

# **Partners in Social Integration**

**Experiences from Community Employment  
Innovative Projects in Dublin's Inner City**

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## 1) Background and Context

This document constitutes the first formal evaluation of the Community Employment Innovative Project<sup>1</sup> within the Dublin Inner City Partnership area. CE Innovative Projects developed out of a process of consultation and discussion between the statutory agency, FÁS, and the independent partnership company, DICP. In many ways, these schemes can be considered an exponent of the model of partnership in operation.

### Dublin Inner City Partnership

The DICP is one of the original 13 area based partnerships that were set up in 1991 under the Programme for Economic and Social Progress to provide a local response to long-term unemployment. There are now 38 partnerships nationwide, with the common brief of responding to a number of issues:

- ✍ The concentration of long-term unemployment in particular locations throughout the country;
- ✍ The need to re-focus major statutory agencies and government departments to ensure their future relevance;
- ✍ The rapid growth and expansion of local initiatives through the formation of independent local development organisations. (Connolly, D. 1996:3)

The inner city of Dublin has a population of almost 90,000 and has been described as "the nation's most concentrated and complex area of social deprivation and economic decline containing a larger scale of unemployment, poverty and crime than any other location." (DICP, nd:11)

According to the DICP, tackling long-term unemployment requires the involvement of a locally based infrastructure that primarily comprises community and voluntary organisations established in response to serious social and economic problems. Added to this is the need to forge direct links with employer organisations and to encourage statutory agencies to refocus their resources.

Thus a central feature of the DICP's modus operandi is the 'partnership' approach of facilitating co-operation between statutory, community and business organisations in the locality. The CE Innovative Project is a practical representation of this partnership approach.

The DICP's Action Plan 1996-2000<sup>2</sup> encourages an integrated approach from the various sectors involved in the Partnership. It has also identified a crucial role for the Partnership in seeking to influence the use of resources available to these different sectors in order that such funds can be directed as a priority at unemployed inner city residents. Objectives of the Action Plan are fourfold:

- ✍ To assist unemployed people by helping them to get jobs, by increasing their income, or by improving their quality of life;

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<sup>1</sup> On its inception, this initiative within the Community Employment programme was referred to as 'Special'. However, the CE Project Operations Manual advises that the initiative is now designated as 'Innovative'. Hence, throughout this document, the terms Special and Innovative are used interchangeably when referring to the initiative.

<sup>2</sup> Dublin Inner City Partnership, (no date) *Strategic Action for a Working City*. Dublin: Author.

- ✍ To involve as many other organisations as possible in the Partnership's work including community groups, statutory agencies and private sector organisations;
- ✍ To involve members and organisations of the various sectors which comprise the Partnership in Working Groups which actively develop and monitor its programmes;
- ✍ To focus on the effective co-ordination and integration of the services and actions undertaken by the wide range of organisations involved in the provision of programmes relevant to unemployment in the inner city.

Arising from a detailed consultation process, the Action Plan sets out four strategic goals which identify the key priorities for investment by the Partnership.

- i. Targeting social development
- ii. Accessing jobs for local people
- iii. Supporting enterprise development
- iv. Developing local infrastructure

A number of the Special Projects relate to specific measures under these strategy headings, while others broadly relate to a particular strategic goal.

### **Foras Áiseanna Saothair (FÁS)**

FÁS, the Training and Employment Authority, is a national statutory organisation established in 1988 under the Labour Services Act (1987). The Board of FÁS, which is appointed by the Minister for Enterprise and Employment, consists of a chairperson, representatives from employer, trade union, education, social welfare and youth interests, representatives of the Minister for Finance and the Minister for Enterprise and Employment and FÁS employees.

The principal functions of FÁS, as set out under the Labour Services Act, are to provide:

- Training and re-training;
- Employment schemes;
- Placement and guidance services;
- Assistance to community groups and workers' co-operatives towards job creation;
- Assistance to people seeking employment elsewhere in the European Union;
- Consultancy and human resource related services, on a commercial basis, outside the State.

The FÁS training programme, employment and industry services are available to the unemployed, school leavers, women returning to work, the employed, community and co-operative groups.

The organisation's Local Development Programme refers to the operation of the Community Employment Programme in the 38 areas announced by the Department of An Taoiseach where Area Partnerships are established or are being established.

The FÁS region in question in this evaluation is Dublin North, the second most populated area of the ten FÁS regions. Within Dublin North there are three distinct sub-regions: the inner city, the north inner suburbs and the north county area.

## **2) The Community Employment Programme**

The Community Employment (CE) Programme is the main vehicle through which the State supports the provision of temporary employment for long-term unemployed

people. CE provides eligible unemployed people and other disadvantaged persons with an opportunity to engage in useful work within their communities on a temporary basis. Approximately 40,000 people participate in the programme nationwide. The CE programme has been identified in the Operational Programme as "a key resource in the achievement of the local development plans in the disadvantaged areas." Its primary objective is to help participants to gain the skills and experience necessary for progression to employment on the programme's completion.

The Programme has three categories of participants, each with its own set of qualifying conditions:

- (i) Part-time Integration Option;
- (ii) Part-time Job Option;
- (iii) Rate for the Job Option.

The Integration Option is a twelve month programme with training and development opportunities. Its primary objective is to develop participants' skills through training and work experience, which will assist them to find full-time employment on completion of their schemes. The Part-time Job Option is, in effect, a part-time job with an annual contract that may be renewed for up to three years subject to availability of places. These two categories of CE also have separate entry criteria, most notably, the latter is for people aged 35 years or over. The third option, Rate for the Job, was more recently introduced and will eventually replace the Part-time Job Option, which is being phased out. Rate for the Job differs in that participants receive an hourly rate of pay commensurate with their skills and experience level.

Within the Partnership area, CE is governed by the Framework Agreement<sup>3</sup>; the rationale behind this is that CE should be implemented in accordance with an annual programme agreed between the Partnership and FÁS. This ensures that the national programme is tailored to meet the needs of those in disadvantaged areas and facilitates the communication necessary to evaluate the programme in these areas. The Agreement sets objectives, outlines targets for overall participation, and identifies a preferred geographical distribution of places within the Partnership area.

The Framework Agreement has been identified by FÁS as marking the beginning of a process of information sharing, consultation and collaboration between FÁS and the DICP. FÁS has welcomed the establishment of such a channel of communication and has recognised the role that the DICP has played in pushing out the boundaries and in exerting pressure on FÁS to provide more flexibility in its programmes.

A 1994 survey<sup>4</sup> of the precursor of CE - the Community Employment Development Programme (CEDP) - outlined a number of constructive criticisms about the operation of the programme. Among the conclusions reached by the report were the following:

The preponderance of national voluntary organisations acting as sponsors who were not recruiting from the area;

The need for improved training and proper accreditation for scheme participants;

The need for better linkages with the jobs market;

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<sup>3</sup> Framework Agreement for the Operation of Community Employment in Areas Designated under the Local Urban and Rural Development Programme.

<sup>4</sup> DICP/Scheme Workers Alliance, 1995, *Community Employment - Options and Opportunities*.

The need for flexibility in the duration of the scheme;  
The need for improved guidance counselling services;  
The recommendation that innovative uses of CE could help create jobs as part of a local development strategy.

### **Working Relationship between DICP and FÁS**

In response to these criticisms, a CE Monitoring Committee was established in the inner city to ensure that all such findings, criticisms, proposals and recommendations would be shared with the pertinent party, FÁS. The committee, which meets every three months, has responsibility for the implementation of the Framework Agreement. The principal objective of the Committee is to ensure that unemployed residents in the Inner City are assured priority access to CE programmes and obtain a quantifiable benefit through their participation.

The CE Monitoring Committee is the channel through which applications are made, either through FÁS or the DICP, for Innovative Project status. Once accepted by the local Monitoring Committee, applications are passed on to the National Monitoring Committee, which has the final approval for all CE projects. The national committee also meets on a quarterly basis, and is comprised of representatives from FÁS, Department of Education and Science, Department of the Environment and Local Government and members of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions.

Partnership with FÁS is an intrinsic element of the DICP's operation. FÁS representatives sit on the DICP Board and participate in various Partnership Working Groups. The collaboration between FÁS (Dublin North), a statutory body delivering a national programme, and the DICP, an area based partnership delivering an innovative programme, has resulted in an entirely new approach to labour and social inclusion policy in the Partnership area.

This alliance is in an interesting proposition, representing a close working relationship between a national statutory body and an innovative, independent community-driven company. Both organisations, however, crucially share a commitment to alleviating the problem of long-term unemployment.

The flow of knowledge and understanding between the two partners has been a reciprocal process. For its part, the Partnership has recognised the innovative and flexible approach which FÁS has displayed in the implementation of the initiative. It was also felt that the Partnership has gained insight into the constraints under which a large national statutory organisation labours – the most obvious being budgetary. The Partnership provides the necessary intelligence from the community, local expertise, innovation, creativity and a strong lobbying ethos.

### **3) CE Innovative Projects**

Innovative Projects were introduced as a result of a process of consultation between FÁS and the Partnerships in preceding years. Parties involved in designing and implementing labour market measures were aware that these measures were not working. Despite a booming economy, the 'Celtic Tiger' had not been translating into jobs for long-term unemployed people. It was felt that there was a valid case for challenging the presiding 'production line' culture with a more innovative 'developmental' culture, hence the establishment of Innovative Projects. They were

incorporated into the CE Programme in an attempt to address specific needs in Partnership areas.

