



DARA LARKIN GERMAINE LLOYD GERRY
GERAGHTY GRÁINNE O'KANE JOHN
PHELAN MARY DANIEL MARY KEEGAN
NOEL FITZGERALD BERNADETTE MAC
MAHON ALICE MURRAY BERNI CULLINANE
LEONORE MAGNE-MOFEU CELINE
GROCQ DIANE RICHMOND LIZ JACKSON
LEE MORONEY MARK BENTAHER ALAN
GIBBONS CAROLINE LYNCH COLLETTE
TOBIN JOHN DOYLE JULIE COMEFORD
CHRISTINE HURLEY MARJO MOONEN
WILLIE SHEILS INA BROE DENIS O'BRIEN
PADDY KELLY EILEEN MCMAHON JOE
DOYLE MAXINE DUNNE ORLA RACHEL
SPENCER MARY REANEY TONY NOLAN
MARGARET JORDAN LORRAINE ROCHFORD
CYRIL O'REILLY PEGGY K DOYLE ANNE
BIDDULPH EILEEN O'ROURKE ALICE
O'REILLY DEE RONAN DEREK JONES
GILLIAN CAROL YEATES MAURICE DUNPHY
MICHAEL FOX FLORENCE MC CULLAGH
NUALA KELLY PHILOMENA POOLE
CHRISTINE O'SHAUGHNESSY CLEMENT
ESEBAMEN GERALDINE ENNIS FLORENCE
MCCULLAGH LORNA MAXWELL MARIE
PRICE BOLGER

FORE- WORD

This collection of stories forms a part of Tallaght Partnership's record of its work from 2000 to 2006. The complete record includes reports, reviews, audited accounts and all kinds of other publications; it is extensive although not fully comprehensive and is sometimes obscure and boring. This is regrettable because the Partnership was an exciting and challenging place to work over this time with a commitment to do the best that could be done in all aspects of its work.

The decision to try to capture something of the 'essence' of Tallaght Partnership through a collection of stories is an attempt to redress this imbalance. It builds on well established practice, if you want something to be felt and understood 'tell the story'. In telling the story complex ideas become easier to understand, there is less reliance on jargon, experience and emotion are shared with the reader. The stories do not make a comprehensive record or a statistically significant sample but they are an authentic account of different people's experience of the Partnership in different contexts and at different times over a number of years. They add depth and understanding to statistical information, programme reports and audited accounts. They complement the evaluation of the Partnership carried out by Marie Cleary of Thrive.

Marjo Moonen, the Partnership's communications and policy officer proposed and led the work to gather the stories. Other staff members took responsibility for seeking out story tellers. Their enthusiasm and commitment to the task is very much appreciated. The Partnership is especially grateful to the people who agreed to share their stories; they help to make sense of a complex area of work and are great reading.

And my story? I can remember the time and effort that went into the preparation of the 2000 – 2006 Strategic Plan; my sense of satisfaction when the Partnership secured a budget allocation to fund important parts of the plan; the challenge of working through a difficult and unsettling period when budget allocations from Pobal (ADM) were significantly reduced; the frustration of not being able to replace key staff. My story however is about having a great job; working with people who are skilled and committed and who care about the work they do; having supportive and engaged Chairpersons and Board members; seeing real positive change in the Tallaght community and knowing that the job is still only half done.

Anna Lee



INTRO

Community development is one of the foundations of the Partnership's work. We like to think it is not only an area of work but also an approach we use in other activities, for instance outreach for training programmes and development of networks of groups or people. The development of community interests in the last 6 years has been very much a continuation and strengthening of the work done in earlier periods.

Fettercairn is an example of a community which has received considerable support over the years from the Partnership, resulting in the establishment of a community centre, Youth Horse Project, coffee dock, childcare centre and many other groups and projects.

Managing and maintaining are key challenges in the support of groups – after the adrenalin rush of the first successes, ongoing attention is needed to keep things going and deal with the changes that inevitably happen. And sometimes tough decisions have to be made, for instance to stop supporting certain projects.

Important other activities in this period focused on people with disabilities, Tallaght Radio and environmental projects.

Berni Cullinane

Community Network Initiatives

When I started working with the HSE Community Team, I was given a list of names that I should contact which included Sheilann and Grainne. I contacted them and was invited along to the Community Development Committee. My first experience of the CDC was a review meeting held down in Kilkenny, which was quite interesting as there was a lot of debate around funding for CDPs.

Currently, I am a member of the CDC and the Social Impact sub-group and I also work with Julie on the Steering Group of the Fettercairn Community Health Project.

One of the most significant pieces of work that I was involved in were the Community Network Initiatives, specifically Brookfield Celebrates Together, which was an extremely creative piece of work. The groups who were organising the event, got a large number of local people involved. Each group brought a local person along to the meetings and supported them (if needed) through the process. Other innovative methods used in this event included the sun sticker. Once you were wearing a sun sticker you could be asked to do anything. It was all about the event. Overall, the event was highly positive and energised the community with hundreds of kids coming out to

see Robbie Keane and Sharon. The only thing was we did not manage to get local people to come back. We needed to be clearer about what was the purpose of the event and what the expected outcomes were. There was a certain amount of frustration over the research we got back from this piece of work, and this was in part due to the fact that we weren't clear from the outset what the purpose of this event was.

Another piece I was involved in was around citizenship, which had three strands of work- Voting and Participation, Community Policing and Representation. We had 4 politicians come along and they were not allowed to state their party. Tallaght Partnership provided the funding for this and it was held in the Partnership. It raised the profile of citizenship in the area.

Germaine Lloyd

South Dublin Community Platform (1997-2006)

South Dublin Community Platform and SPLTU, CDP

When I became the development worker with the Special Project on Long-term Unemployment (CDP), which was based in the Partnership offices, I became involved with Tallaght Partnership. I was invited to join a number of committees including the Community Development Committee and the Community Business Sub-Committee. Currently I am a Social Partner on the Tallaght Partnership Board; I am a member of the Community Development Committee; I'm on the steering group for the FM-WEAPON project and a member of the Tallaght Partnership's Equality Action Group.

In 1997, the Tallaght Partnership's Community Co-ordination Team (Aiden Lloyd and Sheilann Monaghan) were instrumental in bringing together representatives from Community Development Projects (CDPs) in Clondalkin and Tallaght to test the feasibility of setting up an organisational structure through which the community sector could participate in the new 'Better Local Government; a Programme for Change'. Following a series of consultation seminars across the county the South Dublin Community Platform was established early 1998. This was a really important piece of work initiated by the Community Coordination Team of the Tallaght Partnership, which made it possible for local communities to have a voice on the new local government structures.

Tallaght Partnership's involvement in SDCP from 2000 to 2002 was not as 'hands on' as in previous years due to shift in work priorities for staff, the employment of the Platform's own staff person and some uncertainty as to the role of Partnership organisations like Clondalkin and Tallaght in relation to SDCP which was a local

community forum. However, Tallaght Partnership did offer advisory support to SDCP and linked in through its member groups, such as Fettercairn Residents Trust, where the Partnership were already involved.

More recently since 2004, Tallaght Partnership has increased its involvement in work of the SDCP. Julie Thorne, of the community coordination team has supported the SDCP to develop a series of thematic papers which came as a result of workshops held at the 2005 AGM. This has been a really important piece of work, and helps the members to reinforce the need for the voice of the community.

Post 2006, SDCP will be a really important structure within the new cohesion process. The South Dublin Community Platform sees itself as being beneficial to Tallaght Partnership, in the fact that it represents community and voluntary groups across South Dublin County who promote the interests and needs of those who are experiencing poverty and social exclusion.

Gráinne O' Kane

Tallaght FM: May 2004, 'Watch the goals & the pitfalls'

Community Development Worker (2001-2005)

Hundreds of phone calls day and night, tears, fighting, laughter, anger and meeting after meeting to solve problem after problem. Meetings with FÁS, the Broadcasting Commission, staff, management committees, subcommittees, banks, accountants and so on. For a number of years, Tallaght FM was a hot spot of my work and it took a long time to review the goals of community radio, talk about what a possible future could be and what the steps were to get off the destructive path of maintenance onto a path of volunteerism and success.

For many years, Tallaght Partnership supported community radio, primarily through the Community Development Team's active involvement on its management committee. Looking back, the management committee of which I became a member was a closely knit group which did not look at itself from a bit of distance. We made some poor decisions, which I think cost individuals personally and cost the radio as a whole.

The key learning from this experience was twofold. First: do not assume that decisions in

the past were always made in the best interest of the project. Tallaght FM made the decision to apply and operate under the FÁS social economy programme, the objective of which ultimately was to retain Community Employment staff in employment. This was neither in their or the radio's best interest. Secondly, step out and gain some perspective: remove yourself from the chaos and document the core problems, objectives, future and bring this to the table for debate rather than continue to try and stay afloat. If we were to do it again, we would benefit from objective focused supervision!

John Phelan

Experience the utter exhilaration, the power, the strength and the companionship!

At around 1995 I became involved in the Fettercairn Youth Horse Project. It was the time of the Control of Horses Act and my sons and many of their friends had horses as pets. I was also interested because I used to have work horses in Finglas years ago.

Many of the young fellas – it was then nearly all young lads and their fathers – were interested in the idea of forming a club where the young lads and fathers could share their skills and memories in a safe, secure environment. All wanted to be able to experience the utter exhilaration, the power, the strength, the companionship, the closeness of being with and caring for such a splendid animal. It was important that these young lads would have the opportunity to benefit from this attachment to horses, that they would have the opportunity to learn and develop skills and possibly gain employment.

It was with this in mind that a number of us contacted Tallaght Youth Service. They worked with us to set up a youth group, put structures in place, involve the young people, their parents and the community, devised a possible plan of action for the securing of land and funding in order to develop an enclosed stabling facility, which offered equine and related education and training possibilities for young people within the area.

Tallaght Partnership was crucial in the realisation of these plans, and a key link between Tallaght Youth Service and the Partnership was the fact that Sheilann Monaghan moved employment from the one to the other at this time. The involvement of both organisations also gained respectability for the project. The Partnership was extremely important in linking the FYHP into the URBAN Programme, which was the turning point for the project. South Dublin County Council, as the lead agency in the URBAN process, was the owner of the land on which the youths' horses were squatting and was also responsible for implementing the Control of Horses Act!! Once URBAN decided to contribute financial aid to this "worthwhile and unique project" it was impossible for SDCC not to recognise the project. The Partnership was at the forefront in enabling the FYHP to begin negotiations with SDCC, which in turn opened the door to other public and private funders. The Partnership pinned its colours firmly to the

mast and so pushed other organisations, both community, voluntary and private to do the same.

After many years of developing, negotiating, striving, lobbying, the Project was finally opened in December 2000.

Tallaght Partnership made it possible for other agencies to come on board, we were shown how to go about getting the local community onside, we staged information/leaflet drops to all the doors of Fettercairn and the surrounding SDCC and private estates, we invited all to come to the Fettercairn Community Centre to see the outline plan and model of the project and give their views, we encouraged parents to come in, we encouraged more youths from all the estates to be part of the project, we learned to negotiate, to prepare well for meetings with Department heads, to be able to anticipate their questions/queries, to deal with difficult situations and people, and above all we learned the importance of being very clear about what we wanted, being strong and passionate yet respecting the situations we found ourselves in, having local people and others from the project fronting the negotiations.

Tallaght Partnership did a lot of the background stuff at a time when the local community was just learning the ropes of how it should be done - tapping into people, Government bodies, private funders; filling out funding applications; helping to deal with legal and insurance issues/structures; employment issues and contracts; keeping community people involved and keeping them in the loop so that they were involved in making decisions and taking control of the project.

Once the building was up we thought all was done. The realisation soon hit home that the real work was only beginning. Staff were employed, young people were encouraged to join up, training programmes were starting to be designed, health and safety procedures had to be adhered to, insurance requirements were always to the forefront, bills had to be paid, maintenance of

the facility and animal welfare were constantly on the agenda, following funding opportunities was a priority. Parallel to the day to day running was the constant balancing act between all the players within the project—youth development, social/personal/vocational training/education, animal welfare, equine skills, community development. It has been a great credit to the Project that the core aim and purpose of the Project has never been interfered with or come under question.

It was not all plain sailing. There were many trials and errors but when we made a mistake we tried to avoid it the second time around!!! This type of community grass roots project puts huge pressure and responsibilities on community people. I often felt like walking away, but we wanted to prove that the project could work. It took so long to get the project up and to keep it going is a fulltime commitment from local people and the other Board members from various organisations in the area.

The fact that the project is still there and is going from success to success (3 members have been accepted to RACE Training Centre, another member has joined the Army Equitation programme, many youth and community groups attend every week, a high number of members have passed their Association Of Riding Exams, proves to me and the community beyond any doubt that this project meets the need as outlined 11 years ago.

At this stage the project needs formal financial commitment from State and semi state agencies. It needs to be recognized as an important, essential, integral educational and developmental strategy in the formation and progression of young people from South Dublin. This project never set out to be profit making yet it has to survive financially. It is a community project whose purpose is to create new worthwhile opportunities and experiences for local young people. My hope is that as a result of subsidy and self financing this project will have healthy finances and will not have to be constantly looking over its shoulder and so can concentrate on its main purpose – the development of young people.

Mary Keegan

An agency that is there for you!

I realise that this evaluation is concentrating on the years 2000 – 2006, but it is important to understand the work done in Fettercairn by Tallaght Partnership before 2000. That work has enabled Fettercairn to reap the benefits and move successfully past 2000!

In the nineties there were several people in the community who wanted things to change because the area was so run down. We were the forgotten tenants as regards tenants' involvement. Dublin Corporation was in Fishamble Street, while we were out here in Tallaght! In 1997 the change-over happened to South Dublin County Council (SDCC).

We would not have been able to do the work that was done by the Partnership ourselves, because we had no experience with community work. Some people had worked with Dublin Corporation but many did not have that experience. A lot of barriers between SDCC and the community were broken down with the help of the Partnership. I felt there was a great involvement by the Partnership workers. They helped to set up the estate management in the area, develop the structures of the Fettercairn Community Centre and set up the Residents Trust (which was used as the vehicle to draw down funds from the URBAN project) with the local residents.

The first people I met as a voluntary community worker and resident was the Partnership who sat at the table with us in URBAN and helped us negotiate funding, legal and company structures, planning issues, involving the local community and agencies. I learned a load from that because I was like everybody else in this community: all we did was fight because we did not see any other road into them (agencies-SDCC, Garda, Health Board) and we thought that the way to get them to do things was to argue and fight with them to try to get them to do things, but it was not.

It was about negotiating in a constructive way that we learned through the process. We also gained an understanding of where the agencies were coming from, we saw things more clearly. Before we wanted it all done in a week but we had to learn how to negotiate and we learned those skills from the Partnership.

I became the estate management worker, I was sent on estate management training courses, met new people, promoted Fettercairn. I did things that I never thought I would be able to. Development is a long-term process and people have to stay with it all along. Fettercairn is a good example that it is worth it. If you go back and look at old photos of 1990-1994 the place was a sham, there was nothing here. And now look at it today, it is still not 100% but there are huge improvements and benefits to local residents, people are settling down and buying their houses and staying in the community. There is everything here for people and if we are successful that the Luas will stop here at the Community Centre, well then that will be the "icing on the cake" for locals!

At the end of the day we can now do things ourselves. As a result of learning and experience gained from the first time around, we are now much better prepared to carry out a second extension to the Community Centre, which is to begin soon. The Partnership can now monitor us from a distance and link back with us again when we need it. They are still involved with local groups and it is important for communities to know that there is an agency that is there for you!

Noel Fitzgerald

Working with Sexual Orientation

Draiocht Community Development Organisation

My involvement with the Partnership started in 2000 when Draiocht (my organisation) began working in the Tallaght and Clondalkin Areas. My colleague, John Davis and I met Sheilann Monaghan, Coordinator of the Community Development Co-ordination Team, in late 2000 in order to look at working more effectively together in Tallaght. I have been linking and working with the Co-ordination Team and the Community Development Committee since then.

One of the projects we worked on together was the Sexual Orientation Sub-Committee (SOSC), which was initiated by Grainne O'Kane of the Partnership. My organisation had named sexual orientation as an area of work that we were committed to getting involvement in. We had started with the notion of gender but on looking at gender we realised that gender was broader than male / female and this led us into considering sexual orientation. I had done some initial training on the issue but had not done any actual work on the ground.

Grainne brought together a number of different people she had had conversations with: Berni Cullinane (HSE Community Worker), Tracey Reddy (SPLTU) and myself, in July of 2003 to see if there was something that we could do to look at sexual orientation as an issue in Tallaght. Over the next period a number of different other people joined SOSC – Clement Esebamen (Tallaght Partnership) and Stephen Mulkearn (Tallaght Community Radio). The full story of all the work that was done does not belong here, however, it is important for me to say that a huge amount of work and learning was done.

From my organisation's point of view, the work of SOSC and the involvement of both Grainne and Clement made the issue of sexual orientation more real. After the work of SOSC we became much more aware of huge difficulties of even raising the issue of sexual orientation and we realised that this was not just an issue for Settled Irish people. Sexual orientation remains one of the key Policy Areas for my organisation but we are more 'real' in our thinking and how we might go about highlighting the issue in a way that brings the wider community along. This is hugely significant.

This story was important to me and my organisation in that the story suggested two interlinking threads that my organisation will have to grapple with, in order to be able to do good work on the issue:

1. The issue is highly emotive with some people suggesting that sexual orientation is a middle class 'problem' and not an issue of social exclusion. Therefore in addressing it, there is really no point in being 'logical and reasonable' as this will not deal with the real deeply felt emotions people have.
2. Many people we met had relatives, friends, family and neighbours whom they knew to be gay or lesbian. Therefore here was a story that lots of people knew about, but that was seldom spoken of. It posed a question to us – how to support the articulation of a 'common' story that is deemed to be 'uncommon' and even 'grotesque'.

The Partnership contributed to SOSC in three main ways:

- » Funds for organising and delivery of Awareness Raising Sessions
- » Grainne O'Kane's hard work, knowledge on the issue and support to the members of SOSC
- » Clement Esebamen's honesty and integrity in speaking about the issue from his point of view.

