

# Gender Equality & Social Exclusion Issues in Rural Development

**Module 11, BSc Rural Development by Distance Learning, (Copyright to National University of Ireland).**

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# Unit I: The Concept of Equality

- 1.1 Introduction
- 1.2 The Equality Argument
- 1.3 Equality and the Culture of Contentment
- 1.4 Rawls and the Theory of a Just Society
- 1.5 Equal Opportunities and the Equality Continuum
- 1.6 The Equality Context

## Unit I; The Concept of Equality

### 1.1 Introduction

Unit I introduces the concept of equality and key ideas from the writings of Baker, Galbraith, Rawls, Lynch and Handy on aspects of equality, social justice and social change. These are outlined as a theoretical framework against which to consider social change as a part of rural development. The activities in the Unit offer the reader an opportunity to consider the role of rural development as an agent of change to address inequality.

On completion of Unit 1 the student should be able to:

- Consider inequality, social exclusion and poverty in the context of rural development.
- Define the concept of equality
- Consider the role of rural development in addressing inequality and justice issues

### 1.2 The Equality Argument

John Baker, in his book *Arguing for Equality* (1987), maintains that equality is a complicated idea and that it is not possible to state a satisfactory definition. For him, it is preferable to think of equality not as a single principle, but, as a group of principles which form the central belief system in the notion of “egalitarianism”. He identifies the principles of egalitarianism as follows:

#### 1. Equality of Basic Needs

Every person has the right to the satisfaction of his or her basic needs. Egalitarians believe that it is indefensible for some to live in affluence while others face deprivation.

#### 2. Equal Respect

Egalitarians oppose any form of degrading treatment or degrading living standards. They reject the deference expected by the privileged and powerful and reject all hierarchies based on social position.

### 3. Economic Equality

Huge differences in income and wealth found both within countries and between countries are opposed by egalitarian principles. Egalitarians seek equality in democratic control of production and the right to safe, dignified and engaging work. Boring, exhausting and disagreeable work should be shared equally, or people who do it should be compensated.

### 4. Political Equality

Political equality means more than the right to vote or stand for office. It implies greater democratic participation in government, industry, education, social services and family life, it also implies freedom from the experience of the excesses of arbitrary power and oppression, and seeks more individual empowerment

### 5. Sexual, Racial, Ethnic and Religious Equality

Egalitarians oppose difference in treatment of people on account of their gender, sexual preference, skin colour or spiritual beliefs. They reject racial segregation, religious segregation, gender discrimination and intolerance which lead directly to negative differences in wealth, power and status for the people so discriminated against.

Baker questions whether the plurality of egalitarian principles are possible to operationalise within the myriad of social, economic, cultural, familial and political systems developed over the centuries. Questions that emerge from the theory in relation to local community development and to rural development can be summarised as follows:

Is equality **humanly possible** in development planning given that individuals have different physical needs, different capacities, different internalised attitudinal and behaviour patterns?

Is **cultural** equality possible given that cultures have within them levels of inequality which are offensive to egalitarian principles? Does development planning therefore ignore inherent inequalities to achieve other levels of equality?

Is equality **physically** possible given that local area or national resources are unevenly distributed and access to those resources is limited? Is it possible to physically redistribute resources in a way that new inequalities are not created?

In local development, is institutional equality possible? Are partnerships in development based on principles of equality or do they reinforce existing inequalities in another guise? Can economic and commercial institutions involved in area planning adopt an egalitarian approach on a micro level where the wider macro approach is fundamentally different?

In the world of **work**, is it possible to dispense with differentiation between definitions, status, reward systems and opportunities? Can all work be equally valued in a wider system, which is sustained by definitions based on differences? What would the implication be for equality of work status between voluntary and professional, between male and female workers in the development process?

Would **political** egalitarianism devolve more power of decision-making to individuals and local regions, with less centralisation and less bureaucracy? Would it be more consensual and participatory?

### **1.3 Equality and the Culture of Contentment**

John Kenneth Galbraith argues in his book, "The Culture of Contentment", that modern democracies are no longer driven by the aspiration of equality and fraternity. Rather they are moving in the opposite direction. Sectors of society with the least resources are tending to become more marginalised and as a result have less and less impact on the decision-making process which often determines the levels of resources they do have.

Galbraith points out that in the past the "contented" represented the privileged minority. Now the majority of any population in the developed world is "contented" and that majority ensures that society is ordered in its own interests. This has led to a decline in political egalitarianism and a rolling back of the fundamental principles underpinning the concept of the benevolent state. It has led, too, to an acceptance that economic market forces should dictate economic policies and an acceptance that social phenomenon such as unemployment, poverty, emigration, homelessness, environmental degradation and rural decline are the inevitable consequences of economic progress which can be dealt with by "incentives" to the disadvantages to become involved in the market-driven economies as a solution to their problems.

Galbraith argues that the agenda of the contented is kept at the forefront of national consciousness by the media (which is for the most part owned, controlled and operated by the members of the contented classes) by high profit economies and by public commentators. Thus, Government policies are more likely to reflect the concerns and beliefs of the contented, and not those of the common good. The exclusion of sectors of the population from the decision-making processes has political and social consequences for the contented classes:

*"The possibility of an underclass revolt, deeply disturbing to contentment, exists and grows stronger. There have been outbreaks in the past, notably in the major inner-city riots in the*

*later 1960's and there are several factors that might lead to a repetition. It has been one of the high tenets of comfort the uncomfortable accept peacefully, even gladly, their fate. Such a belief may be suddenly and surprisingly disproved."* Quoted in Healy (1992) p. 29

#### **1.4 Rawls and the Theory of a Just Society**

The philosopher John Rawls raised questions about how society could be ordered so the position of the worst off would be vastly improved. The basic principles in his conceptualisation of a just society are:

- that ideally the structure of a society should start from a principle of equality
- that every individual is assigned basic human rights and basic duties
- that social and economic inequalities such as wealth or authority are just, only if they result in benefits for all and in particular for the least advantaged.

Rawls notes that these principles rule out justifying institutions on the grounds that the hardships of some are offset by a greater good in the aggregate. Rawls further notes that it may be expedient, but it is not just that some should have less in order that others may prosper. There is no injustice in the greater benefits earned by a few provided that the situation of persons not so fortunate is thereby improved.

Healy (1992) notes that *"All citizens should have the means to be informed about political issues. They should be in a position to assess how proposals affect their well-being and which policies advance their conception of the public good. Moreover, they should have a chance to add alternative proposals to the agenda for political discussion. The liberties protected by the principle of participation lose much of their value whenever those who have greater private means are permitted to use their advantage to control the course of public debate. For eventually these inequalities will enable those better situated to exercise a larger influence over the development of legislation. In due time they are likely to acquire a preponderant weight in settling social questions, at least in regard to these matters upon which they normally agree, which is to say in regard to these things that support their favoured circumstances."*

#### **1.5 Equal Opportunities and the Equality Continuum**

Equal opportunities policies are generally developed as strategies to redress the exclusion of particular groups from the social, political and economic life of the state. That exclusion can be because of the gender, economic background, ethnic origin, religion, sexual orientation or disability of the particular individual or sector of society.

Kathleen Lynch (1993) developed the notion of an equality of opportunity continuum to

illustrate strategic policy positions with regard to equality. These policy positions can be described broadly as (a) Equity Policies, (b) Liberal Policies, and (c) Radical Policies.

(a) **Equity Policies** seek to promote a form of apparent fairness and are largely aspirational.

(b) **Liberal Policies** address the direct sources of discrimination by removing access obstacles to goods, services and institutions. The underlying assumption is that all people start from the same position and can compete on an equal basis if there are no obvious barriers.

(c) **Radical Policies** aid the disadvantaged and address direct sources of discrimination, followed by policies, which challenge hierarchical structures. A radical strategic approach to equality involves the use of quotas and preferential access policies targeted at under-represented groups. That preferential treatment is variously termed as “positive discrimination”, “affirmative action” or “sponsored motivation”. Source: Byrne (1995)

## 1 • 6 The Equality Context

Equal opportunity policies are primarily strategies aimed at including those who have been excluded from the social, political and economic life of the State by virtue of their gender, economic background, race, religion, ethnic origin or disability. In Ireland, these strategies are supported by legislation.

**The Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform** established in 1993 is charged with the preparation of legislation that will prohibit discrimination on a broad range of grounds and in a broad range of fora. The Department has overseen the enactment of **The Employment Equality Act (1998)** and **The Equal Status Act (2000)**.

The Employment Equality Act (1998) outlaws discriminatory practices in relation to and within employment. It prohibits direct and indirect discrimination in employment on nine grounds. These are gender, marital status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race and membership of the Traveller Community.

The Equal Status Act (2000) prohibits discrimination in the provision of a wide range of goods, services and facilities. These include access to a publicly available place, transport, accommodation, refreshment, and entertainment, banking, insurance, grants, loans, credit education and professional services. The grounds under which discrimination is prohibited are the same as those listed in respect The Employment Equality Act (1998). The Equal Status Act (2000) applies to all providers of the goods and services covered by the Act, whether they

are individuals, organisations, or public bodies, and to their employees.

Structured responses to exclusion based on inequality of treatment include a number of agencies with the specific brief of addressing such issues. They are as follows:

The Employment Equality Act 1998 and the Equal Status Act 2000 were set up to outlaw discrimination in employment, vocational training, advertising, collective agreements, the provision of goods and services and other opportunities to which the public generally have access on nine distinct grounds. These are:

- Gender
- Marital status
- Age
- Disability
- Race
- Sexual orientation
- Religious belief and
- Membership of the Traveller Community.

The act defines discrimination as the treatment of a person in a less favourable than any other person is, has been or would be treated on any of the above grounds.

**The Equality Authority** is an independent body, which was set up in October 1999 under the Employment Equality Act 1998. It replaced the Employment Equality Agency.

**The National Women's Council of Ireland** (formerly Council for the Status of Women) is a Government-funded umbrella organisation representing 130 Non-Government Organisations (NGOs) with a combined membership of over 300,000. The brief of the Council is to represent the concerns of women and to make recommendations on equality policies.

### **Area development Planning**

Commitment to equality now informs the criteria for drawing up and appraising local area development plans. The 1994-1999 Operational Programme for Local Urban and Rural Development guidelines are outlined in the ADM Integrated Local Development Handbook as follows:

*The principles and practices of equality permeate the whole programme, and in particular in regard to membership of Partnership Boards(Section 4.1), the criteria for appraisal of Local Development Plans (section 6.3), the scope of measures (Section 7) and performance indicators and targets (Section 11.1)*

Each Partnership/community group should develop an equal opportunities policy which involves its active commitment to ensure equality regardless of gender, sexual orientation, disability, socio-economic background, age, religion, national or ethnic origin, marital status and responsibility for dependants.

