*I would like to introduce you to my little friend ALF, short for Alien Life-Form. In many ways ALF is a lot like me because so much of what I have been brought up to believe is right and correct is so alien to my human nature.*

*Just look at ALF. Does he look relaxed and happy? I would say no. Look at his little ringed nose. This represents to me the rope to which I was attached. Each time I pulled I got scarred, thus the rings. Even when the leash was released I held myself back, inflicting still more scars. I just did not know how to be adventurous.*

*Now see his little eyes, look how frightened he seems. His mouth wide open and he is baring his teeth ready to snap at anyone who encroaches on him. His arms and legs are all crouched up. He really is very unso- ciable looking. This is me quite a lot of the time, instead of having my eyes wide, a big smile on my face and my body ready and happy to welcome people into my life.*

*The question I would like to ask is, are you an ALF or an ILHB, intelligent loving human being?*

**Power:** The participants also examined their personal power and their power within their organisations.

**Shadowing:** They discussed their shadowing projects and began to make contacts and arrangements.

**Cultural Conditioning:** Raymond Cadwell (management consultant) led the second and third days on cultural conditioning and oppression, particularly in the areas of gender, class and building alliances. He used information and counselling to look at the systems of oppression in our society and how it affected the participants personally, as Irish women or men, working class or middle class.

### MODULE 3

Shadowing (Jan '89)

*"I learnt how important it is for managers to take care of themselves, to avoid getting burnt out."*

This module included the actual shadowing project. Each participant shadowed at least one management committee meeting (some did two) and one manager, outside their own project. The purpose of shadowing at this stage was to allow participants see the day-to-day work of managers and to reflect on this in the light of their learning so far. They observed how the meetings function and what a manager does and how s/he does it. They recorded their observations, particularly on the management roles, time given to different activities and the routines, problems and opportunities of management.

### MODULE 4

Management Skills (Feb '89)

*"I have learned other, more effective ways of approaching a task".*

*"I can deal with confrontation better"*

This module covered the following areas:

- \* stress management
- \* leadership styles
- \* management roles
- \* management of finance
- \* conflict and negotiation

**Shadowing Feedback:** In the fourth module the participants reported on their shadowing and the group shared their learning from their experiences.

**Conflict and Negotiations:** Michael Barry and Sean Ruth (College of Industrial Relations) led a day on looking at the causes and symptoms of conflict in an organisation and different methods for dealing with it. They also examined the skills and process of negotiations and how central it is in the role of management.

### MODULE 5

Planning for Change (April '89)

*"I can see my role in the management of the project when funding ends"*

*"I increased my awareness of what groups can do when they pool their resources"*

**Change:** This module dealt with change management and developing a strategy for change, both personal and organisational.

**Feedback on work project:** Between the fourth and fifth modules the participants prepared their second

participants prepared their second project for the programme. During the fifth module they presented this and gave each other feedback. The presentations included an examination of the role of volunteers in community development organisations, the experience of organising a community development conference and a project to set up an alarm system for elderly members in a community.

### MODULE 6

Follow - up (Oct '89)

*"It is through personal development that we can become better managers and bring about change."*

This module covered:

- \* programme and evaluation report assessment
- \* input on the use of language
- \* future training needs
- \* presentation of certificates

The participants assessed the programme in terms of their individual learning and development and the impact of their development within their own projects. (See 3.1 (c)) They also were asked to review the programme and redesign it for further use. (See 4.2 (c))

The participants gave a detailed review of the first draft of this "Empowerment for Management" report and their suggestions for changes or additions have been included.

Finally, they explored their future training needs.

The participants who completed the course were presented with certificates by the director of the Combat Poverty Agency, Hugh Frazer.

## 3 evaluation

This section draws together the evaluation of the programme by its participants and the planning group.

