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COMBAT POVERTY AGENCY
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National Programme of Community Interest for the
Greater Dublin Area

Report of Meeting of Community Groups
1st November 1988
Kinlay House, Dublin

Combat Poverty Agency

National Programme of Community Interest for the Greater
Dublin Area
Meeting of Community Groups 1st November 1988

The following is a report of the meeting on the National Programme of Community Interest (N.P.C.I.) for the Greater Dublin area which was held on 1st November 1988 in Kinlay House, Lord Edward Street. This meeting was convened by the Combat Poverty Agency for members of community organisations in order to give information and encourage discussion and debate on the N.P.C.I. which is currently being drawn up for the greater Dublin area. The meeting was attended by representatives of 58 community groups. The format for the meeting was as follows:

1. Introduction & background to the Agency's involvement.
2. Information on NPCI and research to date
3. Discussion
4. Workshops
5. Feedback from workshops
6. Format and guidelines for submissions
7. Discussion and follow-up

1. Introduction

Hugh Frazer, Director of the Combat Poverty Agency, opened the meeting by outlining the Agency's interest in the proposed NPCI; the work the Agency has done on this issue to date and suggesting ways in which the Agency and community groups could work together to ensure that the needs of disadvantaged areas of Dublin are addressed in the NPCI.

When it was announced that the Irish government would be applying for an NPCI for Dublin the Agency held a meeting with a small number of groups involved in work on planning and integrated community development to discuss whether other groups might have an interest in this development, what the key issues might be and how to increase community involvement in the process that was now taking place. This meeting took place on 28th June. In early July the Agency produced it's discussion document on this issue stressing that any submission for EC funding under an NPCI must take as its starting point the needs of existing communities and that priority for expenditure should be given to the areas that are suffering from the greatest disadvantage. This document also recommended that as many local community groups as possible should put in submissions to the consultants appointed by the Steering Committee and that the Combat Poverty Agency would be making it's own submission.

Since July the Agency has engaged consultants, SUS Research, to assist it in making its submission and in gathering background information which may be of use to community groups when making their own submissions. Regarding this meeting, it is hoped that the information received from groups will be used in the Agency's submission and that groups will get sufficient information to enable them to go ahead and work on their own submissions.

In relation to follow-up from the meeting, the Agency will circulate a report of the meeting within two weeks, groups are asked to send copies of their submissions to the Agency, the Agency will circularise groups with it's submission (end of Nov) and is requesting that groups write to the

consultants endorsing the Agency's submission, if they agree with it's approach.

2. Information on NPCI and research to date

This presentation was given by Brian Dillon (SUS Research) and gave information on what an NPCI is; what aspects the EC are particularly interested in; what groups should bear in mind when making a submission and what were likely to be the key elements in the Agency's submission. The presentation was accompanied by a number of pieces of documentation (see appendix 1 for further details).

The "National Programme for Community Interest" for Dublin will eventually be a set of proposals endorsed by the Irish Government which will mean a considerable amount of funding coming from the European Community over the next few years to be spent in Dublin County, City and Dun Laoghaire Bourough. The main funding will come from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF). The EC can contribute up to 75% of the costs with the Irish Government contributing the balance. From the EC perspective projects with an economic and/or employment focus will get more favourable consideration particularly in relation to employment creation, transportation and environmental work. Forty seven per cent of all aid under NPCI's in other countries has been spent on roads.

Regarding the Agency's submission, it will be stated that like other European cities, there is a need to distribute services throughout the city and suburbs. It will be important to comment on the cost of ignoring poverty and to make a strong case funding for activities which are not now funded to ensure that balanced development takes place. The submission will also look in detail at employment, transportation and environment. The role of community groups in addressing need must be highlighted and their role in evaluating developments in their areas.

3. Discussion/Questions

In response to questions the following points emerged:

- Regulations state that the government can establish 'partners' with any 'legitimate' group. For example, in Birmingham funding was channelled through a co-op support network. The initiative for this lies with the national government. However, in general funding has been channelled through state agencies.
- the report submitted by the steering committee has then to be accepted or amended by the Government
- the steering committee does not have any representation of community/poverty groups
- the Combat Poverty Agency submission will also keep in touch with the EC
- it may be possible for the Agency to arrange a forum for groups to meet with representatives of the consultants. It is unlikely that the consultants will be available to meet community groups on an individual basis.
- the Dublin plan is to be a model for the rest of the country - it should

- establish priorities which will apply to the rest of the country
- in theory housing is not excluded from funding but it is unlikely that it will be funded unless, for example, it is linked to tourism development.
- it could be possible for the government to apply for substitute funding for work which the exchequer normally funds but this will have to be incorporated into an integrated plan

4. Feedback from workshops

The following is a brief synopsis of the comments and suggestions from the workshops:

(a) Group 1

- many members of the group felt pessimistic about the possibility of consultation taking place with community groups or any real commitment to taking on board the ideas that groups may put forward
- it was agreed that the Agency should seek a place on the Advisory Group as a matter of urgency and that this should be done with the backing of the meeting
- it was felt that it would be very important to try to build up a campaign to lobby for the demands of community groups. The Community Workers Co-op have agreed to convene a meeting for policy makers and politicians to focus attention on the area
- in addition to this groups should try to lobby their own politicians
- it was agreed that as many community groups as possible should be encouraged to submit proposals to the consultants and that where possible groups in particular areas should try to come together to put in joint submissions
- regarding project ideas the following were suggested:
 - # community enterprise projects with local involvement
 - # need for more amenities such as traffic lights, shopping facilities and leisure centres
 - # environmental projects
 - # employment \ job creation projects with built in safeguards
 - # travellers sites in the city and county
 - # youth workers at a local level
 - # community centres
 - # training for youth & community work
 - # community development centres
 - # information and advice centres
 - # relevant education for adults, children and youth
 - # no dumps near local communities

(b) Group 2

- many of the groups felt that the information presented earlier was very complicated and would need time to be further discussed and understood
- some groups could have difficulties putting in a proposal especially those who do not have paid staff working with them
- regarding project ideas the following were suggested:
 - # proper maintenance programmes for flat complexes
 - # improved transport systems

more travellers sites

(c) Group 3

- people were still unclear as to the funding and decision making structure for the NPCI
- it should be proposed that year 1 of the 5 year plan should be set aside for community groups to draw up detailed integrated plans for their areas and that this process should be funded
- Combat Poverty should refer to the lack of structured consumer input in the decision making process for the NPCI
- local groups should, if possible, endorse the Agency's submission
- there was confusion as to whether Bray was part of the catchment area for the NPCI (it is not part of the catchment area for the Dublin NPCI)
- the strategy that had been adopted by the Government was bad for the poor and the nation especially given the lack of grassroots involvement
- there could be a danger of being told that areas referred to in submissions, e.g. employment creation, are already being looked after by state agencies
- state agencies do not look at the needs of particular communities when planning - most areas are treated the same, irrespective of needs
- it would be helpful if the results of S.I.C.C.D.A.'s experience were made available to groups
- there should be a press conference\public forum to get publicity for these issues
- regarding project proposals the following were suggested:
 - # job creation
 - # property development
 - # car parking
 - # "street" markets
 - # pre work training, training during work, enterprise and awareness training.
 - # start up cash
 - # redevelopment of SES scheme with better wages
 - # need for central agency to link up small groups
 - # need for expertise to be made available to local groups e.g.accountants
 - # need for pre-incubator units
 - # DART should be extended
 - # public transport - more cross city links
 - # environment - focus on external tourism

(d) Group 4

- NPCI should be based on need e.g. transport - re-examine priority on roads as opposed to public transport
- Combat Poverty's areas of need not included in three headings
- local communities should come together to make proposals
- media interest in the issue should be generated focusing on the needs of communities
- proposals from the group were as follows:

- # capital for local enterprises
- # community based response to unemployment
- # restructure tax incentives in development areas
- # support for community organisations
- # general environmental improvement

(e) Group 5

- many felt that the details of the NPCI were very complicated
- it is important that there is a common thread between the Agency's submission and individual groups submissions
- the following project ideas were suggested:
 - # long term training of community leaders
 - # long term funding for community groups
 - # employment creation
 - # community involvement in planning
 - # neighbourhood focus on amenities e.g. develop open spaces
 - # funding for basic education (linked to job creation)
 - # community arts\education centres
 - # libraries
 - # funding for community groups coordination & networking
 - # neighbourhood community enterprise units
 - # local development funding
 - # local information and services centres
 - # improving road conditions e.g. traffic lights; landscaping
 - # improving public transport e.g. extension of dart
 - # improving access to hospitals
 - # regular maintenance of community facilities

(f) Group 6

- NPCI seems to be limited in what it can offer
- need for a campaign as well as a submission if needs of communities are to be heard
- proposals for projects should not be taken in isolation - there should be integrated plans for each area. NPCI should make provision for community groups to come together to do this
- local communities should be consulted on all aspects of development proposals which will affect them
- groups should be given funding to help them make submission to the consultants
- project suggestions were as follows:
 - # plan should be for building up "local economic bases"
 - # large scale multinationals have failed in the past - support should be given to local enterprises inside communities
 - # local people should be guaranteed work on developments under NPCI - this should be at a basic income and under fair working conditions
 - # free travel should be provided for the unemployed

(g) Group 7

- the programme is seen by policy makers as having no relevance to welfare area

- danger that the programme will determine the work instead of serving the work
- concern that this programme is only an exercise
- fear that there will be large schemes showing no concern for local needs e.g. roads v safety
- need to look at themes and geographic areas
- clarification needed on whether action projects are acceptable
- the following principles should be adopted:
 - # advisory group should also include an representative from the Combat Poverty Agency and the trade unions
 - # community should be part of the decision making
 - # should seek a positive community development policy
 - # need to include specifically social as well as economic objectives
 - # monitoring needed to ensure that money is not used to substitute existing spending

5. Format and Guidelines for Submissions

Brian Dillon gave a breakdown of what groups need to do in order to make a submission. Two documents were circulated to help with this (Community Submissions - Sample Form and Notes on Sample Submission Form).

