



Partnership Agenda

ISSN 1393-9068

Spring 2003

Dublin Inner City Partnership, Equity House, 16 Upper Ormond Quay, Dublin 7.
Telephone (01) 872 1321 Fax (01) 872 1330 Email office@dicp.ie Website www.dicp.ie

NETWORK
NEWSLETTE

Inner City Groups Build Digital Community

The Dublin Inner-city Schools Computerisation (DISC) Project has obtained funding from Hewlett Packard International towards an exciting new inner city initiative, called the Digital Community.

HP has agreed to provide computer resources to community groups in a number of local authority flat complexes located around the inner city.

To date Hewlett Packard has donated equipment to three community groups:

- ~ Bridgefoot Residents Association.
- ~ St Teresa's Gardens Environment & Employment Project.
- ~ Fatima Mansions Children & Adult Development Project.

These community centres are based in flat complexes in inner city Dublin that experience a range of social problems. All are currently undergoing major regeneration programmes and see the development of computer training as essential within their overall plans.

vided teacher training to over 600 teachers.

Speaking about the new Digital Community initiative, Dr. Tommy Cooke of the DIT said:

"I believe that this is a unique project that brings together a partnership of the business, educational, governmental and community sectors in the resourcing of many inner city housing complexes with state-of-the-art computerisation and IT training. There is tremendous potential to positively influence these communities and individual peoples' lives."

An additional six locations have been selected for the next phase of the Digital Community, and all six should be equipped by February 2003.

Residents in the Iveagh Trust, Charlemont Street, Whitefriar Street, O'Devaney Gardens, Michael Mallin House and Dolphin House will soon have access to state of the art equipment.

Along with the PCs, the Digital Community equips the centres

ple. In some areas, this may include training of young people, unemployed people, and people interested in improving their work skills. 'Training of trainer' programmes will also be introduced.

The Digital Hub has agreed to provide funds for training, software and technical support. Dublin City Council has come on board as a partner and will support the groups by installing electrics and benches, and supplying stationery and ink cartridges to the initiative.

Computers have already been installed in Bridgefoot Street Community Centre, and computer classes for adults are taking place, run by VEC tutor Mary Skipton.

The community group also plans to run courses for teenagers, and is at present conducting survey research with young people to find out what their needs are.

"We're looking for something to make it more attractive for teenagers. They don't want to just be in class all day and sitting around in the evening; they want activities. And they are all computer mad," said Pauline McAdams, a Community Worker based in the Bridgefoot Street complex.

The new facility is advertised to the local community by flyers delivered door to door. Most people who have started the computer classes are beginners. "One person was afraid to touch the mouse when they started," said Pauline.

Kay Royal, a volunteer with the centre, explained how few facilities there are for young people in the area, noting a lack of playgrounds or other amenities. "The children here have nothing. They are the future of the community. They need education, they need to be taken off the streets and helped."

Bridgefoot Street Community Centre has been open three years, but there is a long tradition of community organisation through committee work, dating back to when the flats were first

community centre, which will house the computer resource room when completed.

In a further development, Eircom has agreed to become involved in the initiative, offering each facility a DSL line, free of charge for one year. This will enable high speed internet and email access.

The Department of Education & Science has allocated an additional €60,000 through the Back to Education initiative towards training costs for certified courses.

"We would like to say a special thanks to Tommy Cooke of the DIT and Riona Fitzgerald of DISC, who were very helpful in ensuring that we got the computers, and in coming to visit the community centre and assisting us before we got the initiative underway," said Pauline McAdams.

Peter Byrne has been recruited as the Project Co-ordinator for the Digital Community.