### 3.1 Participants' Evaluations

#### (a) On-going evaluation

The participants engaged in spoken evaluations throughout the course, particularly at the end of each module and at the beginning of the next. A high level of satisfaction with the programme was stated and reiterated by the participants. Their comments on their learning included the following:

*"More expressive"*  
*"More confidence"*  
*"Better listening"*  
*"Greater sense of responsibility"*  
*"Having more confidence to question what was going on in the project"*  
*"Sharing responsibility with others"*  
*"Being more open and finding as a result that more people approach me"*

One participant said it was the first course he had returned to after the first day. Another spoke about the confidence it had given him to take on the management of his project for two days in a crisis situation. Two other participants were invited to join the management committee of their projects as a direct result of their involvement in the programme.

#### (b) Mid-term Evaluation

At the end of the fifth module (after 6 months of the course) the participants were asked to complete a mid-term written evaluation. They were asked what was the influence of the programme in the following areas; their personal development; their skills; how they see themselves in the future; and the influence on their projects as a result of doing their course.

#### Personal development

*"I really want to keep going"*  
*"I have a greater understanding of myself"*  
*"I am not so nervous"*  
*"I feel I can help others, that I have something to give"*  
*"I am more aware of my good qualities than my bad qualities"*  
*"I am more confident to speak my mind"*  
*"My confidence has increased"*  
*"It increases my awareness of what groups can do when they pool their resources"*  
*"I have more confidence in myself"*

#### Changes in skills

*"Better skills"*  
*"Ability to pass on skills"*  
*"Sharing my problems with others"*  
*"Assertiveness"*  
*"More confident to use the skills I already had"*  
*"Dealing with stress"*

*"Analytical skills"*  
*"Planning and preparing"*  
*"I could not have seen myself as a paid worker in the project before we started"*  
*"I have become a much better planner and organiser"*  
*"I have more knowledge of being a manager"*  
*"Better able to handle problems and better able to listen"*

*How they see themselves in the future*

*"Ability to take responsibility"*  
*"Confidence to move on and get qualifications"*  
*"I want to learn more, I want to become more involved in my centre and the community"*  
*"I am aware that I can do something for the centre and for myself"*  
*"I have realised that because of my skills and knowledge of community work, I should be paid for the work I do. I work as a community carer and that must be recognised at community and government level"*

The group said overall they now had higher expectations of themselves and others. They were aware of the need for change and that change was possible. They saw each other as good resource people and highlighted the value of pooling resources and working together.

*Influence on projects*

*"I can now communicate with management better"*  
*"I am participating much more in management committee meetings"*

Most of the participants felt that the training had influenced changes in their projects. One project decided to organise a management development programme for their management

committee because of the benefits of this training for their representative. In another project it played a major part in bringing target group representatives onto the management committee. In another it has helped bring about a change in thinking about unpaid work. It is now seen that volunteers should be paid. Others said that their project has benefited from their development through the training.

Finally, the participants were asked how they would advise someone from their project who was thinking of doing the programme.

*"come with an open mind and good expectations"*  
*"the work is hard but very rewarding"*  
*"will be of great benefit to you personally and to your project"*  
*"do not miss any of it"*  
*"that it is very worthwhile"*  
*"I'd tell them what I've gained"*  
*"I'd tell them not to be afraid and to have faith in themselves"*

(c) Final Evaluation

During module 6, a year after the course began, the participants were asked to answer the following questions individually and then to discuss them together. In this final evaluation the participants repeated some of the comments they had made in the mid-term evaluation, and these have not been included below.

*1. What have you learned as a result (directly or indirectly) of being on this programme for the past year ?*

*"I have learned not to feel intimidated by people in positions of power. I am of value and I have*

*something to offer. I must consider myself equal to others and I must stand up for myself and others. I am aware of the importance of expressing my feelings and of giving feedback."*

*"I have learned to listen to others and to hear what they have to say. I let go of responsibility if it gets too much for me. I have potential but I need to take the time to develop my qualities and learn more. My biggest problem is not having enough faith in myself. I must seek support when I need it - there is no point waiting and hoping."*

*"I have learned to speak out my ideas openly. If one way does not work I try another, I do not give up easily. I know I need to gain more confidence."*