There was also the fact that we could not have met together without the umbrella of the Partnership. Grainne was able to pull us together because she had no agenda between us.

If we would do it again, I think we would be a little less ambitious and more focused. Since we seemed to be a committee of 'straight people' we should have concentrated more on information giving and awareness-raising and not have been so mesmerised by the thoughts of doing policy work. Or we should have worked harder to include more gay and lesbians in SOSC and then we could have had some legitimacy for doing policy work. As it was, we fell between two stools.

David Lynch

The SRUNA Story

I used to work as a Community Links Worker with Tallaght Partnership a number of years ago. I'd like to recount some of my experiences on a project called SRUNA that I think had a profound influence on my own work practice and I hope made a positive contribution to the work of Tallaght Partnership and built on its relations with other agencies in the area.

The initiative was an example of good joint working between South Dublin County Council and Tallaght Partnership. SRUNA was a European initiative aimed at European local authorities that focused on the development of scenic recreational areas that were adjacent to urban landscapes. It had strong emphasis on sustainable development and social inclusion. SDCC approached Tallaght Partnership to carry out a consultation with social inclusion groups in the Tallaght area with a view to seeing how the area of Bohernabreena could be best developed as a recreational area, while retaining its environmental integrity.

Initially, I approached a number of groups, most of whom were participating on the Community Development Sub-Committee of the Partnership, to see if they would get involved. They included groups who represented women, youth, refugees / asylum seekers, older people, community arts, lone parents, people with addiction problems, the long-term unemployed and Travellers. I got to meet many of these groups myself or a connection was made with the target group through workers. At these initial sessions with target groups we informed them about the project and made enquiries in relation to:

- » What they knew about the area concerned now and in the past;
- » How they recreate;
- » What were the barriers to them recreating especially in an area like Bohernabreena.

In addition, questionnaires were devised and filled out at these sessions in relation to these questions. People at the sessions were also asked to nominate 2 people from each target group to participate on a trip to the area to explore these issues in more detail and make more specific proposals / recommendations about the development of the area.

Participants were given disposable cameras and encouraged to photograph sights that particularly reflected their enjoyment of the area, sights that represented barriers to that enjoyment or potential areas for development. The group bonded very well and discussed openly different issues affecting the different groups along the way. The day ended with the group getting a great insight into the area – many of whom knew next to nothing about it although living alongside. Groups said that the day provided them with

an opportunity to reflect their own needs in relation to recreating in the area and to gain knowledge of the needs of other groups in that regard.

Feedback from the experiences of the group was gathered afterwards and collated with the photographs. The results were fascinating and reflected particular issues for different groups, for instance:

- » Disability group – access issues, painting trips and development of points where they could gather to paint;
- » Women – security issues for themselves and children, development of walks where these aspects could be maximised;
- » Older Persons – access to local graveyard adjacent to site would be a big attraction.

The photographs very much backed up the findings from the feedback from the trip. One notable feature from all participants was that they were not in favour of any development that created environmental degradation of the area, or was not agreed to in consultation with local residents. A final report was written up in relation to the process from feedback from the trip, questionnaires etc.

I think this was an excellent project for Tallaght Partnership to take on as it showed an innovative approach that was multi-dimensional including social inclusion and sustainable development under the one brief. It demonstrated how well the different target groups worked together and were open to new approaches. I also think that fundamental to the success of the project was the fact that the community sector in Tallaght was well organised at a local level, with a strong common identity in relation to social inclusion and equality. The experience of working on this project certainly helped me as a worker recognise the great potentialities of involving disparate groups under common themes.

Finally, I would say that the project showed how good working relations between SDCC and Tallaght Partnership were developed. SDCC set up the process for realising the strategy and as part of that involved the Partnership, in recognition of its knowledge of social inclusion issues on the ground and its relations with social inclusion groups locally.

Alice Murray

The Partnership Triangle

Killinarden Drugs Primary Prevention Group

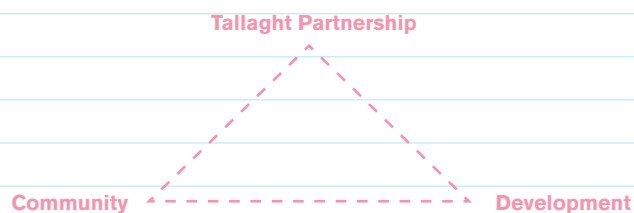
Back in 1990 I was part of a voluntary community Group (Killinarden Drug Primary Prevention Group - KDPPG) when I first entered the friendly open doors of Tallaght Partnership. The 1990's were a very dark time in Killinarden. The drug problems were increasing, drug misuse blighted families and the very fabric of our community. Local crime was on the increase. There was fear in the elderly and worry in the parents and teachers of our youth. The self-image of our community was very low. Luckily local people were questioning Government & agencies on their policies or lack of them and were demanding to have their voices heard. KDPPG, with the support of the Partnership was one of those voices.

The Partnership has supported the KDPPG for the last 14 years through coaching, training and support; for instance with the development of our policy and procedures, course material, research, reporting and evaluation. They also contributed to the development of the KDPPG staff and facilitators - virtually all are local people who live in the Killinarden area.

But the biggest support was in helping the KDPPG to access funding. I remember it very well. On January 3rd 2000 I had a funding proposal with a deadline of the 5th January 2000. I had been taking that proposal as far as I could. Thank God for Anna Lee! On that cold crisp day I just turned up at her door and asked for help. I knew Anna was in work that day because she was extremely busy. Anna without hesitation gave our proposal 90 min of her precious time and that made all the difference again. KDPPG with the help from TP made a successful application to the Probation & Welfare Service.

The development of KDPPG in the last 14 years has been organic, characterised by openness to change and adaptation. There has been an emphasis on practice informed by skills and experience. The funding base of the KDPPG has increased significantly since the establishment of the group – from a budget of a few hundred pounds in 1993/94 to a budget of €215,696.00 annually in 2006. We moved on from being a loose network of voluntary workers to a legally incorporated organisation with employees and a team of paid workers. And we are now recognised as an important and significant organisation within the drugs prevention infrastructure in the Tallaght area. Much has changed within the KDPPG in the last 14 years but the original spirit of optimism and determination has been maintained.

Many people and organisations have contributed to the work and development of KDPPG. In particular the Tallaght Drugs Task Force, and the Probation and Welfare Services have been generous in their financial support. But without the time, help and support by the Partnership with accessing funding where would the KDPPG be today?



Dara Larkin

Community Planning with the Council

South Dublin County Council

From the point of view of South County Dublin's Planning Department, the most important change that Tallaght Partnership has brought to the Council is the expertise and knowledge of Community Development. That started with the South Dublin URBAN Programme – the European Union project aimed at combating social disadvantage in Urban areas.

The URBAN Initiative was a joint Project between Tallaght Partnership, Clondalkin Partnership the South Dublin County Council, the County Enterprise Board and IT Tallaght, with SDCC as the lead partner. The Project operated in a partnership approach: there was never a vote taken to decide any issue, decisions were always arrived at by discussions, compromise and ultimate agreement.

What the Partnership brought on board was an in-depth expertise and knowledge of Community Development, something that often doesn't exist within the various departments. The legacy of the URBAN Initiative, which I believe is still apparent today, is the capacity building work that happened in a number of communities which had responsibility for particular actions, for instance the Fettercairn Community Centre extension, Fettercairn Youth Horse Project, Jobstown Community Planning and Killinarden Community Centre.

The URBAN Community infrastructure committee, with community members and members from the partner organisations, had the job of engaging with communities to enable them to make decisions about what significant community infrastructure projects were going to be chosen and developed within these areas. It was extremely important that there was full community backing for these projects. Of course there were many frustrations mainly at the length of time it took to complete the project, but ultimately people looking back have seen the process as very successful.

Apart from the physical legacy, which in itself is crucial, the capacity building achieved within local communities is still evident today. Local communities have gained a huge expertise both as a result of being involved in individual community projects and as a result of being involved in the wider planning process. I think that the whole area of community planning allows greater understanding between SDCC and the community and I see that as a significant result of the Partnership's work.

These communities now are very capable now when engaging with the Local Authority in relation to any planning and related issues. The most recent example is the engagement regarding the proposed link road extensions within Fettercairn and also the Luas line. This increased level of expertise allows and often forces SDCC and local communities to communicate effectively with each other. It is very worthwhile to feel that what you are putting your energies into has community backing, that at the end of the day what has been achieved has widespread agreement rather than promoting discord.

The experience proves that if the resources and expertise are there, then community planning can be a most worthwhile method of engaging with local communities and so achieve goals of South Dublin County Council.

Gerry Geraghty

Brookfield Celebrates Day 2003

Sharon took part in the 2003 Special Olympics world games. It was a great achievement for her and her family. During the lead up to the 2003 games the community were amazing in raising funds for the Special Olympics. Molly Heffernan's pub gave great support. We had a raffle to raise 5000 euro for the Special Olympics and most of the prizes were donated by local shops. Robbie Keane donated his football shirt and Shamrock Rovers contributed.

Tallaght Partnership funded a community day in Brookfield. The theme was "Brookfield Celebrates" and the day was to honour Sharon for participating in the 2003 world games.

On the day of the Brookfield celebration day Sharon's mother Patricia, myself and Sharon arrived in the centre. It was an absolutely wonderful occasion to see people with different stalls sharing information about what was going on in the area. It was very nice to see.

Sharon was presented with a lovely silver medallion from the whole community of Brookfield. It was great to see all the agencies represented: BASP, FÁS, and the Travelling community and there was a health aspect to the day also.

It was well organised and many local community representatives were there.

Betty Mc Kenna was there and all those who had worked hard over the years in the community. They were very proud of Sharon. It was nice to walk in and see all the groups and all the community together.

The highlight of the day was when Robbie Keane arrived to the centre and he signed Sharon's Special Olympic top. Robbie is a local lad and it was great that he turned up for the event. He was very good to Sharon on the day.

It was fabulous to see that a lot of teenagers and young children asked Sharon for her autograph. The children of the community were very proud of her.

It was a great day for the community. However it's a pity that these days haven't continued. Rosfield, Glenshane and Brookview worked very hard to organise it and it's just a pity that this work hasn't been maintained.

Gráinne O' Kane

Dominic's Area Network: Adopt and Adapt

Community Development Worker (2001-2005)

Community development is not rocket science: networking works. Dominic's Area Network grasped the key ingredients from other areas and shared this learning in their own area. The members of the Network decided on the key issues, objectives and mechanisms to address the issues relevant to their area.

Transforming the idea for networking into proactive actions involves remembering the little things, such as a regular meeting spot and time, the personal touch of contacting people by phone and post/email, refreshments and above all else the work. This work incorporates the consensual view of the entire network and an action plan with timeframes, lead people and agencies, objectives and actions. The learning about the area and how to be a network together consolidated its foundations.

And then let it grow. From the network a number of groups transpired, such as after schools, education, building, and festival.

The Partnership supported the network by developing it with local projects such as Tallaght Childcare and St. Dominic's Community Response and continued to support it with a community development worker to resource the network and relevant initiatives. The story shows how one network, one action can contribute so much to an area.

Mary Daniel

West-Tallaght Resource Centre and the Partnership

West Tallaght Resource Centre

West Tallaght Resource Centre's (WTRC) involvement with Tallaght Partnership began way back in 1990 with the formation of the Partnership for Community Development, which was made up of a consortium of eight local organisations initiated by West Tallaght Resource Centre (WTRC) and Tallaght Welfare Society (TWS).

The work of the Partnership at the time was the continuation of WTRC and the setting up of two sub-projects i.e. Jobstown Integrated Development Project and the Special Project for Long Term Unemployed. The work was funded by the Department of Social Welfare under their first Community Development Programme. In 1991 under the PESP Programme for Government Section Seven, area-based responses to long term unemployment through partnerships were being promoted as the way forward. Tallaght was designated as one of the 12 areas where a partnership was to be established. Following negotiations with the Taoiseach's office, the existing Partnership was expanded to include the other elements of the programme and became the PESP company.

The Partnership continued to administer the Community Development Programme up until 1996/97. Then, because of some difficulties that the Department were having in acknowledging that the three projects were separate but in the one area, it was felt that it would be better, particularly for the two sub-projects (who were restricted in the level of funding that they could access because of the interconnections), if the Partnership gave up the contract and allowed the three projects to apply in their own right. This was done and eventually the two sub-projects were brought into the programme. This highlights the commitment on the part of the Partnership to community development, as they did not have to give up their contract. However, they were willing to withdraw from that contract to allow the two projects to fully develop and at the time this was at a very significant financial loss to the Partnership.

As a founder of the Partnership, WTRC had a seat on the Partnership Board, along with Tallaght Welfare Society, and Get Tallaght Working (Partas), to ensure that community development remained a focus in the work of the Partnership. However, it was never a struggle, given that the Manager of the Partnership has a particular interest in community development herself. Tallaght Partnership is unique in that it has always had a community development focus, even when enterprise development was a significant part of their work in the beginning.

A Community Development Sub-Committee was set up at that time to enable greater participation by the wider community and inform the work of the Partnership and it was out of a need to service that committee, and to facilitate local participation, that the Community Link Person was employed in 1993. In order to continue the community development focus in the West Tallaght areas, it was felt that it would be better if the person was not employed directly by the Partnership but based within a community project. WTRC were in the best position to

employ the person at that time and already had experience in employing staff on behalf of other projects. That work continued to expand and currently we employ three workers now known as the Partnership's Community Coordination Team.

This way of working, having a dedicated committee and a team of staff committed to that committee, has been extremely beneficial to community development in the area and to maintaining community development as a significant focus for the Partnership. There were anxieties and fears among the Community Development Committee when the Community Co-ordination Team moved down to the offices in Killinarden Enterprise Park in 2001 around whether the staff and the work would still remain removed from 'the Partnership'. This was probably a perceived idea, and was not actually what happened. WTRC also had fears as not only had we employed the team but we also benefited financially. We were concerned about any significant financial loss to the project and the effect that it might have on the work of the team. We were also concerned about the CCT that they would not get drawn more into the Partnership work rather than the community.

Being so closely involved and having a good working relationship with the Partnership, we have a much wider view and knowledge of what's going on nationally and this helps to broaden our work through contacts and avenues we can explore through that involvement and expertise. Through networking we have a lot more access to shared expertise.

For me personally, I have been employed by WTRC since 1989 and have a particular connection with Anna Lee as she was my manager in WTRC. So I have had a continuing relationship which has made it easy to develop the work. There is an ongoing exchange of relevant information regarding the community and knowing that the expertise and support is available to me has been important. If issues arise there is always the opportunity for open discussion in an attitude of always doing what is best for the community!

The URBAN project was the first time that statutory and community worked together in agreeing projects. I was on the board of the Partnership and was one of the representatives on the board of the URBAN funding project. It was the first time there was real consultation as to where the money should go in the different areas in West Tallaght. This process proved that if the community is included and consulted, it can work for everyone's benefit. As a result of that funding- the Community Centre was expanded, the childcare facility was built in Killinarden, the Brookfield Enterprise Centre was also supported as was Fettercairn Youth Horse Project.

Noel Fitzgerald

Long term thinking for development

Draíocht Community Development Organisation

I first met the Tallaght Partnership Community Coordination Team in the person of Sheilann Monaghan at the end of 2000. This meeting was around looking at how Draíocht, which John Davis and I had set up as the Regional Support Agency for the Community Development Projects in Tallaght and Clondalkin, and the Coordination Team might work better together in supporting community development in Tallaght.

These meetings continued two or three times a year for a number of years and proved extremely productive. None of this seemed strange at the time, but looking back on it now I am struck that we, as Draíocht, did not meet any other Partnership in such a planned and strategic manner.

I worked with the Community Co-ordination Team in four different and interlinking ways:

1. As colleagues Draíocht and the Community Co-ordination Team of the Tallaght Partnership
2. As support to the Community Co-ordination Team
3. As facilitator and consultant to the Community Development Committee
4. As a requested facilitator to groups that the Community Co-ordination Team was directly supporting

As colleagues Draíocht and the Community Co-ordination Team of the Tallaght Partnership

Draíocht and the Community Co-ordination Team held a number of meetings in order to develop a better and more systematic working relationship. What we discovered at these meetings was that if we did not talk and exchange information on our roles of supporting community development in Tallaght, we could find ourselves in competition as opposed to working cooperatively. What became very clear was that Draíocht had a particular training/support role with Community Development Projects and this seemed to compliment the wider role that the Community Coordination had regarding promoting community development in a wider circle than just the Community Development Projects. This was very significant looking back on it. What it seemed to underline, was the high level of strategic thinking that was going on in the Community Coordination Team and how they could adapt to and work with changes (the introduction of Support Agencies specifically for Community Development Projects was a new and significant change) for the benefit

of their own work, for the benefit of community development and for the benefit of the wider communities of Tallaght.

As support to the Community Co-ordination Team

In late 2003 and 2004, the Community Co-ordination Team asked me to take on two different pieces of work: to devise a template that they could present to others that would clearly explain their role and work and to work with them on Team building. What was again very striking in this was how pro-active they acted as a team. In each of the pieces they had done some work and had seen that there might be added value in getting someone from outside to act as a stimulation to their thinking and acting. In each of the cases the Team engaged with the task and took the work as far as it could be taken. I was struck by how they seemed to fall back on their principles of community development in tackling the work – in that they valued the process as well as the outcome. Secondly, I was struck that they had invited an 'outsider' and had placed a certain amount of faith in me to deliver what it was they wanted out of the work.

As facilitator and consultant to the Community Development Committee

I was asked to act as facilitator to the Community Development Committee at the end of 2003 and I developed a dual role with the Committee over a period of time, as a facilitator to the Review and Planning system that the Committee had in place and as a consultant to the Committee on issues like decision making, representation and structures of the Partnership.

Again a number of things struck me as I did this work. Firstly, how well the Community Development Committee was and is organised. Each year, it formally reviewed its work and planned for the next year and this brief was given to me by the Community Co-ordination Team and members of the Committee. And on these days a lot of energy

was put in by the Community Co-ordination Team to ensure a sense of belonging to and ownership of the Committee and its work by those present through creative exercises, formal and informal discussions and decision making. It is no surprise that the Committee is strong and vibrant and a lot of credit has to go to the Community Coordination Team for that.