There is no precise definition of what constitutes an Innovative Project. The initiative was deliberately framed in broad terms at national level to allow for creative responses at local level to the problem of unemployment. This means that the normal criteria that apply to CE are waived in certain circumstances. In order to be eligible for Innovative Project status, projects must conform to the following:

- i. An innovative or unique work programme;  
**and**
- ii. Objectives and parameters directly linked to special local development objectives;  
**and/or**
- iii. Work programme provides a service/resource which is innovative to a disadvantaged client group with special needs.

In this way, Innovative status is allocated to 'needs-based' project. Benefits accrue to either the participants themselves, or to client groups within the community.

In the past, innovative measures were traditionally devised by 'experts' who identified the most appropriate programmes and delivered corresponding measures. In declining to assume the mantle of 'expert' on this occasion and in deliberately leaving the Special Project initiative 'unflagged', the policy makers were inviting a creative and innovative response from those working on the ground. The absence of clear definition has been interpreted by some as an exciting freedom within what they regard as a prohibitively restrictive CE programme.

The purpose of CE Innovative Projects is twofold: to provide extra supervision, support and training for long-term unemployed people and to enable specific projects to be carried out which will contribute to the implementation of the Partnership Action Plan. Schemes with one or more of the following features can be identified as Innovative Projects:

Flexibility of eligibility criteria to facilitate the participation of specific target groups outside of the normal criteria;

The appointment of an additional assistant supervisor for the project;

A 50% rollover of participants for the second year.

A number of additional features may also categorise schemes as Innovative Projects:

Flexibility in the nature of the work of the project;

Flexibility in the role assumed by supervisors and additional supervisors;

The administrative attachment of co-ordinators to CE Schemes.

The Local Development Programme includes two other provisions that distinguish CE Innovative Projects from CE programmes. Firstly, projects may be approved for up to 3 years subject to annual review. Secondly, eligibility criteria for sponsors are relaxed thereby allowing for the consideration of commercial, state or private companies as sponsors. This provision is considered as a vehicle for enabling these companies to contribute to local development.

## Budgetary Provision

As outlined above, Innovative Projects can enjoy a number of additional features which do not have explicit resource implications. The official position regarding funding of Innovative Projects is outlined in the CE Project Operations Manual. The Initiative does not have a specific and separate Special Project budget, but is instead incorporated within the CE programme.

“A maximum ceiling of 5% of the CE activity in each region may be used for projects designated as Innovative by FÁS. Only the cost of the innovative element of the project should be included in the overall calculation of this 5% ceiling. This would mean that costs/elements e.g. participants that would normally qualify for Community Employment could be left out of the calculation.”

Budgets are determined in advance and calculated on a per capita basis according to strict guidelines, i.e.:

Wages + Materials + Training & Development + Supervisory Personnel = Total cost of each participant

The budget is then sanctioned for a given number of CE participants, which does not allow for additional expenses.

FÁS is adamant that the initiative is about more than just additional money. It readily cites the SAOL Project as an example of a project which is designated as 'special' because its programme is predominantly training – a factor that distinguishes it from CE proper, a temporary work-based programme. Notwithstanding the above provisions, the Local Development Programme contains one reference to additional funding, noting that Innovative Projects may be eligible for 'additional top-up capital/materials funding under the Local Development Programme, subject to availability of resources from Area Partnerships.'<sup>5</sup>

## 4) Case Studies

### Methodology

This evaluation of CE Innovative Projects entailed consultation with parties involved in the design and implementation of projects in Dublin's inner city. These included representatives from FÁS, the CE Monitoring Committee, DSCP staff, and project supervisors and participants. Where available, relevant literature was consulted.

The following section presents a number of case studies, highlighting the variety of activities undertaken by Special Projects, the diversity of objectives in individual projects and the differing capabilities of participants.

<b>Name of Project</b>	<b>Activity/Target Group</b>
Alliance for Work Forum	Education
Bosnian Community Development Project	Refugee community
The Cavan Centre	Residential/Development
Community After School Project	Childcare development

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<sup>5</sup> CE Project Operations Manual, pp. 15-16.

Community Technical Aid	Technical aid
Crosscare	Catering
Down to Earth Theatre Company	Theatre
Dublin Simon Community	Housing for homeless people
Energy Action	Energy conservation
Fire Station Artists' Studio	Visual arts
Focus Ireland	Homeless people
Irish Deaf Society	Disability issues
Larkin Pre-Enterprise	Training for entrepreneurs
Merchants Quay Project	Drug rehabilitation
Parish of the Travelling People	Travelling community
Pathways	Training/Development
SAOL Project	Development programme for drug users
SICCDA Tourism	Tourism
Sunflower Project	Recycling

### Success Indicators

In many cases the objectives of the Special Projects simply do not lend themselves to numerical or quantitative analysis, since they are often about personal and community development, rather than merely progression or job placement. The Operational Programme of CE Innovative Projects proposes that actions must be evaluated by reference to the *process*, as well as to the *outcome*. It states that "many of the proposed and desired outcomes are intangible and have a social rather than a directly economic impact. As such, the qualitative dimension of the impact may be more significant, but more difficult to capture through appropriated performance measures, than the quantitative impact." Two main criteria were applied to the evaluation of the operation of Innovative Projects:

- Benefits gained by participants from additional supports and training;
- Contribution to the implementation of the DICP Action Plan.

In many projects, benefits to participants are multi-faceted and not subject to arbitrary distinctions between personal benefits and enhancements of labour market prospects. Project supervisors and participants were assessed in relation to their awareness of the DICP Action Plan and in particular, networking of their projects with other organisations and a contribution to establishing a stronger local network. The evaluation also takes into account placement rates, where available.

As regards contribution to the DICP Action Plan, case studies measured Innovative Projects in relation to the four key objectives contained within the Action Plan: Targeting social development; Accessing jobs for local people; Supporting enterprise development; Developing local infrastructure. It is self-evident that contribution to the implementation of the objectives cannot be quantified in numerical form. This evaluation assesses the contribution of each project to the plan by charting through the following indicators:

- Identification of a particular strategy and measure of the Plan to which the Special Project relates;
- Contribution made to the establishment of a stronger local network;
- Degree of awareness of the Partnership and the Action Plan.

## **Special Projects**

### **Alliance for Work Forum**

The Alliance for Work Forum ran a CE Innovative Project between 1995 and 1997. Its primary objective was educational, aiming to develop a new means of access to Third level education for residents of Dublin's north-east inner city. The project was successful in increasing the capacity of groups in the target area to create opportunities for new employment and new services based on the local needs of the social economy. Sixteen students participated on the two-year Diploma for Social Entrepreneurs course, which took place in the Alliance's Amiens Street offices.

The Alliance for Work Forum project was innovative in that it delivered Diploma standard qualification at local level, thus ensuring that the students' value systems were 'respected and built upon'. It developed and nurtured perspectives of social exclusion. The emphasis was on providing on-going support to ensure that students could participate competitively at Third level. The project stated the importance of pitching the course at the standard of the Third level academic sector with no concessions and no patronising - an approach which they felt paid dividends.

The initiative identified a deficit in adult education and strategically addressed this in an innovative way for the good of the individual student participants and the social economy of the inner city. The AWF devised the curriculum, identified the target group, accessed resources and secured accreditation. The project appointed an assistant supervisor who would act as a support for the Horizon course. The role of the assistant supervisor essentially constituted an additional resource for those students pursuing the diploma course.

Course participants were attached to a variety of local projects and community organisations. Lectures took place during two mornings and one evening every week. Computers and library facilities in the AWF were open to students at all times. The curriculum, which was delivered by academics and professionals, comprised nine modules: prior reading, adult basic education, urban community development, social economy, social policy, organisation skills, business, planning and marketing, French, learning support. Students also produced action plans for new services to be provided by local groups.

In terms of benefits to participants, the project provided qualifications which would improve their chances of accessing the labour market. The library established by the assistant supervisor gave the greatest possible access to reading material, thereby removing one further barrier to educational participation. The assistant supervisor also provided on-going support for students in the compilation and presentation of their course work. Such support was particularly appropriate to respond to the students' need to master computer skills, touch typing, layout, spell checks, etc. This role was especially important for older participants, who generally had a greater fear of technology.

Growth in self-confidence also resulted from participation on the course, along with the realisation that Third level education exists as a real possibility for participants. Breaking the educational barrier is regarded as a significant psychological breakthrough. Further education became a possibility, for example, one participant secured a place in a

Youth & Community Work course in Maynooth. Others were involved with their own entrepreneurial projects, including an after-schools project, a community workers' canteen and a local heritage museum.

The project contributed to the Partnership's Action Plan by taking the radical step of providing a Third level course in the inner city, an area where only 4% of the population progress to Third level education.

### **Bosnian Community Development Centre**

The Bosnian Community Development Centre was established in 1995 to provide a service to refugees arriving in Ireland as a consequence of the war in Bosnia. By 1995, the Bosnian community in Ireland numbered over 300. There are currently over 780 living here. The project plays an important role in assisting refugees to settle in Ireland. It aims to help refugees with their adaptation to life in Ireland, specifically by supporting social and cultural activities, community services and providing assistance in accessing training and employment. The impetus for the project came from the Refugee Agency, in association with the Irish Refugee Council and the Refugee Trust.

In late 1995 a survey of the entire adult Bosnian community was carried out and a Community Action Plan was developed based on survey findings. The establishment of a Resource Centre in 1996, and the provision of a number of key services, are all based on the identified needs of the community.