6. Final discussion \ Follow- up

Following a suggestion from group one representatives from the Community Workers Co-op confirmed that they will liase with other network groups e.g. A.C.T.E.D., National Campaign for Welfare Reform, Action on Poverty etc in order to highlight the issues raised in the submissions made by community groups and to lobby for them to be accepted. For further information on this you should contact John O'Connell at the Basement, 39, Upper Gardiner Street, Dublin 1.

It was also suggested that the Agency should write requesting representation on the Steering Committee for Dublin and that it should do so with the support of the groups represented at the meeting. The Agency undertook to follow this up immediately.

During the final discussion groups were encouraged to put in their own submission no matter how brief it was and if possible to encourage other groups in their areas to do the same. If time allowed it would be a good idea to get a number of groups from an area to make a joint submission. If a group is having difficulty drafting a submission they can contact either June Meehan or Margaret Barry in the Agency. Where possible they will offer assistance to groups. Groups were reminded that their submissions should be in by the end of November and should be sent to :

Mr Michael Tutty,
 Department of Finance,
 Government Buildings,
 Merrion Street,
 Dublin 2.

In relation to the ideas which emerged from the discussions and the workshops, there was agreement on all of the proposals put forward.

Follow-up: A report of this meeting will be circulated to groups within two weeks. The Agency submission to the consultants will be sent to groups and groups will be asked to write to the consultants endorsing all or part of the submission. This will add extra weight to the submission. Those groups who do submit proposal\ s are asked to send a copy to the Agency to ensure that the issues raised by individual groups are also raised in the Agency's submission.

Note: The meeting which is being organised by the Community Workers Co-op will take place from 9.30 -12.30 on Monday 5th December in Buswells Hotel, Molesworth Street. Further details will be sent to groups. If your project would like to make a presentation a this meeting please contact John O'Connell (see address above).

APPENDIX 1

DOCUMENTATION AVAILABLE AT THE MEETING 1\11\88

1. A National Programme of Community Interest for the Greater Dublin Area -
The Concerns of Community Groups in Areas of Special Social Need.
2. Background to NPCI Research Project
3. Limitations and Scope of EC Funding under National Programmes of
Community Interest
4. Community Submissions - Sample Form
5. Notes on Sample Submission Form

Copies of the above are available on request from the Combat Poverty
Agency.

GROUPS REPRESENTED AT MEETING 1\1\88

Adventure Sports Project
Alliance for Work (North Inner City)
Alternative Entertainments (Tallaght)
Ballymun Task Force
Ballymun Development Co-op
Ballymun Echo
Ballyfermot Community Council
Barnardos (Tallaght)
Bonnybrook Integrated Youth Committee
Bray Family Resource Centre
Community Action Network
Community Training Agency (Ballymun)
Community Training Collective
Community Pre-School Federation
Community Works Co-operative
Community Workers Co-op
Coolock Community Law Centre
Co-op Network
Dublin Corporation
Dublin County Council
Eastern Health Board, Ballymun
Energy Action (Pearse Street)
Exchange House
Fettercairn Community Council
Fettercairn Women's Support Group
Finglas Womens Group
Focus Point
Gingerbread
Holy Family Sisters (Darndale)
Irish Holistic Health Association
Larkin Unemployed Centre (North Strand)
Linx Project (Ballymun)
Lourdes Youth & Community Services (Sean McDermott Street)
Meadowbrook Youth Club
National Youth Federation
Neilstown Womens Co-op
North Inner City Welfare Rights Centre
North Inner City Community Advice Centre
North Wall Womens Group
Northside Centre for the Unemployed
Parents Alone Resource Centre (Coolock)
Parslickstown House (Mulhuddart)
Printwell Resource Centre
Recoverable Resources (Tallaght)
Ringsend Community Training Workshop
Sandyford Community Association
St Michaels Parish Youth Project
St Muireanns House (Tallaght)
St Patricks College, Maynooth
Sisters of Charity (Finglas)
Shanty Educational Project (Tallaght)
South Inner City Community Development Association
Stoneybatter Community Enterprise