Implementing of an equal opportunities policy requires a positive action programme, positive action aims to complement legislation on equal treatment and includes any measures contributing to the elimination of inequalities in practice.

### **UNIT 1: RECOMMENDED READING**

Baker, J. (1987), *Arguing for Equality*. Verso Publications

Byrne, A. (1995). "Making Development Work for Women", in *UCG Women's Studies Centre Review* Vol. 3, Cloduru Lurgan Teo.

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Lynch, K. (1993), "An Analysis of the Differences between Educational Policies Based on Principles of Equity. Equality of Opportunity and Egalitarianism", in *Equality of Opportunity in Third Level Education*, O.Egan (Ed.)

Rawls, J (1971), *Theory of Justice*, Harvard.

Toffler, A. (1970), *Future Shock*, Pan Books

**End of UNIT 1**



## **Unit 2: Exclusion as a Social Process**

### 2.1 Introduction

#### 2.2.1 Relative and Absolute Poverty

#### 2.2.2 Social Exclusion

#### 2.2.3 Exclusion as a Social Process

#### 2.3.1 Responses To Social Exclusion Through EU Social Policy

#### 2.3.2 The Single European Market, "Social Dumping" And The Social Charter

#### 2.3.3 EU White Paper on Social Policy.

#### 2.3.4 The European Structural Funds

#### 2.3.5 Community Initiatives within the Structural Funds 2000-2006

#### 2.4.1 Social Exclusion: The Irish Response

#### 2.4.2 The Government is advised on policy by a number of organisations.

#### 2.4.3 National Commitment to Social Inclusion

#### 2.4.4 Rural Disadvantage

#### 2.4.5 Range of policy responses to the levels of rural poverty and social exclusion identified in Ireland.

#### 2.4.6 Partnership

##### 2.4.6.1 Area Based Partnerships

##### 2.4.6.2 Issues for Rural Partnerships

##### 2.4.6.3 Area Development Management

#### 2.4.7 Programmes to Combat Social Exclusion

#### 2.4.8 Local and Spatial Responses to Exclusion

#### 2.4.9 Examples of Other Organisations, Initiatives and Case Studies Addressing Social Exclusion in Rural Ireland

#### 2.4.10 Case Studies

#### 2.4.11 Video Case Studies

### RECOMMENDED READING

#### Webliography

# Unit 2: Exclusion as a Social Process

## 2.1 Introduction

Unit 2 is intended to introduce the student to the concepts of poverty and social exclusion. It will examine how EU and national social policy evolved and how it responded to a growing awareness of the changing nature of poverty and social exclusion. The student will also develop an awareness of programmes and strategies aimed at combating social exclusion.

On completion of Unit 2 and the student should be able to:

- have an understanding of the difference between poverty and social exclusion and be aware of social exclusion as a cumulative process of marginalisation
- outline the development of EU social inclusion policy as a response to social exclusion in the Community
- be able to identify projects in his/her own area which have been funded by the Structural Funds
- outline the particular difficulties that rural areas face with regard to poverty and social exclusion
- have an awareness of social inclusion programmes and strategies

### 2.2.1 Relative and Absolute Poverty

For some, the term poverty conjures up a picture of what is commonly known as absolute poverty. Absolute poverty is a term often used to describe outright destitution, the struggle to survive, not having enough to eat, indeed not having the physical requirements of food, water, clothing, and shelter.

In the developed world, including Ireland, poverty is understood in a relative way. Relative poverty is described with reference to the prevailing socio-economic conditions of the society in question. Relative poverty recognises that unequal distribution of resources and opportunities contributes to poverty. In the developed world those who are living in relative poverty cannot enjoy the standard of living enjoyed by the majority of the population.

### 2.2.2 Social Exclusion

The term social exclusion takes into account the new and emerging form of poverty and disadvantage brought about by rapid economic, social and technological changes.

It recognises that poverty involves isolation, powerlessness and exclusion from participation in normal activities of society as well as lack of money. Such an understanding of poverty recognises that people have social, emotional and cultural as well as physical needs. The

concept of social exclusion regards poverty as an often intergenerational, multi-dimensional, dynamic process that impacts on individuals, households and communities. Social exclusion is defined as:

*“Cumulative marginalisation from production (employment), from consumption (income poverty), from social networks (community, family and neighbours), from decision-making and from an adequate quality of life.” (NAPS: 1997)*

The shift in emphasis from poverty to the broader concept of social exclusion is based on the perception of the EU and National Governments of:

- The need to move from a sole focus on low income to an approach that incorporates the actual experience of deprivation
- The significance of cumulative disadvantage and the emergence of patterns of generalised and persisting deprivation arising from the impact over the life-course of factors such as class origins, educational failure, labour market marginalisation and household structure
- The need to move from a static to a dynamic perspective, with attention being directed at the process producing poverty or deprivation and contributing to cumulative disadvantage.

### **2.2.3 Exclusion as a Social Process**

The National Anti-Poverty Strategy (NAPS) broadens the definition of poverty to embrace the concept of social exclusion when they suggest that:

*People are living in poverty, if their income and resources (material, cultural and social) are so inadequate as to preclude them from having a standard of living, which is regarded as acceptable by Irish society generally. As a result of inadequate income and resources people may be excluded and marginalised from participating in activities, which are considered the norm for other people in society. (NAPS. 1997:3).*

Social exclusion is a multi-faceted, complex and fluid process that can be passed on through social relations and environmental conditions. It can be intergenerational and multi-dimensional in nature. Therefore individuals may experience a number of reinforcing elements i.e. unemployment, low educational attainment, health problems etc. simultaneously. It has social, physical, economic, psychological and political aspects. It can be aggravated or institutionally re-produced by state and societal activities and norms. Above all, social exclusion is an output of unregulated socio-economic relations and activities in modern industrialised nations.”

### **2.3.1 Responses To Social Exclusion Through EU Social Policy**

When the Treaty of Rome, which set up the European Economic Community (EEC), was signed in 1957, the original Member States were experiencing a period of economic expansion. It was generally assumed at the time, that the earnings of those in paid employment would continue to be sufficiently high to enable workers and their families to enjoy an acceptable standard of living. Large sectors of the population were not perceived as being at risk, and unemployment was not regarded as a significant threat to living standards and social order. This changed during the 1980's when research showed that there was a significant change in the composition of 'the poor' throughout Europe. According to Room (1993) the 'new poverty' in the EU in the 1980's and 1990's was recognised as being qualitatively and quantitatively different from that which was previously experienced since it affected a much wider range of people than hitherto.

### **2.3.2 The Single European Market, “Social Dumping” And The Social Charter**

The move to a Single Market, “a Europe without frontiers”, led to a fear among the poorer members that “social dumping” would be inevitable. The main fear was that large companies would play off one group of national workers against another in an effort to minimise costs and retain competitiveness. This would leave workers in a very vulnerable position.

In response to this, a Charter of the Fundamental Social Rights of Workers was drawn up in

1989. The broad aim of the Social Charter was to lay down fundamental social rights, which would establish basic minimum conditions (which individual countries could exceed if they so desired) and encourage movement towards best practice in the Community. The Social Charter also referred to the importance of 'combating social exclusion in the spirit of solidarity' and stated that:

'Economic development policies must be accompanied by integrated policies of a specific, systematic and coherent nature' and must be adapted 'guaranteeing adequate aid and resources to the situation of each individual. O'Connell (1993)

The principles set out in the Community Social Charter were taken up in the Agreement on Social Policy annexed to the Maastricht Treaty of 1992 (The Social Chapter). But there was difficulty in all Member States reaching agreement on the issue with the UK insisting that an agreement on social policy should be separate from the Treaty agreement (the U.K. "output"). Accordingly, a separate Protocol on Social Policy was inserted so that the other 11 Member States could proceed to make decisions without taking into account the views of the UK.

### **2.3.3 EU White Paper on Social Policy.**

The European Union published a White Paper on Social Policy in 1994. It outlines the extent of poverty and social exclusion within the Union. Section 14 states that:

*"At present, with more than 52 million people in the Union living below the poverty line, social exclusion is an endemic phenomenon, stemming from our economies and societies. It threatens the social cohesion of each Member State and of the Unions as a whole."*

The Paper also acknowledges the cumulative, dynamic and relational dimension of social exclusion and calls for an overall effort to address the problem through social and economic interventions. Section 15 states that:

*"Exclusion processes are dynamic and multidimensional in nature. They are linked, not only to unemployment and/or to low incomes, but also to housing conditions, levels of education and opportunities, health, discrimination, citizenship and integration in the local community. As a result, preventing and combating social exclusion calls for an overall mobilisation of efforts and combination of both economic and social measures. At European level, this also implies that social exclusion should also be addressed in the framework of all Union policies."*

### **2.3.4 The European Structural Funds**

The European Structural Fund was originally established to improve employment

opportunities for workers and to contribute to the raising of their standard of living. It was intended primarily for the working population with regard to geographic and occupational mobility. The funds were intended as “matching” funds for funds spent in member countries in the areas of training, retraining and relocation of workers. Funds were targeted at specific groups in specifically designated regional areas of disadvantage. They were not originally targeted at socially and economically excluded categories of the population such as older people, lone-parent families or groups living in disadvantaged areas.

However, by recognising regional disparities and targeting funds to aid the development of poorer areas through The European Structural Fund the European Commission was recognising the fact that poverty and social exclusion are basically structural problems caused by cumulative economic forces over which such local communities have little control. The financial support offered by the Structural Fund was intended to tackle underlying structural problems which would then lead to easier overall economic integration and consequent social inclusion.

The signing of the Single European Act (1986) allowed for The European Structural Fund budget to be doubled in size. Priority areas of particular regional disadvantage were identified as Objective I areas, which included all of Greece, Ireland and Portugal, 10 areas in Spain and eight in Italy, Northern Ireland and Corsica.

In previous rounds of Structural Funds, all of Ireland was considered as an Objective 1 region (EU region whose development is lagging behind). However, when determining eligibility for the most recent round (2000-06) certain areas of Ireland were deemed ineligible for full funding. The Southern and Eastern Region (S&E) has now exceeded the eligibility limits for full Objective 1 status and is defined as Objective 1 in transition. The Border, Midland and Western Region (BMW) retains its full Objective 1 status for the current round of Structural Funds (2000-06).

