



Welcome to the Spring 2022 issue of the Community Work Ireland newsletter, Community Work News. Many thanks to all our contributors. Please note that the views expressed are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of Community Work Ireland.

If there are issues that you think should be covered or you would like to contribute, please contact info@cwí.ie

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SOLIDARITY WITH UKRAINE

As we watch with horror the events unfolding in Ukraine, we know that many of you, like us will be thinking about how we can support those most affected by this crisis.

Over the coming weeks and months tens of thousands of Ukrainian refugees will reach our shores, the majority of whom will be women and children.

It is imperative that we as community workers, community organisations, women's organisations, and those concerned with human rights, equality and inclusion come together to explore how we can respond and contribute to the national and global effort to support all refugees and stand in solidarity with the people of Ukraine.

Community Work Ireland is committed to working with government departments, the Ukrainian community, our members and partners in the community sector to support the inclusion and integration of all Ukrainian refugees.

Irish Refugee Council – For up-to-date information on developments

Irish Red Cross – For information on the accommodation pledge

Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth – For information on Ireland's response

Irish Government - for up to date information on the crisis in Ukraine

IN MEMORY OF RONNIE FAY

As many of you know, earlier this year we lost Ronnie Fay, the CWI Chairperson, Co-Director of Pavee Point and a tireless advocate for equality and human rights for Travellers, Roma and other minority communities. A staunch advocate for community work, and never one to shy from a challenge, Ronnie spoke truth to power yet firmly believed in the potential and possibility of collaboration, negotiation and honest dialogue with duty bearers. She is, and will continue to be, sorely missed.



Ronnie Fay

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Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland

*CWI work is supported by the Scheme to Support National
Organisations funded by the government of Ireland through
the Department of Rural and Community Development*



Pilot Community Development Programme



Minister Joe O'Brien at the launch of the pilot Community Development Programme

In 2021, the Minister for Rural and Community Development, Joe O'Brien, announced a new pilot Community Development Programme in fulfilment of the commitment in the Programme for Government. At the launch in June 2021, a rare in-person event hosted by Longford Community Resources, the Minister stated that he was delighted to announce the launch of a €1million fund to pilot seven community-led CDP initiatives to address poverty, disadvantage, social exclusion and promote human rights. In an interview with Changing Ireland, the Minister stated that he felt that this was the start of something very important and indicated that he is committed to growing the €1m allocation to support the programme.

The aim of the programme is to use



Anastasia Crickley at the launch of the pilot Community Development Programme

community development as an approach to address poverty, social exclusion and inequality, and promote human rights. The programme objectives are to:

- Develop community development responses to a range of social, economic and environmental concerns
- Facilitate an empowering collaborative approach to building relationships and undertake cooperative initiatives between marginalised groups, mainstream services and decision-making bodies, and
- Showcase and profile the benefits of an autonomous approach to community development in relation to existing, new and emerging issues.

The pilot Community Development Programme has funding for three years,

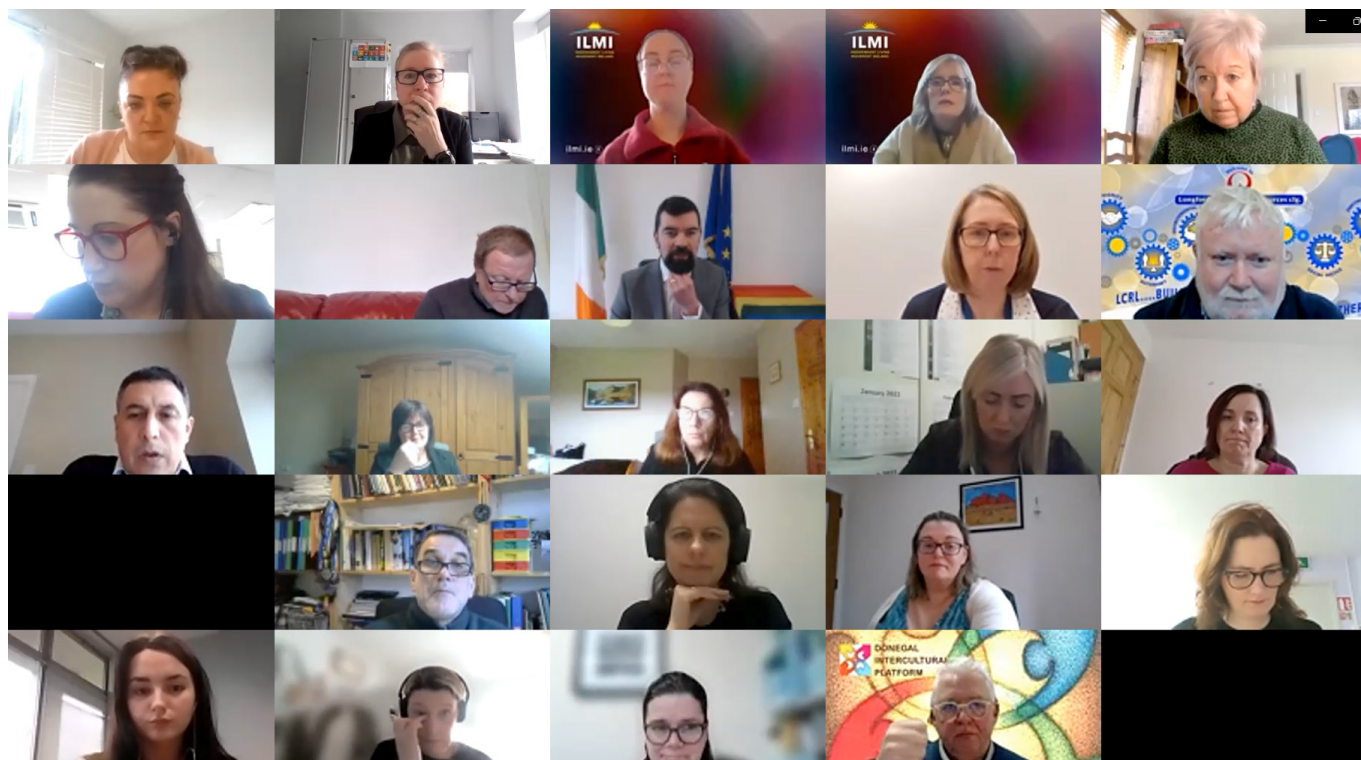
from October 2021 to September 2023. It is supported by a Project Team that is chaired by the Department of Rural and Community Development, with members from Pobal and Community Work Ireland. Community Work Ireland has been given the brief to support the programme. This includes showcasing the work of the projects, with a view to building the case for the expansion and extension of the programme.

