CONGRATULATIONS!

5% increase in turnout in General Election 2007 compared with 2002!!

Congratulations!

The work of our National Active Citizenship Network (NACN) members along with the Vincentian Partnership for Social Justice contributed to the 5% increase in Voter Turnout in the General Election on May 24th. The VPSJ is proud of all our members of the NACN. All the hard work was worthwhile, because of our joint efforts many people voted for the first time and many voted who would not otherwise have thought it was important to have their voice heard on Election Day.

Many activities big and small took place all over Ireland in the lead up to the election. Some of these came to fruition after our National Conference on April 2nd in Dublin. This conference entitled ‘Election 2007, Being Part of the Action!’ was very well attended by over 100 people and was a very enjoyable and successful day with inspiring talks from Mary Davies and Rachel English, RTE broadcaster.

We are delighted in this edition of Citizen’s Corner, the information exchange newsletter of the National Active Citizenship Network (NACN), to share members’ ideas and information on all the practical activities, meetings and ideas which were used to encourage people to vote. We can all learn from one another and we all helped make a difference. We received many accounts of what went on in different counties to encourage greater Voter participation. We hoped to include in this report a comparison with the turnout in 2002, for the areas in question, however turnouts at levels lower than constituency level are not yet available. We hope this report will help us all be better prepared for the next Election in 2009!! This report is also published on our website www.vote.ie. This website had an average of 756 visitors per day in May with a high of over 5000 visitors on Election Day!

This third edition of Citizens Corner provides an up to date account of developments. The events and activities further the vision and goals of the NACN and the VPSJ- an Ireland in which every citizen believes they have an active role to play – an Ireland in which every voice is heard. The 2007 General Election provided us with an opportunity to realise our vision.
Travellers and Voting !!

Galway Traveller Movement (GTM)
Report from Christina O' Rourke

We are very pleased with the increase of Traveller voter turnout in Galway. This turnout, we believe, is down to two approaches. Firstly the Vincentian Partnership for Social Justice in facilitating the Active Citizen/Voter Education Programme with two members of our team who in turn could use the Training Trainers Programme to educate others on the importance of voting and how to vote. Secondly, we could go out into different areas of Galway and facilitate groups of Travellers on how to vote and the importance of voting for them and their families. The Travellers who attended our workshops and open nights found the information very useful and helpful.

The GTM also organised a community night where we had three consecutive information points running simultaneously. A member of the Gardai was present at each meeting to help register people in preparation for voting. In the remaining weeks running up to the election many Travellers visited the GTM for information on voting. This came from word of mouth at the workshops and information nights. We estimate that at least seventy people received direct election information from the GTM, who in turn went home with information for their families.

The GTM believes that the training given by the St Vincentian Partnership and the hard work from the Galway Traveller Movement afterwards gave the best possible outcomes for this election. However we do feel that more work needs to be done with the public some months before an election is to take place, to give the public the best possible chance not only to vote but to understand the importance of their vote.

Carlow Traveller Network

Report from Catherine O' Hare
Youth and Community Development Worker
St. Catherine's Community Services Centre, Carlow

As part of the Carlow Traveller Network training the Vincentian Partnership came to work with 12 Traveller Women. None of the women had ever voted and none had any awareness of the political system. The women found it a great experience as I did. The whole programme was geared to the women's needs and helped them articulate their own needs and the needs of the Traveller Community and the wider community. It also explained how to vote, which for many who have literacy difficulties was a barrier to voting.

At the end of the programme we invited all Carlow based election candidates to St. Catherine's to meet with this group and with other participants in programmes being run in St. Catherine's. Three of the six came. We asked people to give a 3 minutes presentation on their party manifesto and then there was a question and answer session. It was a marvellous experience even for some of the candidates!!

I think that the most important effect was the ripple effect. None of these families have a history of voting and because of the programme 12 extra people registered and voted as did other members of their extended families and they will be able to hold the politicians accountable for their action or inaction.

Thank you so much.
Report from Monica Shannon, Corduff CDP

Below are the main activities that we here in Corduff Community Development project did prior to the election to ensure that the voters here in the area would exercise their franchise? Sorry I have no photos of the occasion, though in memory its success lives on…

- Over the last year I networked with other project workers in the area who had done the training for voter education tutors course. This was very powerful in the sense that we motivated each other and shared our ideas as to what we would do. Each project responded in their own respective areas, some of those initiatives were very worthwhile and successful. One of the centres located on a busy road had a stand outside their centre interacting with the public which was very successful.

- The link with the E.AP.N likewise though at short notice was also very beneficial. This engaged the key projects in the area. Through this the local media papers etc, were engaged, which in turn highlighted the process.

- The voter education course itself was delivered in other areas of Blanchardstown also which had a good turn out. Here in Corduff though small in number likewise it was very successful. This being the one which went out on national radio and which R.T.Es Morning Ireland programme followed through on, on the day of the election. The participants found it very powerful with one lady aged 53 voting for the first time, one of the moving human stories to come out of the election.

- Tall bill boards were also erected on the railings outside of the centre re voting and service delivery and examples of that locally. The centre is located next to the local school where the voting took place.

- Stands were put up both in the I.T.B in Blanchardstown and in the Library. This profiled the gallery walk in both circumstances. This proved very evocative and powerful in the absence of getting the course delivered. Feed back from both venues confirmed an immense interest in the stories of the gallery walk.

- A flier was also sent out to the Corduff area on behalf of the C.D.P encouraging people to use their vote with some very straight forward points.

- Many Posters were put up in the area encouraging people to Vote

All in all the numbers in voter turnout were up again, no doubt adding to the impetus which was out there.

Longford Traveller Movement

Longford Traveller Movement participated in the meeting with candidates in Ballymahon prior to the election. A group of community organisations with support from the EAPN organised a hustings on 17th May. LTM were involved in the organisation of that event. Four candidates came along and fielded questions from the floor. A bus was organised from Longford, and people from the electorate attended. I would estimate that 60 people attended.
Questions and Answers!!

Many groups organised Question and Answer sessions with politicians. The Candidates running in the local constituency were invited to attend as well of members of the public who would pose questions. We do not underestimate the amount or organisation and preparation that went into these events with each events chaired, usually by a broadcaster and questions submitted in advance to ensure the evening ran smoothly. On one particular night in Dublin, there were 3 such events running simultaneously - Ballymun, the Northwest Inner City and Dublin 12!

**Ballymun Residents invite Olivia O’Leary back to chair Questions and Answers in Ballymun**

Olivia O’ Leary chaired a questions and answers session in Ballymun with the hopefuls going forward for election on Wednesday the 2nd of May in the AXIS theatre in Ballymun. The Ballymun Branch of the Active Citizenship Network had promoted this event widely within the community, going around to all the centres and handing out flyers at schools to ensure attendance, so that local people could have their voices heard.

Previous debates and our work in general demonstrate that the community in Ballymun feel quite removed from the decisions that influence their lives and the political structures in general. Through the continuation of these public debates we aim to focus on the issues relevant to the local community and give local people a chance to meet their local representatives.

All candidates had a few minutes to set out their parties’ manifesto before the panel started answering questions from the floor. The panel included the following candidates: Cllr Bill Tormey (Fine Gael), Noel Ahern T.D (Fianna Fail), Roisin Shorthall T.D (Labour), Pat Carey T.D (Fianna Fail), Cllr Dessie Ellis (Sinn Fein), Declan Fitzgerald (Green Party) and John O’Neill (Irish Socialist Network). The opportunity for local people to raise their issues in a structured format was welcomed and we endeavour to continue to provide meaningful forums where local people can engage with their local representatives. There were over 60 local residents who participated in the evening.

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Do You Want To Hear Politicians Respond To Issues About The North West Inner City?

If So Please Come Along To

**ELECTION 2007**

**QUESTIONS & ANSWERS EVENING**

Which will take place on Wednesday 2nd May at 8pm

In

The Incorporated Law Society
*(Formerly Blue Coats School)*

Blackhall Place Dublin 7

The event will be chaired by Brian Dobson (RTE Broadcaster & Journalist) and will be attended by all local candidates running for this years elections.

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The Invitation (left) to the North West Inner City Question and Answer Evening
The Community Development Team of Ballyfermot Partnership facilitated a Questions and Answers Evening with the local candidates running in the 2007 election, on April 30th. Ursula Halligan of TV3 kindly agreed to chair the evening. There was a great deal of work involved in the preparation of such an event particularly concerning the submission and selection of questions.

It was very well attended with approximately 150 people from the D10 area. It served as a valuable information tool for the community and was an ideal opportunity to find out more about local candidates. All politicians were more than willing to attend and become involved in this process.

Submission forms (there is a copy of the form below), were sent to all relevant agencies in the area in order to get a general over view of the issues the community need to discuss. The questions were then themed and there was some space for queries from the audience.

They also sent out press releases (see pg. 5 below) to all relevant newspapers, radio stations and television stations, information was also posted on Active Link and Ballyfermot.ie. Invitations (see pg. 4 below) were sent and posters advertising the event were sent to agencies and centres in the area.

## Copy of Question Submission Forms

**What is happening?**

Ballyfermot Partnership will be hosting a **Questions and Answers Evening**, in preparation for the General Election 2007. The event will be chaired by Ursula Halligan (Presenter of the Political Party TV3) and will be attended by all the local representatives running for Election.

**Where?**

Ballyfermot Community Civic Centre.

**Why?**

The session will be an ideal opportunity to gain a greater insight into the political parties manifesto and agenda’s for the forth-coming election.

**When?**

Monday April 30th @ 7.30pm sharp.

**Who?**

We are inviting all local, community, and voluntary groups to submit questions to be heard on the night, it is an opportunity to have your say and make your voice heard.
What do we want from you?

