

## NAPS POLICY & PROCESS WHAT CAN WE LEARN?

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## Outline of presentation

- Research framework – NAPS as new governance
- NAPS at a glance
- Institutions of NAPS
- NAPS and the EU
- NAPS policy formulation
- NAPS policy implementation
- What can we learn?

## From Government to Governance

- The 'governance turn' concerns a number of alleged shifts in government policy making behaviour, in terms of:
  - policy architecture – more communicative
  - policy processes – more interactive
  - involvement of more non-state actors
  - multi-levelled policy making between and across different parts/levels of govt

## NAPS at a glance

- Global target – to considerably reduce consistent poor from 9-15% to 5-10%
- Five priority areas for govt action:
- Educational disadvantage
  - Unemployment
  - Income adequacy
  - Disadvantaged urban areas
  - Rural poverty

## NAPS - origins & influences

- Copenhagen UN World Summit on Social Development 1995
- Strategy launched in 1997 – 'a mechanism for changing the mindset of decision-makers in our society, to factor in a consciousness of poverty into all public policy decisions' De Rossa
- Clearly as much about policy *process* as *outputs*

## NAPS ambitions

- to achieve greater policy co-ordination by identifying cross cutting themes across government departments;
- to establish 'poverty proofing' of all government initiatives and key policy areas;
- to develop the participation of people living in poverty have all been only partially achieved.

## Institutions of NAPS

- Cabinet Committee on Social Inclusion
- Senior Officials Group on SI
- Inter-dept Policy Committee (subsequently re-gigged with broader membership SICG)
- NAPS unit (now OSI) in Dept SCFA

The policy infrastructure designed to co-ordinate & integrate policy responses.

Individual departments are charged with developing their own programmes

## Monitoring & Evaluation

- NESF - which already monitored SI elements to Social Partnership - asked to report on progress of NAPS implementation
- Combat Poverty Agency charged with oversight, evaluation and departmental support

## NAPS impact on policy formulation

- Important to understand NAPS in context of evolution of Social Partnership
- Homogenising of 'civil society' without acknowledging differentiated capacities
- Replicating 'partnership lite' in NAPS
- Rounds of national consultation
- Without appropriate supports for negotiation

## NAPS impact on policy implementation – national

- Political impetus lost – no obvious bureaucratic champions
- Good news – majority of senior civil servants know about social inclusion
- Bad news – majority have no training, direct experience or knowledge of details
- Awareness needs to be raised *inside* govt as well as *outside* govt

## NAPS impact on policy implementation – local

- 1996 *Better Local Govt* reforms designed to promote social inclusion
- Introduction of County/City Devt Boards tasked with developing NAPS at local level
- Strategic Policy Committees do not operate with specific social inclusion indicators
- Mixed review - balance of opportunities tends to consult rather than negotiate local policy but sense of more positive engagement.

## NAPS and the EU

- EU makes first explicit references to SI at Lisbon Summit, March 2000
- Agrees to 'make a decisive impact on eradication of poverty by 2010'
- Lisbon Targets – fuzzy
- To be achieved by EU 'Open Method of Co-ordination' (OMC)

## OMC – an example of EU ‘soft’ law

- Fixing guidelines, setting timetables for short, medium and long-term goals
- Establishing quantitative & qualitative indicators and benchmarks, tailored to individual states
- Target setting
- Periodic monitoring and peer review
- Facilitating mutual learning/lesson-drawing

## NAPS and the EU

- Subsequent to Lisbon Summit, EU members tasked with producing a ‘National Action Plan on Social Inclusion’ (NAP s/inc)
- EU report on Ireland ‘could do better’
- EU report on 2<sup>nd</sup> NAP s/inc (after NAPS review) ‘substantial progress’ ‘ambitious new targets’ – still some concerns
- Overall state retains policy authority

## NAPS – what can we learn?

- Government matters
- Institutions of NAPS largely subsumed by social partnership – innovative but not wholly appropriate
- Policy process – does not acknowledge or support differential capacities of SI advocacy groups
- NAPS and EU – states still dominate
- Overall the SI advocacy needs to concentrate as much on policy process as policy outputs