Specific objectives are to develop a vocational training programme which takes account of previous skills, and which adapts or retrains participants to play an active role in the economy; to training a core group of Bosnians in a variety of skills to allow for the effective development of a community distinct from, but included within, Irish society; to identify, develop and establish a number of key services, where feasible being operated by Bosnians for Bosnians from the community resource centre; to inform and sensitise service providers, including Government Departments, to the particular needs of refugees and migrant groups.

Other aims of the organisation are exchange of information with transnational partners and the building of links to Bosnian groups in other EU member states.

Achievements to date include:

- The development of a pilot vocational and language tuition programme in co-operation with FÁS, the Refugee Agency, the Irish Refugee Council and the Centre for Language and Communication Studies, Trinity College.
- The establishment of a Resource Centre in Dublin city centre providing drop-in facilities.
- The provision of key services including an information service and a programme of social and cultural activities, including outreach support for the elderly.
- The development of English language training and community development skills training for project participants.
- Participant and information exchanges with transnational partners, in particular Sweden and the UK.

The project is funded by FÁS CE and the EU Employment Initiative (INTEGRA Strand). It also receives occasional grants from various other organisations. The CE Innovative Programme supports the salaries for a staff of one full-time Co-ordinator and 14 part-time participants. It also provides grants for materials and training.

The Management Board includes nominees of the promoting organisations and a number of individual special members. The promoting organisations include the Refugee Agency, the Refugee Trust and the Irish Refugee Council. Board meetings are also attended by the Manager and one of the three Bosnian team leaders.

Since the BCDP Community Employment Project started in July 1995 there has been a total of 34 staff, many of whom have successfully gone on to further employment or training. All Community Employment projects give participants the opportunity to improve their professional skills through training, and to gain the confidence and self-esteem from being at work. However, this Innovative Project is of particular benefit to Bosnians in that besides these points, the project offers its staff English lessons – the essential requirement for further employment here and also the chance to gain experience in the Irish work force. Staff also take part in courses in personal development and community development. It is intended that the experience and training undertaken will enable BCDP to be self-directing and self-reliant, and that this will feed back into the wider community.

The project is relevant to the Social Development Strategy of the Partnership's Strategic Action Plan, in that it combats social exclusion.

### **The Cavan Centre**

The Cavan Centre is a residential centre for education and community development, established in 1977 by a group of volunteers from the inner city who were involved in social work. The Centre provides a resource to promote youth and community work through education and personal development for disadvantaged and marginalised groups and communities. It provides invaluable educational, recreational and training experience for a broad cross-section of young people and community groups who would not otherwise have such opportunities.

The Centre runs a Residential Care Programme for young people, who are, generally speaking, early school-leavers with few or no formal qualifications, poor literacy and in many cases, from homes that have a history of unemployment. The programme has evolved and developed over the years and at present is co-educational, involving 11 participants. Adolescents become involved in the programme on a voluntary basis, mainly being referred from various social, youth and community workers predominantly from the north inner city area of Dublin.

The programme endeavours to provide opportunities in a warm, caring and homely environment to enable young people to develop to their full potential, i.e. their physical social, spiritual, educational and emotional development, in an atmosphere that encourages individual responsibility.

Modules include creative drama, literacy & numeracy, cooking, sex education, self-defence, assertiveness, health education and first aid. Through these modules, the programme tries to impart the work ethics of punctuality, reliability and safety. It also

provides job-search skills including interview techniques, curriculum vitae preparation, job application procedures and computers.

On completion of the scheme, each participant graduates and is presented with a certificate. They are then placed in either employment or a mainstream training course. Some return to full-time education.

Young people are initially encouraged to complete a short stay on the programme to experience the atmosphere of the Centre. When the client commits to the programme, their needs are assessed. The Education and Care Programme is a five-day residential Programme, which enables the young person to remain in contact with their family or their community on a weekly basis.

In addition to this, the Cavan Centre runs a number of short programmes for community groups, including Outdoor Pursuits, Training & Development Skills, Drug Education/Awareness, Confidence Building and Leadership Skills.

The Cavan Centre plans to extend the area for the CE Innovative Project and maintain the standard which has so far been achieved. Its activities are related to two of the measures under the Social Development strategy of the Partnership's Action Plan, in that they combat social exclusion and support new learning opportunities.

### **Community After Schools Project**

The Community After Schools Project (CASP) was set up in 1995 as a response to lack of resources for the Primary school age group in the Buckingham Street area. The project now has two successful after-school services in the north east inner city. Buckingham Street After Schools Project caters for children from Rutland Street School, while Mountjoy Square After School Project, opened in March 1998, caters for children from Gardiner Street School. Both offer extensive extramural programmes of activity for children. The project has also applied to FÁS for a new CE scheme to operate from a premises in Clonmore Villas that is in need of renovation. They hope to begin recruiting in March or April 1999. When established, this project will cater for children from North William Street school.

CASP's aims are two-fold: to provide after school care in the north east inner city and to create full-time jobs in the social economy for the project participants. It also has a longer-term ambition to establish a similar after school project in every national school in the Dublin 1 area. The main work of the project is assisting children with homework and familiarising them with an 'educational club atmosphere'. During the Summer months children are invited to take part in a Summer Project.

The project fund-raises to cover its daily expenditures and has to date secured funding from a number of sources: ADM, Department of An Taoiseach, Department of Social Welfare, National Lottery and St. Vincent de Paul. CASP was a finalist in the Bank of Ireland awards scheme for new community projects.

Special project status enables the assistant supervisor to provide additional support and training, and to share in the responsibility and running of a project which effectively has two components: adult and child. The second feature of this Innovative Project is that participants 'rollover' to a second year. There are presently 32 CE workers and 5 Whole-

time Jobs Initiative staff on the project, along with a Community Liaison Worker, a Development Officer, a Training Co-ordinator and ancillary accounting staff.

CASP has identified a particular need for children and families in the area and responded by providing an innovative childcare service for Primary school children. The project has an intimate understanding of children's backgrounds, an intelligence which allows participants to respond sensitively and appropriately to individual children's needs and problems. In terms of provision of its homework service, the project has received very positive feedback from the Rutland Street school. This achievement is particularly significant in light the many factors which might militate against a child's educational progression in the home: among them, cramped living conditions, absence of motivation or educational skills on the part of parents, or individual family problems specific to the socio-economic features in the inner city.

All participants' children are free to attend the project. Individual participants spoke of bringing skills learned on site back into their families and homes. For many of the lone parents on the project, participation has moved them from a position of isolation into an environment in which skills are gained and friendships are formed. Growth in personal confidence is apparent. Remuneration was also mentioned as a very distinct advantage for lone parent participants. All participants were conscious of the almost tangible 'breaking of barriers' which the project was effecting. Most staff have completed NCVA Level I training and the project has recently obtained EU funding to train 22 participants to NCVA Level II. This will allow participants to avail of job opportunities in the play care sector.

The project's contribution to the Action Plan lies in the implementation of Strategy A, Targeting Social Development, Measure 3: "Tackling educational disadvantage and promotion and support for new learning opportunities." Its innovative status relates to the service provided to a disadvantaged client group with special needs (young people in the inner city).

CASP may be used to illustrate how networks have enhanced community infrastructure and fostered an inter-agency approach in an effort to respond to problems prevalent in the inner city. Children are able to avail of a broad extramural curriculum: school work, arts and crafts, music, dance, drama, swimming, weekly outings, summer trips and computer classes. In this sense, the project extends beyond the provision of 'childcare' by seeking to develop children's individual talents. External links include work placements for students from TCD, Maynooth and the Garda College. The project has been described as one of the most innovative childcare projects nationally.

### **Community Technical Aid**

Community Technical Aid was set up to provide assistance to community groups in a number of areas, including architectural and design planning and project management training. The need for a resource agency to assist in progressing community projects was identified by the Dublin Inner City Partnership and a feasibility study was conducted and published in 1993. CTA in Dublin is modelled on Community Technical Aid in Belfast which was founded over ten years ago as part of a wave of involvement by professionals in community and housing issues.

The project has 1 supervisor and 15 CE positions, some of which are vacant at present. The innovative aspect of this project lies in management training and support given to new projects at set-up stage. Another key reason for CTA's Special Project status stems from the fact that it usually takes two to three years to deliver a community project.

CTA is a participative organisation which allows the expertise of professionals and the skills of others to be made available in the form of advice and services to struggling communities on a free, deferred or low cost basis. CTA has a function of identifying where expertise is located and matching it with the needs of the community. In particular, CTA is an empowering agency focused on helping locality-based communities make realistic plans and achieve practical goals.

To date the CTA Management Support scheme has helped many groups, including the Charlemont Community Association, Missing Persons Group, Dublin Inner City Folklore Project and the Irish Organisation of Market and Street Traders.

CE participants work as architectural technicians, graphic artists, assistant co-ordinator, etc. They obtain practical work experience on the project and have the opportunity to develop skills in the areas of problem solving, conflict resolution, forward planning, risk assessment and presentation skills. Training is an integral and ongoing aspect of the programme. The organisation adopts a pro-active approach to securing suitable employment for each participant, attempting to match their skills with relevant community based development projects.

The company specifically responds to two of the Partnership's strategies: Targeting social development and Promoting local organisation and participation, as well as to the overall aim of improving quality of life and environment for inner city groups.