The format for the submission of questions will be as follows:

Name of Organisation,/Representative Body/Group:
Issue (Bear in mind that the issue be linked in some way to national policy):
Background Information:
Two Questions relating to your issue
(See Example attached)

We are requesting that organisations send in submissions for the evening no later than April 11th (See example attached).

Following your submission your question or questions will be scheduled for the evening, you will be asked by the chair to read your submission and direct questions to the panel. You will be given the opportunity to respond. Questions on your topic will be open to the floor.

We will endeavour to include all submitted questions however, in order to avoid any duplication and to ensure that all issues are discussed a selection process will occur.

If you have any queries regarding this event or the submission of questions, please do not hesitate to contact Tara/Ciara in the Partnership @ (01) 620 7165.

Many thanks!

Example of Question submission

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>Affordable and accessible childcare</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Background</td>
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Over the last 5 years there has been significant inroads made with regard to the development of community childcare places in Dublin City. The EOCP programme has ensured that xxxxxx new childcare facilities has been created in D10 over the last few years and these grants have been welcomed. However, the issue of sustaining these centres in the future is still a huge concern for the majority of community providers in D10. Staffing grants remain too low and are not reflective of the level of deprivation in the area, the size of the facility or the overheads attached. The new childcare investment programme needs to reflect and support in a realistic way community childcare in order to ensure that the children and families of D10 can access childcare at an affordable price.

| Question |
What is the panel’s view of the importance of community childcare and what supports if any would they be proposing to support these facilities in the future |
2007 General Election Questions & Answers Evening in Ballyfermot (Dublin South Central)

Ballyfermot Partnership will be hosting a Questions and Answers Evening, in preparation for the General Election 2007. The event will be chaired by Ursula Halligan (Presenter of the Political Party TV3) and will be attended by all the local candidates running for this year's Election. The evening will take place in Ballyfermot Community Civic Centre Monday April 30th @ 8pm sharp.

The session will be an ideal opportunity to gain a greater insight into the political parties manifesto’s and policies for the forthcoming general election. Gain the knowledge about your local candidates to make an informed decision on polling day! Use your voice, use your vote!

For additional information, please contact Tara Deacy in the Ballyfermot Partnership @ (01) 620 7165

Report on the Evening

35 questions were submitted in total, however unfortunately, due to time constraints only a portion of the questions were discussed. Local candidates highlighted that the event was very beneficial for the community and that such an event may be organised for the local elections in the future.

Following the event the attached a news article was published in the Clondalkin Echo!

Voter Participation Workshops in Ballyfermot

Information was sent to all relevant voluntary and community groups in the area regarding the provision of three voter participation workshops. The aim of the workshops was to encourage people to use their vote and have their say in this year’s election. Unfortunately, due to poor response the provision of two workshops was sufficient.

The Community Worker in collaboration with Ballyfermot Travellers Action Project facilitated a workshop in Labre Park. The evening was very successful and enjoyed by all participants (9 female & 1 male). Questions for the Q & A session were also discussed on the night.

The Community Development Team delivered a Voter Participation Workshop to a group in Ross veal Court in cooperation with Cheshire Community Services (Disability Group), the workshop was very successful. There were nine participants (seven female and two male). The CD Team received positive feedback from all participants regarding the use of their vote in this year’s election.
Beginning the process -
The group met and decided to host a ‘meet the politicians night’ because there was an upcoming General Election due to be called.
There was a lot of discussion about where to hold the event so that it would be neutral as people in the area tend not to venture out of their own area. Tallaght Leisure Centre was chosen because it is new and borders three areas.

A voter companion was designed and produced by the group and some members of Tallaght Partnership proof read and gave input into this.

It was decided to put together a resource pack to assist community groups to produce their own ‘wall of issues’ highlighting the issues relevant to each group. This encouraged participation, a feeling of involvement, ownership and a real effort to hear the voices of the people of Tallaght.

Meetings were held regularly and the attendance grew the closer we got to the event, the effort to include as many voices as possible continued throughout the process.
Workers made links with many groups and left resource packs, of these 24 groups submitted issues/questions and/or a wall of issues. If a group did not produce a wall of issues we got coloured paper and glue and produced them ourselves so that every piece of input (questions/issues) was included. Information for the resource pack was sourced from Vincentian Partnership, VOTE web site and mostly through the Internet. As community groups input we added relevant information into the pack.

ACT looked at all the questions received from all the groups and met to decide how to include a question relevant to each group. In order to include all voices ACT ended up with 10 questions.

The work leading up to the event was ongoing for about 6 weeks, there was contact made with the EAPN for advice, advertising the event, the Chair and some financial support.
Other funding for the event came from Tallaght Partnership, South Dublin County Council, West Tallaght Resource Centre and Tallaght Local Employment Service.

Meet the Politicians night –
About 20 people turned up to set up the venue and everyone was given a/jobs to do.
The ‘walls of issues were collected or brought on the night by the respective groups. These were all put up on the walls of the venue. We had access to the venue from 5.30, at this time the chairs and stage arrived and also the microphones, stands and speakers.
We set up the room and the reception area with posters highlighting the event. John Bowman arrived and was happy with the set up as he had given instructions. The politicians started arriving and some parties set up stands.

We had people placed in reception recording names and directing people to the venue. 103 people signed in with some staff members from the Leisure Centre also attending and others who came in after the event started. The group estimated that the final number who attended was 130.

John Bowman introduced the evening and outlined the programme for evening; each politician had a few minutes to introduce themselves and what they stood for.

10 people from the groups were asked to read the questions from the floor, not all the questions were asked because time ran out but most of the issues concerning people were covered within the questions asked. A lot of time was taken up by one group who monopolised the event but apart from this at the beginning of the Q&A session the event went very well and there was a very good turn out.

The politicians were very impressed with the voter companion and the event itself. All the candidates turned up except Pat Rabbitt who was represented by Councillor Marie Corr.

Following the event –
The following day the stage had to be returned to St. Aidan’s Secondary School. The students and teachers were planning their own Q&A with the politicians which we attended later that week.
ACT asked for feedback from the event and suggestions were given by people who attended. ACT met the following week and assessed the event and what to do next. One suggestion was to correlate all the questions/issues and send them to the politicians and all the groups who submitted questions/issues. This was done and the response was very positive with people really appreciating the follow up contact and request for feedback. People were very positive about the event and expressed a wish to be involved in the future work of ACT.

A.C.T, Active Citizenship Tallaght
DEVELOPING THE WALL OF ISSUES.
AND
MEET THE POLITICANS NIGHT
8th MAY 2007.

A.C.T. wish to thank all members who worked so hard and with such enthusiasm during the weeks prior to the election. The success of the event was due in no small part to all their time, energy and ideas. They would like you to extend our thanks to all the groups and individuals who participated.
More Active Citizenship in Tallaght!

Active Citizenship Voting Campaign - CDI in partnership with An Cosán

Report from Joyce Cahill, Community Engagement Co-ordinator, The Childhood Development Initiative (CDI)
St Mark’s Youth & Family Centre, St Mark’s House, Cookstown Lane, Fettercairn, Tallaght, Dublin 24

Registration process: 11,000 people in Tallaght West were struck off the register. We worked in a small group to get as many of them back on the register in a short time. This was achieved by

- Knocking on doors
- Setting up information tables in local shops
- Setting up information tables in Square
- Working with our local TD’s and Councillors

Between all those involved we succeeded in re-registering at least 3,000 people. We were under time restrictions even after receiving an extension by SDCC

Issues:
We advertised an evening class for anyone interested in looking at issues affecting the community of Tallaght West. From this initial meeting we compiled our “wall of issues”, 4 issues were identified as the most prominent in the area, it was agreed to focus on each of the issues separately in order to look in depth at the affects of this issue in the community. The group spent 2 weeks on each of the issues and finalised the issue with a seminar.

Health Seminar – 22 February 2007
Preparatory meetings were held with community residents in order to identify personal health issues and their personal experience of health care in Tallaght West. This was followed by the health seminar on February 22nd. Guest speaker, Professor Tom O’Dowd (Professor of General Practice, Head of the Department of Public Health and Primary Care in Trinity College Dublin and our local GP), gave his input on his experience of health in the area of Tallaght West and took questions from the audience of 60 community residents. He suggested questions which should be put to our politicians prior to the elections to bring about change in health services.

Safety Seminar – 15 March 2007
Preparatory meetings were held with community residents in order to identify personal safety issues. John Quinlivan, Senior Executive Officer, South Dublin County Council, and Dr Suzanne Guerin, Psychologist, gave inputs and took questions from the audience. A report will be written on this seminar and the learning from the seminar, particularly the inputs given, will also serve to inform the development and direction of the Community Safety Initiative. Both speakers clarified the Council’s actions on ASB and safety in Tallaght West and offered creative ideas about how to address those issues.

Childcare – 05 April 2007
Guest Speakers: Geraldine French (Early Childhood Specialist) & Marian Baker (Manager, The Enterprise Centre in An Cosán)
Preparatory meetings were held with community residents in order to identify personal childcare issues. Marian spoke of the problems she comes up against in their work and Geraldine spoke of the quality of service we can all look for when seeking childcare or delivering childcare in our local area. It opened up to the floor for discussion and questions were prepared for politicians from the seminar.
Education – 15 April 2007

Guest Speakers: Dr Ann Louise Gilligan (Dept of Education, St Patrick’s College Drumcondra) & Avril Bailey (Manage, Shanty Education and Training Centre, An Cosán)

Preparatory meetings were held with community residents in order to identify personal issues around education. Dr Ann Louise gave a talk identifying the current funding which goes into our educational system and helped prepare the group put questions to politicians. We had several early school leavers in this group and Dr Ann Louise suggested questions we could put to our politicians prior to election.

