



# THE ROLE OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT IN TACKLING POVERTY IN IRELAND

A Literature Review

Dr Brian Motherway

 **Combat Poverty  
Agency** *working for a  
poverty-free Ireland*

# **The Role of Community Development in Tackling Poverty in Ireland**

## **A Literature Review for the Combat Poverty Agency**

**March 2006**

Dr Brian Motherway

## **Preface**

Combat Poverty has consistently advocated community development's contribution to tackling poverty. Combat Poverty understands community development as a 'process whereby those who are marginalised and excluded are enabled to gain in self confidence, to join with others and to participate in actions to change their situation and to tackle the problems that face their community'. The Combat Poverty Agency Act (1986) recognises Combat Poverty as a centre for the provision of information and training on community development as a means of overcoming poverty (Section 4.2c)

In recent years the role of communities in tackling poverty has been a major component of Irish social policy with several national programmes funded to address social inclusion. Many of these incorporate and promote community development approaches such as the Community Development Programme itself, the Local Development Social Inclusion Programme and the Family and Community Services Resource Centres' Programme amongst others.

Increasingly, there is an interest and requirement to demonstrate evidence of outcomes related to community development processes. This literature review was commissioned as a first step to identify, at a broad level, evidence of the contribution of community development to tackling poverty. Its terms of reference were:

- Review existing literature relating to community development approaches to tackling poverty in Ireland
- Establish baseline information on documented evidence e.g. evaluations in this area
- Provide an analysis on the nature, extent and quality of the information
- Identify research and documentation gaps in community development approaches to tackling poverty
- Identify potential research questions and make recommendations to Combat Poverty on priority areas for further research and address the gaps identified by the literature review.

The report, undertaken by Motherway Begley, emphasises the need for clarity with regard to the use of the term community development. The importance of retaining a meaningful and solid definition of community development and of defending its core concepts of participation and empowerment and collective action for social change is emphasised. It also recommends that any evaluation system developed to assess the impacts of community development should include both quantitative and qualitative data in a specifically tailored framework.

In its conclusions, the report posits that the potential analysis of existing datasets that operate in a community development context should be explored. This includes the SPEAK data used in the Community Development and Family Resource Centres' Programmes.

Going forward, research frameworks that address the impacts of community development need to reflect the principles of community development and incorporate the participation of community development practitioners and stakeholders.

Combat Poverty wishes to acknowledge and thank Brian Motherway for his expertise and high standards in bringing the literature review to completion. Thanks is also extended to those who participated in two roundtables to inform the development of the literature review and acted as independent readers.

Combat Poverty Agency

May 2006

## Table of Contents

Executive summary.....	i
1. The nature of community development.....	1
1.1 Introduction.....	1
1.2 Definitions and concepts.....	2
1.3 The value of community development .....	4
1.4 The political nature of community development.....	6
2. Community development in Ireland.....	11
2.1 The history of community development in Ireland.....	11
2.2 The current context.....	13
2.3 National community development programmes.....	15
2.4 Current debates in Irish community development.....	19
3. Evaluation concepts.....	26
3.1 Measuring community development .....	26
3.2 The politics of evaluation .....	29
3.3 Evaluation frameworks .....	31
4. Evaluations in Ireland.....	36
4.1 Overview.....	36
4.2 Principal evaluations of Irish programmes .....	37
4.3 Building an overall picture.....	57
4.4 Looking forward .....	59
5. Conclusions .....	62
References .....	66



## **Executive summary**

### **1. The nature of community development**

This literature review has been commissioned to examine the evidence for the impacts of community development approaches to addressing poverty and social exclusion. The objective has been to review existing literature relating to community development approaches to tackling poverty in Ireland; examine documented evidence, analyse the nature and quality of this information; and identify research and documentation gaps and potential future research questions.

While there are many definitions of community development, the core concept for this analysis is one of collective action for social change, with an emphasis on empowerment and participation, and a focus on process as well as outcomes. The benefits of the community development approach generally cited include: empowerment and enhanced participation; better programmes and outcomes through involvement of communities and a community-specific, flexible focus.

Given that it always raises questions about power redistribution and often tries to challenge structural inequalities in society, community development inevitably has a political dimension. The relationship between the community sector and the state is a key question in this dimension. Ireland has a specific context of social partnership that shapes both structures and actors' expectations of access and participation.

### **2. Community development in Ireland**

The current community development sector in Ireland is rooted in the growth of direct action movements focused on unemployment and poverty in the 1970s and 1980s. The current phase, beginning in the early 1990s, is characterised by the emphasis on community development as an approach to tackling poverty, closer state relationships and the centrality of social

partnership. It has also been a period of formalisation and professionalisation of the sector.

This review concentrates for the most part on three main national programmes employing a community development approach. The Community Development Programme (CDP) is a funding programme supporting 185 community development projects focused on addressing poverty and disadvantage, with a particular emphasis on the needs of sectors vulnerable to poverty and exclusion. The programme is funded by the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs and supported through regional community development agencies and specialist support agencies with expertise in specific issues.

The Local Development Social Inclusion Programme (LDSIP) aims to counter social exclusion through local community development via three strands: services for the unemployed, community development and community-based youth initiatives. While the community development strand is the main focus of the community work process and ethos, all elements of the LDSIP operate on community development principles. The LDSIP is administered by Pobal (formerly ADM).

The third main national programme of interest is the Family Resource Centres (FRCs). The FRCs provide services to disadvantaged families including parenting skills training, advice, counselling and childcare and employs community development values and methods. There are now 70 FRCs, with overall management and co-ordination by the Family Support Agency.

These programmes and the associated centrality of state support in community development set the current context for the sector. Debates among Irish community actors are similar to those seen elsewhere, with issues such as relationships with the state, power, structural dimensions and funding contributing to the overall debate about effectiveness and future direction. There are also concerns expressed about the wide use of the term community development and the difficulty in establishing common core principles.

### **3. Evaluation concepts**

Evaluation of community development can have various aims relating to testing the achievement of stated objectives, examining outcomes for the communities involved, and contributing to the programme through learning from successes and mistakes. Long term impacts on the community are difficult to measure. In particular, quantitative data on impacts is often difficult to collect. It is often more appropriate, and more valid, to report impacts qualitatively, for example through case studies or practitioners' testimonies.

It is important that evaluation upholds the ethos of community development in considering issues of power, relationships, and the meaning and use of data. This again suggests the importance of qualitative data in the overall evidence mix. The same principles and values that apply to community development itself should also apply to its evaluation.

A number of community development evaluation frameworks have been developed, and several propose sets of matrices that could be used to evaluate community development through a mixture of methods and also a mixture of qualitative and quantitative data elements. Any appropriate evaluation approach will involve such a mix and should be developed with the collaboration and involvement of the communities involved and tailored to meet the specific needs and goals of the exercise.

### **4. Evaluations in Ireland**

There is one formal evaluation of the CDP, by Nexus Research in 2002. It examines impacts across programme elements such as providing resources and services, giving information and advice and delivering training programmes. The evaluation reports mostly on activities and direct outputs, with many projects being too new to allow for evaluation of longer term impacts. For those longer established projects, the evaluation states that there is clear evidence of improvements in communities' living conditions resulting from their work.



This evaluation is based on data from the SPEAK (Strategic Planning, Evaluation and Knowledge) self-evaluation system developed by Nexus. More recent data is available from this system, although formal analysis and reporting has not been undertaken. This review examined the 2004 SPEAK dataset covering 61 CDP projects. As well as important quantitative data (time spent on various tasks and issues, for example), it contains a wealth of qualitative data in the form of projects' own comments on their impacts. The data indicates many impacts, from better empowerment and community spirit to positive education, employment and economic outcomes for people in the communities.

There is also a SPEAK data set for the Family Resource Centres. Similar general conclusions can be drawn from this data as were seen in the CDP, principally the high value to a local area of having a project to act as facilitator and support to a wide range of groups and activities.

There are several reports on the Local Development Social Inclusion Programme from ADM that are not full evaluations per se but give important insights on impacts. Many are based on case study approaches and the narratives of participants. Similar positive impacts are reported in relation to empowerment, participation and also (though less the focus of these particular studies) impacts on poverty.

Overall, there is considerable evidence (if not systematic or fully validated) of the positive impacts of the main national community development programmes. Existing evidence represents a strong basis for new research and analysis to consolidate the picture.

## **5. Conclusions**

### *Evaluating the impacts of community development*

Measuring the poverty impacts of a community development initiative is extremely difficult. Impacts are often more related to 'process' themes such as empowerment and activation. Many are qualitative in nature and excessive

emphasis on quantitative measurement risks the underestimation of the full positive impacts.

It is possible to evaluate impacts using a mixture of qualitative and quantitative methods to build an overall picture. This requires an appropriate framework usually employing a variety of methods. Typical positive impacts reported in evaluations relate to more resources reaching excluded communities; better facilities and services provided; more effective interventions; rising levels of participation; and lower levels of measurable poverty. Emphasis is also placed on empowerment, increased levels of community spirit and mobilisation.

### *The evidence from Ireland*

There is considerable evidence of the positive impacts of Irish community development programmes. Discussions of these generally highlight success in community activation and self-help and specific gains regarding education, employment or access to benefits. These programmes and projects are undoubtedly the backbone of community development infrastructure, responsible for the initiation and support of considerable volumes of community work.

While these impacts can be gleaned from the data available, the overall evidence base is not as strong or comprehensive as it should be. This review demonstrates that it is possible to collate existing evidence to build a reasonable overall picture of impacts, but further research and analysis is required to complete the picture.

### *A proposed research agenda*

Regarding the development of a new phase of research to address impacts evaluation, the most important issue for Combat Poverty is to determine the precise goals of such research. The rationale for gathering evidence and the uses to which it is to be put will inform many aspects of research design, implementation and analysis. Among the aspects to be considered is the appropriate balance of quantitative and qualitative information to adequately

answer policy needs, while respecting the imperatives of the community development approach.

It is recommended that consideration be given to extracting the full value of existing datasets, particularly through further examination of the SPEAK data. This could result in a more definitive presentation of the data that adds to its accessibility and validity and highlights its key messages.

This literature review suggests that it will be possible to design and deliver a research programme that produces a strong case for the impacts of community development approaches in Ireland. There are a number of frameworks that offer strong starting points from which to develop something to meet the specific needs of the project in hand. The development of such a framework, as with all elements of the research programme, should be carried out according to the principles of community development. This implies the importance of participation by practitioners and other stakeholders.

The most appropriate framework is likely to entail a mix of data types and collection and analysis techniques, from interviews and documentary analysis to surveys and statistical analysis. It is likely to be oriented towards building up an overall picture through a case study approach. This would allow for a piloting phase, produce results quickly and also provide early feedback to particular projects and programmes. The approach should also allow for examination of areas with different lengths of community development history and thus examine impact spreading out and multiplying beyond their original domain. Such an approach can form the basis for the building of a strong national dataset (including quantitative measures) on overall impacts.

# **1. The nature of community development**

## **1.1 Introduction**

In recent years the role of communities and community development in tackling poverty has been emphasised and brought to the fore in many anti-poverty programmes. It is a major component of Irish social inclusion policy and is at the centre of several national programmes addressing local development and social inclusion.

However, the impacts of community development are notoriously difficult to measure for a range of reasons concerning practicality, capacity, validity and meaning. This literature review has been commissioned to address the concern that there is a lack of evidence base for community development in terms of poverty and exclusion impacts. The objective has been to produce a paper that:

- Reviews existing literature relating to community development approaches to tackling poverty in Ireland
- Establishes baseline information on documented evidence, e.g. evaluations in this area
- Provides an analysis on the nature, extent and quality of the information
- Identifies research and documentation gaps in community development approaches to tackling poverty
- Identifies potential research questions and makes recommendations to Combat Poverty on priority areas for further research and addresses the gaps identified by the literature review.

The ultimate goal of this literature review is to contribute to the development of a proposed new research programme on the impacts of community development on poverty in Ireland<sup>1</sup>.

## 1.2 Definitions and concepts

There are many definitions of community development, reflecting its political and indeed contested nature that will be discussed throughout this review. The starting point for this review is the definition employed by Combat Poverty itself, in which community development is:

*... a process whereby those who are marginalised and excluded are enabled to gain in self confidence, to join with others and to participate in actions to change their situation and tackle the problems that face their community* (Combat Poverty, 2000)

Lee argues that this definition 'is rooted in a broad understanding of citizenship that sees people as having a right to influence and participate in the decisions that affect them and to have their experiences and views listened to and acted on. Community development is potentially a means or process whereby people can achieve this right'. (Lee, 2003: 1).

The term community development is used in so many circumstances and for so many processes that it is important to maintain a relatively clear definition. In general definitions refer to participation in decision making and collective action, leading to an agenda of social change regarding equality, social inclusion and amelioration of poverty. There is also a 'spirit' of community development, with a focus on the process as much as the outcome, on rebalancing power inequalities and on action learning;

---

<sup>1</sup> The author would like to thank all those who gave their support and assistance in the preparation of this report, particularly Barbara Walshe and her colleagues at Combat Poverty, the members of the advisory group, and those that made themselves available to discuss issues or provide data and references

*It is a discourse of social action informed by communitarian values that aims to promote social inclusion and democratic participation. (Powell & Geoghegan, 2005: 3)*

For this literature review, the essence of community development is well captured in the Budapest Declaration, which emphasises strengthening civil society, empowerment and an agenda of social change.

The Budapest Declaration (2004):

*Community development is a way of strengthening civil society by prioritising the actions of communities, and their perspectives in the development of social, economic and environmental policy. It seeks the empowerment of local communities, taken to mean both geographical communities, communities of interest or identity and communities organising around specific themes or policy initiatives. It strengthens the capacity of people as active citizens through their community groups, organisations and networks; and the capacity of institutions and agencies (public, private and non-governmental) to work in dialogue with citizens to shape and determine change in their communities. It plays a crucial role in supporting active democratic life by promoting the autonomous voice of disadvantaged and vulnerable communities.*

It should be noted that this definition also sees communities as something more than geographic areas, as reflected in the nature of community development in Ireland, where communities of interest or identity are often as important as any geographic element.

