

**EVALUATION**  
**of the**  
**Moving On Programme**

**For**

**St. Catherine's Community Services Centre,  
Carlow**

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**Centre for Social and Family Research**

**Waterford Institute of Technology**

**October 2006**

### ***Centre for Social and Family Research at WIT***

The Centre for Social and Family Research was established in 2003 within the Department of Applied Arts, Waterford Institute of Technology. The Centre brings together the teaching and research strengths of members of staff and postgraduate students from social studies and law and is co-ordinated by Fergus Hogan and Máire O'Reilly. The Centre is a practice minded research centre, committed to the pursuit of social care and social justice which seeks to develop collaborative research projects within the Southeast region, nationally and also internationally.

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## **Foreword**

St Catherine's Community Services Centre commissioned this evaluation report to assess the Moving On Programme model. The aim was to examine its effectiveness in achieving its aims and objectives over the last 10 years. This evaluation report articulates learnings gained and makes recommendations for the future development and maintenance of the programme. The report included participation of the key stakeholders, participants, staff, tutors and funders. It contains recommendations that will inform the work of St Catherine's Moving On Programme into the future.

Our gratitude goes to all who took part in the research, and in particular Joe Moran and Anne Wayne from the Centre for Social and Family Research, Waterford Institute of Technology (WIT) who conducted the research. Also to Fergus Hogan, Head of Department at WIT, who over saw the work. The existence of the Moving On Programme is entirely dependent on the generous support and funding from FAS, Department of Social and Family Affairs, HSE South Eastern Area and Carlow VEC.

This report is dedicated to the young mothers and their children who have participated in the Moving On Programme over the past ten years. Their sense of enthusiasm and motivation has inspired the work and all those who have worked with them. Their willingness to contribute to the programme has ensured that it remains as a relevant viable response to the specific needs of young mothers. We look forward to the ongoing evolution of the programme.

Frank Comerford  
Management Committee  
St Catherine's Community Services Centre  
November 2006

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- Mary Lee Stapleton, Director of Services, and all other staff of St. Catherine's who took part in the evaluation
- The representatives of the various funding agencies
- Louise Graham, former Director of Services

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And, finally, many thanks to all the young mothers who took part in the evaluation for their openness, insights and willingness to share their experiences of the Moving On Programme.

Anne Wayne

Joe Moran

October 2006

## ***Executive Summary***

### **Tender Information**

The Centre for Social and Family Research, Waterford Institute of Technology was awarded the tender to evaluate the Moving On Programme, St. Catherine's Community Services Centre. The aim of the tender was 'to assess the Moving On Programme model in terms of its effectiveness in achieving its aims and objectives within its defined ethos; to document its progress and effectiveness over the last 10 years and to produce an evaluation report that articulates learning's gained and makes recommendations for the future development and maintenance of the programme'.

### **Methods Used**

The evaluators used a number of different methods to achieve their aim of attempting to be as comprehensive as possible within the limitations of the evaluation. The methods used included focus groups, semi-structured interviews, questionnaires and a review of internal and external literature. The evaluation research was primarily qualitative. Those who took part in the in the evaluation included Board and relevant staff members of St. Catherine's and Moving On, representatives of funding agencies, and women who had participated on the Moving On Programme.

### **History of Moving On**

Moving On was established in 1996 in response to the needs of young mothers in Co Carlow. It was established under the EU funded Integra programme. This allowed the project to meet the vocational training needs of young mothers attempting to return to the labour market and/or further education/training. The programme targeted mothers under 25 years of age who were at risk of or were experiencing, isolation, early school leaving, poverty and difficulties in accessing mainstream education and employment opportunities. When the Integra funding ended, FAS, the Department of Social and Family Affairs, and the County Carlow VEC stepped in to provide financial support for the Programme.

Moving On had as its aim ‘to enhance the lifelong prospects of young mothers aged 16-25 years in County Carlow by enabling them to achieve inclusion in education, training, enterprise opportunities, the local labour market and their own communities’. Moving On developed an ethos, which recognised the young mothers as parents, sought to be inclusive and work in partnership, believed in community development as a method of working, and believed in the value of evaluation and research and in the value of young mothers’ participation in the work force.

From the beginning Moving On embraced the non-traditional community education approach to teaching and learning. The young mothers attend a 40 week programme of 20 hours per week, which is FETAC certified. Central to the programme has been the provision of developmental childcare on site by St. Catherine’s. The programme has remained stable over the ten years with small modifications being made to the syllabus as needed. Staffing levels for the Programme have been mostly part-time, but the Coordinator’s post became full-time in 2005.

## **Education and Social Policy Context of the Moving On Programme**

The programme provided by Moving On meets a very specific need, that of young women in poverty or at risk of poverty. While economic benefits have accrued to most sectors in Irish society, young mothers, in particular young lone mothers are most at risk of poverty. A range of surveys and studies since the mid-1980s have shown this and a government response has developed through successive National Anti-Poverty strategies and social partnership agreements. The Department of Social and Family Affairs is in the process of developing a new approach to lone parents based on emphasising work as the primary route out of poverty.

Community education is an adult education approach recognised in the government White Paper on Adult Education 2000. This particular method has been developed by women’s groups in response to education disadvantage and illiteracy in communities around the country. This model attempts to counter social disadvantage by improving self-esteem and

increasing confidence of the participants. Community education provides the antidote to the negative experiences many women have of education as it is based on a feminist analysis of education.

The Moving On Programme is very much part of the wider social response to poverty and educational disadvantage among young women, particularly lone women parents. Moving On continues to be extremely relevant to the lives of young women in Carlow ten years since it began.

## **Findings**

The following are key findings from the evaluation:

- Moving On is a very effective programme; it has met approval by all involved in it. All stakeholders, particularly the young mothers themselves, spoke highly of the course, the staff and the non academic support, including developmental childcare.
- The issue of mainstreaming emerged as an important point, although there is a lack of agreement as to what is meant by the term between the different people who raised it as an issue.
- The question of whether the course should continue to be a one year course or a two year course was raised. Changes to the content of the course were suggested on this basis. Furthermore, if it were to be changed to a two year course the content which would be included in each of the two years was raised.
- Some of those interviewed discussed the long waiting list for admission to the Programme. It is thought by some that if there is such a need then the Programme should respond by expanding.
- Staffing levels were acknowledged by some not to be adequate for the amount of work involved in providing the course and supporting the young mothers.
- Moving on lacks a strategic plan; this, if available would help to answer some of the key questions raised above.
- Necessary information gathered by Moving On about the participants is not standardised and a system to monitor progression is not in place.

- ‘Soft outcomes’ are an important aspect of what Moving On does but they are not given the importance required in documentation provided by the Programme.
- Community education is central to Moving On, both as ethos and method, but it is not well understood across the organisation.
- The community development aspect of the course is not fully understood by the young women.

## **Recommendations**

The following are a list of recommendations which are made on the basis of an analysis of the information provided by the various stakeholders consulted for the evaluation. A number of the recommendations would become redundant if a strategic review were to be carried out. It is also our belief that central issues of concern, such as mainstreaming, the structure of the course and staffing levels should also be taken up in such a review and as a result no recommendations are made about these issues.

- Moving On is a very good programme; we recommend that the project is further developed to respond to existing and new challenges.
- We recommend that a strategic review of Moving On be carried out. Such a review should address issues of governance, management, staffing levels, administration, funding, external and internal relationships and service provision. This review should set out the future strategy for Moving On for a period of five years.
- We recommend reviewing and standardising the information maintained by all staff on young mothers participating in the course. Information on participants should be collated and retained in an appropriate form. We also recommend that in consultation with the young mothers a system to maintain contact with the graduates and to collect progression information for a specified period be established. This should also include details about those who do not complete the course.
- We acknowledge that many of the original aims, objectives and ethos have remained the same, but we recommend that these are updated, as there have been changes over the years.



- We recommend that ‘soft outcomes’ should be explained and included in all relevant reports on the Programme.
- We recommend that steps are taken to ensure that people at all levels of the organisation develop a greater understanding of the meaning of community education. This is particularly important for all staff working directly with the young mothers and ongoing training should be provided for them, as well as induction for any new staff members.
- We recommend that Moving On develops a system for assessing how its objectives are being met.
- We recommend that Moving On continues to develop its ability to change the content of the Programme based on needs of students each year.
- We recommend an improvement the community development aspect of the course, in keeping with the philosophy of community education and Moving On’s own aims, objectives and ethos.

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# Section 1

## ***Introduction to the Evaluation of the Moving On Programme***

### **The Tender Request**

In March 2006 St Catherine's Community Services Centre (St Catherine's) sought tenders to carry out an evaluation of its Moving On Programme which, in 2006, is celebrating ten years of providing community education to young mothers between the ages of 16 and 25 years. The aim of the evaluation was to assess the effectiveness of the Moving On Programme in reaching its aims and objectives.

The Centre for Family and Social Research of the Department of Applied Arts at the Waterford Institute of Technology successfully bid for this tender and work began in mid-June 2006.

### **Methods used in the Evaluation**

The methods used in the evaluation were primarily based on qualitative research. The financial constraints and time limitations of the evaluation meant that quantitative methods were ruled out before the evaluation began. In addition to absorbing large amounts of resources quantitative methods would have provided a limited statistical picture of the Moving On Programme. Qualitative methods were judged to be the most useful in providing the data needed to meet the objectives of the evaluation requirements as set out by St Catherine's.

Qualitative methods provide 'a broader version of theory than simply a relationship between variables' (Silverman 1993:27). They allow evaluators the flexibility to explore the data to greater depth. Semi-structured interviews and a focus group were the main tools used to collect information. In addition information was sought from the course tutors and the Childcare Coordinator through a short questionnaire as it was not possible to meet these people face to face during the summer holiday period. A literature review was carried out to

establish the policy context and the Moving On files kept by the Programme were used to provide the evaluators with an historical basis for their work. Participants, funders, staff and management of St Catherine's and the Moving On Programme were all consulted in an effort to provide as comprehensive a picture as possible of the Programme.

## **Programme Participants**

An initial meeting was held with this year's graduates of the Moving On Programme to hear their opinions on the course and the ways in which it met their needs. This meeting served as a scoping exercise which provided the evaluators with information on what questions should be asked of others in the evaluation process.

The views and assessment of the Programme participants were seen to be fundamental to the evaluation process. It was intended to carry out a focus group with young mothers from each of the ten years of the Programme. However, this was not possible as making contact with the former participants proved to be very difficult. Two efforts were made by mail shot to make contact with former participants. The first effort failed to get sufficient respondents to participate in the focus group. It is possible that this was because the contact details for the past participants were not up to date as they are a highly mobile group. The second mailing was facilitated by the local area office of the Department of Social and Family Affairs and reached a much greater number of women. This yielded improved results. While not every year was represented in the focus group there was a sufficient cross section of participants to ensure that the key themes and issues were highlighted across the years since Moving On was established in 1996.

The focus group was used because it was judged by the evaluators to offer the most relevant method of information gathering from the young mothers in the time available to the evaluators to carry out their research. Focus groups bring together a small group to find out what they think and feel about an area of inquiry. The group setting allows participants to interact with one another so that 'information that may not be thought of or shared in the individual interview may emerge in the group process' (Maykut and Morehouse 1994:104-105). Another significant advantage of focus groups accrues to the participants because

‘people often enjoy and learn about themselves [from participating and] ...come to new understandings through their interactions’ (Maykut and Morehouse 1994:105). The evaluators were open to holding four focus groups to include up to five young women each (approximately 10% of the participants over the ten years). However the response from the women was such that this was not possible. Six women responded and took part in one focus group.

**Table 1 –Years Represented in the Focus Group**

Year of participation in Moving On	Number at focus group
98/99	1
99/00	2
00/01	1
02/03	2

Two face to face interviews were held with women who had dropped out of the course. These interviews sought information on what benefits the course had to offer them and why they had dropped out.

