

Community Partnership



Network (CPN)

18th April 2007

OECD Seminar

The contribution of Local Partnerships to Policy in Ireland



Community Partnerships - Background

- Implemented **Local Development Social Inclusion Programme** under National Development Plans 1994-99 & 2000-06
- Issues of poverty & social exclusion
- Partnership approach (state/community/social)
- Urban & rural contexts
- Services for unemployed; community development, community-based youth initiatives
- Now into NDP 2007-13 and a new structural landscape

Community Partnership IMPACTS 2000-06

Quantitative:

- 36,529 adults supported under SUE
- 14,833 adults supported under CBYI
- 64,591 youths supported under CBYI
- 1,861 community based projects focusing on target groups
- 509 infrastructure/environment projects

Community Partnership

IMPACTS 2000-06

Qualitative:

- Targeting most excluded /hard-to-reach groups
- Engagement of new target groups & issues
- Massive local voluntary energy & commitment in design & delivery
- Client focused interventions
- Outreach work & hands-on
- Increasing participation of disadvantaged communities /collective community voice
- Coordination with state sector /cross-referral & linkage => maximise resources
- Increased capacity to influence policy at local & national levels

Policy role of Community Partnerships

LDSIP: 'To add value to the effective delivery of mainstream policies & programmes through the provision of linkage & coordination...and to put in place mechanisms to ensure local initiatives inform & strengthen policy development.'

By their very structure, partnerships are policy arenas, bringing together relevant stakeholders with the purpose of addressing poverty & social exclusion within their areas.

What value can Community Partnerships add to the policy process?

- We reach out to those most in need
- Targeted, tailored & hands-on approach
- Community involvement & consultation, local ownership
- Outreach based, flexible & client focused
- Board structure based on 'social partnership' model
- Our ability to support groups to develop their own voice
- Multi-disciplinary nature of our work
- We can pilot actions/approaches
- Our strength in animation & pre-development work within the community/specific target groups
- Our capacity to learn lessons, analyse & be reflective
- Our track record in rolling out new initiatives (CSP, RTP, Dormant Accounts, EfW, NCIP, RSS, Millennium Fund ...)
- Our regional & national network structures are facilitative & grounded
- Our rounded sense of the anti-poverty /social inclusion area

CPN influencing different aspects of national policy...

- Resource allocation for SIP & related programmes (public expend)
- Representing 'disadvantaged' voice and target communities on many levels
- Influencing the design and content of the new SIP 2007-13 (Pobal/Dept)
- Enhancing conditions for C&V (Third) sector (benchmarking)
- Indicators & measurement of rural deprivation (review current resource allocation)
- Improving our access to Social Partnership process through links with C&V pillar /Community Platform

Examples of gaps in policy content persisting /emerging for 2007-13 as recorded by CPN

- Mental health & suicide prevention
- Community health services
- Needs of older people/social isolation
- Carers
- Affordable childcare
- Training programmes for Homeless & Traveller men
- Social / affordable housing
- Migrant workers & families
- Under-employed (farmers, rural shopkeepers)
- Substance abuse (new in some provincial towns)
- Gay, lesbian, bi-sexual & transgender
- Ageism in the labour market
- NEW Areas of Coverage by LDSIP – challenge of future buy-in & ownership of plans by community & target groups
- Rural transport –overarching social inclusion issue

Some Barriers...

- Changing structural landscape poses challenges in the future
- Process of 'cohesion' in past 2 years has pushed active policy work in social inclusion down the agenda locally
- Can become too enmeshed in service delivery...less room for creative thinking & innovation
- Resources not geared towards policy work –local or national
- State agencies don't always buy into role of partnerships
- Community directors sometimes face difficulties on local policy structures e.g. local authority structures CDBs (parity of esteem)
- Weak on forming internal policy groups
- Challenge to have a clear policy message in a multi-faceted area of social exclusion

For things to improve...

Policy role is stymied by a lack of recognition & resources...

- Anti-poverty & social inclusion policy work needs to be recognised as distinct project & programme activity (included in relevant programme guidelines & complements) with targeted resources
- Internal policy mechanisms must be strengthened & enhanced (translate experiences into policy messages for lead agency & parent Dept's)
- It is critical that policy responses to poverty are broader than just the delivery of services and that the policy advocacy role of anti-poverty organisations is recognised and supported.