### **Crosscare**

There are sixteen staff working in Crosscare in Holles Row on a project that is jointly sponsored by Crosscare (Catholic Social Service) and St. Andrew's Resource Centre. The project, a former 'penny dinner', now provides a restaurant-style service for the community. Their CE Innovative Project has been operating for three years. Recently, workers aged over 35 are employed under the 'rate for the job' option.

The project aims to enhance the skills of staff working in the restaurant, and provides a valuable catering service for the community. Staff are encouraged to participate in a wide range of training modules, including Food and Beverage Service Skills (practical and theory), personal development, food hygiene, flower arranging, sign language, basic computer training, basic leadership in floor supervision and own-time-development. The Supervisor also organises work placements in private sector businesses. Participants learn to act as a team.

The combination of all the training modules, work placement and on-the-job training enhances the skills of the participants and assists with progression at the end of their term on the project. Continuous assessment gives staff and management the opportunity to see what progress each worker has made and allows for positive feedback. Since November 1997, eleven participants have been placed in full-time and part-time employment.

Crosscare is of obvious benefit to its client group, since it provides a local, community-based restaurant service. Added to this is the ethos of the staff and management in dealings with clients; workers aim to give customers a sense of belonging, rather than one of 'alleviation'. The project provides a concrete response to the needs of both the clientele availing of the services and the people on the project in a way that is realistic for future development.

Future plans include developing and enhancing the range of skills participants' can obtain on CE scheme, and continuing its service to the community. Crosscare is linked to the Partnership through St. Andrew's Resource Centre and contributes to the Partnership's Action Plan through social development.

### **Down to Earth Theatre Company**

When the Down to Earth Theatre Company was established in 1990 it had two main ambitions: the first was to create employment for out-of-work actors by initiating theatre projects within the community, and the second was to promote environmental awareness through the medium of theatre.

The company originally employed four actors and a stage manager, but has since grown to be a major employer through the FÁS Community Employment programme. They currently sponsor two CE programmes, one in the area of environmental concerns and the second, a CE Special Project. The former involved presenting a Primary schools education package, which has extended to a national level and become an integral part of those schools' environmental programmes.

The CE Special Project was established in 1994 and is based on the needs of the community, and in particular, the needs of people who had a desire to act, but no acting experience. The Special Project format was to be used to set up an Acting Academy, which would train the participants to a standard where they could progress

to the other CE project. The success of the project can be gauged by the response of the students, the tutors (who are all leading practitioners in their field) and other theatre training faculties.

The Company has a co-operative structure and is strictly non-profit. It has a seven-person management committee that meets on a regular basis to oversee the running of the project. The project works closely with FÁS in fulfilling the CE criteria and also in influencing the future direction of the CE programme. They were one of the first companies to respond to Special Initiative criteria by setting up the Academy in line with the guidelines and participants' needs. They work closely with the local community.

The project plans to extend its activities in the future to incorporate a module for training recovering drug users. This will draw on community and arts links. They aim to implement a programme that is interactive with the arts community and rehabilitation organisations. All three CE projects would support the provision of training and employment opportunities.

Benefits to participants are manifold: they obtain training and work experience on the project which will assist their career progress. The project contributes to Strategy A of the Partnership's Action Plan (Targeting Social Development) Strategy C (Supporting Local Enterprise Activity) through promotion of work opportunities and combating social exclusion.

### **Dublin Simon Community**

The Dublin Simon Community has operated a CE Project since 1995, and was awarded Innovative Project status in 1998. The project runs a settlement house in Sean MacDermott Street and charity shops in Thomas Street and Lower Camden Street. It also has post-settlement service.

By its nature, much of the organisation's work is innovative – for example, the long-term settlement houses at Sean MacDermott Street (where most CE staff are based) offers community-style long-term settlement for men and women who were homeless in the inner city for many years. It is the only project of its type in Dublin and the longest established settlement project in the country. Part of the Partnership's brief of targeting long-term unemployment among local people includes a focus on job provision, nurturing enterprise, developing the inner city community and boosting creative activity in the area. Dublin Simon contributes to achieving these objectives in working for people who are extremely disadvantaged and have a wide range of special needs.

Specifically, the project contributes to the action plan in that local residents are recruited to work on the scheme, many through the Inner City Employment Service (ICES). Approximately three quarters of staff are resident in the inner city. The project is very focused on progression routes for participants. Individual-centred training is provided for each participant to assist progression. Data indicates that 69 per cent of participants progress to work and a further 8 per cent progress to full-time education. CE participants are often recruited for full-time positions within Dublin Simon.

One of the key benefits of this new status is that the project may now retain up to 50% of staff who are under 35 years of age, and three years unemployed prior to commencing work on the project. Participants are entitled to remain for three years, subject to

annual renewal. The CE Innovative status recognises the unique nature of the project. The supervisor's responsibilities include assisting identification of participants' training needs, recruitment, induction of staff, sourcing trainers, etc.

Numerous benefits to staff accrue from participation on the project. Training of CE staff is integral to the programme. Staff acquire transferable skills such as good work practice in terms of punctuality and attendance, application to work, communication skills and team work. Other skills include supporting people who experience homelessness, defining boundaries and dealing with members of the public. Own Time Development training for staff has been in the areas of driving lessons, reception skills, Irish classes and computer courses.

Many of the female staff have young families and require more flexible rosters, so participation on this innovative project is appropriate to their needs. According to the CE supervisor, "The increase in the number of local people employed in the area has resulted in greater integration of Simon residents and projects into local communities."

Participants are involved in diverse areas of work, such as cleaning, meal preparation, shopping, assisting elderly residents, accompanying residents on doctor or hospital visits and attending the general needs of residents. Dublin Simon is an integral part of the community and shares in the aspirations of participants. Locally recruited staff have a legitimate pride and interest in the development of the area.

### **Energy Action**

Energy Action runs a CE Special Project that has two main objectives: 1) to alleviate fuel poverty among the elderly and the needy, and 2) to help improve employment prospects among the long-term unemployed. The project assigns a number of crews to various activities, such as draught-proofing, security and energy awareness. To date, they have draught-proofed over 13,000 homes, provided security locks, window locks and door viewers to homes of old age pensioners and provided energy advice to elderly people to help them use fuel efficiently.

The project has a staff of 40 CE participants, 15 people on the Whole-time Jobs Initiative, 3 Supervisors and 2 Assistant Supervisors. Much emphasis is placed on progression rates for participants. During 1998, 80 per cent of people who left the programme progressed to full-time employment, and 10 per cent progressed to further training and education.

The project provides many benefits for individual participants and the wider community. Firstly, it allows participants to experience a working environment, and provides accredited training, including NVQ in draught-proofing, City & Guilds Energy Awareness and the European Computer Driving Licence.

The primary benefit to the community is increased comfort due to greater heat retention in their homes. Added to this, however, is the fact that older people often appreciate being visited by Energy Action crews, so in a sense the project combats isolation in the home. Participants also carried out minor repairs for people in needy situations.

The project has been operating successfully for ten years and plans to continue with the present workload. In the future it aims to introduce energy auditing, which will measure

energy consumption in homes. Energy Action would also like to see similar projects setting up in key rural locations throughout Ireland.

Energy Action falls under Strategy A (Targeting Social Development) of the Partnership's Action Plan, specifically to Measure 2, which refers to projects that undertake innovative energy conservation initiatives.

### **Fire Station Artists' Studio**

The objective of the Fire Station Artists' Studio under its initial Special Project status was to develop a two-year training programme for practising artists and community arts workers. Its twenty-hour weekly training programme was dedicated to technical training. The objective of their subsequent Innovative Project was to organise, direct, facilitate and co-ordinate the 'Inner Art' project - an exhibition of Irish and European artists. The project aimed to engage with the issues affecting the local community through contemporary art which it encouraged and developed within the community. It also sought to investigate the role that art can play in the rejuvenation of communities, with particular reference to those that are marginalised.

The role of the assistant supervisor would appear to be an integral part of the project whole; her appointment enabled the project to work towards the staging of a very ambitious exhibition in the inner city.

Participants worked in diverse areas: artists, technicians, maintenance staff, administrative staff, photographer and receptionist. Training was provided in a range of subjects: specialised technical training (etching, lithography, welding, etc.), multi-media, computers, interview skills. Training provisions were decided through consultation with participants and took full cognisance of the diversity of their needs.

The project favoured appropriate and meaningful certification and required technicians to progress to the certified training standard. However, the sponsor stated that the project accorded precedence to the provision of quality training over the precise source or certification of that training. Such a point is apposite both for artist participants who are already graduates and for those participants who have had little experience of formal education. The sponsor understood that both sets of participants prefer training which gives them the experience, credibility and contacts necessary to move into a particular area of employment as opposed to the securing of specious accreditation.

From consultation with the sponsor, supervisor and assistant supervisor, it would appear that the presence of an assistant supervisor was necessary to provide additional training and support which were required to deliver the objectives outlined above. The project essentially offered a chance to participate in a working environment and access to relevant information and contacts within the artistic world. Isolation and a dearth of information were identified as the biggest problems facing artists – problems which the project's working environment could counter. An ensuing growth in self-confidence was one of the benefits identified as arising from familiarity with the workplace.

The success of the project cannot be measured in placement rates, since, by virtue of the nature of their work, artists will typically be self-employed. The contribution to the Action Plan is best illustrated by the staging of the Samhain parade during Halloween 1996, which the project organised in consultation with a range of community

organisations in the area. In many ways, its staging could be taken as a model of community organisation. All relevant groups within ICON were invited to participate in the parade. Walking in its wake became in itself an expression of community solidarity. In the midst of many social and economic problems which have necessitated meetings and protest marches, Samhain was identified as an event that was staged for purely celebratory reasons.

