

BUDGET 2024 SUBMISSION

JULY 2023



**Community
Development
Programme**



**Clár
Forbartha
Pobail**

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This a joint submission by Community Work Ireland, the Community Development Programme Network and the All Ireland Endorsement Body for Community Work



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**An Roinn Forbartha
Tuaithe agus Pobail**
Department of Rural and
Community Development

Pre-Budget Submission

Community Work Ireland

Established in 1981, Community Work Ireland is the national organisation that promotes and supports community work/community development as a means of addressing poverty, social exclusion and inequalities, and promoting human rights. CWI is a membership organisation comprising over 700 individuals and organisations that support community work/community development and work in the most disadvantaged communities throughout Ireland. For nearly 40 years, Community Work Ireland has played an important role in working to advance policy and programmes that meet the real and pressing needs of marginalised communities seeking to ensure the meaningful participation of communities in the decision-making processes that affect their lives.

The All Ireland Endorsement Body for Community Work Education and Training

The All Ireland Endorsement Body for Community Work Education and Training (AIEB) is the body that promotes and ensures standards in community work practice and in community work education and training. We do this through the development and delivery of inclusive endorsement frameworks, processes and procedures for community work education providers; the development of standards and support for education and training at all levels and the development and maintenance of standards for practitioners, community work organisations, for programmes and policy makers. The membership of AIEB is drawn from a range of stakeholders, including professionally qualified and experienced practitioners, employers, funders and education providers.

Community Development Programme

The pilot Community Development Programme was launched in June 2021, reflecting the commitment in the Programme for Government to re-establish the Community Development Programme. There are currently seven members, soon to be extended to a further three:

- 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
- Limerick Traveller Network
- AMAL Muslim Women's Association
- Amach LGBTI+

Introduction

Community development, or community work, is a long-acknowledged approach to addressing poverty, social exclusion and inequality. With support from the State, Ireland developed an internationally recognized community development infrastructure and a vibrant community work sector. While policy decisions and resource cuts for over a decade have had a considerable impact on this infrastructure, the recent establishment of the pilot Community Development Programme shows a measure of acknowledgement on the part of the State of the importance of supporting vibrant community work as a critical feature of the work to achieve equality for marginalised communities.

This Pre-Budget 2024 submission focuses on the promotion of autonomous community development through the extension of the Community Development Programme and the need to fund and support an improvement in the terms and conditions for community workers working under a variety of programmes.

Promotion of Autonomous Community Development

The pilot Community Development Programme was launched in June 2021, reflecting the commitment in the Programme for Government to re-establish the Community Development Programme. The aim of the programme is to trial community development initiatives that address poverty, social exclusion and inequality, and promote human rights.

With a current budget of €1,250,000, the CDP is currently supporting ten projects, three new projects joining the original seven in 2023.

The experience of the Community Development Programme so far is that it is working as envisaged in the original commitment in the Programme for Government. It allows for the autonomy and flexibility required to begin to address some of the most deeply embedded social issues.

The second Progress report by the independent evaluator states that, 'The CDPP continues to reflect commitment, energy, and creativity in the pursuit of community development approaches to change. The community development values are patently strong and engaged across the projects. The overall and unique design of the programme remains robust and appreciated by the projects. The CDPP remains an important actor in the field of civil society endeavour for human rights, equality and anti-discrimination, social justice, and sustainable development. The scale of practices of interest that emerge, the diversity in the focus and priorities of the projects, and the emphasis on community development approaches is a source of learning of increasing value for the wider civil society. The programme and the projects have progressed to a point where the focus is increasingly on the task of community development, and on sustaining the work done on the process of community development, which has made this increasing focus on task possible. There are challenges for the projects in this period of growth'.

Community Work Ireland and the members of the CDP Network are calling for a significant investment in the extension of the Pilot Community Development Programme to expand and extend autonomous community development projects to the most marginalised areas and with the most marginalised communities. This will lead to the creation of a sustainable community infrastructure that will contribute to ensuring social cohesion and crisis preparedness.

CWI and the CDP Network are calling for:

- An immediate increase in funding to account for the unprecedented inflation levels to offset the negative impact of increased core costs.
- For Budget 2024, the doubling of the budget with an increase to account for inflation at 8% to €2,700,000 to allow for a call for applications for seven new projects.
- An increase in funding to be added to the budget annually over the next five years, allowing for a critical mass of projects based on the same approach as the current programme.

The sums below build in an annual increase to account for inflation at 8%.

Year	Annual Budget Per Project	CDP Budget	Supporting
2023	€125,000.00	€1,250,000.00	10 projects
2024	€135,000.00	€2,700,000.00	20 projects + Programme Budget + increase for inflation @ 8%
2025	€145,800.00	€3,645,000.00	25 projects + Programme Budget + increase for inflation @ 8%
2026	€157,464.00	€4,723,920.00	30 projects + Programme Budget + increase for inflation @ 8%
Total	€563,264.00	€12,318,920.00	

Invest in the extension and expansion of the Community Development Programme to 2026 and beyond.