CPN...to effectively influence policy

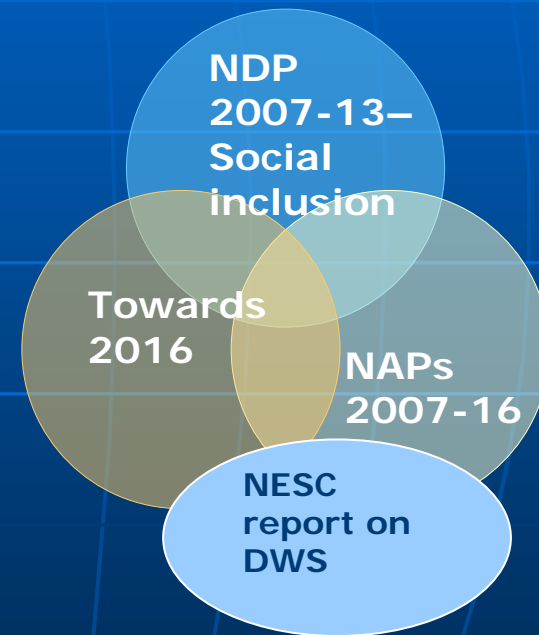
- Need to strengthen horizontal & vertical learning
- Need to access more policy forums national & local
- Ensure direct policy link between SIP and NDP, NAPS, Social Partnership agreements, etc.
- CPN must invest more resources in high level policy forum involvement
- Relevant Ministers, Senior civil servants, inter-Departmental fora, Oireachtas Committees, Office for Social Inclusion (OSI), Combat Poverty Agency
- National policy advisory bodies such as NESF, NESC
- Political parties
- Important to take part in key policy events e.g. annual pre-budget forum, Joint Oireachtas committees (e.g. joint committee on Arts, sport, tourism, community, rural & gaelt)
- Formal link bet local Partnerships & National Social Partnership (must be enshrined in new board structures)
- As well as maintaining strong influence on local level policy structures...CDB's, SIM, SPC's, CCC's, Homeless Forum...

National policy structures for Social Inclusion agenda –high level

- The Cabinet Committee on Social Inclusion chaired by the Taoiseach;
- Oireachtas Committees;
- The Senior Officials Group on Social Inclusion;
- The Towards 2016 Partnership Steering Group;
- The Office for Social Inclusion;
- The National Economic and Social Development Office;
- The NDP Monitoring Committee;
- The Combat Poverty Agency;
- The Local Government Social Inclusion local structures; Steering Group;
- County/City Development Boards and other Social Inclusion Units in government departments and on a phased basis, in half of all county/city local authorities by the end of 2008;
- The Social Inclusion Forum.

More joined up Strategic Policy Frameworks for tackling Social Exclusion? Mainstreaming Partnerships?

- NDP 2007-13: Social Inclusion Priority
- Towards 2016: Lifecycle Approach
- National Action Plan for Social Inclusion (NAPS) 2007-16
- NESC Report 2005 on Developmental Welfare State –*Activist Measures*



Building blocks for new SIP as written into NDP 2007-13

1. Progression towards & within labour market (*follow on to Measure A in 2000-06*)
2. Break inter-generational cycle of social exclusion through education & training supports (*follow on to Measure C in 2000-06*)
3. Add value to effectiveness of SI programmes & interventions delivered by statutory & non-stat agencies through partnership, collaboration & coordination (*very valuable addition to 2007-13*)
4. Innovation & learning & development of practice & policies that meet the needs of individuals & groups experiencing social exclusion (*valuable addition to 2007-13*)

Challenges of a changing landscape in local development

Current:

31 Community Partnerships

38 Area Partnerships

37 LEADER groups

Total: 106 LDO's

(of which 12 are joint LEADER/LDSIP)



Probable Structural Landscape

Estimate **55 structures** including;