## **Funding Agencies**

The key representatives from all of the support agencies for the Moving On Programme were interviewed. Funding agencies are always interested in the evaluation of projects to which they contribute money or other supports. It was very important to hear the views of the representatives of these agencies, all of which are public bodies, in order to find out what they think of the Programme for which they were providing financial support. These agencies included:

- Department of Social and Family Affairs
- FAS
- Co Carlow VEC

## **St Catherine's Community Services Centre**

Within St Catherine's the Chairperson of the Management Committee completed a questionnaire, while the Director of Services of St Catherine's and the Moving On Programme Coordinator, Maureen Murphy, were interviewed. We also met with a founding staff member of the Moving On Programme who was instrumental in establishing the Moving On Programme. Three of the Moving On course tutors and the childcare manager completed written questionnaires also.

## **Methodological Challenges for the Evaluation**

As is the case in any piece of work of this nature there were a number of challenges to be overcome.

### ***Challenge One***

We found most people involved with the Moving On Programme more than willing to make themselves available for interview. Because the evaluation took place over the summer months there were some delays due to holiday arrangements.

### ***Challenge Two***

A more important problem which arose because of the structure of the Moving On Programme was that only three out of the seven tutors contacted completed a questionnaire. The tutors employed by Moving On work on an hourly basis during the course year and may seek other work during the summer period when the Programme is closed. It is possible that the completion rate reflected this rather than their commitment to the Programme.

### ***Challenge Three***

As pointed out above, the most difficult people to make contact with were the former participants. It was not possible to get the views of more than the eight young mothers met during the evaluation because of the narrow time frame and the limited funding available for the evaluation. However, we are not convinced that we would have learned much more



about the quality of the Programme or its effectiveness even if we had met all of the young mothers who had passed through the Programme over the past ten years.

Qualitative research does not rely on significant numerical data that yields generalisable results. Instead it gathers data until no new information is discovered (Maykut and Morehouse 1994). The young mothers who took part in the evaluation repeated key themes about aspects of the Programme and their experiences of it, which seemed to cut across all years of the Programme. The greatest benefit from interviewing all or the majority of the young mothers who participated in the Programme would have been to establish the progression outcomes of each one. This information would have been very useful in a number of respects. However, tracking the women who participate in the Moving On Programme is not easy as they appear to be a highly mobile group.

Apart from these issues the evaluation was not unduly hampered. There was one alteration to the methods outlined by the Centre for Social and Family Research. In its tender documentation it was proposed to hold focus groups for funders and professionals involved with the Programme. However, due to the small number of agencies involved in the Programme it was decided by the evaluators to do individual interviews instead as this ensured a more detailed response from each agency.

## Section 2

### ***Moving On Programme: Education and Social Policy Context***

#### **Women, Poverty and Educational Disadvantage**

##### ***Women and Poverty***

Trends have emerged in recent years which point to certain groups being at greater risk of poverty than others. Women in their own right and women as mothers have come to the top of the poverty statistics. Nolan and Watson point out in their study *Women and Poverty in Ireland* that ‘the poverty risk for women living alone increased substantially between 1987 and 1994, from four per cent to 24 per cent’ (1999:19). They also point out that in 1987 couples with children and lone parents faced roughly the same risk of poverty, and that there was no difference between male and female lone parents. However, by 1994 the risk had increased sharply for female lone parents who were heads of household, from 17% to 32%, while male lone parents saw a reversal in their risk of poverty, down from 17% to 11% (Nolan and Watson 1999).

This trend of women being more likely to be at risk of poverty has continued into this century, although the rate for women has decreased while that of men increased. In 2004 23% of women were deemed to be at risk of poverty in comparison to men at 18% (CSO 2005). The EU Survey of Living Conditions (EU SILC) for 2004 shows that lone parent households are at a substantially higher risk of both relative and consistent poverty (CSO 2005) see Table 1 below

**Table 2 – Relative and Consistent Poverty – a Breakdown by Household**

	Lone parent household	Two parent household	All households
Relative poverty	48%	11%	19%
Consistent poverty	31%	4%	6%

Source: CSO – EU SILC 2005

Furthermore, the number of lone parent families ‘is increasing rapidly and now constitutes almost 17 per cent of families in Ireland....(t)he vast majority of lone parents – 90.7 per cent – are female’ (Department of Social and Family Affairs 2006:19). In the under 24 age group 99.5% of lone parent households are headed by women (CSO 2005). The significance of these statistics is very obvious, that women are more likely to be in poverty than men and that lone parent households, predominantly headed by women are by some distance more likely to be at a much greater risk of both relative and consistent poverty. Richardson (2004) points out that young mothers in their teenage years are at a greater disadvantage than mothers in their twenties or thirties. It is also significant that lone parent families are growing as a proportion of all family units in the state. This analysis is not only of importance to the lives of lone parents, it also of concern for children in lone parent households who are also impacted upon by the poverty experienced by their parents.

The state has come to acknowledge the extent to which women experience poverty. The first *National Anti-Poverty Strategy* (NAPS) in 1997 did not identify women per se as a group which needed to be targeted, but in the review of the NAPS in 2002 women were identified as one of a number of vulnerable group for which specific anti-poverty targets were set – to include reduction of women in consistent poverty to 2% by 2007 and to increase women’s participation in the workforce (Department of Social, Community and Family Affairs 2002). A feature of government policy to combat poverty is to require those not working and who are capable of it to do so. This is a central feature of the *Government Discussion Paper: Proposals for Supporting Lone Parents*. In his introduction the Minister for Social and Family Affairs emphasises work as the route out of poverty and the proposals suggest ways of assisting lone parents to move towards this end point (DSFA 2006).

### ***Educational disadvantage***

Unlike women’s poverty, educational disadvantage was highlighted as a specific issue to be dealt with in the first NAPS. The overall objective was

To ensure that children, men and women living in poverty are able to gain access, participate in and benefit from education of sufficient quality to allow them to move out of poverty, and to prevent others from becoming poor (Government of Ireland 1997:9).

The first NAPS outlined the reasons why it was important to tackle education disadvantage

More than ever, under-achievement at school begets social difficulties which can lead to a life of uncertainty, marginalisation, and dependence on the structures of social assistance. Lack of qualifications can combine with unemployment, dependence on social welfare, accommodation difficulties and health problems, and create a situation where various types of disadvantage become mutually reinforcing (Government of Ireland 1997:10).

Amongst a range of strategies to combat educational disadvantage is a commitment to support second chance and community-based education and training. As part of this response it is believed that ‘participation could be facilitated through the provision of childcare’ (Government of Ireland 1997:11).

Tackling educational disadvantage has remained a central tenet of Government anti-poverty policies through the second national anti-poverty strategy – National Action Plan Against Poverty and Social Exclusion 2003-2005. In the latest social partnership agreement *Towards 2016 Ten-Year Framework Social Partnership Agreement 2006-2015* education disadvantage is again highlighted (Government of Ireland 2006).

The National Economic and Social Forum (NESF) in its *Lone Parents Forum Report No. 20* published in 2001, highlighted the serious problems confronted by young mothers in relation to education, training and employment. The NESF points out that

serious disadvantages arise for those who have left school early and are not reintegrated into the education system at the earliest opportunity. By the time these lone parents are considering employment as an option, their choices are severely limited by the lack of basic qualifications, work experience and up-to-date skills. Consequently, younger lone parents may view long-term reliance on social welfare as the only viable option. For all lone parents, combining work, education or training with family responsibilities can be extremely difficult, in the absence of State-funded childcare if support is not available from other family members or friends (NESF 2001:58-59).

The NESF continues by highlighting a number of institutional barriers to access to education, training and employment for lone parents, and these are:

- lack of family-friendly arrangements;
- lack of childcare;
- lack of progression;
- complexities in the interaction between tax and welfare; and
- loss of secondary benefits (NESF 2001:59).

The NESF recommends that as well as designing specific programmes for the unique circumstances of lone parents and adapting mainstream programmes to meet their education, training and employment needs, a range of ‘personal and other supports also need to be put in place at local level’ (NESF 2001:64).

## **Adult Education**

### ***The 1990s opening up of education opportunities for adults***

The Moving On Programme was founded at the beginning of a period of growth for adult education in Ireland. Prior to the 1990s adult education was neglected despite the efforts of committed individuals and groups who attempted to highlight educational disadvantage among adults. Many community groups realised that a key barrier to the escape from poverty and unemployment was lack of education. The 1990s offered new opportunities for community groups to provide various supports for their communities including community education for adults. Funding became available through European Union social affairs initiatives for pilot projects in education, training and other work-related programmes, NOW (New Opportunities for Women) and Integra. The project Moving On: Young Mothers and Employment was one of a number of groups in Ireland which availed of this funding. As the 1990s progressed the Irish Government introduced other initiatives such as the Women’s Education Initiative (WEI) in 1998. AONTAS explains that women’s groups ‘spearheaded the development of Community Education in Ireland’ (2004:11).

### ***Learning for Life***

The development of the sector occurred in the context of an emerging life-long learning agenda. The European Commission published a *Memorandum on Lifelong Learning* in 2000. Irish education policy was to follow suit with the publication in 2000 of the White Paper *Learning for Life*. This White Paper was of huge significance for the adult education sector, providing for the first time a policy basis for the development of the sector. Within this document was recognition for community education, where it was described as ‘amongst the most dynamic, creative and relevant components of Adult Education in Ireland’

(Government of Ireland 2000:112). The White paper highlighted the significance of community education in three key areas:

- in its ability to reach large numbers of participants in disadvantaged settings
- in pioneering new approaches to teaching and learning in non-hierarchical, community-based settings
- in taking the lived experiences of the participants as a starting point

Furthermore *Learning for Life* promised additional resources including some specifically for the community education sector. These included additional resources to be provided to community groups to allow long-term planning. To date there has only been limited implementation of these commitments – and most critically the additional resources to allow long-term planning have not been forthcoming.

### ***The development of new qualification systems***

There have been other developments which impact on community education. A significant development for education at further and higher education was the Qualifications (Education and Training) Act 1999, which has led to the streamlining of the qualification system in Ireland. The Further Education and Training Awards Council (FETAC) sets standards of awards for their relevant sector. The Moving On Programme is accredited by FETAC.

### ***Community Education***

The Moving On project is located in the community education sector and follows the principles and practises established by that sector. What is community education? *Learning for Life: White Paper on Adult Education* offers two distinct descriptions of community education, which are worth quoting in full:

On the one hand, it has been seen as an extension of the service provided by second and third-level education institutions into the wider community. In this sense it could be seen to incorporate almost all adult learning opportunities provided by the formal education sectors at community level – it is education in the community but not of the community.

A second view of Community Education ... sees it in a more ideological sense as a process of communal education towards empowerment, both at an individual and a collective level. Such an approach to Community Education sees it as an interactive challenging process, not

only in terms of its content but also in terms of its methodologies and decision-making process (Department of Education and Science 2000:110).

The White Paper goes on to say that community education ‘has evolved in Ireland in recent years as an ideologically driven, highly innovative and large-scale Adult Education provision consisting mainly of self-directed women’s groups’ (Department of Education and Science 2000:111). AONTAS supports the second definition of community education and offers the following broader definition:

Community Education is education and learning which is rooted in a process of empowerment, social justice, change, challenge, respect and collective consciousness. It is within the community and of the community, reflecting the developing needs of individuals and their locale. It builds the capacity of local communities to engage in developing responses to educational and structural disadvantage and to take part in decision-making and policy-formation within the community. It is distinct from general adult education provision, due both to its ethos and to the methodologies it employs (AONTAS 2000)

AONTAS argues that this model of education is transformative as it is based on confidence building and women’s participation in decision-making (AONTAS 2003 and AONTAS 2004). The community education model attempts to counter social disadvantage by improving self-esteem and increasing the confidence of the participant. AONTAS, in its publication *At the Forefront*, observes that ‘community education practitioners are familiar with the commonly voiced experience of ‘educationally disadvantaged’ adults who describe their schooling as very negative’ (AONTAS 2001:14).