There are four strands to the Structural Funds:

- |  |       |
|--|-------|
| ○ The European Social Fund                             | ESF   |
| ○ The European Regional Development Fund               | ERDF. |
| ○ The European Agriculture Guidance and Guarantee Fund | EAGGF |
| ○ The Financial Instrument for Fisheries Guide         | FIFG  |

The European Social Fund (ESF); The European Social Fund (ESF) was established in the Treaty of Rome in 1957 and its first objective was “rendering the employment of workers easier and of increasing their geographical and occupational mobility”. Its role has developed since and it now takes a more proactive role in relation to equal opportunities.

In June 1994 the Council adopted a Resolution promoting equal opportunities for men and women through the European Social Fund. While this Resolution was not legally binding it leads to the development of a stronger emphasis on equality in the regulations for Structural Funds after 1999.

The European Social fund is the EU fund for investing in people and assists member states meet agreed goals for educating and training. Its main focus is the promotion of equal opportunities for the unemployed and the disadvantaged. The goal of the Fund is to bridge the gap between the wealthier and less well off regions of Europe by co-financing development programmes with National Governments.

It is expected this will reduce the difference between regions and improve the economic and social balance between regions and between Member States.

The European Regional Development Fund (ERDF): This fund finances infrastructure, job creation, local development projects and aid for small farms.

The European Agriculture Guidance and Guarantee Fund (EAGGF); Assists structural of the agricultural sector and the development of rural areas.

The Financial Instrument for Fisheries Guide (FIFG); This is the financial programme for Fisheries Guidance and is intended for the structural reform of the fisheries sector.

### **2.3.5 Community Initiatives within the Structural Funds 2000-2006**

There are four Initiatives and they cover the following themes:

1. Transnational, cross-border and interregional co-operation designed to stimulate the balanced and harmonious spatial planning and development of the European territory (INTERREG)
2. Economic and Social cohesion of towns, cities and urban areas in crisis, in order to promote sustainable urban development (URBAN)
3. Rural development through initiatives developed by local action groups (LEADER and LEADER+)
4. Transnational co-operation designed to promote new means of fighting all types of discrimination and inequality with regard to the labour market (EQUAL)

All projects that are funded by the Structural Funds must acknowledge this in advertising, stationery, billboards etc.

### **2.4.1 Social Exclusion: The Irish Response**

The Irish Government has adopted a multifaceted approach towards the problem of poverty and social exclusion. This approach is increasingly evident in the extent of social inclusion policies, structures, strategies, programmes, and in spatial planning from the nineties to the present. It recognises that rural poverty and social exclusion is different to that experienced in urban areas.

#### **2.4.2 The Government is advised on policy by a number of organisations.**

These include:

- National Economic and Social Forum National Economic and Social Forum  
www.nesf.ie
- Combat Poverty Agency (<http://www.combatpoverty.ie>)

#### **National Economic and Social Forum National Economic and Social Forum**

The Forum was set up by the Government in 1993 to achieve consensus, in so far as is possible, on economic and social policy issues. Since 1998, the Forum's work is focused on evaluating the implementation of policies dealing with equality and social inclusion. It may consider these policy issues either on its own initiative or at the request of the Government. The Forum also examines policy issues such as the National Anti-Poverty Strategy and local development issues in the context of the EU Structural Funds. It also had inputs to the negotiations on the PCW and Partnership 2000. Its membership is drawn from the following four Strands:

- The Oireachtas: both Government and Opposition Parties.
- Employer, Trade Union and Farm Organisations.
- The Voluntary and Community Sector.
- Central Government, Local Government and
- Independents.

The main task of the Forum are:

- To monitor and analyse the implementation of specific measures and programmes identified especially those concerned with the achievement of equality and social inclusion;
- To do so through consideration of reports prepared by teams comprising the social partners, with appropriate expertise and representatives of relevant Departments and agencies and its own Secretariat;
- Reports to be published by the Forum with such comments as may be considered appropriate; and
- To ensure that the teams compiling such reports take account of the experience of implementing bodies and customers/clients, including regional variations in such experience.



### **Combat Poverty Agency (<http://www.combatpoverty.ie>)**

Combat Poverty Agency is a statutory body that advises on poverty in Ireland. Its main objective is:

To support the effective implementation of anti-poverty strategies at local, national and European levels, with a particular focus on monitoring and research.

### **2.4.3 National Commitment to Social Inclusion**

The Government recognises that, in order for social exclusion to be reduced it is necessary that the economic and social progress of recent years be consolidated. It must be recognised that all sectors of Irish society play a role in the country's progress. With this in mind a range of policy 'proofing' measures have been agreed.

*Policy proofing refers to a formal mechanism by which policies are assessed at design and review stages for their impact on areas of concern e.g. the family, poverty, equality, job-creation potential, ethnic origin etc. (Partnership 2000)*

Key dimensions of proofing are:

- at a minimum, it involves ensuring that key topics and themes are explicitly taken into account in a Strategy
- it should involve an element of formality in terms of both processes and record of its having occurred
- proofing should be a process which occurs over the period of preparation. It should avoid being a last minute token, the all too frequent "few paragraphs" added at the end
- proofing should not stop when Strategies are published, but should be built into implementation, monitoring and evaluation. (Interdepartmental Task Force on the Integration of Local Government and Local Development System, May 2000 paragraph 3.13: 16)

Proofing policies are divided into gender proofing, poverty proofing and equality proofing.

### **Gender Proofing**

Gender proofing is defined as:

*a check carried out on any policy proposal to ensure that any potential gender discriminatory effects arising from that policy have been avoided and that gender equality is promoted.* (Gender Mainstreaming The Local Development Social Inclusion Programme 2000-2006, Appendix 2 Gender Mainstreaming - EAPN Guidelines for Gender Proofing. ADM).

## **Poverty Proofing**

The rationale for poverty proofing is to provide policy makers with the tools to implement the National Anti-Poverty Strategy. Poverty proofing will focus on how policies affect the 9% to 15% of the population who are living in 'consistent poverty'. Poverty proofing is defined as:

*The process by which Government Departments, Local Authorities and State Agencies assess policies and programmes at design and review stages in relation to the likely impact that they will have or have had on poverty and on inequalities which are likely to lead to poverty, with a view to poverty reduction.*

The Government adopted this process in official Cabinet procedures in July 1998 after a successful pilot programme. As a result, principal policy initiatives and memoranda for Government must indicate the impact of such proposals on all those who are at risk of poverty or who are living in 'consistent poverty'.

Within the Local Development Social Inclusion Programme (LDSIP), poverty proofing is a process by which Partnerships and Community Groups funded through ADM assess strategies, activities, structures and processes at planning, implementation and review stages in relation to their impact on:

- poverty and the causes and effects of poverty;
- the target groups;
- unemployment, educational disadvantage and the mobilisation and empowerment of disadvantaged communities". (ADM, Guidelines for the Local Development Social Inclusion Programme, May 2000)

## **Equality Proofing**

Equality proofing focuses on how policies affect those with the population who are most likely to be marginalised. While the legislation discussed above is the key aspect to ensuring equality there are a number of initiatives to positively impact on subgroups who may experience inequality.

Schemes and programmes providing support for community development enable socially excluded groups to participate in identifying and meeting their own needs by working with the other social partners. Funding ranges from small, once-off grants to three-year renewable funding under the three following Community Development Support Programmes:

- Community Development Support Programme (CDSP) aimed at enabling disadvantaged communities to participate in local development, training and education, enterprise and employment opportunities.

- Family and Community Services Resource Centre Programme, which focuses on combating disadvantage by strengthening the functioning of the family unit.
- Core funded Community and Family Support Groups Programme, offering support for smaller scale personal development work for target groups experiencing disadvantage, i.e. disadvantaged women and men, lone parents, Travellers.

These programmes are included under the NDP

#### **2.4.4 Rural Disadvantage**

The 2002 census recorded a significant decline in the population of rural areas. This can have a knock on effect on those remaining in rural areas.

Factors contributing to social exclusion in rural areas include:

- poverty and deprivation
- isolation, especially of the elderly
- higher than average dependency levels
- high proportion of farm households on low incomes
- lack of employment opportunities
- relatively poor transport services
- high incidence of loneliness and isolation

Poverty and social exclusion is quantitatively different in rural areas. Cultural, social, economic issues and lack of physical access to surrounding areas are major factors which contribute to social exclusion in rural areas that is different to that experienced in urban areas. The following characteristics are particular to rural poverty and social exclusion:

**High levels of Invisibility:** A higher level of individual poverty exists in rural areas, which is not as apparent as in an area of concentrated disadvantage in an urban setting. "Rural" is often only considered as referring to members of the farming community whereas, in reality, a high percentage of rural residents are not dependent on agriculture and the term also includes those living in local housing on the periphery of towns.

**Out-Migration and Demographic Dependence:** People have to leave rural areas to continue third-level education and to find work. This means that it is more expensive per unit of population to provide services. It also means that because of lack of skills and services there may be a lack of industry in rural areas. There is also a higher rate of older people in the population which can "erode" community capacity because this group is unable to play a part in the community.

**Economic Decline:** Due to decline of economic contribution from agriculture to State and lack of industrial investment in rural areas.

**Difficulties in Primary Production Sectors:** income, underemployment, low level of educational attainment, high levels of outgoing payments in proportion to income and an ageing farming community. These factors also effect the fishing industry and land ownership. There is also disproportionate inflation in land values in urban and suburban areas.

**Unemployment and Under-employment:** The smaller the size of the labour market the greater the chances of job-losses leading to long-term unemployment. The limited off-farm job opportunities impact on availability and quality of work experience and training. Seasonal unemployment is more prevalent and female unemployment is less recognised in rural areas.

**Delivery of Services-Provision and Access:** Examples of State services which are often lacking in rural areas are: Education, Childcare, Healthcare, Social Welfare, Post Offices and Garda Stations. The elderly and women and children are most effected by the lack of such services, as well as young people without access o social, recreational, educational and employment services. Poor provision of public transport and low car ownership also impacts on access to services.

**Physical Isolation Conditions:** Due to distance between houses.

Rural proofing therefore is needed to ensure that policies and development strategies take these issues into account and address the multidimensional nature of social exclusion.

(Source: Rural Proofing for the LDSIP, 2001:10-12)

**2.4.5** The following are the range of policy responses to the levels of rural poverty and social exclusion identified in Ireland.