Secondly, how the idea of development was always at the heart of the thinking of the Co-ordination Team. The Committee struggled and engaged with the different topics, which I named above, but ultimately learned and developed. What was also very clear in this was that not only was the Committee learning but that this learning was being brought by the members of the Committee back to their own groups and organisations. This was particularly true of the notion of representation, where community groups are often being accused of not being 'representative'. It was very brave and strategic for the Community Co-ordination Team to identify this theme and to bring it out for discussion and resolution and it was to strengthen the voices of those working with the more marginalised in the Tallaght community.

Thirdly, the word sustainability strikes me. It is very clear that the Community Co-ordination Team is putting in the work on the ground and also in the mind to build a strong community development voice within the Tallaght Partnership, which will have an effect in the Partnership, on its work and on the community of Tallaght.

Lastly on this point, is the clear focus on process as the preferred and effective way of promoting ownership and good work.

As facilitator to groups that the Community Co-ordination Team supports

I was asked by the Community Co-ordination Team to act as a facilitator to two projects that the Team was working with: The Fettercairn Youth Horse Project and The Tallaght Environment Action Group.

In both instances the work was framed around reviewing and planning. What was very interesting in both of these groups was that there was a sense of the group and the work being stuck and the Community Co-ordination Team deciding that the way to deal with this was to formally have a review and plan. Having this work done by an 'outsider' allowed everyone to be involved in identifying the difficulties and the solutions (including the member of the Community Co-ordination Team) and in a strange sort of way this promoted improved ownership of the groups and the work by the 'local' people. Placing the discussion in the context of planning also allowed the group to focus on the work and why they were there.

This proved very helpful in both instances. Again the notion of sustainability and process seem to be at the heart of dealing with the issues and the work.

What I have learned from my interaction with Sheilann Monaghan and the Community Co-ordination Team is the importance of minding the process of things and being able to think for the long term, with sustainability in mind. The work that the Co-ordination Team gets involved in is often termed short term in that often money is allocated for 'pilots' and 'initiatives', however it is the ability of the Team to work with that and to develop these into long-term sustainable Projects or Programmes.

I think both of these ideas, process and long term thinking have influenced how I think of my work and how I approach the work within my own organisation. I am also struck by the Team's and Sheilann Monaghan's ability to negotiate with an organisation like ours in the best interests of community development. And lastly, and by no means least, is Sheilann Monaghan's and the Team's commitment to community development as a means and process of addressing the issues of social exclusion. Their way of community development has inspired me and Draíocht in our work with other Partnerships.

Sheilann Monaghan

Hand in hand

Throughout the last number of years there have been several major developments which the Partnership, hand in hand with local communities and others, has helped to initiate and progress. They are still very much part of the community development landscape in Tallaght today. Some examples:

Tallaght Drugs Task Force

In the late 90s the issue of drug misuse had taken hold of working class communities. Government could not or would not give priority to these communities and so erupted the grass roots movement of ordinary community people who decided they had had enough. Even though all this activity was happening within each community there was no one attempting to encourage and enable these communities to work together until the Partnership was given the job of creating the conditions from which the local Drugs Task Force could be established. There had never been a meeting of all main community leaders involved in drug prevention, education and treatment until we met to draw up the draft plan of action for the establishment of the Tallaght Drugs Task Force (TDTF). From there we moved to the formation, development and strengthening of individual Drugs Projects – Jobstown, Killinarden, Fettercairn, Brookfield, St. Aengus, St. Dominics, TRP - the creation of a joint vision and purpose supported by TDTF.

Fettercairn Youth Horse Project

The Fettercairn Youth Horse Project is another significant development within Tallaght. From the very beginning I have believed this Project to be unique, worthwhile even magical. I suppose these feelings emerged as a result of the incredible enthusiasm, dedication and clarity of purpose expressed by the community, both adults and young people. One of my first memories of this Project is the sheer excitement when a new foal was born in November 1995. Seemingly November is very late for such an event. A day before, the owner of the pony and his father had built a makeshift stable from scrap galvanised sheets and wood so that the foal and its mother would have some protection against the bitter November wind. Many of the youths did not attend school that day but preferred to keep mother and baby company! Three days later, on land owned by the Council on which the Project was squatting, there was a hive of activity as owners and their families built 12 similar huts / stables.

At this time one of the main leaders of the Project, John shared with me his vision for the Project--- Stables / Arena / young people directing these magnificent animals between jumps, laughter, shouting, a combination of learning, fun, skills development, confidence, opportunity. All I saw was barren land, which was used as a dumping ground and on which a lot of anti social behaviour thrived, The Backers as it was locally called. I knew then that the purpose of the Partnership and myself was to enable this community to achieve its vision.

This Project was and is all encompassing. It brings together both members of the community and agencies that are interested in young people, in horses, the environment, safety of the community, training & education opportunities, employment possibilities, financial sustainability. The fact that the Partnership and other agencies and individuals such as Tallaght Youth Service, Tom Daly in Social Economy Unit, Dan O Sullivan, Tom Doherty and Dara Larkin in South Dublin County Council had the courage to support the Project when it was not popular gave it legitimacy and therefore ensured that the Project had a less uphill battle in achieving its aims. The Project has not had it easy. Financial sustainability is always an issue but thankfully the clarity of purpose and commitment from the young members of the Project, Community, staff and Board to continue the work still remains.

Citizenship

The area of Citizenship has been on the Community Co-ordination Team agenda since 2000. In 2001 the Vincentian Partnership for Social Justice in conjunction with Tallaght Partnership and Tallaght Youth Service (TYS) conducted their Citizenship Awareness and Voter Registration training programme for YYS young mothers group. This group went on to become winners of the YYS Community Spirit Awards for their work on a voter awareness campaign in 2002. The network ACT-Active Citizenship Tallaght – emerged from this initial work.

In 2003 ACT organised a Tallaght wide day to celebrate and promote Active Citizenship.

Over 60 groups displayed their Citizenship initiatives and activities. Four workshops were held during which the various aspects of citizenship- social, civic and political were given expression. Also during this period the Partnership conducted a Train the Trainers programme. In 2004 ACT and Tallazens, a Partnership project focusing on citizenship and new communities, held a "Meet The Politicians Day" in preparation for the local elections. In 2005 and 2006 ACT, in Partnership with SDCC, conducted very successful Voter Registration Drives. ACT will as part of its 2007 plan be conducting a voter awareness campaign for the general election.

Reminiscing about these major developments I feel that these projects illustrate the important role that the Partnership has played in attempting to improve the quality of life within Tallaght, by way of both geographical and thematic intervention. Form filling, accountability procedures and chasing funding although a necessary part of the work can distract from the core aims and objectives of the work. These immediate demands should not override the development of a clear critical analysis, which will inform collective action!

Bernadette Mac Mahon

An Experience of Collaboration

Vincentian Partnership for Social Justice

The Vincentian Partnership for Social Justice (V.P.S.J.) was established in 1996 to work for social and economic change - tackling poverty and exclusion. In order to achieve this goal the V.P.S.J. facilitates an Active Citizenship/Voter Education Programme with communities in which there is not a record of participation in the democratic electoral process. Since 1998 the V.P.S.J. has facilitated the programme in the Tallaght area. In 2000 Tallaght Partnership expressed interest in promoting the Active Citizenship Programme.

A collaboration began between the V.P.S.J. and the Tallaght Partnership when ACT (Active Citizens Tallaght) was established. The V.P.S.J. became a member of the new group. In time a number of initiatives were planned by ACT, the most memorable of which was a voter registration drive in The Square Tallaght Shopping Centre. This drive took place in November 2005 as part of the celebration of the EU year of Active Citizenship Through Education.

The Voter Registration Drive was a creative initiative which enabled us to raise awareness in a very public place - The Square Shopping Centre - of the importance of Voter Registration. As a result of the 2 day drive a large number of people are registered to vote, others checked if they were already included in the Electoral Register and changed their details if they were incorrect.

Tallaght Partnership played a key role in the planning and preparation for the Registration Drive – they obtained the venue, produced the T-shirts, posters and bookmarks - It also organised the rota of volunteers who serviced the registration desk, spoke to shoppers about voter registration and distributed souvenir book marks. The only thing we could have done differently was maybe to try and attract more volunteers and to get greater media coverage before the event.

It is good to see that the persistent efforts of a group of people ensured that the event was enjoyable and effective. Thanks to the members of ACT and the Tallaght Partnership we now have a model of how to organize a successful Voter Education Drive.



INTRO

Since the nineties we have been involved in work for families and children. Initially this focused on childcare, including the establishment and management of a childcare centre. Moving on from direct provision, the Partnership continued to be actively involved with a range of voluntary boards of local childcare centres, dealing with human resource, financial, funding and many other issues. A growing realisation that community childcare centres need alternative management structures led to research into viable alternatives. While these proposals have not been implemented yet, the Partnership continues to believe in their importance and works to revive interest! Alongside lots of action in the childcare area, we worked on projects to address early absenteeism in primary schools, disadvantaged families with young children and research on housing needs for lone parents. The departure of Anne Prendiville, the coordinator of this area of work, the development of the County Childcare Committee and the establishment of West Tallaght Childhood Development Initiative (CDI) was reason for the Partnership to reconsider its level of active involvement in this area and refocus on support for CDI.

Diane Richmond

Supporting community childcare in urban disadvantaged settings

Partas

I have been involved with Tallaght Partnership for nine years through Partas, but more so in the past five years through membership of various Partnership committees. Partas became involved with childcare from a social enterprise perspective. One outcome of our collective working relationship with the Partnership was the position paper "An unsuitable fit", which enhanced the understanding of funding for childcare in urban disadvantaged areas. We produced a concise and easy to read document and it was communicated to government officials.

Many meetings were held with representatives from various parties in Leinster House. Of most significance was our presentation to the Joint Committee on Justice, Equality, Defence and Women's Rights. The basis for this work was that there was a lack of understanding around childcare issues pertaining to urban disadvantaged areas. This collective action tried to map out how childcare in this area was different than in other contexts. Given that community childcare has to be of high quality but also affordable, we needed to review existing funding approaches and ask for more suitable approaches going forward. The result was a digestible position paper. It laid out the major obstacles and issues and examples of parents (in)ability to pay. It was very practical and set the context for change. Myself and Anne and the committee behind the work, used the document as a lobbying piece and we secured a lot of media coverage. Tallaght Childcare Company was our case study, and illustrated the difficulties with the current situation. At the time of our presentation to the Oireachtas committee, funding conditions within Pobal were relaxed slightly, which offered some room for services to address their strategies.

This story is linked to the story of the Childcare Trust, which was a management model for the childcare sector that the Partnership and Partas were keen to explore. Apart from Partas and the Partnership other stakeholders joined the committee to oversee the work. Funding was secured from Tallaght Partnership, Katherine Howard Foundation and South Dublin County Childcare Committee to undertake a feasibility study and implementation work. Essentially, the

rationale in exploring the model was that by restructuring and supporting community childcare services in urban disadvantaged areas, efficiencies would be achieved and a more effective model would be designed to help overcome some of the difficulties being experienced on the ground in relation to the disparate number of services being developed. Although the childcare facilities voted against the establishment of the childcare trust, the need for it may arise again in the future. That makes the position paper itself a live document, which could re-ignite the momentum!

Both the 'Unsuitable fit' and Childcare Trust work challenged the status quo. Finding out what the perspectives on the ground were in relation to the Trust was an interesting experience. Whilst it didn't have the outcome that the promoters wished, it raised questions about sustainability and how we do our work, and encouraged both the childcare services and us to think outside the box.

Having Partas and the Partnership working together was important for a number of reasons. Firstly, the collaboration gave credence to the work. The Partnership's relationship with SDCC, HSE and Pobal was extremely beneficial. Also, Partas's ability to generate and respond to political questioning was important. Both Anne and I worked extremely well together and were very much driven by our desire to create change within the sector. The way we handled the research and consultation was by subcontracting the work to consultants. Perhaps, we (Partas and the Partnership) should have taken a stronger lead, but it is unclear whether this would have achieved a different outcome or not!

Francis Chance

Hearts and Minds

Barnardos

Anna Lee and I go back years through different pieces of work. I came to Barnardos in 2000 and Tallaght was within my catchment area, so there was a logical connection to make. In 2001 Tallaght Partnership advertised a funding opportunity for a consortium of agencies to set up a service to young lone parents. Barnardos led the successful consortium.

Young Families Matter ran from 2002 for 2 years as a direct service to young lone parents and their children. In researching the need for the service, housing was identified as a key issue. A two year pilot service was never going to be able address this. So we set up a parallel research project to look at the housing and housing support needs of young lone parent families in Tallaght.

The Research side of it resulted in a report entitled *A Place to Call Our Own* which needed to be launched. The usual questions arose: Who should be there? Where should it be held? Anne Prendiville, the Partnership's Children and Families coordinator, suggested looking at creative ways of launching the document bearing in mind that the implementation of 18 recommendations in the report was the overall goal. To do this we had to think about the agencies responsible for implementing the different recommendations and who in these agencies would be our key partners. Once that was identified, invitations were sent out to attend a working breakfast.

On the day of the breakfast a presentation on the research was given, work groups were asked to discuss whether the recommendations were sensible, were possible to implement and if anything needed to be added or changed for them to work. Very senior staff across a number of agencies attended and participated in a way they would have been unlikely to do at a more traditional launch. We got the input of key people in key agencies, they developed a sense of ownership, which strengthened the recommendations and made them more likely to be implemented. The final document incorporated the recommendations re-drafted based on the feedback received. The recommendations became more and agencies became tied in. It served as a way of engaging the hearts and minds of the people who would have to implement the ideas. Our job in a sense was done.

One of the recommendations in the report was to develop transitional housing units specifically for young lone parents. This has led to a commitment to build 11 units for young families by 2008. An important factor in this success was a site visit to the UK by a cross-agency group, including key people from HSE and SDCC, such as senior architect. This visit established relationships and brought the concept of housing for young lone parents alive to the people who would subsequently be key in ensuring its implementation. People met young parents in England and were invited into their homes - it was brought alive. It's about winning hearts and minds and gripping people's imagination!

What we could have done better in Young Families Matter is to have achieved mainstreaming on the service provision side. We did secure funding for the pilot phase of the project but we didn't capture key hearts and minds to support the project beyond its pilot phase.

Young parents were identified as a priority in the Partnership's plans for 2002-2003, which meant that funding was available. Tallaght Partnership is not like other funders who just want accounts and end of year reports. They sat on committees and got their hands dirty. The Partnership is engaged in the whole process and its resources are available such as Marjo on publication design and launch, and Anne as the Children and Families Coordinator. I am disappointed that Anne's post was not filled when she left. I think this is a loss because of the functions that are not being fulfilled, particularly in direct management support work with community childcare providers. I hope that it will be possible to fill this gap through the Childhood Development Initiative.

Anonymous

Understand and listen to my contribution

Sure Start and Tallazens participant

The most significant change that happened in my life since I was involved with Tallaght Partnership, through the Sure Start and TallaZens Projects, is the way that I built my own personality in my community. Being a participant in these two projects gave me opportunities to take part in some general information sessions and training courses where I shared experiences with others and learnt a lot.

In my turn, I had to pass information and knowledge received from those sessions and training courses to other people in my community. For that reason, people were asking me different things and I was trying to help them. From that time, I started feeling more confident and interested in working for the community.

The Congolese community where I am coming from has a communication difficulty. Most of the people have no good English. If something happened to them, they have to look for somebody who has good English for help. So that most of them are contacting me for different issues. I have become a "guide" in my community.

The impact of these have had on people in my community is that:

- » They are well informed about all issues
- » They know their rights
- » They can cope with different issues because they know where to go, the person to contact and the power they have.

I am receiving praise from my community for what I am doing and that encourages me to be always available to serve my community and to be more involved in Tallaght Partnership's activities through Sure Start and Tallazens Projects.

Celine Grocq

The refocus of the Sure Start project

I came on board of the Tallaght Partnership in January 2005, after funding was approved to pilot the Sure Start project in the West Tallaght Area. The Community Linkage Fund, managed by South Dublin County Council, granted funding to the Partnership and I was engaged as the project worker for Sure Start, which I still am.

Sure Start aimed primarily at offering support to non-Irish families who had children in primary education in West Tallaght, giving them a better understanding of the education system in Ireland. The other main objective was to promote their active participation in their children's school experience.

As the project worker, I experienced the evolution of this pilot initiative from its starting point. One year after it was launched, I had to say that the initiative hadn't met the expectations of the schools that are collaborating with the Partnership. The objectives of the Sure Start project were broadly defined, to allow experimenting with different approaches. This meant however, that targets and outcomes were not clearly identified, which made it difficult to set precise milestones, to measure what the project was to achieve and whether it was on track. All this, along with a lack of prioritisation of targets, impinged on the project's ability to deliver on its original aims in an efficient and creative way.

Taking a step back and analysing how the project developed over these 18 months allowed for a renewal of its structure and functioning. With the active engagement of the Steering Committee and project participants in the thinking process, there is now an opportunity to set a plan of action for the coming year that will be closely linked to the needs of the target community and the primary schools engaged in the initiative.

This whole experience has shown that there is a need to identify clear and tangible targets and outcomes right from the start of a pilot project. The objectives drive the initiative, determine the direction and allow monitoring of progress while the project develops. They also allow for a timely change of focus if necessary.

Liz Jackson

Tallaght Childcare Centre

I came on board working with Tallaght Childcare Centre back in September 2003 and my involvement with a member of Tallaght Partnership, Anne Prendiville, started pretty much straight away. I suppose one of the big things that happened to us was when I started in the crèche there was an investigation going on, where certain staff members had been suspended on allegations of bad practice. So it was quite a trying time for staff and obviously the parents and management committee and the community, and there were a lot of negative vibes around. It was a very traumatic time and I was thinking when I started 'What did I let myself in for!', and really to be honest the only way I got through it was Anne Prendiville and the mentoring and online support and everything that she gave to me.

