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Community Work Ireland working collectively
 to support and promote community work as a means
 of addressing poverty, social exclusion and inequality

CWI Update

MARCH 2017

Welcome to the first CWI update for 2017. This update contains information on current key developments of relevance to CWI members including:

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Framework Policy on Local and Community Development & the Interdepartmental Group

Our Communities, the Framework Policy on Local and Community Development was announced in January 2016. In response to criticism that the process to develop the policy was flawed, the Department of Housing, Planning, Community & Local Government (DHPCLG) held a national Local and Community Development Forum in November to develop an implementation plan for the framework policy. A report of the Forum is currently being drafted in the Department. Following on from this work, it is the intention of the Dept to establish an Implementation Working Group to develop an Implementation Plan for the Framework Policy. Their remit will include the ability to 'reimagine' the Framework Policy if they believe it appropriate to so do. The Dept are anticipating 12-14 members:



- Two from the Dept.
- Local government
- Community & Voluntary sector
- Community Development
- Pobal and/or Third level institution

The Dept stated that this is not designed to be a representative group but a group of people with expertise. The terms of reference are currently being drafted.

CWI stated its concern that the Community & Voluntary sector are named in relation to participation on the Implementation Group, stating that the Framework Policy relates to community development and local development and it is difficult to see why the voluntary sector is now being included. The Dept stated that there is a commitment in the current Programme for Government¹ to developing a policy framework and funding strategy for the community and voluntary sectors.

The Dept do not intend to hold a second Local and Community Development Forum this year – their preference is to wait until the Working Group has had the chance to do its work and to report at a Forum in 2018. They may have regional consultation events but have yet to make a decision on these.

SICAP

Many will be aware that SICAP 1 (as it is now being referred to) is being reviewed and a planning process for the successor programme is underway. The ESRI are currently leading the review of the programme and the consultation process to define the new programme is being led by Minister Catherine Byrne.

A national meeting was held in Dublin Castle on Feb 24th. The event was attended by representatives of Local Community Development Committees, Local Development Companies (Programme Implementers) and members of national organisations.

¹ *We will produce a coherent policy framework and develop a strategy to support the community and voluntary sector* (p. 131)

Minister Byrne told participants that SICAP is the most significant social inclusion programme in the country and its role is to assist people to become more job ready. She stated that the programme was a very successful one and stated her commitment to the programme.

Participants were told that the intention is not to make significant changes, rather it is to fine-tune the current programme and participants were invited to constructively input into the new programme design. At the same time, participants were asked to be innovative, even radical, with their ideas.

The workshops were facilitated by Crowe Horwath², a firm of Chartered Accountants, who also chaired the session to take feedback from the workshops and the final plenary session.

Notwithstanding the parameters presented to participants, the feedback from the workshops indicated that participants believe that fundamental changes are required. The feedback indicated that:

- there is a need to enable work to address structural inequalities;
- there is a need to ensure that community development and social inclusion are the focus of the programme³;
- implementing organisations⁴ should be viewed as partners and not contract deliverers;
- the new programme should allow for long-term planning;
- targets should be set locally within a national framework;
- there should be flexibility to respond to local and emerging issues;
- the practice of competitive tendering needs to be abandoned;
- expand the target groups that the programme can work with.

At the final plenary, CWI challenged the narrative that SICAP is a successful programme and asked whether the good work that is happening around the country is happening because of or in spite of the current programme. Clarification was also sought in relation to what was meant by 'fine-tuning' and whether the suggestions made by participations would be regarded as fine-tuning or significant change. One participant stated that a strong and agreed definition of social inclusion and community development has to inform the new programme. Others stated that it was clear that there is a need for significant change to the programme to enable it to deliver on the vision and aims it sets itself. Others asked whether a report of the event would be available to participants, to which there was no response. Questions were also raised about the role of the Local Community Development Committees. SICAP 2 will begin in January 2018.

² <http://www.crowehorwath.ie>

³ There was general agreement that the targets are driving the programme to have a primary focus on labour market activation

⁴ There was general agreement that the term Programme Implementer is not a useful one

CWI research Community work under SICAP

The CWI has been working on the issue of procurement and competitive tendering for a number of years. This culminated in the research report, *In Whose Interests? Exploring the Impact of Competitive Tendering and Procurement on Social Inclusion and Community Development*.