### **The National Anti-Poverty Strategy (NAPS)**

The National Anti-Poverty Strategy (NAPS) was set up as a result of the United National Social Summit in Copenhagen in March 1995. When drawing up this Strategy the Government decided that it should be done through widespread consultation, particularly with those who were affected by poverty. It is a unique Initiative in policy development because it is the first time that the Irish Government committed itself to strategically addressing a major overarching aspect of public policy. It is also unique in that those experiencing poverty and their representatives were central to its preparation. The Strategy acknowledges poverty and social exclusion and their consequent marginalizing effect are detrimental to Irish society and suggests that:

*“Tackling poverty and social exclusion is one of the major challenges facing Irish society. It will involve ensuring that the impact of very rapid economic, social and demographic change reduces social inequalities and social polarisation. It will mean ensuring that the benefits of sound economic management and growth are distributed fairly and in particular, are used to tackle the underlying causes of poverty and social exclusion.”*

(NAPS in 1999/2000 Annual Report of the Interdepartmental Policy Committee)

The Principles underpinning the NAPS are to:

- ensure equal access and participation for all
- guarantee the rights of minorities especially through anti-discrimination measures
- reduce inequalities and, in particular address the gender dimension of poverty
- encourage the development of a partnership approach through building on national and local partnership processes
- actively involve the community and voluntary sector
- encourage self reliance through respecting individual dignity and promoting empowerment
- engage in appropriate consultative processes.

The challenge for the NAPS is to:

1. Analyse and understand the scale of the poverty problem, which exists
2. Identify the key areas in which action is needed if poverty is to be reduced
3. Establish key objectives, targets and a series of concrete actions for tackling poverty
4. Ensure appropriate mechanisms are in place to monitor and review the objectives and targets.

According to Sharing In Progress (1997:4) the central focus of the NAPS must be the 9 to 15 per cent of the population, based on the recent ESRI data, who were found to be "consistently poor". That is, those who are subject to income poverty and who appear to be suffering some form of deprivation due to lack of resources. The overall aim of the NAPS is to reduce this percentage of the population, who are "consistently poor", by 2007.

Those at risk are identified as:

- the unemployed, particularly the long-term unemployed
- children, particularly those living in large families
- single adult households and households headed by someone working in the home
- lone parents
- people with disabilities
- older people, in particular households headed by a retired person

- members of the Travelling Community
- the homeless
- ethnic minorities

The following 5 areas need to be addressed in order to eradicate poverty:

- educational disadvantage
- unemployment, particularly long-term unemployment
- income adequacy
- disadvantaged urban areas
- rural poverty

**Planning For a More Inclusive Society: An Initial Assessment of the National Anti-Poverty Strategy May 2000**

This assessment states that NAPS is *"an important and innovative approach to putting poverty and social exclusion at the centre of public policy."*

It noted a number of key strengths of NAPS:

- the strengthening of political and societal consensus that there is a need to reduce levels of poverty in Ireland
- the establishment of institutional structures to underpin the NAPS process, the adoption of specific poverty reduction targets
- the introduction of poverty proofing, increased awareness of poverty and improved cohesion
- co-ordination and consultation around poverty issues.
- 
- Weaknesses:
- difficulty in translating objectives into operational measures, which can work towards the achievement of NAPS targets.
- need to strengthen the involvement of the community and voluntary sector in the implementation of the NAPS.

**Working Groups**

Arising from this assesment the following groups were set up to look at specific areas of the NAPS.

- Income adequacy
- Long term unemployment
- Disadvantaged urban areas
- Tackling poverty in rural areas
- Educational disadvantage

**White Paper on Rural Development 1999** <http://www.irlgov.ie/ag/>

The White Paper on Rural Development, published in 1999, sets out Government policy on rural development. It covers areas such as infrastructure, transport, environment, health and education. The Paper is indicative of a new approach and a commitment by Government to rural development in Ireland. The government aims to provide the resources for implementing the paper through the NDP 2000-2006. It commits to social inclusion in the rural context and states that:

*“The strategy set out in the White paper endorses and supports the objectives contained in the National Anti-Poverty Strategy and will ensure that the overall strategy for rural development is underpinned by a socially inclusive dimension.”*

(White Paper on Rural Development 1999:85)

**National Development Plan 2000-2006** [www.ndp.ie](http://www.ndp.ie)

The EU requires each Member State to draw up a National Development Plan (NDP). The NDP 2000-2006 is designed to consolidate and improve Ireland's international competitiveness in order to support continued and more balanced economic and social development bringing about social inclusion. This is one of its basic strategic objectives.

A key element in meeting this is a multi-faceted approach to the promotion of Social Inclusion, including targeting interventions aimed at these areas and groups affected by poverty and social exclusion throughout the community.

This objective will be pursued through an integrated strategy involving:

- three Inter-Regional Operational Programmes (Economic and Social Infrastructure, The Productive Sector and Employment and Human Resources)
- two multi-sectoral Regional Operational Programmes encompassing local infrastructure, local enterprise, agriculture and rural development and social inclusion
- the PEACE Programme which operates in the boarder counties and in Northern Ireland
- the CAP Rural Development Plan under the EAGGF Fund

The plan is drawn up on a regional basis and uses the same regions as the Structural Funds which means that Ireland is divided into two regions (NUTS II); the Southern and Eastern Region (S&E) and the Border, Midland and Western Region (BMW). The BMW Region has retained Objective 1 status for Structural Funds for the full period to 2006. The S&E region is defined as Objective 1 in transition and will qualify for Structural Funds on a phased basis up to the end of 2005.

## **The National Action Plan against Poverty and Social Exclusion 2003- 2005 (NAP)**

[www.taoiseach.gov.ie](http://www.taoiseach.gov.ie)

The National Action Plan against Poverty and Social Exclusion 2003- 2005 (NAP) was drawn up after the EU Council at Lisbon and Feira in 2000. The Plan represents a governmental and societal response to combating poverty and social exclusion. Its key objective is to:

*“build a fair and inclusive society and ensure that people have the resources and opportunities to live a life with dignity and have access to the quality public services that underpin life chances and experiences.”*

This plan is part of an EU drive to meet the social inclusion objective set at Lisbon in 2000 of “making a decisive impact on the eradication of poverty and social exclusion by 2010.” Lisbon 2000 sees this as becoming a reality through increased economic activity and set a goal of, by 2010 making the EU:

*“the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world, capable of sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion.”*

The NAP sets out the policies and strategies required to combat social exclusion at national level. It recognises that there are a number of factors contributing to poverty and social exclusion. These include income levels, patterns of household formation, tax and welfare policies, employment and unemployment levels and the level of recourse to welfare supports.

The following vulnerable groups are highlighted in the Plan: (p. 10-12)

- Women: due to their caring role of looking after the children or other family members
- Children and Young People
- People with Disabilities
- Prisoners and ex-prisoners

### **2.4.6 Partnership**

In addition to proving the Government is adopting partnership approach to tackling social exclusion. The Programme for National Recovery launched in 1987 adopted this approach. It was the first agreement between the social partners but did not address equality issues except to promise a Discussion Document on equality legislation. Subsequent Programmes highlighted the need to deal with different equality and gender issues through a partnership approach and the partnership approach proved so successful that it is now mainstreamed.



#### **2.4.6.1 Area Based Partnerships**

The Area Based Partnerships were introduced in this country in 1991 under the Programme for Economic and Social Progress. They were seen as a way of tackling long-term unemployment in the worst affected areas of the country. Their area- based focus was an attempt to reproduce a partnership approach at local level similar to the partnership approach of the Programme for National Recovery (PNR).

Three key developments led to the emergence of The Area Based Partnerships:

- Concern with the persistently high level of unemployment in particular areas and awareness of the connection between particular areas and cumulative deprivation.
- Recognition that the State alone was unable to deliver appropriate services at local level.
- Change in the national partnership approach

#### **Key Objectives of Partnerships**

The objectives of Partnerships have changed over time in line with and reflecting the changing economic environment.

Originally the objectives of area based Partnerships were focused on the lessening of long-term unemployment in particular areas and the first area based Partnerships were set up as pilot initiatives in particular areas. Their success paved the way for the setting up of further Partnerships. The main objective of the Global Grant (1991-1993) was to prepare for the extension of the partnership approach to the most deprived areas of the country and it was to lead to a process in which 38 Partnership companies and 33 Community Groups would eventually be formed.

#### **Local Area Action Plans**

Partnerships produce local area action plans. Production of these plans:

- Brings together the chief stakeholders such as community representatives, social partners, elected representatives and relevant Government departments and State agencies.
- Provide a framework for stakeholders to identify and assess their respective concerns
- Provide a structure for evaluating, prioritising and dealing with local needs.

#### **Linkage with Key Agencies**

In general the Partnerships operate their services through a management sub-committee representative of the key agencies dealing with the unemployed and socially excluded.

Typically these could include:

- Local FAS Services
- The Department of Social and Family Affairs

- The VEC
- Employers
- Trade Unions
- Centres for the unemployed
- Health Boards
- County Enterprise Board
- Leader
- County Development Boards

#### **2.4.6.2 Issues for Rural Partnerships**

Rural Partnerships work in a radically different way to their urban counterparts:

1. Whereas for Urban Partnerships the overwhelming issue involves education to access a pre-existing labour market, supply-side initiatives in a rural setting become meaningless if no jobs are available within a reasonable distance.
2. One of the most important steps in overcoming deprivation in rural areas relates to accessibility. Any service that might reasonably be provided in a small deprived urban area (e.g. a community centre, creche, cultural project etc.), in rural areas faces the additional problem of physical accessibility.
3. Social stigma must be considered as an important aspect when considering interventions. Urban areas are often spatially segregated along social class divisions, particularly at the extremes of the socio-economic spectrum. In contrast, rural communities are more heterogeneous, with the result that poor and more affluent people reside within the same locality, which has a number of important consequences in terms of social inclusion.
4. As in deprived urban areas, unemployment is a major problem in deprived rural areas. However, whilst in urban areas there is an overwhelming need for full-time and well-paid employment, rural areas have a comparatively greater need for part-time and season employment that provides additional income in the context of a multi-jobbing environment.
5. A significant component of deprivation in rural areas is mediated by contingent factors. People in need of individual support are further marginalised because of the difficulty of accessing services, which are often thinly scattered in rural areas and often under threat of closure. Therefore population decline is often an indirect but real cause of deprivation in rural areas.

#### **2.4.6.3 Area Development Management <http://www.adm.ie>**

Area Development Management is a private company established in 1992 by the Irish Government in agreement with the European Commission. Its mission is:

*“to support integrated local economic and social development through managing Programmes targeted at countering disadvantage and exclusion, and promoting reconciliation and equality.”*

Its Guiding Principles are:

- Targeting Disadvantage
- Participation and Inclusion of the Target Groups
- Improving the Economic Independence of Participants
- Equality
- Partnership Approach
- Strategic Planning
- Reconciliation
- Mainstreaming
- Transparency, Openness and Accountability

### **Role of ADM**

ADM manages programmes by monitoring performance and expenditure of groups that receive funding. They Audit accounts and offer supports, which include financial training and advice, human resource guidance, group liaison, and Programme related publications, training workshops and seminars. ADM also supports PLANET [www.planet.ie](http://www.planet.ie) which is the partnership network that represents the 38 Area Based Partnerships.