ADM (recently renamed Pobal) presents a useful description of the community development approach to addressing social inclusion by contrasting it to a direct intervention approach:



Community Development	Direct intervention
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Based on social analysis</li> <li>• Led by facilitators</li> <li>• Participation of target groups in design, delivery and evaluation</li> <li>• Focused on problem solving</li> <li>• Developmental process</li> <li>• Empowerment approach</li> <li>• Ongoing reflection/action</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Based on central planning</li> <li>• Led by experts</li> <li>• Consultation of target groups, principally at delivery and evaluation stages</li> <li>• Focused on managing the process</li> <li>• Directive process</li> <li>• 'Need to know' approach</li> <li>• Periodic amendment</li> </ul>

(ADM, 2002: 39)

### 1.3 The value of community development

What are the benefits of a community development approach? Firstly, community development is seen to address a deficit in democratic access affecting marginalised groups: 'the starting point for achieving inclusion and equality for excluded groups must be the excluded themselves' (ADM, 2003: 60). This reflects the belief that there is more to exclusion than simple financial metrics: 'rights, influence, freedom, status and dignity are all components of well-being' (Maxwell, 2003: 14). It also aligns community development with many burgeoning critical theories of democracy that promote inclusion and deliberation as a means of power redistribution (Petts, 2005: 404).

So the spreading of power is a goal in itself, whatever results this leads to in poverty terms. Community development has a focus on 'process' as well as 'outcome'.

Secondly, wider participation is not just an important 'process' variable. It should also lead to better outcomes, since more focused or local understanding is brought into the system and decisions are thus better

informed about the specific conditions and needs of a community. Fung and Wright set out several reasons why participatory structures should lead to more effective outcomes:

- They convene and empower individuals close to points of action who possess knowledge about relevant situations
- Citizens or street level bureaucrats may also know how to best improve the situation
- They create the possibility of generating better solutions over more hierarchical and less reflective aggregation procedures and create heightened commitment because they are not imposed from above
- They shorten the feedback loop between decision, action, effect, observation and reconsideration
- Because there are multiple command points it allows discovery and diffusion and the learning capacity of the system as a whole can be enhanced.

(Fung & Wright, 2001: 25–27)

In terms of potential impacts, a range of advantageous outcomes have been reported in various evaluations of community development processes:

- More resources reaching excluded groups and communities
- Better designed, built and serviced housing estates
- Earlier, more effective interventions, especially in education
- Lower levels of measurable poverty in deprived communities
- Rising levels of voting
- Improved preparedness to volunteer

(Chanan, 2001, quoted in ADM, 2002: 22)

These outcomes are indicative, and of course programmes vary in objectives, ambition and communities of focus. However, most community development programmes give themselves a set of goals that includes both ‘process’ and ‘outcome’ components.

The growing recognition, in recent years, of the role of communities and community development in tackling poverty stems in part from a recognition of the failure of traditional anti-poverty approaches, as well as the growing importance of social movements in society (Curtin, 1996). Poverty remains a major concern in Ireland, with 23% of the population experiencing relative poverty and 9% of the population in consistent poverty (Combat Poverty, 2005). The first ten-year National Anti-Poverty Strategy, published in 1997, recognised the community as a unit of interest, focusing on disadvantaged urban and rural areas and highlighting the importance of specific communities of identity or interest, such as older people, children, women, people with disabilities, Travellers and other ethnic minorities (Combat Poverty, 2002). The definition of poverty underpinning NAPS is as follows:

*People are living in poverty if their income and resources (material, cultural and social) are so inadequate as to preclude them from having a standard of living which is regarded as acceptable by Irish society generally. As a result of inadequate income and resources people may be excluded and marginalised from participating in activities, which are considered the norm for other people in society. (Government of Ireland, 2002)*

The 2002 review of NAPS states that tackling poverty necessitates a multi-policy approach that involves ‘the combined effort of Government, social partners, communities, families working together to achieve the collective aim’ (Government of Ireland, 2002: 6).

#### **1.4 The political nature of community development**

*There is no getting away from the politics of community development whether we recognise it or not.*

Shaw, 2005

Community development, as Curtin points out, inevitably involves: ‘at least at a rhetorical level, some commitment to the redistribution of power’ (1996:

265). This makes connections to wider political economy questions, and Popple (1995) argues that there is a close relationship between community development and political values, although many community development programmes do not attempt to address this (Tovey *et al.*, 1996).

Mae Shaw (2005) insightfully analyses the characteristics of community development and observes that it is always contextual—related to specific social context—and is a constructed concept. Political dimensions encompass definitions of role and relationships, the function of the state and the importance of the structural dimension of poverty. It is because it is both contextual and constructed that it is also, inevitably, contested and ambivalent.

The power redistribution implicit in improving participation, set in train by a growing recognition of the limitation of conventional politics in dealing with increasing complexity and pluralism is also political:

*‘the functional need for effective political decision-making—achieved in increasingly complex societies through representative, often remote, structures—threatens to undermine the accepted conditions for democratic justification’*

(Mason, 2000: 22)

Improved participation in governance is a response to this crisis in functionality and legitimacy. As a consequence, there is an international trend towards new governance models that emphasise participation in community development processes:

*‘Although the context may vary from one nation to another, partnerships represent a multi-agency ‘umbrella’ structure for stakeholders and interest groups through which citizens express the voice of the locality with respect to the development, coordination, and implementation of strategy and programmes for economic and community development’*

(Aigner, Flora and Hernandez, 2001: 494)

Klaus Eder connects both democratic reform and social activism (social movements and collective mobilisations) as a reaction to a growing sense of disenchantment and disconnection in many Western societies (Eder, 2001: 217). Again this emphasises the political nature of modern community development, and raises the question as to whether it is in harmony or in opposition to traditional state systems.

This is a centrally important aspect of the political nature of community development—the relationship between civil society and the state. Power is at the centre of the issue: ‘although there is a rational reason for public participation in planning, power structures have an overwhelming rationality of their own. This rationality of power is clearly at play, even when attempts are made to extend public participation beyond conventional practice’ (Bedford *et al.*, 2002: 319).

Ireland sits in a particular context for this debate. The social partnership model is the structural context of this. Some commentators argue this is quite distinct from the neo-corporatist models applied in other nation states (O'Donnell, 2001). However, it is unlikely that the current partnership approach can be described as transformative in terms of access and power redistribution. The view of Irish partnership as *post-corporatist*, led by Rory O'Donnell in particular, has been challenged by Teague and Murphy (2004) and by Donaghey (2005) in case studies of decision making in local social development and national social partnership. The debate focuses on the issues of *who* participates and *what* is the nature of the participation. It is important because it fundamentally defines the nature of relationships and participation in local community development and determines its characterisation as radical or otherwise.

Meade & O'Donovan define corporatism as ‘a system of representation adopted by governments that seek to secure pacts between the state and representatives of trade unions and employers in the interests of the national economy’ (2002: 1). It is the ‘state-directed organisation of the economy in the name of the nation’ (O'Carroll 2002). When it is extended to wider interests than simply capital and labour, it is often referred to as neo-corporatism. To

then earn the title of post-corporatism, real innovation in relationships and the nature of deliberation among the partners should be discernible (Strydom, 2002: 135). It is the extent of such difference or radicalism that is the cause of controversy (Meade & O'Donovan, 2002).

Loughry observes that in many disadvantaged communities the traditional relationship was the state as provider of services (and even landlord) and the community as passive recipients (Loughry, 2002: 62). Thus new participatory arrangements represent a significant shift, one that will not be achieved overnight.

A common fear is the threat of state-building rather than community-building—that the opening of doors between the state and communities, rather than allowing the communities up into the corridors of power will instead allow the bureaucrats to reach down and widen their controlling influence in society (Collins, 2002). Shaw (2005: 3) also points out that the new relationship can be problematic: 'There is a sneaking suspicion that we may be responsible for drawing people into bureaucratic structures which are often the opposite of what they claim to be—which too often turn out to be managerial procedures rather than democratic processes'. An examination by Rooney (2002) of the community women's sector in Northern Ireland and the political implications of its state sponsorship raises similar issues. As will be explored later for the specific case of Ireland, the question for the community development sphere is often the choice between residing 'inside' partnership structures or moving towards a position as a separate political space (Powell & Geoghegan, 2005).

Baker also identifies 'full participation and inclusion of all social groups in Irish society' as the key to addressing inequality (Baker, 2000: 117). However, the radicalism–conservatism debate also raises the question as to what this participation is designed to achieve. Is it to address power imbalances in a competitive system or is it to bring new voices into a co-operative process of problem solving? The crucial question is where the state fits into this:



*State policy discourse both north and south of the border invokes the classically liberal understanding of the state, portraying it as a neutral arbiter between competing (intractable even) social interests.*

*Contemporary discourses of partnership suggest that the state, in its role as bridge builder, will facilitate the process of integrated and judicious development by transcending the polarities that have hindered development to date.*

(Meade & O' Donovan, 2002: 3)

The goal is a common one of 'the social good', posited as a win-win process of applying rationality and intelligence to social and economic problems until they are 'fixed'. The critique of this centres on the danger that partnership can thus become a managerial project in which sectoral interests have no place, where there is a common goal and those not in tune with this are not welcome:

*Therefore, the dominant social configuration of power shapes not only the rule of social engagement but also the 'interests' that underpin the social engagement itself.*

(Ikeotuonye, 2002: 76)

Meade sees this in partnership where 'the right to participate in national social partnership is gifted by central government to its favoured interest groups' (2005: 357). These and other debates about community development in Ireland will be discussed again in the next chapter.

## **2. Community development in Ireland**

### **2.1 The history of community development in Ireland**

Lee (2003) sets out an overview of the history of community development in Ireland. Its roots are in the co-operative development movement of a century ago, and then in the establishment in the 1930s of Muintir na Tire, based on a philosophy of self-help. It is generally seen as an 'essentially conservative' movement (Lee, 2003: 49; see also Varley and Curtin, 2002), with close ties to the clergy and the establishment generally.

Lee identifies the 1960s to the start of the 1990s as a period of significant growth in the community development movement, with the growth of community development cooperatives (distinctly outside the State system), a move towards community-based social services, a growth in community projects focused on unemployment and also in self-help and direct action groups, and a renewed interest in the structural dimension of poverty at national and EU-programme level. This was in part a response to the perceived failure of traditional approaches to tackling poverty and a move away from waiting for policy solutions towards more direct action, where local activism had an agenda of structural change (Ó'Cinnéide and Walsh, 1992: 329). The women's movement of the 1970s, as an important component in the strengthening direct action sector, was also influential.

It was in this period that a specific association with poverty began to emerge as a strong theme in Irish community development. According to Cullen, the origins of this association are in the Poverty 1 programme of the 1970s, 'the first attempt by statutory authorities to promote, resource and support the development of community organisations to tackle poverty' (Cullen: 1994: 100), then through the EU Poverty 2 programme (1985-1989) leading to the establishment of the community development fund in 1990 and then of the CDP itself.

Broderick cites reform as the dominant theme in the movement in the 1980s, with a focus on improving service delivery through participation, better access to services and to decision making. This led into the current phase of

community development, beginning in the early 1990s, with (according to Lee) two important developments: an increased interest in the approach by Government (with new supports and initiatives) and the growing acceptance of the importance of participation and inclusion, including formal partnership processes. Meade (2005: 356) adds the crisis in unemployment and prosperity as a driving factor in the seeking of a new way of governance through partnership. The 1980s also saw the establishment of the Combat Poverty Agency (in 1986), seen as a major influence in the subsequent growth of interest in national community development approaches (ADM, 2000).

Geoghegan and Powell also refer to this dual pathway where both the State and community groups themselves developed a parallel commitment to community development as 'a discourse of social action' (Geoghegan & Powell, 2005: 1). The 1980s is also seen by some as a period of fragmentation among community sector organisations, with significant progress having been made in specific areas but little overall coherence in the face of the ongoing national economic woes (ADM, 2000: 11). O'Conghaile and Anderson (1993) argue that community capacity was weak going into the current era, and this is important in the context of evaluations identifying progress in this area in recent years (see Section 4.2).

Curtin (1996: 248) notes that while community development has been practiced in Ireland for many years, it is only in recent times that it has become 'official' in terms of recognition and support, and of course through partnership. Meade (2005) also cites the 1990s as the period of mainstreaming for community development (see also ADM, 2000).

It was the second national partnership agreement in 1991 that made provision for the establishment of local partnership companies 'to coordinate local responses to the crisis of long-term unemployment' (Meade, 2005: 357). Then in 1993 civil society groups were brought into the process as members of the National Economic Social Forum and in 1997 as a fourth pillar in national partnership itself (ADM, 2004: 8). The goal of local partnership in particular was to improve service delivery and development policies for the most

disadvantaged communities and to ensure that these communities had a voice in the process (Collins, 2002: 95).

The partnership context is obviously referred to by many commentators. It has been a controversial issue from the start:

*The official view of the relationship between state agencies and community groups is that of partnership. This view tends to mask the unequal relationship that prevails. Much could be accomplished by such a partnership if local groups had a real say in policy and decision making. The reality however is more often one of confrontation or co-optation. In the latter case many groups more or less accept the terms or dictates of the agency in order to obtain whatever support is available.*

(CWC, 1989)

This view, expressed at the dawn of the era of social partnership, has considerable resonance with debates taking place throughout the period of partnership, right up to the present time.

## **2.2 The current context**

*Social partnership has become the dominant paradigm of policy-making in Ireland and increasingly provides the institutional framework within which community development organisations interact with the state.*

(Meade & O'Donovan, 2002: 2)

According to Nolan *et al.*, by 2000 the partnership model may have achieved its aims in terms of overall economic growth, but with regard to poverty and exclusion less has been achieved to diminish 'inequality of opportunity in terms of social mobility, educational opportunity and risk of poverty' (Nolan *et al.*, 2000: 352).

In this light, Broderick (2000) reviews the current context for community development practice in Ireland. Again, social partnership is obviously at the centre of the discussion. Partnership models and invitations to participate

proliferated through the early 1990s, to the extent that the community sector had real difficulties in meeting the demands placed on it. There were also many negative experiences, with much participation seen as tokenistic (see 2.4 below). Such experiences indicate some of the reasons behind the Combat Poverty *Having your say* programme, where the emphasis is on building communities' capacity to have real influence (see Walshe, 2005; also Harvey 2002; McCamley & Oliver, 2004).

In addition to the main national community development programmes themselves, many other programmes (INTEGRA; New Opportunities for Women; the Peace and Reconciliation Programme; LEADER; URBAN; RAPID; Clár) place partnerships structures and philosophies at the heart of their modus operandi (ADM, 2000: 12).

