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Poverty, Community And Development

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A report on the issues of social policy that have arisen in the work of the nine projects of the Second European Programme to Combat Poverty, 1985-1989

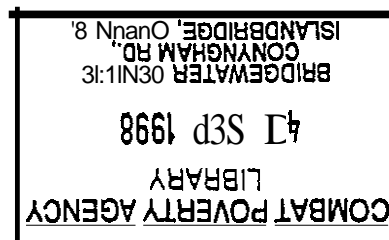
Report compiled and written by **Barry Cullen**

Research Report Series

Combat Poverty Agency 1989

CPA/RPT

Poverty, Community And Development



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Report compiled and written by Barry Cullen

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PREFACE

Important insights into policies to combat poverty often come from the work of local community projects. Their practical experience of the harsh reality of poverty and of the impact of national policies at a local level is an important complement to more academic and research based work. However, all too often such groups are so involved in their day to day work that they have little opportunity to reflect on and record their views as to which policies help or hinder anti-poverty work. The Combat Poverty Agency is very conscious of this problem and sees that one of its tasks is to assist local projects it is involved with to put forward their insights on policy matters.

The nine poverty projects referred to in this report have been part of the Second EC Programme to Combat Poverty for the last four and a half years. They have developed many important new initiatives which are contributing to tackling poverty at a local level. The focus of this report has been to draw out from their collective experience insights into policy issues. It is not the purpose of this publication to document or evaluate these projects; that will be done elsewhere.

The projects are situated in different types of local communities and have varied programmes of work. However they share a community development approach to their work. Also, at the EC's insistence, they have put particular emphasis on the participation and involvement of those most affected by poverty. It is thus not surprising to discover that some of the most interesting and important points made in the report relate to how the efforts of local people to build stronger and less disadvantaged communities can be reinforced. The report highlights the potential of community development projects for tackling poverty. It also spells out some of the blocks that currently exist which make it difficult for poor communities to become more involved in initiatives to improve their situation. It stresses the importance of developing trust between statutory and community organisations working together in partnership. It also emphasises that the development of local people and local communities does not just happen. It takes time, resources and careful planning and is crucial to the elimination of poverty.

The Agency hopes that this report will make a contribution to the development of effective policies to promote local action to tackle poverty. The growing awareness of the concentration of poverty in certain urban and rural communities has highlighted the need for more effective programmes at local as well as national level. This report will add to that awareness. The Agency is convinced that the issues raised are an important addition to the debate about effective anti-poverty work and should be made available to a wider audience. It hopes that

they will be read both by policy makers and by local community development projects. They will also be carefully considered by the Agency both in terms of its own policies and priorities and in its role of advising the government on social and economic policies to tackle poverty.

A special word of thanks should go to the researcher, Barry Cullen, for the tremendous amount of work he put into the report and for the manner in which he helped projects to tease out what they saw as the key policy issues arising from their work. The Agency would also like to thank the nine projects for their interest in and contribution to the research. Their willingness to find time to engage in discussions about policy matters when they were already very busy running their own projects was crucial to the success of the research.

*HUGH FRAZER
Director*

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1 - Introduction

Second European Programme to Combat Poverty

This is a report on the issues and recommendations for social policy that have arisen in the work of the Nine Action-Research Projects in the Second European Programme to Combat Poverty. This programme was set up following a decision of the Council of the European Communities in December 1984, which recommended the establishment of action-research projects among particular target groups of persons who were identified as being in poverty. These target groups are:

- 1 the long term unemployed and the young unemployed
- 2 the elderly
- 3 single parent families
- 4 second generation migrants
- 5 refugees and returning migrants
- 6 marginal groups - e.g. gypsies, travellers, homeless
- 7 underprivileged urban districts
- 8 impoverished rural areas.

Combat Poverty Agency

The programme, which is cofunded by member-state governments, was initiated in Ireland by the Department of Social Welfare, with the assistance of the Interim Combat Poverty Board which had previously been set up to advise the government on setting up its own Agency and Programme to Combat Poverty. Following the processing of 150 applications the EC Commission approved the setting up of nine Irish projects in November 1985. The contracts for these projects were for four years, 1985-89. These nine projects were all operated by voluntary organisations, some of them set up for this purpose. The overall administration of the Irish programme was initially undertaken by the Interim Combat Poverty Board. This task was taken over by the Combat Poverty Agency (CPA), which was set up in 1986. The Combat Poverty Agency also facilitated meetings of the various projects and liaison with the European Commission.

interim report

Since the projects were set up they met regularly to share information and experiences about their work. In 1988, midway through the programme's operation, the nine projects jointly commissioned an interim report on their work in order to share their experiences with a wider audience. This report, *Lofty Ideals Tangible Results* described the setting up, operations and activities of the projects, and underlined many of the key practical features of the projects' work. The report was launched by the Minister for Social Welfare, in May 1988.

setting up research

At an inter-projects meeting held in June 1988, following the publication of the interim report, the projects discussed publishing a second report to focus on the issues for social policy which had arisen in their work. A planning group of four representatives from the projects was established to further this research. At the time the Combat Poverty Agency had

decided to pursue some research into social policy issues that were generally arising in practical community project work. The Combat Poverty Agency agreed to fund the report, and to employ a researcher to undertake the work. The researcher was recruited in August and appointed in October 1988.

main issues

This report was written as a ten month project that commenced in October 1988. Not all the issues referred to in the report have arisen in the work of each of the projects, and not all issues that have arisen in their work are referred to here. Indeed some issues are relevant to only a minority of projects. However, the issues are variations of similar themes, all of which have manifested in different ways in the work of the programme. Over the past four years there have been regular inter-project meetings and a number of exchange visits, which have provided opportunities for projects to reflect on the convergence of issues and their separate manifestation in different activities. The report is not an overall statement on the work of the nine projects nor does it evaluate that work. The more substantive detail of this work is contained in the various publications published by the projects as well as the evaluative reports that have been compiled both by their internal and external evaluators.

advisory group

All of the projects participated in the selection and prioritising of issues for inclusion in this report. The projects also had four members on an advisory group that met eight times to consider the report's progress. The advisory group had four other members, two from CPA and two external members. However, the final ordering and structuring of this report remains the responsibility of the researcher in direct consultation with CPA which commissioned it, and it reflects their joint assessment of the degree of commonality of issues as raised by the different projects and the relevance of these to social policy. The recommendations in this report are based on written submissions from projects, and various discussions with project personnel, the advisory group and members of CPA. The researcher has sought to tease out the recommendations of the projects; to question their implications; to clarify their suggestions; and to apply a shape and structure that makes sense not only to individual projects but also to the experience of a wider group of projects and to CPA.

prioritising issues

From the outset, this report has deliberately attempted to narrow its scope in order to focus on those issues which the projects considered to be of greatest priority. This narrowing of issues has involved a time consuming process of selecting and prioritising issues for inclusion in the report. An important emphasis has been the projects' selection of these issues and their own preparation of material and case studies for inclusion in the report as well as painstaking reading and comment on a number of preliminary drafts. This process has been particularly significant for its emphasis on mechanisms for consultation and participation and for ensuring the report always reflects the projects' experiences. It is nonetheless a difficult process. A fact constantly highlighted by all the projects who

primary issue

participated in this report is that the participative process in community development is difficult: it is time consuming; it involves a lot of self-questioning, self-exposure, doubt and despair; it involves the testing of assumptions and relationships which other methods and approaches often leave alone. But it is also a process which energises and stimulates and which according to the projects is uniquely situated to develop creative and innovative responses to poverty. In making recommendations in this report the projects are particularly concerned that the participative process be embraced, extended and developed in the various state programmes which impinge on individuals and communities who are experiencing poverty.

The primary issue that has arisen in this research is community development as a strategy for tackling poverty. The main focus of the report is issues that have arisen in community development, including participation, strategies, funding, models for personal social service development, community enterprise and training, and the nature of the relationship between community development groups and the main statutory institutions. In exploring these issues the report attempts to define and elucidate the community development approach and to clarify the answers to questions like: What is the function of community development in tackling poverty? What are the various approaches to participation? What are the differences between community development approaches and institutional approaches? Why should the state fund community development? Some answers to these questions are built into the various arguments that are developed in the report. However, the overall discussion reflects the experiences of these nine projects only. The report also focuses on the issues of income, housing and education. However, the wider essence of these issues goes far beyond the scope of both this report and the projects' experiences. For this reason only secondary aspects of these issues which directly impinged on the work of the projects are discussed.

chapters

The report is presented in seven chapters and two appendices. Chapter 2 is an outline of the method used in compiling and writing thereon Chapter 3 explores a number of issues in community development, particularly participation, strategies and funding. Chapter 4 outlines a community development approach to personal social services development. Chapter 5 explores issues that are raised in community enterprise and training. Chapter 6 discusses the issues that have arisen in the local experiences of the projects in relation to income, housing and education. Chapter 7 summarises the recommendations of the report itself. In Appendix I there is a summary of the work of each individual project. Readers not familiar with the work of the projects might prefer to commence the report by reading this appendix. Appendix II is an outline of a preliminary document compiled at the outset of this research.

2 - Outline Of Method

The report has developed in four separate stages, as follows:

- Familiarisation and setting up project
- Prioritising of issues for inclusion in report
- Collecting relevant information from projects
- Writing up of main body of report

Familiarisation
and setting up
research

During the first month of this project the researcher familiarised himself with the projects and took steps to get the report off the ground. A number of published reports and evaluators' base line descriptions were read and a separate preliminary visit to each project took place. These visits were vital for assisting the researcher to gain insights into the work, activities and priorities of the various projects as well as establishing a working relationship for the future development of the report. A primary concern for the researcher at this stage was the number of factors that could limit the subsequent content of the report. These included the short duration (ten months) of the research, the variations in geography, demography, economic base, social need and methods of participation between the different projects, and the pending winding down of the projects' principal, and in some cases only source of funding. Because of these limitations he believed it essential to reach early agreement with the projects as to which issues the report should focus on. These concerns were expressed directly to the CPA and the projects and a special inter-projects meeting was scheduled to focus on the selection and prioritising of issues for inclusion.

Prioritising
issues

The prioritising and selection of issues for inclusion in the report was achieved at the inter-projects' meeting on 24-25 October 1988. This meeting included a number of exercises and workshops which assisted the projects to clarify the issues they wished to select and why they wished to prioritise them. Criteria for agreeing the issues that would to be included were decided at the meeting. Using these criteria each of the projects subsequently filled out a form which rated the relative importance of a number of issues. With these forms the researcher put together a preliminary outline of the focus issues. This outline was circulated to the projects and agreed by the advisory group in November 1988. The outline is Appendix II to this report

Collecting
information

Information for the report was collected from the projects during two-day information visits held in each project during January and February 1989. Prior to these information visits the researcher visited each project for a second time in order to explain the purpose and structure of the visits and to provide guidelines in preparing for them. In each information visit the researcher collected information from files and reports on relevant case study material which had been preselected by the projects. The researcher

writing report

also interviewed project personnel in relation to the case study material in order to extract additional information and seek further clarification of the relevance of the case studies to the report. A three hour information workshop was also held in each project except in the Simon project. These workshops consisted of a small local forum of key project personnel, participants, staff and management, and their main focus was to tease out and expand on the main issues and recommendations that had previously been highlighted. A written record was kept of each workshop. There were some minor variations in the structure of these workshops from project to project.

The researcher spent from March to August 1989 ordering and analysing the various documents, reports and interviews that had been collected from the projects, and writing the report. While it was clear that the report could broadly follow the preliminary outline prepared by researcher and agreed the previous November the researcher believed that the information he was analysing highlighted three crucial issues that underpinned everything else the projects had to say about poverty, development and social policy. These three issues were:

- 1 The relationship between poverty and powerlessness
- 2 The importance of local community development and local participation in developing anti-poverty strategies
- 3 A widespread perception that the relationship between the main institutions, particularly statutory bodies, and those groups who were using local development and participative models for tackling poverty was difficult.

The researcher believed that the significance of these three issues should not be lost in the writing of the report, especially since they had dominated much of the discussion in the information workshops. Therefore, in preparing written drafts of the report, the researcher incorporated the above issues into a developing structure.

accessible

The researcher has been aware of the projects' expectations that the final published report should be presented in an accessible, readable format. While the report was always intended to influence policy-makers, the issue of its accessibility was raised on numerous occasions in project discussions, advisory group meetings and inter-project meetings. The projects were particularly concerned that the report would be published in a format that could be read by persons from the projects who had contributed information to the report. The researcher has taken account of these concerns particularly at each re-drafting stage. Furthermore, the researcher was concerned that the arguments in the report should be based on material supplied by the projects, rather than on secondary material available in other reports and documents. In only a few instances involving major publications which were referred to while information was being collected, is direct reference made to other reports.

projects

Throughout the report there is reference to projects. Generally, the report

reflects the work of all the projects. However, it is an inescapable fact that some issues and recommendations bear little relevance to the work of some of the projects. When projects is used on its own it will refer to all the projects. This generally means that all the projects support what is being said and not that what is said was actually said by all the projects. However, every attempt is made to identify various projects which are concerned with particular issues.

3 - Community Development

· INTRODUCTION

This chapter introduces and defines community development as a process that deliberately activates, encourages and supports groups of people to participate in collective action in pursuit of common interests, and which contributes to social justice and equity. The two concepts of participation and social justice are integral to this definition. They are also strategically significant in relation to programmes for tackling poverty. Community development is concerned with pursuing those common interests that contribute to social justice and a more equitable social and economic system. In the last fifteen years in Ireland many of the innovative approaches for tackling poverty have focused on community development. These approaches which include community projects funded by the EC and Combat Poverty Agency, and various programmes in employment, vocational training, youth development, welfare rights, information and womens' programmes, which have been funded by statutory and voluntary sources, have generally utilised self-help and self-organised responses to poverty and disadvantage.

Variations of the community development process have been used by all the projects in this programme. This chapter explores three important issues in relation to community development. First the issue of participation and the various methods used by projects for developing it are considered. The role of community development in strengthening democracy is discussed and the importance of participatory structures in local responses to poverty is highlighted. There is further discussion on other means of improving the participation of the poor in their local community. Secondly, the chapter looks at a number of community development strategies for tackling poverty and it is pointed out that strategies that work in one particular situation are not necessarily transferable to another. Thirdly the issue of community development funding is considered and particularly the difficulty of generating internal local resources for community development is highlighted.

COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION AND POVERTY

The concept of community participation, as understood by project personnel, derives from a desire that ordinary people be more closely involved in the planning and provision of social, community, training and employment-support services and that many of the functions of government need to be distributed more widely and evenly in the population. Community participation reflects a concern that centralised organisations have expanded too far, and have often too quickly appropriated many decisions in the affairs of ordinary people, with insufficient regard to local consultation. Generally, proponents of community participation do not set out to halt the involvement of the state in community affairs. Rather, they wish to ensure that this involvement more closely reflects local need

through local consultation. Participation in these terms is often a reaction against the 'bigness' of complex state and corporate bureaucracies, and their seeming inability to understand and respond to wants and needs at a local level. At this level, individuals and small communities are distanced from bureaucratic routines and centralised procedures, and thus unable to influence decision-making, with the result that they rarely discover their potential for co-operation, self-organisation, collective action and community power. A primary justification for the projects' support for community development and participation is that it can release this potential. The Inishowen Literacy Resource Centre is an example of how a community through local participation effectively tackled a local education problem that was seemingly insoluble within the education system.

community
literacy
project

Arising from its general concern with literacy the Inishowen project held a seminar on children's literacy problems and dyslexia. The seminar was well attended by teachers and parents from a wide geographical area. As a result of the seminar a committee was formed to research the extent of illiteracy among children in Inishowen. A questionnaire was designed and circulated to all the primary schools in the area. The results showed that 15% of the children in schools throughout the area had learning difficulties. Knowing that there was a shortage of remedial teachers - only 10% of schools had a remedial teacher - it was decided to put together a community based action plan. The project invested resources in setting up a Learning Resource Centre. The centre, run on a voluntary basis, provides books, learning materials, back up advice and support services for students, teachers and parents. The centre is used extensively by schools in the area. It represents a unique response to the type of local education problem that failed to be solved by central policies. If the community were to wait for the education system to make the necessary changes for dealing with learning difficulties, many children would grow up illiterate. The project's vision for the centre's future includes pre-school children's activities, toy library and various other services for parents and children in the area.

Participative
democracy

A further justification for community development and participation is the creation of a more democratic social and political system. The community development rationale is not solely based on a classical notion of *representative* democracy, where the power to decide is vested in representatives, but rather on a notion of *participative* democracy, with the power to decide vested directly in people who are organised into small communities and communities of interest. In these communities direct participation by means other than, or additional to, voting for representatives is made possible, and thus the primary system of representative democracy is enhanced and complemented.

**A planning and
evaluation meeting
in Coolock
project**

Photo: Alan Lund



"Within local community development direct participation is achieved through voluntary involvement in local issues, activities and services, with an emphasis on the sharing of skills, knowledge and experiences."