### **2.4.7 Programmes to Combat Social Exclusion**

The main Programmes administered are the Local Development Social Inclusion Programme (LDSIP) and the Dormant Accounts Funds, LEADER, LEADER+, Community Development Programmes (CDPs), and the Rural Transport Initiative.

#### **Local Development Social Inclusion Programme (LDSIP)**

The National Development Plan (2000-2006) does not have an Operational Plan dealing specifically with local development. Its social inclusion measures have been incorporated into a number of Operational Programmes. The NDP also has two Regional Operational Programmes that aim to overcome Irish regional imbalances. Within these Regional Operational Programmes there is a Social Inclusion Sub-Programme that contains six measures designed promote social inclusion. These are:

- Childcare
- Equality
- Community Development/Family Support
- Crime Prevention
- Youth Services
- Local Development

The Local Development Social Inclusion Programme (LDSIP) provides funding for Partnerships and Encompasses three areas:

- Measure A – Services for the Unemployed
- Measure B – Community Development
- Measure C – Community-Based Youth Initiatives

(Source: Developing Disadvantaged Areas through Area-Based Initiatives, Reflections on over a decade of Local Development Strategies 2003 Trutz Haase & Kieran Mc Keown ADM 2003.)

The Local Development Social Inclusion Programme is funded under the National Development Plan. Its main objective is to tackle social exclusion and achieve sustainable economic and employment growth in order to facilitate development and encourage balanced regional development.

The National Development Plan divides the country into two regions. The Borders, Midlands and Western Region (BMW) has Objective 1 Status for Structural Fund eligibility from 2001-2006 and the Southern and eastern Region (S&E) which in an Objective 1 in transition status region and qualifies for Objective 1 Structural Funds up to 2005.

Objective of the LDSIP:

“... to counter disadvantage and to promote equality and social and economic inclusion through the provision of funding and support to Partnerships and Community Groups that adopt a partnership approach to tackling local issues on the basis of comprehensive, integrated local development plans designed to counter social exclusion and to equitably target the opportunities and benefits of development to the most disadvantaged individuals.”  
LDSIP Report 2001:ADM)

LDSIP is guided by the principle that all actions undertaken should address the needs of the target groups of the Programme. These target groups include:

- The long-term unemployed
- Disadvantaged women
- Disadvantaged young people
- Travellers
- Disabled people
- Ex-prisoners
- Low-income farm households
- Ethnic minorities
- Substance mis-users
- Lone parents

- The underemployed
- Young people at risk
- Disadvantaged communities living in isolated rural areas or deprived urban areas.

In the S&E and BMW areas there are 38 Partnerships, 33 Community Groups and 4 Employment Pacts that benefit from LDSIP funding. (LDSIP Report. ADM: 2001)

### **Dormant Accounts Funds**

In addition to administering the LDSIP programme, the Board of the Dormant Accounts Funds has assigned responsibility for administering this fund to Area Development Management Ltd. (ADM) on its behalf. In the current year (2003-2004) applications from RAPID and CLAR areas for certain programmes are being prioritised.

Under the Dormant Accounts Act (2001) and the Unclaimed Life Assurances Act, (2003) the Government are empowered to transfer money from dormant account and unclaimed policies into a fund called the dormant Accounts Fund.

The Dormant Accounts Fund Disbursements Board ensures the money is used on the following groups:

- Persons who are economically or socially disadvantaged
- Persons who are educationally disadvantaged
- Persons with a disability

(Source: Guidelines for Application and Appraisal Process (Dormant Accounts Fund) Area Development Management. Dublin.)

### **Leader Programmes ( <http://www.pobail.ie/en/RuralDevelopment/LEADER> )**

There are two strands to the current Leader Programme

- Leader National Rural Development Programme
- Leader Plus (Leader+)

Leader; Leader is a national rural development programme operated in areas of the country not covered by Leader Plus. It provides approved local actions groups funding from the National Exchequer and the EU aimed at developing local rural business initiatives. It adopts a bottom up approach, the local Leader agency approves grants within parameters drawn up by the Government and approved by the EU Commission.

Leader Plus; The Leader Plus Programme is a EU initiative for Rural Development. It is designed to encourage the implementation of integrated and innovative strategies for sustainable development in rural communities.. Leader Plus supports training, development, innovative rural enterprises, added value agricultural forestry and fisheries products,

environment enhancement, community animation, capacity building and environmentally friendly initiatives.

### **Community Development Programmes (CDPs)**

The Community Development Programme (CDP) was established in 1990 in recognition of the role of community development in tackling poverty and disadvantage. It was the first nationally funded community development programme. The CDP funds community development initiatives such as resource centres/projects in socially disadvantaged communities. These projects:

- Have an anti-poverty, anti exclusion focus
- Work according to community development principles
- Provide support for and animate community development
- Act as a resource in their community
- Provide co-ordination and aid co-operation between community, voluntary and statutory groups in their area.
- Involve the socially excluded in their management structure

Each project is assigned a Support Agency to provide day-to-day advice and guidance and the projects, if accepted for funding receive a three-year funding commitment.

### **Rural Transport Initiative**

The provision of adequate, efficient and accessible public transport is a key factor in the development and sustainability of rural areas. To meet these needs the Rural Transport Initiative was established in 2001 by the Minister for Public Enterprises, under the National development Plan 2000-2006. It is aimed at encouraging community-based initiatives to provide transport services in rural areas, in order to address the issue of social exclusion in Ireland. Two types of funding are offered through the initiative:

1. EUR5000 to complete a transport needs analysis
2. More substantial funding for those who have completed the ground work and have a transport plan.

This initiative is managed by ADM.

The key objectives of the RTI are as follows:

- To promote and support the development of community-based public transport projects in rural areas; to use the local knowledge and expertise in developing these projects
- To improve use of existing transport services

- To develop models of collaboration and partnership at local levels by encouraging the participation different sectors of society in the initiatives e.g. Voluntary and community organisations, statutory bodies etc.
- To build up experience of using new technologies in co-ordinating and developing the initiative
- To identify and develop models of best practice for meeting local needs
- To contribute to the advancement of the rural public transport policy

Here is an example of a local initiative which was set up in South Kildare with funds from the Rural Transport Initiative.

<http://kildare.ie/community/notices/skct-pressmar03.asp>

#### **2.4.8 Local and Spatial Responses to Exclusion**

In addition to funding programmes to combat social exclusion the government has adopted a local and spatial approach to planning and funding. This approach is aimed at achieving balanced regional development and it compliments the area-based approach of Structural Funding.

Approaches include:

- Local Authority Social Inclusion Measures
- National Spatial Strategy 2002-2020 (NSS)
- CLAR (Ceantair Laga Ard-Riachtanais/Programme for Revitalising Rural Areas) (<http://www.pobail.ie>)
- RAPID (Revitalising Areas by Planning Investment and Development)
- Rural Social Scheme (<http://www.pobail.ie>)
- Western Development Commission [www.wde.ie](http://www.wde.ie)
- Rural Renewal Scheme
- FAS Programmes [www.fas.ie](http://www.fas.ie)

#### **Local Authorities and Social Inclusion -County Development Boards**

The Government has effected reform in Local Government arising from the report of the Interdepartmental Task Force on the Integration of Local Government and Local Development Systems. A key aspect of this reform is the establishment, in 2000, of 34 County and City Development Boards. These Boards adopt a partnership approach and are made up of representatives of Local Government, local development bodies such as Area-based Partnership Companies, ADM supported Community Groups, County/City Enterprise Boards and Leader groups, the Social Partners including the Community and Voluntary Sector and Local Representatives of State Agencies.

The Boards are endorsed in the National Development Plan 2000-2006 and are headed by Directors of Community and Enterprise appointed to each local authority. The Boards are

responsible for designing a City/County Strategy for Economic, Social and Cultural Development. This Strategy is underpinned by the Key Principles of:

- An understanding of the distinct features and situation of each City/County
- An understanding of the perspectives of the constituent bodies in the CDB
- A recognition of the needs of the socially excluded
- Acceptance of development principles
- Transparency and accountability with regard to process
- Participation and inclusion to be facilitated
- Mutual respect between participants
- Decision-making based on consensus
- Shared responsibility and ownership
- Team based approach to drawing up the Strategy
- Understanding of sub County/City issues and concerns

The Task Force proposed the CDBs as an appropriate structure to develop a role in co-ordinating social inclusion measures both in the context of the National Development Plan 2000-2006 and in the context of all subsequent social inclusion activity at County/City level. As a first step the CDBs have been involved in assessing the level of co-ordination of social activities and in assessing gaps and overlaps in the sector.

In February 2003 the Ministers for Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs, Environment and Local Government and Justice Equality and Law Reform announced steps to ensure greater cohesion in programmes being delivered.

An initial measure is the requirement that the CDBs, through the Social Inclusion Measures Working Group endorse all local development agency plans. (In the case of Leader groups that are not directly related to social exclusion it is proposed that a relevant CDB sub Group will consider actions).

### **Social Inclusion Measures Working Group**

The Social Inclusion Measures Working Group is a sub group of City/County Development Boards. Its role is to:

- Act as a facilitator of protocols between agencies at local level
- Assess the extent of co-ordination of Social Inclusion Measures at local level
- Identify gaps and overlaps in the delivery of local social inclusion services
- Information sharing
- Facilitate the development of mutual knowledge of each organisation's key roles and personnel



- Exchange views and insights
- Endorse local development plans (Source: Department of the Environment 2004)

### **National Spatial Strategy 2002-2020 (NSS)**

The National Spatial Strategy was launched in November 2002. Its main aim is to achieve balanced regional development through “developing the full potential of each area to contribute to the optimal performance of the State as a whole – economically, socially and environmentally” (NSS, 2002:11)

### **CLAR (Ceantair Laga Ard-Riachtanais/Programme for Revitalising Rural Areas)**

(<http://www.pobail.ie>)

CLAR is an investment programme designed to tackle the problem of depopulation, decline and lack of services in rural areas. Clar targets parts of Counties Cavan, Clare, Cork, Donegal, Galway, Kerry, Limerick, Longford, Louth, Mayo, Meath, Monaghan, Roscommon, Sligo, Tipperary, Waterford, Westmeath, and all of County Leitrim.