Current Government policy on the community sector is articulated through the White Paper on a Framework for Supporting Voluntary Activity and for Developing the Relationship between the State and the Community and Voluntary sector (Department of Social, Community and Family Affairs, 2000). This White Paper serves to, among other things, formally recognize the importance of the community and voluntary sector 'in contributing to the creation of a vibrant, participative democracy and civil society' (Department of Social, Community and Family Affairs, 2000) as well as establishing structures, funding and general procedures for consultation and involvement. Broderick argues that the White Paper has been welcomed for this recognition of the sector and for its commitment to core funding, long a concern among practitioners (2000: 107). Further discussion of the policy context and its critiques is left to Section 2.4 below.

Partnership remains at the heart of Government policy, both nationally and locally. The local partnerships structures are now the vehicle for much local development work, including that of the reformed local government structures. Local authority strategic policy committees have quantitative rules as to civic sector participation, with local partnerships, platforms and forums to the fore. City and county development boards also include representation from all social partners as generally defined, so that local partnerships are a 'pillar', as

is local representation through community forums. Most areas now have well-established and experienced community development sectors, with a range of bodies and individuals involved, and more professional community development workers than ever before.

### **2.3 National community development programmes**

The current model of community development in Ireland at a national level has its genesis in a number of national and EU programmes, such as Poverty 1, 2 and 3; the Partnership agreements; new local government structures; and the Local Development Programme. The main national programmes discussed in this review are the Community Development Programme (CDP), the Local Development Social Exclusion Programme (LDSIP) and the Family Resource Centres (FRCs).

The **CDP** is a funding programme supporting 185 local community development resource centres and initiatives across the State. The programme is focused on addressing poverty and disadvantage, with a particular emphasis on the needs of women and children, those with disabilities, the homeless, lone-parent families, the elderly, the unemployed, young people at risk, Travellers and other disadvantaged groups. The services provided and activities supported by local projects include:.

- the provision of information, advice and support to particular target groups, e.g. unemployed people, lone parents, Travellers, youth, young families, the elderly, undertaking special projects with some groups
- practical assistance to community groups, e.g. photocopying, facilities, training, information and advice
- provision of adult education courses and training opportunities
- support for local enterprise and job creation initiatives
- identification of policy issues arising from the work of the projects and support for participation in local development initiatives.

(Source: [www.pobal.ie](http://www.pobal.ie))



Support for the CDP projects is delivered through regional community development agencies and specialist support agencies with expertise in specific issues, e.g. violence against women, or communities, e.g. as people with disabilities and Travellers. According to the Department's Annual Report, €20.6m was allocated to the CDP in 2004 (DCRGA, 2005).

Regan describes the aim of the CDP as 'to develop a network of community development resource centres and projects in communities affected by high unemployment, poverty and disadvantage. The projects in the CDP all have a number of common core characteristics: They

- [Have] an anti-poverty, anti-exclusion focus
- Work from community development principles and methods
- Provide support and act as a catalyst for community development activity
- Act as a resource in the communities of which they are a part
- Provide co-ordination and co-operation between community, voluntary and statutory groups in their areas
- Involve representatives of groups which experience poverty and social exclusion within their management structures.

(Regan, 2004)

Recent changes in local government structures now require CDP projects to submit their plans to the relevant city/county develop board for approval, a move designed to improve local integration.

The **Local Development Social Inclusion Programme** is a funding and support programme for area-based partnerships, community partnerships and employment pacts working in deprived urban and rural areas across Ireland. The focus is on countering social exclusion through local community development and it 'aims to counter disadvantage and to promote equality and social and economic inclusion' (LDSIP brochure, 2005). Actions focus on three areas: services for the unemployed, community development and community-based youth initiatives (CBYIs). The programme is implemented

by 38 area-based partnerships, 31 community partnerships and two employment pacts. The community development strand:

*...aims to ensure that disadvantaged communities are facilitated to increase their capacity to act as prime movers in their own development. It seeks to empower communities to sponsor innovative projects, and to focus mainstream programmes to meet community needs in a more appropriate and efficient way.* (ADM, 2002: 12)

The LDSIP is managed by Area Development Management Ltd (ADM) on behalf of the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs. According to ADM's 2004 annual report, total exchequer spending on the programme (excluding technical assistance) was just over €39 million. Some of the progress indicators for the programme are reported in Section 4.2 below.

While the CDP and LDSIP are the main national community development programmes, a third national programme employing a community development approach is the **Family Resource Centre Programme**. Like some elements of the LDSIP (such as the CBYIs), it is not a community development programme in the sense of community development as an action in itself, but rather a programme that employs community development values and methods. They are included in this analysis as they offer evidence of the value of taking the community development approach even outside the core action programmes.

Established in 1994, there are now 70 Family Resource Centres (FRCs) across the state, with a programme budget of €10.61 million in 2004 (Family Support Agency, 2005). Their work is now co-ordinated by the Family Support Agency (FSA), established in 2003.

The aim of the FRCs is 'to help combat disadvantage by improving the functioning of the family unit' (FSA, 2005: 4). Centres provide services to disadvantaged families (often including special services for lone-parent

families, young mothers, young fathers and other identified groups), including parenting skills training, advice, counselling and childcare. They do this through a community development model that emphasises local participation and 'the principles of personal development, adult education and community empowerment' (FSA, 2005: 4). There is now an active and well established set of FRCs, with a national forum for networking as well as the FSA for overall management and co-ordination.

An important element of the framework for community development in Ireland is the Government's *White Paper on a Framework for Supporting Voluntary Activity and for Developing the Relationship between the State and the Community and Voluntary sector* (2000), the aims of which are to:

- Describe the current context in which the Community and Voluntary sector operates, and the range and diversity of the sector
- Set out a cohesive framework of support for the Community and Voluntary sector across Government Departments and Agencies
- Promote sound principles and best practice models for the effective functioning of the State/Community/ Voluntary Sector relationship and
- Make recommendations across a number of areas relevant both to the support of voluntary activity generally and to the framework (e.g. funding, enabling, administrative) necessary to support and deepen the relationship.

(Government of Ireland, 2000: Paragraph 2.7)

It also sets out its own definition of community development which emphasises the dimension of self-help:

*Community development is described as an interactive process of knowledge and action designed to change conditions which marginalise communities and groups and is underpinned by a vision of self-help and community self-reliance.*

(Government of Ireland, 2000: 49)

According to the Minister's foreword, the White Paper 'marks a fundamental change in official attitudes to support for Community and Voluntary groups' and includes many new funding and recognition elements and a 'strong Government commitment to follow up and implement all the decisions in the White Paper' (emphasis in original).

## **2.4 Current debates in Irish community development**

*The fact that area-based partnerships are not exclusively based upon an electoral process does not constitute an intractable problem. This is because the raison d'être for the existence of semi-autonomous local development organisations lies with the underlying need to find new ways of addressing local problems. However, as we stated earlier, this also suggests that these 'semi-autonomous' organisations have an obligation to show that their actions make a difference to the groups and areas targeted.*

(Tovey et al., 1996: 30)

Discourses among Irish community development actors are similar to those seen elsewhere, with much discussion of issues such as relationships with the state, power, structural dimensions and funding contributing to the overall debate about effectiveness and future direction. Of course, the partnership context once again dominates. This section presents some of the main themes of the debate very briefly.

Ó'Cinnéide and Walsh (1992) set out four themes of interest in examining the current situation of community development in Ireland: the varied use of terminology and definitions; the social change agenda as an important focus; the role of the state; and the professionalisation of the sector. As community development activity proliferates and diversifies, they argue for the importance of keeping solid definitions and principles at the heart of the project.

Meade and O'Donovan (2002) see three concerns at the centre of the debate about community development in a consensus-partnership model: it positions the state as a benign actor, a mediator between interests; it posits that

universal goals can be advanced in a win–win manner (i.e. not a winners and losers model); it may hand power to unelected elites. These issues have been discussed in Chapter 1 and represent the first major area of critique of community development in the form of the partnership and consensus model.

♦ *Partnerships and relationships*

Meade describes the ‘consensus imperative’ at the heart of Irish governance, including local and community development, and she laments ‘the hegemonic status of corporatist values within Irish social policy discourses’ (Meade, 2005: 349). This consensus imperative can be accused of quelling radicalism and protecting established interests. According to Meade and O’Donovan (2002: 2), for many in the debate ‘the concept of corporatism is used pejoratively to refer to anti-democratic arrangements [that] foster consensualism and ensure that policy-making is dominated by the privileged and powerful.’ Lee (2003) also observes that the dominant consensus and partnership models tend to squeeze out minority or radical voices.

Of course, it is accepted that the relationship between the community sector and the state has always been difficult (see CWC, 1989). However, an emphasis on national programmes and funding can, obviously, add to concerns about dependence and the tensions this will inevitably cause. Many now observe that among the community sector groups, such as platforms and forums, few could be described as ‘self-defined, cohesive and autonomous structures’ (CWC, 2001, quoted in ADM, 2004: 24).

According to Meade, this dependence and its associated problems have become more acute in recent years due to changes in the CDP where ‘the state has mutated from generous benefactor to stern assessor and with its reconstruction of the terms of project funding has reminded community organisations of their own vulnerability’ (2005: 361). She argues that funding has become more ad hoc and hence less secure, leading to constraints on planning and implementing, while at the same time expectations in terms of anti-poverty outcomes remain very high. Regan (2004) raises similar concerns.

According to Collins, the local partnership era was preceded by a period of worsening relationships between the state and disadvantaged communities. This led to a growth in radical politics, including the burgeoning of Sinn Féin as a working class voice. Local partnership then could be seen as ‘a sophisticated process of State building’ (Collins, 2002: 99), allowing the State to extend its control into communities in a way that is perceived much more benignly than previous contentious periods of control-struggle (see Section 1.4 above). That this has been successful would not be denied by Meade, who goes so far as to say that the autonomous community sector exists no more. All that remains is a body of state-dependent service providers (Meade, 2005: 350).

♦ *The charge of tokenism*

Possibly the most common charge levelled against the Irish model is that it is strong on rhetoric but weak in practice, and that supposed processes of power spreading and involvement are no more than tokens, at best, or co-option mechanisms at worst. Meade argues that this occurs in Ireland through ‘forums that have been manufactured by the state in order to generate outcomes that, despite the best intentions of the community and voluntary sector, are predictably consistent with the state’s economic agenda’ (Meade, 2005: 350). As already mentioned, Collins (2002) also discusses this issue in the Irish context, viewing the Irish history of partnership as one of state building and quelling of the radicalism that was burgeoning within disadvantaged communities—in other words, with the movement of power often going in the wrong direction (Collins, 2002).

Broderick (1999) challenges the authenticity of many recent participation and partnership processes and points out their role in not only co-opting community groups into policy decisions, but also in serving to stretch the resources of these actors to participate credibly, thus damaging their ability to carry out other activities. Skillington, looking at environmental consultations in particular, also views these exercises with scepticism and interprets them as lip-service to participatory themes by actors who remain rooted in ‘a structural system that is non-participative at heart’ (Skillington, 1997: 510).



Loughry also talks about the structural issues in the difference between the rhetoric and the reality in Irish local partnership and community development. She observes that many state agencies retained structures and attitudes that were incompatible with the new spirit of involvement and consultation. In her experience as a practitioner, consultation processes undertaken by state agencies tended to be characterised by lack of respect and empathy for the communities, lack of clear objectives, lack of feedback, lack of organisation and an overall feeling of tokenism (Loughry, 2002: 64). The result of all this, according to Meade, is that 'the sector has been afforded a tokenistic form of recognition: a presence shorn of influence, participation without power' (Meade, 2005: 351). Many also refer to the lack of resources to support communities in their attempts to participate.

Broderick (2000: 104) also points out an important difference that can be seen between partnership (extending power to a select group) and participation (sharing power more broadly), arguing that the distinction is too often forgotten in practice in Ireland. Again, the themes of rhetoric and tokenism are common in this area, and have been throughout the period of partnership as can be seen in this comment from 1996: 'In principle and at the level of rhetoric, the state in Ireland has shown no reluctance to broaden the concept of partnership to include "communities". In practice, community groups have been granted but a token part in many of the area-based partnerships' (Varley & Ruddy, 1996: 81).

♦ *Radicalism or otherwise*

The CDP handbook states that among the core principles of community development is 'to challenge the causes of disadvantage/poverty and to offer new opportunities for those lacking choice, power and resources' (CDP handbook, 1999). Of course, the first obvious question is what are seen as the causes of poverty. Many versions of the national partnership discourse tend to assume that it is a rational managerial project to eliminate 'errors' in the system and work together for solutions that benefit all. This is to explicitly set aside issues of structure, power or interests as causes of poverty. Powell and Geoghegan (also mentioned earlier in 1.2) see this tension throughout the

Irish community development discourse. Lee also calls for the retention of a 'social change analysis' in community development. She argues that if too much attention is given to the service delivery aspect 'there is a growing concern within the community development sector that the commitment to community development as a means to achieve positive social change is being reduced and/or undermined' (Lee, 2003: 55).

Many others also lament what they see as a lack of political radicalism in the community sector. Mick Rafferty in 1996 regretted that area-based partnerships seemed to be avoiding any radicalism and pursuing the same old local development strategies as ever (Rafferty, 1996: 61). Collins also says that there were debates from the start within the community sector, with many fearing the 'deradicalizing impact of partnership' (Collins, 2002: 95). This is a similar sentiment to that expressed by Lee (Lee, 2003: 55) that partnership models can squeeze out radical voices. According to survey work by Geoghegan and Powell, most practitioners don't express themselves in a radical political discourse, for most it is 'rooted in a liberal, humanistic framework with an emphasis on the value, capacity and worth of individuals, rather than an explicit challenge to structured social relationships' (Geoghegan and Powell, 2005: 16).

This also links back to the question of whether wider political economy questions are capable of being addressed, and whether current and recent initiatives can be accused of the charge sometimes levelled at them that they fail to address fundamental structural causes of poverty (see for example Pringle *et al.*, 1999). Fraser (2000) argues that the partnership model being employed to narrow the debate is part of a wider trend across society where equality and redistribution are effectively off the political agenda. Levitas (1996) says much the same - that current exclusion debates tend to stop short of any challenge to economic structures. Meade further mentions the tendency to associate poverty and exclusion with certain groups rather than attribute them to structural causes (Meade 2005: 359). The problem of the 'insider' nature of the community sector in the partnership model is that it ends up in a role of 'social rehabilitator and not that of social critic' (Meade 2005:

360). This debate is very current in Ireland, but Mae Shaw (2005) argues that this has always been the nature of community development and that there is always a tension between radicalism and pragmatism focused on the sector's relationship with the state.