**A training
seminar in
West Tallaght
project**

Photo: Derek Spiers



*direct
participation*

Within local community development direct participation is achieved through voluntary involvement in local issues, activities and services, with emphasis on the sharing of skills, knowledge and experiences. A fundamental aspiration is the creation of local structures that are both *democratically accountable*, in that they allow and provide for all who are presumed to be community members to exercise democratic choice and the free expression of views, and *openly participative*, in that their activities and process allow and provide for the continuous and open involvement of members. In addition to voting on local policies and issues, direct participation can take the form of access to regular decision-making forums and involvement in day-to-day local activity. Ultimately, community development contributes to the democratic process being made more accessible to ordinary people. A primary task of community projects is the provision of structures for achieving this participation. In this regard the projects agree that direct accountability to the target group which a particular community structure claims to be working with or representing is an essential prerequisite to a successful community development approach. It is acknowledged that it is rarely possible to set up such structures at the outset of a community project but the projects point out that a timescale for incorporating such structures should be set in advance of commencing a community project and adhered to.

shareholding

All of the projects deliberately set about creating participatory structures. These include shareholding, as in case of the Connemara project where eighty per cent of the local population, are shareholding members in the project's parent company, Connemara West, and have the opportunity, at least once a year, to present their views in relation to the project's development and to vote accordingly. Cooperative shareholding structures are generally recognised by the projects as a good mechanism for both a legal identity and a forum for participation, and some projects have been involved in setting up such structures for local employment initiatives.

*community
councils
associations and
management
groups*

In relation to the Louisburgh, Inishowen and south inner city (SICCDA) projects the participatory structures are local umbrella groups - a community council, a development group and a community association respectively - and the memberships of these are generally people who reside or work in the areas and who are involved in subgroups and committees. Like the Connemara project the parent group of all three of these projects existed before the project and will continue as an umbrella group when the project funding ceases. Two young project users are represented on the management committee of the Sligo project; other members are representatives of a number of youth and social services and statutory bodies in the Sligo area. Project staff point out that the process involved in achieving management participation for project users was a difficult one particularly as this method of work, in their view, is relatively new and untried within youth services. The Damdale project has been managed by a small group of people who are themselves unemployed. The founders of both the West

PARTICIPATION OF THE POOR

defining needs

Resource centres

Tallaght and Coolock projects incorporated timescales for local participatory structures and the management of both projects have a combination of staff, project users and local social service workers. The Simon project was a direct initiative of the Simon Community (National Office) and was managed by same. Its participatory structures existed at a lower level of user representation, that is on the local management of individual work projects.

Within these various structures the participation process is often unwieldy, complex and difficult to manage. But it is also a source of further project inspiration and energy. Notwithstanding the difficulties of ensuring that a participatory structure continues to be openly participative, while maintaining its effectiveness in project management, the projects point out that a continual commitment to the incorporation and operation of such structures is a fundamental principle of community development.

While participatory structures are necessary for facilitating a community development process, it is generally accepted by project personnel that participation of people, but especially of the poor, does not happen unless it is directly incorporated into community activity through the use of specific techniques. Structures, like those described above are one such technique. However some projects point out that the structure which exists on paper does not always reflect reality and is ultimately only as good as the use made of it in involving local people, particularly with project activities.

If activities are imposed on people it is unlikely they will succeed in improving participation. If a community development approach is too vague about how the people are to become involved then participation may never happen at all. What is most important according to project personnel is that community development activities and approaches are organised in such manner that from the outset people and the poor in particular are part of the process of defining their own needs and responses to their situations as they find them. In the experience of the projects, resource centres, community meetings, publications and personal development groups are crucially important in encouraging and sustaining this form of participation.

Resource centres have been used by the projects as a means of extending participation in community development. They usually consist of small meeting rooms and offices with basic typing, photocopying, printing and telephone resources. They are staffed with persons skilled in organisation, administration, information-giving, and various other specialisms depending on the location of the centre and the particular priorities that have been set for it. In some centres the main emphasis is on welfare advice and information; others concentrate on organising enterprise developments, as in Louisburgh and Inishowen. Most centres are concerned with activity programmes - skills learning, library and literacy programmes, creative

activities, the development of local publications. Resource centres have different styles and approaches reflecting the particular project's priorities. Some schedule welfare and other information for particular times, as in Inishowen. The Tallaght, Darndale and Coolock projects operate an informal drop-in system. The resource centre is located as close as possible to the people for whose use it is intended and is arranged so that people, particularly newcomers, will feel welcome and treated with honesty and respect for their dignity. Resource centres tend to be located either at the heart of the town or the middle of a housing estate. A primary focus in resource centres is on activities and/or services that have direct and meaningful relevance to the people who live in the centre's catchment area.

accessibility

This relationship to the *local* is intrinsic. Resource centres consolidate local morale, confidence and identity in a manner that is not possible when the same or similar services and resources are provided through institutional agencies. The resource centre reaches out to the community with this approach: if all other efforts fail the ordinary person has the opportunity to walk into a centre, seek information, get to know those who are already there, and provide some indication of a desire to be involved in the future. Their crucial importance is in their accessibility and informality and most projects agree that the centres become defunct when they lose these characteristics.

supportive role

Resource centres also have a vital role in supporting the work of the statutory sector. This is especially so in the areas of personal social services and the provision of training and education programmes. Projects point out that people are more likely to attend a self-help or counselling programme located within an accessible local centre. Others may be more inclined to sign on for training programmes if these are developed and advertised with the cooperation of a resource centre.

Community meetings

Another method of increasing participation is to hold regular public meetings on issues of local importance. All members of the community are free to attend and voice an opinion. While only a minority of community members will normally get fully involved in such meetings, they are a useful tool for focusing community attention, generating community interest and identity, and ensuring an opportunity exists for the airing of people's views. The approach has been used by Darndale and Tallaght projects in particular on issues concerning welfare and house purchase grants. As a result of such meetings efforts have been put into supporting welfare recipients and unemployed persons to become directly involved in campaigning further on such issues. Public meetings were used in Inishowen, Connemara and Louisburgh in order to generate interest in various local projects, such as mariculture, local radio, and local tourism co-operatives.

Publications

Many projects highlight local newsletters or magazines as means of increasing participation. Most have produced such publications. Their

regularity has depended on available skill, resources, readership interest and commercial sponsorship.

*community
magazine*

From its inception a primary objective of the Inishowen project's community magazine was to tackle parochial attitudes that were seen as hindering local development. It was hoped that through facilitating an exchange of information and ideas between various local groups and interested individuals, greater unity and community involvement would result. The Inishowen Community Development Group considered the magazine as vital in the early stages of development. It generated a sense of community awareness and provided a focus for more people to get involved. Individuals who expressed interest in the magazine were immediately invited on to a magazine sub-committee. If a particular geographical area had no representation on the sub-committee an interested person from that area was sought and invited to participate. Direct and successful representations were made to schools, hotels, voluntary organisations and so on to submit material. The magazine sub-committee took full responsibility for reporting the activities of the development group and the project, which included giving notice of forthcoming events and summarising progress in various projects. The magazine devoted a lot of space to articles on local resources - mariculture, horticulture, tourism and forestry - and their potential for development. It was hoped that such articles would encourage people to take a fresh look at what the peninsula had to offer and how they could exploit its resources. The production of the magazine was structured so that those involved with it could get hands-on experience of the different stages of production - writing, photography, layout, and selling.

Local radio

Community radio also offers a unique opportunity for participation. It is a very immediate medium with potential to involve people who generally do not participate. It can open debate on local issues that are not normally aired and involve ordinary local people in making comment on issues of national interest. It is also a very creative medium with great potential for local entertainment. The Connemara project set up a local radio project which broadcasted before the new legislation on local radio. They intend to apply for a local radio licence. The SICCDA project has a committee to consider a local radio for its area.

*radio - an
interactive medium*

The Connemara project got involved in local radio because they saw it as an opportunity to raise awareness of local development. Local radio also presented a medium within which the process of development itself could take place. This form of communication improves participation, primarily because it is interactive: With the use of phone-ins it is possible to engage in immediate two-way communication. The radio project also serves to break down isolation: Live community radio can provide local people with a

sense of being part of what is happening. National radio can project an attitude that anything of importance only happens at the centre. Local radio consolidates local pride and a community's sense of identity. It provides opportunities for participation of a number of people with a wide range of skills and interests. It can generate a positive sense of empowerment by people being able to set their own agenda, thus recognising the importance of local attitudes, views and emotions. In relation to the media, most people are generally passive. When they see a programme being made and are part of the creative and production process, people can become constructively critical of the media itself. The empowerment can be abused, particularly if the medium becomes dominated by a small sectional interest. In order to avoid such developments it is important to institute democratic mechanisms for the management of local radio. The Connemora project suggested that the guidelines drawn up by National Association of Community Broadcasting be adopted as criteria for setting up community radio projects. The underlying principles in these guidelines are community control and non-profit making radio.

Personal
development

The Coolock, Sligo, Simon, Sligo and West Tallaght projects focus directly on developing the confidence, self-esteem, and solidarity of specific target groups as a method of improving participation. They point out that participation is a long term process and group support and assentiveness building are vital in consolidating the target group's interest and commitment. The Sligo project highlighted the need at times to work with individuals for prolonged periods to support their involvement in local development groups. The Simon project pointed out the importance of working at the same pace as the target group in relation to participation. Their target group of homeless people is quite vulnerable and the development of participation among the group can rarely take place without a great deal of personal support. Other activities used by projects for building participation include courses, seminars, workshops, open days, and openings.

COMMUNITY
DEVELOPMENT
AND ANTI-
POVERTY
STRATEGIES

Different strategies for tackling poverty operate in different communities. The variations in the strategies used by the projects to tackle poverty reflect a number of variables, including differences in history and culture, geographical location, and the extent of economic development. Such strategies vary both within and between particular communities and reflect the fact that what works in one situation is not always transferable to another. Within these anti-poverty strategies, the central purpose of community development is to release the energies of a group to generate its own self-help response to the situation in which it finds itself. A central part of this rationale is that small local units provide the sense of identity, local cohesion and solidarity that unite members in common interest. This common interest is more obvious in smaller communities where traditional values survive. It is less evident in cities and more industrialised

areas. Many projects focus on preserving and/or re-generating a united sense of community and solidarity.

Project anti-poverty strategies are also built on pragmatism: a united sense of community is not always achievable. The social and economic interests of members of a community may not always be the same. Indeed if common interest is found there may still be concern that the strongest interests are always those with greatest economic power or social prestige. On another level among low-income groups there can be internal distinctions between those who have different levels of income or different status within the community. The projects point out that a number of anti-poverty strategies are explored in community development. These include the following which are discussed below:

- 1 Building a sense of community
- 2 Area development
- 3 Group development
- 4 Political strategy

1- Building a sense of community

A sense of community is often pursued as an option in community development. It is built through highlighting a common set of values, customs, traditions, culture and history. The smaller the community the more possibilities this approach has, and it is perhaps for this reason that some of the small, rural village and inner city communities tend to have strong bonds - social customs, history, culture and family kinship - which combine to project a unified identity. There are strong remnants of traditional community identity within the catchments of all three rural projects and the SICCDA project in Dublin. In these, history and culture have become a focus for local identity. The annual Liberties festival in the SICCDA catchment area has become an occasion for local people to celebrate community. In Inishowen the Community Magazine reaches out to inspire similar virtues with articles that combine a reflection on local history and customs with an analysis of current events and issues of the third world. The local radio project in Connemara has been used as a means of recording folk history as told in the music and storytelling of local people. The Teach Ceoil - a centre in Connemara for traditional music, singing and dancing - is an important institution for consolidating a sense of community while at the same time attracting tourist revenue in the summer.

cultural tourism

History has also provided other commercial spin-offs. SICCDA's "Tour of the Liberties" is a successful tourist project in which visitors are given a walking tour of some of Dublin's oldest communities by a local guide. The "Inishowen 100" is a tourist map which identifies many important historical and archaeological sites. A similar map exists in Louisburgh. These maps, together with other promotional literature produced by the respective projects, are used to generate more tourist revenue in areas that have lacked promotion in the past. They have another impact on the local community, over and above increased tourism revenue. By re-awakening

an awareness of local culture they can provide a positive focus on the historical causes and antecedents of poverty.

Granuaile

The Louisburgh project set up the Granuaile Interpretive Centre which has assembled, in one viewing room, extensive material on the life and times of local sixteenth century heroine, Grace O'Malley. This material is of obvious use in promoting local identity. It also directly promotes tourism which is one of the few indigenous resources. The project believes that culture can be exploited positively for economic benefit. The fundamental objective of the centre is to involve the local community in understanding their own history. This, they believe, would not happen, if the Granuaile centre had been developed solely as a commercial enterprise. In June 1988 the project co-operated with Afri, an organisation that promotes an understanding of the causes of third world poverty, in organising a sponsored walk from Louisburgh to Doolough in commemoration of the "Doolough Tragedy" one hundred and forty years earlier. This tragedy involved a huge loss of life, at the height of the famine, when hundreds of people made the same walk believing that relief and food aid was available at Delphi. It wasn't and they died. The commemorative walk was organised primarily to reawaken interest in and understanding of the famine, its causes and consequences, and in so doing to generate an awareness of the structural causes of poverty, both at home and in the third world. This commemorative walk was repeated in 1989 and is likely to continue in future years. It highlights the unique role of history in understanding poverty and its place in a community's shared identity.

labour outflow

Despite the importance of a community's traditions and cultures in cementing a sense of local identity, these become increasingly insignificant in the face of the demands of a wider economic market. In peripheral rural areas there are insufficient jobs to satisfy local labour supply with the result the more educated and qualified move to the main market centres whether these are in Ireland, the UK, Europe or elsewhere. A primary consequence is that these areas which are most in need of development are deprived of indigenous resources and talents and are increasingly dependent on external investment. In such situations, and in the absence of a youth population the maintenance of a local sense of community becomes an unenviable struggle. As pointed out by the Louisburgh project much of the emphasis is on re-awakening interest that is deeply dormant.

segregation and marginality

The negative effects of economic change on local community structure are felt most in those areas where economic activity is concentrated. Dublin over the last thirty years has experienced a shift in class structure and the emergence of marginal groups whose only apparent long term sustenance and viability is social welfare payments. These marginal groups experience very little social mobility. The effects of persistent marginality are greatest in the large suburban housing estates. In many of

**Creative
arts programme
in Connemara
project**

Photo: Liam Lyons



"A lot of time goes into creating a sense of community and it has to be worked at continually over long periods"

**Launch of
community
information
directory in
Connemara
project**



these estates tradition is being replaced by class as a common value and social segregation is an underlying feature. What most people have in common is their financial inability to own a family home, a relative lack of choice in selecting this home, in addition to residing in areas that for a long time consist of nothing but houses. The housing profile of Damdale, Coolock and West Tallaght is predominantly new, large scale local authority estates. The vast majority of tenants are young families. All three areas are to different degrees underdeveloped, in terms of amenities, facilities and services. They are densely populated, working-class communities. Commercial, industrial and professional interests tend to be owned by people who live outside these communities with the result that incentives to invest in local commercial and development activity are reduced. There is a dearth of indigenous resources for local investment. As West Tallaght project points out the area does not have the local skills and resources to generate growth and development locally.

*community
infrastructures*

A major drawback for local people trying to build a sense of community in a new housing estate is that initially they have nowhere to go for information. The population tends to be made up of young families who are cut off from the advice and experience of their elders in the inner city and other established communities. Community infrastructures, such as community centres, clubs, amenities, are vital for bringing local people together. Community centres, for example, which usually consist of large halls - purpose built or closed down school halls or other buildings - normally have the basic facilities for public meetings and some games, sports and club activities. In many communities such infrastructures are non-existent. Furthermore, when they are built they lack resources. The West Tallaght project notes that a number of estates in the area have community centres built in the past few years. The big problem now is getting the money to keep them open. By themselves community centres are not sufficient to generate a sense of community. This is something that cannot be built, it is intricately related to local attitudes and experiences of community. A lot of time goes into creating a sense of community and it has to be worked at continually over long periods. If the initiative, commitment and resources are not there, it is possible that a sense of community will not happen. It is therefore important that community centres in new areas like West Tallaght are staffed and resourced so that the task of generating local commitment and enthusiasm is consciously undertaken.

2- Area development

Some projects, particularly the three rural projects in Connemara, Louisburgh and Inishowen and the urban area projects in West Tallaght and SICODA, operate an integrated area strategy for tackling poverty. The central aim of this approach is to find a united and agreed set of objectives for all those people who live and are involved in providing services in a particular catchment area. This strategy is usually adopted in communities where members have similar class, residence, income and occupation, or in those rural communities where there is some evidence of a local

consensus to develop the area that cuts across class, residential and occupational divisions. **In** the three rural projects, poverty is described as being related to unemployment, underdevelopment, the lack of and under-utilisation of indigenous resources, and remoteness - distance from the centre of economic, social and cultural development. Using a combination of these criteria all three geographic areas are impoverished. Project personnel tend to relate poverty to an external standard, that is, to the wealth and opportunities of the external national population. **In** putting together a cohesive strategy for community development two rural projects, Louisburgh and Inishowen, focus their main activities on local area development rather than poverty itself. As a result the issues of local poverty, particularly local differences in income, class, status and power, are not openly focused upon. **In** these two projects there is a sense in which an open focusing on such issues could hinder a united community development response.

community control

The Connemara project also focuses on local area development activity rather than specific anti-poverty activity. However, by concentrating on collective ownership it provides an analysis of poverty that reflects both internal and external differences in ownership of resources. The basic underlying objective of all three rural projects is to develop resources under different models of community control and by so doing to improve the relative economic and social position of the community. **In** doing this a key strategy is to mobilise committed personnel from all sectors of the community - poor and non-poor alike. Clearly, a united community strategy to tackle poverty is being sought by each group. However, none of the three rural projects currently has a stated strategy for separately mobilising those members of their communities who are most poor and disadvantaged. The SICCDA project also operates an integrated area strategy for tackling poverty. Unlike the rural projects however, a central objective of the SICCDA approach is the involvement of target groups in their own separate responses, under the umbrella of the SICCDA organisation which itself retains control of community resources.

local co-ordination

The West Tallaght integrated area strategy emphasises co-ordination. Because the West Tallaght community is relatively new and because it has no long-term record of local activity, there is considerable difficulty in pursuing a strategy of uniting local interests. Most local interests are in the first instance unorganised. For that reason much of the project work is in setting up local community organisations and providing them with advice, support and technical assistance. With this approach, community organisations have time to develop and mature, before a unified strategy emerges. The West Tallaght project was initiated by an independent voluntary agency that is located in the main area of Tallaght itself, and which decided to extend its work into the new housing estates of West Tallaght. The project is primarily concerned with issues such as welfare, unemployment and housing, and with setting up and supporting local groups around such issues. The project objectives of co-ordination, networking and cross-

3- Group development

linking lead to lobbying local authorities, social services and training authorities to listen to and take account of local interests whether tenants groups, women's groups, unemployed groups, or welfare rights groups. The project aims to be a resource for facilitating cohesion and integration among the many and varied community groups in the West Tallaght area. It does not see itself as representing those groups but rather as a resource to them.