### **Rural Social Scheme (<http://www.pobail.ie>)**

The Rural Social Scheme was announced in the 2004 budget. It is designed to provide ongoing income and employment support for farmers who can no longer make a viable living from farming. It will also ensure that sustainable top-class services are provided, at reasonable cost to the exchequer, in rural areas.

### **Rapid (Revitalising Areas by Planning Investment and Development)**

The Rapid (Revitalising Areas by Planning Investment and Development) Programme has its origins in the Programme for Prosperity and Fairness. Its function is to improve the quality of life and enhance the opportunities of residents of the most disadvantaged communities in cities and towns.

The Programme for Prosperity and Fairness sets out the following three objectives of the RAPID Programme:

- To develop a specific integrated policy focus, across the Social Inclusion Measures identified in the National Development Plan, directed at the social groups who are excluded, especially where cumulative disadvantage is pervasive.
- To tackle, in particular, the spatial concentration of unemployment, poverty and social exclusion within identified designated disadvantaged areas.
- To stem the social and economic costs of social exclusion by developing a range of integrated measures so that the physical, social and community infrastructure of designated communities is developed to allow them harness the social capital

necessary for economic and community development. (Source ADM Ltd Annual Report and Accounts 2002)

### **Western Development Commission [www.wde.ie](http://www.wde.ie)**

Western Development Commission [www.wde.ie](http://www.wde.ie) is a semi-state body established in 1997 and put on a statutory basis in 1999. It operates with support from the Department of Rural, Community and Gaeltacht Affairs and the Minister appoints its members (<http://www.wdc.ie/members.asp>). Its aim is to promote the economic and social development of the Western Region.

### **Rural Renewal Scheme**

Rural Renewal Scheme is aimed at regenerating parts of the Upper Shannon region. It was first introduced in 1998 and provides tax incentives for commercial and residential developments. It is administered by the Department of the Environment. And Local Government.

### **Foras Aiseanna Saothair (FAS)**

FAS programmes assist and benefit community groups through different programmes the principal of which are:

- The Community Employment Schemes; Community Employment Schemes is a FAS (<http://www.fas.ie>) programme that can provide the long-term unemployed with part-time work opportunities and training and development option that may lead to employment and/or further education and training.
- Community Training; Community Training is designed principally for up-dating and re-training unemployed people across a range of skills. It opens up training opportunities to those who are unemployed in small remote communities. Its aims are:
  - To improve the social and economic profile of local areas
  - To raise the skill levels and consequent employment prospects of participants
  - To develop successful models which can be applied in other socially disadvantaged areas
  - To provide progression opportunities for socially excluded persons.

Social Economy Programme; The aim of the Social Economy Programme is to develop social economy enterprises that will benefit the economic and social regeneration of the community. These programmes provide up to three years grant support to social economy enterprises providing employment for the long-term unemployed or others suffering disadvantage.

#### **2.4.9 Examples of Other Organisations, Initiatives and Case Studies Addressing Social Exclusion in Rural Ireland.**

It is important to recognise the role of volunteers in groups and organisations involved in combating social exclusion in Ireland. These include:

- St. Vincent de Paul Society
- Meals on Wheels
- Organisations dealing with the elderly <http://www.ageaction.ie>
- example Summerhill Third Age Active Retirement Group <http://www.thirdage-ireland.com>
- The Irish Country Women's Association [www.ica.ie](http://www.ica.ie)
- Local Sporting Groups
- Credit Unions
- Local Men and Women's Groups

#### **2.4.10 Case Studies**

The following case studies will give you an idea of some of the local groups that have been set up around the country.

##### **1. Tullamore Wider Options**

This case study provides a good example of inclusion of target groups.

One of the principles underpinning LDSIP and the community development approach is that those who experience poverty and disadvantage take part in decision-making structures locally. The inclusive nature of the Board of Tullamore Wider Options Group Ltd (T.W.O.) is an example of this principle in action. Like all Partnerships and Community Groups the Board is comprised of representatives from the community and voluntary sector, the statutory sector, the social partners and public representatives. Also, within T.W.O. there is a strong commitment to involve both the community and voluntary sector, and the target groups of the programme in the decision making processes regarding the direction and policy of the Community group. The core philosophy of its founders is that marginalised groups should not only be considered 'end user beneficiaries', but that they are centrally involved in the decision-making structures which formulate responses to community needs. By ensuring that target groups were fully briefed and consulted during the development of the Board of TWO, the end result has been the inclusion of the local Travelling Community, local disabled

groups, disadvantaged women and the long-term unemployed in the development of the organisation.

At present the Board of TWO consists of:

- 7 community and voluntary reps (travellers, the Unemployed, People with a Disability, Young People at Risk, representatives from two housing estates targeted by the programme and local women)
- 3 statutory reps (the Department of Social, Community and Family Affairs, the Midland Health Board and FAS)
- 2 Public reps
- 1 rep from the Social Partners (representing the private sector)

By ensuring that these groups are fully included on the Board of TWO the work of the Community Group will continue to be dynamic and focused delivering effective services to the target groups of the programme living in the area.(Source: LDSIP, ADM Report, 2001:21)

## **2. County Leitrim Partnership**

The following case study is an example of a community group meeting the needs of older people. It also identifies key issues to be taken into account if planning on setting up an Active Age group.

An important objective of the County Leitrim Partnership's Area Action Plan is to develop special projects, which will break down isolation among older people and meet their social and physical needs. A partnership approach between Leitrim Partnership, statutory organisations and representatives from older people's projects has been encouraged in order to best meet the needs of this particular target group.

Leitrim partnership has already learned a great deal from working with older people in the community. Some of the learning identified is as follows:


- Older people need to be centrally involved in the identification of their needs and responses to their needs.
- The 'cultural' concepts of older people in Irish society will take time to change not only in the minds of the general public but also in terms of attitudes of older people themselves. However, significant progress can be made if empowerment is part of the community action progress.
- Older peoples' projects need to be encouraged to utilise services that they perceive to be for 'younger' people or 'families' i.e. Citizen's Information, MABS etc.
- Older people's projects do not often see themselves as making an economic contribution to society, despite the large number of carers and childminders that exist among them.

- Older people's projects can sometimes express unease about applying for support for educational activities i.e. computers as this may be seen as taking resources from other groups.
- Older people's projects should be encouraged to nominate their own committees and to be represented in local community groups, community councils etc. This means investing time in building up the capacity of older people to participate fully in development initiatives.

New groups led by older people including Active Age groups have been set up in the county with the help of development workers and some interesting new projects are emerging. During 2001, with the support of the Health Board, the PALs (Physical Activity Programme) programme was initiated. This project involves older people training to become physical activity leaders for their Active Age groups. It is hoped that the experience and training will encourage groups of older people to take up exercise and improve their general health and well-being. The Partnership also organises an Arts Day for older people in the county to provide an opportunity for older people to participate in activities that they may not have experience in the past. It allowed groups to meet and network and already there are signs of critical mass being built, with groups communicating and transferring information, advice and ideas on a more prolific basis. (LDSIP, ADM Report, 2001:24)

#### **2.4.11 Video Case Studies**

##### **The Quality of Life: Gleann**



Clip3.mp2

This project represents how rural development groups can impact the lives of the older people living in isolated areas in Ireland.

##### **Manorhamilton Community Employment Scheme**



Clip1.mp2

This group focus on developing the skills of the members of the community who are long term unemployed of who have not got a skill. It is an example of how development groups can help integrate those on the peripherals back into society.

##### **North Leitrim Men's Group**



Clip2.mp2

This video highlight the gender and social exclusion issues effecting the lives of men in North Leitrim.

## **RECOMMENDED READING**

ADM Integrated Local Development Handbook

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Combat Poverty Agency Handbooks:

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Comhairle/ Citizen Information Centres (CICs) <http://www.comhairle.ie/about/>

Community Workers Co-Operative [www.cwc.ie](http://www.cwc.ie)

Department of Environment and Local Government, Policy Unit [www.environ.irishgov.ie](http://www.environ.irishgov.ie)

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European Commission in Ireland <http://www.euireland.ie>  
European Structural Funds Website <http://www.esf.ie/faqs.htm>  
Equal Programme [www.equal-ci.ie](http://www.equal-ci.ie)  
FAS [http:// www.fas.ie](http://www.fas.ie))  
Irish State Services <http://www.irlgov.ie>  
National Women's Council of Ireland <http://www.nwci.ie/>  
National Economic and Social Forum [www.nesf.ie](http://www.nesf.ie)  
National Development Plan 2000-2006 [www.ndp.ie](http://www.ndp.ie)  
National Disability Authority <http://nda.ie/>  
Office of the Director of Equality Investigations <http://www.odel.ie/>  
Office of Social Inclusion Dept of Social and Family Affairs [www.welfare.ie](http://www.welfare.ie)  
<http://www.pobail.ie>  
PLANET [www.planet.ie](http://www.planet.ie)  
Summerhill Active Retirement Group <http://www.ageaction.ie>

**End of Unit 2**

## **Unit 3: GENDER IN DEVELOPMENT**

- 3.1 Introduction
- 3.2 What is Gender?
- 3.3 The Women In Development (WID) Movement
- 3.4 Responses to Gender in Development in Ireland
- 3.5 Women's Organisations and Women in Organisation in Ireland
  - 3.5.1 National Organisations
  - 3.5.2 Membership of National Organisations
  - 3.5.3 Locally Based Women's Groups
- 3.6 Issues Faced by Rural Women Identified in Recent Research
- 3.7 Rural Development Reproducing Inequalities For Women
- 3.8 Policy Approaches to Disadvantaged Women in Development Programmes
- 3.9 Male Marginalisation

## **Unit 3: GENDER IN DEVELOPMENT**

### **3.1 Introduction**

The concept of gender in development is introduced in Unit 3. Frameworks for analysis of development programmes and policy approaches from a gender perspective are offered. The growth of the Women in Development (WID) Movement is outlined together with the WID strategic approaches to achieving gender equality in development. The idea of male marginalisation in Irish rural society is introduced. Finally, two gender-focused methods of project/programme evaluation are outlined.

On completion of Unit 3 and the accompanying activities the reader will:

- have been introduced to the concept of gender in development
- be familiar with an analytical framework for appraising development approaches from the perspective of gender
- have considered issues of male marginalisation in rural areas
- have been introduced to the concept of programme/project evaluation from a gender perspective.

### **3.2 What is Gender?**

Gender refers to the qualitative and interdependent character of women's and men's positions in society. Gender relations are constructed in terms of the relations of power and dominance



that structures the life chances of women and men. These gender divisions are not fixed biology, but constitute an aspect of the wider social division of labour and this, in turn, is rooted in the conditions of production and reproduction and reinforced by the cultural, religious and ideological systems prevailing in a society. Ostegaard (1992)

Looking at local development from a gender perspective involves examining the roles of both men and women in that development process, how policies are arrived at and how the implementation of those policies may impact differentially on men and women.