For more information contact DISC at 40-41 Lower Sean McDermott Street, Dublin 1. Telephone 402 4392

Collaboration

The Digital Community is a collaborative initiative between:

Dublin City Council
Dublin Inner City Partnership
Dublin Inner-city Schools Computerisation Project
Dublin Institute of Technology
Eircom
Hewlett Packard Manufacturing Ireland
South West Inner City Network
The Digital Hub
The National Centre for Technology in Education
The Residents Groups

The participating local residents' groups are :

Bridgefoot Street Community Centre
Charlemont Street Residents Association
Dolphin House Comm Dev Assoc
Fatima Mansions Children & Adult Group
Iveagh Trust Residents Association
Michael Mallin Residents Association
O'Devaney Gardens Development Centre
St Teresa's Gardens Env & Emp

Partnership Hosts Ex-Prisoner Forum

DICP hosted a workshop on re-integration of former prisoners on 27 January 2003 at the Ormond Hotel.

The aim of the workshop was to focus on three key issues related to the re-integration of ex-prisoners:

- ~ The rights of ex-prisoners
- ~ Local policy and attitude towards ex-prisoners;
- ~ Interventions and operational issues.

While there are a number of re-integration programmes operating in the city, they are under-resourced. A lot of agencies are attempting to address the issue but there is no coordination or networking. The issue of homelessness among ex-prisoners is a major cause for concern. Access to quality education, training, employment, services and income support is vital in order to break the cycle of recidivism. One of the key problems is the lack of social welfare. There are only twenty projects nationwide - this is insufficient to provide a good service in this area.

The National Economic and Social Forum Report No.

Integration of Prisoners

some of the following points:

- The majority of prisoners are from disadvantaged grounds.
- There is approximately 10% recidivism.
- Costs of prisons are €250m annually or €1,000 per week per prisoner.
- The number of prisoners increased by one third between 1995 - 1999.
- Ex-prisoners face some restrictions and areas of discrimination such as access to licences, foreign travel, access to children, accessing accommodation, education and employment.

The workshop emerged from a number of meetings convened by the Dublin Inner City Partnership to inform and progress the Board's commitment to develop and implementing a strategy for a community-based response to the re-integration of inner city prisoners back into their communities.

It was agreed that there is a deficiency of information on ex-prisoners. DICP will be investigating a way to collate an array of information on the different aspects



Pauline McAdams and Kay Royal in the new computer resource room equipped by the Hewlett Packard Digital Community initiative in Bridgefoot Street Community Centre.

The Digital Community has developed out of the DISC Project, an initiative spearheaded by the Dublin Institute of Technology and DICP, which was established in 1998 with the aim of upgrading inner city disadvantaged primary and post-primary schools. The project is currently working with 40 inner city schools (9 post-primary, 31 primary) with approximately 7,000 young people and 600 teachers in total. Since its establishment

with a range of peripherals including digital cameras, printers, and scanners. This will mean that local people will have access to a wide range of multimedia technology, and will be able to test their creativity in digital photography, computer graphics, music or video projects, along with learning packages such word-processing and database.

Once the equipment is in place, the individual communities will

Major Government Cuts on FÁS Social Economy Programme

by Patrick Gates

Local FÁS offices have been directed by FÁS Programme Management to suspend investment in the Social Economy Programme. This has resulted in a reneging on funding commitments to local initiatives and community services that have already been approved for funding by the local Social Economy Monitoring Groups.

Dublin Inner City Partnership opposes this cutback which was taken unilaterally by FÁS without regard to, or consultation with, local players and goes against the spirit of the framework agreement under the Local Development Programme.

In some cases local projects have spent over a year preparing their organisations for the programme only to be told at the last minute they are not being funded. We have the ludicrous situation in which some projects have been allocated the funds to employ a manager but not the resources to employ long-term unemployed workers, those people the initiative was meant to benefit.

In other situations FÁS had given letters of offer and some projects had signed contracts, which will not now be honoured by FÁS.

In the Dublin inner city area, the Social Economy Monitoring Group approved 41 business plans. Sixteen applications have been approved for full programme support and 10 of these are operating with Social Economy Programme support.

However, a number of community-based projects in the inner city are affected by the decision to

freeze the Social Economy Programme, including MaSamba Community Arts Group, Elah Counselling and Aughrim Parish Meals Services. All these groups after having completed the feasibility study, having been approved by the Social Economy Appraisal Committee and meeting all the Programme requirements to become an independent social enterprise were told at the last minute that the funds promised to them were no longer available.