Another strategy utilised by projects in tackling poverty, disadvantage and underdevelopment is to unite members of particular sub-groups within particular areas. Some small groups who have come together around a particular issue or for a particular type of support decide that, even in communities where the main local interest is predominantly supportive of them as a group, their own interests are best served through forming an independent sub-group, small as it may be. Women's groups, men's groups, youth groups and groups which engage in specific campaigns or activities, around such topics as unemployment, welfare reform, local radio, or newsletter, are often set up in this way. This strategy is pursued to varying degrees within all the projects and they also vary in terms of the control and interest they continue to maintain in the progress of such sub-groups. It is a strategy that is directly pursued by the Damdale and Coolock projects.

lobby groups

Both these projects are located near each other in very impoverished suburban communities which consist largely of local authority housing. The target group of the Darndale project is the long term unemployed and their families. The project believes that the best way of organising unemployed local people and consolidating their common sense of purpose is to give the unemployed an opportunity to take control over their own lives. This is done through providing an information, advice and drop-in centre, as well as engaging in local and national campaigns on behalf of the unemployed. The project has had a high profile as a lobby group for the unemployed, particularly on the issues of welfare rights and entitlements.

local resource group

The primary focus of the Coolock project is with one parent families. The percentage of such families living locally is much greater than the national average. However one parent families are a minority interest in the community, although many of the issues raised by the project and its work, particularly income, social services and child care, affect the lives of most families in the catchment area. The primary objective of the Coolock project is to develop a local resource group that is directly concerned with the needs of one parent families. It does this through a resource centre for single parents which provides both formal counselling and advisory services and drop-in information and activities. The underlying strategy of the project is to evolve an independent, resourced group of single parents, which will undertake local and national campaigns on their own behalf. Other strategic involvements with the wider local community are

4- Political strategy

secondary to this.

Many projects point out that self-empowerment and self-organisation of poor people cannot take place without examining the wider social and political implications of poverty. Local models for tackling poverty can provide people with 'an opportunity to consider the connections between poverty, powerlessness and institutional power. The SICCDA, West Tallaght and Coolock projects in particular utilise social analysis of local experiences for exploring the location of power in society. They point out that the empowerment of people cannot result solely from individualised responses. Policy responses that focus on income subsidy, for instance, do not by themselves deal with the relationship between poverty and powerlessness. People are empowered by an increase in their income, but if an increasing percentage of this income becomes discretionary, the effect can be to make the recipient even more dependent and powerless. There is a similar consequence to anti-poverty policies targeted to those most in need - by subjecting people to even more means-testing these have the effect of stigmatising and demoralising the poor. All of the projects believe it necessary to continue the pressure for a substantial increase in basic welfare entitlements and other improvements in social welfare and social services. However they point out that real long-term change cannot be brought about without a shift in wider political thinking. Some projects go further to argue that this shift in political thinking needs to be influenced directly by community development groups adopting a more overt political strategy.

*weak political
influence*

In an overt political strategy community development groups set out to directly affect change in the way decisions are made and resources allocated in society. However it is pointed out by projects that the political influence of community and anti-poverty groups is relatively weak. In 1989 some projects participated in a campaign to introduce mechanisms for consultation with community groups as part of the government's proposals for aid under the reformed EC structural funds. Despite a lot of media attention to this campaign it failed to have a measurable impact on the government's proposals to the EC. Most projects point out that central government and administration have consistently failed to take seriously the importance of local models in tackling poverty, and this is reflected in the relative lack of political power of community development groups.

lack of morale

One of the obstacles to developing a local political strategy is that, as a result of the desperate situation in which many people live, they are politically demoralised and lack confidence that change can be achieved by political action. For many, the issue of political argument is a long way behind their immediate priority of survival. The question is justifiably raised: How can the people engage in political strategies if the condition of poverty means that they do not have the confidence, commitment, motivation and organisational ability that would be necessary to pursue change? Many projects have pointed out the difficulties of selling ideas of

alliances

self-organisation to disadvantaged groups. Conservatism, resistance to change, and a detectable sense of fatalism have all been apparent in project experiences. A picture is painted of poor communities that have limited opportunity for political initiative and sometimes rate as low their own power in the political process. Participants in the West Tallaght project suggest that a process of political education in the form of social analysis aligned with social action is essential for poor people to become aware of power structures and of the possibilities of change.

Some projects, particularly the Connemara, West Tallaght and Coolock projects highlight the importance for community groups of forming alliances and working more closely together. Such alliances would provide more impetus to local political strategies. Effective alliances between all the projects have not been built and a number of reasons have been suggested for this failure. Building alliances can take so much energy and resources that it tends to be left aside. Some projects differ considerably in their activities and structures. Some community groups are placed in the situation of competing against each other for scarce development resources which militates against co-operation and in some instances can lead to mutual suspicion. One view that was expressed in the Sligo project, based on the project's concern with the development of youth services in the area, is that the failure of community development groups to form effective alliances can be exploited by other groups who wish to provide community based services but have no intention of developing local participation or involvement. It is argued by some projects that community development groups which wish to engage in political strategies must give more energy, time and resources to the issue of alliances with other similar groups.

**FUNDING
COMMUNITY
DEVELOPMENT**

The Projects' experience is that the possibility of poor communities finding internal resources for community development is severely limited. Poor communities do not have resources and are severely restricted in their capacity for investment and commercial development. However, the Connemara project point out that any community group that wishes to play an active role in developing its area according to its own agenda must seek its own source of funding. They found that asking local people to subscribe financially - in this instance to the development of a holiday cottage scheme that had commercial potential - had an important positive impact on local organisation. The project has now taken the deliberate step of engaging expertise to help it plan and develop other commercially viable activities to be located within its large premises, thus enabling it to become less dependent on outside agencies. Profits from the holiday cottage scheme underwrite much of the existing community development activity.

*local commercial
options*

Not every project, however, has the opportunity to exercise such commercial options, limited as they are. Some projects would have possibilities and resources for indigenous, commercial development that

others would not have. The rural projects have more possibilities of development through exploiting natural resources that are not available in urban areas. Tourism, fish-farming, and forestry are commercial developments currently or in the past being explored (with varying degrees of success) by all three rural projects. The only comparable development in the urban projects is the SICCDA "Tour of the Liberties" a seasonal project providing employment to local tourist guides of the historic Liberties area. Of these ventures only the Connemara cottage schemes returns a substantial profit to the sponsoring community development group, used subsequently to fund local community development.

*membership
subscription*

In relation to membership subscription of community development activities as another possible source of internal revenue, it is pointed out by most projects that the level of income is generally insignificant to the overall cost of the activities themselves. Generally, projects have not engaged in user-subscription as they believe the collection of subscription to be a cost-inefficient exercise. Furthermore, there is the very important point that involvement in community development has its own hidden costs for individuals, such as time, transport, telephone and postage that are rarely accounted for in costing a community development proposal. Clearly therefore, the only real source of internal funding for community development is from commercially viable projects, whose profits are re-invested in community activities. Such opportunities are few within any community, and fewer again within those communities that lack indigenous resources and wealth.

External
resources

Each of the nine community projects was on a time-limited grant from external sources for four years. In terms of the level of funding and its duration the projects are the most reliably resourced of their type in the country. Most community development groups invariably depend on less reliable sources of funding for their survival. These usually take the form of Department of Labour/FAS employment and training schemes. Indeed most projects have received separate community development funding from such sources. Projects point out that, while their involvement in such schemes represents an important and vital stage in their organisational development, the arrangements that underpin their involvement are usually far from satisfactory. Pre-occupation with satisfying the conditions of this type of external funding inhibits a community group's plans for its own development, its long term strategic planning, and its proposals to collaborate with other groups. While community development groups are often in an advantageous position to take on the provision of local training and other services, if their external funding is completely reliant on such activities, their community development function itself will suffer. Therefore, the projects argue there should be a mechanism for funding community development in its own right.

CONCLUSION

Community development is an important mechanism for tackling poverty primarily because it involves poor people in identifying their needs and engaging in collective action to pursue collective interests. In particular, community development affords opportunities for the poor to identify and respond to their common interests. It improves the access of the poor to the democratic system. In the experience of the projects the participation of the poor is pursued through a variety of methods and techniques, including local representative structures, resource centres, regular meetings, newsletters, communication groups, and group and personal development programmes.

The projects point out that there is no single community development strategy for tackling poverty. The variety in community development strategies reflects differences in geographic locality, common traditions, and social conditions. The projects have used a wide number of anti-poverty strategies and most projects have used more than one strategy. These include: strategies for building a local sense of community; local area development strategies, group development strategies and local political strategies.

The projects feel that it is not possible to adequately fund community development through either the internal resources of particular groups or contracts with various state schemes and services. Sufficient internal financial resources are not available in poor communities. Furthermore, while it is argued that community projects are uniquely placed to be involved in the organisation and management of locally based services and programmes the projects point out that primary consideration should be given to a mechanism for funding community development itself.

The projects recommend that a statutory community development funding scheme be created to fund groups organised around participative structures and which are directly pursuing strategies for tackling poverty. Funding should take the form of a basic grant for staffed, equipped resource centres. It is recommended that funded groups should also have access to capital grants for community infrastructures, capitation grants and technical assistance to undertake various programmes and activities in training, education, social and cultural development.

4 - Community Based Personal Social Services

INTRODUCTION

The projects believe that a wide range of personal social services are necessary to deal with the many human and social stresses related to and often directly resultant from the experience of poverty. In particular, the projects believe that family-support services - social work, family counselling, child residential care, family resource centres and various other programmes for families with special needs - are important for tackling poverty and the many stresses that are associated with it. The SICCDA, Inishowen and Louisburgh projects also highlight the importance of social services in tackling the poverty of the elderly. A number of issues in these services have been identified as requiring priority and are discussed below. Most importantly, the projects believe that personal social services lack integration and co-ordination at a local level, and they suggest that a local model for personal social service needs to be developed.

LOCAL MODEL

The Coolock project put a lot of effort into developing a local model of personal social services for lone parents. The project point out that in order for a local model to become effective for all personal social services it needs to incorporate a number of features: statutory authorities must take responsibility for assessing social need and operating local services; personal social services should be funded through a single budgetary mechanism set up for that specific purpose; service approaches must resource people; consumer consultation is needed in the planning and development of services; service development must be evaluated; participants need access to information in services; informal networks of support must be part of service development.

Local integration

The Coolock, SICCDA and West Tallaght projects are particularly concerned that personal social services lack integration and co-ordination at a local level. Different departments, ostensibly doing the same thing or responding to the same set of needs, sometimes work without even contacting each other. The difficulties are further compounded because no single authority has full statutory responsibility for personal social services and furthermore there is little power to make major budgetary decisions at a local level. This situation exists despite the reorganisation of health and personal social services under regional health boards and community care areas. The reorganisation has not resulted in an effective integration of personal social services, primarily because the 1970 Health Act that set up the health boards was almost exclusively concerned with health and medical care, and made little reference to personal social services.

fragmentation

Under existing arrangements personal social services are funded through mechanisms that involve a number of different government departments, including Health, Justice, Social Welfare, Education, Labour and Environ-

ment. A consequence of this fragmentation is that services tend to be least effective within and among the most marginal groups and communities. According to project personnel there are some individual families with no shortage of social service inputs - in terms of personnel intervening - but they are often concerned with their specialist aspect of the problem, be it child nursing, child care, school attendance, income, welfare appeals, illness, drug addiction, emotional or mental breakdown. What results is a situation where different services take responsibility for different aspects of the problem, but often the central problem itself evades attention. The projects argue that it is essential that many of these services be integrated under a single unit for service delivery.

co-ordination

On a local level, one difficulty is the apparent unwillingness of local authorities and health boards, with similar responsibilities, to sit down together and negotiate the development of services jointly with a local community group. If it approaches these authorities the community group will be encouraged to go off and negotiate separately with each respective department or agency the percentage of funding that relates to their particular responsibility in relation to a proposed service or development. The impression given some projects is that each agency is waiting for the next to act first before it will respond. This procedure undoubtedly leads to further fragmentation and a lot of unnecessary to-ing and fro-ing that would be avoided if there was a mechanism under which all agencies, voluntary, statutory and community, could sit down on a regular basis and co-ordinate their work.

*centralised
decision-making*

The health boards' community care programme is one attempt to decentralise community health services. The Eastern Health Board area is divided into ten separate geographic catchments, each of which has responsibility for personal social services within its area. The SICCDA project operates within the inner city part of area 3. The central and local offices of Dublin Corporation are also located nearby. As a result of a proposal submitted to government in 1982 SICCDA commenced negotiations with the most senior local health board officers in relation to a three way collaboration - SICCDA, Eastern Health Board and Dublin Corporation - to set up a local day centre for the elderly. At all stages they understood the local health board officials (who themselves had invested a lot of energy into the proposal) to have decision-making power and some control over budgets. They were subsequently surprised to find that this was not the case and that any decision on the allocation of budget was subject to approval from central headquarters, which in turn, it appeared, was subject to approval from central government. This seemed to make nonsense of the whole decentralisation exercise, particularly when at any stage SICCDA met with government representatives they were informed that responsibility for various activities lay with the local personnel. A further difficulty encountered by SICCDA in pursuing the day centre for the elderly was getting the health board

voluntary initiative

and the local authority to work together on the proposal. While both authorities were prepared negotiate separately with SICCDA it was difficult to get them to sit down together with SICCDA.

The West Tallaght project illustrates the lack of integration by highlighting the fact that ten years after the area was first developed none of the state agencies responsible for personal social services have a major physical presence in the area itself. The voluntary sector has filled some of the gaps and has been very much to the fore in terms of providing services, highlighting issues and taking initiatives in community development. The negative side is that, despite the proliferation of many voluntary groups, the work itself tends to be very fragmented. Local co-ordination of services depends on informal local link-ups between staff working in both voluntary and statutory organisations. A factor that inhibits statutory initiative in co-ordination is that Tallaght - the third most populous centre in the country - is only one suburb of the larger Dublin area and does not have its own administrative units in the main social services. Much of the blame for this situation is attributed to the planning process which, according to a project staff member, did not seem to recognise that anything other than housing was required for people to live in a place. However it also relates to the failure of the various local and central authorities to jointly plan their involvement with the new community. An important issue is what mechanisms will allow and/or require statutory authorities plan together with community and voluntary groups an integrated approach to local social service development.

*mechanisms for
local co-ordination*

In the area of personal social services there have been documented proposals for local integration and co-ordination. The *Task Force Report on Child Care Services* recommended that the community care programme within the health boards - re-defined as child care authorities also - be reorganised into smaller community care areas with more defined responsibilities in relation to child and family support services and the local co-ordination of these. A supplementary report to the Task Force report, in extending further the logic of the main report, recommended that a new family and child care programme should be established in the health boards to take responsibility for personal social services, including those of the child care authorities. This recommendation was that a new programme be created within the health boards to take over existing personal social services and any others required as a result of further developments in child care legislation and provisions. The main elements of this recommendation were endorsed by health board social workers in a policy document published in 1983. It is the contention of this report that problems of local fragmentation and lack of co-ordination in the delivery of social services must be tackled with an integrated approach to local service provision, such as mentioned in the above recommendation for a separate health board programme for personal social services.

STATUTORY RESPONSIBILITY

prevention

One fundamental problem in relation to the development of personal services is that statutory responsibility for them is mandatory in only a small number of cases. These relate primarily to the provision of residential care and child protection services for children. A consequence is that provision of family-support services and various other preventative services for other categories is dependent primarily on the initiatives of voluntary and community organisations, and the willingness of statutory agencies to fund them. While it is acknowledged that voluntary initiative has an important contribution to make to the development of personal social services, the projects point out that the lack of statutory responsibility has resulted in many needs not being met. Of particular concern is the dearth of family support services which are especially important in preventing child care problems. It is the view of projects that some child care problems could be prevented if a better range of family support services were available at an earlier stage, and if statutory authorities had clear responsibility for setting up such services.