*"I have learned that I am a very creative thinker, that I have excellent ideas and that I am capable. I am a very effective public speaker; people listen to me. I have also learned that community work does not have to be voluntary, we are doing very valuable work. I now see it as okay to expect to be paid for the work I do."*

*"I have found myself more confident in groups, big or small."*

2. What stage are you at in your development with respect to yourself and your project?

*"I am at a stage of great personal and social development. I am an enabler but I also want to see myself as an advocate for change."*

*"I know that we can make our project work, we have the resources and the skills."*

*"Being on the management committee is very important for myself and for my project. I am doing well and I know that I am appreciated."*

*"We know what our needs are and we have a fair idea of how to go about getting what we need. I have learned how to be a diplomat and I have been instrumental in breaking down barriers."*

3. In what way has your development (as a result of the course) had an impact on your project.

*"I have learned skills and I have recognised that I already had certain skills. I am a sympathetic listener and a facilitator. I have a better understanding of people's needs. I have learned not to get too emotional and to be calm and clear when giving advice. I have learned how to be supportive to people I meet in the centre, to work with people and not to put them down."*

*"I have developed my own awareness and thinking. I ask more questions. I gained confidence in myself and my own capabilities. By just airing this confidence and expressing my thoughts and fears I have been able to get things brought out into the open. I am able to express my own inadequacies and I am no longer afraid to say I need help."*

*"I have learned to see things more than one way. I push myself forward and speak more openly. I give my ideas and feedback what I have learned. I have confidence in what I and all the parents in our project can do."*

*"I have a better attitude to paid workers. I can bring my learning to my work with families at risk. I can*

support staff and help community workers with stress."

"Because of this course I was invited onto the board of management. In this way unemployed young people have been heard and our feelings are better understood. This has paved the way for young people being directly involved in running the centre. It also encourages them to give it a try and not to feel so intimidated by management."

4. In what ways do you see yourselves consciously developing other people in your projects ?

"There are lots of ways that I can help others, for example by taking an interest in what the young people are doing, encouraging them, giving them praise and support."

"I can try to encourage others to go onto the management committee. I can act as a role model for them, for example, by taking on to confront people."

"I see myself doing this by working in the community on a daily basis and by highlighting the needs of the area. I can encourage liaison amongst the many different community groups in my area, so they will come together and share."

"I have put my name forward to get involved with teenagers. I would like to facilitate personal development and assertiveness courses. I would like to be able to support women using my life experiences."

"I can show the importance of taking a disadvantage and making it into an asset."

5. How could you use your learning in other areas of your life ?

"It has given me confidence to approach politicians, doctors and solicitors. I feel as an equal, ask them questions and will not be fobbed off."

"I am involved in another management group. I have brought my learning to it, particularly about the importance of how a group works together."

"It has given me support in my own life experiences, dealing with my marriage break-up and counselling and supporting my children."

"I can be a resource person in my community; giving information, understanding neighbours and friends and supportive of fellow workers"

"It has given me confidence to push myself forward in other areas. I am not so nervous about job interviews. I put value on what I do and I realise my good qualities as well as bad. I see the value of being open and honest and expressing my feelings. I am respected for that amongst my friends. I am able to compliment people. Before the course I would have said "I couldn't do that". Now I'll say, "I'll give it a go."

"I am not afraid to face professional people anymore."

"It has helped me evaluate real friendship. I have acknowledged the importance of my friends and made time for them. I have also made more time for my partner and am more aware of his needs. The quality of the time I spend with my son has improved and our conversations and

*discussions show me how our relationship has developed over the past year."*

6. What are the next steps that you are going to take for yourself?

The participants said that they want to continue this process of self-development. One is going on to do a masters in Industrial Relations, another to do a diploma in art and another to finish a diploma in counselling. Two participants are hoping to do a course in community development and a training course in the facilitation of personal development and assertiveness. One woman

wants to get paid work as a community carer and another wants to move into working with children. All the participants want to continue their commitment to and involvement with their projects.

**3.2 Planning Group's Evaluation**

The planning group were involved in a continuous process of evaluation. At their meetings after each module, they discussed the programme with the trainers. On the basis of feedback from the participants and their own observations and experience they suggested modifications and improvements which the trainers implemented.