I previously worked in a corporate setting and wasn't used to dealing with staff from labour market schemes, or dealing with single parents or people with social problems, so I needed a lot of support - and I actually received that. Anne Prendiville was my line manager and I would meet with her on a regular basis in relation to little things to do with staffing issues or concerns that I had over parents or children in the service or facilities. As I said, she probably was the main reason why I lasted, especially that first turbulent year.

I suppose the good thing about it was that we did come out of the whole investigation. A lot of time and money went into it and Anne herself was very involved, making sure that everybody was treated fairly, that everything was done appropriately, for instance that the Health Board and the Guards were informed and that all staff were supported.

Anne was also one of the driving forces behind the development of our Policy and Procedure documents and I live by those every single day, they are absolutely fantastic. As a matter of fact, on a few courses that I have been on with various childcare agencies, they are the actual premier policy and procedure documents that are used.

I'm here now three years but I don't think I would have lasted the first year if the support from Anne hadn't been there. Obviously I knew the Centre did take up a lot of her time with line management meetings, the investigation and board meetings and so on. She probably did a little bit more than what Anna Lee wanted her to do! It's a shame that after Anne left we didn't have representation from Tallaght Partnership on the Board, but I suppose you can't bottle a person, you obviously have to move on!

Sure Start

By Leonore Magne-Mofeu

Story translated into English from the original French version

I am a mother of 3 children attending St Mark's Junior National School in Springfield, Tallaght. I have been a participant of the Sure Start project since its creation, thanks to St Mark's. I knew that in coming to Ireland I would find an education system different from the one in my country, Cameroon, where there is a French system. This made me want to learn more about it to be able to support my children through their schooling years here in Ireland.

The Sure Start project was created just at the right time. I did not hesitate to become a participant following the first meeting with the persons responsible. The project's objectives matched my needs at the time. I was personally given the responsibility of translating into French several documents from the school for parents when they first arrive in St Mark's Junior School, such as the enrolment form...

This piece of work enriched me, I benefited a lot from it as the information covered was varied. I now have in mind details concerning the rules, code of discipline, etc... all that covers rights and duties that parents have in the school where my children are enrolled.

I can say that I have gained from this piece of translation the pleasure to continue on learning the English language. The objective I set-up for myself is to become fluent in English.

I received great moral support from Celine, the valiant project worker, while I was completing this heavy piece of work. I've been compensated financially for what I produced. I was told that I couldn't be paid as a professional translator, but that I would receive a financial compensation for that. I think the people managing the project were happy with the work I produced. I was touched by that.

I am an active member of the Sure Start project. If I was asked to give some of my time to work for the project again, I would not hesitate to do it!





INTRO

Cooperation with schools, improving parental engagement, combating absenteeism and early school leaving were some of the main elements of the work with young people and education at the beginning of the century. Parallel to the establishment of local and national organisations charged with addressing (some of) these issues, most importantly the National Education Welfare Board and School Completion Programme, we gradually changed the focus of the work. On the one hand we further developed support for after-school activities for children aged 6-12 (an age group badly catered for) and for local sports and leisure clubs. On the other hand we started the development with local partners of a Tallaght-wide comprehensive approach to training and support for early school leavers, and enhanced our experience with lifelong learning, both within and outside of the workplace.

The development of the youth sector in Tallaght was influenced by the research into drop-in centres that we carried out with key partners in Tallaght. This publication has been an important factor in the subsequent development of several drop-in services in the area.

A continuing concern during the whole period were young people who left school early. Springboard provided unique opportunities for young people to train in a range of areas and gain work experience abroad. Mór was a pilot project working with young staff who left school without qualifications and their employers, to offer training towards Leaving Cert. equivalent qualification.

Alan Gibbons

Support for Sacred Heart F.C.

At a meeting in Killinarden Community Centre in about 2002 we became first involved with Tallaght Partnership. The Partnership assists our club, Sacred Heart Football Club in Killinarden with our development, through sports grants, training, publications, funding for a sports coach and work with TallaZens to integrate people from other countries into our club.

We work together with the Sports worker in the Partnership and as a result of that our grant applications are more professional. We have secured funding to keep a qualified sports coach and introduced our club members to an awareness of racism and how to deal with it within our club. Our development plans have accelerated and there is significantly less pressure on our Development Committee.

Collette Tobin

Supporting training for local parents

I first became involved in Tallaght Partnership in the early days of KEN (Killinarden Education Network). The Partnership funded KEN and was represented on the steering committee. I was a community representative on the KEN committee for 5 years.

KEN (Tallaght Partnership) supported and encouraged me as a parent into further education. KEN supported me financially to complete a course "Managing Organisations in the Community and Voluntary Sector" in the National College of Ireland. The support paid for the course, books stationery and travel. If funding wasn't provided I wouldn't have been able to complete the course. After that, KEN helped me in obtaining full time employment in my local community.

Through the support from Tallaght Partnership I have continued to grow personally and upskill myself in confidence in other courses over the years.

Julie Comeford

Jobstown 6-12 project

"I started volunteering with the 6-12 Programme last November and I now run sport sessions 4 times a week. This is a great programme for children in Jobstown, it's a very informal way for the children to learn respect and to follow some small rules. Slowly but surely I see the children learning how to respect themselves and others through the sports activities. They are slowly learning to follow rules. This is a brilliant achievement for some of these children.

Tallaght Partnership funds some of the money I receive for my job. Without this support I would not be able to continue this work with the children in Jobstown. The Partnership also organised venues for the sporting activities to take place through the Project Coordinator Joy O'Shaughnessy.

I feel the programme should run in other areas of Tallaght and I feel this would benefit the young people in these areas. Even just one hour a week would help make a difference."

Mark Bentaher

How I became a youth worker

I became involved with the Tallaght Partnership around 2003-2004. I was employed by the Partnership as Coordinator of the Jobstown 6-12 Programme, which is an After School Club for kids between 6 and 12 years old.

As a result of my work with the Tallaght Partnership I am now in full time employment with County Dublin VEC as a Youth Outreach Worker. The Partnership also provided me with funding and the platform to commence with the Youth/Community Work Degree course in NUI Maynooth. I am really enjoying this course and I feel it is an important thing I am doing. The Partnership has contributed a lot in setting me on the path to becoming a professional youth worker. In particular, Anna Lee, Caroline Lynch and John Doyle. Thank You.

Joy O'Shaughnessy

It's great to see all those kids having fun!

I first became involved with Tallaght Partnership in 2005 as a volunteer for the after-school project "Jobstown 6-12 Programme". I helped Mark, the co-ordinator of the project with the sports clubs. The club consisted of 25 young people between 6 and 12 years of age. It was a great experience and made me realise that this was the kind of work that I was interested in. In early 2006, Mark left the project and I became the new co-ordinator for the programme.

Since March the programme has developed significantly, presently engaging 200+ young people in Jobstown in a variety of activities such as Art and Drama, Sports, Dance and Fitness and Horse Riding. The young people thoroughly enjoy the clubs - each club's attendance remains consistently high, with new members arriving on a weekly basis. It is a safe place for them to not only learn new skills but to make new friends and learn important life skills. The programme encourages, recruits and works with young people who are particularly disadvantaged within our community.

The programme is important as there are very few affordable leisure activities for children in Jobstown. The Jobstown 6-12 Programme includes a huge variety of young people from different backgrounds. The clubs engage young people from ethnic minorities, different class structures, members of the Travelling community, young people with disabilities and often behavioural difficulties. It is amazing to bring together such a diverse group of young people who play together every week with no discrimination. The clubs promote equality and fair play and encourage young people to get along and have fun. It is important to continue with programmes like this one as these young people are at a very challenging time of their lives, where structured leisure activities are crucial to keep them focused and off the street.

This story, I feel represents an important change in young people's lives in Jobstown as although integration of different communities is seen at a school level, integration falls short in terms of after-school activities. It is vital that they learn to integrate at an early age so they continue to do so in the future. Although the children often present behavioural difficulties and are far from angels, with persistence, patience and encouragement it is so rewarding to keep them engaged every week and see them having fun.

The Partnership set up the Jobstown 6-12 Programme in 1996 and this year has seen a significant increase in both the number of young people involved and clubs offered. The Partnership organised a management committee which includes staff from organisations such as Tallaght Youth Service, Barnardos, Jobstown CDP, School Completion Programme and Tallaght Partnership. This management committee for the Jobstown 6-12 Programme offers great support and knowledge and enables huge coverage and access to everyone in Jobstown. Additionally, Tallaght Partnership continues to offer funding to the programme, which is vital for the existence of the Jobstown 6-12 Programme.

Caroline Lynch

Working in Tallaght Partnership 2000-2004

As a former employee of the Tallaght Partnership who began working with the Partnership on a project (JETS) in 1996, I found the programme of work from 2000 – 2006 very different to the programme which was already coming to an end when I took over as Education Co-ordinator in 1998. I felt much more ownership of this new programme as I was involved in the lengthy consultation and planning process which led to the final direction we would take.

Everything including our office changed during this period, change provides challenges to do things differently and the Partnership has always been an evolving organisation where new ideas, taking risks and testing alternative ways of working have been supported. The process of bringing others along with you when your organisation is innovative can be stressful and challenging but the results are always worth the journey.

The ways in which the Partnership supports its staff team to carry out its difficult work is key to the organisation's success in this period. A great deal of work has gone into developing and improving staffing supports, e.g. the staff handbook which was the result of a huge amount of work by an internal staff group. The team meetings structure was also supportive as time was always given to these meetings as a priority. I am particularly proud of the C-team, which consisted of staff responsible for the community based youth initiatives. I was the line manager of some of the staff on this team but was delighted that Gretta, Clem and Marjo were also key members. I believe this is an indication of the collaborative nature of this group and many excellent ideas and pieces of work grew from this structure.

I must also note the flexibility of the Partnership. As an employee the most significant change to my life during this programme of work was becoming a mother in 1999 and 2000. The Partnership adapted to this change and allowed me the flexibility to take parental leave 2 days per week and when I returned to full time work I was able to work from home one day per week and adjust my working hours to meet both my family needs and coping with the daily drive from County Meath. I have never stayed in any job as long and this flexibility meant I was able to continue. Although the organisation grew in this period it never lost its caring and supportive nature. Breaking bread together is still as important as ever and the team building and social events are the glue which kept us all together in difficult times. The manager played a huge role in my development during this programme, she pulled me back when over-enthusiastic and made me think things through, her door was always open and her pace of work was an inspiration I think you cannot underestimate the influence she has had on

the development of the programme as she has always had such a clear vision and breaks things down into manageable chunks.

In terms of pieces of work that I was involved in during this time, two stand out for me as examples of the way the Partnership does its work. The first is the School Completion network which we established in Tallaght to provide a forum for the six project co-ordinators in the area. This was a strategic piece of work as we felt we could provide more useful support to the co-ordinators in a forum rather than just attending all the management committees of the different projects. The Regional and National Co-ordinator of the SCP also attended these meetings which provided an opportunity for discussion on the issues in the wider context of best practise and sustainability of initiatives. The Partnership is in a strong position to provide the neutral space and to facilitate these types of collaborations. We also had the credibility around the issue of early school leaving because of the JETS project in the previous programme of work.

The second piece of work I would like to mention as an example of what the Partnership does well is the research piece "A place to chill". This work shows how well the Partnership draws together the skills of its staff team. This was a new area of work for me, I would not have had the skills or the confidence to take it on alone. Working with Marjo on this project was fun and we brought different elements to the work. I feel this work also showed our integration with key partners; the VEC part-funded the initiatives and felt the work was needed to help develop initiatives in Tallaght, and Tallaght Youth Service, who we have always worked closely with on these type of initiatives, were our key research partners. I am very proud of the publication and since moving on from Tallaght I have used the work in the Navan School Completion programme as a discussion document and then the basis for a funding proposal which was successful. There is now a thriving Youth Café in Beaufort College in Navan, which shows not only that the work of the 2000-2006 programme was successful but that it has benefited another area and become a very sustainable initiative. I am delighted to have been part of such an interesting working environment during this period and am confident that the best is yet to come.

John Doyle

Committee skills for Sure Start

I became involved with the Sure Start Project when Celine (Sure Start Project Coordinator) asked me would I help design a workshop to assist the Sure Start Committee with their Committee skills. The Sure Start Programme helps children from new communities start school more easily and operates in St. Marks Junior School, Springfield. The committee is made up of parents of the children from new communities starting school.

Working with Celine and her committee has given me an insight into some of the difficulties that people from other countries experience as they try to carve out a new life for themselves and their children here in Tallaght. I have heard their stories and experiences first hand and discussed various matters with them about their children as they work through their new lives in school and the communities in which they live. It has certainly given me an insight I would never have experienced through the medium of radio, television or printed material.

This story is important to me as it gives me an understanding of some of the work that five of my work colleagues perform under the Education and Equality and Diversity programmes of work:

Deborah, Education Coordinator, Celine, Sure Start Coordinator, Marie, TallaZens Coordinator, Zuzana, FM Wepon Coordinator and Clem, Equality and Diversity Coordinator. As I am working to help integrate new communities into sports clubs in Tallaght with Clem (*Equality & Diversity Coordinator*) and Marie (*TallaZens Project Coordinator*) working with Celine and the Sure Start group has given me invaluable knowledge around this area of work.

Looking back, if I was to do anything differently, I would research the area of new communities living in Ireland more extensively before engaging with them. I found myself looking to Celine to bail me out during questions from some committee members. Thanks Celine!

Lee Moroney

CG-West Tallaght - Be at the games this summer!

At the end of 2005 I had just got a job as Development Co-ordinator for Dublin Community games project. Before I officially began the post, I met with John Doyle, from the Partnership, who I knew from his involvement in securing Sports Capital funding for a sports hall at St. Anne's GAA Club. I knew John's job was to help and support sports clubs involved with young people. I wanted to find out from him what was happening on the ground, and how I should go about working on the project, as I was apprehensive, and very unsure of my new job.

John helped secure some office space in the RAPID office. This not only offered me a workplace but also allowed me to meet others from the Partnership who could help me. John is now on the steering committee for the Dublin Community Games project, and has supported us by securing €1,000 euro from the Partnership. His support and advice, especially with funding applications has been most helpful. All the same, a lot of hard work awaited!

The Tallaght Partnership hub of activity is not in the boss's office or in a board room but in the cafeteria.

During my many cups of coffee and pieces of cake the 'real' networking started! I made contact with so many people who work for the TP and this helped significantly with my work and making contacts in Tallaght. There's always a smiling face, a helpful hand and a warm cuppa on the long winter days and even a game of basketball during the spring and summer time. This was very important to me because my job is without close supervision and without any other colleagues to bounce ideas off or work with. So the cafeteria became my network and I no longer felt nervous or afraid of my challenging post.

Anonymous

Springboard South Africa

At the moment I am not involved with Tallaght Partnership, but in 2002 I participated in the Springboard South Africa Programme. The programme involved extensive Youth and Community Work training and one months work experience in Cape Town.

Through my participation in the programme I gained vital experience which helped me in my application to the National University of Ireland in Maynooth where I completed a Diploma in Youth and Community Work and this year completed a Degree in Applied Social Studies. Obtaining these qualifications has enabled me to find employment in my current position as Drug Education and Awareness Worker in the Inner City.

The Springboard course broadened my mind to new ideas and ways of life both in Belfast and Cape Town. I also used various community and youth projects in Belfast as case studies as part of my diploma course content. I found the programme comprehensive and professional at all levels. My only suggestion would be to maintain greater links with participants subsequent to the programme's completion.





INTRO

The landscape of unemployment in Tallaght has changed radically since 2000. While unemployment had already come down significantly in the decade leading into this century, the memory of large numbers of people on the Live Register was a recent and vivid one. Paid employment was generally seen as the best way out of poverty and investment in measures to help people to access the labour market have been a key priority for the Partnership. Roughly 60% of the budget has been dedicated to tackle long-term unemployment.

The three most important ways to support people are Tallaght Local Employment Services Network, the Flexible Training Unit and the work of Partas. Tallaght Local Employment Services Network mediates individual people towards and into work, provides training and generally serves as an important support for people who are long-term unemployed to access the labour market.

The Flexible Training Unit works with groups of long-term unemployed men in flexible combinations of training, education, health supports and personal development, to bridge the gap to employment. The Unit has also been involved in European projects about adult education and lifelong learning.

Partas works on behalf of Tallaght Partnership to help people set up their own business and to establish social economy enterprises in the Tallaght area.

Anne Biddulph

Best practice in training and improved lane sense go hand in hand

At the end of 2002 I was appointed to the role of coordinator of the local South Dublin Public Sector Site of Equal at Work and I started in that position on a full-time basis from January 2003. This meant a move from the Tallaght Local Employment Service to the premises of Tallaght Partnership in Killinarden and working closely once again with the Partnership staff where I had started originally.

This job was a steep learning curve as I was working on a section of an EU pilot project reporting to Caroline Creamer, the overall project co-ordinator based in the Dublin Employment Pact, and on a local basis with staff of SDCC and Tallaght Hospital, plus all the other members of the local management group. During this time I started my almost daily trips into Anna's office for advice and reassurance which haven't stopped yet! During my time on Equal at Work I travelled to Naples and Bordeaux on transnational visits and did a lot of driving around Dublin city. The city driving certainly improved my knowledge of the road and traffic system and my lane sense has much improved since those days!!

I think what most people remember from that project was the Medical Secretary training where the focus of the work was upskilling entry level staff in Tallaght Hospital and transferring the model of training to CE staff to facilitate their progression to full time employment. Ten hospital employees commenced the training, 9 finished it and are all still employed in Tallaght Hospital. Eight of those participants have since been promoted from entry-level positions.

The targeted accredited training for the CE and JI staff was a new departure and 14 participants were offered places on the training after an interview process. They were all supported by their CE supervisors, who encouraged their participation and allowed time to undertake the training and complete the assignments necessary for FETAC accreditation.

The LES assisted with job seeking skills and 5 of those participants are now working in Tallaght Hospital, 1 in St James Hospital and 1 in South Dublin County Council, 1 is a full time mother and 3 are in other employment.

The knowledge gained about HR practice and interview and training processes has been invaluable and informed further work of the Partnership. The cooperation of Willie Shields in SDCC and Margaret Jordan and Bridie Horan in the Hospital was generous at all times.