As many of you will know CWI is now undertaking a further piece of research with support from the Centre for Rights, Recognition and Redistribution in Maynooth University, exploring community work under the SICAP programme. This project will build on this work and deepen the analysis by undertaking far more in-depth primary research processes including qualitative and quantitative information gathering. It is increasingly clear that procurement has copper-fastened the programmatisation of community work, away from social change towards service delivery. It has refocused energy on compliance only, the effects of which are only emerging. This project will capture some of the evidence in the Irish context

Thanks to all that contributed to the CWI research. The research phase is now drawing to a close and we hope to have a draft report by the end of March.

Community Facilities Fund

A new Community Facilities Fund has been announced by Minister Catherine Byrne. This is a new fund of €2 million for small scale grants (up to €1,000) for groups operating in the community and voluntary sector. A total of €64,000 will be allocated to each local authority area and be implemented by the LCDCs. The Dept stated that the fund is small to start but have ambitions for it to grow. It is seen as important in sowing the seeds of connection with PPNs and organisations. In rural areas, it will be on a much smaller scale than LEADER. In discussion with the Dept, CWI emphasised the need to go beyond the usual groups and organisations at local level and focus on projects that promote equality and integration.



RAPID

The Programme for Government contains a commitment under Minister English, who is responsible for urban renewal, for what will be a revamped RAPID programme. It will come under the remit of LCDCs. The Dept is aware that while some areas received significant enhancement under the RAPID programme, others did not. A total of €4.5 million is allocated for 2017, €2.5 of which will go to Dublin Inner City. Other local authority areas will have an equal share. The Dept feel that the introduction of RAPID is a very good sign and are hopeful of increased funding in the future.



LCDC Capacity Building

A total of €90,000 has been allocated for LCDC capacity building for 2016 and 2017. The Dept are currently working out how best to deliver the support. They have started to engage with LCDCs, initially with Chief Officers and will begin work with the LCDC Chairs.

They stated their intention to undertake a full review of LCDCs this year to see if they are fit for purpose. They have noted that there is a significant discrepancy in the process underpinning the LECPs. They also intend to look at 4-5 Pathway LCDCs to ensure that they are fit for purpose.



The Eighth Amendment to the Constitution - CWI Submission to the Citizens Assembly

CWI are members of the Coalition to Repeal the Eighth Amendment. We made a submission to the Citizens Assembly of the Eighth Amendment urging the members to recommend a referendum to **repeal the Eighth Amendment to the Constitution, without replacement or amendment.**



The submission further called for:

- The removal of all criminal sanctions on women seeking and accessing abortion services in Ireland
- The removal of criminal sanctions on provision and performance of abortion in the Republic of Ireland
- The regulation of abortion services and medical professionals performing abortions through customary medical disciplinary procedures and general criminal law
- The enactment of legislation providing for access to abortion on a woman's request.

See our full submission [here](#)

CWI Submission to the National Women's Strategy

The CWI made a submission on the National Women's Strategy in January. To view the submission, please click <http://communityworkireland.ie/national-womens-strategy/>



World Community Development Conference 2018



World Community Development Conference 2018

June 24th – 27th 2018, Maynooth University, Kildare, Ireland

The International Association for Community Development, Community Work Ireland and Maynooth University invite you to

Participation, Power and Progress: Community development towards 2030 – Our Analysis, Our Actions

This conference will provide a unique opportunity for practitioners, academics, policy makers, decision makers, funders and other stakeholders to share perspectives on current contexts and challenges for community work. The conference will encompass cutting edge inputs and interactive workshops on rights-based community development, addressing and engaging locally, nationally and internationally with key current issues including:

- Poverty
- Migration
- Women's Rights
- Environmental justice
- International Development and Community Development
- Racism
- Civil and Political Rights
- Social, Cultural and Economic Rights
- Change and Transformation
- Impact and Outcomes

Followed by optional practice exchange with Irish practitioners and projects

For initial information
info@communityworkireland.ie

**PLEASE NOTE THE
DATE CHANGE**

WHO?

Community Development Practitioners, Policy Makers, Decision Makers, Funders, Academics and Other Stakeholders

WHEN?

June 24th -27th 2018

Where?

Maynooth University, Kildare, Ireland