Meet the Politicians

A document was compiled with the issues identified encompassing all the work to date on our issues. It consisted of the identified issues, suggested solutions and 15 demands on Health, Safety, Education, Childcare and Lone Parents which we called the “Tallaght West 15”.

On April 26th, all local politicians were invited to attend the AGM of An Cosán which we combined with our Q+A session with the politicians. This provided the community residents with an opportunity to put the questions and concerns which arose from the four seminars to the politicians for their views on how to address them. The purpose of this event was to define the political response/commitment to bring about improvements in Tallaght West and to enable community residents to make an informed decision about who will get their vote in the upcoming general election.

Voting:

In the last few weeks running up to elections we used a sample ballot sheet to inform first time voters how to vote. This was carried out in each of the classes in An Cosán and in turn each participants were asked to pass this information on to others.

Lead up to election:

Photo’s were taken in all the local business’s/shops and they were asked to display the photo in window. Firstly the photos were blown up and captions placed on them requesting viewers to use their vote to bring about change in their community. The purpose of this was to allow residents to identify/-election with people they knew personally. This we found was very successful and for lots of residents it was the first time they made the connection.

Day of elections:

We approached our local TD’s, South Dublin County Council(SDCC) community centres and Moby bus for support on the day.

- Local TD’s made donations to pay for buses
- SDCC donated 1,000 free swim vouchers
- Tallaght Centre for unemployed donated their childcare bus for the day to support parents to use their vote.
- Community Centres acted as drop in centres for the day encouraging people to use their voice

We attached a sound system and speakers to the car which drove around the four communities of Tallaght West encouraging people to vote. We spoke to residents of the importance of using their voice to bring about change in the community. This was a very successful act as we interviewed lots of children asking what changes they would like to see in their community and through the children we were able to reach the parents. SDCC supplied 1,000 free swim vouchers for the new pool in Jobstown which we used as incentive for the children informing them of the opportunity for free swim when they encourage their parents to vote.

The Campaign was very successful and we had a lot of young people who voted for the first time. The biggest problem we met in this process was the amount of people who were not aware they had been knocked off the register. I would hope to work with whoever is interested in sorting this problem out asap. As I don’t believe we should wait for another election.
HEALTH

Every individual has a human right to receive good health care

ISSUE

In Tallaght West 96% of people have not contacted the Gardaí regarding anti-social behaviour, yet 60% are personally affected by crime and 41% of families are affected by Anti Social Behaviour. (How are we KID?, 2004, CDI)

SOLUTION

10. A single publicly funded health care system suitable to and accessible to all.

DEMAND

There should be only one health system funded by the government.

Better management of the health system.

Every individual has a human right to receive good health care.

35% of households in Tallaght do not have a medical card or private health insurance (Willie Daly Research, 2000).

ISSUE

People with no private health insurance are twice as likely to be on a waiting list as those who have private health insurance.

SOLUTION

Waiting Lists for medical card holders or for people who have no private health insurance should not be any longer than for those with private health insurance.

DEMAND

Healthcare should be delivered "not by need, not money but health care needs levelled by need not money levelled by health care needs".

People use fewer GP visits if they are eligible for GP fees exemptions.

It is difficult to attract and retain GPs for an area like Tallaght West.

ISSUE

People feel there is no police support—They don't respond to calls or offer protection to the public.

SOLUTION

Make the police more visible in the community.

DEMAND

There is a lack of police presence in the Community of Tallaght West.

AN COSÁN & CDI
Pre-election Campaign 2007

SAFETY

STOP

LISTEN TO US

LOOK

The Tallaght West 15

AN COSÁN & CDI
Pre-election Campaign 2007

CDI

TALLAGHT WEST
CHILDREN'S DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE

"My doctor referred me to Talaght Hospital & have a hernia. Cost would not be borne without a "safety net" from a Consultant!"

"my doctor referred me to Talaght Hospital & got a hernia. Cost would not be borne without a "safety net" from a Consultant!"

"The people of Talaght have valuable insights into health care. can articulate their health needs and are committed members in the planning of health care services" (Rahole Hospital Research, 2002.)

ISSUE

11. Waiting lists that are needed, not Money!

SOLUTION

An incentive scheme to attract and retain new GP's into the Talaght West area.

DEMAND

Don't accept the treatment we are receiving. Heighten your expectations.

"I don't have a PCI yet for their surgery!"

"My doctor referred me to Talaght Hospital & have a hernia. Cost would not be borne without a "safety net" from a Consultant!"

"My doctor referred me to Talaght Hospital & got a hernia. Cost would not be borne without a "safety net" from a Consultant!"

Fear and intimidation are the dominant feelings.

Bullying is out of control.

Joking is a huge problem.

"The people of Talaght have valuable insights into health care. can articulate their health needs and are committed members in the planning of health care services" (Rahole Hospital Research, 2002.)

ISSUE

12. An incentive scheme to attract and retain new GP's into the Talaght West area.

SOLUTION

Bureaucracy is common place.

DEMAND

During the period of health care, to areas well being and support from the top down.

"The people of Talaght have valuable insights into health care. can articulate their health needs and are committed members in the planning of health care services" (Rahole Hospital Research, 2002.)

ISSUE

Fear and intimidation are the dominant feelings.

SOLUTION

An incentive scheme to attract and retain new GP's into the Talaght West area.

DEMAND

Bureaucracy is common place.

"The people of Talaght have valuable insights into health care. can articulate their health needs and are committed members in the planning of health care services" (Rahole Hospital Research, 2002.)

ISSUE

The development and delivery of community based programmes should be focused on bullying.

SOLUTION

Programmes or how to manage and support of community level.

DEMAND

We need a community approach to bullying and intimidation.
**EDUCATION**

**Education is the key to transforming poverty**

**ISSUE**
- Ireland spends less than half EU countries on education.
- The Government pulls more money into roads than into schools.
- In some places, failure rates are up to 90% of pupils have literacy difficulties.
- Tallaght West has the highest percentage of children aged 0-4 in the country.
- Almost one quarter of young school leavers aged 16-24 are unemployed.
- Almost one third of young adults leave school by the age of 16.

**SOLUTION**
- More funding given to community education initiatives and schemes.
- Learning difficulties in children detected early.
- Children assessed quickly without long delays.

**DEMAND**
- A child with special needs may have limited access to education.
- Ireland needs a comprehensive education system that caters for all children.

**CHILD CARE**

**Good quality early years education and care helps all children towards a better start in life**

**ISSUE**
- There is a lack of investment in pre-school education for all children.
- Parents are busy and struggle to ensure that their children are engaged in educational activities.

**SOLUTION**
- Pre-school education for all children should be made accessible.
- Parents should be encouraged to engage in educational activities with their children.

**DEMAND**
- Childcare services should be widely accessible and affordable.
- Parents should have access to flexible childcare options.

**LONE PARENTS**

**For the first time in Irish history, large numbers of our children are now being brought up by lone parents, a fact which is significant true in Tallaght West**

**ISSUE**
- There is a lack of support for lone parents.
- There is a lack of support for children of lone parents.

**SOLUTION**
- Support schemes should be more accessible to lone parents.
- Training programmes for lone parents should be better integrated into the community.

**DEMAND**
- There should be better support for lone parents.
- Training programmes should be more accessible to lone parents.

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**Plus 1:** An Ossian demands that the Government have a cross-departmental multi-annual budget for community education. This would involve the Department of Education and Science, the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs, the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment, the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform and the Department of Social and Family Affairs.
The Donegal Local Development Company are running an initiative led by David Doherty to encourage Voter Participation in Donegal. The initial work plan for delivery of the initiative included 42 courses with participant numbers from five to ten per course run over nine months or three quarters. The plan included the delivery by the project officer of some 28 courses (240 participants) with community trainers taking on a further 13 courses (90 participants) to facilitate the combined total of 330 participants. The position at the end of the first of these quarters is fewer courses with larger numbers per course. Several courses Donegal Town, Rathmullen, Dunfanaghy, and Letterkenny were cancelled due to poor numbers of participants.

In relation to trainers, twelve (12) were recruited and trained by the initiative. However the uptake by trainers of opportunities to conduct courses in their areas has not been successful. Despite the initiative training and offering logistical and financial support, none of the trainers have conducted courses.

It is proposed to bring these trainers together in a trainers review workshop during the second quarter and combine that with an additional trainer’s course. This effort will it is hoped motivate the existing trainers as well as new trainers to actively engage in voter education. The current revised plan is 34 courses delivering the same number of proposed participants. No budget alteration are required but a flexible approach to allocated budget spend will be needed.

It was expected that disadvantaged target groups and communities would be prioritised for training under the programme and that, they would benefit significantly in increased social inclusion terms. No specific numbers or target groups were included in the proposed work plan but rather a general theme of targeting these particular demographic contingents was adopted.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Course Type</th>
<th>Course Location</th>
<th>Target Group</th>
<th>Needs</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Participant Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Trainer</td>
<td>Letterkenny</td>
<td>Community Leaders</td>
<td>Physical Disability</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>General</td>
<td>Donegal Town</td>
<td>Rural Farm Workers</td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>General</td>
<td>Rathmullen</td>
<td>Rural Farm Workers</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>General</td>
<td>Raphoe</td>
<td>Rural Farm Workers</td>
<td>Literacy</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>General</td>
<td>Sligo*</td>
<td>Lone Parents</td>
<td>Childcare</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>General</td>
<td>Letterkenny</td>
<td>Lone Parents</td>
<td>Childcare</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>General</td>
<td>Letterkenny</td>
<td>Mental Health</td>
<td>Literacy</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>General</td>
<td>Donegal Town</td>
<td>Unemployed</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Trainer</td>
<td>Ballybofey</td>
<td>Community Leaders</td>
<td>Physical Disability</td>
<td>C</td>
<td></td>
<td>Cancelled</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>General</td>
<td>Donegal Town</td>
<td>Unemployed</td>
<td></td>
<td>C</td>
<td></td>
<td>Cancelled</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>General</td>
<td>Dunfanaghy</td>
<td>Rural Farm Workers</td>
<td></td>
<td>C</td>
<td></td>
<td>Cancelled</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>27 (36%)</td>
<td>48 (64%)</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* this course was conducted with permission from Border action. All expenses were paid by OPEN. In addition this course was used to assess the viability of the initiative expansion commitment as outlined at the last site meeting.
The revised work plan includes greater emphasis on specific target groups such as under 30’s, travellers, immigrants and retired persons.