An important element of this project was the cooperation and networking between community and statutory agencies and the growth in knowledge and mutual understanding. This cross-organisation cooperation facilitated the progression of hospital staff and CE and JI participants and demonstrated a model of good practice for progression.

Christine Hurley

Mediator in Tallaght Local Employment Services

Stepping into STEPS

To tell you how I became a STEPS facilitator, and indeed a mediator with TLES, I must start at the beginning. In early 1997, having been a full-time mother to my three children for the past 17 years, I felt it was time to rejoin the workforce. However, although well-educated with an excellent past work history, I felt technology had passed me by and my confidence in my working abilities had dwindled. Then a close friend told me about a Jobsclub, being run in Cookstown that she was attending. I made enquiries, applied and was fortunate enough to be accepted. It was while attending the Jobsclub that I was introduced to the STEPS Programme as a participant and it changed my whole concept of the way I viewed myself and my own capabilities – I grew wings!.

To make a long story shorter, I started working as the Receptionist in TLES, Unit 4 in October of 1997. While there, with the support of my Manager, whenever the opportunity for attending a course arose, I put my hand up to participate. So when word of STEPS facilitating training arose, I jumped at the chance to participate, particularly as I knew how people could benefit, as I did, from attending such a course.

By May 1999, I had not only become a Mediator but was also a trained STEPS facilitator. Since 2000 to date, I have been fortunate enough to

have delivered numerous STEPS Programmes to a range of people in the Tallaght region and can honestly say I have enjoyed each and every one of them. More importantly, the feedback from participants (both on feedback forms and in person) has been amazing. In particular, I remember one lady (who was job searching at the time and looking for 'anything') said 'anything is no longer good enough for me, I am worth more'. She went on to further education. That, in a nutshell, sums up the power and value of STEPS and makes me proud to have the privilege to be able to facilitate this programme.

Cyril O'Reilly¹

The advantages of the Integrated Area Plan in Tallaght

Tallaght Local Employment Service became involved in the South Dublin County Council Integrated Area Plan in Tallaght during 2000. The IAP, as it is known, is an Urban Renewal Scheme that allows Developers in the Tallaght area to avail of special Tax Incentives, when they comply with certain provisions of the Scheme. In 2001 I was given the responsibility to liaise with South Dublin County Council and the developers who become involved in the Scheme.

There are two employment objectives:

1. To engage with the developers and construction companies, ensuring that TLESN clients and local people are employed on the construction and afterwards when the businesses open;
2. To ensure that construction companies give training opportunities and that they look to the local employment market to provide apprenticeship opportunities within the trades on the construction projects.

In the past five years we have had reasonable success in persuading developers and contractors to use local labour and to provide training. We have sent our clients' CVs to the contractors for consideration and where these clients were suitable they were employed – some as qualified tradesmen, some as unskilled general operatives and others as trade apprentices, covering Carpentry, Plumbing, Bricklaying, Electrical and Painting. The advantage of apprentice opportunities is that young apprentices, who might be in their first or second year and might have been 'let go' from one job and are 'taken on' by these contractors, get the opportunity to continue with their apprenticeship, which then remains uninterrupted.

In the beginning, the developers and contractors were slow to engage with us, but as time passes they have become more aware of the need to engage locally, not just for the tax benefits, but because our locals do have skills and are worth employing. 'On the job training' for unskilled general operatives ensures that they are then up-skilled, which leaves them in a stronger position of experience and skill when they move on in the industry.

Recently, the Dept. of Finance commissioned a report from Goodbody to examine the performance of the IAP schemes around the country. South Dublin County Council and Tallaght Local Employment Service are mentioned favourably in that report. I include here an extract from the text of that report which covers only an approximate two years of the period.

“The Tallaght and HARP IAPs are examples of where a dedicated management team aided the success of the Scheme, with Tallaght in particular achieving positive community benefits. Only those Schemes that were proactively managed had the capacity to influence developers and builders to take on local labour. Even then, there were generally very poor outcomes. Again Tallaght is an exception in that the Tallaght Local Employment Service Network engaged developers in order to maximise local employment effects, with up to 100 training and employment positions being obtained.”

A further feature of the IAP Scheme giving benefit to Tallaght is the Community Linkage Fund. This Scheme works as follows: Although each developer receives Tax incentives within the Scheme, he also pays a financial contribution to SDCC, based on the area that he has developed. The Council has used this fund to finance local activities such as Community Centres, local projects such as the Fettercairn Horse project and many others.

Denis O'Brien

The Partnership: mechanism for multi-agency cooperation and community engagement

Social Welfare, Board member of the Partnership

I started work in our Tallaght Social Welfare Services Office in the summer of 2002. Prior to this I had worked for the same Department, but mainly in offices based in Dublin South locations. Almost immediately after taking up my post in Tallaght, I was appointed as a statutory representative on the Tallaght Partnership Board, in succession to Clodagh McDonnell, who had moved to work in Dublin city.

I was very much aware of the existence of Partnership companies and their ethos insofar as I had been working closely, whilst in Dublin South, with Partnership companies, through my participation on working groups and committees of both the Southside and Bray Partnerships.

My previous experiences with Partnership companies helped me greatly in understanding the mission and the challenges of the Tallaght Partnership. Indeed, I was aware that Tallaght Partnership, which was set up in 1991, was at the forefront in establishing local development companies in Ireland. Much of their initial experiences would have been strong indicators for the methodology adapted subsequently by newly forming Partnership companies.

My over-riding impression of Tallaght Partnership in the last few years, both in my role as a Board member and also as a member of the Services for

the Unemployed Committee is in the eagerness of people from all sectors, be they Community, State Agencies, Social Partner or Public Representatives, to work together for the better good of the people and the communities living within the designated areas in Tallaght.

The Tallaght Partnership has been the mechanism through which this collective cooperation and working together has happened. It allows our Department to promote and further its agenda for social inclusion at the same time as allowing us to work and interact better with relevant others both from the community and statutory side.

As importantly, it has provided our Department with the conduit for engaging more closely with the people and the communities we serve, in understanding better their needs and in working closely with them with a view to maintaining and improving our services.

Eileen McMahon

Medical secretaries training 2003/4

"I saw the Medical Secretary Training, sponsored by Tallaght Partnership and Equal at Work project in conjunction with Tallaght Hospital, advertised on our intranet and was successful in getting a place on the course. There has not been any change to my life but doing the course helped me to gain confidence and when people see the details of training on my CV I am always asked about it. The most important change has been to my confidence and without the involvement of Tallaght Partnership I would not have had the opportunity to do this training course. If the training was offered again I would like a follow up programme for people who are not employed as medical secretaries."

Anonymous

Medical secretaries training

In the autumn of 2003 I was working in PARTAS as a receptionist on a CE scheme and my time on the scheme had run its course. My supervisor informed me that a Medical Secretary Course was being offered in the Tallaght Partnership by the Equal at Work programme.

I applied and was invited to attend for interview and was offered a place on the course. After I successfully completed the training at NCVA Level 5 I got a job as a Medical Secretary with the HSE. After about a year in this job I applied to Tallaght Hospital and was successful in getting a job in a Grade 4 clerical position where I am still working.

I felt my story was important because as an older person it proved that age is no barrier to learning new skills and through the provision of training by Tallaght Partnership it was possible for me to gain confidence and to get a job in the hospital.

Gillian

No two days are the same

I started working as Support Person at Avonbeg Enterprise Centre in 1998, following from Tallaght Partnership, where I commenced in 1994. My duties at this time consisted of providing information to clients on training, employment, services available in the area and referrals to the Local Employment Service. Curriculum Vitae were produced and appointments made with the Facilitator or Mediator. The client group in Avonbeg at that time were mainly women returners to the workforce. Most of this group were referred to the Jobsclub in FÁS Cookstown, where they were provided with the skills necessary to enable them return to work. The majority of clients found this service very advantageous and many obtained employment as a result of completing the course.

Following the resignation of the Facilitator in Avonbeg, I became Information Officer at the Centre and I began outreach in the local area, which I found very beneficial to my job – finding out what the needs of the clients were and also networking with local groups.

I moved to the Jobstown office based at Dromcarra Avenue a year later. The client group were much younger and mainly male – literacy being a huge barrier to job seeking which resulted in referrals to BEST for literacy training. The LES at this stage became involved with the St Dominic's Response Project – assisting people with addiction problems by providing pc training – I assisted the Facilitators and it was through this that I took an interest in addiction studies. I then completed the Community Addiction Studies course at IT Tallaght and worked as a part time volunteer for two years at St Aongus Addiction Group on a weekly basis.

During my two years in Jobstown I was involved with TLES staff in various outreach activities/leaflet and door-to-door drops, including attending at the Social Welfare Office in Tallaght, The Square Shopping Centre, various other shopping centres and libraries/community centres throughout Tallaght. I felt I really enjoyed this aspect of my work. I acted as Information Officer in Fettercairn Community Centre on Wednesday mornings for a number of weeks. I was also available two days a week at the Killinarden office which was then based at Killinarden Heights.

Two years later I moved to the offices at Killinarden Enterprise Park as Mediator – where I successfully completed the NUI Adult Guidance Theory & Practice Certificate. My work in this area is providing career path planning to unemployed people across the whole target group. My work is varied and interesting – no two days are the same!

Ina Broe

My personal involvement through working with TLES

In 1996 I was made redundant from Packard Electric and enrolled in a computer course in FÁS, which lead to an administrative job-share role in the Jobs Club in Cookstown. I have been employed in the Jobs Club in a variety of roles since then and have progressed to my present position as Jobs Club Facilitator since 1998. The Partnership has helped me by paying my fees to further my education, which in turn enables me to deliver IT Training and Personal Development through the STEPS programme to our clients.

Over the last six years in particular I have developed a talent to actively listen and more importantly to hear the needs of the clients. Through helping them they in turn have given me the drive and commitment to stay focussed and committed to the ethos of the Jobs Club. I get immense satisfaction from being able to personally help our clients to achieve their goals. I do this through the gradual delivery of a professional curriculum and through a structured day to day involvement in their career planning and the eventual achievement of their chosen career path.

I feel that the people of Tallaght and the catchment area are very lucky to have these great facilities. As we have seen the success of the LESN grow with the invitation to further stretch our boundaries. For the future I think that the rise in youth unemployment is the most frightening finding so it is without hesitation that I say that there needs to be a big rethink in this field to tackle the root cause of the problem.

Joanna Savage

Jobs Club Participant

CHANGES

My life isn't what it used to be
So many changes have come over me
I've changed in more ways than one
And what a better person I've become
My self esteem has risen higher
And has set my determination on fire
This course has helped me in so many ways
I'm now looking forward to better days.
Thank you all for believing in me
I now have a belief in my abilities
My path to the future is suddenly clear
And everyone of you have helped me get here
So thank you all from the heart
You've all played such a big part
I hope I've done the same for you
I also hope all your dreams come true

Joe Doyle

From foot in the neck to happy as Larry

FTU Participant late 2004/05

The Labour had a foot in my neck to do something else, so I came to the Flexible Training Unit to keep the Labour off my back. As the staff are now on my list of friends I call in and out to see them especially when I'm at the doctors with the wife, which is quite often.

Due to the course we have found out much more about what we are entitled to, particularly about welfare allowances. My wife was passed for disability allowance, has a bus pass and now I'm her carer. It's sorted now at last. Only for doing the course we wouldn't have had a clue about what we were entitled to.

I enjoyed doing the course, all the different aspects you cater for. I fitted in the different age groups on the course. I'm happy as Larry now because I

haven't the labour on my back and can concentrate on my family. We're doing the garden now; it's a project we can do together. We didn't have the time before and we are 25 years together.

The family did a surprise 25th party for us and from the presents we got enough together to plan and do the garden. That's our project at the moment. We are much less stressed and can plan for the future. The Unit learned us to set ourselves goals - that's what it's all about, one step at a time.

Margaret Jordan

Change

Adelaide Meath and National Children's Hospital (AMNCH) known locally as Tallaght Hospital

Back in 2003 AMNCH were approached by Tallaght Partnership and asked to become involved in the South Dublin Public Sector Site - one of the four sites in the Equal at Work Project. The Director of Human Resources of the hospital at that time, (Mairead Shields) nominated me to represent AMNCH. My responsibility was, and still is, the administrative facilitator for overseas nurses for the hospital. However the focus of our work with the Equal project was the delivery of accredited Medical Secretary Training to entry level administrative staff in Tallaght Hospital and the follow-on delivery of this training to CE participants.

Before my involvement with Tallaght Partnership I had no knowledge of Community Employment schemes or of the participants involved in these programmes. When we were asked to participate in the interview process to select CE participants for places on the training programme I was struck by the lack of confidence of the applicants. Some of the interviewees concentrated on the difficulties they had in arranging their lives to allow them to participate in the training or employment. They were worried about moving out of familiar surroundings and their "comfort zones". As the training progressed and the women came to the hospital for work experience and some later as employees I was struck by the growth in their self esteem and belief in their own ability.

I noticed that through success by participation in accredited training and in the STEPS programme they realised their potential to work at the same level as the other staff and the problems preventing their full participation in the workforce no longer seemed insurmountable.

Up to this time the hospital had little involvement with non-statutory agencies. Training was centred on supervisory and managerial level. There was very little training focused on entry level. The Partnership identified relevant accredited training and an experienced trainer. The delivery of the training to our own staff first and then the transfer of the training model to CE participants was unlikely to have happened without the involvement of the Partnership.

Maxine Dunne

Links and chains

I worked as manageress of a Spar shop until the birth of my first baby in January 2001. When she was about six months old I decided I wanted to retrain and return to work. I was lacking in confidence and did not know what type of work I wanted to do, so I went to the Tallaght Local Employment Service for advice.

I was offered a place by Anne on an "Introduction to Computers" course in Unit 4 in the Village Square. I had never used a computer before but I enjoyed the course and found it gave me back some confidence and I decided I wanted to do more. I was referred to Paula, a mediator in the LES and she thought I had an aptitude for administration work and she gave me advice and help on CV preparation. She helped me to see the potential in myself and to get a position on a CE scheme in PARTAS, where I worked for a year. While there I completed the ECDL, which I would not have been able to do without the introductory computer course. I then left to have my second daughter. In 2002 I found myself back in the same position and I returned to the LES for advice and this time I met with Christine. She helped me to prepare and revise my CV and gave me tips and help with interview techniques. She kept looking

until she found the right job for me as administrator with the Village Counselling Service – a job I love.

This story is important to me as through my connection with the Tallaght Partnership, LES and PARTAS I changed the direction of my working life. I am now doing a job which I really enjoy, with a confidence I never thought I had, and which I built up during my training. The provision of the initial training allowed me to try something new and I then got good advice with the training, which qualified me for the job I am now doing.

I would never have got where I am today without their help and advice and the belief they had in me. I have brought my mum along to the Tallaght Partnership and she is now back in school doing her Leaving Certificate.

All the links worked!

Orla

Back to work for myself

"My name is Orla and I will cut a very long story short. I was separated a few years and totally going for broke. I was starting to hit the walls, money going out and nothing coming in. I bit the bullet, and went to Partas where I met 'Linda Twamley,' a name I can't forget, a lady with a halo who was extremely helpful and approachable. She gave me advice on a back to work scheme, which I started in May 2003.

I went back to work – back to work for myself, I might add as a Driving Instructor. I started with one car, now I have a few cars on the road plus an office. The business is growing steadily.

When Partas came into play they were always only a phone call away.

I felt there was support in the background, whether I needed it or not. Anytime I called, nothing was a problem. It is the likes of 'Partas' that will always help to convince people to help them maintain a feeling of self worth going back into the work place."

Peggy K Doyle

Somewhere, somehow I have made an important contribution to someone's life

Teacher and trainer

I have had what you might call a varied teaching career. I started with primary, remedial teaching, secondary for a short period and then on to adult education. I undertook Business Studies and specialised in medical terminology and worked as a medical secretary for a period as well.

Education and learning have always been very important to me and one of the most satisfying things in my life is to pass my knowledge and skills on to people who did not perhaps have the same opportunities I had.

In 2002 I met with Anne Biddulph who was putting together a project under the Tallaght Partnership. The idea was to offer training to employees of the Adelaide and Meath Hospital incorporating medical terminology. At the same time the same course was to be offered to JI and CE participants.

In my mind, I wanted to show the candidates that the opportunities were there for them to further their careers or to take a completely different path. Lack of education in his or her earlier years should not impede anyone. My motto for them was *"It's never too late to learn new skills"*. In previous years I had, for the most part working entirely on my own, devised and taught the course modules from start to finish.

This changed when I began working for the Tallaght Partnership. From beginning to end and throughout, I was supported and encouraged. I was made to feel that I was making a difference to the candidates' lives. Maybe or maybe not they would use their new-found skills but one thing was sure, they learnt that they could turn their lives around, continue their lives with confidence and self-esteem or be able to help members of their own family think more deeply about their own situation and lives.

The participants received the same support and encouragement that I did. At the end of the 2 courses, nobody was prouder than me of their achievements.

From the course I began work at Shalom House, facilitating CE participants and in 2005 again under Tallaght Partnership I facilitated a course for early school leavers employed at Jacobs/Fruitfield. Again with the support guidance and encouragement of Tallaght Partnership, (Jenny Murphy was the project coordinator) the result was an excellent one. Everyone with Tallaght Partnership, whether involved with the project or not followed with great interest the path of the participants. Help and support was offered and everyone was overjoyed at the results.

I have found so often in the past participants would undertake a course or module; complete it and then that would be it, no more communication or contact. You never really knew what or if any benefit had been gained from doing it. Working or Tallaght Partnership has shown me a different scenario altogether, it has been teamwork at its best.

The difference it has made to my life is; I have forged new friendships and I am secure in the knowledge that I was part of the team and that somewhere, somehow I have made an important contribution to someone's life. I have always enjoyed teaching but the last 3 years are the ones I think I will remember the most and I hope to continue working with Tallaght Partnership.

Willie Sheils

Partnership and trust

SEO South Dublin County Council

I first became involved with the Tallaght Partnership through the Equal at Work Project. This was an EU project involving approximately sixty different agencies and bodies over four sites in the Dublin area.

The South Dublin Public Sector site was headed up by the Tallaght Partnership as the lead organisation and included my own employer, South Dublin County Council.

