



Community Work Ireland

Annual Report 2015

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Chairperson's Note



As Chairperson of Community Work Ireland, I welcome you to the 2015 Community Work Ireland Annual report. 2015 was a very busy year for Community Work Ireland as we consolidated our new identity without compromising on our principles of engagement and participation.

It was a year in which we sought to engage our members in the process of influencing the Framework Policy on Local and Community Development. It was the year of the Sustainable Development Goals, which we sought to reflect on in the joint CWI & Maynooth University International Conference, *Human Rights and Equality from Below*. 2015 saw the publication and launch of *In Whose Interests? Exploring the impact of Competitive tendering on Social Inclusion and Community Development in Ireland*, important work that we are now building on.

2015 saw the opening of our new office in Westside Community Development Centre in Galway and the taking up of posts by Ann Irwin and Rachel Doyle as Joint National Co-ordinators. This annual report illustrates the level of their professionalism and commitment and the commitment of the Central Group, the Community Sector Subgroup and CWI Members.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Central Group, Community Sector Sub Group and all our members for their interest, engagement and support for the crucial work of the organisation during the year.

Anastasia Crickley

Central Group Members for 2015 were;

- Aine Deeley
- Anastasia Crickley
- Helen Lowry
- Joe Donoghue
- Siobhan McLaughlin
- Jamie Gorman
- Oonagh Mc Ardle
- Juan Carlos Azzopardi
- Mick Mooney
- Obert Makaza
- Patricia Brennan
- Sheilann Monaghan
- Sinead Smith
- Siobhan O Donoghue
- Tommy Coombes

Introduction

Established in 1981, Community Work Ireland (CWI) is a national organisation that promotes and supports community work as a means of achieving social change that will contribute to the creation of a more just, sustainable and equal society.

The CWI is a membership organisation. Its membership comprises individuals and organisations involved in community work at local and national level. There are currently approximately 800 individual and organisational members of CWI.

CWI aim

The aim of the CWI is to promote and support community work to achieve positive social change and to contribute to the creation of a more just and equal society.

CWI Objectives

The objectives of CWI are:

- To ensure the inclusion of, and to bring about equality of outcome for, those currently experiencing social exclusion and inequality.
- To promote anti-oppressive, anti-sexist and anti-racist community work, with particular emphasis on the inclusion of women.
- To develop partnership and co-operation within the community sector.
- To seek to positively influence the economic and social development policies of the State and its agencies
- To seek to promote community work and influence policies at EU level.
- To support the development of models and institutions of participatory democracy which will enable the participation of marginalised communities in planning, decision making, implementation and evaluation at local, regional and national levels.
- To support the recognition and inclusion of the community sector as a social partner in order to articulate the interests of those who experience social exclusion and inequality.

- To promote a global perspective on justice issues and seek to make constructive links with the sector and development issues.

CWI Funding

The Scheme of Supports to National Organisations continued to provide core funding to CWI for 2015, enabling the employment of staff and the opening of the new office in Galway. Funding and sustainability however remain a significant challenge for the organisation as the current round of funding comes to an end in mid-2016.

Strategic Priority 1

To embed quality community work in practice and policy

All Ireland Endorsement Body for Community Work Education and Training and Revised Standards for Community Work

Community Work Ireland continued to play a co-ordinating role in the All Ireland Endorsement Body for Community Work Education and Training (AIEB). A core priority for AIEB for 2015 - 2016 was the review of *Towards Standards for Quality Community Work* and the production of a revised all-Ireland set of professional standards for community work. Two consultation workshops were held in Dublin and Limerick with CWI members and a further consultation meeting held with the North South Community Work Educators Forum in Maynooth University. Drafting of the revised standards began at the end of the year and in November we presented a draft at four capacity building meetings organised by the Department of Environment, Community & Local Government and Pobal in Dublin, Limerick, Cavan and Mullingar with Local and Community Development Committees to introduce the revised Standards and discuss the draft

We attended a one day seminar in Edinburgh organised by the Scottish Community Learning and Development Standards Council who also viewed and commented on the draft Standards.

CWI/ Maynooth University International Community Work Conference - *Human Rights and Equality from Below: Framing Irish Community Development in Local and Global Challenges*

The one day CWI/Maynooth University conference “Human Rights from Below” was held on Sept 25th with a high level of attendance (120) and lively discussion and debate. The keynote speaker was Jim Iffe, the inaugural Head of the Centre for Human Rights Education at Curtin University, Australia until his retirement in 2006. Prior to that he was Professor of Social Work and Social Policy at Curtin University and at the University of Western Australia, where his teaching and research interests were in community development and human rights and he is the author of books in these fields.



Other conference speakers included, Colin Wrafter (Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade), Rachel Doyle (CWI), Rowena Pecchinino (Dean of Social Science Maynooth University) Oonagh Mc Ardle (Maynooth University) and Anastasia Crickley (MU and CWI).