The successful projects, seven from a total of 123 applications, are:

- Kilkenny Traveller Community Movement
- ICON Community Development Project
- Clare Traveller Community Development Project
- Longford Roma and New Communities Project
- VOICE Community Development Project, ILMI
- Donegal Intercultural Platform Community Development Project

• Cultúr Community Development Project

At a recent inaugural meeting between the projects and the Minister, he emphasised the importance of a community work approach, stating, *'we know that your projects are working to address some of the most challenging social issues, but what makes these projects different is the community work approach. The benchmark for professionalism for this work is set out in the All-Ireland Standards for Community Work. These standards will be a key tool for you to drive the quality of your work.'* This approach, the Minister continued, requires participation, empowerment and collective action and collective outcomes, and he added, *'My sense of autonomous community development is to give community-led projects the space and flexibility needed to build relationships with marginalised groups. It's about promoting equal rights and opportunities, and participation in policy in the decision-making process.'*



ICON Community Development Project



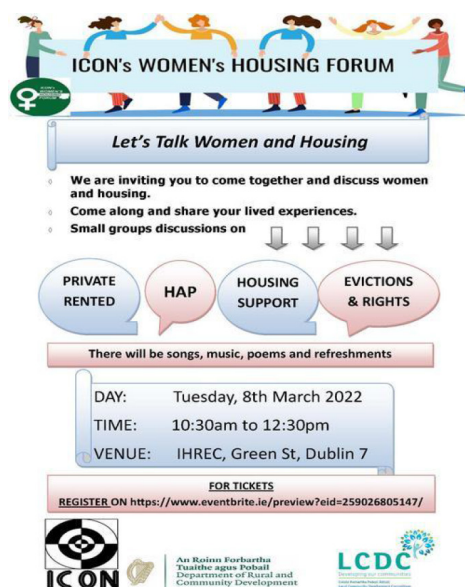
Responding to issues experienced by women in the Private Rented Sector

ICON is a community network based in the northeast inner city of Dublin with a long history of engagement with community development and social inclusion programmes and practices.

Within the Northeast Inner City there is a large amount of very poor quality (and expensive) private rented accommodation. The ICON Community Development Project will focus on women and the right to adequate housing in the private rented sector in the northeast inner city. Women's experiences

of housing are different from those of men. This includes women's pathways into and out of homelessness, interactions with housing services, and access to affordable and adequate housing standards, including the private market.

Access to affordable and adequate housing is profoundly gendered and intimately linked to women's poverty. Women's disadvantaged position in the labour market, including part-time, precarious and/or low-paid employment and unpaid care work, has a direct impact



on their housing. Market-dominated housing policies tend to disadvantage women, particularly female-led households. Closely linked to the gender pay gap, there is a gender property gap in terms of women's ability to rent and buy homes, and the proportion of women's income spent on rent. On average, women have lower incomes and less capital than men, and are therefore more likely to be renters or in less advantageous housing circumstances on the private market.

This project is community based and community led. It aims to work with marginalised women using a community development approach that will empower collaboration and seek to address the issue of housing in the private rented sector in the area.

Using a community development approach, the project will:

- Access women living in rented accommodation in the NEIC with a focus on women in poor quality housing and in receipt of rent supplement/ Housing Assistance Payment (HAP)
- Develop a grassroots campaign for the right to housing led by women in the NEIC
- To inform women of their rights in private rented accommodation and landlord obligations
- Explore common issues/struggles faced by women in private rented accommodation
- Build a community of support for women facing housing struggles in the NEIC
- Develop peer led research into housing needs/issues facing women in the private rented sector
- Provide training on a range of issues in private rented accommodation

Cultúr Migrant Community Development Project



Challenging the social exclusion and inequality experienced by migrant communities and vulnerable groups. Seeking to address the intersecting issues of poverty, racism and isolation

The Cultúr Migrant Community Development project was developed in response to the needs of migrants in Meath and Louth, including the ongoing challenges of poverty, discrimination and inequality, worsened by the experience of COVID 19, issues relating to low pay and job insecurity, language skills, information gaps and underrepresentation in the community.