♦ *Future direction*

These concerns are the fuel for the fiery debates about the future direction of community development in Ireland. Much of the debate is about whether to stay in or step out. Murphy 2002 talks about the dilemma for community groups on whether to stay within partnership, accepting its imperfections but working towards removing them, or to step outside and adopt a more radical stance (see Powell & Geoghegan, 2005: 11).

Few disagree that there is a wealth of experience and commitment built up in what is now a stronger and more cohesive community development sector than ever before (see for example Harvey, 1996; also Lee, 2003). However, the relationship of the sector with national programmes remains a point of debate. Some see the period of state sponsorship as a lost opportunity for the pursuit of a more radical agenda (Murphy, 2002: 88). In addition, recent changes in the CDP raise concerns for some. For instance, Sean Regan of the CWC cites new provisions that new projects will be hosted rather than set up as independent organisations and that CDPs in the Gaeltacht will come under the auspices of Údaras na Gaeltachta, and wonders if a process of fragmentation is underway (Regan 2004). Others have also expressed concerns prompted by the withdrawal of CWC's funding in 2004. Similar tensions have been seen in the LDSIP, particular in relation to the transition to the LDSIP phase from previous phases, where some partnerships saw themselves as being squeezed into one of the three programme measures without a natural fit (Haase & McKeown, 2003: 16).

The main discussion continues to focus on the tension between the positive impacts of the national programmes in terms of stability and funding set against the risks of losing radicalism and energy. This debate will continue indefinitely, but the core project should not be forgotten:

*Community development has to present its vision of society and the values and principles underpinning such a society. It must constantly evaluate its way of working and organising. It needs, above all else, to enable the voice of those who are excluded to be heard.*

(Lee, 2003: 58)

### 3. Evaluation concepts

#### 3.1 Measuring community development

*In most instances, it is extremely difficult to make an accurate estimate of the programme's impact.* (Purdon *et al.*, 2001: 5)

What does evaluation of community development activity measure?

- It is a way of assessing whether objectives have been achieved
- It is a way of assessing the outcomes of projects for people who use them
- It is a way of learning from successes and mistakes.

(Leeds HAZ, 1992)

A distinction is often made between the terms *output* (measurable direct results of a programme) and *impact* (long-term effects of a programme on the social or economic issues the programme aims to address). Barr *et al.* (1996) also distinguish *effectiveness*—measures of success—and *efficiency*—measures of how well resources were utilised. They also add *equity* as a third dimension of high importance in community development.

Another distinction often made is between *summative* and *formative* evaluation. Summative evaluation looks at impacts and quantifies effects, whereas formative evaluation examines processes and asks why interventions succeed or fail (Davies, 2003: 4).

However, many commentators note the same core challenges in evaluating community development. Impacts are long term in nature and difficult to precisely measure and any measurement tends only to be possible in a qualitative sense (see Nexus, 2002). Similarly, Brown (1991) sets out what he sees as typical practical challenges in evaluation of community development, namely problems of cost and scale, such as availability of resources, a cycle of timings for grants and programme renewal, and confused boundaries of

responsibility. Confusion is compounded by the frequently complex mix of actors and funders in a given project or programme.

In terms of research methods, Murtagh lists a range of approaches to evaluation and discusses their strengths and weaknesses. The approaches mentioned are as follows:

- Quantified indicators
- Community surveys
- Key actors in-depth interviews
- Project management systems
- Case study action research.

(Murtagh, 2001)

Most can be employed in either instrumental or interpretive ways (see 3.2 below). Key issues for assessing methods relate to practicability and cost, validity and legitimacy, and (in the interpretive spirit) questions of politics and power.

It is also worth noting that a distinction can be seen in this list between approaches that work with quantitative data and those that employ qualitative data. Quantitative data on long-term impacts, though often desirable for funders or others who like to see 'hard proof', is fraught with difficulties. Even if relevant data can be gathered, it needs to be interpreted in a way that establishes the link between the change and the intervention. Weiss (1998) introduces the concepts of 'implementation failure' and 'theory failure' to distinguish these from the primary problem of 'measurement failure'—where the change of interest proves difficult to measure for practical or validity reasons. If impacts are not showing up 'on the radar' of quantitative measure it could also be due to theory failure—the underlying model was faulty—or implementation failure—intended outcomes were not achieved in the project.

Community development evaluation has a particular interest in qualitative methods, as they tend to be in keeping with the core values of the approach as a whole. The UK government's guidance on qualitative policy evaluation,

the *Magenta Book*, argues that the strength of qualitative research in this area lies in 'its ability to explore issues in depth and capture diversity, its concern with context, and its focus on exploring meanings.' (Davies, 2002: 5).

Murtagh, for example, refers to Dixon's (1995) concept of 'community stories', narratives from the community itself that can serve to 'capture the process and experience of change using ethnographic methods rather than stark quantified indicators' (Murtagh, 2001: 226). It involves evaluators acknowledging that practitioners and community participants possess valuable knowledge and expertise about the relationships, processes and conditions of their communities and also stresses the importance of finding ways to properly incorporate this data into the evaluation (ASDC, 2001: 12). Again quoting the *Magenta Book*: 'qualitative research also lends itself to evaluations which require an understanding of processes.' (Davies, 2002: 6)

What standard is community development to be developed against? What defines success, when simple quantifiable measures do not exist? The Scottish Community Development Centre's LEAP model identified three bases of evaluation:

- expressed (i.e. from the viewpoint of the participants)
- normative (i.e. relative to standards set down by authoritative bodies and experts)
- comparative (i.e. relative to conditions in other areas)

(SCDC ,2002)

Purdon *et al.* emphasise that asking the question 'What has the impact of a programme been?' means addressing the 'counterfactual'—'What would the situation be if the programme hadn't existed?' (Purdon *et al.*, 2001). Again, quantification of this is extremely challenging. They also make the distinction between measuring process and measuring impact, arguing that they are entirely different goals. This creates challenges for community development, where process dimensions are so important, and yet so hard to evaluate. Bridgen (2004: 291) observes how little has been published on how to measure empowerment or to evaluate programmes with regard to community



empowerment. And yet this is a crucial element of community development and often the central goal. Murtagh also alludes to this when he argues that evaluation can be harmful if it over-emphasises simple impact measures while avoiding a discussion about 'whether there has been a genuine shift in control and influence of resources towards disadvantaged communities' (Murtagh, 2001: 223).

### 3.2 The politics of evaluation

*It is recognised that evaluations are crucial moments in institutional life and thus are deeply political.* (Marsden & Oakley, 1991: 315, 216)

If community development is always political, then so too is the evaluation of community development. As with community development practice itself, evaluation reflects an underlying world view. Brendan Murtagh (2001) uses a case study of evaluation of urban policy in Derry to explore the distinction between instrumental and interpretive approaches to evaluation (focusing specifically on the urban policy evaluation). Following Marsden and Oakely (1991), instrumental approaches are described as those interested in quantification based on assumptions of the value-free nature of evaluation, while interpretive approaches accept that evaluation is never neutral and acknowledge the importance of power and relationships. Instrumental approaches are often seen as an attempt by management to gain increased control (Marsden & Oakely, 1991: 316)

Barr *et al.* (1996: 11) point out that the employment of community development principles in evaluation requires that the community should be fully involved, and also that evaluation should take place through the life of a programme. Taylor *et al.* (2001) also emphasise the iterative and ongoing nature of evaluation and its interactions with planning. It is not a stand-alone abstract piece of science, but rather an integral part of the community development process. This is also stressed by Nexus for the Irish SPEAK model discussed later in this review. Ian Shaw explores the boundaries between practice and research, looking at practitioner research in social work in particular (Shaw, 2005). Brown (1991) also notes that the flexibility so

important to community development bodies often makes evaluation against a pre-defined set of objectives all the more problematic.

The same principles and values that apply to community development itself should also apply to its evaluation. This means an emphasis on participation and inclusiveness; on trust and positive relationships between evaluators and practitioners and participants; clear, agreed goals and expectations; and good communication and information exchange (ASDC, 2001). The W.K. Kellogg Foundation in the USA has published an evaluation handbook that stresses similar points. Evaluations should seek to:

- Strengthen projects
- Use multiple methods
- Design evaluation to address real issues
- Create a participatory process
- Allow for flexibility
- Build capacity

(Kellogg Foundation, 1998)

Alan Barr, a veteran of community development research and author of some of the evaluations and frameworks discussed later in this review, presents an overview of community development research in a recent article that makes a number of important points. He observes a tendency for research to be driven by external academic researchers rather than by participants in the process and consequently there are often 'substantial contradictions between the way that research is used and the idea of research as a means of achieving community development outcomes' (Barr, 2005: 456). Very different attitudes and approaches arise depending on whether the research is driven by a desire to collect data on communities or by a desire to serve as a tool of community development in itself. He calls for a model of community development research that:

- is grounded in and values community experience
- is designed to enhance the capacity and ability of communities
- challenges false assumptions about the objectivity of external research

- demystifies research
- promotes equalities and inclusion.

(Barr, 2005: 458, 459)

### 3.3 Evaluation frameworks

*Evaluation is not about establishing 'certainties' or even about 'proving' anything. Rather, it is a process which helps us see more clearly what it is we are doing, and the nature of the issues being confronted. It is a 'way of seeing'.*

(Van der Eyken, 1992)

A number of excellent evaluation frameworks have been developed that set out both the principles and philosophy of such evaluation and also the practical steps involved. One worth mentioning is the Rowntree Foundation's *Evaluating Community Projects: A Practical Guide*, which sets out the conditions under which evaluation is most effective:

- it is a continuous (not just one-off) process informing planning and delivery as the project develops
- it involves all those with an interest in the project in defining the questions they want answered
- it uses imaginative and creative approaches, which engage those involved
- it helps projects to be more accountable to the wider community
- it is used to challenge discriminatory and oppressive policies and practice, and to overcome inequality and disadvantage
- it highlights and celebrates successes and achievements
- it encourages an honest appraisal of progress, so that you can learn from what hasn't worked as well as what has.

(Taylor *et al.*, 2005: 2)

An evaluation method developed by the Community development foundation and employed extensively in the UK is called the ABCD method (Achieving Better Community Development). It includes a discussion of some of the

reasons why evaluation has proven so difficult (and often disappointing) in the past:

- Inappropriate evaluation models: many different expectations of community development; many different evaluation frameworks imposed by funding regimes
- Lack of an agreed agenda: funders are often focused on demonstrable impacts, whereas practitioners place more emphasis on process
- The burden of evaluation: Projects are often asked for large amounts of monitoring information relative to their resources or capacity, and evaluation can often be seen as a negative process
- No clear understanding of community development: including confusion around terminology and a failure to value the contribution of community development<sup>2</sup>.

(Barr & Hashagen, 2000: 16)

These are the reasons the authors put forward for the value of proper, meaningful evaluation, done well and used well. The ABCD framework sets out ten dimensions of community development in a structure of 'a healthy community', 'a strengthened community', 'quality of community life dimensions' and 'community empowerment dimensions' (Barr & Hashagen, 2000: 23). This can be used as a framework to articulate in detail the goals of an initiative and then to develop indicators under each dimension that can be used for evaluation.

The framework distinguishes between inputs, processes, outputs and outcomes (i.e. impacts). On outcomes (impacts), the authors note that some are quantifiable and some are not, but that they can be wide and far beyond the original intent of the project:

---

<sup>2</sup> As noted elsewhere, terminology is an issue for Ireland, where the phrase community development is very widely used and no clear definition distinguishes between appropriate and inappropriate uses, see for example Ó'Cinnéide & Walsh, 1992: 331.

*Given that community development is largely concerned with wider outcomes that it cannot control, the relationship between the outputs that it can influence and the wider outcomes is crucial to understand. Planning, evaluation and learning depend on our ability to have good information, and to be able to make judgements about how far community development activities have indeed led to the wider outcomes sought.*

(Barr & Hashagen, 2000: 59)

Another interesting model by some of the same authors that combines both qualitative and quantitative elements is the method developed for the Northern Ireland Voluntary Activity Unit (by Alan Barr *et al.* of the Scottish Community Development Centre). This method pre-dates the ABCD method, and indeed informed much of it, but is explicated here for its interesting analysis of possible community level indicators. It proposes a number of measures that can be used, under a set of nine themes, offering measures of change in people, in the community, in local services and in policies. All categories are relevant. Some selected illustrative examples are as follows:

Theme		Measures of change
A learning community	In people	What qualifications have people gained?
	In the community	Are people active in community groups and organisations?
	In policies	Do agencies have policies which recognise the right of people to participate, and which encourage this by removing obstacles and encouraging access?
A fair and just community	In people	Do minority group members feel accepted and valued?
	In the community	Do community organisations have equal opportunity policies?

An active and organised community	In people	How many people are involved in the work of community organisations?
	In the community	What services and facilities are provided by community organisations?
	In local services	What mechanisms are in place to involve the community or service users in planning and delivering services or in planning investment?
An influential community	In the community	Are community organisations represented on planning and policy making bodies
	In local services	In what ways are the views of the community sought?
	In policies	Do policies specify the importance of community involvement in decision-making?
A commonwealth: local economic development	In people	How many community members are employed in community-led enterprises?
	In the community	Is the community successful in attracting external funds for projects and activities?
	In local services	Have investment, recruitment or other business decisions been influenced by the community?
	In policies	Are there economic policies designed to encourage investment in the community?
A caring community	In the community	What local action, campaigns, or pressure is there on social development issues?
	In policies	To what extent do policies encourage open access, user feedback, local dialogue, participation and influence?

A green community	In people	To what extent are community members aware of environmental issues and action?
A safe community	In people	To what extent do people think they are likely to be affected by crime?
	In the community	Are any community initiatives concerned with public safety issues?
A good place to live	In people	Are people generally satisfied with living in the community?

(from Barr *et al.*, 1996)

Not all of these items are easy to quantify, but many are amenable to measurement through various survey techniques. These then offer an opportunity to bring a quantitative analysis to impacts evaluation that can compliment a qualitative analysis of the same issues. Of course, causality remains a concern, echoing earlier comments about the relationships between outputs and outcomes, so care always needs to be taken when making claims for particular interventions. Recording change is not the same as recording impacts.

These are but examples of frameworks that have been developed and employed in community development contexts. They illustrate the many considerations that are relevant to such research questions for Ireland, from the practical challenges to the political dimensions, to the importance of employing the appropriate approach that emphasises both the correct ethos and the need for research validity. There is no simple, universal magic solution to the challenge of measuring community development impacts.