## 4 recommendations

### 4.1 Issues

In their evaluations the participants and planning group highlighted the difficulties experienced by the participants in attending this programme.

#### (i) Other commitments

Most of the participants were under considerable strain in fulfilling their other commitments: family, work and project, while doing the course. Several participants had to go to meetings or deal with problems in their projects after long intensive training days. One of the participants had to cancel the information and advice service which she ran. One woman had to organise someone to take her child to and from school, someone else to baby-sit in the afternoon and another person to do her part-time job. Another woman had to keep her teenage daughter away from school for three days to prepare dinners for live-in students and to collect a younger child from school. Other participants reorganised their time so as to be able to see to every area of responsibility themselves, thereby doubling their work-load. Living on a low income makes these arrangements all the more difficult.

#### (ii) Finance

Travel and food expenses were covered by the projects but there were other hidden expenses. For example

the woman who had to arrange for child minding and for a substitute to do her job was covering these costs herself. When a project worker realised this after the second module she was reimbursed. Another of the participants had her unemployment assistance cut by £14 because she was attending the course and was therefore unavailable for work.

#### (iii) Travel

The programme was held in the Combat Poverty Agency's offices as it was the most central location for the different projects. However travel to and from the course was a problem for most of the participants who were dependent on buses. For example the Tallaght people spent up to four hours each day travelling. It was also an added difficulty for the Sligo participants who had to travel to Dublin the previous evening and stay overnight.

#### (iv) Language

The participants identified language as a difficulty for themselves and for other local people involved in managing projects. They spoke about how it is a barrier to their development, how it is used to keep poor people powerless, how it prevents equal communication. They discussed the issue of whether poor people should learn the language of the people who have power or

whether they should demand that they use their language.

In their review of the first draft of this report they commented that it was difficult to understand and that like all the other reports written about community development, it would not be read by most of the people it is about. They said that such reports should be written in language that will be read and discussed by poor people themselves.

#### (v) Funding

Another issue that came up frequently in discussion was funding. The participants were very clear that the inadequate, short-term and arbitrary funding for community development is a major barrier in their work. They spoke about the amount of emotional and physical energy wasted looking for funds.

#### (vi) Relationships between paid workers and volunteers

The participants often referred to problems in the relationship between local people working voluntarily in a project and the employed staff. It was agreed that there is a need for both groups to be open to and aware of the needs and circumstances of each other and to take time to look at better ways of working together. As part of her evaluation of the programme one participant wrote a piece: "Volunteerism - Thoughts from a survivor". (see page 18)

### 4.2 Recommendations

The difficulties of this group highlight a few of the many problems poor people experience when they try to pursue educational opportuni-

ties. The participants and planning group made a number of recommendations for future management development programmes on the basis of their evaluation which they hope will help decrease or eliminate some of these difficulties in future management development programmes.. These recommendations, which are not in order of priority, are as follows:

#### (a) Preparation

A preparatory meeting for the participants should be organised before the programme in order to: outline the programme; highlight the practical difficulties of ongoing attendance; such a long term commitment in terms of child care, transport, accommodation for rural participants, job substitution and stamina.

#### (b) Support

It is recommended that each participant has a support person in their local community. This person's role would be to give the participant emotional and practical support throughout the programme. They should help the participant with practical arrangements, project work and also discuss issues, feelings or difficulties. This will provide continuity between modules and help decrease some of the difficulties noted above. This person may be involved in the project or in similar work in the community and it should be someone who already has, or can build, a trusting relationship with the participant. It is also recommended that the support person join the planning group or be kept informed on all aspects of the programme's development, so that they will understand the programme themselves and can feedback observations or learning to the group.