### **Focus Ireland**

The primary objective of Focus Ireland is to 'prevent, eliminate and alleviate homelessness in Ireland.' The organisation's vision is that everyone has a right to a place called home. A range of services are provided, targeted at young people, families and adults. The CE Special Project is integral to Focus Ireland's operation. Flexibility in eligibility criteria allows for the recruitment of Social Science graduates as Community Service Volunteers, who work a 40 hour week at CE rates. Focus Point brings an holistic approach to problems of homelessness to achieve the following objectives:

- Creating awareness of homelessness in Ireland
- Empowering people with information, resources, relationships and decision making
- Enabling people out of home to participate in the work of Focus Ireland

Focus Ireland's use of CSVs, which is a unique feature, is a pilot scheme for a national project. The organisation believes that the initiative which FÁS is facilitating within Focus Ireland can be applied to other voluntary bodies. CSVs are involved in all areas of the organisation's services (Open Access, Family and Development and Young People's Services). They receive training in behavioural management, crisis management, drug addiction, sexual abuse, domestic violence, men's issues, self injury and prostitution. Training is accessed from professionals in the various areas, although in the main it is not accredited.

The project benefits participants by giving graduates practical experience and a structured training programme within an innovative organisation. Participants have identified the work experience as having enhanced their prospects for return to further education or work within the social services. There are two issues that should be addressed from this pilot. The first is the low income received by participants and the fact that the 40 hour week does not allow for the generation of additional income. The second is the need for greater freedom with regard to expenditure on personal training budgets.

Virtually all CSVs progress to work in the social services or further education. Focus Ireland has a 74% placement rate for the totality of CE participants (not all of whom are CSVs). Such a rate is a validation of the training, support and personal development programmes which it has developed over the years.

This Special Project relates to Strategy A (Targeting Social Development) of the Action Plan, which contains a specific measure addressing the problems of homelessness in the inner city.

'Locally based responses to some of the unique problems experienced by homeless people in the city centre will be supported.'

The locality of the Dublin branch of Focus Ireland is the inner city – a location to which homeless people are drawn in search of accommodation and assistance. Focus Ireland describes the experience of being homeless as representing “the most severe economic and social marginalisation in our society.” In 1995 Focus Ireland provided services to almost 4,000 individuals. The contribution which the employment of CSVs make to the welfare of homeless people must be viewed in this light.

### **Irish Deaf Society**

The Irish Deaf Society is an active, progressive lobbying and advocacy organisation for Irish deaf people. Its main aim is to provide services for the deaf community. The organisation's objectives are to uphold the status of the Irish sign language and to promote the cultural and linguistic vibrancy of the deaf community. The Assistant Supervisor on the IDS project is an interpreter. Within Ireland professional interpreters are quite scarce and expensive. No training currently exists for interpreters in Ireland - a vacuum whose significance is compounded by the fact that each country has an indigenous sign language.

The project's work includes the sale of technical aids for the deaf, the publication of the Irish Deaf Journal every quarter, the operation of a library within the project which handles queries on deafness and related topics, research, public relations and fund-raising, administration, the organisation of a World Federation of Deaf summer camp, maintenance and security for the IDS building.

The benefits which participants receive from the presence of the assistant supervisor and her role as interpreter include improved communication between deaf and hearing people. This introduces a diversity into the lives of deaf people which would otherwise be absent. Such a role comes into play in facilitating the participation of deaf people in mainstream education and training (for example, she attends Dorset College for three hours every day with participants). Her work also includes interpreting phone calls for participants, imparting information to deaf and hearing parties, staff meetings, etc. In practical terms, the evaluator for this study would not have been able to speak to participants without the interpreter. Other benefits to participants include a visible growth in self-esteem and self-confidence, opening up of channels of information and communication. Essentially, the deaf person is afforded the opportunity to function on a par with the hearing person. Female participants have become involved in women's organisations and organise talks on women's issues.

In terms of personal benefits for participants, the interpreter identified a number of changes which have been effected by the channels of information, communication and education opened up by her presence, including a visible growth in self-esteem and self-confidence as a result of the ability to communicate and interact with others. Essentially the deaf participant is being accorded the opportunity to function on a par with the hearing person. Individual participants testify to the benefits which they have received from the presence of an interpreter.

Placement rates are lower than project would wish. Typically 25% of participants progress onto full-time employment, a very small number return to education and the remainder apply to return to the project when the required period of unemployment has lapsed. It is a function of their disability that deaf people often secure employment that is below their capabilities. A certain pessimism was discernible among some

participants, who, while highly skilled, have already experienced disappointment in the jobs market.

The operation of the IDS is informed by the specific needs of its deaf participants, and therefore does not impact directly on the inner city. As an organisation, however, it holds the same brief for its target group and operates according to principles which would appear to be very similar to those informing the DICP.

### **Larkin Pre-enterprise**

The Larkin Centre has been involved over a number of years in providing enterprise support and training in self-employment for the long-term unemployed. The Centre is now running a CE Innovative Project that provides a one-year pre-enterprise training course for new entrepreneurs. Twenty-seven participants are presently taking part in the 1998/99 Pre-enterprise Support & Training Programme, which comprises 200 hours of training. Classes take place one half-day per week and the remainder of the time is devoted to developing the businesses. The service accepts referrals from ICES centres, the Department of Social, Community and Family Affairs, the Larkin Centre, other organisations and by word of mouth.

The purpose of the training programme is to provide an induction course for inner city clients prior to commencing on the Area-based allowance. Participants complete three modules over the year:

- 1) Business Studies and Accounting
  - Book-keeping and Management Accounts
  - Taxation
  - Practical Business Administration
  
- 2) Marketing
  - Introduction to Marketing
  - Market Research, Planning and Pricing
  - Business Development
  - Selling Skills and Telephone Sales
  - Promotion
  - Presentation and Communication Skills
  
- 3) Legal and other issues
  - Health and Safety
  - Employment Law
  - Insurance
  - Sources of Finance
  - Business and Consumer Law

The course aims to instil core business skills training and provide 'hands on' support for individual business start-ups. It provides business information, computer and fax use and low cost printing, feasibility studies, outline business plans, help with funding applications, sourcing workspace and equipment, insurance cover, etc. The course also provides a registration service for the Area Based Allowance for sole traders and worker co-operatives. Participants benefit from the practical training and advice and

the structured environment of the course. They also benefit from access to equipment and technology that would otherwise only be available to them at a high cost in the commercial sector. Participants attend monthly business meetings where they present accounts and develop the business strategy.

A wide range of business start-ups are being developed by including event management, building, antiques, illustration, refuse collection, drama, mini bus hire, architectural draughting, motorcycle restoration, and window cleaning.

Participants on the course also have trade union membership with SIPTU, since the Larkin Centre is sponsored by the Irish Congress of Trade Unions and has a policy of employee union membership. This union membership entitles participants to information on rights and entitlements, legal advice and representations on a range of issues and representation at appeals.

This Innovative Project relates to Strategy C of the Partnership's Action Plan, in that it supports local enterprise activity, specifically under Measure 1 of the strategy, 'Support for unemployed individuals who wish to establish new enterprise.'

### **Merchants Quay Project**

The Merchant's Quay Project provides a treatment and support service for drug users. The project was established in 1989 by the Franciscan Community in response to the high level of people in the area who had problems with drug use; Dublin 8 has the highest levels of heroin use in Ireland. The project recognises that there is no simple solution to heroin problems and that a complex range of responses is required to effectively support recovering drug users. To this end, the project provides a crisis intervention service, stabilisation programmes, residential treatment, and training. The service strives to be creative and client-centred. The project's main funding sources are FÁS CE and the Drugs Task Force.

The CE Innovative Project is approved for 140 participants and there are presently 65 on the programme. Participants may be people who work with drug users, or drug users themselves who are taking part in the various programmes in the project, such as the Stabilisation programme.

For CE participants working with the service's clients, training and work experience are important benefits. Many of these participants come from community groups in Dublin, and receive specialist training in drug counselling through Merchant's Quay. The project also runs a one-year certificate course on drug issues, accredited by University College Dublin, which is the only course of its kind in existence.

For clients who are participating on the CE Innovative Project, the programme offers them a supportive environment in which to recover from their drug use, the opportunity to meet people and make friends, thus combating isolation, information and health care and a structured daily routine.

Progression rates for the project are measured within the range of services provided by Merchant's Quay. For example, CE participants who start on the Stabilisation programme may progress to the residential programme in High Park. From there, they may progress to the residential farm in Tullow, and eventually on to the Integra European programme that assists progression from rehabilitation to the work

environment. It is clear that for this group of participants, progression is a slow process that requires supports and structures at every level. Due to the nature of their experiences as problem drug users, participants must attempt progression one step at a time.

Third Level students who take part in the CE project for work experience often progress to employment in social work and similar areas.

The project's innovative nature lies firstly in its activities, mainly training and support, and secondly in the high level of supervisory personnel involved. It also features a rollover facility, with each participant being eligible to apply for up to three years on the scheme.

The project contributes to the Partnership's Action Plan through Strategy A, Targeting Social Development, in that it provides a service that aims to combat social exclusion.