Since gender considerations permeate every social relationship and every sphere of human activity, the way in which we conceptualise male/female social relationships should be an essential aspect of sociological enquiry. Its study is concerned with the process whereby people learn to be either male or female and with the outcomes of this process; the differential social, economic and cultural positions in society held by men and women. Curtin, Jackson, O'Connor (1987)

### **3.3 The Women In Development (WID) Movement**

The Women in Development Movement broadly refers to the research, discourse and action-oriented projects which focus on the lives and economic activities of women in a development context. The action-oriented research conducted is designed not only to be data - gathering but also to contribute to the improved status of disadvantaged women in society by lobbying for strategic policy changes to deal with the problems experienced by these women.

WID research is both qualitative and quantitative in nature, and both scientific and political in purpose. In WID research, women are not regarded solely as objects to be observed and quantified but rather as participants in action-research which both identifies the needs of disadvantaged women and encourages them to formulate policy approaches to meet those needs.

Research into issues of concern to women in development on a global scale was inaugurated in 1947 when the UN established a Commission on the Status of Women as a constituent part of the Commission on Human Rights. Its brief was to prepare recommendations on how best to promote women's rights in political, economic, social and educational fields.

The UN International Women's Decade, 1975-'85 and the preparations leading up to the four UN Conferences on Women in Mexico 1975, Copenhagen 1980, Nairobi 1985 and Beijing 1995, stimulated debate and raised awareness of the issues faced by women in development across the globe.

The 1975 UN Conference in Mexico and the inauguration of the Decade for Women led to the production of scientific and popular publications specifically about the role that women play in development. In preparation for the 1980 Mid-Decade Conference in Copenhagen the UN commissioned statistical information gathering about women's status and living conditions on a global scale. The following summary of the data emerged from the research:

As a group, women have access to much fewer resources than men. They put in two-thirds of the total number of working hours, they are registered as contributing one third of the total labour force and receive one-tenth of the total remuneration. They own only one percent of the world's material goods and their rights to ownership are far less than those of men.

At the 1985 UN Conference and Alternative Forum, 16,000 researchers, educationalists and development activists gathered to exchange information, make recommendations and identify areas for new research.

The most important achievement of the UN Decade for Women was to illustrate the importance of gaining international registered government commitment on women's rights on a legal basis. Secondly it highlighted the impact on women of the structural adjustment programmes encouraged by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank. It drew attention to the fact that the number of women experiencing poverty was increasing in developing countries because of these adjustment policies. Thirdly it shifted the focus from primarily "efficiency" approaches to women in development towards a consideration of "Equity" policy approaches.

The Women in Development Movement, whether in its scientific, political or popular form, has definitely drawn the world's attention to the fact that women represent powerful human resources in development, that unnoticed, they perform the major part of the world's labour and that they do so under very underprivileged conditions. Ostergaard (1992)

### **WID Top-Down and Bottom-Up Approaches to Change in Development Policies and Practices**

The Women In Development Movement regards its primary aim as the improvement in the status of women world-wide through changes in policies and structures. The Movement has both "Top-Down" and "Bottom-Up" strategies to achieve this.

The "Top-Down" strategies of WID aim to change the institutions and agencies which work for development with the expectation that this change will promote both the achievement of development and the achievement of equality for women.

The “Top-Down” approach includes:

- Pressure by means of international conferences, consultation and presentation of data on how development policies and practices impact on women.
- Evidence to show that WID issues are important in themselves by providing evidence that involving women in development programmes increases their chances of success.
- Tools such as gender analysis frameworks, guidelines and operational checklists, and the availability of WID consultants.
- Structures such as staff appointments within major agencies and gender training for staff.

The “Bottom-Up” strategies aim to go directly to women either facilitating or supporting their entry into the mainstream of societies by:

Change to legal or social barriers that exclude women. Empowerment of women to take the initiative to become involved in development planning and policies. Support through technical assistance to women’s groups to acquire greater control over resources.

Source: Jackson (1992)

### **3.4 Responses to Gender in Development in Ireland**

In the UN Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995 governments made a non-binding commitment to implementing a *Platform for Action* to promote the advancement of women in all policies and programmes. Twelve areas of critical concern were highlighted:

- Women in poverty
- Education and training for women
- Women and health
- Violence against women
- Women and armed conflict
- Women and the economy
- Women in power and decision making
- Institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women
- Human rights of women
- Women and the media
- Women and the environment
- The girl-child

There are two significant legislative acts affecting gender discrimination;

**The Employment Equality Act 1998**, which outlaws gender based discrimination in employment as one of its nine grounds.

**The Equal Status Act 2000**, which outlaws gender discrimination in wider areas of society in a range of goods, services and facilities. (cf. Unit 1.6)

### **Gender Mainstreaming in Ireland**

The Equality for Women measure of the NDP 2000-2006 requires the implementation of gender mainstreaming for all policies and programmes.

Gender mainstreaming is a comprehensive strategy to obtain equal opportunities for men and women. It means incorporating a gender equality perspective into the development, implementation, and evaluation of mainstream policies. It will reinforce the effect of current equal opportunity strategies, such as equality law and positive action measures.

The NDP Gender Equality Unit [www.ndpgenderequality.ie](http://www.ndpgenderequality.ie) was established in the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform to provide advice and support for NDP policy makers.

Other commitments made by the NDP to progress gender mainstreaming are as follows:

- Requiring that equal opportunities be part of the criteria for selecting projects to be funded by the NDP
- Requiring indicators to be provided for each gender 'where the nature of the assistance permits'.
- Promoting a balance of women and men on Monitoring Committees.
- Including a representative for equal opportunities, from a relevant Government department or statutory body, on all monitoring committees.
- Establishing an Equal Opportunities and Social Inclusion Co-ordinating Committee to oversee progress in equal opportunities issues in NDP spending.

### **The Equal Opportunities Childcare Programme (2000-2006)**

The Equal Opportunities Childcare Programme (2000-2006) was launched in 2000 by the Minister of Justice, Equality and Law Reform. It is funded by the Irish Government and the EU under the National Development Plan 2000-2006. The key objectives of the programme are to increase the number of childcare provision centres and places, and to improve the quality of childcare provision.

City/County Childcare Committees were established under the Equal Opportunities Programme 2000-2006 to develop and implement plans to improve childcare services in line with local needs. The key objectives of city/county childcare committees are:

- To develop a co-ordinated strategy for the provision of childcare and to monitor its implementation
- To develop and support local networks of childcare providers and to increase the number of childcare services and facilities.
- To develop and maintain effective links with the appropriate county structures including County Development Boards, Local Development Boards, National Voluntary Childcare Organisations, Parents, Childcare Providers and the Health Boards.

### **3.5 Women's Organisations and Women in Organisation in Ireland**

Since the turn of the century, women have been contributing at several levels to rural development and community development in general:

- through national organisations with exclusively female membership
- through their membership of national organisations concerned with agriculture and rural development
- through locally based women's groups
- through their work on farms and through alternative farm enterprises
- through their work in paid employment in rural areas
- through enterprise development on individual, collective or co-operative levels
- through their contribution to local voluntary organisations providing services and support systems in communities where public services failed to meet local needs.

#### **3.5.1 National Organisations**

##### **United Irishwomen / Irish Countrywomen's Association (ICA)**

United Irish Women was founded in 1911 directly from the momentum gathered by the Irish Co-operative Movement under Horace Plunkett. The aim of the organisation was to improve the living conditions for both men and women through a pro-active and collective approach to improved production, marketing and distribution of farm products.

The educational and development approach was directed at both individuals and at communities, deliberately avoiding divisive political or religious issues. **5. The Efficiency Approach; Post 1980s**

This approach concentrates less on women and more on the development process. Its focus is on maximising the efficiency and effectiveness of development programmes. It regards women as an under-used asset for development and assumes that increased economic activity by women will automatically lead to greater equity for women.

In 1934, the organisation changed its title to Irish Countrywomen's Association (ICA) and the

organisation was associated with the initiative for further organisations that in their turn, have made considerable contributions to rural development in many spheres. Among those organisations were:

- o - Country Worker Ltd.
- o - Country Markets Ltd.
- o - Irish Homespun Society
- o - The Country Shop
- o - Farm-Home Advisory Service
- o - Macra na Tuaithe
- o - The Credit Union Movement

### **The Irish Housewives Association**

The Irish Housewife's Association (IHA) was established in 1942 as a direct response to the health and nutritional problems brought about by food scarcity and depletion of services during the "Emergency" years of the 1940s.

The Irish Housewives Association was consciously political, lobbyist and feminist in its strategies to improve the living conditions and quality of life for families and for the women who carried a great share of the burden of maintaining families and communities.

The "Housewives Petition" to Government demanding fair food prices and more equitable distribution of food and goods resulted in the introduction of ration books and subsequent improvement in food distribution. The IHA merged with the Irish Women's Citizens Association (linked to the earlier Suffragette Society of 1874) and formed links with the International Alliance of Women.

Throughout the half-century since its foundation, the IHA has lobbied on consumer-related issues such as food prices, food hygiene, quality standards of care of the elderly, drugs regulation, standards of care for children in institutions and much more.

While the IHA membership never exceeded 1,500, it exerted considerable political pressure and was part of the lobbying group to succeed in having the First Commission on the Status of Women constituted in 1970. In the context of Irish society in the middle years of this century the IHA could be regarded as "radical" in terms of its aims and strategies.

### **3.5.2 Membership of National Organisations**

Irish rural women, particularly farming women, have contributed at both national and international levels to improvements in rural life within organisations such as Irish Farmers

Association Farm Family Committee, Irish Creamery Milk Suppliers Association (ICMSA), COPA (European Agricultural Co-operative Movement), Muintir na Tire and Macra na Feirme.

### **3.5.3 Locally Based Women's Groups**

The early 1990s witnessed a rapid growth in locally based women's groups which were becoming politically active in community development. Much of the impetus for this growth came from strategically targeted funding through the EU Poverty Programmes, and through funding from national sources such as the Combat Poverty Agency and from Department of Social Welfare grants.

The locally based women's groups tended initially to be more urban than rural, but increasingly, development groups have emerged in smaller rural towns and rural areas. These groups tend to be non-hierarchical in structure, participatory in methodology and empowering in strategic vision. The basic assumption underlying their approach to community development is that through personal awareness and awareness of social and political processes, together with input of resources and support that local groups can effect change in their own community. The Western Women's Link is one network of locally based women's groups which developed in the West of Ireland.