The project will work to enhance participation, develop resilience and promote empowerment and self-determination for migrants, asylum seekers, refugees. The project aims to develop the capacity of local migrant groups to engage and work in collaboration with decision makers and NGOs in the community. A key focus of the programme is the development of Migrant Networks, including those that are experiencing social exclusion, racism

and discrimination in Meath and Louth and surrounding area. The project will work closely with Travellers and other marginalised groups, building solidarity for equality in the region.

Using a community development approach, the project will:

- Engage and build the capacity of migrants and ethnic-led organisations
- Develop local network partnerships with ethnic minorities and local agencies
- Promote participation and challenge racism
- Develop culturally responsive approaches to supporting migrant communities
- Work in solidarity with ethnic minority groups

- Promote understanding of interculturalism, equality and human rights
- Target the most excluded, disadvantaged & undocumented
- Challenge individual and institutional racism and discrimination
- Support the inclusion of people seeking international protection
- Create the conditions for inclusion, participation and representation of Black and Minority Ethnic Communities in civil society at all levels



Platforma Interkulturalna
istnieje by pomagać
Platforma Interkulturalna pracuje i wieloma narodowościami i grupami etnicznymi, które żyją w Donegale. Naszym celem jest pomóc społecznościom w ich codziennych problemach i stawiać wyzwanie jakimkolwiek formom dyskryminacji związanej z płcią, orientacją seksualną, wiekiem, więziami, pochodzeniem czy zarobkami. Nasze biuro jest zlokalizowane w Letterkenny, godziny otwarcia: 9-5 od poniedziałku do piątku, są też dostępne kontakty telefonicznie i mailowo. Jeśli potrzebujesz wsparcia lub informacji, pomocy i wiza albo chcesz się zaangażować w ten projekt zadzwoń proszę do Nolungi na nr. 086 455 7475 lub donegalinfo@e-mail.com

مع العديد من Intercultural تعمل منصة
الجنسيات والمجموعات العرقية المختلفة
التي تعيش في إقليم دونيقال. هدفنا مساعدة
هذه المجتمعات في مختلف القضايا التي
يواجهونها في الحياة اليومية ، و أيضا
للمساعدة في تحدي أي شكل من أشكال
التمييز على أساس الجنس أو العمر أو العقيدة
أو العرق أو القدرة البدنية ... الخ .
لدينا مكتب مفتوح في مدينة كييف ،



Minister O'Brien (grey suit) with members of the Platform 8 supporters



Longford Roma and New Communities Community Development Project

The Longford and New Communities CDP is being established by Longford Community Resources Clg in response to the needs of Roma and New Communities in Longford where there is a significant population of Roma, mainly from Slovakia, fleeing poverty and discrimination. The vulnerability of this community has come to the fore especially during the past two years, where they struggled to access basic services including registering with the Dept of Social Protection, accessing housing, health care, etc. The population is concentrated mainly in Longford town, and many are employed in meat factories, mushroom farms, and other precarious work environments.

Many Roma are living in extreme poverty and in poor housing with a constant risk of homelessness. The community have poor or no English and little understanding of Irish institutions, making it difficult to address their often serious and complex needs. Participation in education is poor and racism against the community is frequent.

The objective of the Longford Roma and New Communities CDP is to create the conditions where Roma and New Communities can participate as equals in all parts of society, have their voices heard in decision-making that affects them,



- have their culture valued and celebrated and have full and equal access to basic services.
- Using a community development approach, the project will work over three years to:
 - Build trust with the community and support them to access basic services.
 - Organise a range of activities and programmes to engage with the community
 - Build capacity and leadership skills amongst members of the community
 - Establish an independent organisation led by Roma and members of New Communities.

ILMI VOICE Community Development Project



Independent Living Movement Ireland (ILMI) is a cross-impairment national Disabled Persons Organisation (DPO). The ILMI vision is an Ireland where disabled people have freedom, choice and control over all aspects of their lives and can fully participate in an inclusive society as equals.

The Virtual Online Inclusive Communities for Empowerment (VOICE) Community Development Project aims to work with disabled people in counties Cork, Kerry, Tipperary, Carlow, Kilkenny, Waterford and Wexford, with the focus on bringing disabled people together in collective spaces.

The project is based on digital networking, peer mentoring support and activism with disabled people in the south of Ireland (CHO areas 4 and 5). As a genuine Disabled Persons Organisation (DPO) we recognise, first and foremost, that disabled people must have the equality of opportunity to become active members in their communities. Spaces need to be created and resourced to build a collective shared analysis and for representatives to be supported to bring collective voices to inform mainstream service provision and policy development.

Using a community development approach, the project will:

- Work with each participant to develop Personal Action Plans, identifying and developing goals through effectively accessing local mainstream services that reduce isolation while improving health and wellbeing.
- Inform, mentor and support disabled people to build authentic local representative structures.
- Build the capacity of local mainstream services to promote real inclusion of disabled people.
- Provide technical guidance to mainstream local community, sporting, educational and cultural organisations in relation to Disability Equality Training, access, engagement and inclusion in order to promote involvement of disabled people in their communities.