## 4. Evaluations in Ireland

### 4.1 Overview

*From a poverty point of view, analysis must start from a recognition of inequality in the distribution of resources and life chances as a central feature of Irish society, and must assess any proposed intervention in the rural in terms of its likely impact on this unequal distribution*

(Tovey *et al.*, 1996: 30, 31)

The challenges of evaluating community development discussed in Chapter 2 above apply to Ireland as much as anywhere else. Tovey *et al.* identify the absence of impacts analysis in the Irish case, and the reasons they identify are similar to those mentioned earlier: the constraints on resources and prioritisation of ‘doing’ rather than ‘measuring’; the difficulties in matching project operation and approaches to a research model; the lack of importance placed on evaluation; the absence of a solid evaluation framework or data; the lack of resources specifically assigned to evaluation; and the low prioritisation of evaluation among government departments and agencies (Tovey *et al.*, 1996: 30, 31).

However, some evaluations have been undertaken, and data exists on the activities and impacts of the CDP, the LDSIP and the Family Resource Centres. For the CDP and FRCs, most of this data comes via the SPEAK (Strategic Planning, Evaluation and Knowledge) self-evaluation system developed by Nexus Ltd<sup>3</sup>. This is a database-driven computer system that allows projects enter their reporting data and generate their own reports, and also collects all project reports into a national database for further analysis. It is designed to be a planning tool as well as a reporting tool. Projects have been involved in its development and are provided with support in using it. It is now in use by the CDP and the FRCs, with large datasets starting in 2003 for

---

<sup>3</sup> This review concentrates on the most recent evaluations: older evaluations such as that carried out on the second Poverty programme or on the Community Development Fund are not addressed in detail.

the CDP and 2004 for the FRCs. These datasets are the basis for much of the discussion in the following section.

For the LDSIP, several evaluations have been carried out on behalf of ADM. Three are discussed to illustrate the nature of impacts being discussed for the LDSIP.

All evaluations of the Irish national programmes emphasise what could be termed process variables, such as the provision of support services and resources (from photocopying and CV services to meeting rooms), the development of community capacity and improvements in participation, awareness and community spirit. All are based on reports from the project participants themselves. They are not external evaluations per se and they do not purport to be external evaluations of overall impacts. Thus they illustrate much about the projects and about the value of community development, but they also illustrate the tremendous difficulties in answering questions about long-term impacts on poverty-related indicators.

## **4.2 Principal evaluations of Irish programmes**

### **The Community Development Programme**

Nexus Research<sup>4</sup> carried out in a formal evaluation of the CDP in 2002. The overall objectives of the evaluation were as follows: to

- Describe and present the rationale for funding of the CDP as part of an overall social development and anti-poverty strategy
- Measure and document the impact of the work of the CDP
- Make such recommendations as seem appropriate for modifications of the Programme structure, policy of funding to enhance its effectiveness in an efficient and cost-effective way

(Nexus, 2002: 5)

---

<sup>4</sup> In association with Farrell Grant Sparks Ltd, for the Department of Social, Community and Family Affairs

The evaluation emphasised the importance of looking at the processes of community development as well as products and outputs, in keeping with the overall ethos of the approach. The research involved project-level and programme-level evaluation. The project evaluation framework consists of an examination of area and project characteristics and of output and impact indicators. Programme evaluation involved a review of documentation, consultation with key stakeholders and a survey of 'working partners' (Nexus, 2002).

The evaluation examines impacts across a set of 'working methods' employed by the CDP projects through the data collected from all projects via the SPEAK system. What is set out here aims to give a sense of this dataset and its evaluation without claiming in any way to be a complete presentation. The main areas of impact discussed are as follows:

♦ **Providing resources and services**

This would include office facilities, help with administration or accounts, use of meeting space. The most tangible output reported was the production of publicity materials such as newsletters. The associated impacts identified were:

- Improved public image for an area or community, better perception among agencies and among the local public
- A greater sense of unity in community groups, greater awareness about common issues and challenges.

Access to space for meetings was also cited as very important, assisting the function of projects in a very fundamental way and giving them a sense of rootedness and location. The Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs also reports that individuals make up the majority of users of resource services (DRCGA, 2005: 20).

#### ♦ **Giving information and advice to individuals**

Advice on specific topics such as social welfare, entitlements, services and accommodation. The study reports the impacts of this advice in terms of indicators such as 'recipients going on to become involved in community-based development activity', 'recipients going on to access employment opportunities' and 'increased benefit uptake'

#### ♦ **Giving information and advice to local groups**

Projects most commonly offer advice on funding, management and organisation, and on broader development issues. A majority report typically four or five instances of each per week. Associated impacts are most tangible regarding funding advice with over 100 instances of funding achievement being attributed to CDP advice and an expectation of many more unreported cases. (Nexus, 2002: 43). Another impact reported was in increased numbers of new groups being established, as well as groups being seen to move forward or expand, better networking and increased community participation.

#### ♦ **Providing and delivering training or education programmes**

Impacts reported among participations of training programmes are:

- Progression to employment (reported by 11 projects out of 58 in database)
- Progression to further education/training (reported by 7 projects)
- Progression to community involvement (reported by 18 projects)

Similar types of impacts are reported from educational programmes, more commonly with literacy and adult education programmes, less commonly with social awareness or self-development programmes.

#### ♦ **Establishing and maintaining new groups**

According to the evaluation, 'it is within this activity field that impacts of the CDP projects are most evident, widespread and sustained' (Nexus, 2002: 46).

Three types of impact are discussed:

- *New development-oriented partnerships between community and statutory organisations generated*—among the dataset, 16 new partnerships arrangements were recorded.
- *The work of such partnerships leading to verifiable improvements for the community in general*—including five cases of community space being created (community centre or recreational spaces) and one case of a new community-based enterprise
- *Verifiable improvements resulting for individuals or sections of the community*—two instances of educational improvement and three cases of positive impact on individual or family poverty (reduction in fuel poverty, reduction in rent arrears and increased uptake of benefits).

#### ♦ **Establishing and maintaining local networks**

Working relationships with statutory bodies led to impacts such as new initiatives being established and influence on area development plans or county development board strategies.

#### ♦ **Participation in activities re areas of policy beyond the project community**

Projects report participation in policy conferences, representation in regional or national networks and increased awareness of their work beyond their own community. These activities led to impacts on knowledge and practices, new strategic alliances and influence on the CDP itself.

There is evidence of a progression path, in that newer projects tend to be concentrating on establishment and administration tasks, while more mature projects can be seen to be working more on establishing groups and participating in networks and other activities. The evaluation presents a

summary of overall project impacts that suggests that, particularly among the longer established projects (about a third of the total), impacts are clear regarding creating local development infrastructure and regarding developing partnerships with statutory agencies ‘to develop and/or mainstream new responses to social exclusion’ and that ‘there is clear evidence of real improvements in living conditions resulting from this’ (Nexus, 2002: 48). This is the most significant evidence set for the impacts of the CDP.

### **The SPEAK model data set for the CDP**

The above evaluation can be developed through analysis of the SPEAK data submitted to the Department in subsequent years. The data set has not been fully analysed, but has been perused for the purposes of this study<sup>5</sup>. The data set is the submissions of CDP projects via the SPEAK software. The software collects project-level data in four areas:

- **Operational Environment**—the nature of and the main issues facing the community in which the project operates
- **Resource Audit**—the activities of the project and their time apportionment, looking at working methods (themes), target groups and issues being addressed. Information is collated from reports from all staff members and volunteers
- **Project Outputs**—the direct outputs of the project work under each working method. Quantitative data on numbers trained, number of groups assisted in their development, etc
- **Project Impacts**—looking at the broader impact of the project’s work. Mostly qualitative, descriptive data.

(DRCGA, 2005)

The 2004 set covers 61 projects and has been collated into thematic files and into a draft overall report. The data gives very detailed information on activity

---

<sup>5</sup> The author is grateful to Eddie Arthurs of DCRGA for facilitating access to this data

and on how time was spent. For example, the following table illustrates how time is divided among 'working method' areas of work:

<b><i>Working method</i></b>	<b><i>Percentage of total time spent</i></b>
Providing resources	10.33%
Providing information	10.85%
Helping groups	8.45%
Education and training	11.27%
Establishing groups	2.57%
Establishing networks	1.52%
Networking locally	5.62%
Policy work	3.64%
Community based arts	2.78%

(DRCGA, 2005)

Again, the analysis is based on reported data—it is not an external evaluation. The output data is reported by project staff and volunteers, and impact data by management committees. The quantitative element of the data set relates to time spent and also funding and staff deployment.

It reports, for instance, that the respondents are responsible for the establishment of 189 networks, 183 of which were active in 2004, and 32 of which were newly established in 2004. Another example is the time reported to be spent on different policy issues:



<b>Policy Issue</b>	<b>Days</b>
Education	2,502.98
Employment	908.98
Enterprise	342.51
Health	1,429.34
Equality	1,495.20
Housing	974.85
Environment	731.13
Domestic Violence	573.05
Drug Use	382.03
Crime/Justice	368.86
Amenities	836.52
Tourism	164.67
Childcare	1,712.57
Transport	362.27
Total	12,784.98

(DCRGA, 2005: 17, 18)

Clearly there are questions about the precision of such data, particularly as presented above, and of its accuracy, coming as it does from the projects themselves with no external verification. However, as a general indicator of activities and outputs, it is undoubtedly very useful.

There is also a large amount of qualitative data in the form of comments from the projects under headings such as *general comments*, *learning points* and *long-term impacts*. The following gives a feel for the kinds of comments logged under the heading of impacts:

<b><i>Working method</i></b>	<b><i>Nature of impacts reported</i></b>
Providing resources	Improves relationships, information, empowerment, skills Vital in sustaining local groups/activities, groups would not manage without it

	<p>A base for community activity, gets people more involved</p> <p>Community better informed, their needs better met</p>
Providing information	<p>Raises awareness of rights and entitlements</p> <p>More benefits accessed, more education accessed</p> <p>Project personnel learn local concerns</p> <p>Capacity building improving employment prospects</p> <p>Builds local awareness, allows tailored dissemination</p>
Helping groups	<p>Builds local understanding, information is shared</p> <p>Builds community development ethos, raises project profile</p> <p>Builds groups' capacity and increases their self-reliance</p> <p>Funding accessed, new facilities acquired</p>
Education and training	<p>Builds confidence, capacity, empowering people</p> <p>Builds interest in community and adult education</p> <p>People now using skills on a commercial basis</p> <p>Increases employment prospects</p> <p>Positive health impacts via health education</p>
Establishing groups	<p>More people are reached</p> <p>Gives the community more influence, gives people a say</p> <p>Improves awareness, communication</p> <p>Builds capacity, confidence, self-esteem</p>
Establishing networks	<p>Improved relationships, awareness, mutual learning</p> <p>New services and initiatives established</p> <p>Sharing best practice, reducing duplication</p> <p>Motivating people, reducing feelings of isolation</p>

Networking locally	Sharing information, learning from others Builds relationships, solidarity, enhanced co-operation Sharpening awareness of local needs, maximising responsiveness Promotes community development ethos
Policy work	Influence, learning, information sharing, keeping up to date Promotes the CDP Catalyst for people to work collectively
Community-based arts	Gets people more involved, leads to other involvement Personal fulfilment, self esteem, reduced isolation Highlights local issues, builds project profile

Occasionally, there are quantitative elements in the impacts data. For example, one project reported statistics from a training course, illustrating the potential positive impacts. Of the 25 participants:

- seven are now employed
- five are in full-time education
- two have received recognised qualifications
- five are on community employment schemes
- five are involved in voluntary work

In general, however, it is not a quantitative data set, and of course it represents the views of only one third of all CDP projects. Also, by some definitions there is certainly confusion between the concepts of outputs and impacts in places. It is, however, one of the richest untapped sources of ready information on project work and its impacts and, as can be seen in the table above, serves to reinforce many points made elsewhere about the types of impacts to be expected.

The SPEAK data will continue to be important, and the Department intends to push for higher response rates in future years, so the value of the information will grow accordingly.

### **The Family Resource Centres**

A SPEAK dataset also exists for the Family Resource Centres, with 57 FRCs having submitted reports in 2004. The Family Support Agency is now working on a national report based on this dataset. 2005 reports are now being collected, and a similarly large dataset is expected to be complete soon. This literature review has not attempted to interrogate this dataset to any degree but, as with the CDP SPEAK data, it is worth reporting on the kind of information contained in the set<sup>6</sup>. This is illustrated through the following table, which presents quotes from the reports that are fairly typical for each working method heading:

<b><i>Working method</i></b>	<b><i>Typical comments reported under impacts</i></b>
Providing resources  13.2% of time spent	<p>‘It provides an accessible and low-cost facility to the local people’.</p> <p>‘The impact of our work providing resources can be seen in the funding obtained for different activities and community groups in our area’.</p> <p>‘Over the years residents are becoming more comfortable and familiar with calling in to the centre to use the services’</p> <p>‘The impacts of our work are that the local community has access to affordable and quality childcare, a friendly and welcoming community centre, access to developmental, education and training opportunities and a resource for local people to help build a better community that values diversity and equality’.</p>

---

<sup>6</sup> The author is grateful to Brian Dillon and Dave Redmond of Nexus for facilitating access to this data

<p>Providing information</p> <p>7.8% of time spent</p>	<p>‘We have an open door policy and this is displayed in the numbers presently visiting our centre’.</p> <p>‘A number of queries related to rights and entitlements for lone parents’.</p> <p>‘The time spent on providing resources has given a wide range of people in the community the ability to use resources to benefit their lives in improving their overall economic and social quality of life’.</p> <p>‘We support individuals, families and groups to progress their issues, have access to a safe, nurturing and confidential environment and support for service users to gain access to quality information and support’.</p>
<p>Counselling and support</p> <p>4.4% of time spent</p>	<p>‘Community really needs a listening ear’.</p> <p>‘One hundred and sixty five people have been supported to make informed decisions regarding issues which are specific to them. Individuals are encouraged to participate and encouraged to access services and supports. We strive to support people to live their lives to the best of their ability’.</p>
<p>Helping groups</p> <p>3.9% of time spent</p>	<p>‘This process empowers the community to develop new skills and be more pro-active in their own learning’.</p> <p>‘Impacts include empowerment of groups, sustaining their development and development of partnership relationships between the Centre and new groups’.</p> <p>‘There is a large increase in community activity’.</p>
<p>Education and training</p> <p>14.2% of time spent</p>	<p>‘These programmes help develop and improve people's ability to actively participate in society. This positively impacts on society as they are able to use what they learn in their every day lives and this can often have a positive impact on society as a whole.’</p>

	<p>‘Facilitated growth in self esteem’.</p> <p>‘Many of the group members have decided to access further education’.</p>
<p>Establishing groups, networks</p> <p>2.2% of time spent</p>	<p>‘The establishment of these groups met a particular need that was not heretofore catered for in our community’.</p> <p>‘The more groups in the area, the more the communities needs will be met’.</p> <p>‘Establishing new groups leads to more self esteem within the community. The centre has provided a safe place for new groups to form and grow’.</p>
<p>Networking locally</p> <p>4.0% of time spent</p>	<p>‘Networking is seen as an integral part of the Resource Centre's ethos’.</p> <p>‘We have established good relationships with many of the local people and agencies in the community’.</p> <p>‘People are more aware of resources available in the community’.</p>
<p>Policy work</p> <p>2.7% of time spent</p>	<p>‘The project has influenced the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform to provide funding for child care’.</p> <p>‘The impacts of policy work are a wider community ownership and understanding of national policy, increased participation by groups who were previously excluded from policy making forums and development of policy based development work’.</p>
<p>Community based arts</p> <p>1.3% of time spent</p>	<p>‘Youth became involved in several arts projects to build self esteem’.</p> <p>‘Our community based arts programmes have raised the community awareness of issues such as racism, bullying, drugs/alcohol misuse, in a fun, integrated and accessible way’.</p>

(Source: FRC SPEAK 2004 database)

Users of the SPEAK system receive support through the software in terms of indicating the kinds of impacts and issues being pursued in a given question. This works through use of previous years' answers to develop typical indicators, a process undertaken interactively with the FRCs themselves.

