

County Monaghan Partnership



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The Irish case – the contribution of local partnerships to
policy in Ireland

***Barriers to accessing the Labour Market
for people with disabilities***

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County Monaghan Partnership



*A Local Development Body
Providing
Local Solutions to Local Problems*

*By
Using a bottom-up approach to
tackling both the causes and outcomes of Social
Exclusion*



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Mission Statement

To empower the most socially excluded persons of County Monaghan to participate and contribute in a positive way with Society.

We shall continually endeavour to transform the social, economic and educational prospects of people in our target groups by working in Partnership with all other stakeholders to devise and implement practical solutions that break down barriers preventing those who live with lack of opportunity from accessing training, education and employment options.

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Local Area Partnerships

Work as local catalysts to transform the policy framework for tackling unemployment and social exclusion centered on three main approaches:

- Promote and pursue a local multi-agency approach to planning and coordination – *better local governance*;
- Involvement of local community and social groups in problem definition & decision making – *extending the social partnership approach to the local level*;
- The promotion of local development and labour market initiatives - *to tackle the multi-dimensionality of social exclusion*

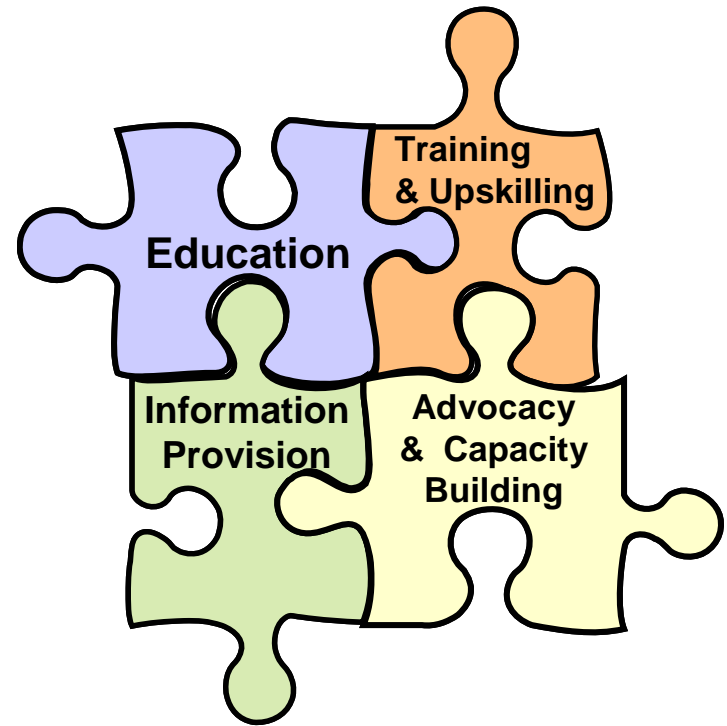
How does our Partnership achieve this?

By working with Statutory bodies, Industry and Community partners to both identify and address the causes of social exclusion in County Monaghan.

By promoting innovative approaches, programmes and actions that address the key causes of social exclusion and disadvantage

Including:

- **Education disadvantage - leading to low education attainment & employment outcomes**
- **Low skills levels – leading to unemployment / underemployment**
- **Lack of information on rights and entitlements – poor access to services**
- **Discrimination against individuals on equality grounds – lack of a rights based approach**



Social Inclusion requires and integrated approach

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Identified Policy Issue:

- Barriers to accessing the Labour Market for people with a disability and the low level of supports available.

“The unemployment rate of people with a moderate illness or disability is about twice as high as for persons with no disability, while the unemployment rate of persons with a severe illness or disability is about three times the level of non disabled persons”

“Considering that unemployment is a key route to social inclusion, the urgency for measures that decrease this discrepancy are evident”

(European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions, *“Illness, disability and social inclusion”* 2003)

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Why is this problem?:

- People with disabilities represent a significant proportion of the Irish population (8 – 16%) with many having the potential to contribute to society through employment.
- The onset of disability for adults of working age is associated with a 20% decline in the probability of being in employment & 15% decline in income
- People with disabilities are among the most marginalised from a social inclusion perspective, and participation in labour market is a key avenue to tackling social exclusion, low skills and social networking deficits.
- Lack of sufficient mainstream supports for PWD means that labour market participation rates and targets (Lisbon Agenda, National Anti-Poverty Strategy etc) will be more difficult to reach.
- PWD often require a multi-disciplinary approach to supporting their entry/re-entry into labour market (i.e. health, training, entitlements, education)
- A high withdrawal rate of welfare supports when PWD takes up employment acts as a poverty trap.

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Why and where is there a policy failure?:

- Statutory agencies in charge of labour market supports have been slow to formalize specific supports for people with disabilities;
- Resulting in low levels of mainstreaming
- Poverty traps are being caused by too fast a withdrawal of secondary benefits on taking up work i.e. medical card, and procedural difficulties around exemptions to work p/t while on a disability benefit

Who is responsible?

- A lack of a 'joined-up government' approach to tackling the issue, i.e. National Training & Education Authorities, Health Authorities, Social Welfare Services, Finance

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Our Objectives:

1. To address the policy failure at local level by developing a labour market project which provides specific supports PWD into employment
2. To have all Supported Employment projects fully mainstreamed as a National Labour Market policy approach under the National Employment Agency (FAS)
3. To promote the multi-agency approach to supporting PWDs who want to access the labour market (case-conferencing etc)
4. Promote a coordinated approach to policy development for PWD, especially in the context of labour market

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Tools to influence Policy:

- Pilot a Supported Employment Service for PWDs at local level
- Demonstrate value of this policy approach through reports, case studies, lobbying etc.
- Participate in development of National Network of similar projects (i.e. IASE)
- Through this network, feed into and influence National policy development on labour market supports for people with disabilities

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Stages:

- Monaghan Supported Employment Service (pilot) now well developed
- Similar projects now operating under national funding countrywide (24)
- National Network is now beginning to impact nationally and at EU level
- Specific Policy supports for PWD accessing the labour market are now being articulated as National policy.

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National/EU Policy Context:

- “To remove obstacles and create incentives to employment for those furthest from the labour market and to achieve and surpass the Lisbon Agenda targets i.e To increase overall employment participation rate to 70% by 2010”
(Employment & Employability, National Action Plan for Social Inclusion 2007-2016, p. 43).
- “Increase the employment of people with disabilities who do not have a difficulty in retaining a job – aim to have an additional 7,000 PWD employed by 2010”
(National Development Plan 2007-2013, p. 42).
- “PWDs are significantly constrained by the absence of support services and/or the high withdrawal rates of welfare support they otherwise receive only in recognition of a status outside the labour market”
(NESC, Developmental Welfare State, (p.30)
- The European Council has identified PWD as one priority category for increased labour market participation
(Council of EU,- "Joint Report on Social Protection and Social Inclusion 2007)

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**Not the
End**



**Just the
beginning**