Kilkenny Traveller Community Movement Community Development Project

The Traveller Voice is Key

The Kilkenny Traveller Community Movement CDP was established in response to the needs of Travellers in Kilkenny including the lack of representation, health issues, including low life expectancy, suicide and infant mortality rates, unemployment, literacy issues and issues associated with education.

In existence since 1998, support from the Community Development Programme means that the organisation has independent, consistent funding for the first time. A key area of work for KTCM will be to develop young Traveller voice and leadership and to establish its own premises.

Using a community development approach, the project will:

- Provide a supportive environment for all Travellers in County Kilkenny



- Work together to improve the lives of the Traveller community
- Create an environment for Travellers to work together and participate
- Support groups around the county to develop and encourage Traveller participation and leadership
- Link Travellers into opportunities for education, training, and employment
- Promote the inclusion of Travellers and their culture
- Encourage Travellers to network with other Traveller families, communities, and organisations in a relationship of mutual respect, openness and dignity
- Improve Traveller representation on relevant agencies and committees
- Improve access to accommodation for Travellers
- Improve Traveller representation on relevant agencies and committees
- Improve access to accommodation for Travellers

Clare Traveller Community Development Project

Use community development approaches to build capacity and empowerment of Travellers

There is a huge need for specific Traveller supports in Co. Clare and in particular for those led by and co-created with Travellers. One of the prominent findings from the Clare Traveller Health Needs Assessment carried out by Pavee Point in 2019, was the lack of Traveller infrastructure in Clare. This was acknowledged by both Travellers and service providers alike. In terms of the challenges, service providers noted that, in the absence of a Traveller project, it was difficult to engage with Travellers and to meet their specific needs.

Clare Traveller Community Development Project is a collaborative project, led by Clare Local Development Company, Clare Public Participation Network, Clare Women's Network and HSE Mid-West Traveller Health Unit, and supported by a wide range of additional organisations locally and nationally. Currently hosted by Clare LDC, the ambition is the creation of an independent community development project.

Using community development approaches, the project will:

- Establish an independent Traveller-led Community Development Project
- Identify and provide a variety of community development supports to the wider Traveller community



Clare Local
Development
Company



HSE Mid West
Community Healthcare



- Support opportunities for Travellers in education, training, employment and enterprise
- Promote and encourage Traveller participation and leadership in decision making bodies
- Work closely with local, regional and national organisations to improve the quality of life for Travellers in Clare
- Advocate for Traveller human, economic, cultural and social rights and opportunities.

REGULARISATION SCHEME FOR UNDOCUMENTED MIGRANTS

After 11 years campaigning by the Justice for the Undocumented Group, a campaign group hosted by the Migrants Rights Centre Ireland, a scheme to regularise the status of people living in Ireland long-term without papers was announced on 3rd December 2021. The regularization scheme applies to

people that are living undocumented in Ireland for 4 years or more, or 3 years with children. The Regularisation Scheme is open now until July 31st. MRCI have all the details and a range of support and videos on their website. Find out more at mrci.ie/scheme21

Are you Undocumented?

APPLY FOR YOUR LEGAL STATUS NOW!

Scan the code below



or visit www.mrci.ie/scheme21

Applications for the new undocumented scheme are open from 31 January until 31 July 2022 via the Department of Justice website

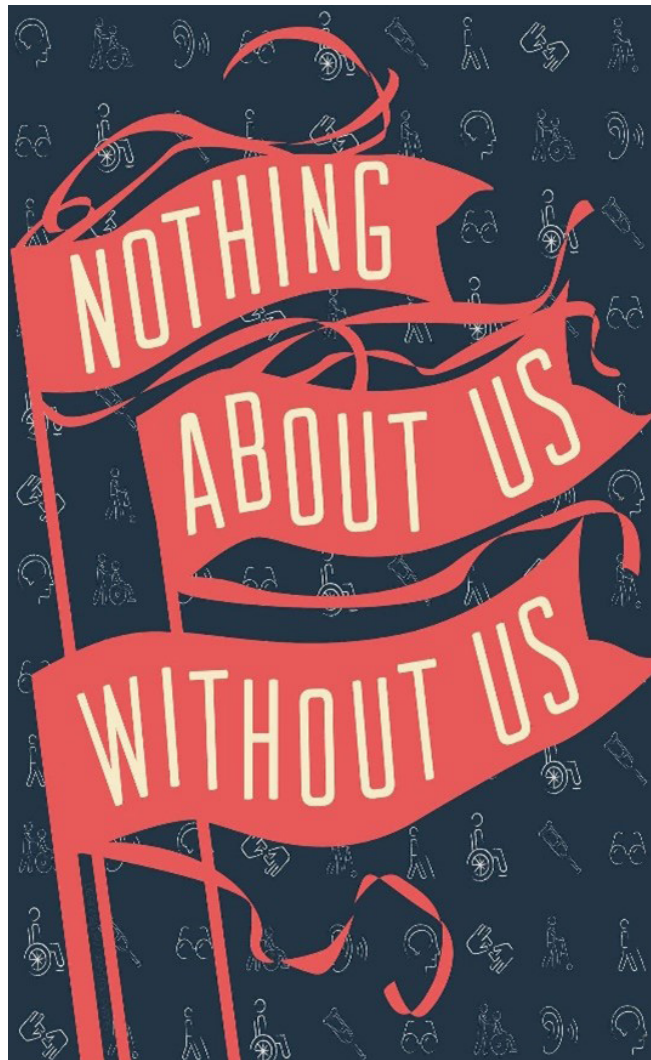
Scan the code above or email jfu@mrci.ie to:

- Get free up to date information & support to apply
- Read our Step by Step Guide to the scheme
- Hear about upcoming events to help you apply

HAVE IRISH COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PRACTITIONERS FAILED DISABLED PEOPLE?