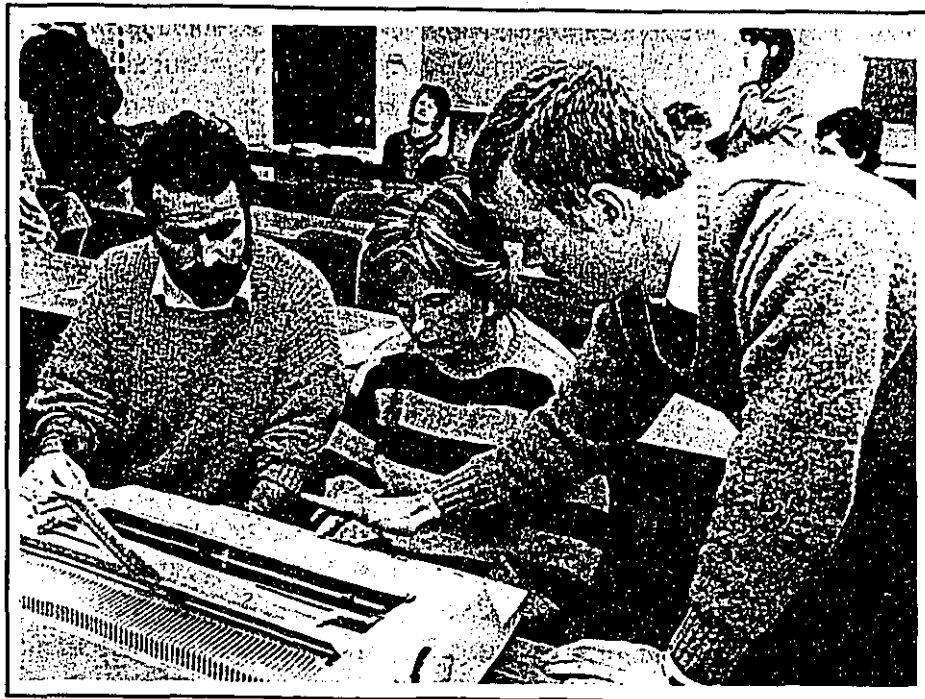
The Coolock project, while acknowledging that not every child-care breakdown is preventable, is particularly concerned that one such breakdown they were involved with required more preventative supports at an earlier stage. Eileen is a single parent who came to live in the Coolock project's catchment soon after the birth of her child. The social work personnel involved were aware of previous child management difficulties and because of this a meeting was called of possible support people/systems to draw up an integrated plan of support to the family. Eileen attended the project daily as part of this plan. Before long it emerged that child management supports in Eileen's home promised from social services did not materialise in the anticipated form. Eileen became very stressed. Her child developed a chest infection and was admitted to hospital. Eileen's stress level reached an all-time high resulting in her having a row with hospital staff. A place of safety order was obtained by the hospital and subsequently the health board obtained a fit person order from the court. The project points out that there was never any question of neglect or ill treatment of Eileen's child. There were child management problems which the right kind of homemaking or day-fostering supports could have remedied. In the neighbouring health board area not two miles away, there is a comprehensive day-fostering service which was developed at the initiative of local health board personnel in conjunction with local people and a voluntary organisation. Such a service, if available, would have been a major part of a support programme to meet Eileen's needs. If the health board had statutory responsibility for developing non-residential children's services, these would be available, not only in areas where voluntary initiative was taken, but in all areas where the need had been identified.

local administrative
unit

While the projects are anxious to highlight the generally high quality of

**A prin'ting
workshop in
West Tallaght
project**

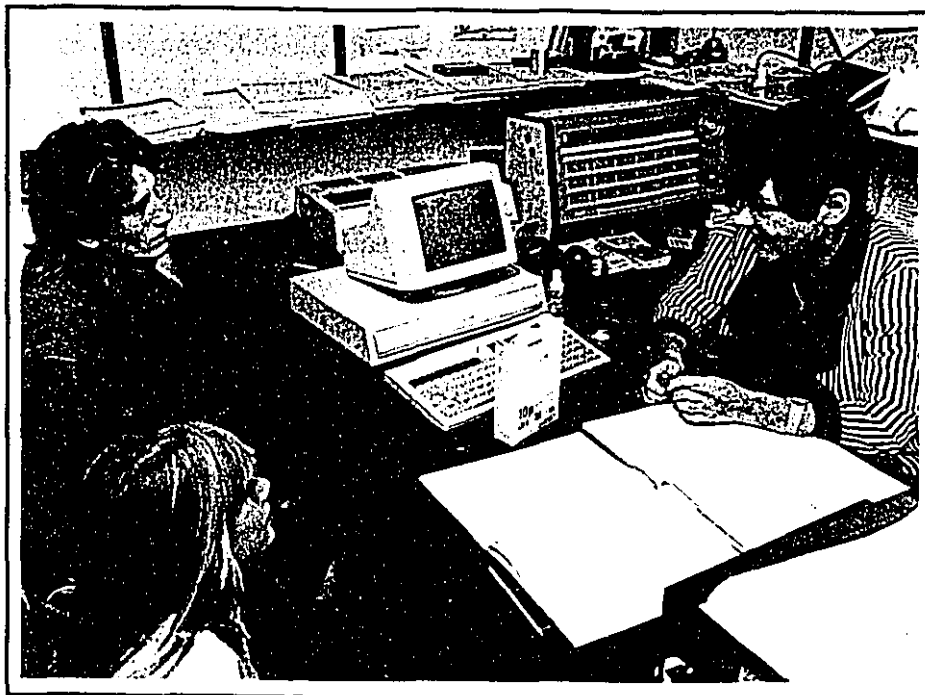
Photo: Alan Lund



"The primary objective (of personal social services) would be to re-source people to become more independent and effective in identifying their own needs and making appropriate responses"

**Information
and advice
service
in Darndale
project**

Photo: Alan Lund



child care and other personal social services, they are concerned at the great reliance on the initiative of individuals or voluntary agencies to set up these services. In relation to child and family support, in particular, statutory responsibility must be mandatory in order to put into effect an appropriate range of personal social services. In an integrated model of personal social service development all services within a specified catchment would be re-organised under a single administrative unit with executive powers and budgetary discretion. This administrative unit would have statutory responsibility in relation to the assessment of social need and the provision of personal social services. It would also be required to bring together all the relevant statutory, voluntary and community groups providing social services within a particular area to co-ordinate and integrate their activities.

Funding

The projects point out that a fundamental problem in relation to funding personal social services is that their benefits to the wider community are difficult to pinpoint. One of the main reasons for this is that they are primarily oriented towards the prevention of social problems - while the greater public demand is for services that treat or cure social problems. Right across the spectrum of social service spending, preventative services - like literacy teaching in education and probation services in the criminal justice system - operate as a poor relation to the more mainstream programmes - schools and prisons, respectively. Family support services which tend to be located in health programmes, form a very small part of community care spending, which itself forms a small part of the overall health budget. The development of family support services therefore is directly related to an expansion of community care. Unfortunately, the funding of developments in community care has relied too much on savings in institutional health programmes. Developments in personal social services are therefore restricted by the level of overall funding of health programmes. The projects point out that the effective development of personal social services cannot rely on changes in institutional areas of health care. In order to fund personal social services a separate and much increased budget has to be agreed at central level and allocated appropriately.

Resourcing people

The projects point out that the focus of personal social services should be more with resourcing people than problem-solving. The primary objective would be to resource people to become more independent and effective in identifying their own needs and making appropriate responses. Individual counselling is one method of resourcing people. It is argued by projects that individual counselling is too often the only option presented to people with personal difficulties. While counselling presents real opportunities for self-awareness and development, in many instances it can individualise social problems and make people dependent instead of resourcing them. It is suggested that a greater range of intervention methods should be developed within the personal social services.

self-help

Many project personnel point out that people with personal difficulties often find self-help and othersupport groups particularly useful. However many such groups are unlikely to form unless social service personnel take direct initiative and responsibility for bringing people together in the first instance. There should also be greater opportunities for people to learn more about their situation through information workshops. Most projects have involved project users in direct information-giving and found that it has had very positive results. Locally-staffed advice centres have been able to reach out to people who tend to be most isolated and are sometimes suspicious of more institutional services. Furthermore, they present opportunities for people to contribute directly to the content of information itself.

activity programmes

Personal social services should also explore the usefulness of activity programmes, exercise, yoga, and creative activities. The Coolock project successfully used relaxation classes for women who were exploring alternatives to drug-treatment in relation to their own anxieties. The budgeting and home management programmes which are mentioned in Chapter 6 could become a starting point for developing some activity programmes. However, it is pointed out that if programmes become over-concerned with domestic management they can reinforce traditional roles, particularly that of housekeeper and child-minder, which are often a primary source of personal stress and anxiety. It would be more appropriate for such programmes to expand their activities to include creative experiences that are new to the persons involved.

wider change

Finally, it is pointed out that people's personal difficulties are not isolated from social and political institutions. Coolock project personnel in particular believe that personal social services should recognise that by identifying and articulating their problems people can work to change the wider social and political structures that contribute to their situation. Personnel in the social services should be open to encouraging such developments and to facilitating them where it is possible and appropriate.

Consumer
consultation

Many groups in poverty have no opportunity for their interests to be represented in vital decisions concerning the allocation of resources and the promotion of various social service developments. The projects point out that mechanisms for consumer and user consultation need to be incorporated into the development of such programmes and to be seen as vital and necessary to strategies for tackling poverty. Most projects believe that state agencies are generally unwilling to consult directly with consumers and users of services. This is most apparent within health and personal social service delivery. Consultation is with the providers and not the users of these same services. At the heart of the debate on consultation is the fact that there are no universally accepted mechanisms for representing consumer interest, with the result that these will vary from group to group and service to service, if indeed they exist at all.

lack of consumerism

Projects express concern that the main social services have little regard for

**Dance classes
for the
elderly in
SICCDA
project**

Photo: Derek Spiers



"Personal social services should also explore the usefulness of activity programmes, exercise, yoga and creative activities"

**Relaxation
massage
for women
in the
Coolock
project**

Photo: Alan Lund



welfare appeals

consumerism as an institutional value. Service users are rarely asked if they are satisfied with services or if anything can be done to improve them. The projects' perception is that when it comes to making choices between competing demands, the stronger voices are those, not of the consumer, but of the best organised professional and vocational interests. Prevention and self-help programmes, for instance, have only a small, insignificant voice with little access to the decision-making table. Even if decisions are taken in the consumer's best interests the consumer has few ways, other than the assurance of providers, of knowing that this is in fact true.

The supplementary welfare system is an important mechanism for supporting persons who experience stress and hardship. Those who avail of it are very often those with the greatest personal difficulties. The manner in which the service is administered can contribute greatly to an alleviation of distress or it can cause further anxiety. It can be organised in such a manner that it embraces either positive or negative attitudes to consumerism. There is some concern in projects that the manner in which appeals on supplementary welfare allowances are handled, reflects a particularly negative attitude to consumerism. There is apparently no procedure for supplementary welfare appeals, and they vary from area to area. People who make an appeal are often informed that their appeal is to go to the board (that is the respective health board). This implies that appeal decisions are made by an obscure, hidden committee. In reality appeals decisions are made by a senior officer, either acting on his/her own or in consultation with the appropriate junior officer. A more positive consumer approach to appeals would be one where there is appellant representation, and where the appellant has full access to information pertaining to the original claim refusal.

consumer groups

As part of its strategy of encouraging the development of consumer groups the West Tallaght project encourages welfare recipients to participate in seminars and conferences on welfare. At one such conference some resentment was expressed by welfare providers at recipient participation. One such provider commented to a project staff member that this participation raised false expectations and the danger was that it would encourage people to arrive at welfare offices the following Monday morning, demanding and expecting more money. The project is concerned that some welfare providers believe that consultation and information automatically implies increased demand for any particular service and that such attitudes are not isolated. Parents experiencing difficulties clothing their children for a return to school were encouraged by the project to apply for exceptional clothing needs grants. The project was criticised by some welfare providers on the basis that they were raising people's expectations. Yet the project's advice was factually correct. The project point out that one reason for such attitudes is that when "professionals, social workers, and other care workers are under pressure they tend to deliver the solutions as defined by their

hierarchy, and if your job is the professional solving the problem then it is unlikely that you concern yourself with other, more participative ways of doing things".

It is suggested that mechanisms for consumer involvement in the planning, development and management of personal social services are crucial for the effective delivery of those same services. They should also be seen as a vital component of strategies for tackling poverty.

Ongoing evaluation

All personal social services should have built-in mechanisms for ongoing evaluation, which could happen in a variety of ways: evaluation by participants of specific programmes; evaluation questionnaires administered to random samples of the consumer group; consultation with participants regarding the content and form of programmes. An important factor that militates against social service organisations developing a dynamic evaluation approach, is the urgency of doing within the personal social services.

crisis services

This comes about primarily because many families in contact with social services are under extreme pressure, and are quite often demanding that personnel respond to their individualised needs - provision of aid, arranging pre-school places, mediating in welfare applications. At the level of personal social service contact, it is not easy to refuse to become involved in that kind of response and very quickly services have become overburdened and over-stretched. Personnel find themselves in situations where they can only respond to crises. A consequence is that service users realise that their only option in seeking a response to their situation is to represent it as a crisis - "If you do not get my kids into a community playgroup (or money for food and so on) then I'll leave my kids and it will be your fault." Before long the whole service can become so involved in crisis work that it is difficult to find time to question whether or not it is doing the right thing. The possibility of looking at alternative approaches become even more remote. Social services can become trapped into maintaining a crisis-relationship because they rely on it for funding, but this relationship can never be the basis for initiating and monitoring a self-development approach. According to a West Tallaght project staff member an important issue is how to convince social services that unless they re-examine and re-adapt their approach to one that is developmental rather than solely problem-oriented the service will spend a lot of time shoring up an inadequate system with handouts and various alleviating interventions, whose effects are never questioned or evaluated in terms of their impact on poverty.

Access to information

The importance of access to information held on files is an important issue especially for the Coolock project. Project staff believe that professional values associated with client non-access to information contribute to negative attitudes among poor people, particularly women, who invariably are on the front line dealing with social service personnel. The lack of access

effective counselling

to information in social services arouses suspicion and genuine fears among people that professional assumptions are made about them which they have no opportunity to check or question. Some project participants believe that single parents are perceived by social services as a problem because they are single parents. If a single parent brings a child to hospital she is often, without apparent reason, referred to a social worker.

Access to information is crucial in building up a trusting environment for social service development. In particular, client access to information forms an important basis for effective counselling. In situations where social service programmes have statutory responsibility in relation to children, and where there is a conflict of interest between the agency and the individual, the individual could be fully advised and provided with a separate support programme - counsellor, social worker, or whatever. In such situations access to information rules would be different but families would be made aware of the differences and as a result they would also be aware of the statutory obligations of particular services.

Informal care networks

It is pointed out by the projects that personal services could be delivered with more effect and efficiency if they had greater capacity to utilise informal networks of care within the community. Within stable family situations, informal networks of support are automatically mobilised at times of crisis, and usually involve immediate or extended family. However, in the kind of family situations dealt with by social services, such supports often do not exist. In child care situations in particular, the placing of children in care at times of crisis is often the only option available to social service personnel. This option is expensive, disruptive for all concerned, and frequently not in the best interests of either child or family. An alternative option would be to assign (and pay) persons to work full-time in the home at particular times of crisis. Such persons would not need to be professionally qualified: they could be a substitute aunt, friend or mother, with an appropriate range of skills in child care. The service itself could be developed with proper structures for training and co-ordination. The crucial importance of this approach is that the intervention would take place in the home. In the residential option the intervention can be so removed from the home that it can cause suspicion and further distress for the family concerned.

home based worker

Mary is a single parent who attends the Coolock project. Some of her six children aged 3 to 15 have been taken into care on a few occasions. The project believes that this could have been averted if a more informal care arrangement had been made available to Mary. Prior to the birth of her last child Mary's husband left the family home and since then she has experienced recurring serious illnesses. Following the birth of the child Mary had to be hospitalised for three weeks. The five older children were taken into residential care. Six months later Mary was hospitalised for a two week period and her children were again placed in residential care.

During the following year her two younger children were again taken into care on two separate occasions. Each time the children were taken into care Mary experienced further stress. A more effective remedy for Mary's situation would be the provision of a home-based worker to assist directly in the home. This would cause less stress to Mary and contribute to her well-being and her ability to recover. The children would feel more secure in familiar surroundings and be able to maintain their school and home routines. It would also be a much less costly exercise than residential care. The project staff who were involved with Mary point out that in this and other cases they have come across, the option of taking children into care has been utilised in many situations where that of home-based worker would have been preferred. This option is not available primarily because there is neither will nor resources to pursue it within the principal care agency - the local health board.

It is suggested that a greater range of informal (home and community based) care options is essential to respond effectively to the needs of families at a local community level. Before these options can be developed responsibility for initiating and developing them needs to be undertaken at local community care level.

CONCLUSION

The projects point out that personal social services are crucial in tackling the many human and social stresses that are associated with poverty. In particular, family support services are essential for providing counselling, support, and various other interventions at a personal level. However, the projects are concerned that these services lack integration and co-ordination at a local level. Because no single statutory agency takes responsibility for personal social service development many needs are unmet, particularly in the areas of child and family and services for the elderly. A further difficulty is that funding for the personal social services relies heavily on budgetary decisions taken in departments whose overall remit in relation to these services is minor. The projects are also concerned that personal social services should primarily be involved in resourcing people with personal difficulties and should incorporate mechanisms for consumer consultation, ongoing evaluation, access to information and the utilising of informal care networks in service development.