One of the main features of the project in the South Dublin Public Sector site involved the research and development of a hugely significant change in the way SDCC (and all other local authorities) recruited people at entry-grade level. The thrust of this element of the project was to find a new and more appropriate way of making employment accessible to more people who might expect to find themselves excluded under the present system. This would include people with disabilities and people who may not have had the opportunity to complete their secondary school education.

From my perspective, Tallaght Partnership being the lead organisation for the site meant that I had to be prepared to listen to the views of other organisations and people outside the Council on the Council's recruitment practices and related issues, as well as the general perception of the organisation.

I also had to trust the Tallaght Partnership and its staff to arrange and facilitate meetings and functions, to manage budgets and timetables on issues that could have a significant impact

on SDCC. This involved Anna Lee initially, and subsequently Anne Biddulph and their support staff.

This link with the Tallaght Partnership was of significance for me because it was my first involvement with a community-based organisation such as the TP and also my first involvement with a multi-agency European Union Project.

At this point, I should mention that there were up to fourteen other organisations represented on the South Dublin site and I was amazed at how efficiently and professionally each of these was managed and included at the appropriate time by the intelligent facilitation and co-ordination of the TP.

Overall, the major lesson I learnt was that there is a tremendous range and depth of knowledge and expertise in the community/voluntary sector, epitomized by the Tallaght Partnership, and the energy and drive to employ that expertise to great effect.

This is especially significant for someone in management in a local authority – consultation on a huge range of issues is the order of the day. What I learnt shows that if you are prepared to become involved with outside agencies of the calibre of the Tallaght Partnership, there are many benefits to accrue.

Alice O'Reilly

Progression from a JI position to full time employment with the Local Employment Services Network (Obair)

I first became involved with the TLESN in August 2001 after completing a VTOS 2 year Post Leaving Certificate course plus ECDL (European Computer Driver License). I graduated from the VTOS course in May 2001 and left my CV into various companies with little or no results, so by the first week in July I felt very depleted. Then a friend suggested that I call into the Obair office.

The very next day I called into the Obair office in Village Square Tallaght. The person on the desk explained the service to me and asked me would I like to register with the LES and I did. I was assigned to the on duty mediator, and as we chatted the mediator asked me did I know what JI (Jobs Initiative) meant. I told him I didn't and he went on to explain that a JI position is a progression into employment during which you can avail of relevant training plus have the benefits of on the job training. That same day an appointment was set up for an interview with Ms Olive Whelan (JI Sponsor of Action Tallaght) for August 9th 2001.

I arrived for interview with Olive Whelan of Action Tallaght on 9th August as arranged by the mediator from Obair (LES), Olive said that originally she was going to assign me as admin person for the Horse Project in Fettercairn, however after the interview she felt I would be better suited as frontline person for the Brookfield office of the LES and to report for work on Monday 20th August 2001 to Ms Jackie Johnson (Coordinator TLESN).

The classroom education and training I had received the two years before didn't prepare me for the day to day work of a frontline person in a busy office, plus I realised that if I wanted to survive for more than a week I would need to develop my telephone technique. While attending TLESN staff meetings I was in awe of management and staff members: they knew so much about the organisation and what makes it work, I felt I knew nothing and had nothing to contribute. When I voiced my concerns to Jackie, she responded with these words: "Alice, go to the meeting, all you have to do is Listen and Learn."

That piece of advice proved to be sound and of great value to me! I took her advice and applied myself to learning all I could about the job at hand. With the support and encouragement of management and help of TLESN staff in about 4 weeks I was becoming more confident in my position.

In April 2002 Jackie Johnson asked me would I like to come on board as a member of TLESN staff. At this stage I had learned much more about the organisation, management, members of staff and what the TLESN stood for and I jumped at the chance to become a part of the team. I was also attracted to the training provision and have availed of it on numerous occasions. If a staff member needs a specific piece of training that is relevant to their job, management is very approachable.

2006: my regular job as a frontline person entails working on reception, client registration and administration. Currently I'm on 5 working groups and along with team leader and colleagues we work hand in hand to produce relevant and necessary pieces of work that add to the organisation and enable us to identify and meet our clients' employment and training needs. Now that we have achieved Q-Mark accreditation, TLESN is now working to achieve ETP (Excellence Through People). At the minute I'm one of 5 internal auditors and I have carried out 3 audits this year.

While assisting Tony Nolan to coordinate the Men's Communications and Literacy Group I realised that there is a huge need for the programme and how it benefits the men and enables them to progress to other levels. Due to this work I have enrolled in a two year Literacy Tutors Course in Crumlin College in September.

Carol Yeates

Changes

Receptionist / Administrator, Obair Local Employment Service

I started working with Obair Local Employment Service in November, 1999. For the year previous to that I worked with Tallaght Partnership, so I was familiar with all the staff in Obair before I made the move across the road to Unit 4 where I have worked since as Receptionist/Administrator.

In the years since 1999 I have seen many changes in both staff working in Unit 4 and clients using our service. Many staff have either left or moved on to other offices to take up various positions.

With regards to clients, there has been a vast change since 1999. In the early years many of the clients were local people popping in with their shopping trollies on the way back from The Square to check for courses or jobs for themselves or a family member. I have heard every story from troublesome teenagers to marriage difficulties to personal tragedies while they have been waiting in reception to see their Mediator.

Now in 2006 the majority of our clients are foreign nationals (at least 4 out of every 5 callers to our

office) and many of them have little English and sometimes none at all so they bring a friend or relative to talk on their behalf with the result you don't have the same rapport with them as local people. You can still meet some very nice people trying their best to master the English language and hoping to secure a decent job and make a life for themselves in Ireland.

I know, as is the nature of things, we must welcome in change but you can't help but miss some of the chats you would have had or the funny stories you heard when dealing with the local people in the early days. The only way forward is to learn some foreign languages so that we can move with the changing times and communicate more freely with our clients of all nationalities

Anonymous

My involvement in Cookstown Jobs Club

"I participated in a Job Club Programme in the FÁS Training Centre, Cookstown in 2005. When I arrived that first morning, my self - image was low and I lacked self – esteem. I had a poor idea of my own self worth.

The STEPS Programme helped me realise that I was a valuable person and that I had achieved many things in my own right. STEPS shows you that goals you once considered to be a pipe dream, with the right attitude can become attainable. You begin to open doors for yourself with confidence and enthusiasm. The STEPS Programme is for everyone regardless of background or life circumstances. It is a learning tool that can be carried with you throughout your life. There may be times when all is well and you can put the programme on the back burner for a while, however if a problem does arise it is very easy to put the STEPS Programme into action. I am now a productive member of the workforce, earning a weekly wage, and that is all positive.

The STEPS Programme in Cookstown is delivered by Tony McAvinney / Ina Broe, both excellent facilitators. They encourage and help to motivate each individual in a gentle and caring manner. No one comes to Cookstown Jobs Club as a number, but rather as a person, important and valuable. One could liken the experience to taking a gentle walk and breaking into a healthy stride. Tony and Ina run the STEPS Programme expertly as I am sure those who have passed through Jobs Club will agree."

Dee Ronan

Changes – Feel the fear and do it

I can still remember the absolute terror I felt on the morning I facilitated my first STEPS Programme. My legs shook like jelly and my voice sounded like something from the bottom of a well. I was so nervous I said to Len "Just get a gun and shoot me" – it would be easier than having to facilitate a complete course. Sometimes, even when change is good for us, we try to push it away.

That was back in October 2001. I have facilitated many programmes since and can honestly say I have enjoyed every single one of them. I still get nervous before a course, wondering about things like - will the group gel together? Will everyone enjoy it; Will all the equipment work etc. However, I feel the day I am not nervous is the day I will not do my job properly.

The reason I feel the course is such a success is because of the belief the facilitators have in the success of it. Many changes have happened in my life both professionally and personally since I was introduced to STEPS. All the goals I have visualised along the way have happened and I am still striving for better things. When I hear the word 'CHANGE' now I welcome it rather than run away from it. I can share my experiences with all who participate.

I get a great buzz out of watching people develop and grow and enjoy their journey. It is brilliant to watch participants on the course start to make changes in their lives. From day one when they arrive unsure of what to expect; worrying about whether they will understand the programme and unsure of each other - to day six when they leave with smiley, happy faces ready to face the world of change.

One of the concepts of the programme is to step out of our comfort zones. I certainly stepped out of mine when I started facilitating. Sometimes we think it is better not to face a rainy day when we feel miserable but if we get up and face the world there could be a new opportunity waiting and the sun might just shine later on.

Becoming a STEPS Facilitator was the beginning of my journey back into education.

I value the opportunity I was given and the support, guidance and encouragement I received from my colleagues (my Positive Wizards), without which I would not have had the confidence to continue into third level education.

I have been with the Local Employment Service since 1998 – Many changes have occurred from a procedural point since then but I feel the initial ethos still remains – that of ensuring each client feels he/she is listened to and valued from the time they walk in the door. I like to feel that in some way we contribute to their positive change.

Derek Jones

From administration to facilitation

Jobs Club Facilitator

I came to the TLES in January 2003 on a work placement from FÁS. I had been doing an I.T. course at the time and decided to try the LES in Killinarden for work experience. Originally I had gone to the Tallaght Partnership but they had no vacancies at that time and I was told to try the Jobs Club where I was given a work placement for the month of January. At that time I did not know for certain what path to take career wise. I had been working in advertising telesales for under a year, which was demanding and very competitive. I decided telesales was not the career for me and so embarked on the I.T. course with FÁS. I guess you could say I fell in to the role with the LES. After the initial work placement I was offered work full-time as the Jobs Club administrator and so began working officially for the LES.

The role of Jobs Club administrator was interesting and varied. I got to meet a lot of the clients coming in and out and each had a story to tell. Although many of them came from quite different backgrounds, they bonded well as groups, united by the fact that they were all unemployed and searching for work. It is always interesting to see the personal growth of the client from when they come in the door to the last day on the Jobs Club, the journey they go on in between that time. Some clients come in with introverted personalities, lacking confidence but eventually leave with a more solid belief in their abilities and a new aura of energy and enthusiasm. Of course there are always those clients who never complete the journey, who drop-out along the way for varied reasons but most stayed for the duration. A lot of them found new purpose for getting out of the bed in the mornings, they found a place where they belonged. The Jobs Club was not school, school being a place which the majority of participants despised. School for them was a place of punishment and mundane routine. The Jobs Club provided a more secure and informal environment where they could express their opinions and beliefs without fear of judgement.

In 1994 I was offered the role of Jobs Club facilitator, an opportunity which I seized. Because I had been the administrator for over a year it didn't feel like a huge transition to move into the facilitators role. I already had the opportunity to work with some of the groups before, so taking over as facilitator was more of a natural progression than anything else. I was glad to have the opportunity to try new things with the groups, alter the modules slightly and introduce some new material and see how it would be received by the groups. There were huge challenges, particularly when Jobs Clubs lost their training allowances. The role demands resilience and to be chameleon-like at times. Times of change can be difficult, but I feel it is something to embrace rather than resist. Whether it be working with an entirely new client group or delivering new training, these kinds of changes keep you challenged and there is great personal and professional growth to be taken from these experiences.

Eileen O'Rourke

Healthy Living in the Training Unit

Health Specialist in the Flexible Training Unit

I first became involved with The Flexible Training Unit in Summer 2002, when I was asked to do a Yoga and relaxation class with a group of men on a trial basis. I worked closely with Mary Sheehan, the Manager of the Unit, who was a great support to me.

Having spent time in the Unit I discovered that the men loved the Yoga, which involved teaching them breathing techniques and relaxation techniques and they showed a strong interest in learning more about their health and well being.

In 2003, when the F.T.U. was getting a new programme started, Mary asked me if I would work with the men for the year. Having had a career in nursing and experience working in a western medical practice, as well as being qualified practitioner of Traditional Chinese Medicine and a Yoga teacher, Mary asked me to devise a diverse health programme. This took place and the men were so interested in their health and particularly food – nutrition and exercise.

Also in 2003 an opportunity arose for me to be trained by the Health Promotion Unit to deliver a programme called the "Being Well" programme. This is a programme, which is designed to be delivered over an eight-week period. It covers an introduction to healthy living, changing life style, nutrition, and healthy activity and stress management. I delivered this and continued with the Yoga classes, which proved to be a great success.

In 2004 I became involved with Mary Sheehan in the Men's Health Forum. This involved a visit to the Ploughing Championships in Carlow to help launch a health booklet. This booklet involved comprehensive information on "Men's Health" with emphasis on looking at conditions from a preventative medical point of view e.g. prostate cancer and testicular cancer. I now include this information in the Health Programme.

In 2005 I trained with the Health Promotion Unit in a Stress Management Programme, which I have delivered to both staff and training participants.

In 2006 the Programme has now extended to another module "Healthy Food Made Easy", again working and training with H.P.U. to deliver a six-week programme. This includes more detailed information on nutrition e.g. protein, fats, fibre, carbohydrates, hygiene, when dealing with food, planning healthy eating for a family and a visit from the Community Dietician during the programme to answer any of the men's questions. I also involved cooking a healthy dish in class during four of the six classes.

It is quite amazing to see the progression of the Health Programme over the four years and I feel that the men learn a lot from the different approaches to health. Some of the men have school going children and are very interested for their sakes.

When the men start their programme I do a one to one medical interview with them. This gives them an opening to discuss any medical problems in a comfortable relaxed atmosphere. Some of them may not have attended a doctor for years if ever. I guide them and give them information on how to get a medical card and encourage them to go and have a check up, if required, or refer them to the appropriate sources. Some of the men have given up cigarettes through referral to the Smoking Cessation Officer at the Mary Mercer Centre.

Through the four years each group of men is so different and their needs differ but I feel that without doubt they have all benefited from the programme. I suppose the highlight of my four years was when one day we got a call from one of men who had been sent to Mountjoy Jail and he 'phoned the Unit to give me a message that he was doing his Yoga and relaxation in his cell and that he found it was really helping him to cope.

Anonymous

Working Together in Equal at Work

In November 2003, while still a participant on a Community Employment programme in Tallaght village, I first became aware of the Tallaght Partnership and the Equal at Work Training Initiative through an advertisement which was circulated to all CE schemes.

This notice invited all interested participants to apply for interview for the Medical Secretary Course. This was a pilot programme and there were only 15 places available to community employment participants. As I had been training in my present position and had successfully passed all my exams in Information Technology I decided to apply and I was successful in getting a place on the course. Having had previous experience of working in a hospital environment, which I thoroughly enjoyed, I hoped that I might be able to achieve adequate qualifications to now be acquire employment in the clerical area of the hospital service.

The course commenced in November 2003 and was very well structured into 4 modules of learning over a period of 16 weeks. The main modules were Audio Typing, Word Processing, Medical Terminology and Anatomy and Physiology. There was a great deal of work involved but it did equip the students with the basic knowledge required for working in the clerical area of the health service. On successful completion of the modules each student received a certificate from FETAC. The participants also had the option to continue their training with the remaining 4 modules to achieve a certificate in Business Studies at a later date. This course was delivered by a tutor from the Equal at Work programme. On the first day we were told about the various different groups involved in organising this course and the funding authority – some of the agencies involved with the Tallaght Partnership were , South Dublin County Council, the Adelaide and Meath Hospital , other health service bodies and FÁS the training authority. Working together these groups provided the links for the successful participants to achieve their goals and find full time employment in the workforce.

This I think was the most successful initiative ever in the area of community employment and re-training for people to gain access to the workforce after many years of unemployment. Many people take up training courses and pass exams but if there is not enough information and links to the employment field these people find it very difficult to progress from that position. The support of communities working together, trainers and employers alike can make the difference as this training initiative has proved. The staff of the Equal at Work Training Initiative worked extremely hard on behalf of all the participants to secure work experience positions for them while they were on the training programme. This gave each participant the opportunity to familiarise themselves with the hospital environment and allowed the option of placing their CV's with a prospective employer. The success rate of this training programme speaks for itself, most participants succeeded in getting full and part-time positions in the workforce.

As this was a pilot programme and there were only 4 modules initially and the option to continue at a later date, I think it would be much better to have all 8 modules in the course over a longer period of time. This would give a broader range of employment opportunities to participants when successfully completed. As for myself, I thoroughly enjoyed the course, I continued on privately to complete my remaining 4 modules and successfully achieved my goal. I am now happily employed in the Adelaide and Meath Hospital as a Grade IV Clerical Officer.

Marjo Moonen

Europe made real

The Flexible Training Unit, where long-term unemployed men train in Metalwork, Yoga and everything in-between, was looking to develop and deliver Communication skills training. Mary, the Unit's manager and expert networker, must have thought: "well, we don't have a communications officer for nothing!" and asked me to do the job.

From this initial engagement grew a closer interest and I quickly became more than involved in the development of the entire training programme. When Mary asked me in 2003 to work with her on Flex-all, a European Union so-called "Grundtvig" project to develop flexible practices in adult education, I felt privileged and excited.

Having missed the initial meeting in snowy Sweden, I first met all other project partners in Italy, in the middle of fierce debates about pedagogical and didactical approaches to adult education. Debates that were enlivened by seven different cultures' take on English - creative translating became one of my responsibilities. In addition to this we were involved in the editing of the project newsletter and developed the final product: a guidebook for flexible working in adult education to better meet people's learning needs.

In the course of a year and a half all nine Flex-all partners worked on the contents of this guidebook and tested elements in their own organisations. The Flexible Training Unit for instance, organised training for Partnership trainers in a practical, objective assessment system, which was developed and delivered by our Dutch partners. The work was punctuated by regular meetings where we exchanged our experiences, jointly planned the next steps and got to know each other very well socially.

In our curious mix of cultural differences and similarities, the shared responsibility focused our activities and facilitated us to be realistic and use the most appropriate expertise and skills of all partners. I must admit I never felt more "European" than while working together on a joint project.

This feeling was shared by most project partners and we worked hard to write a follow-up proposal to further develop some of our ideas. In its second attempt, this proposal was passed by Brussels in 2005 and we are currently midway in the Lifelong Learning Map project. (www.L3-map.com). This project includes eight of the former Flex-all partners and a new Bulgarian partner, and is about the development of a motivational tool to record adult learners' progress in education and training.