Similar general conclusions can be drawn from this data as were seen in the CDP, principally the high value to a local area having a project to act as facilitator and support to a wide range of local groups and activities. Also, the same pattern of progression can be seen as projects mature and move on to more advanced activities.<sup>7</sup> As with the CDP data, there are some valuable quantitative components, such as proportions of time spent on different activities or issues, and well as general deployment of resources and numbers of people reached by various activities.

### **The LDSIP**

The LDSIP has been the subject of several analyses, not usually full and formal evaluations of the whole programme, but more commonly examining certain aspects of the programme that includes a degree of evaluation. Some of the conclusions of this work are reported here to illustrate this.

ADM's annual report presents an overall picture of the LDSIP through a set of quantitative indicators, as illustrated in the following table for 2004. This gives a good sense of scale of impacts for the programme.

<b><i>Indicator</i></b>	<b><i>Total 2004</i></b>	<b><i>Cumulative 2000 – 2004</i></b>
Adults supported under Services for the Unemployed	30,227	118,001

---

<sup>7</sup> According to Brian Dillon of Nexus Research this pattern can be seen across the FRC SPEAK data for 2004 and 2005



Young people supported under Community-Based Youth Initiatives	41,335	206,392
Adults supported under Community-Based Youth Initiatives	8,466	37,697
Total number of individuals in target groups supported under LDSIP	80,028	362,091
Number of community-based projects focusing on target groups	1,961	4,986
Number of infrastructure / environment projects	154	1,111
Number of adults supported to participate in education and training	9,900	45,971
% participating in certified education and training	50%	46%
% adults achieving certified education and training	46%	49%
% adults supported into employment	16%	17%
% adults supported into self-employment	5%	12%

(Source: ADM Annual Report, 2004)

Evaluation data also comes from the report *Community Work in a Rural Setting: An Examination of Community Work under the Local Development Social Inclusion Programme* published by ADM in November 2003. The study makes a distinction between two approaches among LDSIP funded groups: work which starts with the target groups and work which starts with existing local community organisations whose focus has not traditionally been on addressing issues of poverty and inequality' (ADM, 2003: 6). The study establishes that the former approach is more likely to successfully achieve LDSIP objectives. There is some discussion of impacts in the report, such as the following conclusion:

*The study shows that targeted work in rural areas does bring about significant benefits for excluded groups.*

(ADM, 2003: 66)

However, the study is more a discussion of good practice than an impacts evaluation per se. Most information of interest to this discussion is to be found in the case studies that are at the heart of the report. Six rural community development initiatives are examined in detail under a set of seven headings, one of which is 'outcomes for the LDSIP target groups'. The kinds of outputs reported are similar in language to those seen in other evaluations:

- Establishment of new groups or networks
- Improved links among groups
- Empowerment through working collectively
- Higher participation
- Transfer of learning
- Awareness
- More focused services
- Access to funding
- Provision or improvement of facilities and infrastructure

Clearly, to use the distinction established earlier, the focus of the evaluation is on outputs as opposed to impacts, and longer term effects on poverty and exclusion indicators are not considered in any detail. It should also be noted that LDSIP initiatives have a wide range of objectives and are by no means always primarily focused on poverty and exclusion.

Another analysis of the LDSIP is reported in *Equality in Education: An Examination of Community Based Youth Initiatives under the Local Development Social Inclusion Programme* also published by ADM in November 2003. Seventeen community based youth initiative (CBYI) projects are examined against a framework of quality in education that looks at equality of opportunity, treatment and outcome. Under these three headings, the study reports the work of a number of projects with regard to their strategies and objectives and to their outcomes. These are summarised in the following table:

<i>Evaluation framework</i>	<i>Outcome headings reported</i>
Equality of opportunity	Personal and social benefits Increased academic achievement Value added to mainstream delivery Young people coping in the system Improved school attendance and retention
Equality of treatment	Relevant and responsive educational provision Outcomes in terms of young people's participation and achievement Self-esteem and confidence Increased understanding of inequality of treatment within the Education system Improved collaboration
Equality of outcome	Outcomes for children/young people (includes additional supports and greater educational progression) Outcomes for parents (improved parenting skills and personal effectiveness) Outcomes for schools (including greater awareness of diverse needs and enhanced educational provision)

(Source: ADM, 2003b)

Equality of outcome proves the most difficult to assess, with only two projects reporting under this heading and both noting the difficulty in measuring ultimate impacts of this kind. In general, there are some numbers cited, such as numbers remaining in school or undertaking exams, but for the most part it is, as it set out to be, an overview of the work of the projects and their results. There are also illustrative case studies that provide valuable insights into what can be achieved. This is an important source of intelligence on the achievements of a specific subset of LDSIP supported projects.

The study highlights the importance of effective collaboration between community groups and school, and on the overall value of a local community development approach. It recommends as best practice that projects 'adopt area-based, community development approaches that incorporate key stakeholders from a variety of sectors in the development of local solutions to local problems based on appropriate local analysis' (ADM, 2003b: 9).

A third examination of the LDSIP is set out in Brian Harvey's study of community experiences in LDSIP, *The role of the community sector in local social partnership* (ADM, 2004). This report has been cited a number of times throughout this literature review. Three community platforms and forums are examined (with much of their experience pre-dating the LDSIP itself). The focus is the success of these bodies in developing meaningful local community participation.

The study reports the experiences of the community groups in terms of the levels of representation achieved (including counts of committee memberships, etc.) and the reported experiences of participants. For the most part this is a qualitative report of experiences rather than an attempt to measure any impact variable, in the strict sense. However, the study does offer insights into the kinds of achievements local community development structures can report in the area of participation and representation. It makes the following overall concluding point:

*Overall, the process of local social partnership is more successful in city or county development boards than in strategic policy committees, although there are reverse exceptions to both. The process of redrawing local governance is proving to be a ... difficult and complex one. Despite that, there is an almost universal commitment to make it work and a widely held aspiration that it will succeed in the medium to long term.*

(ADM, 2004: 22).

Another study that examines similar activities but again draws from the pre-LDSIP phase is ADM's *The interface between community development and local development* (ADM, 2000). Its focus is the local partnerships within the

Local Development Programme, looking specifically at the impact and role of community development in the Programme. It is based on three in-depth case studies.

The key finding of this study is that the LDP partnerships have helped to develop local community sectors beyond what was seen before:

*The impact on the community sector has been one of the most important outcomes arising from the interface between community development and local development. Prior to the development of the Partnerships there was not an identifiable community sector in any of the three case study areas. There were a number of key community projects in place but the relationship between them and the statutory sector ranged from the inconsistent and ad-hoc [in one case study area]... to one characterised by mistrust and opposition.*

(ADM, 2000: 56)

These partnerships are also seen as providing a 'new context and framework for involving disadvantaged communities in the planning and decision making that affect their lives' (ADM, 2000). It argues strongly that most progress in local participation, both in terms of the partnership's work and its influence on the work of statutory bodies, has been made where a community development approach has been adopted.

Haase and McKeown also report on progress within the LDSIP, looking at achievements leading on from previous phases of the partnerships into the first period under the LDSIP banner. Their analysis includes quantitative data for the three strands of the LDSIP for 2001 and the first six months on 2002<sup>8</sup>:

#### *Services for the unemployed measure*

- Nearly 30,000 (16,000) individuals participated in adult guidance and training measures

---

<sup>8</sup> The authors note that numbers cannot be accumulated from year to year and many of the people counted are receiving benefits in each year

- Roughly 12,000 (6,000) individuals participated in education and training programmes, half in certified training courses, of whom just over half (56%) obtained certification
- More than 3,000 (1,700) individuals were supported in self-employment and social economy measures
- Over 2,000 job placements occurred during the first half of 2002.

*Community development measure:*

- Nearly 3,000 (1,570) community-based projects received support
- Support was provided to nearly 500 (235) infrastructural projects.

*Community-based Youth Initiatives measure:*

- A total of over 70,000 (21,000) young people were assisted
- Approximately 12,000 (4,000) adults—parents, guardians, carers, etc.—received support.

(Haase & McKeown, 2003: 17, 18)

According to the authors, overall quantitative evaluation of the LDSIP will only be possible through a comparative analysis of key socio-economic indicators for the partnership areas against other areas. Ultimately, this data will not be available for the LDSIP period until after the 2006 census (Haase & McKeown, 2003: 18).

While the main focus of this review is the national community development programmes discussed above, it is worth referring to one other Irish community development-type programme for which evaluation data exists.

The Peace II Programme is an EU funding programme covering Northern Ireland and the six border counties of Ireland. Its goal is to ‘reinforce progress towards a peaceful and stable society and promote reconciliation’, and it funds projects within a range of themes, including economic renewal, locally based regeneration and cross-border co-operation (PriceWaterhouseCooper, 2005: 1,2). A mid-term evaluation published in October 2005 presented findings on

results, outcomes and impacts for the projects funded. Looking at the economic renewal heading for illustration, among the quantitative data presented were figures on:

- people securing additional income: 561 (15% of overall target)
- people entering/progressing within employment/education/further training: 3855 (40% of overall target).

Figures for NI programme (PriceWaterhouseCooper, 2005: 47)

The evaluation makes a useful distinction between results (such as gross number of jobs created) and impacts (net jobs created, to be assessed after the programme). It also presents informative qualitative data on impacts, including project case studies, and mentions qualitative evidence for outcomes such as 'contributing towards peace and reconciliation', 'building capacity' and 'acting as a catalyst for future development' (PriceWaterhouseCooper, 2005: 68). It is an important source of additional evidence of the positive impacts of programmes that employ a community development approach.

There are also more detailed case studies of PEACE II impacts in certain areas within a study by the Northern Ireland Council for Voluntary Action entitled *Telling the story of PEACE II* (2004). The study looked at Belfast, Cavan and Strabane, collecting data mainly through practitioner interviews (84 in total). Its analysis of the Cavan case considers impacts under the headings of 'peace building', 'developing the economy', 'developing capacity' and 'providing opportunity' (NICVA, 2004: 58-65). The dataset often looks similar to that of the SPEAK systems, in that it is comprised of comments made by practitioners on their perceptions of impacts. There is, however, an additional layer of analysis and comment by the researchers that adds validity and perspective. The overall conclusion is that there have been many positive impacts under the above headings, although some of the specific economic improvements in the area would be hard to ascribe directly to PEACE II project funding.

### 4.3 Building an overall picture

The discussions of the previous section illustrate well the issues around evaluating community development impacts. It is possible to generate rich datasets that are able to give a good sense of the activities of community development projects and the kinds of outputs and impacts possible. However, none of the above reports or datasets are attempts to carry out an external evaluation of impacts of projects in terms of changes in area-level poverty indicators. Few such evaluations exist anywhere, for the reasons discussed in the previous chapter.

Similar general conclusions can be drawn from the SPEAK data for both the CDP and the FRCs:

- There is considerable value to a local area having a FRC or CDP project to act as the backbone of community development infrastructure in the area
- A pattern of progression can be seen as projects mature and move on to new tasks
- Projects provide invaluable support and facilities to a range of local groups and activities
- Projects foster strong local awareness, community animation and participation
- Impacts are measurable with regard to education, employment, services uptake and improvement, benefits uptake, policy influence and participation
- Impacts are less quantifiable but discernible with regard to local capacity building, empowerment, community spirit and self-esteem, local involvement and animation.

Of course, the SPEAK data is not primarily intended to answer questions about poverty impacts, and its ability to do so is limited. It is self-reported data and is not externally validated. It is important to continue to provide external validations of the data set through formal evaluations. There will obviously be



problems with consistency about how and what people report and whether data is exactly correct, especially any quantitative data. It is of course also possible to speculate that self-reporting tends to accentuate the positive. Also, the project focus means that positive effects in terms of spreading or multiplying are not considered, and this is an important potential advantage of community development as an approach. However, it is undoubtedly of considerable value and currently represents the central element of the evidence base for the success of community development approaches in Ireland.

The data available on the LDSIP is quite similar in that it is mostly reports directly from projects and other stakeholders, but of course with the additional analysis of an evaluator. The numbers seen in ADM's main indicators give a sense of scale of impact that is impressive, and both the CDP and LDSIP seem to offer excellent value for money in the light of throughput and activity numbers, as well as the narratives of participants themselves. The value of the projects is firmly established, and ultimate impacts should become more visible as time goes on.

The studies also point to the progress in local participation and representation. The success of the local partnership process generally in bringing participation to local governance is seen as mixed, but much has been learned that can inform the next phases of development and work is ongoing with both the SPCs and the CDBs in terms of improving both participation and outputs.

For all three programmes discussed, emphasis on the data is on local empowerment and animation, with less discussion of the larger structural issues being on the agenda.

These discussions have presented an overview of the main published evaluations on the national community development programmes, and have also gone beyond this into the unpublished datasets available through the SPEAK system. More could be extracted from these datasets, but it is already clear from a preliminary analysis that they point to considerable activity in the

community development projects and considerable positive results. Comments on impacts, although tentative, indicate substantial effects are occurring due to projects in terms of empowerment, animation and also alleviation of poverty and exclusion.