This is yet another example of a withdrawal of public investment to vital services in disadvantaged communities. The cuts in the Social Economy come on the back of a further 20% cut in Community Employment. On top of this, the manner in which the cuts were introduced was appalling in the disrespectful way it treated local community organisations, many of which have invested much of their voluntary time and resources in the development and regeneration of their communities and in preparing investment proposals for the SEP.

Dublin Inner City Partnership feels particularly let down by this decision. Notwithstanding the clear weaknesses in the Social Economy Programme, the DICP has invested a lot of time and energy in promoting the Programme and has held a number of consultation and information workshops as part of this process. The Partnership also convenes the Social Economy Working Group and Social Economy Monitoring Group to facilitate the development of the

social economy in the inner city. Also Partnership staff have been actively involved in the appraisal of SEP applications. Our involvement in the SEP was on the understanding that the programme could deliver significant resources to areas of need in the inner city.

However, the opposite has been the case. The Social Economy Programme was meant to redirect monies saved from the downsizing of Community Employment into the SEP but while the inner city faces a disinvestment of over €13 million in Community Employment, the investment in the Social Economy Programme has been less than €1 million, a nett loss of over €12 million to Dublin's inner city disadvantaged communities. It is clear that there has been a major withdrawing of resources for community services by the Department of Trade and Industry through both the CE and the Social Economy Programme. This is creating a major gap in funding to these services. There is now an urgent need to look at an alternative means to publicly invest in those social services in disadvantaged communities that are being provided by local organisations.

In the meantime, the DICP will press FÁS to reverse its decision. This will require that FÁS honour verbal and written agreements with local organisations that had been approved for financial support under the Social Economy Programme.

For more information contact Patrick Gates, tel. 872 321.

Tenants Surveyed to Help Improve Hardwicke Street / Dominick Street Areas

Inner City Organisations Network and the North West Inner City Area Network recently collaborated on a survey of local authority flat complexes in the Hardwicke Street, Dominick Street and Dorset Street areas.

The area experiences a number of social and economic problems ranging from unemployment and anti-social behaviour to a poor built environment coupled with an underdeveloped infrastructure of community and social services.

Community Technical Aid undertook the study along with eleven local people who were trained in research methods. Another local person was employed as Project Resource Worker to research existing projects in other communities.

The survey showed that the majority of tenants are women (70%) and nearly one quarter are lone parents. There was a sixty percent rate of welfare dependency among respondents.

Fifteen percent were in full-time work and 15% percent were in part-time employment. Eight percent were on a CF scheme

The report raised a number of issues, such as the recent population growth in the area, which will have implications for local services, and the need to prevent racism occurring as disadvantaged indigenous and new communities compete for scarce resources.

"There has been an identifiable trend in inner city flat complexes over the past 5-6 years whereby the population of tenants is stabilising with families, many of them lone parent families, opting to make their permanent homes here. Previously the trend was for families to go on the transfer list and see their time in the flats as a transient stage while they waited for a house. The housing crisis and huge rents in the private sector have changed this situation dramatically...Coupled with the fact that the worst drug dealing and anti-social behaviour has either been dealt with or is in the process of being dealt with, there is a sense that families will invest in these communities and want to stay and rear their children here." (Report, January 2003)

The most important environmen-

area.

Afterschool clubs and homework clubs were the top priority in terms of additional services required by the community, which reflects the large number of school going children in the flats. Services for the elderly were also identified as a priority. The research will be used to inform an integrated plan for the area, which will improve the quality of life and living conditions of residents and encourage more participation by residents in the decisions and interventions of the various agencies. Refurbishment of some areas is already underway by Dublin City Council, for example, in Rory O'Connor House which will have a new community centre and childcare and education centre.

Four of the local researchers have since progressed on to study a Social Research Module with CTA which is accredited by the Northern Ireland Open College Network.