### ***Feminist Education***

Community education provides the antidote to the negative experiences many women have of education as it is based on a feminist analysis of education. The White Paper quotes Smyth on feminist education who says that this form of education embodies:

- an openness to alternative structures and a critique of existing ones;
- an emphasis on sharing in learning rather than competing in it;
- a blurring of distinctions between the ‘teacher’ and the ‘taught’;
- an endeavour to locate personal, individual experiences within the broader social and political context;
- the elimination of hierarchy;

- an orientation to enhanced educational and vocational progression of the participants;
- a challenge to the dominant modes of assessment and accreditation (DES 2000:111).

The educational context for young mothers who participate in the Moving On Programme is based on the community education model. This model counters prevailing education methods and opens up new experiences and opportunities for young mothers who are at an educational disadvantage due to a range of complex and inter-related life experiences, such as early school leaving, lone parenthood, income poverty and isolation.

It is clear that the Moving On Programme is very much part of a wider social response to poverty and educational disadvantage among women, particularly lone women parents. What Moving On does is extremely relevant to the lives of young mothers in Carlow in 2006 and, it seems, in the years ahead. It is relevant educationally through the community education methods it uses and its use of the FETAC qualification system. Moving On is also relevant in the wider socio-political context of the government's continued targeting of poverty and educational disadvantage as priority policies, as well as the proposed new approach by government to lone parents – to encourage work and discourage dependence on welfare.

## ***The Moving On Programme Model***

### **Setting**

The Moving On Programme is operated from St Catherine's which describes its mission as 'to provide quality services responsive to local needs, based on equality, diversity, justice and inclusion with a view to empowering and enriching individuals, families and communities in Carlow and its environs' (St Catherine's Community Services Centre 2004) It carries out this mission by facilitating community development programmes which cover areas ranging from child-care to youth and community work to adult education. It also hosts other like minded organisations such as the Citizens Information Service. The Moving On Programme fulfils one of the strategic objective set out by St Catherine's; 'to identify and outreach to those who are most disadvantaged in terms of access to training and education opportunities and



the labour market and to provide intensive support and guidance' (St Catherine's Community Services Centre 2004)

The Moving On Programme was the first long-term programme introduced at St Catherine's and as such has a special place in the centre. The Director of St Catherine's characterised it as, 'the big sister of all the programmes around here. It is the one that most people recognise' (s5 2006). However it does not operate in isolation and from its inception has been embedded in St Catherine's. Young mothers have been referred to the Programme from other services at St Catherine's. Once on the Programme they are supported by the St Catherine's childcare and can take advantage of other St Catherine's services or of other services hosted by the centre such as legal aid.

It is an integrated approach.... Very often people have been supported in progression by moving into one of our social inclusion schemes. For example there are people now working in Meals On Wheels, childcare and reception. (s6 2006).

## **History**

The Moving On Programme began in 1996. It arose out of the dual impetus of the needs of young mothers in Co Carlow and an opportunity for funding from European sources. Louise Graham, the first community worker at St Catherine's Community Services began working with groups of lone parents and saw that young mothers were grouped with lone parents but had different needs, 'a bit about parenting, a bit about education and not identifying or fitting into the groups that were already set up.' (s4 2006)

Graham had links with other groups around Ireland who had also noticed similar themes and they began discussing ways in which they could address these issues. In 1995 the Louth Youth Federation, National Youth Federation, St Catherine's and Treoir established a consortium to 'promote innovative approaches and responses to the education and training needs of young mothers' (Moving On 2002: summary). They had all found that young mothers were difficult to engage with because of their isolation.

The following year, with funding from the Integra Strand of the EU employment initiative 1996-1998, they devised a vocational training programme to 'meet the needs of young

mothers attempting to return to the labour market and/or further education/training' (Moving On2002:summary). This Programme targeted mothers under 25 years of age who were at risk of or were experiencing, isolation, early school leaving, poverty and difficulties in accessing mainstream education and employment opportunities.

The issues named above have continued to be problematic for young mothers over the ten years of the Programme. In fact due to changes in the local labour market it seems that the Moving On Programme has become even more essential to assist young Mothers to overcome these barriers than when it first started.

The type of service jobs, in restaurants, in the chipper, waitressing jobs, that the girls used to access are probably now being accessed by other people. So therefore in order for them to get into employment that fits into their family pattern, they do even more need a good qualification and a job that enables them to pay for childcare, housing and all the rest when they are on their own (s6 2006).

## **Aims, Objectives and Ethos**

The specific aim of the Moving On Programme is to 'enhance the lifelong prospects of young mothers aged 16-25 years in County Carlow by enabling them to achieve inclusion in education, training, enterprise opportunities, the local labour market and their own communities' (St Catherine's Community Services Centre 2004:41). In practice all the stakeholders use the shorthand term, 'progression' to describe this aim.

The aim is reached by meeting a number of objectives:

To provide flexible, needs based, empowering, accredited training to young mothers in County Carlow recognising personal development as the key to all other learning.

To provide a positive experience of education for young mothers

To allow participants to develop an awareness of their own capacities and interest and how these relate to labour market opportunities

To provide participants with a foundation in generic skills for the contemporary world of work

To develop a realistic employment plan with each participant and to support participants in making these plans a reality after the course

To provide a supported work placement which will offer real experience of work

To explore ways in which young mothers can be more actively involved in their own communities and support and facilitate this involvement

To provide pre school developmental crèche and playschool for the children of the target group (St Catherine's Community Services Centre 2004:1).

The consortium that collaborated on developing the Moving On Programme set out the ethos behind their work as:

- Recognition of the importance of young mothers as parents
- Working in a way that seeks the inclusion of young mothers
- A belief in partnership as a method of working at all levels
- A belief in community development as a method of working
- A belief in the value of research and evaluation to inform and enhance policy and practice
- A belief in the value of young mothers' participation in the work force

(Moving On 2002:16-17)

The Moving On Programme has used the aims, objectives and ethos reproduced above without any change throughout its ten years of work.

## **Funding**

After the initial funding from Europe ceased the Moving On Programme was able to obtain funding locally.

Initially we had three years funding from the Integra European funding and FAS came on board very bravely at the time as match funder. The success of the Programme spoke for itself which was important for the other funders so we had a smooth transition and that's been the funding relationship since then. (s4 2006)

It is significant that the Moving On Programme has been supported by the same three agencies throughout its ten year existence.

- FAS pay 'pay training allowances, meal allowance, child care and a grant towards the administration of the Programme' (f2 2006) as well as travel allowances.
- The Department of Social and Family Affairs 'fund the other training they have to buy in, the ancillary costs and the shortfall' (f4 2006).
- The VEC 'provide benefit in kind through literacy tuition' (f3 2006).

In the eleventh year of its existence the Moving On Programme has secured the support of the Health Services Executive. They will be providing personnel to assist with the young

mothers' parenting skills. Their general support of St Catherine's also benefits the young mothers.

## **Management**

The Moving On Programme is managed by a co-ordinator who supports seven tutoring staff and a mentor. The Coordinator of the Moving On Programme is accountable to the Director of Services of St Catherine's who, in turn, reports to the Management Committee and Board of Directors of the centre. In explaining the structure of the Moving On Programme the Director of St Catherine's explained, 'It is a simple structure' but went on tellingly to say, 'Maureen [the Programme Coordinator] manages the total Programme' (s5 2006).

The Moving On Programme is supported by a steering committee, which was introduced for the first time in February 2006. It consists of representatives from the three main funders, FAS, DSFA and VEC; the HSE is also represented as is the CIS, Teen Parent Support, two participants, two members of the Moving On staff and the Director of St Catherine's.

## **The Participants**

In the ten years that it has been in existence there has consistently been strong demand for the Moving On Programme by young mothers aged between 16 and 25 years. Although the Programme welcomes young mothers in any situation the Coordinator estimates that 95% of those who took part over the ten years were lone parents.

Young mothers are recruited in the following way:

We get referrals from social workers, the probation service, Teenage Parent Support Programme, CIS [Citizens Information Service], people in-house, community workers but more than 80% would be self referrals who have heard from friends or sisters. Despite all that we also drop leaflets to places where young parents are, doctors' surgeries, clinics, other community venues (s6 2006).

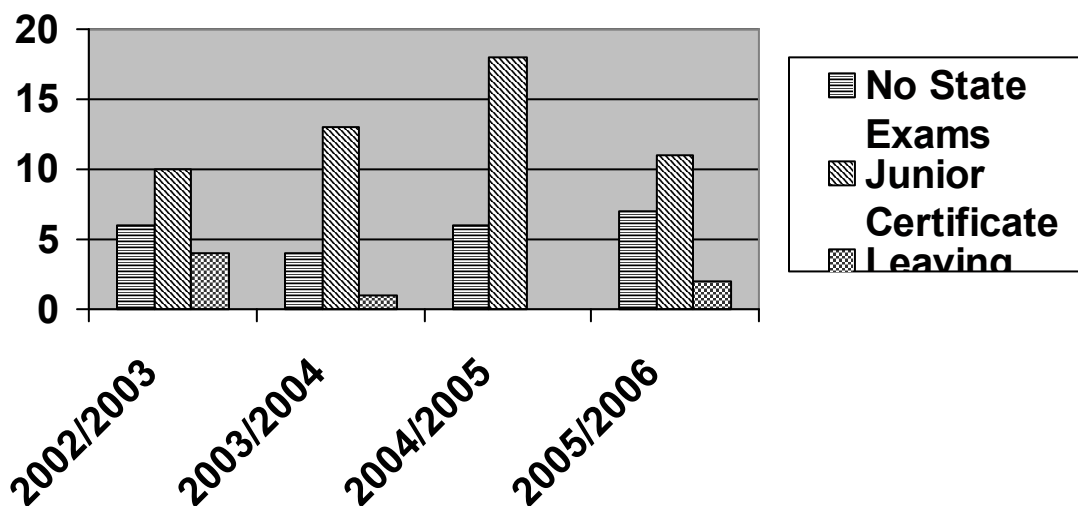
All those who are referred are placed on a waiting list for the next available Programme. Before the Programme starts all applicants on the waiting list are interviewed by the Coordinator, one tutor and one member of the childcare staff. 'In the interviews we score for education, social context, isolation and motivation. Why people are coming and whether they are ready' (s6 2006). In this way the Moving On Programme is able to screen out those who may be poised to progress without participating in the Programme or who are not yet ready to undertake study.

Some people on the list have got their leaving cert and just need information and encouragement to contact the VEC.... We aim to cater for people who have no higher than junior cert as they are the ones with no other opportunities.... People who might have drugs or other issues in their lives, we suggest that they deal with that first as we are not doing them any favours if they are trying to juggle too much in their lives. (s6 2006)

This purposive recruitment means that while the young mother's who take part in the Moving On Programme come from a variety of backgrounds and areas around Carlow, they are all united by low educational attainment (See graph below). For example in 2002 5% had not entered secondary school, 18% had not attained Junior Certificate level and in total 80% had not completed the Leaving Certificate (Moving On document). The staff has noticed that in later years the participants are also united in having a more complex set of needs than those who first presented to the Programme.

The issues are more complex now. One person could be experiencing the need for several lots of support whereas before maybe it was one. There's complex issues around custody and relationships and maybe a second and third relationship as well (s6 2006).

Graph 1 –previous educational attainment of participants, 2002-2006



### Participants' Children

Young mothers are able to participate in the Moving On Programme because St Catherine's provides childcare places for those undertaking the Programme. These places are funded by FAS and St Catherine's but the young mothers also make a proportional monetary contribution. While it is essential that the young mothers are freed of their responsibility of caring for their children in order to participate in the Programme the childcare offers much more than this. The Childcare Coordinator explains that it is 'a planned programme of developmental activities, which support the children's learning and development' (s8 2006) which has been devised to counter the effects of the marginalisation their mothers experience. The children are monitored and 'progress indicators... show significant improvements in all their developmental areas, which is documented and shared with parents' (s8 2006). It has also been found that they 'learn to be less dependent on their mother and develop skills of independence' (s8 2006).

## Education

From the beginning the Moving On Programme moved away from traditional methods of teaching and embraced adult and community education approaches.

We were aware that there were a small number of programmes for young mothers around the country and they were all reporting that they come for one session and they don't return. For us the starting point was group work, participation, empowerment, allowing the participants to have a say (s4 2006).