### **Parish of the Travelling People**

The objective of this Special Project is to involve participants with the work of the Parish of the Travelling People whose own objective is to 'work in solidarity with Travellers' and promote interaction between Travellers and Settled people that is liberating for both groups. The project constitutes a 'drop in' centre for Travellers, offering information, advice and referrals onto other pertinent services and centres. The project's innovative dimension derives from the emphasis on justice, rights and culture of the Travelling Community which informs the delivery of its programme.

The project has enabled participants to write and publish books about both specific dimensions of Travellers' culture and also the problems facing their community, a project that has not previously been attempted. Participants perform a variety of services on behalf of the Travelling community. Intercultural work includes visits to colleges and schools and the initiation of first time contacts with settled children and various professionals. Within their own community, participants provide pre-marriage courses and also act as 'faith friends' to children. Individuals work as teachers' assistants in the nearby Strand Street school for Travelling children. The project is also involved in sports development work. To date the project has had two publications, *'Wrapped in the Mantle of God'* and *'Drugs - what you need to know'*.

Participants receive training in personal development, art, office skills, computers, desk top publishing, driving, interviewing and research techniques, literacy, English language and literature. They also participate in a leadership course, drama workshops, social analysis and team building. Training is accessed from a number of sources: FÁS supervisors and community workers, participants with appropriate skills, local colleges, schools and community groups.

The project offers participants the experience of a working environment, a work routine, training, support, encouragement, the opportunity to meet others and, for lone parents, a significant increase in personal income. Crucially such an environment accords due sensitivity and respect to the very distinctive features of Travelling culture, e.g. the cultural significance of bereavement. For many Travelling women who may be isolated and confined to a home/caravan, the project affords them an important outlet. Personal confidence and self-esteem have ensued from such an opportunity. The sponsor identifies the holistic development of the person as a very significant step for

members of an oppressed group. Project participants echo all of the above sentiments. It is felt that training and other benefits received will translate into benefits for their children. Essentially it is introducing an educational background into Travelling families. The extended duration of participation on the project is viewed as vital in building up the necessary skills and confidence. Employment is identified as just one of the areas in which Travellers experience discrimination. Participants interviewed generally see themselves working with Traveller children and within Travellers' organisations.

The operation of the Special Parish of the Travelling People project is not intended to meet the needs of the inner city, since its target groups is the Travelling Community which is obviously not defined by geographical location. As an organisation, the aims of the Parish of the travelling People are not dissimilar to those of the DICP. The projects aims to resource Travellers through their participation on the project and to develop leadership within the Travelling Community. In endeavouring to meet such an objective, it is attempting to generate a group identity within a culture whose members instinctively incline to individual family identity, and to counter the often negative dynamics which operate within oppressed groups.

### **Pathways**

The Pathways project was set up to assist participants with re-integration into the world of work. Most of the participants have served time in prison, and some had experienced problems with drug use. The programme provides training in the areas of literacy tuition and computers. There is also a work experience module. Participants are entitled to two years on the programme, depending on their age. The project is part-funded by the local Drugs Task Force.

The participants benefit from the training element and also from support, guidance and counselling. Courses include personal development, work preparation, basic education, photography, languages, computers, cookery, drama, video, crafts, T'ai Chi, art, music, study skills, social studies and history.

The project is promoted by the City of Dublin Vocational Education Committee and supported by FÁS CE and ESF funding.

The training programme contributes to the realisation of the Partnership's Action Plan by tackling educational disadvantage and combating social exclusion.

### **SAOL Project**

The SAOL project is a two-year pilot programme for former and stable women drug users, established in 1995 following research conducted by the Eastern Health Board. The programme is education and training based, providing development work for participants that leads to independence. All participants attend a methadone maintenance treatment programme in the City Clinic in Amiens Street. The programme is now in its second phase; seventeen women successfully completed the first two-year block, and there are sixteen participants in the present project. At the end of 1999, 33 women will have completed the programme. It plans to continue post-99, although funding has not yet been secured.

The project represents the first of its kind in Ireland, in that it specifically targets women drug users. Its objectives include:

- ✍ Reintegration of women into their communities and families
- ✍ Provision of a process whereby women can gain stability in their lives
- ✍ Provision of education, development and training
- ✍ Response to the holistic needs of women

The project is also unique in that it does not employ a punitive approach to participants who may on occasion lapse back into drug use. Instead, it responds by providing additional supports, taking a personal and holistic approach to the treatment of individuals.

SAOL operates on an annual grant from the Eastern Health Board, and funding from FÁS and the EU. FÁS has facilitated the project's freedom to devote its time to development, education and vocational training and, crucially, has allocated each participant a two year duration within the rehabilitative programme.

A recent development is the acquisition of NOW funding, which necessitated the establishment of transnational partners in Germany, Spain and Italy where similar projects are operating. SAOL is working on a 'skills swap' with their German partners, which involves training their partners in the SAOL processes and ethos. The German partners have visited the project in Dublin and three SAOL staff members and a participant will make a return visit during 1999.

The Project employs a manager, two development workers, an administrator, a NOW Co-ordinator, a part-time Social Support Co-ordinator, a housekeeper (Whole-time Jobs Initiative), two part-time Crèche Workers, and two Peer Support Workers who were former participants. The crèche supervisor is participating in an NCVA Level II course in childcare.

Participants have entered the project from a position of extreme educational disadvantage; many have literacy problems. The FÁS supervisor has established an educational system and curriculum within the project that takes into account the damage that drug abuse has wrought in so many areas of women's lives. Training in shiatsu, relaxation massage and aromatherapy has been introduced to the women as a means of 'coming down' without drugs. Participants have also received training in communication skills, group work skills, cookery, women's studies, portfolio building and sewing. Participants are involved in a 'Speaking Choir' and have published a book on their experiences, called *'Women in Action'*. They are presently researching a joint publication with their German partners. They make excursions to the theatre, museums, exhibitions, receptions and seminars.

Education and training have been sourced from the adult education sector, organisations such as KLEAR, CAFÉ, Sláinte Pobal and from within the project itself. Many of SAOL's participants have become involved in formal education: 11 have completed the Junior Certificate. In addition, the group is currently participating in a joint UCD/SAOL Women's Studies Certificate Course due for completion in mid 1999. They are also taking part in an NCVA accredited course.

Most of the women are lone parents so participation has provided a significant increase in their incomes. Self-confidence has been instilled. All participants can now read. Budgeting skills have been learnt. All are now reintegrated into their communities – a process which has been effected by the project's adoption of a policy of advocacy on behalf of the women. Such factors impact indirectly on the families of participants.

The supervisor identifies the participants' futures as lying within the social economy. Seven of the previous participants are currently employed, including the two who now work as Peer Support Workers on the present project. Prior to participation in the project, the idea of employment for these women would have been inconceivable.

An issue identified following completion of the first phase was that the sense of loss experienced by participants when they were required to leave the project. Many participants conceive of the CE scheme as a 'job', and with the end of this comes the loss of income, social contact, status and full-time support. This issue is being addressed by the project, however, and extra supports will be put in place when the current participants leave. Previous participants now keep in touch with the project through an after-care programme that runs for a few afternoons per week.

Project staff are concerned about two further issues: the first is the proposed change to the Community Employment programme. This may bring about a reduction in the numbers of people on CE, and a change in eligibility criteria of lone parents, which could have a severe impact on SAOL. Alongside this, the project is anxious to 'mainstream' and attract core funding from the government. This will be one of their priorities for 1999.

The project contributes to the Partnership's Action Plan through the construction of a framework within which the drug problem afflicting the inner city can be considered and in the successful pioneering and execution of the programme. The philosophy of the project has been replicated by other projects in Ireland; many visitors to SAOL have learned from their experience, notably STAR in Ballymun and Target in Tallaght.

The DICP has described the project as constituting "a model Partnership approach involving community organisations, the Eastern Health Board and FÁS." Likewise, FÁS has described the project as a great example of partnership in action.

### **SICCDA Tourism**

SICCDA Tourism ran as a CE Innovative Project in the south west inner city. It aimed to equip participants with skills in tourism, to help develop tourism in Dublin 8, and to set up businesses on a co-operative basis. It had two Special Project features, namely the allocation of an assistant supervisor and the nature of the work (purely a training project). The assistant supervisor was responsible for administration and contributed to the training capacity of the project.

### **Sunflower Project**

The Sunflower Project's aim is to provide employment opportunities in the environmental sector by recycling waste in the north inner city. It has established door-to-door collection of recyclable materials in residential and designated business areas in the inner city. The project also plans to raise awareness of environmental issues, undertake environmental work in run-down flat complexes and derelict sites, and design and deliver educational packages in local schools. It is innovative in that it simultaneously

provides employment opportunities for long-term unemployed people and improves the quality of their living environments. Sunflower is a work-oriented project that essentially houses three teams: administration, depot and transportation. Administration takes place in Gardiner Street and the recycling element is situated in Buckingham Street. The nature of work, which involves using industrial equipment and a corresponding insurance policy, requires the constant presence of a supervisor.

Project participants are involved as drivers and helpers on collection vans, sorters and graders, machine operators, and office staff. The project manager believes that the project has built up an expertise in a very short period of time. Participants are now making sophisticated recycling judgements and some are able to avail on occasion of additional work outside of their CE hours. In the past, the project was funded through the EU INTEGRA programme, although this ceased in 1997. They now receive funding from Youthstart for 12 young people between the ages of 15 and 19 who are completing a certificate programme developed with Trinity College Dublin and the Curriculum Development Unit.