Promotion of Community Development within Programmes

Community Development is a key approach to ensure that communities, particularly marginalised communities, are facilitated and supported to participate in policy and decisions that affect their lives. This inclusive participation is key to, for example, the realisation of the Sustainable Development Goals, particularly Goal 17, and the overarching goal to *Leave No One Behind*. Notwithstanding the misplaced ambiguity about the definition of community development, CWI welcomes the status given to community development in the new iteration of the Social Inclusion Community Activation Programme (SICAP), and we look forward to collaborating in the design of the Community Development Quality Standards Framework.

It is important to acknowledge that climate justice may be outside the normal skill set of community workers and investment will be required to ensure the necessary skills underpin the work.

Invest in the development of skills and knowledge to enable SICAP to reach the potential it sets for itself, particularly in the areas of human rights, equality community development and climate justice.

Invest in the community development aspects of SICAP and other programmes that require and support community development.

Workforce Development

Core to the development of sustainable, inclusive and empowered communities is a diverse, professional, agile and responsive community development workforce. Investment in targeted workforce development initiatives to support those involved in community work to access community work education and training underpinned by the All Ireland Standards for Community Work is key to supporting the development of a discipline that can do this while being reflective of the communities where community work takes place.

In the context of supporting continued professional and practice development, it is essential that Government programmes that require and support community development include ringfenced resources to support the professional development needs of those involved in community work throughout the spectrum, including access to community learning initiatives, and endorsed professional qualifications and Continuous Professional Development.

Invest in the ongoing professional and practice development of community workers.

Similar to other professions, the community development workforce is experiencing considerable difficulties with recruitment and retention. The terms and conditions of community workers, including salaries, have been neglected for many years and overtaken by positions in newly designed programmes such as Healthy Ireland and the current Local Area Integration Teams. Community organisations report considerable issues with recruitment and retention and community workers and community work students report that the poor terms and conditions and the lack of opportunity for progression influence their decisions to apply elsewhere for jobs.

State investment in this area can have a significant impact on outcomes for community work and communities, including marginalised and minority communities, as well as State supported programmes such as SICAP, the Community Development Programme and others.

Invest in the improvement of terms and conditions for community workers.

Background to the Community Development Programme

The pilot Community Development Programme was launched in June 2021, reflecting the commitment in the Programme for Government to re-establish the Community Development Programme

The aim of the programme is to trial community development initiatives that address poverty, social exclusion and inequality, and promote human rights. The 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
- 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 2024. 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 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

In 2023, the Minister announced three new projects are to join the CDP:

- Limerick Traveller Network
- AMAL Muslim Women's Association, Dublin
- AMACH! LGBTI, Galway

While the projects are working in different areas and with a diverse range of communities, what unites the projects is the community development approach from which each is working.

This approach is underpinned by the definition of community work that is a developmental activity comprised of both a task and a process. The task is social change to achieve equality, social justice and human rights, and the process is the application of principles of participation, empowerment and collective decision making in a structured and co-ordinated way.

These values are similar to the values that underpin the document recently approved by Government, *Values and Principles for Collaboration and Partnership: Working with the Community and Voluntary Sector at a Local and National Level*, which sets out an agreed set of values and principles for collaboration and partnership working with the community and voluntary sector at national and local level. The values and principles were developed by the sector and agreed by Government, and will provide the foundation for all consultation, collaboration and partnership working between the community and voluntary sector and central and local government.

The learning to date

The projects have identified the important shared characteristics of the approach that the Community Development Programme facilitates:

Autonomous

The work of the projects is based on needs analysis carried out with their communities - meaning that projects are community based and community led. This allows for work, including outreach work, with a range of communities with diverse, often invisible, needs. Autonomy allows for interventions that respond to the needs, characteristics and local circumstances of the hard-to-reach groups.

Voice to unheard communities

The projects are giving a voice to communities that often go unheard – this requires investment in those communities. It allows supported growth and ownership of future decisions – the process and opportunity to have direct impact is accessible for the first time for many in the communities the projects are working with.

Changing Narrative/Shifting Thinking

Recognising that marginalised communities are not responsible for the issues they face and they cannot address those issues on their own, the projects are shifting the thinking from a focus on issues such as discrimination and racism as an issue for minorities to a focus on the majority role.

Lived experience at the centre

The projects put the lived experience of the communities at the centre of all the work, supporting active involvement and leadership of participants to address their own human rights and equality issues.

New Partnerships

The CDP Network is showing that there are new ways of working with the State. This includes the partnership with the Project Team and the co-design of the Programme Planning and Monitoring Framework.

Programme Approach – networking/learning

The CDP Network comprises the seven projects with support from CWI. The network takes a programme approach, and the projects identify as members of the network. The network has allowed for networking, learning, collaboration, solidarity and support, and is currently focusing on extending the learning with an Introduction to Community Development programme for members of the target communities.