Young mothers attend the Programme for 20 hours per week over a 40 week period. During this time they undertake a number of accredited modules. In the early years of the Programme the participant's achievements were accredited by the Open College Northern Ireland and then the NCVA (National Council for Vocational Awards). In recent years the Moving On Programme has been accredited by FETAC (Further Education and Training Awards Council). The young mothers complete FETAC's core modules of communications, maths, personal and interpersonal skills, information technology and work experience. They also complete a number of electives which vary from year to year but always include childcare. Parenting is also included as well as subjects that allow space for creativity and relaxation.

We do a combination of FETAC levels which are equivalent to the applied leaving cert. Not everyone gets the full cert but they might get 6 out of the eight modules. So we look at where people want to go after the course and what they need. We would also do some modules at a lower level (s6 2006).

Certification is important to both the participants and staff of the Programme. 'There is a huge focus on achieving FETAC modules because we want people walking out of here with a piece of paper which is a step they can stand on to wherever else they are going' (s5 2006). However all stakeholders acknowledge the importance of what can be called soft outcomes of the Programme. These are benefits which accrue to the young mothers by virtue of the process they undertake rather than from the stated goals of the Programme. The soft outcomes include greater confidence, self awareness, advocacy skills and re-engaging with the community.

## **Stability**

The Programme has remained essentially stable over the ten years of its existence however small modifications which increase the quality of the course for the young mothers have been made over the years. One tutor noted that in the time she has been working with the Programme she has seen, '[o]n-going evaluation and tailoring of the Programme with a greater focus on the holistic aspect of the person and greater regard for the softer outcomes of the Programme' (s7 2006).

A mentor was appointed to increase the value of the work experience placements. This post also allowed for greater support to the young mothers in the development of progression plans. In addition some tutors were trained in literacy issues in order to offer a more sensitive service to participants with low literacy levels. Most importantly the Coordinator position was increased from half to full time. The current Coordinator explains:

The Coordinator was part time till 2005 but now it is a fulltime post which has made a big difference because the post entailed multiple tasks: general admin, day to day running of the course, supporting the participants and participation-if they didn't come in giving a ring because if they are out for a few days they find it hard to come back [and] the financial management.

In the mornings it was very difficult to fit all the tasks in as you had to be available to people. Now I have the afternoons to do the admin but also to reflect more on the work (s6 2006).



## Section 3

### **Findings**

Representatives of all the stakeholders in the Moving On Programme were invited to discuss their opinions of the Programme with the evaluators. These discussions were conducted by way of personal interviews, semi structured focus groups or written questionnaires. In this section the information which emerged is divided up into thematic categories and summarised.

### **Funding**

As is the case with most voluntary community organisations in Ireland, St Catherine's, and by extension the Moving On Programme, are dependent on funding from the State for their existence. This form of funding is provided to most sectors on an annual basis and Moving On is no exception to this. They apply each year to their funders who grant contributions on a non permanent annual basis. This form of funding can cause a lot of anxiety for the providers of voluntary services. In 2002 The Moving On Programme reported that 'the fact that funding has to be negotiated annually remains a problem for the planning and development of the Programme and in maintaining staff. (Annual Report 2002). One funder also pointed out that yearly funding affects those on the Programmes waiting list as, '[t]hey can't be told when they apply to join the waiting list that there definitely will be a Programme this year' (f1 2006).

But it is not just the beneficiaries of funding from the state that must deal with annual funding. Many state funding agencies are also affected by budgetary considerations and constraints. They are limited in what they can spend and how they spend it. As a funder explained 'from our point of view we only get funding on a year to year basis ourselves and we can only plan on this basis' (f2 2006).

*The White Paper on a Framework for Supporting Voluntary Activity* (2000) outlines very well the difficulties that community and voluntary organisations are confronted with when funded annually and suggests that where projects by the sector are viewed to provide a benefit

which is in keeping with Government priorities then there should be a move towards multi-annual budgeting. However, while there have been significant advances as a result of the White Paper, this move has not developed at a desirable pace, where the search for funding each year is still a major task. For programmes like Moving On, which have few human resources this effort is a time-consuming one and is accompanied by no little stress.

## **Recruitment**

The Moving On Programme has accommodated approximately twenty young mothers each year since it first began. Young mothers are recruited for the Programme through a number of avenues. Those in the participant focus group described how they heard about Moving On from family and friends - 'Girls that previously done it told me they thought it was good' (pfg 2006), were referred by other programmes - 'I got involved through the single mothers group' (pfg 2006), or discovered Moving On through their connection with St Catherine's - 'I came up here [to St Catherine's] upset and I met Maureen and she suggested that it [the Moving On Programme] would do me good and it did do me good' (pfg 2006).

Once they have gained a place on the waiting list young mothers are interviewed to discover if the Programme is suitable for them.

One of the most important things when we recruit is that there is motivation. And there invariably was. They wanted an opportunity to move on, to be more confident, to go back to school, to be a better parent, to be happier, to be not on anti depressants, to be not in a violent relationship. Moving on was different for every one. But, for all, the motivation was linked to being a mum (s4 2006).

Each year many more young mothers apply for the Programme than can be accommodated. The Director of St Catherine's pointed out that 'the Moving On Programme is so oversubscribed it's frustrating' (s5 2006). Thus the interview process seeks to identify those young mothers who are in most need of the Programme and are in a position to benefit from the Programme. In this way a waiting list that can number over a hundred is reduced to a 20 strong participant group.

There was some reflective questioning by one of the interviewees about separating the young mothers from other learners.

Is it necessarily a good thing to draw people together from the one grouping rather than integrate them? Integration means people learn an enormous amount from each other. Interchange and exchange is a huge part of the educational process (f3 2006).

However the focus group participants clearly articulated their need for a supportive environment where they could explore their experiences with women of similar backgrounds and gain confidence before launching into integrated education or the work environment. A funder also spoke of witnessing ‘the support that they get on this Programme from each other [which] is excellent’ (f2 2006).

The advantage of peer support is borne out within the community education sector where education supported by peer group is also a well-trying model. The community education model in Ireland was developed by women who experienced disadvantage and has been used by other marginalised groups subsequently. The young mothers who participate on the Moving On Programme have experienced disadvantage at a number of levels and the supportive environment provided by the project aims to help them to overcome these disadvantages.

## **Availability of Alternative Programmes**

The Moving On Programme targets young mothers who have low levels of educational attainment. The curriculum caters for a wide range of abilities starting with those who have not achieved their junior certificate and childcare places are provided for all participants. The participants of the focus group described an educational landscape which offered them very little choice other than this unique Programme.

Some focussed on the fact that the Moving On Programme provided childcare without which they would not have been able to participate.

There wasn’t many options not as regarding childcare .... There were no crèche facilities and you couldn’t afford childcare. I did a computer course beforehand alright but it was an evening course and then I was depending on family and friends. Finding a babysitter was difficult and it cost a lot of money. That was the major problem- childcare (pfg 2006).

Others explained that their low levels of previous education meant that they were not suited to other programmes, ‘I’d only done my junior cert so there wasn’t any other stuff available’ (pfg 2006).

The funders all pointed out that in the ten years since the Moving On Programme began a number of other education and training opportunities have been developed in which young mothers could participate. However, it seems clear that the Programme would not be so much in demand if these options met their current needs. ‘The demand is there [for the Moving On Programme]. The number on the waiting list is always greater than the available places.... It has not come to the end of its natural life yet’ (f4 2006).

The increased education and training which is now available in Carlow does not seem to have made the Moving On Programme redundant. Rather, one funder explained that it seems to be a necessary precursor to availing of other education and training opportunities. This is especially the case in situations where young mothers may have enough education to move onto other programmes but do not have the self esteem or confidence to avail of them.

My perception of the Moving On Programme is as a stepping stone from maybe having low levels of education to being able to access education through the VEC and the Department of Education. If the Moving On Programme wasn’t there these young mothers wouldn’t be in a position to access the other programmes. This is mainly down to the level of education in that most of them would have junior cert or lower and there’s also issues around assertiveness, confidence, which are addressed in the Programme. They may actually have the educational levels that would be required but they mightn’t have the confidence or the self belief to go onto the other educational programmes (f1 2006).

FAS and the VEC provide training and education for a range of different groups and abilities in Carlow. However, neither provides the same type of course as the Moving On Programme. The combined unique characteristics of Moving On include:

- directed at young mothers only
- accepts young mothers at a low level of educational achievement and brings them to the level of a recognised qualification
- provides childcare on site
- supports the young mothers in dealing with social problems which directly affect them and their capacity to participate on the course
- uses a community education model

There is a broad consensus among the various stakeholders that Moving On meets a specific need, and if the project was not available this specific need would not be met by other agencies.

## **St Catherine's Community Services Centre**

All the stakeholders felt very positive about the fact that the Moving On Programme was located within St Catherine's.

The initial investigative stages of the Moving On Project found that young mothers feel stigmatised and as a result can feel isolated (Moving On). The young mothers interviewed for the present evaluation were very aware that in the general community they could be regarded with disdain and prejudice. One woman explained,

I was 17 when I had my child and I was still in school and it was a big thing. 'Oh look at her she's pregnant and she's in school like. I left school and that's the reason. I was in the leaving cert year and I just wasn't able to handle the gossip and everyone talking and I left 6 months before my leaving cert which is the most stupidest thing I ever done but I just wasn't able to handle it at the time (pfg 2006).

However the young mothers felt that this did not occur within St Catherine's or at the Moving On Programme. They knew that in this new environment they were respected as individuals. One young mother praised the Programme saying, 'when I came here it was a lovely environment to learn in. 'Cause you have your child you're not looked down upon, you're respected like, no pressure, no bitchiness' (pfg 2006).

The young mothers also enjoyed the affirming interactions with a wider group of people than just those on the Moving On Programme. One woman explained,

You get to know all the staff and everyone was there to support you. There was no one there [at St Catherine's] just because you were a single parent or whatever who looked down on you (pfg 2006).

Because of the constant interaction with the St Catherine's staff and students on other courses at the centre, young mothers on the Moving On course were 'helped...to mix with other groups and developed their organisational skills' (s2 2006).

The young mothers appreciated the fact that St Catherine's housed other organisations such as the CIS and Legal Aid which they could easily access. 'Cause everything was there you get help with your rights. Someone was always there to give you advice (pfg 2006). Staff also commented that the young mothers interacted well with St Catherine's by making 'good use of other support services available in St Catherine's in particular Citizen Information Centre' (s1 2006).

One funder, who had contact with a number of other once off programmes, felt that the stability of the St Catherine's setting was a distinct advantage.

Other programmes that are once off, the participants will have picked up skills but there is very much a sense that they are on their own again. But for the Moving On Programme it is still in the same location, people know where to go; it's an established ongoing thing. Stability is very important to a programme (f1 2006).

The young mothers echoed this theme and were delighted that 'they'd remember you if you popped in after' (pfg 2006).

After completing the Moving On Programme some young mothers were assisted in progression, 'afterwards I came up here asking for letters for the college and Maureen wrote me a lovely letter' (pfg 2006). Others were assisted with difficult life issues, 'I was having trouble with an ex and they got me in contact with Women's Aid' (pfg 2006). A number of them maintained more formal contact with the Centre even after they finished the Moving On Programme. Some worked on social inclusion schemes at St Catherine's and another, 'used the playschool afterwards and helped out as a volunteer for a while' (pfg 2006).

It seems that St Catherine's complemented the learning environment of the Moving On Programme in a number of ways. It mirrored the ethos of respect and support for adult learners and helped them gently integrate into a community setting. It also enabled the young mothers to make contact with agencies who could assist them with life issues which otherwise may have prevented the women's participation in the Moving On Programme. Finally the stability of the Centre meant that ongoing formal and informal support was available in the participant's progression to education and employment opportunities.

## **Adult and Community Education**

For young mothers formal education has often proven to be a negative experience (Richardson 2004). This appears to have been the experience of the Moving On participants. Once young mothers began the course they were pleasantly surprised at the contrast between their previous experience of education and the Moving On Programme.

The Moving On Programme was a more enjoyable setting than school was anyway, a lot more easygoing. And different. The thing that I remember when we came in, Maureen kept stressing we're all going to be treated like adults and not like school. And that's the way it was like. You know, at school its all discipline (pfg 2006).