Work to date leading up to the General Election focused entirely on those members of our community whom the project officer in consultation with Border Action and DLDC felt were most in need of voter education (unemployed, physical & mental disadvantaged, Lone Parents, first time voters). The continuing work plan focuses on those who will require voter education for future participation in democracy, such as young disaffected, coming of age, marginalised teens and immigrants who qualify for participation in local democracy. The focus therefore on the second quarter will be working with the large immigrant community and disenfranchised teens.

The initiative has sought and obtained agreement from Donegal Youth Services, Foroige and Abhaile Aris to operate a summer programme for members. This programme with approval from Border Action will focus on delivery of the voter education courses in diverse venues, over several evenings and will require a flexible approach to funding. Approval for this programme is now being sought. The overall budget spend will not be affected.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Course Type</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Target Group</th>
<th>Additional Needs</th>
<th>Participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>General</td>
<td>Letterkenny</td>
<td>Teen</td>
<td>Bus, Gym</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>General</td>
<td>Castlefinn</td>
<td>Teen</td>
<td>Bus, Gym</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>General</td>
<td>Donegal Town</td>
<td>Teen</td>
<td>Bus, Gym</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>General</td>
<td>Killybegs</td>
<td>Teen</td>
<td>Bus, Gym</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>General</td>
<td>Raphoe</td>
<td>Teen</td>
<td>Bus, Gym</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Trainers</td>
<td>Ballybofey</td>
<td>Community Leaders</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>General</td>
<td>Ballyshannon</td>
<td>Immigrants</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>General</td>
<td>Letterkenny</td>
<td>Immigrants</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>General</td>
<td>Donegal Town</td>
<td>Unemployed</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>General</td>
<td>Letterkenny</td>
<td>Travellers</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Agreement has been sought and obtained from several schools in the DLDC catchment area to run an autumn programme within the transition year school programme. This exciting initiative will see all transition year students in each of five schools undergo voter education. Volunteers from each of these courses will in turn complete a trainers education course and then will deliver either a voter registration drive or voter education course in their locality. This demonstrates real active citizenship. A legacy effect will be put in place by each Transition year co ordinator which will in twelve months see the current transition year trainers return to conduct a voter education training course with the next intake of transition year students.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Target Group</th>
<th>Needs</th>
<th>Participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>General</td>
<td>Killybegs</td>
<td>Teens</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>General</td>
<td>Carrick*</td>
<td>Teens</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>General</td>
<td>Glenties</td>
<td>Teens</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>General</td>
<td>Milford</td>
<td>Teens</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>General</td>
<td>Donegal Town</td>
<td>Teens</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>20</td>
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<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>Trainer</td>
<td>Killybegs</td>
<td>Teens/teachers</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>Trainer</td>
<td>Carrick*</td>
<td>Teens/teachers</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>Trainer</td>
<td>Glenties</td>
<td>Teens/teachers</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>Trainer</td>
<td>Milford</td>
<td>Teens/teachers</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>Trainer</td>
<td>Donegal Town</td>
<td>Teens/teachers</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>General</td>
<td>Donegal Town</td>
<td>Retired</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>General</td>
<td>Ballybofey</td>
<td>Retired</td>
<td>Bus</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>General</td>
<td>Letterkenny</td>
<td>Retired</td>
<td>Bus</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>13</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>178</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*this course will be conducted with permission from Border action. In addition this course will be used to assess the viability of the initiative expansion commitment as outlined at the last site meeting.

**Achievements**

A number of achievements were to be obtained over the course of the initiative and these were to include:

- A successful launch of the initiative
  - Completed
- Joint delivery of trainers workshop with the Vincentian Partnership for Social Justice
  - Completed
- Delivery of general workshops
  - Ongoing
- Engagement with other partnerships including
  - Monaghan
  - MFG Teo
  - Inishowen
  - Ongoing
- Engagement with Franchise section of Donegal County Council
  - Completed
- Investigation into the possibility of expanding the initiative
  - Ongoing

**Target areas and Groups**

The initiative was expected to appeal to the following target areas and groups:

- Areas where social and economic development has been affected by the conflict
  - Completed
- Ex-prisoners and their families, i.e. qualifying prisoners who were or would have been released under the terms of the Good Friday Agreement
  - Ongoing
- Displaced persons
  - Ongoing
- Young people, women and older workers
  - Ongoing
- Isolated rural communities who have disengaged from basic democratic participation due to proximity to the border and the direct effects of the Troubles.
  - Completed
Busy in Limerick!!

Report from Mary Flannery and Anita Martin of City of Limerick VEC

1. The VPSJ voter education training of trainers was delivered in Sept.06 to 7 community people and 1 VTOS tutor as a precursor to active delivery of course to learners.
2. The VPSJ voter ed. training, in its entirety was offered to all communities during the year.
3. Closer to election time we circulated all co-ordinators to advise of the possibility of taking advantage of a one-off 2 hour session on the "how to" aspects of voting in addition to a basic outlining of issues.
4. We convened a voter education group to include local community workers and CLVEC staff who met on a number of occasions prior to election in order to determine how best to increase interest, knowledge and turnout locally at election time. This group came up with the following suggestions which were then carried out with the support and involvement of most of the group:
   a. Made contact with candidates in local constituency (Limerick East) in order to increase the effectivity of voter ed. training by making it more specific to local candidates, their manifestos, issues and strikingly attractive photographs!!!! This didn't work as well as anticipated as, in spite of numerous contacts made only three provided us with photos and manifesto details.
   b. Developed and distributed 400 issue cards. These were postcard sized cardboard reminders for people of what their issues were, to be kept on the fridge as a reference point when candidates called to homes or alternatively to be handed to politicians in return for all of their pamphlets. These were very popular and successful and necessitated numerous reprints, becoming known colloquially as "orange cards" (this seemed like a good, striking colour at the time!)
   c. We developed and distributed approx. 60 voter resource packs to all local community coordinators. These provided resources of material and information on the how and why of the voting process in order to allow coordinators to facilitate a session if they so desired or alternatively to allow them the confidence to be able to provide accurate information on voting if requested.
   d. We submitted a suggested programme outline to Live 95FM, a local Limerick radio station which was readily accepted with some alterations. This involved an interview with a CLVEC tutor who had delivered the VPSJ training plus two learners who had taken part in the training. The interview focused mainly on the background of the course, the how and why of voting plus how the training had impacted on the voting behaviour of those who had taken part.
In 2004-2006 we included the Active Citizenship programme on adult basic education courses being delivered to: - Mental Health Services in Newbridge and built it into our Home School Liaison Programmes, Intensive Adult Basic Education Programme and FAS Return to Education Programme.

Together with my fellow worker Deirdre Gallagher in 2007 we delivered the Active Citizenship/Voter Education programme/with a focus on the General Election to:

Participants engaged in the Intensive Adult Basic Education Programme, FAS Return to Education Programme. Learners and tutors working in the centre.

I also displayed all your election posters on a notice board in our hall I got this idea at the Active Citizenship Day held in April, in the Royal Hotel, in Dublin.

From information on your website I devised a piece of reading and quiz on How Ireland is Governed which we sent to all our literacy tutors to work through with their learners (see below).

How Ireland is Governed

Look up the following words in the dictionary

Constitution, Democracy,

Fill in the blanks in the following sentences with the above words.

1. The ___________________________ of a country is the laws which govern the country.

2. Ireland has a ___________________________ which was drawn up by the people in 1937.

3. Democracy is a system of government in which the people choose their leaders by voting for them in elections.  Ireland is a ______________________.

4. Bertie Ahern is Ireland’s _______________________.  He has been ________________________ for the past 10 years.  He is the leader of Fianna Fail.

5. The General Election takes place on Thursday the 24th of May.  There is a ______________________ every 5 years.

6. On Thursday the 24th of May, people all over Ireland will vote in the ____________________________.

7. How many TD’s are in the Dail?

8. Name 2 political parties.

9. What does the word TD mean?

10. What can a TD do for you?
Co. Clare Lead the Way Again !!

Report from Mary Flanagan, Family Learning Project Clare VEC

Build up to Election 2007 in Clare.

As part of The Clare Family Learning EU Project on Families and Active Citizenship an Integrated Training (FACE-IT) we have delivered five sessions of Active Citizenships as an integrated part of Family Learning programmes to three groups around the county, two English Language groups and one Traveller group. All were completed the week of the election.