The projects recommend the following:

The effective co-ordination and integration of personal social services at a local community level.

Appropriate public authorities (i.e. health boards) be required to assess social need and set up appropriate local structures for personal social service development.

Personal social services be funded by a separate budget at central level to be allocated to appropriate authorities and agencies.

The primary approach in personal social services be to resource people with personal difficulties, through a number of intervention methods including individual counselling, self-help groups, information, activity and development groups.

The setting up of mechanisms for consumer involvement in the planning, development and management of personal social services.

Personal social services to have built-in mechanisms for ongoing evaluation and assessment of progress.

The introduction of a client-access records system in all personal social service programmes.

The development and provision of a greater range of fully resourced informal care networks in the community.

5 - Community Enterprise and Training

INTRODUCTION

The EC Commission in formulating guidelines for the Second Anti-Poverty Programme decided that the projects should not have a remit in relation to local economic development. However, in the operation of some projects, particularly the rural projects and SICCDA, involvement in local economic activities was inescapable primarily because of previously developed objectives and activities in this area. In relation to the West Tallaght and Damdale projects, there was a peripheral involvement in local economic development, through alliances with local enterprise groups, an involvement in training programmes, and a general concern with economic issues. Overall, the three rural projects, SICCDA the West Tallaght and Damdale projects were concerned with the issue of local economic development.

stimulating employment

The state's primary mechanism for stimulating employment is to encourage private sector investment with grants, subsidies and tax exemptions. There has also been a secondary programme of support to community enterprise which has provided feasibility, development, workspace, enterprise worker, wage subsidy and manager grants to various community based enterprises. While the projects have not been in a position to assess the impact of either private sector or community enterprise in disadvantaged communities they argue that a community enterprise model specifically designed for such communities should be developed and promoted. This chapter considers some of the issues that are raised by the projects in relation to community enterprise.

local training

Over the last ten years many community development initiatives have been initiated and supported through the operation of various employment and training schemes under the aegis of a number of state agencies which are now amalgamated under one agency, FAS. Most projects have been involved with providing and developing such schemes. All of the projects have been concerned with issues that have arisen in the operation of these schemes. These issues which are discussed below include the fact that literacy, numeracy and social skills inputs into some of these schemes need to be subsidised from sources outside the main training agency grant. There is also concern that the relationship between the state training agency and community groups who operate training schemes is not always one of partnership. Furthermore, the projects consider the regulations that govern eligibility to participate in training schemes are often restrictive, inflexible and unsuited to the needs of people who are on low income.

COMMUNITY ENTERPRISE

The projects describe community enterprise as enterprise or activity that is collectively owned within the community in which it is located, and whose surplus profits are reinvested into that same community. The main distinction between community and private enterprise is that in the former

ownership is likely to be shared equally between those who initiate, operate or support it while in the latter ownership is with the person(s) who have invested most capital. Another distinction is that profits from a community enterprise are normally invested directly into the community through financial dividend or other projects. Profits from private sector development are normally invested where they can be most profitable, which is often outside the community where they were first created. It is also argued by the projects that with community enterprise a wider social benefit, which goes beyond that of employment and income, will accrue to the local community in a manner that is not possible in the private sector. Such benefits include the mobilising of community effort, the expanding of social experiences and relationships, the development of local management skills, and a visible improvement in the resources and creditworthiness of community groups. However, it is acknowledged that it has not been possible yet to provide a comparative measurement of these social benefits.

holiday cottage scheme

The Connemara project provides the example of a commercially successful holiday cottage scheme owned by the project's parent company, Connemara West, a company which is owned by community shareholders. The cottages have an important role in bringing tourists and capital into the community. The profits that have accrued from this scheme over the last twenty years have essentially underwritten other non commercially viable community development projects. If the cottages were owned by private enterprise the profits would accrue to the owner and be reinvested where they could be most profitable, which might not be the same local community. Within Connemara West's company structure there is no expectation that dividends be paid directly back to shareholders; people are aware that the dividend is there but they are not getting it in financial terms. The project has to put a lot of effort into convincing a community that profit can be returned in different ways, just as a lot of effort has to go into convincing state agencies that commercial outturn can be measured in different ways.

market failure

The Connemara project points out that the profits which accrue from enterprise development in impoverished areas are often insufficient to attract private investment. This situation contributes to market failure insofar as additional economic activity does not, as a result, take place. However, the objectives of community enterprise are tailored towards a narrower profit margin, if any at all, and a wider social benefit. Project staff believe, for instance that the holiday cottage scheme and Teach Ceoil developments would not have happened through private enterprise investment. Yet these schemes, as well as returning a considerable income to Connemara West, have generated other economic activities, particularly in the summer. The project believes that statutory mechanisms for supporting community enterprise should be aimed at achieving a lower profit margin (and sometimes a loss) and a measurable social benefit. One

*additional
development*

tourism cooperatives

mariculture

institutional supports

of the difficulties in advocating this approach, as mentioned previously, is that there has not been adequate research on the measurement of social benefits.

The Inishowen project points out that if there is more encouragement to community enterprise the resultant activity can provide a stimulus, no matter how small, to further local economic development. They argue that community enterprise can stimulate additional private sector activity. However, they point out that the initial stimulus, in their case the project's own activities, is crucial. In the examples in Louisburgh and Inishowen, described below, a crucial factor in the development of community and other additional enterprises is the strategic location of a resourced, and staffed, community development project.

Both the Louisburgh and Inishowen projects had to work hard to convince their respective communities and statutory agencies of the benefits of tourism cooperatives. Both projects believe there is scope in their areas for the type of tourist who does not require the high-class accommodation promoted by state agencies in previous years. Tourist development has the potential of expanding the involvement of low income farmers and results in subsidising their income. Unless the marginal households became involved in tourist development there would be no consequent changes in local infrastructure. In the initial stages of developing this approach, they could not convince state agencies that giving support to initiatives at the lower end of the market could have positive consequences for the whole market as well as for the community. Similarly, it was difficult to convince those private operators already in the local market that developments in the wider interests of the community could have spin-offs for them also. Nonetheless the projects set up local resource groups for stimulating tourism development - a tourism cooperative in the case of Louisburgh and a tourism sub-committee in Inishowen both of which have achieved success in attracting new tourists to their respective areas and involving more local people in the provision of accommodation and tourist services. Both projects point out that these developments would not have happened within traditional private sector structures. The Inishowen project is also involved with the development of mariculture. The development group believes that this natural resource could have immense benefits if developed by and on behalf of the community. Surveys and tests were carried out and suitable sites for the cultivation of shellfish identified. Local people setting up their own satellite operations use the central community development project to acquire their stock and eventually to market produce. It is anticipated that this project will provide financing for community development .

Those projects which directly involve themselves in stimulating economic activity, particularly Inishowen, Connemara and SICODA express con-

Examining oyster spat at the Inishowen project's oyster farm



"If community enterprises had a more developed infrastructure of institutional supports, including product research, marketing expertise and management training, they could be strategically placed within those disadvantaged communities which had not succeeded in attracting private enterprise sufficient to sustain a normal level of employment"

Gardening cooperative members at work in Darndale

Photo: Alan Lund



cem that community enterprise is too often perceived by state economic agencies as residual activity. It is difficult to generate enthusiasm from the state towards new community enterprise ideas. The projects argue that if such community enterprises had a more developed infrastructure of institutional supports, such as some of those which exist within the private sector, including product research, marketing expertise, management training, and so on, they could be strategically placed to stimulate local economic development within those disadvantaged communities which had not succeeded in attracting private enterprise sufficient to sustain a normal level of employment. The SICCDA project point out that state agencies tend to assess community enterprises according to similar criteria which were applied to private enterprise, i.e. long term viability in profit terms. The main problem SICCDA find with this approach is that the objectives of community and private sectors are different and do not lend themselves to such comparisons. SICCDA in particular believes that state economic agencies do not sufficiently understand community enterprise to make the distinction between it and small privately owned local businesses.

traditional craft

The SICCDA project believe that a revival of traditional industry could have a role in the social and cultural development of the area as well as providing some much needed jobs. Preliminary research in a traditional craft revealed there was a quality market for its product. The project applied to and received a feasibility grant from a state agency to research the product further. The main purpose of the grant was to engage consultants. The project differed with the state agency as to how such consultants should be engaged. The project wished to advertise and by so doing to generate competition and interest in the development. The state agency wished to appoint consultants that they had already identified as being suitable, and in the event this happened. As it turned out the consultants, with the support of the state agency, proceeded to set the development up as a local business enterprise, as opposed to a community enterprise, which was the objective of the SICCDA initiative. Eventually SICCDA, after committing a lot of time, energy and resources to the project, withdrew from it.

*stimulating
development
in impoverished
communities*

In general terms state support for economic development is intrinsically related to any proposal's potential for jobs and wealth creation. The projects argue that in impoverished communities this approach is too narrow a basis for state involvement. Rather than the simple question whether new jobs and growth will accrue from a state investment we should ask the deeper questions of how to stimulate economic initiatives where previous enterprise development was non-existent; what training and supports are required to develop proficiency where there are few formal qualifications and skills; how does a community group focus on market led enterprises when their interrelation with the wider market, and its principal operators, is limited? These questions could be more easily

cooperative training

answered if the infrastructure! support to community enterprise were greater.

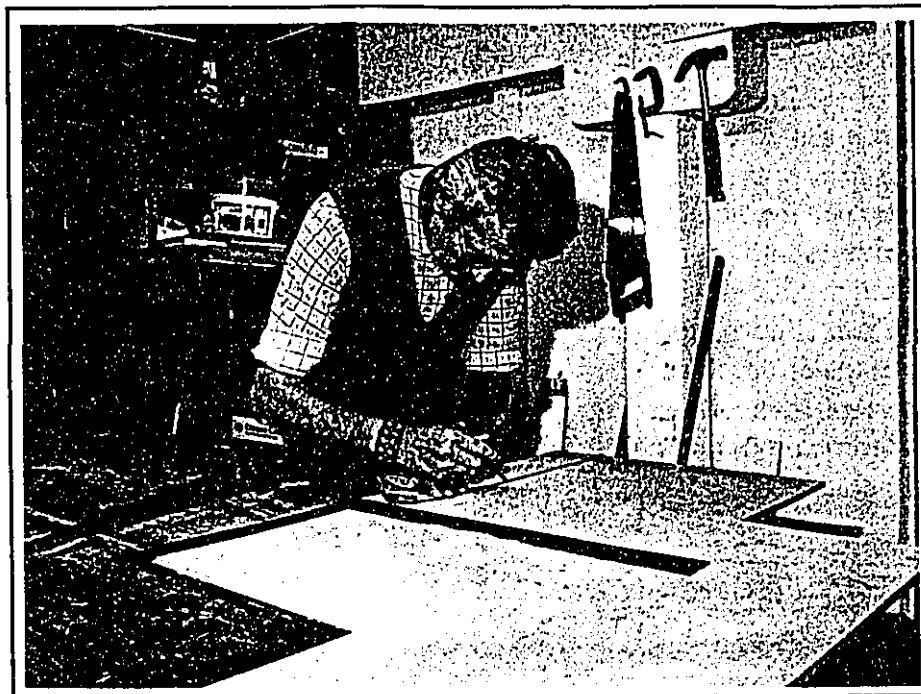
The Darndale project is involved with a co-operative development training initiative. Much of the impetus for this training programme originated from within a section in a state training agency. A small group of training resource staff were exploring the possibilities of cooperative models for regenerating employment in the construction industry. They believed that such a programme was more likely to succeed if matched directly with planned construction initiatives. In Darndale, Dublin Corporation was planning a house refurbishment programme. This development was perceived by the trainers as an ideal opportunity for involving unemployed construction workers in the reconstruction of their own community. If "local people are involved in the physical aspect of the work, then a stronger sense of identity and belonging will prevail". A strategic objective of the training programme was that trainees would be in a position to tender as sub-contractors for some of the work in the refurbishment programme. The project and other local groups were disappointed that only a small number of local persons were employed by the main contractor on the refurbishment programme. The primary reason for this is that local authorities have no legal mechanism for requiring contractors to employ local labour. The only alternative mechanism by which local people could get work was by setting up local co-operatives and sub-contracting work from the main contractor. This was pursued and one of the cooperative groups that resulted from the training programme did eventually secure contracts for some aspects of the refurbishment work. However, this limited involvement of local labour was not achieved without a protracted struggle. One of the factors that worked against the local group was that a cooperative development course ceased at a vital stage of the group's development. The project's perception is that the agency concerned believed that all the skills required to run a cooperative could be learned in a six months course. This is quite unrealistic in view of the previous education, skill level, and work experience of those on the course. Clearly, the kind of commitment required to support cooperatives of this kind to a level where they can compete is substantial, and cannot be achieved through short-term state involvement and State funding of such programmes needs a much longer timescale.

development expertise

While projects acknowledge some of the inherent limitations of community enterprise developments, particularly in the areas of skill and commercial expertise, concern is expressed that state agencies lack understanding of development expertise. By development expertise is meant not alone skills in production, administration, sales and management, but the abilities that are required for working with a voluntary committee, for answering some of the questions that are raised above and posing some solutions

**Training in
aSIMON
work
project**

Photo: Peter Orford



"FAS training schemes have provided opportunities for community development and other local activities that would not have existed otherwise, as well as providing opportunities for many people to return to the workforce"

**Training in
SICCDA
community
training
workshop**

Photo: Alan Lund



COMMUNITY TRAINING

and for the promotion of a wider community identity. Some projects that when these latter skills are priorities of community projects state agencies can lose confidence in the project's abilities.

There has been a substantial state investment in various job training, education and employment experience programmes directed at improving the prospects of unemployed persons seeking work. Some of these programmes have been aimed at disadvantaged young people: they include Teamwork, which has provided work experience in social employment, and Community Training Workshops which provides basic work skills training usually of six months duration in community based centres. Other programmes have targeted the long term unemployed and they include Social Employment Schemes, (half time work experience for people aged over twenty five) and External Training Programmes (which are usually contracted out programmes in return-to-work skills for adults). All of these programmes for disadvantaged people, except a part-time community development training programme for women, are restricted to people who are on the live register of unemployed persons. The programmes have been developed with the direct involvement of various community projects and organisations. The local group often manages the scheme on the basis of a budget agreed in advance with the state agency. All of the projects have varying experiences of such schemes. Some manage them directly; others have been involved in setting them up; all have been involved in various attempts to integrate the schemes to the needs of project target groups. There have been positive experiences in relation to these schemes and it is acknowledged that they have provided opportunities for community development and other local activities that would not have existed otherwise, as well as providing opportunities for many people to return to the workforce.

lack of basic skill

However, the projects point out that there is a lot of dissatisfaction with the operation of these schemes. In relation to young people in particular there was concern that many coming into community based training lack basic skills such as literacy, numeracy and social skills. Often the training grant is insufficient to provide an adequate response to these needs and the resources have to be found elsewhere. The SICCDA project points out that it had to make a considerable personnel input to provide a social programme in its community training workshop. The personnel involved would otherwise have been available for other local development work. Therefore the community project was actually subsidising the community training workshop.

socially disadvantaged context

Projects believe that the regulations concerning the funding and objectives of community training programmes should be changed to reflect the socially disadvantaged context in which they operate. By their very nature community training programmes are usually aimed at people who, for reasons normally associated with social disadvantage, have not availed of

mainstream training programmes. Community groups have demonstrated a capacity to operate such programmes and furthermore to attract the socially disadvantaged into them. The projects believe that the objectives, funding and content of community training programmes should take more direct account of the work being done in tackling poverty.

youth training

The SICCDA project points out that if community groups refuse to provide training programmes the people who suffer the most are the young people who could have availed of these. A primary reason why community training workshops are set up is that young people from poorer and disadvantaged backgrounds do not avail of the state's mainstream training opportunities. SICCDA had a difficult relationship with the state training agency in relation to its training workshop, which they eventually set up three years after the training agency's own community workshop closed. There was strong pressure on SICCDA to accept the proposals of the state agency which were for training programmes, management structures and funding arrangements, far short of the optimum demands. To give in would have meant that a local workshop would have been up and running within months of its predecessor closing, which would have pleased many local people, particularly the young. SICCDA believed that the proposals did not adequately address issues of poverty and disadvantage that were fundamental to a restructured training workshop. They decided to hold out for a better deal; while the result continues to fall short of what it would consider to be the best arrangement, it represents a tremendous improvement on the state agency's initial offer. The state agency had closed its own workshop for reasons that related to the local situation of poverty and disadvantage, but seemed unwilling to acknowledge these factors when it came to negotiating a replacement workshop with a local community group.

partnership

Projects believe that the relationship between community groups and FAS, the main state agency responsible for training, needs to be more firmly based on partnership. Some project personnel feel that FAS tends to negotiate with community groups according to its own pre-set agenda, usually concerned with the issues of funding, course content and recruitment for particular training programmes. The projects believe that real partnership means that the state agency should show greater interest and concern for the wider issues facing a community group. FAS should be more prepared to look at its own role in furthering the overall development of community groups.