Strategic targeting of rural women through women's groups has greatly increased the capacity of those women to start enterprises and to contribute individually and collectively to the development potential of their areas. The following are the programmes which are of most relevance to rural women as an avenue to greater economic independence and personal empowerment.

### **3.6 Issues Faced by Rural Women Identified in Recent Research**

A number of research reports in the past 15 years have identified the major problem issues faced by rural women in Ireland. The following are perhaps the most significant pieces of published research:

- 1982. 1983 Council for the Status of Women Reports of Get-Togethers (Outcomes of seminars held in towns throughout Ireland)
- 1990 Women in the Countryside (Rural Action Project) Greenmount College Conference Papers
- 1993 Report of the Second Commission on the Status of Women
- 1994 First Report of the Fourth Joint Committee on Women's Rights: Women and Rural Development
- 1994 National Report for Ireland to UN Fourth World Conference on Women

From this research, a number of common themes emerge as the main issues of concern to

rural women, both farming and non-farming. The following are the most frequently recurring issues:

- Under-representation of women at decision-making levels in all aspects of
- society, all major organisations involved in rural development, and at
- policymaking levels.
- Reluctance of organisations to adhere to the 40/40% recommended gender representation on State Boards.
- Non-recognition of the contribution of women to rural economies through “gender blind” methodologies of statistics gathering anomalies in the Social Welfare System and the use of the Live Register to determine access to specific training and employment opportunities.
- Lack of locally based, affordable, supportive child care facilities for working
- mothers, or mothers who need respite care for children with a disability.
- Lack of farm relief services for farm women.
- Crowding of the low-paid service work areas and unprotected part-time working.
- Pressure on women to become actively involved in rural development without provision of supportive structures to enable them to do so.
- Lack of public transport and the impact of that lack on all aspects of rural living.
- Centralisation of specialist medical services and information services in larger urban areas.
- Lack of refuges for rural women and children in violent domestic relationships.
- Loneliness and isolation.

### **3.7 Rural Development Reproducing Inequalities For Women**

Despite the importance of women to the farming and general rural economies through their productive work on farms and their voluntary work in the community, farm women are rarely featured in the debates about the future of rural Europe and about the pivotal role that the farm family must play in adapting to the restructuring of agricultural production and the moves toward the Single European Market.

Rural regeneration programmes and the reorientation of resources from agriculture to rural development are based on implicit assumption about how rural economies operate and on unitary notions of the farm family.

*‘The fact that farm women are unequally placed to avail of opportunities afforded by rural development policies and programmes seems to have largely escaped the attention of policy makers and planners’ O’Hara (1993)*

The lack of awareness of the inequalities faced by rural women involved in rural development



can be attributed to a number of factors which include a lack of research data on the actual positions of rural women, and to the under-representation of women in rural development policy-making and institutional structures at European and national levels.

*“Rural development as an off-shoot of agriculture has often inherited the same gender bias in both the content and staffing of institutional arrangements for policy implementation so that women’s marginalisation in agriculture is being replicated in rural development”* O’Hara (1993)

Byrne (1995) contends that there are at least four issues to be addressed in order to “feminize” rural development. Strategies are required to:

1. facilitate the promotion of women on boards of management
2. encourage the advancement of women in leadership roles at local, regional and national levels
3. assist the participation of women in local development schemes
4. encourage the involvement of women who are not currently active in development schemes, but who do wish to become involved.

Byrne also contends that the change towards equality of opportunity in rural development is best achieved by positive action policies for women to enable them to access decision-making levels within organisations. She recommends the use of quotas to ensure the feminization of the entire rural development process. She does not regard the “integration” of women into the existing system as it is not necessarily aware of the inequalities faced by rural women.

“If development can be made to work for women, this paves the way for other marginalised individuals and groups who need effective and responsive equality policies to combat disadvantage.” Byrne, (1995)

### **3.8 Policy Approaches to Disadvantaged Women in Development Programmes**

The published works of social analysts Carolyn Moser and Ester Boserup in the 1970s and 1980s contributed frameworks by which to examine different development approaches to disadvantaged women, particularly with reference to development aid programmes from developed to developing countries.

The framework involves:

- (a) Classifying the work roles performed by women in a society or community

- (b) Distinguishing between “practical” gender needs and “strategic” gender needs
- (c) Describing policy approaches to women in development.

The framework is elaborated on below.

(a) The Triple Work-Roles of Women in a Community

The work-role of women can be described under three category headings as follows:

1. 1. Reproductive Work-Role: child-bearing & child-rearing responsibilities.
2. 2. Productive Work-Role: household work, farm or business, paid work outside the home.
3. 3. Community Maintenance Work-Role: provision of services to the community through voluntary activity, protection of the environment.

(b) “Practical” and “Strategic” Gender Needs of Disadvantaged Women

Practical Gender Needs arise from women’s position in society and the work - role that women are required to play in that society, e.g. if a woman’s work-role in a society involves caring for young and dependent members of the society, then women need the skills and resources with which to perform that role.

Strategic Gender Needs are those needs of women which arise from the fact that in most societies, women are in a less powerful position relative to men and that they have a need to redress inequalities in ways that lessen their subordinate position.

(c) Policy Approaches to Women in Development;

Allowing for broad generalisation, five categorisable approaches to disadvantaged women in development aid programmes have been identified:

1. 1 - the welfare approach,
2. 2- the equity approach,
3. 3-the anti-poverty approach,
4. 4- the efficiency approach and
5. 5- the empowerment approach.

**I. The Welfare Approach; 1950 - 1970**

regards disadvantaged women primarily as the passive recipients of development assistance. It focuses on the reproductive work -role of women as mothers and home-makers. Its main concern is with meeting basic needs of families by allocating resources to mothers to meet those needs. This, in turn, contributes to the well-being of society as a whole. The Welfare Approach is a politically safe approach in so far as it does not question the structures, which result in such an approach being necessary in the first place. Development programmes which have a predominantly welfare focus tend to create dependency among the recipient group on those programmes.

## **2. The Equity Approach; 1975- 85**

recognises that women are active participants in the development process and in economic progress through their productive and reproductive work-roles. Equity approaches questions the underlying assumptions that economic strategies often have a negative impact on women and that women ought to be brought into the development process to counter that impact. Equity Approaches to development planning meet both the practical and the strategic needs of women and link development with the achievement of greater gender-power equality.

## **3. The Anti-Poverty Approach; 1970 onwards**

recognises that for a number of socio-economic reasons more women than men tend to be caught in the poverty trap, e.g. lone parents, widows, women in low paid and unprotected jobs. This approach also recognised that general development growth does not necessarily “trickle down” to these vulnerable categories when it is not specifically targeted at them. The Anti-Poverty approach aims to increase the productive work-roles of poorer women in order to increase general economic growth. (The World Bank is increasingly aware of the contribution of women to sustainable development and recognises that loans given to disadvantaged women in a community are more likely to generate growth than loans of a general nature.) The Anti-Poverty Approach increases the productive roles of women by offering more employment opportunities. In this way it meets their practical gender needs. It regards the disadvantaged position of women as a general problem of underdevelopment and not one of the subordination of women in society. It is not a consciously strategic approach to the problems faced by poorer women but may result in those women having a greater choice in the direction of their lives.

## **4. The Empowerment Approach; 1975+**

This approach aims to increase the capacity of women through self-reliance. It seeks to increase their self-esteem and confidence so that they can become more significant activists in the development of their own communities and areas. The Empowerment Approach questions the assumptions in development policies:

1. that development necessarily helps all people in an equal way
2. that women want to be integrated into existing models of development and policy approaches

The Empowerment Approach is deliberately both ‘practical’ and ‘strategic’ in its approach and regards networking amongst women as a key element in instigating social change. It believes that work on practical gender needs is necessary to build a support base to address strategic gender needs.

## **5. The Efficiency Approach; Post 1980s**

This approach concentrates less on women and more on the development process. Its focus is on maximising the efficiency and effectiveness of development programmes. It regards women as an under-used asset for development and assumes that increased economic activity by women will automatically lead to greater equity for women.

In the Efficiency Approach, women's unpaid voluntary activity in the maintenance of community and environment which contribute to the economic development of that community is taken for granted. It assumes that a short-fall or reduction in resource allocation to a community will be supplied by voluntary additional work by both genders but especially by women. In this way, the Efficiency Approach does not fully meet the strategic gender needs of women.

It is important to recognise that development policy approaches may not "fit" the categories neatly and may contain characteristics of two or more approaches. Sources: Jackson (1992), Ostergaard (1992).

### **3.9 Male Marginalisation**

Within mainstream local development initiatives such as LEADER, INTERREG, Area-based Partnerships etc. the problems facing men in disadvantaged areas are generally regarded as resulting from long-term unemployment, difficulties in accessing training and retraining, difficulties in accessing finance for enterprise establishment and development.

Positive action interventions to counter these problems generally take the form of:

- provision of training opportunities
- community employment schemes and work experience schemes
- enterprise training
- supported enterprise development
- incentives to employers to increase levels of staffing through positive discrimination in favour of the long-term unemployed.

Recent provisions from statutory and voluntary sectors for disadvantaged men, particularly in urban areas, include:

- Resource Centres
- Drop-in Centres
- Shelters/Hostels
- Grants to men's support groups.

In rural Ireland, men can find themselves marginalised from social norms for a number of

reasons including:

- isolated dwelling
- lack of employment opportunities
- de-institutionalisation policies of Health Boards and insufficient support in the community
- disability
- advanced years and rural isolation
- transport difficulties.

Indications of such marginalisation can be gleaned from health and education reports regarding the numbers of men seeking treatment for alcoholism and other dependency related conditions. Increasing suicide rates among young men in rural areas, increasing numbers of young men being admitted to hospital for psychiatric illnesses, and the need for direct interventions for young males on programmes such as Youthreach are also indicators.

#### **CASE STUDY; Male Homelessness in Rural Areas**

Eoin O'Sullivan (1993) studied the lifestyles and survival strategies of homeless men in a Galway night shelter, their relationships with each other and with the providers of the shelter.

He profiled the shelter users as follows: "The men who use the shelter, especially the long-term users, exist in a world of poverty, alienation, marginalisation and rejection, where the norms of the wider society do not regulate behaviour and actions. Inhabitants of this world are not voluntary members, but are individuals who, for a variety of historical and social system faults, personal inadequacies and lack of alternative facilities, are forced into this harsh environment."

Source: "Identity and Survival in a Hostile Environment: Homeless Men in Galway", in *Irish Urban Cultures*, Curtin, Dooner & Wilson (Eds) (1993).

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**End of Module 11**