At the end of each session, issues that needed action were decided on by the group. Topics covered included a session on each of the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Issue from the group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Family,</td>
<td>- Clean water and maternity services in Clare.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Citizenship</td>
<td>– Issues of non Irish not having the right to vote in some elections.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Our Government</td>
<td>– Who are the candidates, where are their offices.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voting</td>
<td>– Not having enough time to register to vote, if living away from home before election was called.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Some interesting findings:

- Ireland is looked upon as a very fair place to be with regard to elections.
- It seems easy to become a politician, in that one doesn’t need to be very rich.
- People enjoyed the opportunity to discuss their issues and used them when politicians called.
- Very negative attitudes to males by the Traveller group, when discussing family.
- Travellers stay within their own community, and feel they are not part of wider Irish society even locally.
- Without a passport non-Irish people feel they lack citizenship.
- Matching party leaders to Political parties was an enjoyable exercise by everyone. The most recognised were Michael McDowell and Bertie Ahern.
- Using a ballot paper similar to the election, getting the groups to vote, then count the papers was a very powerful and real learning experience.
- Six women in the Traveller Group voted in the Election.

Our local TD Tony Killeen, called into the Adult Education Centre to meet the students and had a look at our issues board.

Other Literacy tutors have done a number of Active Citizenship classes with students with intellectual disabilities. The organisations they were working with, were in some cases embarrassed that they had forgotten to highlight the Election with their clients, and were very grateful to be prompted into action by Clare Adult Basic Education Service (CABES). The participants felt these classes were very inclusive, as they knew what was being talked about in the media hype leading up to the election. They had the same vote as everyone else and the same power.

Ann Loftus, Clarecare, working with the Primary Health Traveller Project, produced the Ballot Paper and did super work with her group.

The Clare Family Learning Project are hosting a Grundtvig 3 Training in Ennis on November 14,15,16th on How to Develop a Family approach to Active Citizenship. It is available on the Grundtvig Database IE- 2007 – 102 – 001. We also plan to host a national training for Irish tutors in Spring 2008.
Report from Morgan Mee, Waste Training and Development

Record of Pre-election Work Undertaken in the West, May 2007

The strategy that was undertaken by Community Development Projects (CDPs) and Family Resource Centres (FRCs) in the West comprised of two major elements. Firstly, the programmes organised Pre-election Hustings Meetings with Candidates and, secondly, the programmes implemented voter awareness events with a view to increasing voter turnout within targeted areas.

Pre-election Meetings
These meetings were Questions & Answers style meetings. The purpose of the Pre-election Meetings was three-fold:

- To remind election candidates of the work, and the value of this work, that the two programmes (CDPs and FRCs) are undertaking in the West
- To get issues relating to Poverty and Social Exclusion on the political agenda through asking questions of the candidates on these topics
- To hear what candidates intend to do in relation to poverty and social exclusion should they be elected

In advance of the meetings each Project was asked to formulate a question (including an opening and closing statement). Each question was then vetted by an organising committee comprising Project Representatives. This ensured that there was no overlap between questions and that the closing statement that followed each question reflected the position of all Projects in the Region.

The meetings took place as follows:

Galway West, 20th April, 2007
Westwood House Hotel, Galway

Chaired by: Robin Hanon (EAPN, Ireland)

Candidates Attending:
Mayor Niall Ó’ Brolcháin (Grn), Minister Frank Fahey T.D. (FF), Minister Éamon Ó Cuív T.D. (FF), Michael D. Higgins T.D. (Lab), Cllr. Fidelma Healy-Eames (FG), Cllr. Catherine Connolly (Ind.)

Questions from CDPs and FRCs

Q1: Margaret O Riada (Galway Traveller Movement) – Projects Challenging causes of Poverty

Q2: Funding for Projects

Q3: Commitment to Eradicating Poverty in Ireland

Q4: Clann Resource Centre – Youth Cafes

Q5: Ballybane & Mervue Community Development Resource Centre – English classes for Foreign Nationals

Q6: Connemara Community Radio – Sheltered Employment
Q7: Pléaráca Teo, Rosmuc – Lack of Development in Gaeltacht Areas

Q8: Galway Traveller Movement – Traveller Education Strategy

Q9: Ballybane & Mervue Community Development Resource Centre - Childcare

Q10: Galway Traveller Movement – Recognition of Travellers as an ethnic group

Q11: Ballybane & Mervue Community Development Resource Centre – Recreational Space for Youth

Full text of questions available on www.westtraining.ie under the ‘news and events’ section.

Galway East, April 23rd 2007
Meadow Court Hotel
Chaired by: John Whyrne, Loughrea FRC

Candidates Attending:
Cllr. Jason Devlin (SF), Paddy McHugh T.D. (Ind.), Cllr. Ciaran Cannon (PD), Michael Kitt (FF), Dr. John Barton (FG), Cllr. Tom McHugh (FG), Paul Connaughton T.D. (FG), Cllr. Colm Keaveney (Lab), Adrian Feeney (Ind.).

Question One
From: Veronica Stone, Gort Family Resource Centre – Freedom of Projects to challenge government policy?

Question Two
From: Olivia Conway, Loughrea Family Resource Centre – Amount of public money being paid in rent to private landlords – let Projects buy their premises?

Question Three
From: Martina Forde, Na Caláí, East Galway CDP – Funding for Projects

Question Four
Siobhán Noctor, Aonád FRC, Ballygar – Exploitation of Migrant Workers

Question Five
Denise Feeney, Solas, Headford Family Resource Centre – Rural Transport

Question Six
Na Caláí, South East Galway CDP – Youth Cafes

Question Seven
Aine Deeley, Loughrea Family Resource Centre – Undocumented Migrant Workers

Question Eight
Mary O Keefe, Aonád, Ballygar Family Resource Centre – Rural Isolation

Question Nine
Michael Gorry, Tuam Community Development Resource Centre – Accessibility for Disabled People

Full text of questions available on www.westtraining.ie under the ‘news and events’ section.
Mayo, 23rd April 2007
Lough Lannagh, Castlebar
Chair by: Áine Ryan, Mayo News

Party Representatives Attending
Cllr. Frank Chambers (FF), Sen Paddy Burke (FG), Dr Jerry Cowley T.D. (Ind), Beverly Cooper-Flynn T.D. (Ind) and Gerry Murray (SF).

Issues raised by CDPs and FRCs:

Question 1 – Staffing for Projects
Question 2 – Rural Poverty
Question 3 - Adult Education
Question 4 – Youth facilities
Question 5 – Immigration
Question 6 – Traveller Ethnicity
Question 7 – Isolation and Mental Health
Question 8 – Domestic Violence

Full text of questions available on www.westtraining.ie under the ‘news and events’ section.

Voter Awareness Events

The Voter Awareness Events were focused on members of the Travelling Community and people with disabilities.

Representatives from a number of local groups became involved in different elements of this work.

Training for Trainers:

Athenry, 13th and 14th February
Co-ordinated by West Training & Development and DESSA
Delivered by the Vincentian Partnership for Social Justice
Funded by Galway Rural Development Company

Westside 23rd and 24th April
Co-ordinated by West Training & Development, RAPID, Galway City Community & Enterprise Section
Delivered by the Vincentian Partnership for Social Justice
Funded by RAPID II, Galway City

Voter Awareness Sessions:

March 12th
Portumna, County Galway
- Attended by 15 people.
- Ten new voters registered (gardaí stamped forms as part of event)
March 20th
Ballybane Community Centre

- Attended by 6 people.
- Five new voters registered (gardaí stamped forms as part of event)
- This event focused on members of the Galway Deaf Community. A signer attended the event and some deaf-friendly materials were designed and used during the day.

May 2nd
In the week leading up to May 2nd a lot of ground work was undertaken. As well as the “training for trainers” course delivered by the Vincentian Partnership for Social Justice meetings were held with representatives from the following organisations:

- West Training & Development
- Galway City Council
- RAPID 2, Galway City
- Westside Community Development Resource Centre (CDP)
- Ballybane & Mervue Community Development Resource Centre (CDP)
- Galway Traveller Movement
- Bothermore Community Development Group

A plan was put in place to promote voter awareness events in four communities around Galway city on the evening of May 2nd. Promotion included the distribution of flyers door to door, displaying posters in community buildings, radio advertisement on Galway Bay FM, a radio interview on Galway Bay FM. Alongside this, the Galway Traveller Movement visited Traveller families that they felt were not voting and encouraged them to attend the voter awareness events.

The gardaí travelled from one venue to the next throughout the evening so that FRA2s could be stamped. Two people took on the job of facilitating each event. Events took place in Ballybane, Westside, Bothermore and Ballinfoile.

Numbers of new voters registered at each event:
- Westside: 9 people (incl. 6 change of addresses)
- Ballybane: 28 people
- Ballinfoile: 12 people (incl. 1 change of address)
- Bothermore: 12 people

May 3rd
The People’s Resource Centre in Nun’s Island, Galway, stays open late on Thursdays. A garda agreed to stay in the centre between 8 and 10pm on the 3rd. RFA2 forms were available and a volunteer was on hand to help un-registered voters complete the forms.

Numbers of new voters registered at each event: 5 people.

The vast majority of newly registered voters in all areas of the city came from within the Travelling community. This is largely due to the work of the Galway Traveller Movement who undertook a huge amount of work promoting the events.

A meeting is to be held next week between Galway City Council, Galway RAPID, Community Development Projects in Galway City and West Training & Development to evaluate how we got on with our voter participation events this year and to see how we could improve on our performance for the next election.
Mayfield CDP
Report from Brenda Corcoran

I was delighted to see there was a greater turnout in this election. I know in the polling station where I voted myself there was a 75% turnout. With Eve Phillips we delivered the programme here over 4 weeks. Unfortunately there were only 5 participants despite much publicity on the Evening Echo and on posters etc. However I did learn afterwards that the material which I had left displayed in our training rooms was discussed by other groups informally. Sorry we didn’t take any photographs.