wood skills project

The Connemara Project found that the most fruitful relationship with any state training agency in relation to its wood skills project, which is now a two-year course in fine woodworking and design, were with the Youth Employment Agency (now incorporated into FAS) during the agency's setting-up period. At the time the agency

and its director encouraged risk-taking and innovation, which were necessary in terms of exploring responses to poverty and disadvantage. Project personnel recall that during that first period of dealing with the YEA "a lot of ideas were developed and confidence, enthusiasm and a sense of learning were generated". Such thinking they believed is crucial, because it supports the view that innovation is more likely to result from bottom-up initiatives than top-down. As they researched available methods of wood skills training they discovered that most were directed towards traditional carpentry skills, an approach that was counter to market developments. They decided to tailor their future training programme towards newer market developments and to incorporate into the training business, marketing and design skills. The wood project was completely funded by the YEA for the first three years. At the end of the three years no state agency was willing or obliged to take the project through its next stages. The YEA view was that now the project had been up and running and proved as a pilot project it should be incorporated directly into state training funding. This would put the project under the aegis of AnCO (now incorporated under FAS). ANCO proposed an external training project: a programme of skills training of limited duration. Connemara West turned down this proposal on the basis that it would not constitute a development with real long term potential. Eventually, after almost two years of negotiation, the wood project was re-launched as a new course in fine woodworking and design, a joint arrangement between Connemara West and the Regional Technical College, Galway. A central difficulty in developing this project is that state agencies, apart from YEA in its earlier days, do not have a model for working with community groups. It seems as if statutory agencies fear engaging community projects on a partnership basis. Indeed, at one stage it appeared that although state agencies were not prepared to take over the funding and development of the project a haphazard attempt was being made to set up a similar project in the same region under the direct aegis of one of the state agencies concerned.

limited eligibility

Another concern of the projects in relation to employment training schemes is the rule that only persons who are on the live register of unemployed persons are eligible to apply. This rule excludes from participation in such schemes married women who are not registered for unemployment benefits or allowances, single parent women who receive social welfare allowances, recipients of various disablement payments and those who are in receipt of fanner's dole. The projects argue that many members of these groups are uniquely suited to participate in employment training schemes and would benefit immensely from the experience. The issue is most forcibly highlighted by the Coolock project in relation to single parent women on social welfare. On the one hand single parents experience a certain amount of public criticism for being dependent on social welfare. On the other hand, if they wish to return to work they are

deprived of opportunities, available to others, for developing their work and employment skills.

social employment

The Louisburgh project experienced a further difficulty with the regulation concerning the age of participants in certain schemes. Some of the schemes are aimed at people under the age of twenty five, but because of emigration, there are insufficient numbers of young people in their catchment to avail of the schemes. They also find the Social Employment Scheme restrictive. They employ a secretary under this scheme. This employment is limited to twelve months, after which the secretary is let go and the project, if it wishes to continue with the scheme, must employ someone else. However, the possibilities of the secretary finding alternative employment and of the project finding a suitable replacement are remote. Other projects experience similar difficulties in relation to the temporary nature of these schemes.

participant's account

This account of a Social Employment Scheme is from a participant on the Darndale project: "I started on the Social Employment Scheme in August 1987. My reasons for starting on it were purely for the extra money I would receive, as I was only getting IR£70 on the assistance and I would get IR£85 on the scheme, which gave me an extra IR£15, plus I did not have to spend my busfare which I did when I was collecting my assistance. I started the scheme as a caretaker in the Information Advice Centre, which was run by the unemployment action group. This was my first involvement with the work of the group although I had known the people in the group for some time. On the scheme I had to work twenty hours a week which was reasonable, but I found I would rather have been working forty hours per week, which would have made me feel as if I was really working again. The scheme was only for one year which is not long enough to help someone who has been out of work for a long time (in my case six years) to feel he or she could be useful to the community again. When I say that the scheme was only for one year what I mean is that you come off the labour for a year but only work for six months, i.e. doing twenty hours per week. I feel that if the government want people to go on these schemes they could give them at least two years work. By that I mean a forty hour week at the average industrial wage which would get people back gaining some pride in themselves and not feeling as if they were sponging on society. While they are on these schemes people could be learning new skills so that when the scheme finishes they would at least have some chance of getting a new job. I feel that most if not all of the schemes brought in by successive governments are of no help to the unemployed; they are just a way for the government to cook the figures regarding unemployment. I feel that the people in power if they want to be seen to really care about unemployment, and they feel they must bring in schemes, then I suggest they think along the lines I have already explained. The one good thing to come out of being on the social

employment scheme for me was that I became involved with the unemployment action group and in doing so I have found that there is no need to sit around the house all day with nothing to do. I now help ^{to} run the centre and that helps me feel that I am helping other people to help themselves.

CONCLUSION

The projects do not have a widespread involvement in local economic development. Nevertheless, they believe that community enterprise with an emphasis on collective and cooperative responses to unemployment and enterprise development operating in addition to and in place of private sector development constitutes an important strategy tackling poverty. The projects point out that with community enterprise it is possible to achieve development, employment and growth in disadvantaged areas that otherwise would not happen, although they acknowledge that the relatively small number of Successful demonstration models in community enterprise make this difficult to prove. The projects highlight that the social benefits to disadvantaged areas which accrue from community enterprise have never been properly measured. They conclude that community enterprise is a relatively untried sector in the economy and that policies that support it should be further developed.

The projects recommend that policies and incentives for mobilising community enterprise need to be more enthusiastically embraced and promoted from within the development agencies of the state itself. In particular they recommend that institutional Supports in the form of product development, market research and management training should be directly provided to community groups.

The EC projects have also been involved to varying degrees in the planning and operation of community based training and employment programmes. This involvement has raised important issues in relation to how these schemes are structured and operated.

The projects recommend that employment and training schemes be re-organised to take more direct account of local experiences of poverty and disadvantage. It is further recommended that the main state agency responsible for funding training schemes engage in partnership with community projects who manage these schemes.

It is also recommended that rules and regulations that govern entitlement to participate on these schemes be made more flexible in relation to the eligibility of persons receiving state allowances, the numbers participating on any particular scheme, and the length of time a particular individual stays on the scheme. The projects also recommend that entitlement to social welfare payments never be made conditional on participation in such schemes.

6 - Poverty, Income and Services

INTRODUCTION

While the primary thrust of this report has been to focus on issues for social policy that have arisen in relation to community development in particular, projects have also been concerned with the wider issues of income, housing and educational services. The issue of income is fundamental and in this regard the projects highlight a number of issues which are discussed in this chapter. Most importantly they are concerned with the continuing issue of income inadequacy and they also express some concern with the ever increasing reliance of low income persons on discretionary and means tested benefits.

In this chapter the Dublin projects express their concern with the manner in which housing policy, particularly the development of large seemingly unplanned housing estates, has left a trail of socially segregated, disadvantaged and isolated communities. In relation to education most projects have already highlighted the low level of educational attainment of persons who participate in employment, training and various youth development schemes. This issue is elaborated further in this chapter.

INCOME

The projects believe that the lack of adequate income of many people in their target groups has a particularly negative impact on people's morale and ability to gain control over their own situation. Like many other community, social welfare, and social service personnel the projects argue that the basic levels of social welfare income are below an acceptable poverty line and have contributed further to the disempowerment of poor people. In some projects there is a good deal of anger and bitterness that the many recommendation of the Commission on Social Welfare with regard to income adequacy has not been implemented. In 1986 the Commission recommended that social welfare recipients be entitled to basic payments of £50-£60 (1985 values). Following the 1989 budget, basic long-term unemployment assistance allowance for a single person is, at £47, still considerably less than this recommended figure. In preliminary discussions held in Darndale and in some of the interviews subsequently conducted there, it was pointed out that all the necessary information on income adequacy was available in the Commission on Social Welfare's report. It is a matter of regret that this, report and all the publicity that had gone with it over the years was not sufficient to get an adequate social policy response. Similar views on this issue were expressed in other projects, and there is general concern that income adequacy attracts too many reports and too little action.

Dependence on discretion

There are a number of specific aspects of income adequacy that projects wish to have highlighted. In the absence of an adequate level of social welfare payment many people have incurred debt and/or become increasingly dependent on discretionary supplementary welfare payments and

*dependence on
charity*

charitable contributions. Some projects point out that many social welfare recipients who are known to them are unable to set aside savings for large once-off outlays, particularly for clothing, furniture, large bills and school costs (outing, uniforms, books, sports outfits). People borrow substantially in order to meet such large outlays. In relation to supplementary welfare and charitable donations there was concern that some of these payments rely too heavily on discretion and too many people are becoming reliant on the payments.

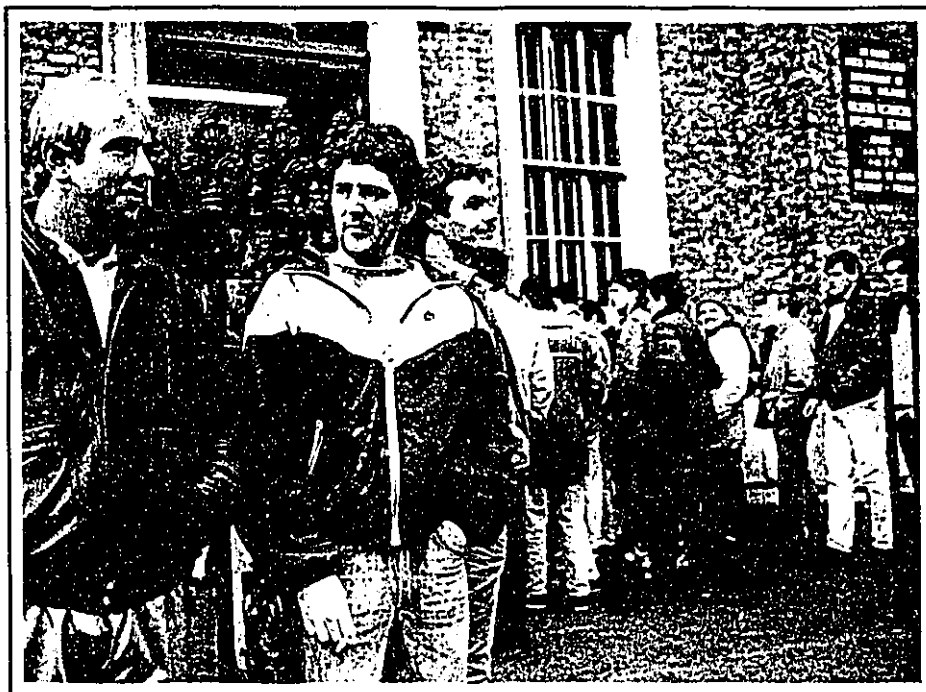
Siobhain, who attends the Darndale project, highlights some of the traps of becoming dependent. She has one child and lives on unmarried mother's allowance in a local authority flat. Prior to her pregnancy she had worked for seven years in a steady job with a regular income and had always managed satisfactorily. After the birth of her son she lived with her parents but eventually decided to set up her own home. She found the experience of setting up a flat extremely difficult and even today shudders when she recalls occasions that were particularly lean. When she moved into her flat she had no furniture. A friend who lived below her suggested she contact the St. Vincent de Paul but she refused. Her parents were particularly proud that despite having to rear a large family they never had to rely on charity and she was reluctant to break the pattern. However two members of the St. Vincent de Paul called one evening. They had heard she had moved in and wondered whether she needed help. They suggested providing her with some furniture. Although she was embarrassed by their offer she agreed to the help. She knew that she would never have been able to afford a table and chairs and although she felt ashamed at agreeing to the help, it was more humiliating not to have any furniture if people called on her. She was also offered a short-term weekly payment of £5 to help her settle in. This payment was delivered in an envelope every Tuesday evening by a male caller who always reminded her that the payment was only short-term. Every Tuesday, she looked forward to the payment. It meant that on Wednesday morning she would have cash to buy a few small things that she would not normally have. Eventually, as expected, the payment stopped. When it stopped, she missed the £5 badly and regretted ever having received it:

resentment

Discretionary payments too frequently used to satisfy basic needs contribute to resentment and bad-feeling among those who rely on such payments. Some welfare recipients interviewed for this report express strong negative feelings about discretionary payments. In some projects involved in the provision of welfare information there is concern that a considerable number of supplementary welfare claimants, who come to the respective projects for assistance, are unhappy with the manner in which their claim for supplementary welfare was handled. In the SICCDA project a number of these claimants went so far as to petition the local health board with their grievances.

People who
queue for dole
payments .

Photo: Derek Spiers
(1987)



"Many people on low income rarely have opportunity to go to the cinema, theatre, restaurants, or sports clubs although social entertainments are seemingly taken/or granted in public discussion in the media and elsewhere"

.....cannot afford
sit-down lunches
in cafes
and
restaurants

Photo: Alan Lund



poverty business

Derek is a long-term unemployed member of the Darndale project. His views on the administration of supplementary welfare are one insight into the strong resentments that have been built up against this system. Derek is proud of his competency in budget management. When he worked, for twenty seven years before he became redundant, he managed to put aside the right amount of money for the special needs of himself and his family - children's clothing for example. In September he will go to the health board's community welfare officer to apply for a discretionary supplementary welfare allowance to purchase shoes for his children. In order to apply he will be interviewed and means tested. He will be asked questions about his ownership of land and property. His income will be verified through getting a Department of Social Welfare officer to fill out and sign a form. He is likely to have been in the same office a month or two months previously applying for assistance on his ESB or other bill. He may even be back again within another two months for further assistance. The very same information was also supplied and recorded when he first signed on for social assistance and again when he applied for a medical card and again for a renewal of his medical card. He firmly believes that vast amounts of money are unnecessarily spent in what he calls the poverty business distributing subsistence money to the poor. The only effective way of tackling this, he points out, is to have a guaranteed basic minimum income for everybody which would take away the stigma of applying for handouts and make significant savings on staffing levels.

Limiting effect
on social experience

The second issue that concerns the projects with in relation to income is the limitation placed on social experiences by low income. The projects point out that people on low income are deprived of many social opportunities that are otherwise taken for granted. For instance a round of drinks among a small group of friends could easily cost 20-25% of the total single adult allowance from social welfare. As a result many people do not drink in company and many others do not drink socially at all. Project personnel have also pointed out that many people on low income rarely have opportunity to go to the cinema, theatre, restaurants or sports clubs although social entertainments are seemingly taken for granted in public discussion in the media and elsewhere. One man in Damdale found that unemployment meant giving up many things he had taken for granted, particularly a weekly drive in the car for himself and his family. Unemployment is seen as denying people the basic social benefits that come with work: a work routine, social contact, and a sense of social and economic purpose.

Home management
courses

A third issue over which projects express concern is home management courses. Projects agree that a lack of budgeting skill contributes to the further impoverishment of some persons on low income. The Darndale project suggests that mechanisms for the payment of some of the main bills - ESB and gas - by direct weekly deduction from social welfare payments

relevance of budgeting

could be explored. A number of positive views are expressed at the success of home management and budgeting courses which have been provided mainly as a result of government grants to the society of St. Vincent de Paul. Such courses provide opportunities for women to come together to explore common interests, opportunities which might not have existed otherwise.