This new and positive experience of education is the result of a conscious commitment by staff of Moving On Programme to pursue, 'a holistic approach based on community and adult education ideologies, philosophies and practices' (s1 2006).

From the adult education perspective we try and provide a positive learning environment and positive learning experiences aiming to create a safe environment. We work using facilitation- a group work ethos where everyone's voice is heard and respected and every one is entitled to their voice. We pass over the responsibility for learning. We wouldn't chase people for assignments for example but we would support them in getting there. They would be treated as adults (s6 2006).

While the practical application of adult and community education principles seemed to be well established in the Moving On Programme, there was some disparity between stakeholders as to what adult and community education is and how it is applied. Some were very clear on the concept while others gave a much vaguer definition, or a definition which did not fit this model, or admitted that they did not know what it meant. This is significant because it may hamper long term planning for the Moving On Programme if there is not a common understanding of these guiding education principles.

## **Facilitators not Teachers**

The young mothers highlighted the fact that tutors of the Moving On Programme were different to any teachers they had encountered before. In particular they appreciated the commitment of the Coordinator who was described as, 'brilliant', 'just like a mammy', who would 'do anything to help anyone out' (pfg 2006). One participant summed up the feelings

of the group about the Coordinator saying, 'It makes the course special that there's someone like that who cares' (pfg 2006).

The young mothers also praised the teaching skills of the other tutors

Most of the tutors were able to teach the class and keep it under control. You could have the bit of craic and then they would get down to the work and they knew their stuff and that made it interesting (pfg 2006)

They felt that they were treated as adults and that unlike their experience of school teachers the tutors respected them and would 'listen to you and help you' (pfg 2006).

One tutor taught me maths and I was pure dumb at maths. Like long division I wasn't able to do and I learnt it here because she was able to give me the time and she had the patience and I remember trying to do it in school and the teacher was like will you ever get it into your head like but here they took the time and the patience to do it with me (pfg 2006).

One young mother pointed out that many of the tutors inspired them to learn or try things that they initially wanted to avoid. 'I hated the computers and I'd have murder with [the tutor] but I ended up getting two distinctions so I was delighted after that I listened to her' (pfg 2006).

The tutors themselves highlighted their commitment to be flexible and responsive to student's needs. They adhered to adult education methodologies offering learning in many different forms so as to cater for all learning styles:

The teaching methods I use in my classes respond directly to the needs. For example, timings and topics being taught can be alter in direct response to participants' needs on a class by class basis (s1 2006).

I use very informal language and encourage the girls to use their communication skills in as relaxed atmosphere as possible through role-play, presentations, reading, writing and dialogue (s2 2006).

I try to incorporate a variety of teaching methodologies and tools to ensure I reach all of my students and regularly review their progress (s7 2006).

In a small number of cases young mothers felt that tutors were not appropriate for the Moving On Programme either because they were not skilled in teaching adults or because they were not proficient in their subject. One tutor 'acted like you're a student, she's the teacher and that's it .... She'd be more suited to teaching kids' (pfg 2006). Another tutor, 'wasn't able for the class of women to be honest' (pfg 2006).



On reflection the young mothers recommended that, ‘the tutors have to be chosen carefully’ (pfg 2006) for their experience, relevant qualifications and ability to teach adults. This is especially important where young mothers are involved.

You need people who can teach because if you’re not interested in the subject or its not presented in a way that can grab your attention you’re not going to bother, especially if you’re wreck tired from the child. The last thing you want to do is go into a class where some person hasn’t got a clue what they’re doing (pfg 2006).

## **Curriculum**

Person-centred learning is central to community education and the young mothers acknowledged this when reporting on the curriculum followed by the Moving On Programme. They appreciated the fact that the curriculum was relevant to their lives and offered the chance to gain skills and certification which would help them to progress in education and the workforce.

The curriculum covered core subjects which the young mothers would otherwise not have had the opportunity to study. ‘[We learnt] basic maths and computers. And I wouldn’t have even known how to turn on a computer in those days’ (pfg 2006). The skills the young mothers learnt have continued to be useful to them as they have progressed on in education and the workforce.

The computer skills was a big thing for me. And then when I got a job I knew all about computers and how to type up a file and now at the moment I’m at third level college and it helps me to type essays and all that, doing the word count and having the right margins whereas the other kids, even the mature students, they wouldn’t have the typing skills and they wouldn’t be able to type that fast and that would hold them back and so that’s a benefit for me (pfg 2006).

Young mothers were also introduced to staff from relevant local agencies such as the Money Advice and Budgeting Service and the Health Board who were able to address issues that were or might become important in the participant’s lives. ‘We had someone in to talk to us about our rights and our social welfare and the medical card and the birth cert and what partners are entitled to so that was helpful all right’ (pfg 2006).

Both the staff of the Moving On Programme and the young mothers agreed on the importance of the fact that the Moving On Programme is certified by FETAC. As a

founding staff member noted, 'for the women, not just the funders, you have a tangible education outcome, a certificate' (s4 2006). The Coordinator explained what this meant after young mothers completed the Programme.

Core Modules are FETAC accredited at level 3, 4 and 5. The combination meets the needs better than being stuck at one thing....Accreditation gives the participants a progression route and options. It increases their choices. Without that piece of paper they are not going to achieve and have those choices (s6 2006).

In addition the young mothers emphasised the emotional, motivating force certification had on them. One said, 'getting them certificates was deadly and then you want to keep improving yourself' (pfg 2006). Another repeated this point explaining, 'it made you want to keep on and better yourself' (pfg 2006).

Small changes have been made to the curriculum over the past ten years. While core modules must be adhered to in order to fulfil FETAC accreditation requirements tutors are innovative within these modules. One explained how, 'by working with the group for a couple of weeks I assess their literacy and social skill and then I plan the Programme to meet their learning needs and ability' (s2 2006). Another tutor has introduced themes such as 'active citizenship and this year we are looking at doing self advocacy' (s1 2006).

The staff has also noticed that the needs and interests of the young mothers have shifted and as a result have changed some elective modules in the course.

When I started people were interested in doing office based work and childcare. In more recent years a lot of people have progressed to do social studies, social care, beauty therapy, so they are looking to do different things and so the modules we put in place have to fit that (s6 2006).

Some young mothers felt that even more changes were necessary to modernize the Programme and ensure that it continues to be relevant to the students' life situation. 'I'd say change the subjects. Better skills for things that are needed these days. Not a big jump up now. Just change the subjects a little' (pfg 2006). Young mothers suggested that subjects such as 'more computers and office skills', 'finances and budgeting in more detail than just a talk' 'health, depression and post natal depression', 'domestic violence' and 'pilates, yoga, meditation and relaxation' could be covered in a revamped Moving On Programme.

Independently the Coordinator spoke of the need to offer different subjects in the Moving On Programme. She has worked to ensure there is space for this in the last two Programmes.

Once you begin to work with the group then you find other needs and we try and respond to these. For example last year while doing the issue of assertiveness they came up with emotional blackmail, non physical violence that was happening in relationships. That was out of our scope and so Women's Aid came in and did a 4 week programme that they developed with the group. Last year we did that at the end of the year but the learning was that it needs to happen earlier in the year. So this year we have more flexibility in the Programme and some free sessions each month. We also do activities that respond to social need, time out for themselves so there's balance (s6 2006).

The young mothers mentioned only one module which they felt was not satisfactory. They believed that the level at which childcare was taught was not appropriate for their situation, describing it as 'a bit patronising [to] have your children half reared and then someone's explaining how to change a nappy' (pfg 2006). This is an issue that has already been addressed by the Coordinator and since the 2005/2006 Programme this module has been delivered at a higher level.

## **Non Academic Support**

It became clear over the course of the evaluation that the Moving On Programme involved many more elements than a traditional learning programme. It also incorporates supports which allow participants to avail of the learning programme. These include a financial element, childcare provision, support with social problems and, where needed, transport to and from the centre. These are all essential to the Programme. As one funder explained,

If there were no supports the Programme wouldn't work. It's only as you get talking and meet the group that you realise this (f2 2006).

## **Social Support**

Adult and community education principles assert that students are not empty vessels to be filled with learning by a teacher; rather they are human beings who bring their own wisdom, life experience and current situations to the classroom. It is impossible to separate students from all the other issues they have to attend to in life and thus these issues impact on the learning environment.

The staff of the Moving On Programme has taken this into account and have factored, into the Programme, space and time for dealing with these issues. In 2004 they reported that ‘opportunities continuously arose to empower participants to relate their own social issues to the wider social context and to provide a framework for individuals to access information, plan actions and thus gain for themselves the knowledge needed to address their own social issues’ (St Catherine’s Community Services Centre 2004:41-42).

In discussing changes that she has witnessed since beginning to work with the Programme one tutor noted that, ‘The numbers have increased on the Programme.... [But] the attendance has declined at times, as there are more social issues for the girls thus impacting on their attendance’ (s2 2006). In practice this means that the staff has to spend time supporting the young mothers to deal with the overpowering issues in their lives and to structure learning so that the young mothers can make up time they have missed. The Coordinator described how the support system works:

Where we function very well as a first step for people back into participation is when people come into the course very often there are huge issues at home, maybe domestic violence, and unless we give them support around those social issues they can’t concentrate fully when they are in. We send out clear signals that while we can’t provide the services we can link them to the services or the information so that we are not just dealing with the learning and the personal development we are looking at where they are coming from and supporting them to look at or make decisions around those issues to enable them to grow and participate fully in the program and in society as well (s6 2006).

During 2004 the staff noted that the ‘social and personal issues experienced by the target group are noted as becoming more complex. Multiple referrals to other services have been made. These include Women’s Aid, Legal Aid, Counselling, Money Advice and Budgeting, Citizens Information, Community Welfare and Barnardos for child related issues such as behavioural problems’ (Moving On).

### ***Childcare Support***

A previous staff member pointed out that the most important support offered to the young mothers is the on site childcare, ‘because that supports the women in their parenting and gives them the safety and the space to get on with and fully participate in the Programme’ (s4 2006).

Over the years the provision of childcare has become even more important.

I've also noticed over the years that the support the participants get from extended family is more limited because their mothers and their families are not there to do the childcare and so whilst childcare was always offered it is even more essential now (s6 2006).

The young mothers' responses highlighted this fact over and over again. They expressed the opinion that the provision of childcare was crucial to their ability to participate in and complete the Moving On Programme. Without childcare they simply 'couldn't have come in and done the course' (pfg 2006).

Young mothers valued the nature of the care which contrasted with standard child care facilities.

It was the first time mine had been away from me.... She wasn't settling in but if you're leaving them and going off to work or whatever you can't exactly go back in whereas here the girls could come down and say, "look could you come up for a minute and settle her", 'cause you're only down the corridor and that made it a lot easier then (pfg 2006).

They were also positive about the development opportunities childcare afforded their children. 'I just had the one and he wasn't used to mixing and it gave him the chance to mix with other kids as well. So he benefited too' (pfg 2006).

The previous quotes demonstrate that the young mothers recognised that the childcare provision offered them more than child-free time to participate in the Moving On Programme. It was also intrinsically valuable to their children. The childcare manager explained that these children were also affected by the barriers which disadvantaged their mothers.

The effects of social isolation, poverty, low educational attainment and lack of self-esteem are well documented as particular disadvantages for young mothers, but they also impact directly and filter down to their young child/children (s8 2006).

During their time at St Catherine's childcare the children of the young mothers participated in a programme which met their developmental needs, 'covering their social and emotional development right through to their language, physical and intellectual development' (s8 2006). This time away from their mothers also strengthened the bond between mother and child.

[P]arenting alone can be a stressful time, we believe that when the mother is engaged in an activity or outlet which allows her to do something for herself, at the same time the child is placed in an environment which is calm, well planned and stimulating, both child and mother have the opportunity to develop to their potential. Reunion with the child for the mother is often seen as very loving and rewarding and strengthens the bonding process (s8 2006).