Chrysallis Community Drug Project

Great result all round. We were very satisfied in relation to being involved in such a worthwhile cause. Unfortunately we have experienced a considerable staff shortage this year with a full time position not filled and our co-ordinators maternity leave was not covered. This presented as a barrier for us in relation to fulfilling our prospective plans for greater voter education. However we were in a position to facilitate informal sessions with our client group as part of our drop-in service and on some of the one to ones. This included on going informed discussion around -why vote, how to vote, what to look for and where while deciding your vote etc. We also helped clients in relation to information on voter registration. We found that clients were very interested in all of the discussions that they participated in. We found that referring back to the information we received on the training was key in the delivery.

We did stay informed in the community in relation to the progress of voter education. We advertised and attended the evening held in the Law Library with the local politicians before the election. The information from his evening was communicated to the clients who could not attend themselves.

Thanks for all the hard work.

The Team at Chrysalis

Kerry Education Service

Report from Lucy Henehan

Hi good to hear that the programme is producing results. I was a tutor delivering the programme to a group of 30 women in Killorglin. The group then decided to invite local candidates to their group. Jackie Healy Ray and Breda Moynihan Cronin attended. We were all very impressed with Breda but sadly she did not get elected in a fiercely contested constituency.

I also delivered an adapted version of The Voters Education programme to a special needs group in Killarney. I think an adapted version of the programme can be used very successfully with Special Needs groups to generate greater awareness of how society functions and their role in improving it. I would be grateful for info or any further materials you may produce to deliver the programme to this group.

Thanks Lucy Henehan
More from around the Country....

My concentration since meeting in Mountjoy Square 2/3 years ago has been to get everyone on the register. I would think I have put upwards of 50 people who were not registered to vote on the system over this time. I found during the weeks up to the election that people were glad to be included “in” – I thought I even noticed pride at being counted.

I didn’t think there was a more practical way for me to promote.

Delighted to hear of your success – you deserve it.

Billy Gallagher

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I thoroughly enjoyed taking part in the Active Citizenship/Voter Education Programme Training Trainers' Module in Navan, on the 4th April '07. We had just reached the end of our Return to Education/ FAS/VEC programme and had no time to incorporate the course, but I look forward to doing so in our Trim Adult Literacy Centre in the future. Congratulations on the programme and the resulting increase in voter participation and on the way it has been devised. Thank you for all the initiatives and hard work.

God bless you all! Rosemary McLoughlin.

Wonderful Waterford !!

Report from Josephine McCaughey, giving feedback from participants on training for trainers course held in Waterford.

Margaret Kerrigan:-

Margaret has done some work with traveller women, but not the full course. She covered the history of how women received the vote. They found that very interesting and discussed how important it is to vote. She suggested they listen to radio and television (they would not have good reading skills.) They had no idea who any of the politicians were, or what party they belong to. Did questions and answers about voting – they are still finding the transition difficult – Their awareness and understanding of how we got the vote has made them more interested in voting now. More aware of local issues and things that involve them. They were delighted to discuss Berie when they realised who he was, and what party he was leader of etc.

They have gone on to Primary Health Care (Mary Bagg) will do module on local elections, and will follow up on local elections.

Mary Bagg:-

Working with group around election, certainly has done some more work in that area. On a personal level she found it very informative. She is not Irish citizen so found the information very useful in her understanding of the way the system works here in Ireland, it has had a knock on effect. The group felt disempowered and now feel confident that they can take up relevant issues.

Claire Mc Namara (H.S.E.)

Has worked with one group, two other groups she hoped to work with were not interested. She found the whole lecture very positive. She used every chance she gets to pass on the knowledge she acquired.
**More from around the Country....**

**Report from Patrice Dunne, Knockmay Community & Family Resource Centre, Portlaoise**

Firstly I would like to thank Sr Phyllis for facilitating our information evening in the run up to the election. We ran our information evening on 25th April in Portlaoise College and it was a joint venture between ourselves at Knockmay Community & Family Resource Centre and Portlaoise Community Action Project. Only a small group of local people attended but these were key people in our community and word soon spread very quickly. Two days after this information evening people attended our Centre to fill out supplementary registration forms, in attendance was the local community Guard, he stamped all the forms and we got them all to the County Hall by that afternoon. People who had never voted before actually voted in the election. We sent them a flyer with some issues to bring to the politicians that effect Knockmay as a community.

This information evening had a huge effect on all that attended, with many of the participants interested in learning to facilitate this programme themselves.

Again many thanks to all involved.

**Mallow Initiatives**

Tom Ward went to the Secondary School and sourced Students who would be eligible to vote. He demonstrated the Module during class period. A member of the Garda Siochana also attended. In total 13 students registered to vote. Since the election contact was made with the group and all 13 reported that they had voted.

On 8th March International Women's day a manifesto was established on the issues for Mallow Women (120 attended). This was used as an awareness manifesto and a tool for discussion prior to election. (I presume you have a copy - if not I can forward same)

Margaret Desmond
RAPID Co-ordinator Mallow

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**Voter Education Workshop in Cavan**

“we did some voter education training with some lone parents groups”

Hazel Leahy
South West Cavan CDP.
Active Citizenship Voter Education Programme

Our Voice, Our Vote

The students completed the 12 week Vincentian Partnership for Social Justice Programme which seeks to educate and organize students to actively participate in the political process.

A visit to the Council Chambers at Kerry County Council was organized and students learned about how local government is structured and experienced first-hand a council meeting. Below is the students own report of the visit to the council.

Active Citizenship at Work

By Voter Education Students, Moyderwell

On the 12th of March, 2007 at 10 a.m. seven students and our tutor met outside the Kerry County Council Offices. We were there to attend a council meeting because we had participated in a Voter Education Programme and as Adult Basic Education students we were interested in seeing how the Council works.

We were greeted by a member of the office staff and taken up to the Council Chambers. Then another member of staff, Padraig Corkery, the Communications Officer, skilfully answered some of our questions. For instance, he told us how we could find out who our local Councillor is. Michael Gleason, the Councillor from Killarney, welcomed the group personally and at this time we voiced some of our concerns about the barriers and obstacles to voting that some citizens face.

The meeting finally started at 11 a.m. – a half hour late – and Lord Mayor Ted Fitzgerald welcomed everyone to the meeting. There were a lot of distractions in the room during the meeting. Even though we were politely asked to turn our mobiles off, the Councillor’s phones were constantly ringing. As well, laptops were creating a lot of confusion, and many Councillors talked throughout the meeting. What really surprised us was that there were only two women Councillors present and the rest were men.

The group left after an hour because we found the items starting to get repetitious. We returned to Moyderwell for tea and coffee, discussed our experience and agreed that more citizens should attend the meetings so they could see first hand how our Councillors conduct themselves.

We all enjoyed the learning experience and agreed that it was great to see how council meetings are organized. We have decided that we would now like to visit the Dail and hope there will be more classes like this. From this experience and, as a result of our voting class, we have been inspired to vote and encourage others to vote in the upcoming general election.

.................................
As a result of the Vincentian Partnership Voter Education Programme the students with the Adult Basic Education course started off the year by developing and performing a short drama called *Standing at the Crossroads*. The play examines the issue of voter participation, focussing on the first time voter who may have reading and writing difficulties. The play encourages people to become active citizens and thinking, active partners in social change.

Ann Ryle, Mary Shanahan, John Russell and Delia Lucid performed the drama at the Dublin City Hall, the NALA Students’ Forum in Dublin, the Kerry Education Service Committee Meeting and the Tralee Town Council.

Between then and the call of the general election, students developed a ‘Wall of Issues’. After attending a workshop on digital camera use, students photographed areas of concern around Tralee and in their local communities. Students circulated the town of Tralee and took photos of issues that could be represented visually. The visual representation depicted typical election issues. For instance, they took photos of rubbish bins, graffiti, potholes in the roads. The students then compiled the photos on poster boards and created a *Wall of Issues*. On May 16, 2007 local politicians were invited to attend a *Voters’ Café* at which their *Wall of Issues* was displayed. Although only one politician turned up for the event, the students were encouraged by the interest expressed by fellow voters and the awareness it raised.

Although the next election is not for another five years, students intend to keep track of their elected politicians and ensure that the promises made during the campaign are carried out. I believe there is a heightened sense of awareness as a result of students participating in this programme, and students now take a genuine interest in the issues that concern their community.
Report from Ruth Lunnon, Support Worker/Assistant Coordinator
Loreto Centre, Crumlin Rd, Dublin 12

We did the following here in the centre:

1. Ran an Active Citizenship course in Jan - Feb 07 that targeted our Women's Studies Certificate Graduates. While most of them were voters, we targeted them as an articulate and questioning group of people who could be potential 'ambassadors' to spread the word about voting to their peers and wider family/community groups. The feedback from them was very positive. We also asked local candidates for info and left this out for participants to browse.

2. Publicised the 'Meet the Candidates' session organised by the Crumlin Women's Action Group/AONTAS.

3. Did a free group text (can be done on your mobile provider's website) to past Active Citizenship course participants with the 'Meet the Candidates' information.

4. Put the www.vote.ie info up on our notice board.

5. Put the info re Gay Mitchell's booklet up on our notice board.

6. Put the Irish Times 'How we are Governed' Supplement up on our notice board.

7. Collected about 170 signatures for the AONTAS 'Demand Your Right to Vote' campaign and spoke to classes and put up posters about it.

8. Organised a group to go to Leinster House on 24th April - people felt much better informed and enthused by this (and the scones and coffee laid on in the visitors bar went down a treat!)

Voting Heroes! Participants on the citizenship course Jan-Feb 2007 with their Certificates. Included are Ruth Lunnon and Eleanor Murphy-White co-facilitators.
Prisoners Vote for the First Time!!