However, in some projects, involved with the issue of low income, regret was expressed that public announcements of home management courses over emphasised the relevance of budgeting skills in tackling poverty. There is concern that such publicity distorts the experience of poverty especially with the evidence that the overall level of social welfare payments is still considerably lower than that recommended by the Commission on Social Welfare. One Darndale project participant believes that because they did not have sufficient means for fighting back the poor are easy prey to generalised comments in relation to financial management. The reality according to many project personnel is that people on low income tend to be very good home managers, whose skill in budgeting is unacknowledged and underestimated. It is argued that in situations of low income the consequences of poor budgeting become highly visible, and therefore subject to criticism: in situations of high income the consequences of bad budgeting may more easily be dismissed as misadventure or bad investments.


morale

A fourth issue of concern to the projects is the debilitating impact of low income on people's morale. People on low income may be so preoccupied with survival that it is virtually impossible to do something more long term about overcoming their situation. For many the benefits of becoming involved with welfare rights campaigns and various other social issues are not immediately apparent. Further concern is expressed that some public comments on the issue of social welfare unfairly convey an impression that many recipients defraud or otherwise abuse the system. An important consequence of such comment is its reinforcement of passivity among genuine recipients causing some, with no obvious reason, to fear the social welfare system.

fears

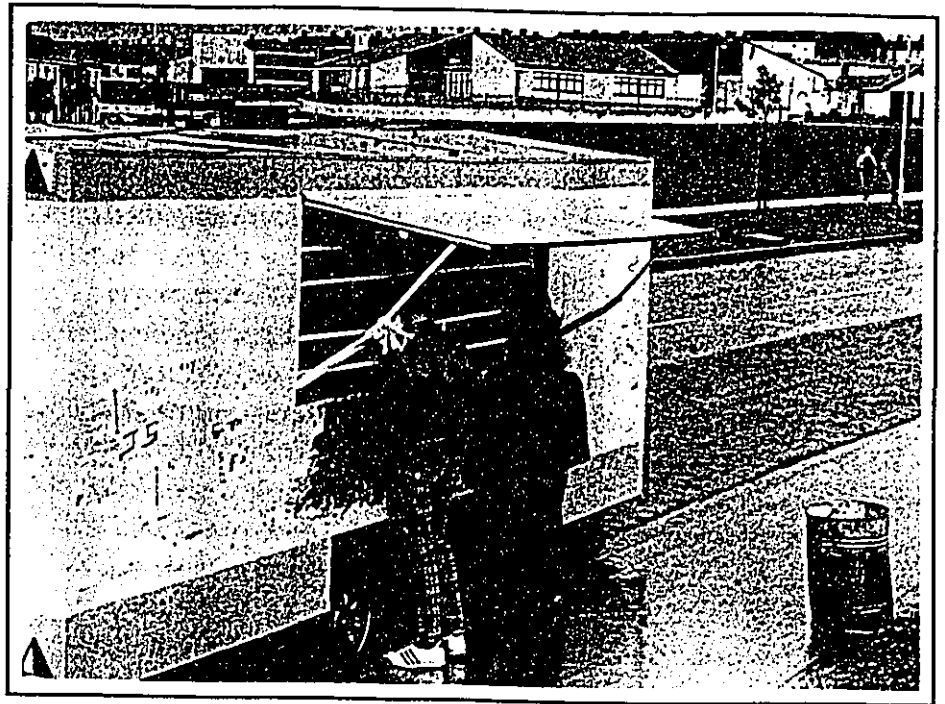
Some project personnel point out that that such fears rebound on self-organised welfare campaigns. According to members of a young unemployment group in the Sligo project, when asked why more unemployed are not involved with their group, they replied that many people do not become involved because of fears that the involvement itself will adversely affect their dole payments.

welfare rights

 *When the West Tallaght project set up its welfare rights centre it had difficulty convincing some people that its purpose was not the disbursement of financial and material aid, although this could very easily have become the thing to do. Some other social service personnel and many local people expected that a project concerned*

A shop
facility in
a Dublin
suburban
estate

Photo: Alan Lund



"Public building programmes have resulted in large scale housing estates which, long after they were built, have lacked a social and economic infrastructure"

Waiting
for the bus
in a Dublin
suburban
housing
estate

Photo: Alan Lund



with welfare would disburse aid. At the early stages of any project there is an urgency to be perceived to do something. If other agencies involved in the same field of work give material and financial aid, pressure can be applied to do the same. As pointed out by the West Tallaght project it is much more difficult to say to people: "We will become involved in your situation, but our involvement is on the basis of assisting you in pursuing, perhaps with others, your rights - your rights not only to basic entitlements but also your right to be consulted about your long term needs. This may or may not go in a direction that provides individual benefit to you." The expectation of many poor, and one that has been reinforced by traditional social service thinking, is that a project like the West Tallaght project would sort out welfare problems whether this meant negotiating with the community welfare officer or supplementing income with financial aid from whatever source. The project believes however, that it had to start with the right kind of model from the outset, which was not to take over people's problems. Fortunately, some people want to become part of this process and in this instance they did set up their own welfare information and advice service. The reality is that there are more who cannot. They simply do not have the time, energy or resources for getting involved.

HOUSING

The powerlessness of people in particular groups is not just that their income or circumstances are poor but that the vast majority of their neighbours, friends and acquaintances are in the same position. In new, large public housing estates people can experience a deep sense of isolation. Because of the enormity of the situation they may feel desperate at not having a solution. As pointed out earlier, community development programmes provide an opportunity for residents of such estates to come together and to develop a community spirit. While community programmes, particularly one such as the women's summer festival organised by the West Tallaght project, have had a significant and important impact on community awareness and identity, breaking down some of the isolation and sense of powerlessness, it is pointed out that long-term meaningful solutions could be found from within housing policy.

Large housing estates

Public housing policies in a developing economy inevitably involve the building of new estates. Such building programmes have resulted in large scale housing estates which, long after they were built, have lacked a social and economic infrastructure. Their sheer size inhibits internal initiatives. When community groups eventually get off the ground in these estates, there are so many major issues requiring immediate attention - employment, education, transportation, and services - that it is difficult to make the long-term commitment that is often necessary to pursue these successfully. Personnel in both the West Tallaght and Darndale projects point out that the housing planners who designed their estates did not seem to be sufficiently informed by the experiences of previous large scale housing developments which were also badly affected by a lack of

lack of planning

planning. In this regard, they considered it important that the lessons of West Tallaght, Darndale and other areas be taken account of in the planning of new estates in the future, and that measures are taken to avoid the imbalances and impoverishment that have resulted from bad planning.

The West Tallaght project staff point out that in their area too many estates were concentrated in one area isolated from the main shopping and amenity facilities. One consequence is that the different estates often end up competing against each other. From the outset the area has seriously lacked facilities and services, particularly in the areas of transportation, shopping, amenity and recreation. There is no health centre for West Tallaght and limited services are made available through parish-owned facilities. There is no social welfare office, although the majority of the population relies on social welfare payments as the main or only source of income. There is a Dublin Corporation maintenance depot and rent office but no housing advice service or rent assessment section. There is no local FAS office although unemployment in the area is estimated at around 70%. Some of these services are available in Tallaghtville which is a bus ride away. Others are only available in the city centre an expensive hour's bus ride away. While project staff acknowledge that there have been recent improvements in some of these services, they highlight the need for services to be integral to the planning of new housing estates in the first instance.

Housing allocations

The SICCDA, West Tallaght and Darndale projects have also expressed concern that local authority housing allocation policies can contribute to good quality housing becoming run-down, low demand, and in some instances a ghetto for those tenants who have little opportunity to exercise choice of residence. Public housing allocations are regulated by the rules of a local authority, subject to the number of houses being built and their location. Choices have to be made as to who gets houses based on a complex system of points allocated according to certain criteria, such as current housing conditions and length of time seeking housing. Additional points are allocated for exceptional medical or social circumstances. Depending on the number of points allocated to a number of persons seeking accommodation in the same areas, a threshold is reached, which becomes the cut-off point for those who are seeking housing. As the demand for housing in certain areas goes up so too does the number of points. As the demand comes down so also does the number of points.

low demand

One consequence is that applicants who are in a low position on the points system are offered housing in low demand areas. Sometimes they have not expressed a preference for such areas but they accept the offer of accommodation through negative choice. Often they will move into an area with the expectation that in a few years time when their points position improves they can then transfer out to a higher demand area. Because they see themselves as temporary residents they may not wish to get involved in

local activity or in developing their area. If there is a large number of such tenants the area will experience a problem of transience. While projects regard widespread owner-occupation as a valuable goal in housing policy, some project personnel pointed out that policies that support owner occupation - tenant purchase schemes and tax relief on mortgage interest - have effectively excluded people on low income from home ownership. In practice tax relief on mortgage interest excludes the low paid and social welfare recipients. The level of income of social welfare recipients excludes them from the purchase scheme, and if the area is already largely made up of social welfare recipients then few can avail of it. The consequence is to put the most aspired form of housing, that is owner-occupation, further out of reach of those on low income.

ghettoisation

Since moving to the West Tallaght area many tenants have moved into private housing availing of the £5,000 house purchase grant (this scheme is now discontinued). Generally, these are families with one person in employment. A survey conducted of two estates each with 700 families showed that 16% availed of this grant and moved out. All families had a member in employment. This policy, designed to have a positive effect on the building industry, had a devastating effect on new unsettled communities, giving rise to fears of ghettoisation and of being left behind. The inevitable result was to split a new town at its crucial early stages into those who do and those who don't own their houses, distinguished not by housing design (as many tend to be similar) but by family income and ability to pay a mortgage.

EDUCATION

The lack of educational qualifications among people with a low income involved in employment, training and various other project schemes is cited by a number of projects as a particular issue of concern. The low level of educational attainment by some training programme participants in Darndale, for example, means the programme had to reassess and change training objectives. All projects point out that whenever formal programmes of training, learning or development are designed within their community development group they are invariably revised to take account of potential participants' level of education. The relatively low level of full education participation within the catchment areas of all Dublin projects is continually cited by them as an important obstacle to local change and development. Some projects feel that this lack of full educational participation has fundamental structural causes over which local community development groups can have very little impact.

educational inequalities

Inequalities in Irish education have continued to persist since they were first comprehensively reported in the report *Investment in Education* in 1965. Additional information compiled since, particularly Patrick Clancy's report, *Who Goes to College?*, for the Higher Education Authority in 1988 and Damien Hannan's report *Schooling Decisions: The Origins and Consequences of Selection and Streaming in Irish Post-Primary*

underachievers

highlighted that working class children derive far less benefit from education than their counterparts in the higher income groups. In Dublin the education system is particularly polarised and a worrying scenario for those projects which are located in high density working class areas is that the lack of education may contribute to impoverishment from this generation to the next, irrespective of whatever community developments are pursued locally.

The Sligo project expressed concern that second level education in particular, has too great an emphasis on high academic achievement and that one consequence is that underachievers benefit little from their educational experience. The project is especially concerned that many young people from disadvantaged backgrounds are leaving school with little or no preparation for life, no real understanding of the jobs market, and no knowledge of the welfare system, primarily because the school curriculum had no inputs on these subjects. The result is that many of those young people who left school without either the points or the intention of going to university at a vital stage of their development face the prospect of long term unemployment and poverty. Project personnel point out that their particular programme of work is designed, as they saw it, to respond to needs which they believe should have been more adequately dealt with in mainstream education. Much of their energy is expended in operating social and life skills and career counselling programmes.

*school and
unemployment*

Michelle, a participant in the Sligo project, has been unemployed since she left school the previous year. She had a good leaving certificate and on leaving school she was looking forward to the future, with a job and new responsibilities. She describes her entry into the labour market as total shock. She had no real idea of how to look for work. When she could not get work she did not know how to apply for social welfare or other entitlements. Her daily routine became form filling, replying to advertisements and telephone calls. As routine it was boring except the odd occasion when a notice in a shop window looking for assistants would arouse interest and excitement. Within months however, when she realised she was getting nowhere, she lost confidence. She became irritated, fed up and began to annoy family and friends. There was a time when, under pressure, she stopped looking for work. She found room to reflect on her schooling and wonder what went wrong. She began to question the appropriateness of her education and in particular its emphasis. She remembers that teachers placed emphasis on getting points for college. Those who asked what would they do if they did not get their exams were advised to repeat them the following year. But there was no talk about unemployment, form filling, or coping with not getting work. In the situation in which she now found herself, nine months after the confidence boost of a good leaving certificate, school appeared to be grossly irrelevant.

CONCLUSION

Some young people from the Sligo project who left school at an early age and who are participating in a literacy programme in the project point out that their decision to leave school was influenced by negative messages they felt from their teachers. They believe they were labelled as people who could not get on at school. They confirm that they did not succeed at school and that at the time they interpreted the teachers' messages to suit their own desires to leave. However, they now regret their resultant lack of literacy skill.

The issue of income adequacy is raised in the experience of a number of projects. One of their most fundamental concerns on both a local and national level is the large number of people living on social welfare payments that are considerably less than what experts have assessed as an adequate basic income. The projects point out that a consequence of an inadequate basic social welfare payment is an increasing reliance of the poor on discretionary and means tested allowances. This development reinforces dependency and has a negative impact on poor people's morale and dignity. It forces them into situations where the primary task on a week-to-week basis is survival.

The projects recommend that the basic social welfare payment for a single adult be raised to levels advocated by the Commission for Social Welfare, 1986, with appropriate adjustments to take account of subsequent rises in the cost of living.

The projects also recommend that the social welfare system should have a greater emphasis on a basic income for all adults irrespective of their gender and familial status.

The projects recommend that the operation of supplementary welfare be revised to ensure that basic needs are not made subject to discretion or further means-test enquiry.

The projects point out that public housing programmes in the Dublin area have tended to achieve the building of vast housing estates without basic facilities and infrastructure. Within these are concentrated tenants with an overall low level of income and a relatively high incidence of social problems. There is an overall picture of social segregation which is apparent in the housing profile of the Darnd'Ule, Coolock and West Tallaght projects areas and to a lesser extent in the SICCDA area.

The projects recommend that within new public housing programmes there should be greater attempts at achieving a social mix, and that the building be accompanied by the development of a social and economic infrastructure, particularly education facilities, services, amenities, transport and employment.

The projects also recommend that housing allocations policy be revised to ensure that local authority housing estates do not become run down directly as a result of such policies.

In relation to education, projects express their concern that educational inequality contributes to the continuation of poverty from one generation to the next. It is pointed out by projects that educational inequality is a major structural problem in society and that policy recommendations are far beyond the scope of this particular report. However projects are concerned with the low levels of literacy and numeracy which are manifested in employment training and various other schemes. The Sligo project is particularly concerned with the lack of life skills training for second level students particularly those who have left school without qualification and who have no work.

The projects recommend that greater efforts be made at second level education to ensure that students with lower levels of educational attainment leave school with basic preparation in literacy, numeracy, and life and social skills.

7 - Summary of Recommendations

I - COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

The projects recommend that a statutory community development funding scheme be created to fund groups organised around participatory structures which are directly pursuing strategies for tackling poverty. Funding should take the form of a basic grant for staffed, equipped resource centres. It is recommended that funded groups should also have access to capital grants for community infrastructures, capitation grants and technical assistance to undertake various programmes and activities in training, education, social and cultural development.

2 - COMMUNITY BASED PERSONAL SOCIAL SERVICES

The projects recommend:

The effective coordination and integration of personal social services at a local community level.

Appropriate public authorities (i.e. health boards) be mandated to assess social need and set up appropriate local structures for personal social service development.

Personal social services be funded by a separate budget at central level to be allocated to appropriate authorities and agencies.

The primary approach in personal social services should be to resource people with personal difficulties, through a number of intervention methods including individual counselling, self-help groups, information, activity and development groups.

The setting up of mechanisms for consumer involvement in the planning, development and management of personal social services.

Personal social services to have built-in mechanisms for ongoing evaluation and assessment of progress with client participation.

The introduction of a client-access records system in all personal social service programmes.

The development and provision of a greater range of fully resourced informal care networks in the community,

3 - COMMUNITY

The projects recommend that employment and training schemes be re-organised to take more direct account of local experiences of poverty and disadvantage. It is further recommended that the main state agency responsible for funding training schemes engage in

ENTERPRISE AND TRAINING

partnership with community projects who manage these schemes.

It is also recommended that rules and regulations that govern entitlement to participate on these schemes be made more flexible in relation to the eligibility of persons receiving state allowances, the numbers participating on any particular scheme, and the length of time a particular individual stays on the scheme. The projects also recommend that entitlement to social welfare payments never be made conditional on participation in such schemes.

4- INCOME

The projects recommend that the basic social welfare payment for a single adult be raised to levels advocated by the Commission on Social Welfare, 1986, with appropriate adjustments to take account of subsequent rises in the cost of living.

HOUSING AND EDUCATION

The projects also recommend that the social welfare system should have a greater emphasis on a basic income for all adults irrespective of their gender and familial status.

Furthermore, the projects recommend that the operation of supplementary welfare be revised to ensure that basic needs are not made subject to discretion or further means-test enquiry.

The projects recommend that within new public housing programmes there should be greater attempts at achieving a social mix, and that the building be accompanied by the development of a social and economic infrastructure, particularly education facilities, services, amenities, transport and employment.

The projects also recommend that housing allocations policy be revised to ensure that local authority housing estates do not become run down directly as a result of such policies.

The projects recommend that greater efforts be made at second level education to ensure that students with lower levels of educational attainment leave school with basic preparation in literacy, numeracy, and life and social skills.

Appendix I - Project Descriptions

LOUISBURGH PROJECT

Louisburgh is a village on the west coast of Ireland. Poverty in this area is seen largely as a result of its remote location. The labour force is largely engaged in agriculture on small uneconomical holdings. The whole population of the area is the target group. The area is disadvantaged in terms of economic opportunities, social services and cultural autonomy. Louisburgh Community Council established a company, Louisburgh Development Company in 1984 to purchase a local school with a view to initiating economic initiatives. This company subsequently set up the Louisburgh project. The project covers an area of 50 square miles, comprising the parish of Louisburgh and half the adjoining parish and it has a population of 2,800.

Objectives

The project began with three main objectives. First, to encourage and facilitate a united and integrated approach to tackling the problems of underdevelopment. Secondly to establish a resource centre for use by individuals and development-oriented organisations in the area. Thirdly to develop the social, cultural and economic aspects of life in the district. The project has two full-time staff, a project co-ordinator and a development officer and two part-time staff, a secretary and caretaker.

Activities

The project is involved in various activities including the training of people in voluntary organisations, the development of a resource centre and initiating local community developments. It set up the Granuaile interpretive centre which exhibits in the one premises a range of historical material on local historical heroine Grace O'Malley. The project produced a directory of voluntary organisations and a promotional video and also produces a monthly newsletter. It has formed a craft group, tourist co-operative a credit union and an enterprise centre.