The childcare staff operates a key worker system so that one staff member always liaises with the same parent – ‘providing and receiving invaluable feedback around their child, it contributes to positive relationships and eases the transition for the parents’ (s8 2006). It is also an avenue for the young mothers to seek and receive support and information in their parenting role.

The childcare manager noted that funding limited the amount of work they could do with the young mothers and the children.

[W]e can only offer a 3.5 hour session of childcare for the 40 weeks of the Programme. The funding only allows us to maintain our childcare ratios according to pre-school regulations. However, there is a high level of need within this target group of children and...we feel that the children would benefit from a lower adult to child ratio.... Year to year funding makes the childcare service vulnerable and can be difficult to retain staff (s8 2006).

There is no doubting the importance of the supports provided by Moving On. It is acknowledged by all stakeholders. While statistics are not available on the total number of people who dropped out of the Moving On Programme over the ten years, the trend in later years indicate that it was a very small percentage. The provision of supports appears to be a central feature in the high level of participation by the learners and their retention on the Programme.

## **Preparation for Work**

The Moving On Programme sets out to give young mothers a realistic picture of the world of work through a number of work placements. It also supports young mothers to develop an awareness of their own skills and capacities in relation to the labour market.

Students do a personal profile, are encouraged to seek a work placement in an area that interests them, assisted in applying to the prospective employer and monitored whilst on work placement. Most work placements are very realistic and shed light on many pre-conceptions that participants and employers hold prior to that experience (s7 2006).

Some young mothers from the earlier years of the Programme pointed out that they had not done the work experience class which focused the awareness of the later students by helping them to develop an employment plan. The tutor explained that this consisted of,

Meet[ing] with the various agencies and bodies that provide employment or further educational opportunities, assistance with any applications that require completion, and regular bulletin of opportunities throughout the summer months post-course completion (s7 2006).

The work experience process assisted the young mothers to make choices, to consider options which they otherwise might not have thought about. This was a positive step for the young mothers as not all necessarily knew what they wished to do. 'It's very hard to know what you want to do especially when you have your own child and here you got to try things' (pfg 2006). The onus was very much on the young mothers trying new experiences and sometimes they were surprised by their own ability.

I done work placement with a woman doing childcare and basically that's how I got into childcare afterwards. She said to me I had a natural flair like which I didn't think at the time but she's there years and so I thought; 'ok I'll give it a go' and that's how I got into it then (pfg 2006).

One woman very succinctly summed up what the work experience class was about: 'Find out your own skills and what you were good at and what you weren't and then how to work on the stuff that you are good at' (pfg 2006). A key feature of the work experience process is that is not like school

Where you go to the career guidance and they say, 'what do you want to be?' When you're 16 or 17 you don't know and you just tell them anything to get them off your case. It was much different. It was very good and the tutor was supportive and realistic and she'd tell you exactly what you had to do to get where you wanted to go (pfg 2006).

As well as being supported formally by the work experience mentor the development of an employment plan is 'also supported informally by other tutors' (s1 2006). The approach indicates the level of inter-connectedness there is between the different elements of the Programme.

## **Community Involvement**

The Moving On Programme set itself the aim of supporting young mothers to be more actively involved in their own communities. The young mothers felt that this did not happen but that it was not actually necessary as it was an historical aim relating to the stigma surrounding young mother's at the outset of the Programme.

I s'pose ten years ago lone parents would have been looked down upon but not now so it [support for community involvement] wouldn't apply because it's more acceptable now socially. It's definitely less of a stigma then it was because it's more common than it was (pfg 2006).

A second woman echoed the view that support for community involvement was because 'they (lone parents) would have been behind closed doors and they would have been ashamed but now not so much' (pfg 2006).

It is interesting to note that the young mothers are ambivalent on this issue. Earlier in the focus group they explained that they were very isolated before attending the Moving On Programme, that there was a lack of childcare allowing them to be involved in issues outside the house and that some had not felt able to continue in education because of the stigma of being a young mother. It is also apparent that the young mothers, while experiencing and engaging in community development activities, do not understand what the 'community development' aspect of the course is about or that this is a core element of community education and not necessarily linked to issues around lone parenthood.

## **Soft Outcomes**

The young mothers valued the fact that they could further their education and improve their access to other education and job opportunities. However as a founding staff member explained this was not all the curriculum offered.

The Programme raised people's confidence, ability to make decisions and be in control. The Programme deliberately targeted modules that addressed these issues. The methodologies of debating and sharing also helped develop this (s4 2006).

Tutors have noted that this continues to the present day.

I see the participants mature and grow into young adults over the year; they start to ask questions and develop personally and socially. The broad range of modules on the Programme affords the participants the opportunity to try out new things and to become aware of their own development and needs' (s2 2006).



The Director called these outcomes 'soft' and makes the point that if they had not been achieved then it would be impossible for the young mothers to make other, measurable progress.

Soft outcomes are that someone commits and attends, gets into a routine, gets on with the others in the group, learns conflict resolution, begins to strengthen up and give a yes or a no in the appropriate situations, gaining confidence and self esteem and know they are valuable and have the right to be themselves. You wouldn't get measurable harder outcomes unless all the other soft issues are stacked up there (s5 2006).

In fact the staff of Moving On is working to measure the soft outcomes as well.

[T]he achievement is developing as a person and that the learning is built on that. We are talking about self-esteem, motivation and confidence. It's talking about the soft outcomes of the Programme and they are the ones that are very hard to measure. Giving the person opportunities to be self aware, to take responsibility, to engage in activities that build up self confidence like taking part in things like speaking in a group, voicing their opinions, seeking info, if they have to go to meet with a CWO that they know how to approach that. That they get the skills that they need for every day life and therefore they feel that they have more control over their life. It's a very hard thing to measure. At the beginning of the year we do a sociogram recording of a group activity, of people taking part and we repeat it at the end and the increase in participation is quite amazing. We also do a self-esteem recording at the beginning of the year. Whilst it is a very basic one we do it a couple of times and one of the interesting findings is that after work experience, although we value what people do here when they go outside the employer gives them that positive feedback that seems to enhance it (s6 2006).

Young mothers realised that the Programme had also helped them achieve soft outcomes and they highlighted their increased confidence as well as the other benefits that the Programme offered them. The most important of these were the alleviation of isolation that they felt as young mothers and huge gains in their level of personal confidence. Other benefits included returning to a culture of work and education, focusing on a goal and developing an interest separate to their commitment to their children.

The young mothers responded with a range of positive comments such as 'It was enjoyable and you were learning a lot and meeting new people' (pfg 2006). For a number of young mothers there was a palpable sense of loneliness and isolation; being left at home with the children and not having any adult company. Moving On provides an opportunity to escape from that world of isolation where the young mothers lose contact with friends who were moving on to better things in life, such as college, while they were stuck 'cracking up' at home. For some young mothers the Programme gives them the chance to do something for

themselves 'It was just doing something for your self 'cause once you have a child your whole life revolves around them' (pfg 2006).

Moving On may initially allow a young mother to 'do something for your self' but it progresses beyond this and becomes much more

It gives you great confidence like. Plus we did personal development and I used to be scared of speaking out but in personal development we used to have to talk out and it gave me great confidence and helped me speak out (pfg 2006).

When the young mothers describe what the Programme gave to them the word 'confidence' is frequently used. Other difficult to measure outcomes include the simple fact that the Programme requires routine, 'It was routine as well. Getting up and getting the kids in and it put structure like to the day instead of just sitting at home cracking up' (pfg 2006). For another woman the Programme 'made you realise there was more out there' (pfg 2006). These statements from the young mothers are not easy to measure but are profoundly important for the women's development at a number of different levels including the personal and the educational.

Staff emphasised the work they did trying to empower the women. Some funders questioned whether and how this happened.

I would wonder would it be necessary for representations to be made on their behalf in all cases and it might be more valuable to empower them to make the inquiry or the complaint themselves (f1 2006).

Another funder wondered if rather than empowering the young mothers the Moving On Programme was breeding dependence and made the following point.

I'd like to see more outside involvement. I feel that St Catherine's are great and they have a very highly qualified staff up there but they try and qualify them in every aspect and I don't think anyone can do that. I feel that exposure to maybe, instead of saying these girls have to have their literacy in St Catherine's, no they don't. These girls can easily go down to the literacy centre and it is of benefit to the girls to move out as well as moving on. Part of the personal development for these young ladies should be that they are able to engage with services outside of the door of St Catherine's (f3 2006)

This was not an uncontested view. Another funder saw great value in keeping the Programme contained within St Catherine's

It's a good model. It's working and shows what you need to sustain a programme. St Catherine's is key to it, the IT on site, the childcare on site. The central location is good. Instead of having people going all over the place. Especially when you have kids and they know that mammy is not gone to the far side of the town (f4 2006).

The staff too has struggled with these issues. Even early in the Programme

We were always acutely aware of creating dependency. We always struggled with the Programme needing to be longer and yet not wanting to create dependency. After the first half of the Programme we were working towards women moving on (s4 2006).

The staff gave many examples of how the young mothers are empowered to advocate on their own behalf. One striking example follows:

A real issue last year was rent supplement. Up until last year the training allowance wasn't counted but from last Christmas they applied a €70 disregard. So when there was a rise after Christmas to €90 they lost that pound for pound. When you are on a small budget it is seen as unfair and then this year I had people on the list coming and asking me if I get in how much will my rent supplement be docked because they have a fear that if they are docked will they ever get them back. We have done a lot of lobbying but it seems to be really stuck. First of all we tried to contact it at a local level but we got nowhere. Then the girls wrote to the minister. We had a group session and did brainstorm on the points and different groups took different points and compiled letters and emailed them in. We got an acknowledgement but no answer. So then we wrote to National Women's Council and they sent us the email addresses of all the TDs and so we did that as well and then there was four questions asked in the Dail about it. And the minister said that only people who were funded by the special projects fund were exempt from having their rent supplement reduced. So we thought we have it in writing and we went to the local superintendent CWO and he said it was open to interpretation so we are still lobbying. For the girls they were quite angry that there was no initial response. They were quite delighted when we were able to print off the Dail questions and answers. We decided that as well as lobbying we had to be quite practical about this so we documented all their expenses from being on the course (s6 2006).

Other methods are also used to prevent dependency on the Programme

If we link them to agencies we give them the info the numbers and it is up to them to actually do it although sometimes I might make the first call. When you link people to services or provide support they are still left with the decision about whether they engage with that support....I say to people that I haven't got all the skills but I can give them the information to go elsewhere. By bringing some of those people to talk to the group in general then they see the face and maybe it is easier to go themselves (s6 2006).

## **Progression**

The young mothers clearly articulated their belief that participation in the Moving On Programme had a major impact on their lives and led to progression that they would

otherwise not have dreamt of. 'I wouldn't have done the Diploma in Childcare if I hadn't come here' (pfg 2006). Others also believed that without Moving On they would not have progressed. Their experience of the Programme made the young mothers want more from life.

I know myself if I hadn't done Moving On I definitely wouldn't have gone back to college but it was just getting back into the school routine and the learning environment and doing the Moving On got me in tune with that atmosphere again (pfg 2006).

One participant very articulately outlined the difficulty of managing to continue in education when looking after a child and the role of Moving On in helping to encourage the young mothers to work out how to balance the two and to plan for the future.

You can say after you have a child, 'this is it'. It's easy to get a job and go and study when you have no responsibilities. When you have the responsibility of a kid that's your responsibility now and your own priorities go out the window. So here you learnt to balance the two and say, 'well I need to be in college to get a good job to provide for your child when they get older'. And you see the bigger picture as well. They [Moving On Programme] support and encourage you that way to think what happens five years down the road and ten years (pfg 2006).

Progression statistics are only available until the September after the young mothers complete their course but they are impressive showing for example in 2002 that 'participants continued to progress to a varied range of activities. In September 2002 10 participants progressed to Carlow Institute of Further Education to undertake Post Leaving Certificates in Childcare training (x3), social care training (x1), computer maintenance (x1), security awareness (x1), Beauty Therapy (x3) and Office technology (x1). One participant was accepted as a mature student at University College Cork on the Business Degree course. Two participants obtained office work, one retail, and one restaurant work. The remainder decided to remain full time parents but are linked into our adult education course and or as volunteers' (Moving On)

The funders also generally seemed confident that the young mothers were successfully supported to move on to other opportunities in the short term.