Disabled people continue to experience inequalities in Ireland despite the state's pouring of an annual 2.2+ billion Euros into the private disability-sector. This is reflected in ongoing non-disabled professional led developments in mainstreaming strategies, 'special-needs' Social Policy, Law and Normalization approaches of integration, but, not necessarily, Inclusion led Social Policy discourse and implementation. As a disabled activist with a 30-year plus background in community development practice and policy work, this paper is identifying that a fundamental change is needed from Irish community development practitioners in order to shift these social policy informed patterns of disabling construction of integration and Normalization of impairment labelled 'problem' individuals.

There is an opportunity to act now, in light of the Irish ratification of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities (UN CRPD), and in particular for Irish community development practitioners, working with Disabled Peoples Orgs. (DPOs). And in particular, to enable UN CRPD social inclusion articles related to inclusion and collectivist DPO activism beyond the 2.2 billion Euro pumped-up disability-sector. Community development practitioners should recognise this non-disabled person led disability-industry as seemingly owning the state cash supplied Value of the term 'Disability' while disabled people carry the cost of a disabling and oppressive Society.



DPOs for & 'with' disabled people

Disabled Peoples Orgs. (DPOs), unlike non-disabled led private disability services providers, are led by and for & 'with' disabled people yet are mostly excluded from the annual valuable 'Disability' 2.2 billion state budget. Unlike the many specific impairment label led service-providers, DPOs work on a cross-impairment basis with disabled youth and adults from a Disability-Equality approach. Disability Equality identifies

that the place to accommodate the idea of the Social Model of disability - Society creating socio-economic and cultural disabling barriers - is best accommodated in the community development sector.

From a community development perspective DPOs are about bringing disabled people collectively together to bring about a more inclusive, equal and equitable society. DPOs, such as the 2018 established national DPO Independent Living Movement Irl (ILMI), are experts in enabling Ireland's effective realisation of our 2018 ratification of the United Nation's 2007 Convention on the Rights of disabled people. For non-disabled community development practitioners DPOs should be the 'Go-To' body of disabled people that statutory, non-Statutory, media, cultural, sporting, economic, employment and social inclusion dialogues will reach directly out to as the voice of the lived experiences of disabled people.

Community Development needs to up the game

This article aims to truly identify that Irish community development practitioners need to up their game with knowledge of Disabled Peoples Orgs. discourse and the systematic relationships between effective social inclusion and disability equality discourse in 21st century Ireland. The Republic of Ireland is lucky in that it has some strong community development DPOs which are 'equality' & 'equity' led and not impairment label narrative medical & charity model focussed. Disability equality builds community development core values of social inclusion on to the bedrock of the Social Model.

While the Social Model is the bedrock of disability equality, it also has a framework built on that bedrock which includes equality, equity and human rights alongside a promotion of Social Model Intersectionality practices. Intersectionality can be either medical model or Social Model, the medical model promotes the idea that the impairment label will always trump and overshadow the disabled person and their class, gender, ethnic and other intersectional lived experiences.

This article hopes it will enable a CWI discourse towards a more effective disability equality DPO interrogation of social inclusion by and with community development practitioners. The argument for CWI is that social inclusion policies are informed for and with disabled activists as community experts-by-experience. As a disabled activist since the 1980s, and currently Social Inclusion cross border Coordinator with a national DPO, I sincerely view a requirement to build capacity of Irish non-disabled community development policy and practice. A strong disability equality resourcing of community development would allow non-disabled practitioners gain a critical understanding of the political, cultural, ethical, economic and social structures which contribute to current RoI Society created disabling barriers.

The lived experiences and oppression

In terms of what this article is promoting in relation to disability equality and non-disabled community development practitioners learning, it is the recognition that the lived experience of Impairment is an individual experience of a physical,

mental and/or sensory permanent corporeal experience, but the person's narrative can be either medical or Social Model. The lived experiences of 'Disability' should be primarily recognised by non-disabled practitioners as a social or societal experience.

The lived experiences of Disability is the exclusion and oppression of disabled people due to social and environmental discrimination that acts as a barrier to their full equal and equitable effective participation in mainstream society. The lived experience from a disability equality informed approach is the development of community development processes, practice and products that are fundamentally an issue of rights for and with the disabled persons as an Expert-of-their-lived-experience.

The UN CRPD was eventually ratified by Irish Government in March 2018, albeit it endorsed by the state in 2007. I worked on the development of the UN CRPD with other international DPOs and NGOs from 2002 to 2005 as the Forum of PwD (1990 to 2006) representative, which included trips to New York at the United Nations building basement huddled over various Convention drafts with international comrades.

UN CRPD embodies many community development principles

The UN Convention's role within a specifically Irish community development policy and practice discourse is about giving clear indications and gaining continuous strides in developing mainstream led state and community supports in Republic of Ireland state system and power structure.