In addition to this, the Flexible Training Unit is leading a smaller European project, also a spin-off of Flex-all. This Assessment and Progression project looks at different assessment methodologies of participants when they first enter training. Both projects will be influential in the further development of the Flexible Training Unit after 2006.

Lorraine Rochford

Fettercairn Coffee Dock and Market

My name is Lorraine Rochford and I am the Manager of The Fettercairn Community Enterprise Co Ltd. We operate a Coffee Dock and Outdoor Market in Fettercairn Community Centre.

We have had the assistance of the Social Economy Department in Partas since 1998. During that time, they have assisted us with business plans, sources of funding and setting up our company, including registering in the Companies Registration Office and other legal requirements, which we had no knowledge of.

In July 2002, the Company was funded by FÁS to operate a Social Economy Programme. We have received a lot of support and help from the Social Economy Team in Partas since then. They have helped to develop the Company and bring us forward. We have had a lot of challenging times either through staff problems, recruitment etc.

We have found that the staff of Partas have always been there and are very accessible to us when we require help, advice etc. Our Company still depends on Partas for assistance in the smooth running of our Company. They are always there to advise us on the requirements from the statutory bodies, which are sometimes very difficult to understand.

We consider the present and previous members of the Social Economy Team as our friends and we feel that we, in the Community Sector, are treated on the same level and we do not feel inferior. We are very grateful to the Social Economy Team in Partas, for their continuing help and support."

Mary Reaney

Renewed Ambition

It was January 2000 when I first came to the Local Employment Service in Ballycragh and spoke to Teresa Lawless. Having been out of the workforce for 20 years I needed to get advice and direction on moving into the area of employment.

Before I separated from my husband my profession was in private secretarial work. After speaking with Teresa, she advised me to do a computer course as things had changed radically since my working days. Through her help I completed the ECDL and passed all modules. I then went on to do MOUS (Microsoft Office User Specialist) and passed that as well.

I returned to Teresa and then got a job as private secretary. I remained there for one year. After a time it became evident to me that full-time employment was too much for me. I went back to Teresa where we discussed my options. My ambition as a young person had always been to become a teacher of children, so when Teresa explained about a part-time position with a community youth programme which involved dealing with disadvantaged children, I felt that this was the right choice for me.

This was definitely where I found my passion lay. I helped the children with their homework and engaged in activities. The fact that I attended an all-Irish school gave me the opportunity to teach and help the children in my care with their Irish homework, it also

presented a space where the children learned the Irish language without pressure.

I found this job fulfilling and rewarding and discovered great empathy with the children in my care. After further discussions on this training programme, I became aware of an S.N.A. course which was available to me. I have now completed and passed with merit the Special Needs Assistants Training Course, School of Practical Childcare and Froebel College of Education in the I.T. College in Tallaght. I am now ready to move into the area of Special Needs.

Since then it has now come to my attention that a Diploma Course is available to me in Carysfort College. I have already obtained FETAC Level 5, which is the only access stipulation that is necessary for me to do this course. Through the availability of these courses and work placements which I obtained through The Local Employment Service I have grown, realised and recognised my new ambition. I now intend to go forward to Carysfort College and complete and obtain my Diploma S.N.A. Level 6.

Paddy Kelly

"I felt I had a say"

Flexible Training Unit participant in 2004

"I was in the Social Welfare Office in the Village and was checking out what was available. I was just being pure nosey, didn't want to do anything specific. Curiosity got the better of me and after hearing about the Flexible Training Unit from Social Welfare staff I called up.

I haven't looked back since I went to the Unit. I moved on from the Unit to PARTAS on a C.E. scheme so that's where I am at the minute now. The one big change that the Unit made for me was it helped me to get an opportunity to meet people in the area, as I was new to it.

My reading improved as a result of the course but I still need help with writing. Because I was older, doing the metalwork was all new- we didn't do it in vocational education in my day.

Working in a team meant I was ahead on some things but the young lads helped me to see the new approaches to learning- the group I was in was very representative of the area. The end result is that Tallaght Partnership helped to do some things but there is much more to do for men on courses; to use Bertie's phrase. For me as an older man in my late fifties I think courses need to be more tailored for my way of learning- we need different supports, as our gaps are wider.

I have a young son, he's two and a half and it's great that now he has opportunities for playschool. We used to hear so much about the bad things in Tallaght; nowadays there is so much more.

I wouldn't have the job now if I hadn't made the breakthrough by meeting people involved in FTU/ Tallaght Partnership's work. One thing that mattered was that at the FTU I was given the opportunity to chose how money for additional learning opportunities and other supports were spent for me; as it was discussed and we planned some parts of the course together. I felt I had a say- this made me feel happy and in control. I never felt I had to do what people told me - I was listened to- more than in other experiences I've had.

I liked going to Men's Health Policy Forum consultation meetings-you don't get many chances to influence people along the line so it was good to get out there and have your say."

Rachel Spencer

I never looked back

"My name is Rachel Spencer. I run my own business "RS Wedding & Event Management." It is an event coordination company and was formally known as "Irish Weddings by Rachel" but I decided to change the name 2 years ago. I left school at the age of 15 and never sat any exams in school, so the idea of me running my own business back then was only a dream.

About 4 years ago, in 2003, I really hated the job I was in and I was toying with the idea of starting a small business but nobody would take me seriously at all, mainly because I had no training or qualifications - and the fact that I left school early didn't go in my favour. However, I was talking one day to a friend of the family about my ideas and she told me about Partas / Get Tallaght Working. I was so excited by what she told me that I wrote out a small business plan and brought it down to Partas. I hadn't put a business plan together before, so it was fairly rough and it needed work done on it. I was given tax forms and it was explained to me how to register my business name and how to register for tax. These are things I would never have thought of and it felt great knowing that I was in the early stages of setting up a business and that these people were taking me seriously.

I was given a list of courses that are available at Partas and at a very affordable price too. During the start-up stage I joined the NEST programme, which I felt helped me tremendously with my business. I also met new people who I still keep in touch with and whom I now do business with. It was great to have the support there because most of the group were in the same position as me, setting up or running a small business. I also completed a manual bookkeeping course, a computerised accounts course and a course on advertising, promotions and selling skills.

All of these courses were crucial for me as I needed to be able to do my own books and to understand about taxing etc. The advertising course gave me the courage to open up an online store where I sell party and wedding products. The skills I have learned in that course have taught me how to promote my company to the right market and also how to advertise on a budget, which I needed at the time and probably on occasions still do. All in all, I don't think I would have set up a business if it wasn't for Partas, because I had the drive but not the confidence. I am 100% more assertive now and I have no problems dealing with clients / customers in a businesslike manner.

I now run a successful business and earn a comfortable living from what I do. I love my job now and its great being my own boss. I can work from home and still spend time with my children. I'm now in the process of expanding my business and I'm currently searching for suitable premises to hopefully open up a small shop. I am also designing wedding accessories and cards etc. for the gay community as I have discovered a big market for this, so my company is always growing. Never in my wildest dreams would I have expected to be where I am today and it's all thanks to the staff of Partas in Bolbrook. I know I wouldn't have set up without their tremendous support and encouragement and now my friends and family take me seriously, so I owe it all to them. Thank You!"

Tony Nolan

English for Traveller Enterprise programme 2002

On Wednesday 9th October 2002 the English for Traveller Enterprise programme commenced in our offices in Brookfield Enterprise Centre. This programme ran for the next 26 weeks. The group started with 15 participants who were all attending the programme itself and literacy tuition on a one-to-one basis, which was organised in conjunction with the course.

Tallaght Local Employment Service recognizes that Travellers encounter particular challenges in business start-up and using Information Technology, due to the low levels of formal education which most have received, and their attendant low-literacy levels. For these reasons Travellers often express the feeling of intimidation by business research, business plans, accounts and Information Technology. This was the backdrop against which it was decided to develop tailored training for Travellers who were interested in setting up their own business.

All of the participants were assessed as to their level of literacy and engaged in the process of learning the necessary skills to be able to compete in the open market with their own particular business ideas. All recognized that this would be a slow process and were committed to making the changes in their lives to facilitate their own learning and development.

The sessions were run two mornings per week with literacy inputs on the remaining three mornings. The modules for the enterprise development programme were devised in such a way that they can be delivered using video and role-plays to impart the necessary information.

Since commencement of the course three of the participants have started their own businesses. Up until now they did not have the self-belief that they could do this successfully. Several others have ideas around enterprise that with support and encouragement could develop into small enterprises.

This was a pilot programme and as it was successful, we now have a model of good practice that we can use with other groupings of clients from our target groups.



A1
24
417

A1
24
404

EXCEPT TRAMS
Gibt keinen Durchgang

35



INTRO

The Partnership is committed to being an effective organisation, continually developing and learning, to carry out our ambitious work plan. During the last 6 years we have moved to new premises in Killinarden to be closer to many of our target groups, we have taken on new staff, lost a few people on the way (very few really) and taken on more new staff. We have developed computer systems from 10 stand-alone desk tops to a network which works well but urgently needs updating (where's the money?). We further improved our financial systems and put in place new work practices, policies, committees and progress reporting systems. We developed equality policies, incorporated community arts in our work and implemented a creative and cohesive communication strategy.

We also kept many things the same. Our morning break for example, our Christmas quiz and Kris Kindle, our day trips (by some staff) to London, Leeds and Edinburgh, the good atmosphere, the jokes and the helping each other out. And did anyone mention the temperature in our offices yet?

Marjo Moonen

External Communication

postcards



coherent &
creative

annual reports



projects



AN UNSUITABLE FIT



Sustainability of Community Childcare Centres in Disadvantaged Urban Areas

A Place to Call Our Own



November 2008



website



Clement Esebamen

Hello Stranger...! Who are these folks?!!

I was employed as Equality Worker in March 2001 job-sharing with Mary Keogh who had since gone on to many other great things. The challenge of developing an equal opportunities policy and implementation plan was central in the course of the day job in those early days. The management quite rightly saw the importance of planning and responding to the changing intercultural environment, by imbibing principles and developing policies that accurately reflected them. I became a fulltime worker by the end of 2002 and took on the responsibility of leading the organisation's equality and diversity strategy.

My involvement resulted very directly in the addition to the organisation of 3 new staff with international backgrounds and varying competence in charting the course of immigrant participation and integration in our area of work. The profile of TP has flourished as an acknowledged key opinion formulator and policy driver in local development. Its cutting edge leadership in actions addressing disadvantage, target group working and equality initiatives is widely recognised and tapped both nationally and international levels.

An example is the TallaZens Project which is an initiative that aimed to promote the participation of non Irish citizens in local active citizens' action group. The convening of a stakeholders meeting (South Dublin County Council, Tallaght Intercultural Action, Tallaght Volunteer Bureau and Tallaght Partnership) and a forum of non-EU nationals gave rise to the idea of a project that has achieved for the stakeholders and participants.

The successful implementation of the basic idea of TallaZens back in August 2003, has led to the current EU-INTI funded Trans-national Partnership Project 'Integration through Participation'.

This project remains very exciting because of the possibilities and real value of building an integrated and highly-resourced community of people and ideas, as well as the opportunity of sharing and contributing to the European experience through the Partnership. The by and large positive transformation of the participants' experience of community life through association with the project is also deeply satisfying.

The original idea of the TallaZens Project came out the Partnership strategic plan for the area, aiming to promote the inclusion of people on the margins of the community and explore innovative actions that could make this happen. The stakeholder and forum of the target group were facilitated by the Partnership. The work consequently was led and driven by the staff and management in collaboration with the stakeholders and project participants.

Geraldine Ennis

Why we stayed in the Partnership

We met over lunch one day to reminisce on the good times and why we all stayed so long – well, over five years would be considered a long time in anyone's estimation! Of course some of us have been here a lot longer than that and I would have to say that one recurring comment jumped out at me – the Partnership has always been a very adaptable, family-friendly and flexible organisation, well it would have to be to encourage some of the most marginalized and excluded in our society to participate in the innovative and groundbreaking events and initiatives it has been at the forefront of since its inception towards the end of 1991.

For this story we'll concentrate on the period 2000-2006, the bulk of which has been spent in the present offices at Killinarden Enterprise Park but anyone who was around at the time of the move from the Village Green has it etched in their memory because we all worked as a team that day, Marjo really got right into it (the skip that is!), we had take-out for lunch and adjourned in our trainers and sweats to the Abberley, only to be told after a couple of drinks that we weren't quite within the dress code and "would we be long?"!

When we talked about individuals' reasons for staying, the comments ranged from variety, job satisfaction, opportunities, challenges and wanting to be part of helping to make positive changes happen, to the support and encouragement we all received from each other; you can always find someone to help you out of a difficulty or buoy you up to try something new. In fact Sheilann joined the Partnership in 1996 despite being seven months pregnant at her interview! It is a testament to these qualities that the organisation has an enviable record on sick leave.

There were some funny stories when we recalled our most memorable or funniest events during our tenure with the Partnership, including the fact that Mary Robinson's visit in 2002 rivalled Albert Reynolds' at the height of the peace process in 1996 when the South Dublin County Council offices had just opened and

we ran out of drink while we were waiting for him to arrive! Gretta regaled us with the ups and downs of Springboard, including the foot and mouth epidemic which necessitated the Northern trainees being accommodated in the South to avoid contamination and the graduation ceremony when the late Mo Mowlam presented the certificates. Another highlight was the Awards Ceremony for Volunteers in 2003 which was the culmination of the KEN project, everyone rallied round on the night and in the preparations. Kay was proud of the conferring of certificates on the first group of men by Chris Flood in the Flexible Training Unit and Sheilann felt the URBAN Project provided a valuable collaboration between the Local Authority and communities.

There was general consensus that the organisation has become increasingly professional over the years and this is reflected in the corresponding increases in budgets provided to fund new and existing projects.

The advent of teambuilding events, whether organised by the Partnership or just a day away for ourselves served to cement our friendships outside as well in work. For my own part I would echo the sentiments of everyone else and I have to say that I personally would never have been able to continue working without the consistent camaraderie, understanding and generosity I've encountered during my time with the Partnership.

Lorna Maxwell

An important piece of the puzzle

South County Dublin

I first worked with Tallaght Partnership when preparing the County Strategy, South Dublin: A Place for People, in 2001. Tallaght Partnership is a member organisation of the County Development Board (CDB). The Strategy was prepared over 2001-02, launched at the end of 2002, and the first Implementation Plan ran from 2002-2005. During 2005 a review of the County Strategy was carried out, and the next Implementation Plan prepared, to cover the period 2006-08. I had close and ongoing deliberations with Tallaght Partnership throughout this period. I left the CDB at the end of 2005, which also ended my relationship with Tallaght Partnership in that capacity.

The success of the CDB and the level of integrated services and initiatives developed is directly dependent on the level of commitment and active participation of the member organisations. Thus, the involvement of each individual organisation influences the constantly emerging pathway for the CDB in a unique way and leads to an enriched and eclectic approach. My view is that Tallaght Partnership has maintained a high level commitment to the ethos of this approach and its particular contribution has been four key areas (as I see it):

1. In ensuring that the CDB process is one where dialogue and an ongoing process of deliberation with the Board members is regarded as important as the achievement of specific initiatives.
2. In actively contributing to and developing an enhanced and shared understanding of the nature of poverty and its effects, and in the development of appropriate responses.
3. In pressing for real commitment to a strategic planning approach that ensures meaningful engagement rather than adherence to tight timeframes that are often dictated by priorities external to the county.
4. In having clarity on the appropriate structural framework for cross-agency and cross-sectoral working that is borne out of a considered approach rather than personality based linkages.

This has been an incredible learning experience at both a personal and professional level and I believe for each of the board members and the organisations involved. Supporting a Board of twenty different member organisations, working across four different sectors in the County, to embark on an entirely new approach in the way each of those organisations carries out its functions – to do things better – is a huge and ambitious undertaking. It is a process that only works by giving something of benefit to everyone participating, so that people in turn will feel it worthwhile to contribute something of benefit to the process. The role of Tallaght Partnership was an important piece of the puzzle – and has influenced both the process and outcomes of the CDB significantly to date.

Though I have left the CDB seven months now, I believe one of the current priorities for the CDB process to work should be for each member organisation to embed that change process and collaborative approach internally and formally throughout their own organisations and across all their activities.

Maurice Dunphy

Art to address the issues

I joined Tallaght Partnership as its first Community Arts Worker in the spring of 2001. My job included working through the arts with community based youth initiatives, community development and services for the unemployed.

In the course of this work I have conducted numerous integrated arts projects with schools, youth groups and community organisations to help them learn, explore and experiment with issues that concerned them. I have also created a developmental integrated arts training programme for employees and volunteers of funded initiatives of Tallaght Partnership. These include childcare centres, youth development groups and clubs, community development projects, services for the unemployed and family learning and literacy projects. The arts programmes were among a number of crosscutting measures that attempted to impact on all main areas of TP's work. Although I left Tallaght Partnership in the summer of 2003 I am currently involved with a number of its programmes during the period 2001-2006. While all of the projects undertaken in this period constitute a valuable legacy some stand out more in my memory, particularly those where serious crosscutting measures were required in order to complete the projects.

One clear example of this kind of crosscutting approach was the 'Tallaght-ween Arts Project', a project involving 300 ten-eleven year old school children, 100 parents/adults and a number of staff members from St Thomas Senior Primary School in Jobstown. The aim of the project was to create a piece of theatre that would include school and community in a large scale arts project that would have ongoing educational value after the initial project finished. I conducted five weeks of theatre/allied arts workshops in which we devised and subsequently performed an outdoor play for Halloween 2001. The project involved parents as designers and creators of associated props, costumes and setting. This was followed by a creative writing programme for children, based on the story of their play, and the subsequently produced book was launched by the Minister for Education and Science. The book, *The Search for a Pleasant Land*, was accompanied by a 'devising process handbook'. The hope was that the whole programme would open up and encourage the children to look at their society, realise the possibility of change and the part they might play in it. The ongoing educational spin-off we hoped

for was to try to encourage the children to read more and learn to enjoy literature and the arts in general.