#### **4.4 Looking forward**

Further work is required to fully answer the question as to what is the anti-poverty impact of the community development approach in Ireland. This will entail considerable new research, including the development of a specifically tailored evaluation framework. A choice must be made between attempting an overall evaluation of the programmes as a whole or more of a bottom-up approach that works through case studies and narratives and places less emphasis on complete (and quantitative) data sets. This decision will ultimately be informed by the goals of the research and the intended uses of its results.

Data in general is getting better, with new geographical data on poverty, for instance Haase and Pratschke's recently published *Deprivation and its spatial articulation in the Republic of Ireland*, further fleshing out the baselines and general quality of detailed poverty data.

At present, evaluation of programmes as a whole has not emerged as a high priority, but many excellent studies and partial evaluations have been conducted. Development in this area will need to address some notable gaps (such as agreed programme indicators or precise objectives that can be used to define performance) and the need for capacity and resources in the evaluation area at all levels and scales.

##### Development of a framework

The SPEAK system is the closest thing to an Irish community development evaluation framework currently available. However, it is not primarily a framework for the evaluation of impacts, as its developers are at pains to point out. Any new evaluation research should, in keeping with the principles of

community development, start with the assumption that a specifically-tailored framework will need to be developed on a participatory basis. There are, however, several good frameworks available to use as a starting point.

From a programme point of view, it is probably not desirable to employ exactly the same framework across all community development initiatives. However, from a national-evaluation perspective, the desirability of one collated and coherent analysis is obvious. Ideally, consideration could be given to the employment of new frameworks for all programmes that fit each programme but aim to retain sufficient commonality to allow an upwards collation, if that is desired. It is most likely that a framework that allows information to be built up through case studies will be most appropriate.

#### Further examination of existing data

There is considerable value yet to be extracted from existing datasets, the SPEAK data in particular. At the very least, this will be invaluable in informing the development of the questions and methods of any new research programme. Beyond that, it is probably also amenable to interrogation to provide tentative answers to a lot of important questions that have not yet been fully asked of it. Of course, care must be taken to respect the dataset, to avoid lifting it out of its context or to try to stretch it into uses for which it is not intended. There is also scope for further consideration of the area-indicator based approach proposed by Haase and McKeown (2003), with the idea of the Deprivation Index further explored in Haase and Pratschke (2005). Work is already underway on this, and may lead to some interesting outputs, though of course it is not an exact fit to the research questions at the heart of this literature review.

#### New research programmes

The ultimate goal of this literature review is to help to inform a proposed new research programme on the impacts of community development in poverty in Ireland. Any such programme will need to be developed through a process that properly reflects community development values, and so should not be

subject to too much second-guessing at this point. However, as mentioned, above, established frameworks and methodologies do exist that would seem to offer themselves as strong starting points for any new research. As stated, an early decision will be whether to pursue either a 'top-down' approach with a comprehensive coherent national dataset as its goal or a more 'bottom-up' approach that focuses more on case studies and narratives, and thus more on qualitative measures. Of course, the two approaches are not entirely dichotomous, but they do require different choices from quite an early stage.

## **5. Conclusions**

### **5.1 Evaluating the impacts of community development**

Setting out to measure the poverty impacts of a community development initiative is always extremely difficult. Impacts are often more related to 'process' themes such as empowerment and activation. Direct impacts on poverty are difficult to measure from a programme perspective, and if measured more globally are then difficult to ascribe to specific policies or interventions. Many impacts are qualitative in nature and an excessive emphasis on quantitative measurement risks the underestimation of the full positive impacts of community development.

These problems are compounded by the ubiquitous use of the term 'community development' across so many programmes, policies and actions. It is important that a meaningful and solid definition of community development be retained and that the core concept be 'defended' from its potential dilution or distortion. This core definition should emphasise collective action for social change.

It is possible to evaluate impacts using a mixture of qualitative and quantitative methods to build an overall picture. This requires an appropriate framework that disaggregates goals and expected outcomes, leading to indicators or variables that can be measured (qualitatively or quantitatively). Data can then be pursued through a variety of methods, probably most appropriately through a case study approach that builds a larger picture over time.

Evaluation needs to be in keeping with the ethos of community development. This implies ensuring an adequate emphasis on process and methods as well as on outputs, a recognition of power issues in evaluation and proper consideration of the meaning of all research results.

There are a number of good evaluation frameworks and methodologies now developed and a considerable wealth of experience in community development evaluation. There is little in the way of definitive quantitative

information as to the impacts of community development, but a substantial body of heterogeneous data (often qualitative) exists, indicating positive impacts in both process and ultimate outcome terms.

From the international literature, typical positive impacts reported relate to more resources reaching excluded groups and communities; better facilities and services being provided; earlier, more effective interventions, especially in education; rising levels of participation and involvement; and, crucially, lower levels of measurable poverty in deprived communities. Much emphasis is also placed on empowerment, increased levels of community spirit and mobilisation, and improved levels of community well-being generally.

## **5.2 The evidence from Ireland**

There is considerable positive evidence of impacts from Irish community development programmes. Impacts are documented across all of the themes listed above, from resources accessed to community well-being. There are quantitative elements to the evidence base, but no systematic set of numerical indicators by which to measure impacts. Most discussions of impacts tend to focus on the dimensions of self-help and community activation and of personal benefits such as education, employment or access to benefits. There is little discussion of impacts in terms of political influence or structural change.

The extent of impact can be seen by considering the counterfactual —what would be there without the community development programmes? Community development programmes are undoubtedly the backbone of local and community development infrastructure and are responsible for the initiation and support of considerable volumes of activities and outcome. For many communities, community development projects are the source of personal and collective advice, support and resources, as well as a path of access to service providers and decision makers such as local authorities, welfare and health bodies. Their impacts in terms of promoting education and training also seem particularly strong.

While these impacts can be gleaned from the data available, it must be acknowledged that the overall evidence base is not as strong or comprehensive as it should be. For the CDP and the FRCs, there is considerable value in the SPEAK datasets but these are not (nor do they claim to be) a formal overall evaluation of impacts. Similarly there are many excellent examinations of components of or dimensions of the LDSIP, but no comprehensive overall study of poverty impacts. At the same time this literature review demonstrates that it is possible to collate a range of evaluation elements and to build a reasonable overall picture of impacts. To go further will require new research.

### **5.3 A proposed research agenda**

Regarding the development of a new phase of research to address impacts evaluation, the most important question for Combat Poverty at this point is to determine the precise goals of such research. The rationale for gathering evidence and the uses to which it is to be put will inform many aspects of research design, implementation and analysis.

Among the design aspects to be considered is the appropriate balance of quantitative and qualitative information to adequately answer policy needs, while respecting the imperatives of the community development approach. Similarly the strengths and weaknesses of a case study / narrative approach to evaluation as a policy-informing tool will need to be considered in the light of overall goals.

It is recommended that early consideration be given to extracting the full value of existing datasets, particularly through further examination of the SPEAK data. This could result, quite quickly and cheaply, in a new definitive presentation of the data and its implications that would add significantly to its accessibility and validity and highlights its key messages.

The comparative spatial analysis approach being developed by Haase and others will add a valuable dimension to the evidence file for community development, and its potential contribution should be taken into account in the design of any new research programme in the area.

This literature review suggests that it will be possible to design and deliver a research programme that uses a number of methods, data types and indicators to produce a strong final case for the impacts of community development approaches in Ireland. There are a number of frameworks that offer strong starting points, but these should be developed to meet the specific needs of the project in hand.

The development of this framework, as with all elements of the research programme, should be carried out according to the principles of community development. In particular, this implies the importance of participation by practitioners and other stakeholders. Appropriate advisory or steering structures should be put in place.

The most appropriate framework is likely to contain qualitative and quantitative elements that can be measured through a mixture of techniques, from interviews and documentary analysis to surveys and statistical analysis. It is likely to be best oriented towards a research programme based on building up an overall picture through a case study approach, where programmes, projects or areas can be examined in themselves and then also added to the overall pool. The framework will also need to address the issue of definition and scope, establishing what exactly is meant by the term 'community development' in this context.

A case study approach has the advantages of allowing for a piloting phase, producing useable data and conclusions more quickly, and also providing early feedback to particular projects and programmes to allow for learning. The approach should also allow for examination of areas with longer or shorter community development histories and should therefore examine issues relating to effects spreading out and multiplying beyond their original domain. There is no reason to see such an approach as incompatible with building strong national data (including quantitative measures) on overall impacts.



## References

- Acheson, N., Harvey, B. and Williamson, A. 2005 State welfare and the development of voluntary action: the case of Ireland, North and South. *Voluntas* **16** (2), 181-202.
- ADM 2000 *The interface between community development and local development*. Dublin. Area Development Management Ltd.
- ADM 2002 *Pre-development work: building capacity amongst target groups and disadvantaged communities*. Dublin. Area Development Management Ltd.
- ADM 2003 *Community work in a rural setting: an examination of community work under the Local Development Social Inclusion Programme*. Dublin. Area Development Management Ltd.
- ADM 2003b *Equality in education: an examination of community based youth initiatives under the Local Development Social Inclusion Programme*. Dublin. Area Development Management Ltd.
- ADM 2004 *The role of the community sector in local social partnerships*. Dublin. Area Development Management Ltd.
- Aigner, S.M., Flora, C.B. and Hernandez, J.M. 2001 The premise and promise of citizenship and civil society for renewing democracies and empowering sustainable communities. *Sociological Inquiry*, **71** (4), 493–507.
- Arnason, A., Lee, J. and Shucksmith, M. 2004 *Understanding networks and social capital in European rural development*. Conference paper: EU Presidency Rural Development Conference, Westport Ireland, May/June 2004.
- ASDC 2001 *Principles for evaluating comprehensive community initiatives*. Washington. The Association for the Study and Development of Community.
- Baker, J. 2000 The challenge of Irish inequality. In J. Dunne, A. Ingram and F.Litton (eds), *Questioning Ireland*, 111–123. Dublin. IPA.
- Bar-On, A. 2005 On elephants, giraffes, and social development. *Community Development Journal*: bsi069.

- Barr, A. and Hashagen, S. 2000 *ABCD Handbook: a framework for evaluating community development*. Community Development Foundation, Unit 5 Angel Gate, 320-326 City Road, EC1V2PT. [www.cdf.org.uk](http://www.cdf.org.uk)
- Barr, A.H. 2005 The contribution of research to community development. *Community Development Journal* **40** (4), 453–8.
- Bridgen, P. 2004 Evaluating the empowering potential of community-based health schemes: the case of community health policies in the UK since 1997. *Community Development Journal* **39** (3) 289–302.
- Brocklesby, M.A. and Fisher, E. 2003 Community development in sustainable livelihoods approaches—an introduction. *Community Development Journal* **38** (3), 185–98.
- Broderick, S. 2002 *Community development in Ireland—a policy review*. *Community Development Journal* **37** (1), 101–10.
- Brown, D. 1991 Methodological considerations in the evaluation of social development programmes—an alternative approach. *Community Development Journal* **26** (4) , 259–265.
- Butcher C., McDonald B. and Westhorp V. 2003 Healthchecks and sustainable livelihoods: a case study from Kent. *Community Development Journal* **38** (3), 225–34.
- Callanan, M. 2003 *Institutionalising participation and governance? An analysis of new local government structures in the Republic of Ireland*. Conference paper: EUROLOC Network Eight European Summer School in Local Government, UCC, July 2003.
- Chanan, G. 2001 *Which tip of the iceberg? Toward community involvement indicators*. London. The Audit Commission, unpublished paper.
- Chanan, G. 2004 *Measures of community*. London. Community Development Foundation.
- Collins, T. 2002 Community development and state building: a shared project. *Community Development Journal* **37** (1) 91–100.

- Combat Poverty Agency 1988 *Towards a funding policy for community development*. Dublin. Combat Poverty Agency.
- Combat Poverty Agency 1989 *A Framework for Community Participation in Integrated Development*. Dublin. Combat Poverty Agency.
- Combat Poverty Agency 1996 *Support for Community Development: a discussion document*. Dublin. Combat Poverty Agency.
- Combat Poverty Agency 2000 *The role of community development in tackling poverty*. Dublin. Combat Poverty Agency.
- Combat Poverty Agency 2002 *From national to local: NAPS and local government*. Dublin. Combat Poverty Agency.
- Combat Poverty Agency 2005 *Making a decisive impact on poverty: submission on the Irish national action plan against poverty and social exclusion 2006–08*.
- Connelly, S. 2006 Looking inside public involvement: how is it made so ineffective and can we change this? *Community Development Journal* 41 (1), 13–24.
- Cosgrove, S. and Ryder, N. 2001 *Community and voluntary sector involvement in the new local authority structures—survey report for the Local Government Anti-Poverty Learning Network*. Dublin. Combat Poverty Agency.
- Crow, I., France, A., Hacking, S. and Hart, M. 2002 *Does Communities that Care work? An evaluation of a community-based risk prevention programme in three neighbourhoods*. York. Rowntree Foundation.
- Cullen B. 1994 *A programme in the making*. Dublin. Combat Poverty Agency.
- Cullen B. 2000 *Evaluating Integrated Responses to Educational Disadvantage*. Dublin, The Combat Poverty Agency.
- Curtin, C. 1996 Back to the future: communities and rural poverty. In C. Curtin, T. Haase and H. Tovey (eds), *Poverty in rural Ireland*. Dublin. Oak Tree Press / Combat Poverty Agency.

CWC 1989 *Community work in Ireland—trends in the 80s, options for the 90s*. Dublin. Combat Poverty Agency.

CWC 2001 *Local social partnership analysis*. Galway. Community Workers Cooperative.

Davies, P. 2003 *The Magenta Book*. Place. UK Cabinet Office Strategy Unit.

Davoudi, S. 2005 *Multi-level governance and strategic territorial planning*. Conference paper: Managing space—managing place: strategic planning for cohesion and diversity. Dublin.

Decoster, Dominique-Paule. *et al.*, 2005 *The governance of local development: a comparative assessment of agency capacity in north west Europe*. Conference paper: Beyond the City Beautiful, Association of Collegiate Schools of Planning, Kansas City, USA, October 2005.

Department of the Taoiseach 2005 *Reaching Out, a set of consultation guidelines for public sector bodies*. Dublin. Department of the Taoiseach.

Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs 2005 Annual report 2004.

Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs 2005 Draft SPEAK report, unpublished draft.