Training has been provided to participants in the areas of personal development, computers, stained glass, quilt making, material design, art through recycling, environmental awareness, and community development. Some participants have taken fork lift and driving lessons. Participants also pursue individual educational and training options; some attend literacy and numeracy classes in nearby The Larkin Unemployed Centre and one-to-one tuition in the Dublin Adult Literacy Centre. Sunflower runs a two-year Youthstart programme in environmental issues, certified by Trinity College Dublin, for 15 to 19 year old early school-leavers. Participants also assist with physical work on the premises.

Over twenty participants have progressed from the programme since it was established three years ago. There are three full-time staff and three Whole-time Jobs Initiative workers. Their 26 CE positions are always full, in fact, there is a waiting list. One CE position is topped up with additional funding to a full-time position.

The Project Manager identifies the second year's participation on the project as being absolutely necessary to enable the project to deal with participants' problems. A second year's participation makes for more informed choices and addresses underlying issues, like illiteracy. Participants have shown a marked preference for learning that takes place on the job.

The appointment of an additional supervisor brings an environmental background and knowledge of marketing and financial planning to the project. Commercially, the project has generated some profit which is reinvested in equipment for the project. Participants hope to find employment in the recycling industry and small businesses that may develop from the project. The Project Manager identified the Sunflower Project and the industrial sector as future sources of employment – representatives of the latter group have already approached the project to second project participants out to set up recycling operations within their organisations. The recycling project is specifically mentioned in the Action Plan under Strategy A, Targeting Social Development.

'Special projects will be funded to undertake innovative recycling and energy conservation initiatives in the Local Authority flats complexes

involving the employment of local people and the active participation of the residents.'

One of the project's concerns is that they do not own the premises in which they are based, or even have a long-term lease, i.e. they have no security of tenure and the landlord would be entitled to give them four weeks' notice to quit at any stage. Transport has been a problem insofar as collections in the suburbs can yield little recyclable waste. The project has one truck and one van operating at present. Sunflower is planning to concentrate on collections from offices in areas of the inner city and are developing the idea of charging a membership fee.

The project liaises with a variety of groups, including Dublin Corporation, Department of the Environment, ENFO, ESB and the Dublin City Centre Business Association.

### **Co-ordinators**

In addition to the above listed Special Projects, the DICP negotiated with FÁS to employ a number of Co-ordinators through the CE Innovative Programme, with additional financial support from the Partnership. Four Co-ordinators are employed to oversee the four area networks, operating in each quadrant of the inner city. A Cultural Affairs Co-ordinator is employed to promote arts and cultural activities in the inner city, and to act as Co-ordinator of the Ormond Multimedia Employment Programme. The St. Catherine's Combined project employs a Development Worker to oversee the conversion of former Dublin Corporation premises to a community centre.

### **Inner City Organisations Network**

ICON is an umbrella group that aims to link up voluntary and community organisations operating in the north east inner city, as well as individuals working and living in the area. The organisation's main function is to provide information, a forum for debate and local policy making and a means of lobbying issues as they arise within its nine working groups. The work of ICON includes liaison with community and tenants' groups, acting as a Managing Agent for the Whole-time Jobs Initiative, organising conferences and developing strategic plans.

### **North West Inner City**

The North West Inner City Network is one of the more recently established networks, uniting a core of local groups. A full-time Co-ordinator commenced employment in May 1997 and this has greatly accelerated the progress of network development. Nine working groups and a Steering Group have been established. The Network's recent focus has been on estate management training and maintaining links with the local drugs task force. The network is developing an Area Action Plan based on a consultation process with working groups, voluntary and community organisations, residents groups and employer organisations.

### **South East Network**

The South East Network Co-ordinator is responsible for developing the two communities of Pearse Street and Ringsend. The SEN network is unique in that it has developed out of two existing networks in the south east quadrant, those of RING (Ringsend and Irishtown

Network Group) and PANG (Pearse Area Network Group). The co-ordinator is presently working with both communities and developing the profile of the network.

### **SWICN (St. Nicholas of Myra Parish CE Project)**

SWICN represents the largest quadrant in the inner city and was established in 1994 in response to the need for an integrated approach to deal with the problems of the area. The network is a forum where issues affecting the area are identified from the community's point of view and joint action is planned. Informed by the policy of community development, the network is about drawing on those who have responsibility for particular issues and involving them in the process of change. The Co-ordinator was appointed in April 1996, with the brief of implementing the Local Area Action Plan and establishing and managing the local infrastructure.

### **Ormond Multimedia Employment Programme**

The Cultural Affairs Co-ordinator was appointed in September 1996 with the brief of promoting arts and culture in the four quadrants of the inner city. Funding of the position is facilitated by its administrative attachment to the Ormond Multimedia Employment Programme, and additional funding from the Partnership. The Co-ordinator is employed to develop links between a number of locally based arts activities and the local community. Responsibilities of this position also include ensuring that benefits arising from new arts and cultural facilities in the area accrue to residents and improving access for inner city people to the arts. The Officer works within the Ormond Multimedia Employment Programme, which has developed a job placement and training programme that places CE participants in various cultural developments in the Temple Bar area.

A range of projects related to the educational and employment potential of the arts industry are supported by this position, including the Marketown Music Collective, Bedrock Theatre Company, Red Cow Lane Youth Theatre, Vesuvius Theatre Company, Dublin Film Office/Script to Screen Limited, Sports Against Racism (Ireland), the Sculptors Society of Ireland and the Ormond Multimedia Employment Programme. Other projects with which the Cultural Affairs Officers was involved during 1998 include the *Songlines* project that celebrates the European Year for Older People; *No Mean Cities* which links Everton, Liverpool, Belfast and Dublin; and the *Border Vision Film Project*.

### **St. Catherine's Combined**

A Development Worker is employed through the CE Innovative Programme and Partnership funding to work with St. Catherine's Combined Project on the development of a multi-purpose Community and Sports complex in the Dublin 8 area. St. Catherine's is an umbrella organisation of resident and tenant groups in the south west inner city. Dublin Corporation made available premises in Marrowbone Lane for the group to develop as a multi-purpose community resource centre. Achievements to date include securing £1 million from the Department of Education and Science for the development of the centre, advancing plans for the sports facility and developing localised drug treatment facilities.

## 5) Discussion & Conclusion

Of the four partnerships that have availed of Innovative Projects, it is clear that the DICP has made the most extensive use of the Initiative. The level of community representation in Partnership structures indicates that DICP remains community-driven. The Partnership provides a forum for delivery of the proposals that have emanated from its community.

Underlying the concept of Innovative Projects was the idea that the local community should be the driving force in the implementation of projects. Traditionally, 'experts' have identified the problems, devised the programmes and the most appropriate means of delivering them to people. In the case of the Innovative Projects, a creative and innovative response from those on the ground is sought. In this way, decision-making is transferred to the people, organisations, communities and groups who have experience of unemployment. They are encouraged to be the driving force in the implementation of the initiative.

The essential question posed by this evaluation is what exactly the inner city community has wrought out of this environment of flexibility and freedom. The evaluation seeks to find out the opportunities and difficulties which individual projects have encountered as they have responded to the challenge posed by the Initiative. In order to appreciate the achievements of projects, it is important to understand the specific socio-economic problems that exist in the inner city.

The degree of success which the projects have met is illustrated below. Attention should be paid to the precise contribution of the 'Innovative Project' status to projects, as distinct from CE proper.

In the first instance, **flexibility in eligibility criteria** has facilitated the participation of Travellers, Bosnian refugees, graduates (as Community Service Volunteers), recovering drug users and young adults 'at risk'. The participation of the target group in question and the very specific needs experienced by such groups hitherto excluded from employment programmes became the issue in each case.

Secondly, **flexibility in the 'work' programme** means that in some instances emphasis can be on training more than work, as is the case with the SAOL project; this project's primary actions are devoted to rehabilitation and social integration as opposed to labour market integration.

**Flexibility in the role performed by supervisory personnel** has introduced personnel with specific qualifications (e.g. a librarian, a sculptor and an interpreter) into innovative projects. It has also facilitated the appointment of people with disability and a member of the Travelling Community as supervisory personnel.

**Flexibility in the duration** allotted to participants on Innovative Projects was the one feature on which there appeared to be virtual unanimity. Such an opinion was articulated both by those who were enjoying such a provision and by those who were not. All parties identified the necessity for a second year's duration on CE as the minimum period for the realisation of project objectives, which include capacity building for individual participants and the actualisation of the stated project objectives.

The **administrative attachment of co-ordinators** to a number of CE Projects has provided the Partnership with a very important focal point within the individual quadrants. The appointment has enabled the individual quadrants to harness their collective energies under one representative office and thus to maximise the capacity which the various community groups have for unified strategic action. The office is also enhancing the community's potential to impact on policy development for the individual areas. It would not be inaccurate to describe the position as a catalytic force within community development.

It is perhaps inevitable that such an atmosphere of flexibility, innovation and experimentation that a degree of uncertainty and confusion should be voiced. Such confusion ranged from an understanding of the initiative to the precise objective of the projects and the function of the additional features which some enjoy by virtue of their Special Project status. On its inception the initiative was called 'Special'. However, the CE Project Operations Manual advises that the initiative is now designated as 'Innovative'.

The two criteria that this report uses for the evaluation of projects are the benefits gained by participants and the extent to which the project contributes to implementation of the Partnership's Action Plan.