While it is often difficult to see the tangible evidence of the long term value in this type of work I certainly had one such experience. In the summer of 2005 I was greatly and happily surprised at a 'national children's book week' phone-in to an arts programme on RTE Radio One. Of the five telephone call-ins broadcast, two of the broadcast calls were from book-club members of St Thomas Senior Primary School. These calls were made by confident, curious and articulate children and are a credit to everyone involved in their literary pursuits. I think projects such as *The Search for a Pleasant Land* play some small yet significant part in these successes.

Another such project that has produced concrete evidence of its successful youth projects, Springboard and Interact, exploring youth identity, citizenship and community. The Tallaght youth group were all involved with the JETS programme co-ordinated and managed by Caroline Lynch (then Tallaght Partnership's Education Officer). The group have trained and worked with me as arts assistants on a large-scale children's theatre project. This was also conducted with the FTU where we created the props and costume for the beach day. Of these eight young people, three are now in full-time third-level education and two others are in recognised apprenticeships.

My first project with the Flexible Training

Unit set the tone for all future work. I worked with a group of young unemployed men and the aim was to get the men to explore their 'identity'. This was conducted through a variety of arts processes, all of which would be integrated into a multimedia representational artwork.

The project began with a quick discussion on 'the arts' primarily to demystify any notions of elitism and the explore what they meant to each of us. We found a common theme which we all agreed to work on and began to create a simple storyline with a local west Tallaght flavour which the group

represented through the group's interest in horses and cars. The simple storyline had the working-title *Mick's Horse*.

Mick's Horse could simply remain as a short story or be adapted as a stage play or a short-film script. The next process decided on by the group was to storyboard the first few events (or scenes) of the story, then to create painted location-shots and eventually creating a suitably atmospheric soundtrack. Each group member then designed a single set for a particular scene, from which they constructed a scaled model.

This helped us develop the story further, discussion leading to more intensive detailing and dramatising the story in order to explore ways of resolving the conflicts in Mick's life. The aim was to find peaceful and progressive ways of freeing and rehabilitating Mick. During the course of this process the story required retitling and the group agreed after discussion and collaboration on the title *Zero to Hero*.

The final artwork was a multimedia representation, collaboratively created and included a short story, a screenplay, a series of drawings and paintings, a collection of sculptures and stage/film set models. Due to the success of the programme I decided the work was sufficient to submit for an Art and Design FETAC accreditation. All of the group members involved in this project were successfully accredited. Although this project had very humble beginnings it became a very important vehicle for these young men to gain awareness of their inner selves and discover what their identity meant to them. This in turn led them to explore positive options for the future and deal with the issues that affected them such as addiction recovery, alienation from society and redress their lack of self-esteem and confidence.

The ongoing commitment of Tallaght Partnership to engage in this type of work and to constantly search for alternative ways to address the issues with which it deals is perhaps the single most identifiable reason for the success of these projects.

Florence Mc Cullagh

The Move

The Tallaght Partnership as it is today bears little resemblance to what it was when I joined in July 1999. It was then based in The Village Green complex in Tallaght Village. At that time we were a fairly small group of staff based in the centre of life in the village. There was a great atmosphere and work ethic among all the staff but as time went on it was felt that firstly the building was too small to cater for the growing number of projects being undertaken and secondly that we were too isolated from the community we were supposed to be serving. The decision to move to our present location was taken to overcome this.

On the fateful day all staff assisted in the packing, as all equipment, kitchen appliances and documents had to be ready for the removal company. The office had to be cleared of everything else, so a skip was ordered. We had a couple of hours between delivery and collection, so it was all hands on deck. The offices were on the first floor with no lift, so up and down the stairs we went. What a sight to behold Marjo in the skip trying to fit everything in. A great day was had by all and ended in the local hostelry where we were barred because Anna was wearing white runners as well as carrying a briefcase.

The new offices in Killinarden Enterprise Park were an improvement on the old cramped office, everyone had their own work station with more space, light etc but we had to get accustomed to the "isolation" of working away from our beloved village. Extra staff was taken on for new projects and for the first time we now had two men in our midst who blended in very well.

We endeavoured to recreate the same atmosphere and work ethic that we once had and I think we were fairly successful in this regard. We were assisted in this by adopting teamwork. There were new challenges with Ireland's new found wealth and all the problems that came with it e.g. the new immigrant population, those left behind by the Celtic Tiger, equality legislation etc.

We are all well settled now but there have been many changes over the last few years that have impacted on our level of work. Now with the impending expansion of our catchment area there obviously will be further changes and new challenges for us all. Hopefully we will be as successful in meeting these as we have been in the past.

Philomena Poole

Inter-agency working is key

Director of Housing, South County Dublin and Chair of the Partnership Board

"I am involved with the Tallaght Partnership Board since 2000. The County Council representative was changing at the time and I more or less invited myself. I was the Director of Community and Enterprise in the Council, so it had particular relevance to my work and the County Development Board was going the way of community development as well. The last 3 years I have been the Chair of the Partnership's Board. I felt it was important for the state sector to step up to the plate and show its commitment to the partnership process. I agreed to stay on for longer than I planned, to see out the current programme and cover the Cohesion process, but after this period another Board sector should take over; the different sectors should ideally all take their turn.

The thing about the Partnership Board is that it works well and always did, so I can't really think of anything that changed that much over the last 6 years. There were interesting debates in our meetings however on a strategic rather than an operational level, where we really had to think out where we stand on certain issues, for instance about anti-social behaviour and the Traveller Accommodation Plan. When your organisation's position is different from the Board's position, that is challenging to manage, and the Board has more awareness of that now. It is very important to create space for that kind of discussion and I think it is really helpful to hear other people's views on issues. It definitively gave me a greater level of information and influenced my opinion. The importance of Board information, both before and during meetings should not be underestimated. It contributes significantly to your understanding of the complexity of situations and you feel that if you missed a meeting you'd miss a bit of the picture. It's not for nothing that Board attendance is so good – we've never had to cancel a meeting because we didn't have a quorum!

Inter-agency working has always been key to the Partnership's approach and Anna is mainly responsible for that I think. That high level of cooperation isn't the norm everywhere in the country. The tradition of agencies working together makes it much easier to approach them because there is an expectation within organisations.

It is a very exciting time for partnerships now. The cohesion process means that a new population and additional priorities will have to be taken into account. Older people, for instance, are a new group that the Partnership will have to work with. It will be a real challenge to maintain the existing service and expand to include new work and it will require creative resource management. We all have to rethink in the public sector how to use systems and resources in the most efficient way. Technology can free up people's time – why not update project files on a handheld computer every day for a few minutes rather than spending a couple of days at the end of the month? It will require this kind of thinking – and Pobal has a responsibility here too – to make strategic choices and invest to change the service for the future. If you don't change internally, external forces will make you!"

Christine O'Shaughnessy

Growing

I am involved with the Partnership since 1997, when I was responsible for one account, the main account, and the wages. I remember 2000 well, that was when we started with three more accounts. It was the start of the big work increase. I look after 17 different accounts now and went from 2.5 to 3.5 days a week and I work fulltime now.

Every account comes with a person. That means there is much more communication with people, which I like. I'm like their mammy out there, when they come to me with questions about cheques and lodgements. Maybe I should send them back to learn how to do it themselves!

It wasn't only more projects and more accounts; it was also ADM who generated more work. They came in and did an audit. We have to do everything according to their financial handbook and that brought more changes. Every document needs to get a stamp and Anna has to sign everything. It must take a lot of her time as well. It's making us more professional but it does take a lot of time and money!

Other examples of how we've become more professional are the computer network, we're all connected and have broadband.

We also have the Sun system for accounting. I'm finally getting my head around that. I had some training in it but mostly I had to learn it by doing.

I have more work and more responsibilities now. In 1997 I started on reception and then went on to do administration. I do wonder about that sometimes: there was a ladder to go up on, while once you get to the top there's nowhere else to go.

We used to have Willie, the caretaker, who went to the bank for us. Since he's gone we have to do those things ourselves. Banks have become more professional too and everything takes much longer. We used to do things over the phone but you can't do that anymore.

We've grown and grown and when we're going to expand we'll have even more work!

Anonymous

Working together for communities

In 1999 I became the DSFA (Department of Social and Family Affairs) representative on the Board of the Partnership and I was a Director until I moved from the Department's Tallaght office in June 2002. I currently have no direct involvement with the Partnership, although the area in which I work, the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs, is responsible for policy in relation to the Local Development Social Inclusion Programme and the RAPID programme.

From my perspective, both personally and professionally, my work with Tallaght Partnership was the most significant and fulfilling 'wider agency' work I was involved in during the time I spent in Tallaght.

On a personal level, I benefited from much development from working with the staff and Board of the Partnership, and in building up networks and contacts through that. There was always an 'open door' policy in the Partnership; phone calls, enquiries and physical calls to the office were always welcome and the approach to everything was always user friendly. I also found that I was consistently kept informed of issues and developments within the Partnership catchment area and indeed on the wider front in terms of issues regarding Pobal (then ADM), the EU and any new requirements or schemes coming on stream.

On a professional level I found the networks through the Partnership Board and sub-groups invaluable in terms of enhancing my work of Area Manager of Tallaght Social Welfare Local Office.

For example, through these contacts I established 'open days' in the Social Welfare office attended by all key agencies including the Partnership and TLESN, for our mutual clients to provide information and advice on employment education and training opportunities. I also worked closely with the Partnership and TLESN on other projects and initiatives, such as the FIT programme and Springboard. None of this would have been possible without the Partnership, which helped create the links and promote integration of services through the key players on the Board.

The Partnership works as a catalyst and facilitator. It provides the link between the State sector and the Community and Voluntary sector, it is closest to the issues in the locality in relation to groups and residents it serves and through bringing together all the key players it facilitates solutions being found and results being achieved for the target groups. The inclusive approach taken in terms of membership of the Board and sub-groups has been, in my opinion, very effective.

Florence Mc Cullagh

Computers

Tallaght Partnership decided to update their IT equipment in mid 2000. New computers were installed, with flat screen monitors. The new computers had Window 2000 software. It was a big investment, and at that time very much up to date. In 2001 more projects were taken on and extra staff employed so more computers had to be installed. The computers were stand alone which made information sharing difficult, this could only be one with the use of floppy disks.

When the Partnership moved to their new office in Killinaraden Enterprise Park in October 2001, the services of an IT company were employed to develop a LAN (local area network). A server was installed with different drives to cater for all needs i.e. a drive for accounts only, a general drive for all staff projects and drive for each member of staff. The addition of a very good network printer plus photocopier (which will do almost anything) was also leased at great expense. A colour network printer has been also been installed. So now staff can sit at their desks and share information and send documents to the printer to collect whenever it suits them. Another advantage of a server is that our work is backed –up every day, if a file is lost or deleted by mistake, it can be retrieved from a previous back- up tape. A new terminal server was also added this year. The network has been a great asset to the work of the Partnership. Every staff member has their own email address, which has made communications with staff and outside agencies much faster. Email has greatly enhanced the work of the Partnership.

We now have a systems development company, Definitive Solutions, to take care of our IT requirements i.e. software and hardware needs, to identify problems and solve them as quickly as possible. This can be done by remote access sometimes.

Such is the technology today that when staff go abroad on transnational projects they can bring a laptop and once they have a broadband connection they can access the server to send and receive emails and access documents.

Easy access brings other problems. That is why virus protection and password protection are important to prevent unauthorised users breaking into the system. New strains of virus appear very often, so we have a good virus protection which must be updated regularly to scan the system to safe- guard the network.

At the present time the Partnership has 25 computers and 9 laptops. We have wireless broadband for laptops in the office. The laptop users have remote access to the network. All staff have internet access from their own PCs. Project updates are sent monthly to Pobal by remote access via Scope. Sun System accounts package is in operation and it can be accessed remotely from Brookfield by FTU and LES administration staff.

The introduction of this new technology has made the Partnership of 2006 a very different work place to what it was in 2000. It has created a more businesslike environment and has enabled it to encompass more projects and deal with a greater workload than previously was possible.

Marie Price Bolger

From grant-givers to network facilitators

Manager of Tallaght Welfare Society and Partnership Board member

I have been involved with Tallaght Partnership from the start in '91 in two stints. I helped to found Community Initiatives Tallaght (CTI), an umbrella organisation of what we would now call CE supervisors and became the first Chair of that organisation. Tallaght Partnership supported us, as part of the development of local employment opportunities. We became involved with the Partnership's Community Development Committee and I was elected as CIT representative on the Partnership Board, where I stayed for about 2.5 years. In the years after that I was involved with the development of the Jobs Initiative Plan and the LES Outreach contact point in Fettercairn.

Work then took me to Blanchardstown for a period of four years. My second period of involvement started when I came back to Tallaght, towards 2002. I noticed a big change in the way the Partnership worked and was seen by local groups. There was no longer a perception that the Partnership was an endless source of money. It was more about capacity building, support for people and groups to do things themselves. As a result there were a number of strong groups in the area. I'm sure this change was a gradual one, but because I was away and came back I maybe saw it more clearly.

I think the development of the Community Development Team from one to three members made a big impact; there was more staff to give information, advice on how to access funding and support with practical things. And other Partnership people have been working on the ground as well, for instance John's sports work and Caroline's actions for young people. This work has shown the importance of networks.

Through the development of networks you can touch base with far more people and groups than on a 1-to-1 basis, and people can learn from each other. Networks make it easier for projects to look at themselves, their needs and the ways to address those. An early example of this work was KEN, the Killinarden Education Network. But the Dominic's Network, Tallaght Childcare Centre and Fettercairn Horse Project are other examples of groups that wouldn't have progressed without the involvement of the Partnership.

Recently the community sector has gone through challenging times. The uncertainty for Community Development Projects about their funding and even their existence for instance has been very disruptive. The Partnership has a role, through the CDP network to deal with these issues.

In Partnership structures we have become more policy-focused. I suppose this is the logical next development of the supporting role. Rather than being action-led the organisation has become more facilitating and directing. We used to organise seminars for instance, but now the Partnership initiates and facilitates others to do that.

Michael Fox

Openness

Disability Interest Group, Former Chair of the Partnership Board

"I have been involved with the Partnership for a long time; it must be since about 1992. That was when I represented the Forum for People with a Disability in the Partnership's newly formed Disability Interest Group. Between 2000 and 2004 I was on the Board as a community Director and from 2002 to 2004 I was the Chairperson of the Board. The rotation policy of Community Directors meant that I had to step down after 4 years on the Board. I am still active in the Disability Interest Group of the Partnership and come in the office a fair bit to organise things.

The most important thing about the Partnership is its staff and the way it is open to new people and ideas. When I think of the new people who have come to the organisation I am kind of amazed at how well they all seem to adapt to the organisation and fit in. The "party line" as it were, but something much more subtle than that and never really made explicit. Quite a few non-Irish people have joined over the last couple of years – that also shows the openness of the organisation. Of course more staff means that more time is needed to manage them.

While a lot of new staff has joined, there are still a lot of people around going way back, from the time the Partnership had offices in the Square. Not many people leave. The Partnership obviously has a very good team spirit. I realise though that as a board member you don't see and hear everything - I'm sure things happen that I'm not aware of.

The Partnership attracts people because of its good reputation, I'm sure. People want to work there. New people bring fresh blood and new ideas. There is a very good pool of knowledge and different experiences in the Partnership and people are very generous in sharing those. I have received great support. People are generally open to suggestions from others as well.

Another example of the openness to new influences is the work on disability issues. The Partnership was one of the first to take up that area. The same goes with equality, which has been an important part of the work in the last six years. The Partnership wants to lead in those areas and is really committed to them. That isn't the case in all organisations - I've been to meetings where I've come across very different ways of dealing!"

Nuala Kelly

From the Outside

Pobal Liaison Officer

Maybe I am not the best person to participate in telling stories about the Partnership as I have not been part of the story! I have just been looking in. Partnerships are the implementing mechanism for the social inclusion programme¹. My role as liaison officer with Pobal is to ensure that the aims of the programme are implemented to the best possible outcome for equality and participation of local communities and disadvantaged groups. For almost two years now, I attend Board meetings, assess Programmes of Activity and offer general support as well as some monitoring and challenge in relation to implementation of the programme objectives. I don't know at first hand about the Partnership's projects but I do have a comparative overview given that I also liaise with other partnership organisations and I enjoy working with and learning from Tallaght.

Recently as part of a review of Tallaght Partnership for the Local Development Social Inclusion Programme, I reflected on some of the interesting experimental models of work that have been developed in Tallaght. In particular I mentioned one area of work with which I was to have greater contact. The Partnership's early work with local refugee / asylum seeker projects had set the ground for participation, along with two other partnerships, in a joint initiative with Pobal, Migrant Rights Centre Ireland and Dublin Employment Pact to explore the development of strategies for the integration of migrant workers. This was an attempt to explore and highlight the vital role that partnerships can play in work to facilitate intercultural integration that recognises the value and contributions of migrant workers to the promotion of a cohesive society. Hopefully, it has contributed to efforts to ensure the further development of strategies and actions for integration at local level.

While stringent financial accountability procedures and processes can create negative vibes between

Pobal and partnerships, my experience of dealing with Tallaght has been positive and constructive. When matters are well run in the sense that sub committees process the nitty gritty and offer clear material to the Board to inform decision making, this relationship becomes less fraught. More importantly, it takes the pressure off a voluntary Board comprised of people from diverse sectors and backgrounds. Tallaght Partnership can be cited as an example of good practice in the respect that it shows for its Board with the provision of well prepared and accessible material.

Tallaght Partnership is continuously alert to and aware of the challenges it faces. It experiments with methods to encourage participation and integrated approaches. One challenge is to explore wider use of community development approaches for outreach in employment, enterprise, equality or education related projects to engage or empower disadvantaged groups collectively to identify and raise their concerns. Anna once famously said that she likes to be challenged and surely this is the biggest challenge of social inclusion work...for us all!



This document is a collection of stories about Tallaght Partnership; diverse, kaleidoscopic and subjective. Other, more objective records of the Partnership's work, for instance audited accounts, annual reports, End-of-year reviews and project evaluations, are available on request. Some of these records are also available on our website: www.tallpart.com

Tallaght Partnership
Killinarden Enterprise Park
Tallaght, Dublin 24
T 01 466 4280
E info@tallpart.com
www.tallpart.com