The survey task group comprised Dublin City Council, the North Inner City Drugs Task Force, ICON, NWICAN and local community representatives

O'Devaney Garden Community Forum

by Lena Jordan

O' Devaney Gardens is a local authority flat complex in the north west inner city of Dublin. Built in the 1950s, it was the first major public housing programme that took place in the area. It currently comprises 276 flats with a population of approximately 835 people. It is estimated that 460 children and young people aged 18 or under live in O' Devaney Gardens. This area has experienced a range of serious social and economic problems and it was against this background that in 1998, O' Devaney Gardens Community Development Forum was established to see how this situation could be improved.

The Forum is made up of people living and working in the area, including representatives from community, voluntary and statutory organisations. The Forum employs a Development Worker who is based in the Development Centre on the estate.

In 2002 the Forum produced a Five-Year Development Plan, which aims to improve the quality of life and living conditions of residents within O'Devaney Gardens. In producing this plan, the Forum clearly recognised the need to consult with local residents. Therefore, a major element in the process of compiling the plan related to consultations with local residents and to this extent the Forum conducted a Survey of Local Residents living in O'Devaney Gardens (published in 2001). The survey was based on a questionnaire of every household living on the estate - 92% of local residents participated in this survey.

The Development Plan was subsequently based on the outcomes of this survey and sets out the priorities, needs, hopes, fears/concerns of local residents living in O'Devaney Gardens. It maps out a vision and a series of goals/targets for O'Devaney Gardens and for the

agencies and organisations providing services within the area. In effect, the Development Plan represents a type of blueprint which the actions and interventions of key Government Departmental statutory agencies, voluntary organisations and community groups could be judged against.

The plan presents 38 recommendations, which set out clearly that need to change in O'Devaney Gardens to become a better, safer place to live.

One of the key issues for O'Devaney Gardens has been the absence of community facilities, and particular facilities for children and young people on the estate. Therefore, the priority for the Development Forum since its establishment has been to lobby for the development of a purpose-built Community Resource Centre.

To-date the Forum has secured €1.9m towards this centre priority now for the Forum to ensure a Feasibility Study is conducted which will also include architectural plans for the proposed Community Resource Centre. The development of the new centre will be conducted in stages - the first stage being a facility for young people from O'Devaney Gardens. The development of this centre will be conducted in stages - the first stage being a facility for young people from O'Devaney Gardens. The development of this centre will be conducted in stages - the first stage being a facility for young people from O'Devaney Gardens. The development of this centre will be conducted in stages - the first stage being a facility for young people from O'Devaney Gardens.

Further information about the Forum can be obtained from Lena Jordan, Development Worker at 086 323 4444

Local Children Delight in Diversity Education

School children from 5th and 6th classes in St Enda's National School on Whitefriar Street have just completed an exciting diversity education programme called 'One World'.

The initiative links the local children with third level students from the neighbouring Dublin Business School who are foreign nationals.

The two groups have an opportunity to mix and learn about different cultures in an enjoyable programme of activities. This year One World comprised a demonstration in Chinese Cookery and opportunity to learn about Chinese New Year and Asian culture, and a drum workshop that taught children samba music, as well as excursions to Dublin Zoo and bowling. The children also explored different cultures through classroom projects with their teachers.

On Thursday 13 February, the children were presented with their certificate of attendance and all participants were thanked.

One World is a collaborative initiative between Neighbourhood Partnership Unit in Pearse Street Garda Station, Dublin Business School, St Enda's NS and Dublin Inner City Partnership. The Youth Programme at Andrew's Resource Centre provided the introductory session and the Dublin Bus provided sponsorship.

This was the fourth time the programme has run in local schools.



School children sample Asian cuisine as part of the One World Programme.

Thanks

The Board and staff of DICP would like to express their sincere thanks to Ashling Healy, DICP Education Co-ordinator, for the commitment and energy she showed during her employment here. Ashling resigned from her position in January, and we would like to wish her the

Partnership Agenda is produced by Dublin Inner City Partnership.

Dublin Inner City Partnership, Equity 16 Upper Ormond Quay, Dublin 7. Telephone (01) 872 1321 Fax (01) 872 1322 Email office@dicp.ie Website www.dicp.ie ISSN 1393-9068