The UN CRPD embodies many community development principles such as social justice, effective participation and collectivism, and worldwide DPOs and NGOs in that NY UN basement made sure this was reflected in the final Convention draft from an equality and equity value base. The UN CRPD development bedrock seeks to maximise participation in society and enables disabled persons to live with independence and autonomy while making their own choices about their lives and their futures. The UN CRPD is the perfect vehicle for Irish community development practitioners to make the required effort to engage directly with disabled young people and adults. Plus, it is also about stopping & listening to disabled activists and their DPOs who already have a proven track record delivering disability equality and community development practices. What is a community development related purpose of enabling the 2007 UN Convention on the Rights of Disabled People? UN CRPD Article 1 proclaims that practitioners should:

- To promote, protect and ensure the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms by all '*persons with disabilities*' and to promote respect for their inherent dignity.

The UN Articles are a response to an overlooked development challenge for Ireland's community development sector's less than glorious engagement with disabled people. Approximately 15% of the world's population are disabled people (over a billion persons) and based on my New York UN experiences with activists from so-called Developing-

Countries, community development is working across the globe. Yet, despite the prevalence of disabled community development activists, approximately 80% of disabled people live in lesser income countries. A genuine future response by Irish community development practitioners should be open to the fact that although pre-existing human rights conventions offer considerable potential to promote and protect the rights of disabled people, this potential was never truly tapped into by mainstream community development workers and that is one reason why disabled activists worldwide lobbied for and designed the 2007 UN CRPD.

UN CRPD Promotes inclusive and accessible development

As with our international comrades, Irish disabled activists recognise that disabled people continued being denied their human rights and were kept on the margins of society in all parts of the world despite over 70 years of Universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted in 1948 by the United Nations. The disabled persons 2007 Convention sets out the legal obligations on States to promote and capacity building of social inclusion policy and practice that protects the human rights of disabled people. So, why is this paper arguing that the roll-out of RoI 2018 ratification of the UN CRPD is essential and opportunistic for Irish community development effective engagement with disabled activists and their DPOs and state social inclusion 'discourse'? Because the 2018 Ireland ratified UN CRPD claims it:

- Clarifies the rights of disabled people

- Sets out responsibilities, inclusive of state and private bodies, to respect those rights
- Requires a rights-based approach informed by 'Disability Equality
- Promotes inclusive and accessible development
- Ensures national and international monitoring of rights

The Convention marks a 'paradigm shift' in attitudes and approaches to disabled people. Disabled people are facing barriers and rights violations that restrict their participation and inclusion - they are not in need of medical 'cures', institutional stabilization and religious and charity model fervour. Irish community development has a duty to take all adequate measures to remove oppressive barriers, tackle discrimination and support disabled people so that they can enjoy all their rights on equal and equitable basis with other citizens. The UN CRPD leaves behind the perspective that a response to marginalisation of disabled people based solely on welfare or medicinal treatment or institutional rehabilitation which historically contributed to consolidating such medical model 'victim' led marginalisation.

Currently there is no meaningful community development presence

Social inclusion disability-service sector paradigms currently have no meaningful community development and disability equality presence, and this has, and still can, enable corrupting interlocking systems with a medical model management, technocrat and organisational culture professional

lived experience. As does the wider Disciplinary-Society Intersectional impacts of neo-liberal capitalism, Ableism ('Society' designed around the concept of a 'Normal'), white supremacy, misogyny and heterosexism. All thrive on demeaning the social inclusion informed value and worth of disabled people, and of anything those people produce and how they are valued. By the end of 2021 over 2.2 billion Euros will be spent on a state policy response with disability services.

Ideally, the purpose of Irish community development critique identified in this paper would be to help state and DPOs to mutually reflect and grow. But current Irish engagement by non-disabled community development practitioners somewhat reflects a benign support for medical & charity model neo-liberal private sector disability-service delivery that echoes the state's service delivery

function for funders, technocrats and producers. It somewhat reflects Foucault's Disciplinary-Society argument to sell products and obtain more funding, often by ensuring conservative or medical model social policy narratives and content. A Disciplinary-Society where disabled people become docile bodies due to the presence, or threat of, constant for profit sector surveillance in which community development practitioners are mainly absent.

Peter Kearns December 2021.

Peter Kearns has written this article in a personal capacity. Peter is currently St. Angela's College Sligo NUIG Disability Equality Lecturer, plus Coordinator of ONSIDE cross border social inclusion & IT project for the Independent Living Movement Irl. Peter is also Disability Equality Consultant, Artist/Filmmaker and international mountain trekker.