Report from Dr. Clodagh Harris – UCC

Claire (one of the MA students) and I ran a workshop in Cork prison before the February 14th registration date for prisoners. Unfortunately only a handful of the prisoners (approx 4) attended all three sessions. In the end it was more of a registration drive and a ballot paper information session than a full workshop. I estimate that 50 (or perhaps a little more) prisoners attended at least one of the sessions.

At the end of April I delivered the training for trainers programme to 6 teachers (five from Cork prison and one from Limerick prison) and to 2 prison officers (both from Cork prison).

I am currently in contact of the chair of the committee that provides in service training to the teachers in the prisons with a view to running another training for trainers session in September. As soon as I have further information on that I will pass it on to you.

I am attaching a report and document I received from Raymond Murray of the Irish prisons service. It shows how many prisoners were registered and how many voted. I know from speaking to the Deputy Governor in Cork prison that many of those who registered there in February had left by May. The prison is extremely overcrowded which means many have been released early.

Voting in Prisons – Raymond Murray Irish Prisons Service

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prison</th>
<th>No. registered by Feb 14th</th>
<th>No. that voted</th>
<th>No. of eligible voters (those over 18 and excluding non-nationals)</th>
<th>Nos. of remand &amp; sentenced prisoners</th>
<th>Day of ballot</th>
<th>Method used</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arbour Hill</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>139</td>
<td>4 trial, 134 sentenced</td>
<td>18/21 May</td>
<td>Sealed ballot checked and posted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Castlerea</td>
<td>15 (est)</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>235</td>
<td>44 remand, 191 sentenced</td>
<td>17 May</td>
<td>Sealed ballot, checked and posted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cloverhill</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>411</td>
<td>219 remand, 145 trial, 63 sentenced</td>
<td>No set date</td>
<td>Sealed ballot checked and posted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cork</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>266</td>
<td>288 sentenced, 38 remand</td>
<td>18 May</td>
<td>Sealed ballot checked and posted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dóchas</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>30 remand, 64 sentenced</td>
<td>18 May</td>
<td>Sealed ballot, checked and posted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limerick</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>271</td>
<td>52 remand, 242 sentenced</td>
<td>18 May</td>
<td>Sealed ballot, checked and posted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loughan</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midlands</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>392-395</td>
<td>436 sentenced, 2 remand</td>
<td>16/17/19 May</td>
<td>Sealed ballot, checked and posted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mountjoy</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>540</td>
<td>540</td>
<td>18-22 May</td>
<td>Sealed ballot, checked and posted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portlaoise</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>3 trial, 112 sentenced</td>
<td>17/18/21/22 May</td>
<td>Sealed ballot, checked and posted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shelton</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>56-60</td>
<td>16/17/18 May</td>
<td>Sealed ballot, checked and posted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Patricks</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>133</td>
<td>25 remand, 179 sentenced</td>
<td>No specific day</td>
<td>Sealed ballot checked and posted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training U</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>18 May</td>
<td>Sealed ballot, checked and posted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wheatfield</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>368</td>
<td>18 remand, 368 sentenced</td>
<td>18 May</td>
<td>Sealed ballot, checked and posted</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The low take-up in open centres and in Cloverhill can be explained in the context of a relatively high turnover of inmates.

The final figure as per Dept of the Environment is that 400 prisoners registered by 14th February deadline (12% aprox of the prisoner population).

Variations in the numbers of eligible voters between the original figures issued for February 14th and the final numbers can be accounted for by:

- prisoner transfers between institutions
- individuals being admitted to prison who were already on the postal voters list
- those who applied and were successful in getting onto the supplementary postal voters list
- those admitted after 14th February
- those released after 14th February and before the election
- those who spoiled their votes.

The process followed in each prison was as follows: Once the prisoner had cast his/her ballot, it was placed in a sealed envelope, the prisoner's name was checked on the list and the envelope was posted to the Returning Officer. Voting workshops were provided in prisons by the Faculty of Government in UCC and by the Vincentian Partnership for Social Justice. These training sessions were presented to staff in a "train the trainer" format. A number of prison staff attended a workshop and presentation on defining and encouraging active citizenship on 4/4/07, hosted by the Vincentian Partnership.
‘A Seat at the table’ project (funded by the Dept. Equality and Law Reform) has established the first service user forum in both the North East and South East of the country, for people who are facing the challenges of intellectual disability.

‘Midway’ in Meath has teamed up with ‘S.O.S. Kilkenny’ to bring together the various regional organisations that provide services for people with an intellectual disability.

The project born out of the H.S.E. desire to have better customer service is founded on the principles of ‘Advocacy’ and ‘Active Citizenship’. It has brought together advocates from Midway, Order of Malta, Steadfast House, Cairde Activation Centre, Drumlin House, St. John of Gods and Rehabcare.

All thirteen advocates have been elected to the parliament, by their peers. Elections, based on proportional representation took place last July in each of the seven services.

The parliament members have almost completed a ‘Certificate in Leadership’ course at Dundalk Institute of Technology, the first students to do so. They will be graduating in the presence of President Mary McAleese this September.

The parliament hosted their second regional forum meeting, on ‘Voter Education’ and ‘Active Citizenship’ on 10th May 2007. The idea was to raise awareness, both among those with an intellectual disability and those campaigning for election, of the power that this section of society have with their vote. This included a presentation from the ‘Vincentian Partnership for Justice’ and a number of T.D’s and councillors took part in a question and answer session from the floor. The following elected representatives attended the forum meeting on voter education and active citizenship:

Dermot Ahern, Mairead McGuinness MEP, Councillor Paddy Conalty, Paudge Connolly
Fergus O’ Dowd, Councillor Mathew Carty

They answered questions from 200 service users with an intellectual disability on current topics and social policy.

On the 16th May 07 the parliament made a presentation at the national ‘Just Ask’ conference in Kilkenny, where they addressed the difference between work and employment.
More Photographs from ‘A Seat at the Table’ May 10th 2007
One of the most innovative initiatives pre-election was held in Athy, Political Speed Dating and was led by Phyllida Clarke of Athy CDP. Phyllida is happy to do a demo or to meet and go through the process, if any other groups are interested in hosting a similar event.

**Report from Phyllida Clarke – Athy CDP.**

We had a great time here in Athy with my new idea for drumming up interest - political speed dating, using the Vincentian Partnership principles. We only did this with young people but I think its an idea that has a lot of potential.

The meeting was a kind of 'wall of responses and feed back' from the kids. The kids were in groups and we had the candidates moving between groups and we had a couple of 'spare' groups resting and discussing between sessions. Interestingly we found the Nigerian children engaged the most, but by the end of the evening (4 hours!) all were really riveted. Unfortunately the timing wasn't good coming up to the leaving and junior certificates but it needs to be near an election to get the candidates to engage.

This tied in very well with other active citizenship stuff we are doing with the Athy Forum For Youth and other work we did in the schools last year.

**KYS AND ATHY CDP POLITICAL SPEED DATING PROJECT (sample of forms used)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Environment, Education, Safety, Planning, Youth Services, Health etc.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Candidate</th>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Voters' names</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
“Being Part Of The Action”

Well the last few months of election fever, debating and voting are finally over, and the new Government has now been formed. This new Government will be made up of Fianna Fáil, the Greens and the PD’s, and will be supported by a number of Independents, and they will lead the country for the next 5 years. Bertie Ahern T.D. Fianna Fáil, has been re-elected as Taoiseach, and is now the first Taoiseach since Eamon de Valera to win three elections in a row. Also of note, Sean Connick, Fianna Fail’s Wexford TD, has become the first TD who is a wheelchair user and member of the Dail.

Over the last two years Enable Ireland has been playing its part in preparing for ‘Election 2007’. This was achieved by delivering training programmes and forming groups that provided information and support for Service Users in preparation for the Election.

The key aspect of the approach was to deliver a ‘Voter Awareness Training Programme’ that covered the main aspects of the electoral and political system in Ireland, and led to the majority of Service Users being registered and therefore eligible to vote in Election 2007. This programme was delivered with the support of the Vincentia Partnership for Social Justice, a voluntary organization that promotes Active Citizenship.

The other important factor was the development of two ‘Lobbying Groups’ based in D12 and Dun Laoghaire Adult Services. The ‘Lobbying Groups’ are run by Service Users and in the build up to the Election they invited in local politicians to talk about their policies and in particular to discuss disability related issues.

Election Day 24th May 07 has now come and gone, and the following results have been compiled to show how much Dublin Adult Services became ‘part of the action’, through exercising the right to vote.

SURVEY

**Question 1:** DID YOU VOTE IN ELECTION 2007?

Over all, 64 Service Users were identified and contacted and asked if they voted in the Election. From this, 40 responded that they voted in the election, which represents a voter turnout of 62 %.

The resulting statistics therefore show that 24 people did not vote, which equals 38 %.
Question 2: DID YOU VOTE IN THE LAST ELECTION IN 2002?

The second question asked of the survey group of 64 Service Users was whether or not they voted in the last Election 5 years ago in 2002. This was to see if there were any significant changes in voting turnout between the last election and present election. The results were as follows.

23 people Voted in 2002 = 36%
41 people didn’t vote in 2002 = 64%

The percentage increase in ‘voter turnout’ from 2002 to 2007 is therefore +26.57%. This is significantly higher than the national increase between the last two election of +4.28%.

SUMMARY OF VOTER RESULTS

In meeting the aims and objectives of giving information, creating supports and providing the opportunities for all Service Users to be part of this year’s election, I feel this has been achieved and believe the results reflect this. Comparing Dublin Adult Services ‘voter turnout’ with the National Electorate ‘voter turnout’, we are very much in line with the way the nation turned out to vote as a whole on 24th May 2007 (See Pie Chat comparisons).

