

### SECTION 1: POLICY DEVELOPMENTS

#### RAPID EVALUATION PUBLISHED

On 1 June Éamon Ó Cuív T.D., Minister for Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs published the independent evaluation of the RAPID programme which he requested POBAL to commission in 2005. Five core issues were identified for examination in the evaluation:

- The successes, best practices, weaknesses or failures of the programme
- Assessment of the impact of RAPID initiatives on the RAPID areas
- Assessment of structures and procedures of the programme
- Identification of the impact of the programme on the level of investment and quality of service delivery in the designated areas
- Recommendations in the overall context of public sector investment and service delivery, and regarding relevant developments in the external and policy environment.

Fitzpatrick Associates were commissioned to undertake this review, which involved a review of documentation on the programme, consultations with national stakeholders, a survey of Area Implementation Teams, case study analysis of 8 RAPID areas, and a series of workshops to which representatives from all 45 RAPID areas were invited.

#### Conclusions – Strengths

- The facilitation of a significant number of local development projects addressing the most pressing needs of the local community that would not, in the opinion of local stakeholders, have progressed without the establishment of the RAPID programme
- The establishment of structures that in many areas have provided a mechanism for disadvantaged communities to identify needs, influence policy and develop projects with regard to their local area for the first time
- The encouragement of real working partnerships between local authorities, state agencies, community and voluntary organisations and local communities that have generated efficiencies in service delivery and facilitated the securing of multiple funding packages to bring forward projects in the RAPID area. The widespread recognition that the prioritisation of areas by the RAPID Programme has levered a greater amount of national and local government investment in these communities

- The more effective use of investment within these communities as a result of the closer understanding of local needs and the synergies developed between local stakeholders that have facilitated highly effective partnership projects
- The development of innovative practice, particularly with regard to community participation and engagement, that has allowed learning to be shared around different parts of the country.

#### Conclusions – Weaknesses

- A general weakness in strategic planning to underpin the activity being progressed in RAPID areas, resulting in an often ad hoc and reactive approach to bringing forward projects, and making it difficult to construct a holistic view of the needs of the areas
- The limited implementation of the programme in a number of areas, most of which would constitute the most disadvantaged of all areas, as a result of conflicting local authority structures, a lack of success in empowering the community to influence the local decision-making processes, and the level of commitment of some of the key stakeholders involved in the implementation process
- A variation in the level of interaction with the local implementation of the programme by representatives of key state agencies as a result of other work pressures and individual commitment to the programme
- A difficulty in securing funding for certain types of projects, particularly in relation to education, training and employment, despite these areas of activity representing a key means by which lasting solutions can be found to issues of social exclusion in RAPID communities.

Minister Ó Cuív also launched the RAPID Programme Toolkit today. The Toolkit was designed as a support for RAPID Area Implementation Teams and Task Groups and for Partnerships and networks that are involved in the process of planning and delivering service integration.

It supports the third strand of the RAPID Programme - Improving the Delivery of Public Services and draws on the experience of the Integrated Services Process (1998-2001), RAPID, Local Development Programmes and other partnership initiatives to provide a clear, user-friendly approach to multi-player collaboration.

Further information on the above or copies of the complete Evaluation Report including Executive Summary and a complete listing of the recommendations are available upon request from:

Press & Information Office,

## Youth Work Ireland Local Member Youth Services Current Awareness Update

Department of Community,  
Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs  
Tel: 01 6473130 Fax: 01 667 0826  
Email: [eolas@pobail.ie](mailto:eolas@pobail.ie) Website: [www.pobail.ie](http://www.pobail.ie)

### VECS SELECTED AS EXCLUSIVE AWARDING AUTHORITY FOR STUDENT GRANT SCHEME

On 6 June, the Minister for Education and Science, Mary Hanafin T.D., announced that the State's thirty-three Vocational Education Committees (VECs) were to be given sole responsibility for the administration of third level student maintenance grants with effect from the 2007/2008 academic year.

The Minister said that the decision was taken following an extensive round of consultation and assessment of all of the available options for administering student grants on a more streamlined basis. Currently, responsibility for grant payments rests with a combination of VECs and Local Authorities.

The core objective of the change is to enable improvements in the standard of service provided to the 57,000 students around the country who are in receipt of grants. Service agreements will be put in place with the VECs that will clearly define the standards required.

It is intended that all new applications for grants for the 2007/08 academic year will now be handled by the VECs. Plans are also in place to introduce new legislation to unify the various grant schemes and place them on a statutory footing.

For further information contact:

Department of Education and Science  
Marlborough Street  
Dublin 1  
Tel: 01 8896400 Email: [info@education.gov.ie](mailto:info@education.gov.ie)  
Website: [www.education.ie](http://www.education.ie)

### SECTION 2: FUNDING

#### **NEW DORMANT ACCOUNTS FUNDING FOR ALCOHOL RELATED HARM PROJECTS**

Up to €1 million is being made available from the Dormant Accounts Fund in 2006 under the Economic and

Social Disadvantage Category for projects tackling alcohol related harm. The closing date for applications is 5pm on **Friday 14th July 2006**.