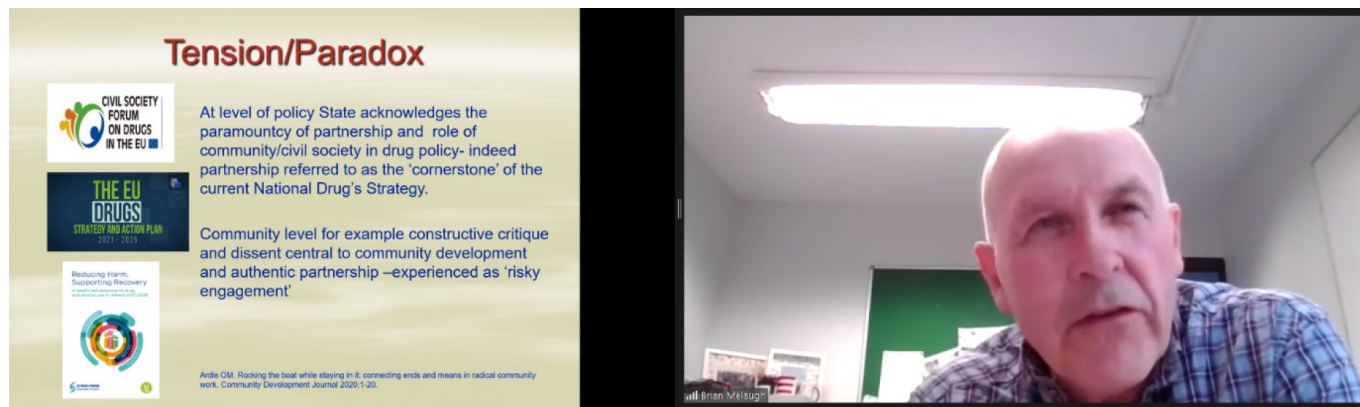
COMING SOON

CWI/AIEB Continuous Practice Development Workshops in the following areas:

- CPD Workshop 1: Public Sector Duty: Protecting the Rights of Rights Holders
- CPD Workshop 2: Best Practice for Working with Refugees
- CPD Workshop 3: Community Work Responses to Climate Justice.
- CPD Workshop 4: Community Work Responses to Drug Use
- CPD Workshop 5: Community Work Responses to racism

All participants will receive a Continuous Practice Development Certificate of Completion upon successful completion of each workshop. Toolkits to accompany each workshop will be developed following the workshops and will be made available to all participants. Further information will be circulated soon.

A COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT APPROACH TO THE DRUGS ISSUE



On 18th November 2021, Citywide Drugs Crisis Campaign, Community Work Ireland and Department of Applied Social Studies, Maynooth University held a conference 'Fergus McCabe Memorial Conference: From the Rabbitte Report to a Citizens' Assembly – A Community Development Approach to the Drugs Issue'. The aim of the conference was to reflect on the 25th anniversary since the publication of the 'First Ministerial Taskforce on Drugs' (1996), more commonly referred to as the 'Rabbitte report'. The report was and indeed is still considered a milestone in Irish drug policy because of its recognition of the validity of community expertise and community development in the formation and implementation of drug policy, the acceptance of the link between social deprivation and problematic drug misuse and the establishment of the 'Drug Task Forces'. The conference was an opportunity to reflect on the learning from 25 years of employing a community development approach towards the development of a coherent drug policy. And, as we look forward to the Citizens Assembly on Drugs which

will take place as part of the Programme for Government, to consider how the learning from the last 25 years can shape the agenda for the discussions at the Assembly and indeed for the future direction of Irish drugs policy. The conference was dedicated to the memory of the late Fergus McCabe, someone who was at the heart of the response to drugs, both at a community level and a national level, throughout all these 25 years (and before). To mark Fergus's memory and contribution a short film 'Community Activism & Partnership with the State -the Story to Date' by Joe Lee had its inaugural presentation at the conference. The short film can be viewed here <https://youtu.be/exa8lovZ1Xo>

The conference was opened by an Taoiseach Micheál Martin T.D. In the address, the Taoiseach recognised the importance of community involvement in drug policy and the role of partnership. Furthermore, an Taoiseach, stated his commitment to the health-led approach with increased supports, reflected in the National Drugs Strategy. Finally, the Taoiseach stated his commitment to a citizens assembly on drug use. After the

inaugural address, session one focused on two presentations addressing the theme: 'Marking 25 years since the Rabbitte Report -What Have we Learnt?'

Dr Brian Melaugh, Assistant Professor, Department of Applied Social Studies, Maynooth University, delivered a presentation titled '25 Years of Irish Drug Policy - Looking Back to Look Forward-Learning, Challenges and Opportunities for Community work'. Dr Melaugh offered evidence and a rationale as to why community expertise and community development are essential for the development of coherent drug policy. Evidence of this coherence is evident in the Rabbitte report with its validation of community development and setting up of structures (Local Drug Task Forces) to support partnership between communities and the State in the task of responding to drug use. The influence of community development is evident in the Rabbitte report's acceptance of the link between social and economic disadvantage and problematic drug use, linking local community experience to national drug policy and the adoption of community development structures (ICON Interagency Drug Project) as a basis for the development of Drug Task Forces. Melaugh argues that current drug policy is characterised by a repudiation of community development principles/ approaches stated in the Rabbitte report and a move towards centralised, top-down drug policy. The solution, the Rabbitte report developed a model of partnership that ensured the voice of the local community was represented in the development of national drug policy. This approach supported the development of coherent drug policy,

and the State is required to accept the legitimacy of community development in policy formulation and implementation going forward. There is also a necessity to accept that robust drug policy is developed by various actors, by its nature constructive policy making includes dissent and challenge. Finally, the new Community Development Programme is an opportunity for the State to integrate the learning from the Rabbitte report into initiatives responding to drug misuse.