## VOLUNTEERISM

*(Thoughts from a survivor)*

*"A volunteer in any project in Ireland is often akin to being the poor cousin of many affluent relatives. The patronising hand of an outdated patriarchal system seldom extends the milk of human kindness directly to the volunteer. The anomaly of such a situation is one that at least now is being examined.....albeit at the expense of the volunteers themselves.*

*The debate on volunteerism is only just beginning. Many volunteers now find themselves in the position of apologising, nicely!, for asking for their work to be evaluated and accredited. Professionals talk about the 'professionalisation' of volunteerism. Volunteers are talking about the 'deprofessionalisation' of professionalism.*

*"Volunteers do.....therefore they are.....Why they 'do' is quite simple.....They respond.....This response is usually immediate and effective. The professional response is invariably slow and laden with a quagmire of bureaucracy that is alien to the volunteer. This in turn limits the voluntary input and severs the fresh response of the 'enthusiastic amateur'.*

*"One of the best community workers I have ever met is an unemployed, illiterate man who is an outstanding worker in our community. Professionals may quote his lack of literacy skills as a disadvantage but I know different. His skill is with the people.....helping them.....humouring them.....shouting at them and laughing with*

*them. In short, people trust him and respond to him. He is a truly skilled professional.*

*"Volunteers care... They may be approaching from different directions but their criteria is about caring. I have yet to meet a volunteer who gave up caring.... Many become disillusioned but they continue to care....I have on the other hand met quite a few disinterested professionals.....This then begs the question as to what is the difference between an 'enthusiastic amateur' and a 'disinterested professional'"....!*

*The language of 'professionalese', social standing and class are and will continue to create barriers to development at all levels. Unless the innate skills of the volunteer are acknowledged and supported directly in every aspect, volunteers will, in my opinion, discontinue to provide the pillar for professionalism as it is. A volunteer is easy prey... often an excuse... always an access and frequently a friend...Ultimately though, at the present time, the volunteer remains 'always the bridesmaid, never the bride' literally!*

*"My own experience of being a volunteer has been all of the above and more. I have received acknowledgement of a kind! I have argued for access...and I have received access with limitations...! I have acquired 'substitute skills!' and a 'thick neck!' I have survived being 'myself' and ultimately if one is 'skilled' enough to admit that... then in reality that is what really matters...My survival, personally and voluntarily!, is due in part to the great support from the true professionals I have come to know over the years.*

### (c) Programme

The course content and project work should remain in its basic form, except for the adjustments recommended by the participants (see below). Generally it was felt that the separation of the modules was very important. It gave an opportunity to put learning into practice and to reflect on it. Two days at a time was enough, first, because of the other arrangements participants had to make and secondly, because the days

were very tiring physically and mentally. They had the extra work-load, the travel and they were not used to that kind of concentration. However, one participant recommended that the programme be run as a concentrated course over two weeks.

The spacing of modules should leave no more than one month between each, with the exception of the follow-up module 6 months later. Each module should be two days long. One of the modules should be run

low-up module 6 months later. Each module should be two days long. One of the modules should be run over a residential weekend.

*Redesign of Future Programme*

As part of the final evaluation the participants recommended a redesigned programme, as follows:

Module 1	Introduction Day (1 day)
Module 2	Personal Development (2 days)
Module 3	Presentation Skills (1 day)
Module 4	The Organisation (2 days)
Module 5	Shadowing (1 day)
Module 6	Management Skills (2 days)
Module 7	Conflict and Negotiation (2 days)
Module 8	Planning for Change (2 days)
Module 9	Evaluation (2 days)

**(d) Input**

Managers of community projects should be invited to give inputs on the programme. The participants also recommended more inputs and exercises on finance and funding, cultural oppression, leadership, confrontation, stress management and the use and sharing of power. They also recommended more fun and lightheartedness.

**(e) Shadowing**

All the participants highlighted the shadowing project as a very valuable learning experience. It was difficult to arrange and took up quite a bit of time but it was a very important part of the course. It is recommended that it be included in any future management development programme. The participants also recommended that the shadowing could be of previous course participants in their work. This would be a kind of follow-up for the participants.

**(f) Child care**

Creche facilities should be provided for the participants or they should be reimbursed for child-care expenses.

**(g) Expenses**

Participants should be refunded for any loss in income due to their involvement in the programme.