Lively workshops ensued on the themes of; Local Authorities and Local Structures: roles and responsibilities for building participation and supporting community development; National Plans & International Targets: Responding from below to Irelands global commitments, including developing national Sustainable Development Goals; Promoting Rights Through National Programmes; Thinking Locally Acting Globally -

Making local issues global concerns; Thinking Globally, Acting Locally: Using global standards to address local concerns and Thinking About Collective Action Through New Technologies.



The conference called on CWI and Maynooth University to write to Enda Kenny urging the development of a national implementation strategy for the new UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Correspondence on this was sent to the Taoiseach, Minister Charlie Flanagan, Colin Wrafter (DFAT Human Rights Unit) and the Irish Ambassador to the UN David Donoghue.

Thanks to all our members and friends for taking on roles and supporting the conference to make it a truly worthwhile and engaging event.

Sustainable Development Goals



This year we joined the Dochas/NGO SDG alliance represented at the first meeting by Jamie Gorman.

The LEADER Programme 2014-2020

The initial phases of the new round of the LEADER programme (2014-2020) got underway this year and CWI was particularly interested to note that Local Development Strategies were required to be based on local needs and designed and implemented with strong community involvement through a process of Community-Led Local Development (CLLD).

Priority 6 of the LEADER Programme is **Promoting social inclusion, poverty reduction and economic development in rural areas**. Of particular interest to CWI members was the fact that LEADER in Ireland is programmed under priority 6 which should present community groups working to tackle social exclusion, poverty and inequality with a unique opportunity to engage as key stakeholders in the LEADER process. A meeting was held with Minister Ann Phelan, to discuss the social inclusion dimension to LEADER and follow up correspondence was sent to the Minister, Department officials and Pobal regarding CWI concerns. Meetings were also held with Pobal and with Department officials in Ballina.

Pre-Budget Submission

CWI produced and disseminated our Pre-Budget Submission and encouraged members to use it to inform their own submissions.

DEPR Draft Consultation Principles/Guidance for Public Consultation

Following consultation with CWI members we made a submission to the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform's public consultation process on draft guidelines. These aim to foster greater citizen consultation and involvement in policy and service development to strengthen democracy and improve public services. The submission was circulated and members encouraged to submit their own submissions.

Social Inclusion Community Activation Programme

We issued a statement on the results of the SICAP tendering process and have repeatedly raised concerns with the Department on the difficulties associated with ensuring a strong community development focus in the programme.



Strategic Priority 2

Resource community work through the provision of information and analysis on existing, new and emerging issues

In Whose Interests? – Exploring the Impact of Competitive Tendering and Procurement on Social Inclusion and Community Development in Ireland

The issue of procurement and competitive tendering for social inclusion work emerged as a very significant area of focus in 2015. The move towards the contracting out of public services (including social services) in Ireland had begun to take place with little debate or reference to experiences in other countries. In 2014 CWI received funding from the St. Stephens Green Trust to undertake an analysis of the rationale and current drivers and policy around contracting social services in Ireland. The project also considered the risks for the community and voluntary sector, and for key target groups and marginalised communities, the legal context and policy on social clauses as well as social considerations in the procurement process and document the experience of other countries. The report was to compile a research discussion document and raise awareness and generate dialogue amongst key stakeholders on this issue

CWI held a roundtable discussion in March 2015 in Liberty Hall with a broad range of key stakeholders to discuss and add depth to the research. The roundtable was held in the context of the current procurement process. Participants were invited based on their experience or knowledge of procurement processes and their impact, and came from all over the country.

In December 2015, at the CWI AGM we launched the research *In Whose Interests Exploring the Impact of Competitive Tendering and Procurement on Social Inclusion and Community Development in Ireland*.



Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

CWI made a submission to the UN Committee on Economic Social and Cultural Rights for Ireland's examination by the ESCR committee on June 8th and 9th.



Refugee Crisis

With the emergence of the refugee crisis we wrote to Minister Frances Fitzgerald and to the Taoiseach (also sent to all TDs and Senators) regarding initial steps in addressing the crisis. We developed an initial proposal "Addressing the Refugee Crisis: Promoting Integration, Interculturalism and Social Inclusion through Community Development" sent to the Ministers for Social Protection, Foreign Affairs and Trade, Environment, Community and Local Government, and Justice & Equality. The proposal was disseminated widely including to all TDs and Senators and CWI members and was referenced on the Drive Time programme. We held a members' meeting on the crisis on Sept 17th and further developed the proposal.

We gave a presentation on our position at the Family Resource Centres National Forum in November. We joined with NGO Alliance on (convened by MRCI) and the CWI submission

forms the basis of one section of their position paper. We met with Pobal to discuss the proposal and explore possible work going forward including linking with LDCDs on the issue.

Alignment

Throughout the year, we continued to support members and the sector in relation to the alignment process. A Brief has been developed on the Guidelines for Local, Economic and Community Plans and circulated to members. CWI workshops on the alignment process were held in Cork, Ballymun and Wexford. We supported Pavee Point to engage with Traveller groups in relation to alignment and the Public Participation Networks and provided support to the Equality and Rights Alliance regarding their engagement with LCDCs and the LECsPs.