Applicant groups must be well established with a proven track record (i.e. at least three years) in the delivery of programmes targeted those affected by alcohol related harm. Applicants are advised to develop a partnership approach (with statutory and / or community or voluntary stakeholders) in planning actions / interventions.

Groups can apply for a minimum amount of €10,000 and a maximum amount of €50,000. Exception will be made for larger funding applications where such projects are demonstrably innovative and are made as part of a larger collaborative community response to alcohol related harm.

Application forms and guidelines and further information are available from:

Pobal  
Holbrook House  
Holles Street  
Dublin 2  
Tel: 01 2400700 Fax: 01 6610411  
Email: [enquiries@pobal.ie](mailto:enquiries@pobal.ie) Website: [www.pobal.ie](http://www.pobal.ie)

### SECTION 3: TRAINING

#### **ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF BOARD MEMBERS**

The Wheel and Boardmatch Ireland are co-hosting an information seminar to explore the role of the board of directors, the specific responsibilities of different positions within the board and typical challenges facing organisations in relation to voluntary board membership.

The seminar will be informal and participatory involving short presentations from three speakers followed by an extended questions and answers session and will take place in **All Hallows College, Dublin on 4 July from 5.30 p.m. – 7.30 p.m.**

People wishing to attend are invited to submit questions in advance. These questions will be forwarded to the speakers and incorporated into their presentations covering the following themes:

- Recruitment and Retention of Board Members – Getting the Right People
- Training and Supports for new boards
- Common challenges facing organisations
- Roles and responsibilities of the Secretary,

## Youth Work Ireland Local Member Youth Services Current Awareness Update

Chairperson and Treasurer

- The functions of Sub Committees

This event is free of charge. To confirm your place or for further details contact:

Danielle,  
The Wheel  
Irish Social Finance Centre  
10 Grattan Crescent  
Inchicore  
Dublin 8.  
Tel: 01 4548727 Fax: 01 4548649  
E-mail: [Danielle@wheel.ie](mailto:Danielle@wheel.ie) Website: [www.wheel.ie](http://www.wheel.ie)

For further information/copies of the research please contact:

Combat Poverty  
Conyngham Road  
Islandbridge  
Dublin 8  
Tel: 01 6706746 Fax: 01 6706760  
Email: [info@combatpoverty.ie](mailto:info@combatpoverty.ie)  
Website: [www.combatpoverty.ie](http://www.combatpoverty.ie)

## NEW YOUTH PARTICIPATION GUIDES PUBLISHED

### SECTION 4: ROUND UP

#### NEW RESEARCH HIGHLIGHTS TRUE EXTENT OF CHILD POVERTY PROBLEM

Almost one in five Irish children (17%) live in income poverty for five years or more, according to new research published by the Combat Poverty Agency. The findings have emerged from extensive research, undertaken by Richard Layte, Bertrand Maitre, Brian Nolan and Christopher Whelan of the ESRI, on behalf of the Combat Poverty Agency, which examined the length of time that children spend in poverty, the factors which cause children to move in and out of poverty, and the causes of intergenerational poverty.

The study has culminated in the publication of a report '*Day in Day Out – Understanding the Dynamics of Child Poverty*' which was officially launched by the Minister for Social Affairs, Seamus Brennan, T.D. on 29 May.

The ESRI research, conducted on behalf of the Combat Poverty Agency, found that children move in and out of poverty and that children in lone parent households spend substantially more time in poverty than children in two parent households. The research also concluded that the age of children and family size affected the duration of poverty for children.

The employment, education and health status of parents were also found to be critical factors influencing child poverty risk.

Community Creations, the youth-led team responsible for developing the SpunOut.ie website, have just published two new guides to youth participation.

1. *Culture Shift* is a booklet that provides youth, health and education workers with a handy, concise guide to involving young people in participatory projects and decision-making.

2. *SpunOut.ie Guide* offers professionals an introduction to 'Ireland's biggest and best youth website' and demonstrates how young people are involved in contributing information, articles, photographs and artwork to the site, and encourages youth, health and education workers to use the website in their own work.

Both guides are downloadable as PDFs or can be requested by email, please contact:

Community Creations  
William Allingham House  
Ballyshannon,  
Co. Donegal  
Tel. 071 9851330  
Email: [info@community.ie](mailto:info@community.ie)  
Website: [www.community.ie](http://www.community.ie)

Copies of all publications and documentation highlighted in this edition are available for reference or loan purposes from the Irish YouthWork Centre  
Tel: 01 8729933 Fax: 01 8724183  
Email: [ghalpin@youthworkireland.ie](mailto:ghalpin@youthworkireland.ie)  
Website: [www.iywc.com](http://www.iywc.com)