**(h) Attendance at courses**

Unemployed people should get every encouragement to attend courses such as this. Under no circumstances should their welfare payments be reduced as a result of attending such training.

**(i) Networking**

When the course is run at inter-project level networking visits to each project between modules should be arranged. The host project should plan and organise a 3 - 4 hour visit to include (i) a social dimension (e.g., a meal) and (ii) a detailed description of the project and how action takes place. The objectives of these visits would be to educate, support, increas

awareness, stimulate other members of the host project's interest in the programme and provide an opportunity for fun and socialising. The networking should be written into the programme structure and planned during the first module so as to fit in with the busy work schedules in the projects. To facilitate those travelling to Dublin the networking could be arranged for the day before the module.

#### **(j) Funding for Training**

Funding agencies should make the necessary funds available to local groups to undertake programmes such as the one in this report.

#### **(k) Location**

Running the programme at inter-project level was valuable in terms of building alliances, sharing learning and networking. Instead of holding it in one centre each project could host one module. The programme could also be run for the management committee of one particular project or it could be run for a number of different projects in a locality.

#### **(l) Planning Group**

The planning group should include past participants of this programme, a representative of the projects, the trainers and possibly support people. It is very important that the projects' representative brings information to and from the projects about the programme. This information flow

should help the projects understand the programme, feel involved and encourage their commitment to it.

#### **(m) Trainers**

It is recommended that a target group member, who has training experience or, a previous participant on this programme, should assist with training on future programmes in order to pass on training skills. Trainers should also be aware of the issues relating to language highlighted in 4.1(iv) above.

#### **(n) Importance of Training**

Projects should put resources and time into the training of their managers and volunteers as well as their staff. It is also recommended that this training be centred around personal development.

#### **(o) Follow-up**

There should be a follow-up session with the participants in two years time to look at their experience of management.

#### **(p) Pilot project**

This was a pilot project and there was a lot of learning in the process for all involved. The participants, advisory group and trainers recommend strongly that it should be run again. They see it as a major contribution to the area of training and support for community development.



## conclusion



This Management Development Programme was clearly very valuable and worthwhile. It gave participants the opportunity to develop skills and the resources to become effective managers; it highlighted many important issues for training with locally based management groups and it resulted in specific recommendations on how this type of work can be further developed.

However this was a pilot programme and was only available to a small number of people. Programmes similar to this one would be very beneficial to local people involved in the management of a range of local projects, e.g., community development projects, youth projects,

women's projects and enterprise projects. There are costs associated with running programmes such as this and local groups need to have access to funding to undertake such work. The programme described in this report cost the Combat Poverty Agency £2,050. There were also other costs, e.g., childminding, travel and subsistence, which were borne by the individual projects.

Funding and training agencies need to make the provision of management development training for local people a priority. This would be a major advance in the process of empowering people to take charge of their own community's development.

## LIST OF COMBAT POVERTY AGENCY PUBLICATIONS

### Policy Statements and Related Research

- An Anti-Poverty Programme, Pre-Budget Submission 1988.
- Moneylending and Low Income Families, 1988.
- Poverty and the Social Welfare System in Ireland, 1988.
- Submission on the Programme of Community Interest for the Greater Dublin Area, 1988.
- Framework for Community Participation in Integrated Development, 1989.
- Pictures of Poverty, 1989.
- Poverty - Priorities for Action, Pre-Budget Submission, 1989.
- Towards a Funding Policy for Community Development, 1989.
- Poverty - An Agenda for the 90's, Pre-Budget Submission, 1990.
- Annual Reports.

### Research Report Series

- Assessment of School Meals and of Growth, Food Intake and Food Likes/ Dislikes of Primary School Children in Inner City Dublin Schools, 1989 (TR Gormley, T Walshe, K Cormican).
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- A Review and Recent History of the Coolock Community Law Centre, 1989 (B Dillon).
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- Lofty Ideals, Tangible results: Interim Report by the Projects in the Second European Programme to Combat Poverty, 1988.
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**Poverty Today, (quarterly, free subscription).**

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