#### **(i) Criteria One: Benefit to Participants**

In identifying the benefits to participants, it is not possible to delineate one generic set of benefits. In general, however, benefits accruing may be described either in terms of personal benefits or enhanced employment prospects. The former category lists benefits such as:

- increased social interaction and integration;
- growth in self-confidence and self-esteem;
- holistic development of the individual;
- entrance into formal education;
- increase in income of lone parents;
- parenting and home-making skills;
- attainment of a sense of participation and ownership within communities.

Since many projects are running for a two year duration and have not yet reached their conclusion, it is too early to chart placement rates for participants. Prospects were identified variously; within the social economy, return to further education and training, entry to the social services sector or development of entrepreneurial projects within the community.

#### **(ii) Criteria Two: Contribution to Implementation of the DICP Action Plan**

The local development objectives of the DICP are outlined under four strategy headings. In the case of all Special Projects, it is possible to articulate the objectives and programme of the project in relation to one of these four strategies. The operation of some projects is explicitly provided for within the Action Plan (e.g. SAOL, Sunflower Project), while others relate to specific measures within the four strategies (e.g. Fire Station Artists' Studio, Parish of the Travelling People). Some projects can be located in a general sense within particular measures.

Of the four individual objectives, case study projects appear to make the greatest contribution to 'Targeting Social Development'. The significant developments and progression which some projects are making within the social economy are impacting both on the social development of the area and on the construction of an infrastructure which will prove to be invaluable if the work currently being done can be supported within the social economy.

The one objective that does not appear to have been adequately addressed is the 'Promotion of Local Organisation and Participation.' While individual projects are forging links with networks, individual participants do not appear in general to be locating themselves within the wider developmental picture.

In terms of awareness of the Partnership and its Action Plan, a significant finding of this evaluation was the degree of ignorance that existed in relation to the plan, and in a lesser degree, to the organisation itself. There has been a clear failure to brief sponsors, supervisors and participants about the Partnership and local development objectives. If local development partnerships are to be democratic and inclusive, individuals within the partnership area must be apprised of its plans and mechanisms of representation.

The degree of success which individual projects have met in their respective objectives can be seen to be a result of the strategic linkages effected throughout the project. Such 'linkage' can be traced to the very formulation of project objectives which are, in almost all cases, explicitly articulated to a strategy or measure contained within the Action Plan for the area. The premise informing each linkage is that the connection is enhancing the operation and contribution of individual strategies and parties which have hitherto operated within separate and segregated spheres.

Multi-sectoral relationships are being formed between agencies with distinct identities, roles and, on occasion, diverse methodologies which are interconnected in some way. Links are also being forged between communities and professional bodies or agencies. The merit of the partnership approach has been described as the ability to reach agreements at local level that would not be possible at national level. Individual bodies have become involved in local projects on an experimental basis. Statutory bodies are funding projects which would not be considered at a National level.

The following practices have proven to be beneficial both for individual residents and for the Partnership's local development objectives: the primacy of the community sector within the Partnership structures; the forging of a good working relationship with FÁS; the establishment of administrative and working structures through which the DICP and FÁS can consult and share information about the operation of employment programmes in the inner city; the operation of a procedure through which all applications for Innovative Project status can be made and considered; promotion of the partnership principle on the ground; the emphasis on the establishment of structures to facilitate the participation of the local community in policy formation; the identification of employment and enterprise potential in new areas; the forging of transnational partnerships within individual projects.

The conceptualisation of the Special Project initiative can be seen as representing the move from a production line philosophy to a developmental culture. The developmental approach differs from the former in that it recognises the different degrees of need which exist in participants at entry level.

It is in the light of the above linkages and ensuing synergy that this evaluation deems it entirely legitimate to describe the implementation of the Special Project initiative within the Dublin Inner City Partnership area as an explicit manifestation of the ethos and implementation of the partnership ideal.

## **6) Recommendations**

Recommendations are made under four categories: relating to statutory organisations, the Dublin Inner City Partnership, CE Innovative Projects and other area based partnership companies.

### **Policy recommendations for statutory organisations**

The Operational Programme states that the work of Partnerships will produce an outcome "which will improve co-ordination and evaluation at local level of mainstream programmes and policies to ensure their effective delivery to the long-term unemployed and the socially excluded and from this experience to contribute to the national policy making process."

It is recommended that the statutory sector avails of the indigenous expertise of local people in devising programmes and measures for their communities.

In devising programmes for the long-term unemployed, it is proposed that policy makers note the significance of the shift in terms from 'poverty' to 'social exclusion' - a shift which takes cognisance of the multi-dimensionality, the duration and the structural causes of poverty.

Similarly, policy makers should consider the precise rewards that the community is reaping from the investment provided by Innovative Project budget. If the additional expenditure involved in funding Innovative Projects enables them to harness funding from other agencies, then there is an argument for increasing such an initial investment. This argument can be made on an exclusively 'cost effective' basis if necessary.

To facilitate the operation of the Innovative Projects in a developmental model, budgets need to be allocated in a manner other than the traditional per capita budget. Budgetary considerations are only one of the issues that need to be on the agenda if all partners are to engage fully with the developmental model.

### **Policy recommendations for the DICP**

The Partnership might consider its overall strategy in articulating the Special Project initiative to its local development objectives. The Partnership might also make use of the provision for the consideration of private companies as project sponsors (albeit in limited circumstances).

The DICP should take strategic steps to correct the degree of ignorance which exists about the Partnership and its Action Plan for the area.

There was a suggestion that the Partnership could extend the definition of community to encompass all residents. At present, it appears to relate only to those in deprived areas.

Individual projects have identified the need for the provision of a greater degree of support from the Partnership.

All arising issues should form an agenda for discussion between FÁS and the DICP.

### **Recommendations for Innovative Projects**

Firstly, the Innovative Project environment should remain free and flexible. Within individual projects it is recommended that stringent records are kept on the career progress of all participants. Such data would provide valuable information in the employment of the 'routing principle' in participants' careers.

The necessity of retaining flexibility in the role of additional supervisory personnel is also recognised as crucial to effecting significant enhancements in the training, educational and developmental environment offered to participants.

A consensus exists among supervisors and participants on the necessity for a second year's participation on projects. Such a facility would certainly seem to be a prerequisite if the routing principle is to be employed to any effect. An analysis of the disadvantage and social exclusion which characterises the position of many long-term unemployed people necessitates the realisation that real and meaningful change cannot be effected within one single year.

### **Baselines for other Partnership companies**

It is recommended to other Partnership companies that ownership of community initiatives should remain in community hands and rigorous evaluation procedures should be employed by all. There is a crucial role for FÁS Community Development Officers (CDOs) as a local resource in relation to local action plans. Attention should be paid to the welfare of individual participants in the midst of local development objectives.

Other partnership companies may also wish to attend to the innovative manner in which the DICP responded to the Innovative Projects. Among the points to be considered are the manner in which project objectives are articulated to local development objectives and the strategic use which individual projects have made of the additional supervisory resources. The position of area co-ordinator warrants particular attention. This relationship has enabled the DICP to effect changes in FÁS' recruitment policy in the Partnership area.

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## Appendix I Case Study Project Contact Details

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Mick Rafferty, Community Technical Aid, c/o St. Vincent de Paul, 101 Railway Street, Dublin 1. Tel. (01) 855 7015	Thomas O'Rourke, Crosscare, Holles Row, Dublin 2. Tel. (0) 6765707
Shane O'Doherty, Down to Earth Theatre Company, The Boneyard, Schoolhouse Lane West, Dublin 8. Tel. (01) 670 5734 Fax (01) 670 5736	Joan McSweeney, Dublin Simon Community, 35 Sean McDermott Street, Dublin 1. Tel. (01) 836 3450 Fax (01) 855 3211
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James Boylan, Merchants' Quay Project, 4 Merchants' Quay, Dublin 8. Tel. (01) 679 0044	Damien Smith, Parish of the Travelling People, St. Laurence House, Cook Street, Dublin 8. Tel. (01) 677 5411
Jane O'Hanlon, Pathways Programme, 1a Parnell Court, Granby Row, Dublin 1. Tel. (01) 872 6499 Fax (01) 872 6194	SICCCA Tourism, 90 Meath Street, Dublin 8. <b>(No longer operating)</b>
Cathleen O'Neill, SAOL Project, 58 Amiens Street, Dublin 1. Tel. (01) 855 3393	Bernie Walsh, Sunflower Project, Mandela House, 44 Lower Gardiner Street, Dublin 1. Tel. (01) 878 8897

## Local Development Co-ordinators

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## Appendix II List of CE Innovative Projects in DICP Area

Name of Project	Activity/Target Group
Alliance for Work Forum	Education
Bosnian Community Development Project	Refugee community
Cavan Centre	Residential/Development
Community After School Project	Childcare development
Community Technical Aid	Technical aid
Crosscare (St. Andrew's)	Catering/food depot
Down to Earth Theatre Company	Theatre
Dublin Simon Community	Housing for homeless people
Dublin Travellers	Travelling community
ELAH	Counselling
Energy Action	Energy conservation
Fire Station Artists' Studio	Visual arts
Focus Housing	Homeless people
Focus Ireland	Homeless people
Irish Deaf Society	Disability issues
Larkin Pre-Enterprise	Training for entrepreneurs
Matt Talbot School Meals	Catering for school children
Merchants Quay Project	Drug rehabilitation
Parish of the Travelling People	Travelling community
Pathways (CDVEC)	Training/Development
SAOL Project	Development programme for drug users
SICCDA Tourism	Tourism
Sunflower Project	Recycling

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