Department of Social, Community and Family Affairs 2000 *Supporting voluntary activity. A white paper on a framework for supporting voluntary activity and for developing the relationship between the state and the community and voluntary sector*.

Devlin, M., Crickley, A. 1989 Community Work in the '80s-An Overview. In *Community Work in Ireland: Trends in the 80s; Options for the 90s*. Dublin. Combat Poverty Agency.

Donaghey, J. 2005 *Deliberation in Irish industrial relations: towards post-corporatism? AIRAANZ*, 167–76.

Donoghue, F. 1998 *The politicisation of disadvantage in the Republic of Ireland: the role played by the third sector*. International Society for Third Sector Research, Third Annual Conference, Geneva, ISTR.

- Eder, K. 2001 Social movement organisations and the democratic order: reorganizing the social basis of political citizenship in complex societies. in C. Crouch, K. Eder and D. Tambini (eds), *Citizenship, markets and the state*, 113–237. Oxford. Oxford University Press.
- Ellis, G., Motherway, B. and Neill, W. 2005 *We're too busy for that kind of stuff : progress towards local sustainable development in Ireland*. In N. Moore and M. Scott (eds), 159–78. London. Ashgate.
- EU Commission 2005 *Proposal for a council decision on community strategic guidelines for rural development (Programming period 2007–2013)*. COM(2005)304.
- Family Support Agency 2005 Guidelines for inclusion into the Family and Community Services Resource Centre Programme.
- Flynn, B. and Kröger, L. 2003 Can policy learning really improve implementation? Evidence from the Irish responses to the Water Framework Directive. *European Environment* **13**, 150–63.
- Forde, C. 2005 Participatory democracy or pseudo-participation? Local government reform in Ireland. *Local Government Studies* **31** (1), 137–48.
- Fox, C. 2004 *Improving living conditions and quality of life in rural Europe*. Conference paper: EU Presidency Rural Development Conference, Westport Ireland, May/June 2004.
- Fraser, N. 2000 Rethinking recognition. *New Left Review* **3**, 107–20.
- Frazer, H. 2005 Setting the scene Europe-wide: the challenge of poverty and social exclusion. *Community Development Journal* **40** (4), 371–84.
- Fung, A. and Wright, E.O. 2001 Deepening democracy: innovations in empowered participatory governance. *Politics and Society* **19** (1), 5–41.
- Geoghegan, M. and Powell, F. 2005 Community development, partnership governance and dilemmas of professionalization: profiling and assessing the case of Ireland. *Br J Soc Work*: bch344.
- Gorobets, A. 2006 An eco-centric approach to sustainable community development. *Community Development Journal* **41** (1), 104–108.

- Government of Ireland 2002 Building an inclusive society: review of the National Anti-Poverty Strategy. Dublin. The Stationery Office.
- Haase, T. and McKeown, K. 2003 Developing disadvantaged areas through area-based initiatives: reflections on over a decade of local development strategies. Dublin. Area Development Management Ltd.
- Haase, T. and Pratschke, J. 2005 *Deprivation and its spatial articulation in the Republic of Ireland: new measures of deprivation based on the Census of Population, 1991, 1996 and 2002*. Dublin. Area Development Management Ltd.
- Harvey, B. 1996 Options for working together: national strategies. In *Partnership in action: the role of community development and partnership in Ireland*, 133–154. Galway. Community Workers Co-operative.
- Harvey, B. 2002 *Working for change: a guide to influencing policy in Ireland*. Dublin. Combat Poverty Agency.
- Hay, C. and Smith, N. J. 2005 Horses for courses? The political discourse of globalisation and European integration in the UK and Ireland. *West European Politics* **18** (1), 124–58.
- Hayes, T. 1999 *Government and the voluntary sector in the Republic of Ireland*. Coleraine. Association for Voluntary Action Research in Ireland / Centre for Voluntary Action Studies, University of Ulster.
- Heenan, D. and McLaughlin, R. 2002 Re-assessing the role of credit unions in community development: a case study of Derry Credit Union, Northern Ireland. *Community Development Journal* **37** (3) 249–59.
- Henderson, P.C. and Glen, A.S.L. 2005 From recognition to support: community development workers in the United Kingdom. *Community Development Journal* : bsi063.
- Hillman, M. 2002 Environmental justice: a crucial link between environmentalism and community development? *Community Development Journal* **37** (4), 349–60.

- Ikeotuonye, F. 2002 Lateral shades of social engineering: A critical exploration of 'interest representation', 'state' and 'development' *Community Development Journal* 37 (1), 69–79.
- Iredale, Rachel 1999 Public consultation and participation in policy making. In G. Kiely, A. O' Donnell, P. Kennedy and S. Quin (eds), *Irish Social Policy in Context*, 178–194. Dublin. University College Dublin Press.
- Kay, A. 2005 Social capital, the social economy and community development. *Community Development Journal* bsi045.
- Kellogg Foundation 1998 *Evaluation Handbook*. Place. W.K. Kellogg Foundation.
- Lee, A. 2003 Community development in Ireland. *Community Development Journal* 38 (1), 48–58.
- Lee, A. 2005 *Community development and working for change: having your say*. Dublin. Combat Poverty Agency. (Forthcoming)
- Leeds Health Action Zones 2002. Evaluation toolkit: a practical guide to project evaluation. UK Department of Health. [www.dh.gov.uk](http://www.dh.gov.uk)
- Levitas, R. 1996 The concept of social exclusion and the new Durkheimian hegemony. *Critical Social Policy* 16 (1), 5–20.
- Loughlin, J. 2001 Ireland: from colonized nation to Celtic Tiger. In J. Loughlin (ed.), *Subnational democracy in the European Union: challenges and opportunities*, 61–80. Oxford. Oxford University Press.
- Loughry, R. 2002 Partnering the state at the local level: the experiences of one community worker. *Community Development Journal* 37 (1), 60–8.
- Lukkarinen, M. 2005 Community development, local economic development and the social economy. *Community Development Journal* 40 (4), 419–24.
- Marsden, D. and Oakley, P. 1991 Future issues and perspectives in the evaluation of social development. *Community Development Journal* 26 (4), 315–28.
- Mason, M. 1999 *Environmental Democracy*, London, Earthscan



- Maxwell, S. 2003 *Heaven or hubris: reflections on the 'new poverty agenda'*. *Development Policy Review*, **21** (1), 5–25.
- McCamley, C. and Quintin, O. 2004 *Influencing policy: training pack*. Dublin. Combat Poverty Agency.
- McGuirk, P.M. 2000 Power and policy networks in urban governance: local government and property-led regeneration in Dublin. *Urban Studies* **37** (4), 651–72.
- Meade, R. and O'Donovan, O. 2002 Editorial introduction: corporatism and the ongoing debate about the relationship between the state and community development. *Community Development Journal* **37** (1), 1–9.
- Meade, R. 2005 We hate it here, please let us stay! Irish Social Partnership and the Community/ Voluntary Sector's conflicted experiences of recognition. *Critical Social Policy* **15** (3), 349–347.
- Meldon, J., Kenny, M. and Walsh, J. 2004 Local government, local development and citizen participation: lessons from Ireland. In W.R. Lovan, M. Murray and R. Schaffer (eds), *Participatory governance: planning, conflict mediation and public decision-making in civil society*, 39–60. Aldershot. Ashgate.
- Moore, N. and Scott, M. (eds) 2006 *Renewing urban communities: environment, citizenship and sustainability in Ireland*. Aldershot. Ashgate.
- Murphy M. 2002 Social partnership: is it the only game in town? *Community Development Journal* **37** (1), 80–90.
- Murray, M., Greer, J. and Sterrett, K. 2005 The public value of public involvement: insights from participatory village planning in Ireland. *Administration* **53** (1), 3–15.
- Murray, M. and Greer, J. 1997 Planning and community-led rural development in Northern Ireland. *Planning Practice and Research* **12**, 393–400.
- Murtagh, B. 2001 The politics and practice of urban policy evaluation. *Community Development Journal* **36** (3), 223–33.



Newman, T., Curtis, K. and Stephens, J. 2003 Do community-based arts projects result in social gains? A review of the literature. *Community Development Journal* **38** (4), 310–22.

Nexus 2002 *Evaluation of the Community Development Programme*. Dublin. Department of Social Community and Family Affairs.

Nolan, B., O'Connell, P. and Whelan, T. 2000 *Bust to boom: the Irish experience of growth and inequality*. Dublin. Institute of Public Administration.

Northern Ireland Council for Voluntary Action 2004 *Telling the story of PEACE II*. Belfast. NICVA.

O'Brien, C. 2005 Integrated community development/conflict resolution strategies as 'peace building potential' in South Africa and Northern Ireland. *Community Development Journal* : bsi068.

Ó Broin, D. 2002 Participation on the periphery: community participation in reformed local government structures. *Journal of Irish Urban Studies* **1** (1), 47–60.

O'Conghaile, W. and Anderson, R. 1993 *Local community action and social policy*. Dublin. European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions.

Ó Cinnéide, S., Walsh, J. 1990 Multiplication and Divisions: Trends in Community Development in Ireland since the 1960s. *Community Development Journal* **25** (4), 326–336.

O'Carroll, J.P. 2002 Culture lag and democratic deficit in Ireland: or, 'Dat's outside de terms of d'agreement'. *Community Development Journal* **37** (1), 10–19.

O'Connell, P. 2002 Are they working? Market orientation and the effectiveness of active labour market programmes in Ireland. *European Sociological Review* **18** (1), 65–83.

O' Donnell, R. 2001 *The future of social partnership in Ireland: a discussion paper prepared for the National Competitiveness Council*. Dublin. National Competitiveness Council.

O'Keefe, B. 2005 *Participatory structures for spatial planning in marginal rural areas*. Conference paper: Managing space—managing place: strategic planning for cohesion and diversity. Dublin. October 2005.

OECD 2001 *Poverty reduction: the DAC Guidelines*. Paris. OECD.

Popple K. 1995 *Analysing community work. Its theory and practice*. Buckingham. Open University Press.

Powell, F. and Geoghegan, M. 2005 Beyond political zoology: community development, civil society, and strong democracy. *Community Development Journal*: bsi062.

Powell, F. and Geoghegan, M. 2004 *The Politics of Community Development*. Dublin. A.A. Farmar.

Prendiville, P. 1998 Community Development Projects, Organizational Development and Effectiveness. International Society for Third Sector Research, Third Annual Conference, Geneva, ISTR.

Pringle, D.G., Walsh, J. and Hennessy, M. (eds) 1999 *Poor people, poor places: a geography of poverty and deprivation in Ireland*. Dublin. Oak Tree Press.

Purdon, S., Lessof, C. , Woodfield, K. and Bryson, C. 2001 Research methods for policy evaluation. Discussion paper. UK Department of Work and Pensions.

Rafferty, M. 1996 Between Scylla and Charybdis. In *Partnership in action: the role of community development and partnership in Ireland*. Galway. Community Workers Co-operative.

Regan, S. 2004 *Is the Government trying to fragment the Community Development Programme?* Galway. Community Workers Co-operative.

Rooney, E. 2002 Community development in times of trouble: reflections on the community women's sector in the north of Ireland. *Community Development Journal* **37** (1), 33–46.

Scott, M. 2004 *Building institutional capacity in rural Northern Ireland: the role of partnership governance in the LEADER II programme. Journal of Rural Studies* **20** (1), 49–59.

Scottish Community Development Centre 2002 LEAP Support Manual.

Shaw, I. 2005 Practitioner research: evidence or critique? *British Journal of Social Work* **35**, 1231–48.

Shaw, M. 2003 Classic texts: gilding the ghetto and in and against the state. *Community Development Journal* **38** (4), 361–7.

Shaw, M. 2005 *Political, professional, powerful: understanding community development*. Community Development Exchange Annual Conference 2005, Leeds.

Shirlow, P. and, Murtagh, P. 2004 Capacity building, representation and intra-community conflict. *Urban Studies* **41** (1), 57–71.

Shortall, S. and Shucksmith, M. 2001 Rural development in practice: issues arising in Scotland and Northern Ireland. *Community Development Journal* **36** (2), 122–33.

Skelcher, C. 2003 Governing communities: parish pump politics or strategic partnerships? *Local Government Studies* **19** (4), 1–16.

Skillington, T. 1997 Politics and the struggle to define: a discourse analysis of the framing strategies of competing actors in a new participatory forum. *British Journal of Sociology* **48** (3), 493–513.

Storey, D. 1999 Issues of integration, participation and empowerment in rural development: the case of LEADER in the Republic of Ireland. *Journal of Rural Studies* **15** (3), 307–315.

Taylor, G. 2005 *Negotiated governance and public policy in Ireland*. Manchester and New York. Manchester University Press.

Taylor, M. , Purdue, D. , Wilson, M. and Wilde, P. 2005 *Evaluating community projects: a practical guide*. York. Rowntree Foundation.

- Teague, P. and Murphy, M. C. 2004 *Social partnership and local development in Ireland: the limits to deliberation*, Discussion Paper Series no. 156. Geneva. International Institute for Labour Studies.
- Tovey, H., Haase, T. and Curtin, C. 1996 Understanding rural poverty. In C. Curtin, T. Haase and H. Tovey (eds), *Poverty in rural Ireland*. Dublin. Oak Tree Press / Combat Poverty Agency.
- Van der Plaat, M. and G. Barrett 2006 Building community capacity in governance and decision making. *Community Development Journal* **41** (1), 25–36.
- Varley, T. and C. Curtin 2002 Communitarian populism and the politics of rearguard resistance in rural Ireland. *Community Development Journal* **37**(1), 20–32.
- Varley, T. and Ruddy, M. 1996 Partners worthy of the name? The State and community groups in the forum project. In *Partnership in action: the role of community development and partnership in Ireland*. Galway. Community Workers Co-operative.
- Walshe, B. 2005 Having your say; supporting participation in policy making. *Action on Poverty Today* **10**.
- Weiss, C. 1998. *Evaluation: methods for studying programs and policies*. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey. Prentice-Hall.



[www.combatpoverty.ie/havingyoursay](http://www.combatpoverty.ie/havingyoursay)



Bridgewater Centre, Conyngham Road, Islandbridge, Dublin 8

Tel: 01 670 6746 Fax: 01 670 6760

Email: [havingyoursay@combatpoverty.ie](mailto:havingyoursay@combatpoverty.ie)

Website: [www.combatpoverty.ie/havingyoursay](http://www.combatpoverty.ie/havingyoursay)

The views expressed in this text are the authors' own and not necessarily those of the Combat Poverty Agency