Anna Quigley, Joint -Co-ordinator of Citywide Drug Crisis Campaign, delivered a presentation titled 'Crucial Role of the Community Voice'. The presentation highlighted how community development/community expertise is reflected in the work of Citywide in areas including: addressing the links between drugs and poverty, recognition of the role of community development projects, campaign/s to stop drug related stigma and removal of criminal sanctions for personal use of drugs. The presentation highlighted the key message from the EU Civil Society Forum on Drugs (CSF) that dissent in drug policy is not only integral to democracy it is evidence of a constructive policy making process. In many ways Anna's presentation outlines key areas/themes important for agenda setting for the proposed Citizens' Assembly on drug use.

Session one of the conference ended with powerful inputs from a variety of organisations on the learning and challenges from using community development approaches to respond to drugs. These included inputs from UISCE, National Family Support Steering Group, Pavee Point, Belong to Youth Services, New Communities Partnership (NCP).

The conference was an opportunity to explore how to develop an Agenda/Community manifesto for a Citizens Assembly called to consider matters relating to drug use. The discussion focused on the exploration of a number of key themes, for example 'the crucial role of community voice, addressing the link between drugs and poverty, recognition of the key role played by community drug projects, resourcing for a national campaign on drug related stigma and removal of criminal sanctions for people using drugs and consideration of the evidence for drug regulation.

The conference ended with a moving tribute to Fergus McCabe by Maureen Penrose. You can listen to Maureen's inspiring poem here youtu.be/CIAI44DnfOI

Dr Brian Melaugh is a lecturer in the Department of Applied Social Studies Maynooth University. Before taking up an academic position he worked extensively in the area of drug practice and drug policy and was CEO of the Ana Liffey Drug Project in Dublin. Brian holds professional qualifications in community work and youth work, social work, Masters in Systematic Organisation and Management, Masters in Organisational Consultancy, and a Doctorate in Health.

ALL IRELAND ENDORSEMENT BODY FOR COMMUNITY WORK EDUCATION AND TRAINING (AIEB)

In 2021, AIEB received very welcome operational funding for the first time since we began in 2010. This funding indicated a significant recognition of our work and objectives by the Department of Rural and Community Development (DRCD). AIEB is hosted by Community Work Ireland, and we are grateful for their support and ongoing collaboration in the promotion of quality community work and standards in practice.

My name is Ciara Shanahan. I was appointed as AIEB Co-ordinator in May 2021 and since then I have been working on implementing AIEB's programme of work.

A key facet of AIEB's role is the endorsement of community work education programmes. Endorsement can be described as a system for recognising education programmes that lead to professional qualification. The process of endorsement sets and assesses professional standards in relation a range of criteria. AIEB endorsed programmes are benchmarked at honours degree level and beyond, in line with parallel requirements in other social professions.

In June and July of this year, two endorsement processes took place. In June the Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Community Development and Youth Work | GMIT | Galway Mayo Institute of Technology in the School of Health Sciences, Castlebar Campus received initial endorsement.



In July the undergraduate and postgraduate programmes delivered by the Department of Applied Social Studies (DAPPSS) at Maynooth University (MU) were fully re-endorsed. This Department delivers a Bachelor of Social Science in Community Work and Youth Work with both fulltime and part-time in-service routes.

DAPPSS also deliver a Masters of Social Science in Community Work and Youth Work delivered both on a fulltime and a part-time in-service basis.

The other endorsed programmes on the island of Ireland include the Bachelor of Arts in Community Development & Youth Work, Department of Humanities, Technological University of Dublin, Blanchardstown Campus and in Belfast the Bachelor of Science in Community Development, School of Applied Social and Policy Sciences, Ulster University.

For more information on the endorsement process and the endorsed programmes visit our website www.aieb.ie.

In 2021, the AIEB commissioned research to provide clarity regarding the scope and breadth of the available community development qualifications and inform the AIEB's work to advance and build recognition of community work as a discipline and a profession across the island of Ireland.

A key recommendation in the report is the development of a Work Force Strategy which will require us to explore the potential for providing additional opportunities for practitioners to acquire professional endorsed qualifications.

In this context, AIEB is undertaking a survey to assess the education and training needs of community workers, those who undertake community work duties as part of their work and those who manage community work organisations. This has been carried out in Galway city and county and is currently being carried out in Dublin and Donegal. The findings will be used to support the case for the expansion of opportunities for current experienced community workers to access endorsed professional community work qualifications. The findings will also inform the development of Continuous Practice Development initiatives on current and emerging issues.

In addition, AIEB is working to develop a mechanism for recognition of programmes below level 8 Honours to ensure coherence between programmes at all levels and progression to professionally Endorsed programmes.

Other key activities of AIEB include the promotion of the All-Ireland Standards for Community Work, 2016. We have produced a poster of the Standards and will roll out a campaign to encourage organisations to formally adopt them. To support community work educators, we host and organise a Community Work Educators Forum which meets 3 times per year.

In 2021 an all-island Students Forum was held, organised by community work students themselves, with support from AIEB and CWI on the theme of 'Far Right Mobilisation – an issue for community work'. It is intended to continue to support annual community work students fora on various themes.

AIEB looks forward to continuing to engage with community workers, community work students, educators, funders and policy makers to advance the community work profession and discipline.

For further information see our newly developed website www.aieb.ie, email enquiries@aieb.ie or phone Ciara Shanahan 087 1308273