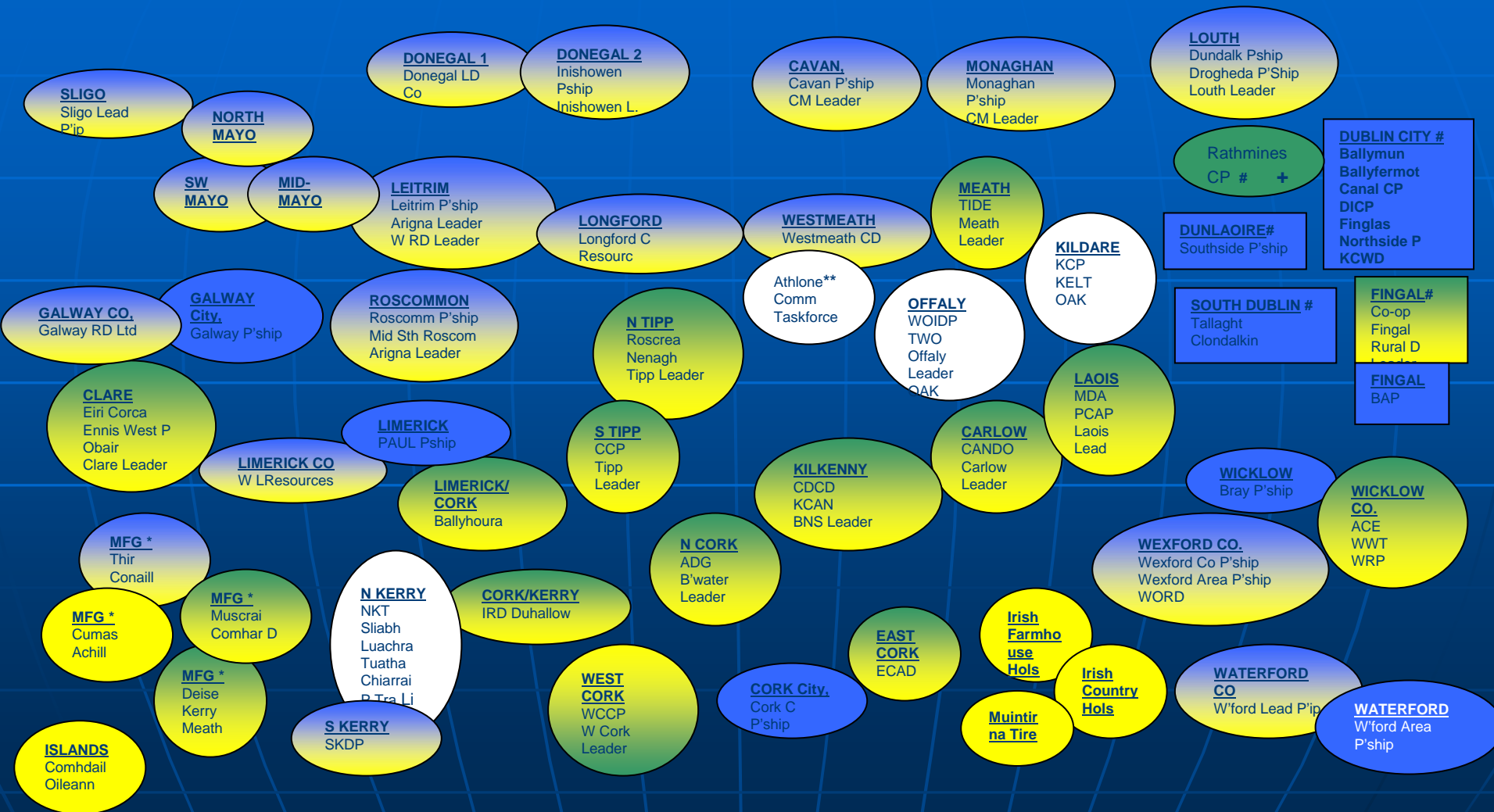
- Approx. **22** new integrated structures
- the **12** existing joint delivery structures (with some modification)
- some **20** remaining similar with some redefinition of boundaries

Of the 55:

- Estimate 20 will be urban based/35 rural

Possible Structures & Alignment to Networks in

2007-08



Challenges & Implications for influencing policy....going forward

- Retaining community involvement & consultation
- Ensuring adequate Community representation at Board level in new structures (not to be outweighed by statutory)
- If community representation becomes a minority, 'Partnerships' will no longer be NGO's, Third sector or C&V (charitable status)
- Undermining of voluntary capacity, local ownership, expertise in the sector, continuity
- Keeping that space where we can pilot actions/approaches
- Safeguarding animation & pre-development work within the community/specific target groups
- Ensuring that our regional & national network structures remain facilitative & grounded

Opportunities?

.....IF the right balance is struck in meeting those challenges..

- Potential to occupy a new policy space with greater access to high level policy arenas
- Potential to better resource policy work if it is to be built into programme complements (measures 3&4)
- Better equipped to develop & drive our own policy mechanisms

BUT ONLY IF WE ACHIEVE THAT BALANCE...



Thank You!

**COMMUNITY
PARTNERSHIP
NETWORK**

Converting National Policy
into Local Action