National Election ‘Voter Turnout’ Results
(NB. Electorate: 3,111,410. Turnout (valid vote / electorate):66.39% (+4.28 compared with 2002).

Also very encouraging is the fact that the voter results show more or less a complete and positive reversal in voter participation from the 2002 to the 2007 election. In 2002, 64 % of Service Users didn’t vote and 36 % did vote – in 2007, 63 % of Service Users did vote and 37% did not vote.

It is hoped that the Enable Ireland voter awareness training programme’s and the lobbying groups have played their part in encouraging everyone to exercise their right to vote and at the same time respecting peoples choice not to vote. Also the results reflect a bigger picture in that people with disabilities are increasingly becoming more involved and active in politics and being ‘part of the action’ to decide who will be the government of the people of Ireland.

Gary Morris : Community Development Co-Ordinator
Enable Ireland June 2007
The Discovery Centre* combined the Vincentian Partnership Voter Education programme with a photography project. Young people attending the Discovery Centre CTC participated in this project along with participants from Cara Park Education and Training Centre. Participants were trained in basic photography skills by photographer Derek Spears. This photography aspect was accompanied by the Voter Education Programme delivered by Sr. Phyllis from the Vincentian Partnership and Margaret Kerrigan, a local trainer. The Project focus was on positive and negative change in their local community. Participants were encouraged to consider ways in which they could bring about positive change in their communities by engaging politically, at local and national levels.

The project aimed to engage participants in a creative process, while complementing this with a programme of social analysis. The photography aspect particularly complemented the ‘Wall of Issues’ aspect of the Voter Education sessions. The themes, which arose in these sessions, were used as background for the discussions on photographic representation of positive and negative aspects of life in the local community. The programme also provided a valuable opportunity for young people attending the CTC and participants from Cara Park to meet and to share experiences and impressions about various aspects of life in these communities. As a result of the programme, participants identified specific issues they would raise with candidates during the election campaign.

An exhibition of photographs was opened in the Village Centre in Darndale in December 2006. The collection then moved to the library in Coolock. Some of the photographs are now on display in the Cara Park Education and Training Centre. The Discovery Centre is particularly grateful to participants of S. Patrick’s Institute for Young Offenders for framing these photographs to such a high standard. This will enable us to display the photographs in a permanent exhibition.

This project was part of a wider North East Active Citizenship programme. The North East Active Citizenship Group includes representatives from the following organisations:

Northside Citizens Information Centre
Northside Community Law Centre
Northside Partnership
The Media Co-op- NEAR FM.

This group came together in 2004 after the last local elections with the aim of developing strategies at local level to increase voter participation in the area. The group developed a plan to promote Active Citizenship in the area in the period 2005-2007. This plan was developed in the context of high levels of voter apathy in the catchment area of north east Dublin and preparation for the general elections in 2007. The plan involved the following:

- Delivery of the Vincentian Partnership Voter Education training programme
- Development of Civic Fora which provide opportunities for organisations and individual to engage with public representatives
- An extensive media strategy
- Leadership training for young people.
Some of the achievements of the group include:

- Four public fora which were broadcast live on community radio.
- Several local community members trained to deliver the Vincentian Partnership Voter Education programme.
- A series of radio programmes were produced, based on the voter education programme developed by the Vincentian Partnership and Network Washington.
- Youth Leadership programmes developed by Northside Partnership.

The photography programme was funded by Northside Partnership, The National Lottery and Comhairle.

*There are two elements to services provision in the Discovery Centre:

The Discovery Centre Community Training Centre (CTC) provides second chance education and training opportunities for early school leavers aged 16 to 21 years. The CTC is fully funded by FAS. Participants receive training in a variety of disciplines such as woodwork, engine technology, catering, home crafts and childcare. As many participants have left school early, literacy and numeracy support and lifeskills training are also provided when needed. County Dublin VEC funds the provision of part-time adult education courses for participants aged 16 years and over. A wide range of courses are offered including computers (beginners to ECDL Level), First Aid, Office Procedures, Communications, Childcare, Health Related Fitness and Community Radio.

Below are some photographs from the Q& A evening with politicians in Dublin North East
Report from Mary O’ Rourke Drumlin CDP, Carrickmacross

A training for trainers workshop was facilitated in Carrickmacross in March 2007 with participants from Co. Monaghan and Co. Cavan. As a result workshops were facilitated in:

- Kilanny ICA group
- Monaghan Town Lone Parents Group
- Carrickmacross Community Group

As part of the preparation for the Election, the large window of Drumlin CDP office in Carrickmacross was decorated with posters and brochures and a large wall of issues. The display used many of the resources from www.vote.ie, including the instances in history where one vote has made a difference, like Hitler being elected leader of the Nazi party by one vote and one vote deciding the official language of America to be English instead of German. The display attracted considerable interest and as a result they had many callers to the centre. This gave the opportunity to explain issues regarding the Election, eg how to complete a ballot sheet and how to respond to questions generated by the display. The callers were fascinated to learn about the power of one vote and to discuss issues related to the election.

------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Report from Leixlip Adult Learning Centre

Report from Anne Comerford

Leixlip Adult Learning Centre held an evening offering help with voting on Tuesday May 22nd. They designed a poster entitled “Worried about Voting” and placed this notice in public places and in local newspapers. The poster also offered help by telephone and all help was private and confidential.

As a tool the tutors on the centre took the VPSJ sample ballot paper and put the names of real candidates running in Kildare North on the ballot sheet. This way anyone coming for help would have an idea who the candidates were and the order in which they would appear on the ballot paper. This would make it easier on the day for them when they went to cast their votes.

Many Thanks
Summary of Voter Awareness

A registration day was held in two Local shopping centres in the Dublin 12 area in November 2006. These were a great success, we found the general public were approachable and very responsive to registering on the day. Dublin City Council (DCC) sent representatives on both days that were helpful and very supportive. However Dublin South County Council (SCC) were unable to send representatives due to their own registration days being held and the register sent to us was incomplete, with many roads omitted. We feel that local councils should work in conjunction with community groups on registration days to maximise on reaching a wider section of the public.

We held our Questions & Answers night on the 8th of May. In the run up to the election we contacted all politicians by letter and email to invite them on the evening. However some could not attend due to other commitments in other constituencies. The feedback from the evening was very positive and the responses from politicians and public will hopefully serve to develop good working relationships. The scope records for the evening are 62 of which nine were the panel of politicians. We requested journalist Rachael English to chair the evening, which she did in a very competent and professional manner. The learning from our Questions & Answers evening was that there were too many questions, and this did not allow for public debate. WAG feels in future fewer questions would facilitate more open and diverse dialog. Because Questions & Answers nights were being hosted by many other communities around the country the communities and politicians alike were lethargic as there was an overlap of events in neighbouring communities. Community groups need to plan and consult with each other to plan up and coming events.

We also felt more time should have been spent on our wall of issues with community groups, to visually highlight concerns of the community. By placing our wall of issues in a public place the broader community who did not participate on Voter Awareness training were given a chance to have a say on issues of concern to them.

We then followed up with thank you letters to politicians while wishing them success in the election.

SOME OF THE QUESTIONS

01. Community Facilities -
    Pauline Sargent – Drimnagh Environment Network

In light of all the developments that are going on in this constituency where are the community facilities. We feel that the health of the community is suffering because political parties are at times, too closely linked to the construction industry and do not put the interests of society first.

Q: Where are real and meaningful community facilities being discussed and actioned for the Dublin 12 area.
02. Family Resource Centre
Winifred Grehan – Dublin 12 Women’s Action Group

There is a Community Development Project in Lower Crumlin and one in Drimnagh. But we see an urgent need for a Family Resource Centre to cater to the needs of the people in the Crumlin area. More funding for new Centres is supposed to becoming available.

Q: Would you support a Family Resource Centre for the Crumlin area, and what will you do if elected to help bring it about?

03. Crumlin Hospital – Georgina Logan – Community Member

One of the biggest issues for people right across the constituency is the ongoing threat to Crumlin Children’s Hospitals. It affects patients, their families and the people who work at the hospital. I am looking for a commitment from the candidates that they will do whatever it takes to ensure the hospital is kept open, and existing services maintained.

Q: I want to know what they have done to keep the hospital so far.

04. Poverty Question – Justin Moran – European Anti-Poverty Network

Given that the report published last week by the Central Statistics Office revealed that Ireland has one of the highest rates of people at risk of poverty in the EU (20%) and one of the lowest rates of spending on social protections i.e. Disability payments, pensions and Social Welfare payments, what would the candidates do to change this?

Q: How would they eliminate poverty in Ireland, and in this constituency in particular where the Dublin 12 area is a designated disadvantaged area?

05. Childcare – Patricia McCann – Co-ordinator Childcare Network

- Provide adequate funding to reach required staffing levels under the new pre-school regulations
- Staffing grants to be based on a % of total projected staff costs

06. Ann Sharp Family Resource

I welcome the comment in relation to the Family Resource Centre. I feel it is much needed facility for the families of drug misusers, a place where they can come without being stigmatised and can get support and information pertaining to their situation in a safe environment.

Q: When elected would you provide a space in a family resource centre for family support.

07. Damian Nolan DISABILITY

Q: Given that disabled people tend not to use their vote should the right to vote be taken away from them?

08. Angela O’Connor Over Sixties Forum

Question will be given tonight

09. Dublin 12 Domestic Violence Service

Q: If elected what will you and your party do to prevent domestic violence against women and what will you and your party do to improve local responses to domestic violence?
Congratulations to Everyone!
Keep up the good work for
Local Elections in 2009!