They've always produced figures to us and evaluations each year of the Programme and the figures are quite impressive. Because a lot of them are coming from such a low level progression into other training might be more important for them than getting a job (f4 2006).

One funder questioned to what extent progression actually happens.

Where do these girls go? I don't feel there's enough of that [information] in relation to, these girls have progressed to a particular stage or a certain number moved on to college or a certain number that's as far as they want to go and that's perfectly fine (f3 2006).

This highlights a problem which the staff of St Catherine's is acutely aware of - the Moving On Programme has not kept long term statistics regarding past participants. Moving On surveys the young mothers at the end of the course and offer seminars over the summer after their course. But formal contact ceases at the graduation ceremony three months after the young mothers finish the course. It is only through informal personal contact that the Moving On Programme can gain some idea of the long term effect of the course on the lives of the young mothers.

The contact with the young mothers in the focus group offered an opportunity to gain a picture of progression routes in the years after completion of the Programme.

**Table 3 –Progression Routes of the Focus Group Participants**

<b>Year of participation in Moving On</b>	<b>Progression</b>
98/99	Completed 3 year FAS programme, 1 years employment, now in 4 <sup>th</sup> years study on third level course
99/00	Completed diploma in Childcare, part time employment in childcare, now working full time in administration
99/00	Completed Diploma in Beauty Therapy, worked part time in beauty therapy, now working full time in sales
00/01	Completed 2 year FAS scheme, worked as a childminder, has now applied to study childcare at college
02/03	Completed one year of a third level course. Now studying a vocational course
02/03	Completed certified course in hairdressing and beauty therapy. Now working fulltime in this area.

We acknowledge that it has been difficult for Moving On to address this issue because the young mothers are a highly transient population and tracking them over a longer time frame would require resources which the Programme simply does not have.

A further issue which emerged about the theme of progression was that there are structural barriers which prevent the young mothers from accessing certain opportunities and that progression can be viewed in a deeper sense:

Most women did move into something else. But progression was affected by whether women could move onto another course where there was childcare or there was no point working ten hours a week in a chippie that was going to compromise all your payment or secondary benefits. We also supported women in making the choice to be parents (s4 2006).

Also key is that we are about supporting them to pursue opportunities but we are also supporting them in their parenting role. If somebody decides I'm going to stay at home till my child starts school we would value that as well. It's about women as individuals we support their choices but we try and make them as wide as possible (s6 2006).

One funder also understands progression as a wider set of changes in the young mothers' lives.

The aims are to enable the participants to access further training, education or employment but another aim would be to put a value on the parenting role. So progression is the general term but also progression in making their lives a bit better and valuing them as parents (f1 2006).

## **Follow Up**

The young mothers felt that they were free to drop into St Catherine's at any time after the Programme. However, they were disappointed that there was no formal mechanism for keeping in touch with others they had studied with or to update them on information related to the Moving On Programme. They did not want intensive contact but something small and regular. A number of suggestions were made – from monthly coffee mornings to letters.

Although the tutors did not identify follow up as a problem their answers regarding this issue revealed that there is no formal mechanism for keeping in touch with the young mothers.

'Although I don't have any formal contact with participants once they leave, I often meet them in the town and in St Catherine's. I also have taught participants in other courses they pursue. Participants often call into see me and to get references from me' (s1 2006).

'I attend the graduation ceremony, which is big occasion for the participants, and I meet the girls in town and always stop and catch up' (s2 2006).

'Through the Mentoring Service I keep in touch with each individual where possible to the following September' [after the course has ended] (s7 2006).

The Director identified this as a funding issue stating that

We would like to be funded to give individual support once they move on because they seek help where they're familiar and comfortable (s5 2006).

## **Non Completion**

Two young mothers who had not completed the Moving On Programme responded to the evaluators and completed individual interviews. Interestingly these young mothers were not negative in any way about their experience and mentioned similar positive reactions to the Moving On Programme as those who had completed the course.

They felt the curriculum was relevant and interesting. One enjoyed the 'computers and literacy' (nc1 2006), while the other 'thought the childcare [course] was brilliant' (nc2 2006). One woman was particularly impressed by the childcare provision, while the other said, 'if someone else was thinking of doing it [the Moving On Programme] I would say to them do go for it cause you'll have a ball' (nc2 2006).

Both young mothers who did not finish the Programme felt that the Moving On staff had done all in their power to support the young mothers to complete the course. But this did not prevent them from leaving as their reasons for non completion fell outside the remit of the Moving On Programme.

Oh they did try to help me. Maureen said to take my time and not to worry about when assignments were due and I could get extra time. She was most helpful...Unfortunately family circumstances got in the way. Some evenings I didn't have time to do the work. I know everyone has their family issues but I couldn't cope with that and the baby and the study. Like before the baby come there was issues which was kind of easier to deal with cause there was no one to mind only myself but when the baby came it was impossible (nc2 2006).

I was pregnant at the time and my second child was a bad asthmatic so I sort of had to be around him a lot and then things got sort of rough with me and my partner so I couldn't come back. He didn't want me to work basically so I had to leave it then after that. It was nothing to do with the Moving On course so it wasn't. I would have stayed if it wasn't for

my partner. It was just his jealousy and basically he didn't want me outside of the front door. I used to look forward to going to the Moving On Programme for to get away from him for the couple of hours and then when I'd go home he wouldn't actually believe that I was in the course (nc1 2006).

After further prompting one woman did reveal that she had experienced some difficulties with the Moving On Programme because of her literacy issues.

You had to write out a lot of things which I couldn't, 'cause I couldn't read what was actually on them. But Maureen was great that way 'cause she wrote it down on the board so I could copy it down.... Some of the teachers would write it down on a paper and bring it over and hand it to you and just tell you to copy it down and the rest of them [participants] would be looking around and going, 'where's mine?', which was embarrassing enough at times. And then some of the girls on the course got very bitchy. Friends one second and bitchy another second. I would have got through that but everything got so tense at home and then it was tense at school. I looked more forwards to actually looking after the kids than I did to coming onto the course so it wasn't worth making my partner mad. I was listening to bitching in the course and bitching in home so I says no I just need to listen to it once is enough (nc2 2006).

Despite these difficulties the participant did believe that the staff had attempted to support her so that she could complete the Programme

Maureen brought in a literacy teacher so when I was falling behind they were bringing me up to date with it and outside of the course she got me into a literacy class for two evenings a week (nc2 2006).

In the three years since this woman first began the Moving On Programme her family circumstances have changed and she has now re-enrolled to complete the course as she believes it offers her the opportunity to move on in her life.

I've more confidence in myself than I had before and I just want to get on and do something with my life. I never really had the opportunity beforehand. From the Moving On course you can move on and do what you want to do if you put your mind to it. I'm hoping to go on and work with old people and I think I'll have to go on and do a carers course but I know through out the course they'll tell me what I have to do to get where I want to go. And Maureen did tell me that I'd have to take a literacy course outside of the Programme but she'll help me organise it so I'll do the literacy on the course and outside (nc2 2006.)

The interviews with these two young mothers did not indicate any serious problems or deficiencies with the Programme.



## Improving Effectiveness

### *Extending course duration*

A number of stakeholders expressed the opinion that the Moving On Programme would be more effective if the course stretched over two years. They pointed that a one year course only takes place over 40 weeks and that this does not give staff and students the opportunity to deal with all the issues that come up.

From my evaluation sheets which the participants complete for me the feeling seems to be that one year is not enough. It's a very short time. Its only 40 weeks and they are just settling down. At the awards night you can see the confidence they have gained since the start of the Programme (f2 2006).

This has been an ongoing issue for the Programme as one previous member of staff explained,

Every year as the program finished we came up with the question does the program need to be longer. Did it need to be two years? To deal with women with complex life situations, [to deal with] lack of reading and writing skills that meant they couldn't participate. Also for the small group of women who needed more time and support at the end (s4 2006).

As well as increasing quality for the students, tutors felt that a longer timeframe would also help them. With extra funding to support a longer Moving On Programme one tutor felt that there could be 'more frequent tutor meetings and more integration of modules to afford tutors more time to explore different teaching methodologies, it is a very tight time frame to get all the work done' (s2 2006). One tutor felt that young mothers also needed more skills training and suggested 'a follow on programme that would give participant vocational training i.e. would be qualified to work in a line of work on completion of the course e.g. fully trained for office or childcare work'(s1 2006). The Director of St Catherine's echoed these sentiments.

[H]aving a second year would be so much better. It might reduce some of the pressure and strengthen the qualifications. Two years in a complex life gives the opportunity to work through more (s5 2006).

Participants of the focus groups and non completion interviews all agreed that the Moving On Programme could be more effective if the Programme was longer but they pointed out that a general two year course would not be attractive to most students and that specific

skills courses could be done elsewhere. Instead they suggested that young mothers with special needs could complete a pre-Moving On year before enrolling on the Programme.

You can do other courses after Moving On like the PLC course. You really would not have people coming back [for a second year]. But if you did a pre-year for people to get them ready to do their certificates then the classes can merge (pfg 2006).

A woman who did not complete the course suggested that a pre-Moving On year would have been beneficial in her situation

The ones that is fully educated I think they should keep them a little bit separated from the ones that's not really educated. Like there's a big group of girls. Some of them has done their leaving and their inter and they're putting them with the likes of myself that barely knows how to write their own name. And they're just flying through their work while you're just sitting there waiting for Maureen to write down stuff. They should put the girls at my level separate. It saves the embarrassment for girls at that stage. It would work if girls like me did the course for a year and you'd know a lot more and then you'd be ready and waiting for the rest of girls when they came along the next year to do the Moving On. It would be less embarrassing when the teacher has to run to you every five minutes (nc1 2006).

The Coordinator herself felt that, 'the ideal way to do the course would be to have a foundation year and a second year but there is not the funding to do that' (s6 2006).

### ***Increased Funding***

Throughout the discussions with stakeholders a number of suggestions were made about improving the Programme which all required extra funding. Some stakeholders were unhappy about the fact that young mothers are turned away from the Programme each year. 'While the Programme has been successful the fact that the list of applicants for the Programme far surpasses the availability of places is a concern' (s3 2006). They believed that if the duration of the course was extended then more young mothers could avail of it.

Two of the tutors called for more funding for tutors to improve the quality and variety of the Programme. One tutor observed that 'Just one tutor [per module] cannot always meet mixed levels of ability within the group' (s2 2006). Another felt that more tutors would 'allow for the incorporation of more subject areas for the participants to choose from with possibly more elective topics to choose from (s7 2006). This dovetails with the young mothers call for more and different subjects to be added to the curriculum.

The Coordinator explained that it is not easy to obtain funding for improving and extending the Programme.

It's difficult to get that bit of funding, especially when you have the main Moving On Programme. The interpretation is that Moving On does it all (s6 2006).

### ***To Mainstream or not to Mainstream?***

A number of the stakeholders referred to ongoing discussions within Moving On about whether the Programme should apply to be mainstreamed. Although there were slightly different understandings of what mainstreaming would mean all seemed to feel that it would alleviate the uncertainty over funding and perhaps increase resources available to the project.

By mainstreaming I mean ring fenced funding so that this program happens year on year, no matter what because the need is not dropping (s5 2006).

As far as we're concerned, the staff of the social family support service, it appears a shame it's [the Moving On Programme] not available to young mothers everywhere. By mainstreaming I mean that it would become a programme of the Department of Education. In other words an application for funding wouldn't have to be made every year. The Programme would be given permanence. It would also imply that it would be made available throughout the country. The Moving On Programme and the ten years of it would be seen as a pilot and it would be a model of best practice (f1 2006).

In contrast to these opinions one staff member explained the advantages for the Programme in not being mainstreamed. 'The Programme evolves every year and that is key because we are in a way independent from any mainstream structure and we can adapt the Programme to meet the needs' (s6 2006).