Contact

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CONNEMARA PROJECT

Connemara lies on the west coast of Ireland some fifty-five miles from Galway city. The project covers an area of 320 square miles and has a catchment population of 1,700. Most people are employed in agriculture but much of the land is unproductive and the farm structure is fragmented with 70% of holdings less than 30 acres. There is little or no industrial employment in the area and besides agriculture the only other sources of employment are in fishing, forestry, semi-skilled and skilled labour and

	<p>seasonal tourism. Emigration has long been accepted as inevitable for most young people. The result is an unbalanced age Structure in the population and relateted social difficulties. Poverty in the area is seen by the project "as mainly a result of underdevelopment.</p>
<p>Connemara West</p>	<p>Connemara West was formed in 1971 to enable the local community to become involved in managing its own development. It is a public liability company managed by a voluntary board of thirteen directors, eleven of whom are directly elected by local shareholders who make up 80% of the local population. Connemara West employ two people under the resource and education project - a project leader and a project worker. A pan time evaluator is employed from University Colelge Galway. Connemara West provide a pan time secretary directly to the project.</p>
<p>Objectives</p>	<p>The project has three main objectives. First to encourage and assist in the development of the resource base of the community with community participation in its planning and management. Secondly, to investigate and promote educational, cultural, information and training opportunities and services, some of which may lead to economic spin-offs. Thirdly, to increase awareness within the community of issues and activities concerned with development.</p>
<p>Activities</p>	<p>The project is involved in many activities in the areas of self-education, training and employment and in the development of tourism and the environment. It developed and consolidated a third level course for the region in furniture making and design in pannership with Regional Technical College Galway and based full time in the project's premises in Letterfrack. It has also organised training courses for adults in cooperation with Co. Galway VEC, FAS, Teagasc, and the Western Health Board. The project organised a national wood sculpture symposium in association with the Arts Council, Galway Co. Council and the Sculpture Society of Ireland. It published a community information directory and set up a library. The project established a framework for a community radio station and also developed a creative ans programme with teachers and anists now being incorporated into local primary sChools curriculum. The project also drew up an environmental and amenity plan for three local villages and is currently developing plans for a heritage centre to be located adjacent to Connemara National Park. This latter development is pan of the projects overall plans for the development of tourism in the area.</p>
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DARNDALE
PROJECT

The Damdale Belcamp area is situated in the outer suburbs of North east Dublin. The area consists of 1,200 local authority houses and has a population of around 6,500. The Darndale estate has a run-down and ghettoised appearance although it was built less than fifteen years ago. In more recent years there has been an improvement in the estate's appearance due to a Dublin Corporation house refurbishment programme. There is a high turnover of tenants in the estate reflecting a generalised social stigma attached to it. Most of the households consist of young families and about a quarter of these are one-parent families. The area has an exceptionally high level of long-term unemployment and, to a lesser extent, of youth unemployment. The target group for the project is the long term unemployed and their families.

Objective

The project was set up in 1983. The four main objectives of the project are: First to provide unemployed people with opportunities to take control over their own lives. Secondly to create an awareness among the wider public of the effects of long-term unemployment. Thirdly to place the needs of the unemployed on the forefront of the political agenda. Fourthly to organise the unemployed into a unified body. It has a board of management consisting of six unemployed people and a project leader who is employed. The board meets once a month to decide on broad policy issues for the project. There is also an unemployment action group consisting of about twelve unemployed people who meet once a week to discuss issues of general concern to the project. The project has four staff, equivalent to two and a half full-time positions and these consist of a project leader, project evaluator and two secretaries.

Activities

The project is involved in a number of activities. It runs an information and advice centre and produces a weekly bulletin which has a distribution of 1,200. It is also involved in educational and recreational activities, and provides a library and a coffee shop. It has been involved in a variety of meetings and conferences in relation to general unemployment issues at a local, national and international level.

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INISHOWEN
PROJECT

The Inishowen peninsula is situated in the very northwest of the Republic of Ireland. It covers an area of 309 square miles. With a population of 28,000, the region suffers from its remoteness in relation to the rest of the country, and is cut off from its natural hinterland by an international boundary. The region is affected by high unemployment and emigration and there is also a large dependency population. The local economy is

based on agriculture but the majority of holdings are small- less than 30 acres and close to subsistence level. There is also some local involvement in fishing but the once prosperous tourist industry has been badly affected by the Northern Ireland situation.

Inishowen Community Development Group

The Inishowen Community Development Group was set up to promote economic and social development in the Inishowen region. It is a company limited by guarantee and has a central committee and specific interest sub-committees with representation on the central committee. It coordinates many community and voluntary groups in the peninsula and acts as a first point of contact for many of the state agencies operating in the region. The project has a staff of five - a full-time project leader, two full-time project workers and two, part-time project workers.

Activities

The project is involved in a range of community development activities. It set up an adult literacy programme and a reading resource centre to assist those dealing with children affected by learning difficulties. It also set up a community advice and information service and it has coordinated a variety of voluntary services for the elderly. The project produces a quarterly community magazine. Its resource centre provides various secretarial services and general advice to the community. The project has produced a range of tourism promotional material including maps and guides. It has also established a heritage centre. The project has set up a commercial shellfish project for the cultivation of oysters and clams for export and it has also undertaken a comprehensive mariculture survey of the region. A number of FAS training programmes have also been provided through the project. These have focused on engineering, textiles, business development, community enterprise, horticulture, mariculture, product development and marketing.

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COOLOCK PROJECT

The project can best be described as a resource centre for one parent families, of all categories and those effectively parenting alone - the ethos is one of self help - an alternative to traditional service provision. Coolock is situated in the suburbs on the northside of Dublin city. The catchment area is approximately 5 sq. miles in a densely populated area. Much of the area is local authority housing covering the parishes of Bonnybrook, Kilmore, Priors wood, Belcamp and Darndale. The rate of unemployment is approximately 50%. According to the 1986 census of the population slightly less than 15% of all family units are headed by a lone parent. More than 80% of these are women. Parenting alone is a 24 hour job and because the typical Irish family is based on marriage one parent families often feel

isolated, and stigmatised. This situation is further complicated by the constitutional prohibition on divorce whereby persons who are parenting alone as a result of marriage breakdown experience particular difficulties. The titles of the social welfare schemes such as "unmarried mother's allowance" or "deserted wives allowance" reinforce lone parents' feelings of isolation. Many lone parents desire to be independent but access to state funded training schemes is mostly confined to registered unemployed and many of these women are excluded. This lack of training opportunity is coupled with the non-existent at work childcare facilities in Ireland.

Objectives

The strategic aim of the project is to develop a community resource centre which would eventually be managed and operated by one parent families living in the Coolock area. The project's objectives are: First to combat the social isolation of lone parents and to provide a contact point where they can seek support and advice. Secondly to support lone parents to jointly identify and tackle their own problems. Thirdly to research issues of relevance to lone parents. Fourthly, to educate state agencies and the local community about the rights and needs of lone parents and fifthly to promote the co-ordination and development of facilities for lone parents and their children. There are five women working on the team, four full time - project co-ordinator, two project workers, one secretary, and the children activities worker who is half time. The project is legally constituted as a company limited by guarantee with charitable status. There are now eighteen on the board of management: five project staff, two social service staff and eleven lone parents who form a majority.

Activities

The centre has an average of 200 callers per month for a variety of activities: drop-in sessions, information and advice on social welfare and legal issues, counselling, educational programmes on personal and social issues for one parent families, workshops on health issues taking an alternative and holistic approach. Training courses and workshops have also been held on communication skills, enterprise development, management training, welfare and legal rights. A video *Voices for Change* was made by parents and staff. It highlights the changing needs and issues for the family in Ireland and it is used by the project in a public education programme. Children's activities are an integral part of the work of the project which include after school sessions for those from 6-12 years and evening sessions for teenagers. The project works closely with local and national groups on issues of common interest and has been involved in the organisation of a number of conferences and seminars on poverty and related health issues.

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SIMON PROJECT

The Simon Community is a voluntary organisation which works with homeless people in Cork, Dublin, Dundalk and Galway. It provides a range of services including night shelters, soup-runs, residential houses, work projects and follow up outreach services. The organisation has two main objectives which are first to provide a caring service for the homeless and secondly to campaign for the elimination of homelessness. Each of the four Simon communities is autonomous and is responsible for financing and running its own projects. All the communities work closely together and collectively form a national body with the National Office in Dublin acting as a resource, servicing and co-ordinating agency.

Action-research

It is an action-research project divided into two phases. The first phase (December 1985-November 1987) was concerned with the research into work skills, experiences and preferences of Simon residents. The second phase (December 1987 - November 1989) is concerned with the implementation of the research recommendations. The project places emphasis on the participation of residents in the two processes of action and research.

Project development

The project employed a researcher and a part-time secretary in phase one and a development worker and part-time secretary for phase two. In phase one detailed research was conducted into the backgrounds, work skills and work preferences of Simon residents. Both a summary report and main report on this research were published. The research resulted in a detailed list of recommendations for new projects and also details of projects to be avoided. In the second phase a development worker worked with the four communities in implementing the recommendations on the developments of the work projects. The project is involved in many other activities including an introductory conference on European work projects and also the production of many publications. It also contributes regularly to both SIMON's own newsletter and other external publications and journals.

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SLIGO PROJECT

Sligo is a port town 190km from Dublin and serves as the capital of the north west region. It has a general regional hospital, a regional technical college and the regional offices of most of the major public and commercial agencies. It has a population of 17,000 having grown by 30% in the past 15 years. Employment in the town is mainly in manufacturing and also in the rather underdeveloped tourist industry. Unemployment however is, at 20%, particularly high among young people.

Objectives

The general objective of the project is to give unemployed young people

	<p>recognition and status and to build their self confidence and improve their self image. Its more specific objectives are: First to provide a meeting place for unemployed young people which allows for their active participation. Secondly to provide a range of activities and programmes for personal development. Thirdly to recruit trainees to Sligo Community Training Workshop. The project which is located in a centre town premises is managed by Sligo Youth Enterprises a non-profit limited company which was established by the original planning group of the project. It employs three staff, a project director, a project worker and a part-time evaluator.</p>
Activities	<p>The project operates a drop-in centre and coffee shop for young people. Informal information, and advice is provided. A number of formal activities are organised including indoor and outdoor recreation and workshops on video, modern music and drama. The project has also operated a number of formal and informal programmes in literacy, numeracy, personal development and counselling.</p>
Contact	<p>Noel Sheridan Sligo Youth Contact Centre O'Connell Street Sligo Tel. (071) 42687</p>
SICCDA PROJECT	<p>The project is situated in the Liberties one of the oldest parts of Dublin city. It is a disadvantaged inner city area which has suffered the neglect of successive governments resulting in environmental decay, high unemployment (70%) and related social problems. The catchment population is approximately 13,000. The project began when in 1982, a number of local people from neighbourhood organisations decided to unite in an 'umbrella' group called South Inner City Community Development Association (SICCDA). It is incorporated as a company limited by guarantee with charitable status.</p>
Objectives	<p>The project has a number of wide ranging objectives which include the following: First to promote through Community Development the total development of the Liberties area and its people in a manner acceptable and suitably controlled by the people themselves. Secondly in conjunction with local people to design and initiate a programme which will cater for their social, economic, cultural and educational needs. Thirdly to develop an integrated programme to tackle the needs of the elderly, families with special needs, unemployed, homeless, youth, traveller families, in the project area and promote their participation in so far as possible. Fourthly to identify and to attempt to bring about change in the existing policies, structures, services and attitudes as they affect the lives of the groups mentioned above. The project employs four full-time and two part-time staff.</p>

Activities

The project has done a lot of research on the needs of the community and it has set up a resource centre providing information, counselling, legal aid and training. It has also been involved in many activities with special need groups - providing a welcome programme for new families and a number of training and information programmes. The project organises a home help service and has been involved in a pilot allowance scheme for the elderly. Cooperatives for the unemployed have also been established with the creation of about 50 new jobs. The project has also put together a tourism development plan and formed an action group for unemployed people. The project operates and manages a community training workshop which itself is involved with the Youth Reach Programme, the Petra Programme and the Youth Exchange Bureau. The workshop has trained 182 young people of which 123 were placed in full-time employment. The project has been involved in a number of campaigns on issues such as social and recreational facilities, roadway construction, free fuel scheme, enterprise allowance scheme for women and the Dublin city five year development plan. The project has helped to promote an annual community festival and sponsored a number of social and cultural events in the area. The project has produced a number of publications including a community newspaper - 'Liberties News' and reports on surveys of the elderly, the young unemployed and the environment.

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WEST TALLAGHT PROJECT

TallaghtTown is located around 24kms. South West of Dublin City at the foot of the Dublin mountains. Just 20 years ago, there were 600 households with a population of just over 2,000. Tallaght has become one of the major growth centres of Dublin with a population in 1981 of over 65,800. West Tallaght consists of 4 local authority housing estates comprising over 5,000 dwellings with a population of approximately 20,000. Many of the people who came to live in West Tallaght did so from the inner city of Dublin and had no previous links with the area. The target groups with whom the project is working are: the long term unemployed, welfare recipients and women. In the estate where the project is located only 28% of the principal earners in each household are employed. All the remainder rely almost entirely on state assistance of various kinds. Sixty per cent of the principal earners have an income of less than IR£100 per week. Twenty per cent of households are one parent families. Facilities in West Tallaght are poor. There is no shopping centre, no library, no health centre and community facilities are inadequate.

Objective

The overall objective of the project is to establish a resource centre which will act as a focus for community activity. help build a response to

unemployment, build links between communities and organisations, respond to the needs of women and young families, and act as a catalyst for social welfare recipients. The sponsoring body for the project is Tallaght Welfare Society (TWS), a registered friendly society. TWS was keen to extend its work into new housing estates of West Tallaght. The management committee is made up of three representatives from TWS, three people with specialist backgrounds, six local residents and two members of staff. The project has 2 full time and two part time staff members.

Activities

The main focus of the project's work has been a resource to local community organisations and groups. The project has identified and highlighted needs in West Tallaght. It has facilitated discussion of these needs and how best they can be addressed with statutory bodies and local people. It has also encouraged the development of effective local groups including unemployment groups, womens groups, and welfare groups. It has provided these with back-up facilities such as meeting rooms, secretarial assistance and access to telephone and other resource centre facilities. The project also co-ordinated a women's festival. The project has promoted cooperation between statutory and voluntary bodies and the local community and has highlighted the concept of an integrated approach as being the most appropriate to addressing the needs of Tallaght.

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Appendix II- Preliminary Outline

OPENING STATEMENT

This document was circulated to projects in November 1988. It was a preliminary statement of the issues that would be covered in the report and it was compiled following consultations with the advisory group and with the projects at the Inter-Projects meeting in Galway October 1988.

An overriding theme that underpins the recommendations to be made in this report is that local participation leading to collective action is an important and significant strategy for tackling poverty. It reflects the view that local people *involved together* in discussing their own interests can be more sensitive to local need, and can make a more effective contribution to the design and operation of responses and services than what would happen within more traditional arrangements. This underlying theme further acknowledges that the process of achieving participation and self-organisation is difficult. Dominant social forces do not openly or willingly support the collective ideal and those groups working for social change and development operate in a context of tremendous internal and external resistance to change.

The central approach of this report is to extract information, research and proposals for tackling poverty. Essentially these will be directed at a higher level- state and institutions. However, acknowledging that generally these do not openly or willingly respond to change, the report will develop and highlight strategies aimed at community groups for making the recommendations more realisable.

INTEGRATED AREA DEVELOPMENT

Existing economic policies and market forces have resulted in the economic impoverishment and social marginalisation of underdeveloped rural and urban areas, resulting in disproportionately high levels of unemployment and poverty and large scale emigration. Ultimately this situation needs to be tackled with state policies of deliberate job creation. An additional state response, however must recognise the relationship between unemployment and underdevelopment, and involve a strategy that tackles unemployment and poverty through local development. However, the possibilities of such a response are severely restricted by the absence of structures that allow local input into centralised decision-making and regional planning. Furthermore the different components of existing state strategies lack co-ordination and are seemingly unable or unwilling to engage the support of local groups in devising a comprehensive, united approach to underdeveloped and impoverished areas.

The projects recommend an integrated approach to local area development in both rural and urban underdeveloped and impoverished areas, which would have the following main features:

EMPLOYMENT TRAINING SCHEMES

- 1 The provision of democratic structures at a sub-regional level for more local and community participation in planning and development
- 2 The provision of adequate state funding, staffing and technical assistance to community development groups involved in long term local development
- 3 The active stimulating of local development initiative through raising awareness, disseminating information, provision of training and encouragement of local participation

In responding to the needs of the long-term and young unemployed the state has co-funded with the EC Social Fund a number of vocational skills training and retraining, social employment and work experience programmes. These have relied heavily on the participation of the community and voluntary sector which has planned, devised, operated, managed and subsidised many of these schemes. However, some groups have found that the rules governing the operation of such schemes restrict the participation of some of the poorest and least skilled persons, particularly the homeless, single parents and early school leavers. The schemes do not allow sufficiently for inputs and tuition into the areas of social skills, literacy, numeracy and personal development which many groups see as being fundamental prerequisites to vocational preparation. Within the education system there is a lack of preparation of young people for the type of labour market that currently exists and some young people, particularly those described as underachievers, lack essential social and personal skills. Many of these shortcomings are encountered within employment and training schemes and other youth development activities and projects.

Furthermore, employment and training schemes are operated on a temporary one-off basis, and their operation is unstable, devoid of planning and subject to high staff turnover. The introduction of the Jobsearch programme which has related some people's willingness to participate in these schemes to their entitlement to social welfare payments has further undermined the operation of employment and training schemes and inadvertently introduced an element of suspicion between those who operate the schemes and those who participate.

The Projects recommend the restructuring and reorganisation of training and employment schemes as follows:

- 1 Community development groups have more involvement and control in the long term management and operation of such schemes under the type of structures that have been referred to in section on integrated area development above, allowing more flexibility in their type and content and introducing more stability and continuity
- 2 Such schemes are made more accessible to those groups who are poor and unskilled yet outside the official labour market (that is not on live register of unemployed persons)
- 3 Schemes are only operated under the principle of voluntary participation