We made a submission on the Local Economic and Community Plans which was disseminated to all LCDCs and a submission on the funding to be assigned to Public Participation Networks.

Carrickmines Tragedy

Following the devastating tragedy at Carrickmines, we contacted all national Traveller organisations expressing CWIs condolences, solidarity and support. We disseminated a letter from Pavee Point to all members calling for support for their letter to the Taoiseach. We also used social media to spread the word.

CWI Newsletter

We produced and disseminated 2 CWI Newsletters featuring a broad range of articles on issues of relevance including LEADER, the refugee crisis, the review of standards, local government and the Sustainable Development Goals.

Working with Partners

We continued to engage with the Community Platform and the Community & Voluntary Pillar. We played a role as the Community Platform representative at bi-lateral meetings with the Department of Environment, Community and

Local Government. We contributed to the development of the Community Platform document, *Future Perspectives*.

We spoke at SIPTU Protest in relation to cuts to the community sector and put forward and presented two motions at the NWCi AGM (on procurement and on the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership). We made a presentation at the MRCi community work practice seminar. We chaired a panel discussion at the NUIM seminar on CERD on May 18th.

Social Inclusion Forum

We worked with the European Anti-Poverty Network in supporting the organisation of the Department of Social Protections Annual Social Inclusion Forum (SIF). To this end, we organised three preparatory workshops for the SIF in Galway, Wexford and a thematic workshop on migrants and asylum seekers in association with the Migrant Rights Centre Ireland and the Irish Refugee Council. CWI also presented at the plenary session of the Forum



International Linkages

We continued to be represented on the Boards of the European Community Development Network (by Oonagh Mc Ardle) and the International Association for Community Development (by Anastasia Crickley). Many thanks to our reps for sharing their time, expertise and commitment.

Strategic Priority 3

To contribute to the development of policies, structures and programmes that support and enable quality community work

Our Communities: A Framework Policy for Local and Community Development in Ireland

In 2015 the then Department of Community Environment and Local Government produced *Our Communities, a Framework Policy for Local and Community Development*. The policy was one of the recommendations in the Final Report of the Local Government/Local Development Alignment Steering Group in March 2012¹ and was confirmed in the policy document *Putting People First*. The vision for Our Communities is ***to 'create vibrant, sustainable, self-determining communities that have the social, cultural and economic well-being of all community members at their core, built upon a shared understanding of their needs and aspirations, and where both participative and local democracy provides community members with the opportunity, means, confidence, and skills to influence, shape and participate in decision-making structures and processes that affect them and their communities'***.

CWI engaged with the consultation process for Our Communities by producing and disseminating *A Reading Guide to the Framework Policy*. This was followed by two

information/consultation workshops with CWI members on the draft document.

A template based on the principles of the consultation was circulated so that CWI members and others could use it on which to base their submissions. This was well used and we received very good feedback. A draft of the CWI submission was circulated for comment by CWI members and then submitted to the Department.

In reviewing the final published document, it became apparent that very few changes were made to the draft document prior to publication despite a high level of engagement and submissions by a range of community sector and local development sector organisations. CWI's concerns were raised with the Department.



Review of Scheme of Supports for National Organisations

CWI led the development of the Community Platform document on the review of SSNO funding, submitted to Pobal and the Department.

¹ 'A national Local and Community Development Policy should be developed. This should set out

national priorities and a framework for the realisation of a cross-government approach at local level.'

Strategic Priority 4

To ensure the sustainability and further development of the CWI



Staff and Office

Ann Irwin and Rachel Doyle were appointed joint CWI National Co-ordinators (job share) and took up their posts in January 2015.

We opened a new CWI office in January in Westside Community Development Resource Centre in Galway which contains good space and available meeting rooms.

Name Change

Following consultation with members and agreement by the CWI Central Group, it was agreed to change the name of the Community Workers' Co-operative to Community Work Ireland, reflecting the leadership role of the organisation in supporting and promoting community work in Ireland.

Website

Work began on redesigning the website with a key focus on the design of a new logo to represent the name change, on-line payments and membership renewal notifications.

SSGT funding application

A successful funding proposal was made to St Stephens Green Trust to publish and launch In Whose Interests?

Governance

Changes were made to the CWI Directors and the business address and lodged with the CRO.

Communication

We continued to communicate with members through emails, the CWI website, Facebook and Twitter.

SSNO Reports

We produced 26 monthly progress reports to Pobal and received very good feedback citing; the high level of engagement and support provided to the Community & Voluntary sector and engagement with LCDCs through SICAP and the fact that CWI continues to be actively involved in promoting community work standards within the sector as well as influencing government policy to ensure programmes address poverty, social inclusion and inequality.

Annual Accounts

The 2014 accounts were completed, submitted to the Companies Registration Office and presented at the AGM.

NUIM John O'Connell Award

CWI were delighted to be awarded the John O'Connell Award for our contribution to community work. The award was presented at a ceremony in NUIM on June 12th.