### ***Interagency communication and cooperation***

Some funders highlighted the fact that they were not closely involved in the Programme and that communication between all partners happened at rare intervals. Staff have worked to address this by setting up a Steering Group to allow for 'the proper representation and influence of all the stakeholders' (s5 2006) and they are hopeful that this situation will improve.

It [communication] probably could have done with some attention really but with the introduction of the [steering] group a lot of issues have been raised.... That wouldn't have happened prior to the setting up of the management committee because the only time we

would have met would have been once a year at the funding meeting. But now we meet at least three times a year (f1 2006).

One funder expressed the opinion that while the steering group was a welcome innovation the makeup of the group was problematic. 'One of the difficulties is that the Director of Services is involved and that brings in a different element. You really need just the people who are running the Programme to focus objectively on the Programme (f3 2006).

### ***Administration***

In preparing for this report the evaluators found that consistency of information collated about the Moving On Programme and the young mothers varies over the ten years of the Programme. In later years Moving On has developed systems for keeping good records about the young mothers who attend the Programme. This means that it is only possible for the Programme to collate quantitative details about the young mothers in the later years of the Programme so that comparisons cannot be made across the ten years of the Programme.

## **Section 4**

### ***Key findings***

In this section of the report we highlight key findings which have emerged from the research carried out on the Moving On Programme. These findings are outlined under a number of different headings below.

### **Relevance of the Moving On Programme**

An important central question to be asked about any project at any time is whether it is relevant to the needs of those for whom it presumes to provide a service. The evidence provided by both the young mothers interviewed for the evaluation and the stakeholders would suggest that Moving On is as relevant now as it was ten years ago. Despite the many changes in Irish society since the establishment of Moving On in 1996 educational disadvantage and barriers to employment among certain groups continue, and young mothers, in particular lone mothers, are one of those groups.

The Moving On Programme is unique in the way that it eliminates barriers to young mother's participation by providing childcare and offering a route back into education for those with previously low levels of attainment. Even now ten years after it was started there is still no comparable course for young mothers. Furthermore, the fact that the same funding agencies have been involved for the last ten years shows that they too believe in its relevance and shows the high regard and trust that these agencies have for the Moving On Programme.

### **Programme Recruitment**

The Programme is advertised through information in the form of leaflets and posters in locations where young mothers have reason to visit, as well as through recommendations and referrals from FAS and other service providers in the Carlow area. However, it appears that over the ten years word of mouth recommendations have consistently been the main reason for young mothers joining the Programme. This again points to the high regard in

which young mothers and the wider community hold the Moving On Programme. The Programme is always over subscribed and there is a substantial waiting list every year for admission.

### **St Catherine's Community Services Centre**

St Catherine's is recognised by all stakeholders as providing an ideal venue for the Moving On Programme. The setting adds value to the Moving On Programme as it is able to offer quick access to other services (including childcare and rights advice), the ethos of St Catherine's mirrors and supports that of the Moving On Programme and the permanence of St Catherine's offers stability and follow through for the young mothers who wish to take advantage of this.

## **The Moving On Programme**

### ***Community Education***

The Programme adheres to best practice in community education methods. This ensures that high numbers of the participants complete the course and have a positive and rewarding experience, which is one of the aims of the Programme. The aim of community development for the young mothers was very weak. It is evident from the responses of the young mothers interviewed that they have a limited understanding of the centrality of community development in the ethos of community education. Individual tutors incorporated community development activities but were not supported by any formal structure in the Programme.

It is also apparent that it is not only the young mothers who are unfamiliar with some principles of community education; some other stakeholders are also not familiar with the central principles of this particular method of adult education. Community education is a distinct form of education and is recognised as such by government in its White Paper on Adult Education. The fact that it is distinct and different from other forms of education is its strength and provides the best opportunity for meeting the educational and training needs of the young mothers who participate in it.

### ***The Curriculum***

The curriculum is valued for its relevance, certification and practical nature. Young mothers pointed out that small changes would improve the curriculum. Staff are aware of this because of their continuous evaluations and a number of the changes that the young mothers suggested have either already been implemented or are planned for the coming year.

Getting the curriculum balance right is not an easy task given the range of abilities of the young mothers who participate in the Programme and the need to meet the standards of FETAC for award recognition. A further element in the curriculum debate is the changes in the world of work and the strategic move towards a 'knowledge based economy' where the emphasis is on higher levels of education and education as a lifelong process. This poses a challenge for Moving On and other similar type programmes; how to best prepare the young women for this non-traditional world of work. There will always be a need for people to work in lesser-paid service jobs which will only, if at all, add marginally to the income levels of most of the young mothers who participate on the Moving On Programme. The curriculum pursued by the Programme must therefore reflect, in so far as is possible, the changing realities of the work environment.

A key element of the Moving On Programme involves preparing young mothers for the world of work by equipping them with the generic skills needed in the contemporary labour market, giving them a realistic picture of the world of work through placements, and equipping them with the awareness to develop an appropriate employment plan. Young mothers reported that the effectiveness of elements of the course has improved in recent years since the appointment of a mentor. Work experience, job mentoring and employment plans gave young mothers a more realistic picture of work. This improved part of the curriculum has been a highlight for the women.

### ***The Moving On Ethos***

The self-described ethos behind the Moving On Programme includes that of valuing young mothers and recognising their importance as parents and as potential participants in the labour force. Young mothers felt that they were respected, came to a new-found

appreciation of parenting or deepened their sense of mission as a parent and felt that the Programme opened up a new vista of opportunities which they had not seen when they were 'sitting at home with the kids'.

The Programme sets out to 'enhance the lifelong prospects of young mothers aged 16-25 years in County Carlow by enabling them to achieve inclusion in education, training, enterprise opportunities, the local labour market and their own communities'. Although it does not set out the pre-conditions for this the young mothers and other stakeholders are acutely aware that this cannot happen unless the young mothers are confident, empowered women with concrete, achievable goals. All stressed that although difficult to measure, these pre-conditions are achieved by the Moving On Programme. This suggests that the Moving On Programme needs to articulate the hidden benefits of the Programme in its aims, objectives and outcomes and that these need to be measured in appropriate ways and formally communicated to all stakeholders.

### ***Progression***

No matter how beneficial a course is to those who participate on it the reality is that most education and training courses are judged on their progression records. All stakeholders spoke of progression as being important. The wider view of progression needs to be clarified in the Programmes aims, and where possible long term progression records need to be kept.

In discussion the young mothers themselves suggested ways it may be possible for Moving On to remain informed of the progression of former participants. Young mothers who attended the focus group were an impressive group of women who clearly believed that the Moving On Programme had played a key part in the educational and work opportunities they had availed of in the years since participating. Obtaining and retaining such crucial information about their progression would be of huge benefit to Moving On.



## **Staffing**

The majority of the tutors of the Moving On Programme over the years have been extremely committed, skilled and at times ‘inspirational’. However, it has been suggested by the focus group participants that a small number of tutors have not been skilled in adult education methods or knowledgeable in their subject matter.

Although the evaluation did not specifically examine staffing levels for the Programme it does appear that there is too much emphasis on part-time staff, and we note that it is only since 2005 that the Coordinator’s post has been a full-time one. The demands on that post holder appear to be growing as the requirements of the post have increased. It is acknowledged that any increase in staffing is accompanied by increased costs but it is suggested that a review of staffing levels are needed.

## **Childcare**

In any review of the barriers that face young mothers in gaining access to education, training or the labour market the foremost difficulty identified is that of childcare. Childcare is absolutely essential to the success of the project. This is borne out by the fact that the young mothers said they could not do the Programme if it had not been for the availability of childcare and the fact that where progression was not supported by childcare the young mothers were not able to avail of it. The success of the Moving On Programme is due in no small part to the provision of childcare on site.

## **Administration**

It is clear that it was not possible for the Coordinator of the Programme to devote appropriate time to record keeping when there was not enough funding to support that position in a full time capacity. While record keeping has become systematised in the later years of the Programme the lack of consistency over the ten years means that the Moving On Programme has lost the opportunity to make strong comparative arguments about the young mother’s situations.

## **Mainstreaming**

An issue which emerged as of great importance to stakeholders other than the young mothers is that of mainstreaming. The stakeholders had no shared understanding of what mainstreaming means within Moving On. To some it is about a more-streamlined funding arrangement while to others it is about moving the Programme into a more formal adult education model. As a community education project Moving On is not mainstream. The decision to pursue mainstreaming should be very carefully considered as Moving On would lose a number of the distinctive features which make it so successful. It is possible that the Programme would not be replicated so successfully in a more formal setting.

## **Management**

One of the strengths of Moving On is that it is part of St. Catherine's Community Services Centre including its board and management structure. That structure provides the Programme with stability and direction in keeping with the mission of St. Catherine's. This strength is positive on the one hand but also provides a challenge on the other. The needs of Moving On are not always necessarily fully met within the St. Catherine's structure. This is not to suggest that Moving On should be separate from St. Catherine's but Moving On needs a separate mission, aims and objectives, and strategic plan. The Programme has continued through its ten years with no strategic review of its aims and objectives and without a strategic plan specifically for its short to medium term direction.

It is essential for the development of the Programme that its future needs are strategically examined and planned for. The introduction of a new Steering Committee, made up of funding and other relevant agencies, the Director of Services of St. Catherine's, the Coordinator of Moving On and participant representatives is potentially a move in this direction. The devolution of some responsibilities to a Steering Committee should give greater focus to Moving On. Yet there is a need to have clarity as to the role and the membership of the Steering Committee. The Steering Committee will only be as effective as its remit and that is as yet unclear. Part of the problem is that there is no overall plan for Moving On in which to locate the Steering Committee.

### ***A One-Year or Two-Year Course?***

The question as to whether or not there should be a one or two-year course falls within the same context as the issues in the previous paragraph. The length of the course is an issue raised by a number of people during the evaluation. There is no agreement on what is the optimum time-period for the course. In fact there is some suggestion that the issue is not just about one course but two related courses. The staff has a particular perspective on this while the young mothers who were interviewed for the evaluation have another.

This is also an issue which should be included in the context of strategic planning. If it is believed by the various stakeholders that an additional year should be added to the course then this should be included in the development of a future plan and direction for the Programme and not just taken in an ad hoc manner, based on its own merits alone. This question about the course highlights how the Programme has progressed to a point where some fundamental decisions need to be made about its future direction. Such decisions would impact greatly on the Programme and should not be taken without extensive consultation and due consideration for the impact any changes might make.

## **Section 5**

### ***Conclusion and Recommendations***

#### **Conclusion**

The opinion of all those interviewed was that the Moving On Programme achieves its aims. There are a number of reasons for this. That the Programme is located within St. Catherine's is one reason, that it has been fortunate to have an extremely committed Coordinator is another, that tutors work hard and provide a very good Programme is a third. There are other reasons too. One funder expressed the opinion that this was because of the non academic support provided for the young mothers:

They look after all the needs like childcare and transport not just education and I think that is what's led to the success of the program. Childcare is most important and from experience of other programs where that is not in place it does have an effect on the success of the program (f1 2006).

A previous staff member highlighted the fact that the Programme was designed so that young mothers had as many chances as possible of achieving.

Every women who participated came in with a particular life situation so this affected to what degree the outcomes were achieved. The program had so many elements purposely so women could achieve under different areas (s4 2006).

She also made the point, '[t]he reason the Programme hasn't changed significantly is that it's working as it is. We have looked at it and taken it apart and put it back together. The core Programme is meeting a fundamental need' (s4 2006).

The evaluation shows that the 'the core Programme is meeting a fundamental need'. The Moving On Programme is an extremely effective one providing very important opportunities for young mothers which would not necessarily be available to them otherwise. It was an innovative project when first established and it continues to be at the cutting edge of education provision for young mothers. Women and in particular young mothers continue to be at greater risk of poverty than other groups within society despite the development of a number of policy initiatives to combat poverty. Wider policy developments in combating educational disadvantage and poverty as well as the proposed

new approach to supporting lone mothers suggest that Moving On will continue to be an important provider in this sector.

Moving On is a central programme in the array of services provided by St. Catherine's Community Services. This position in a well-respected voluntary agency provides stability and much needed supports for the Programme. The Programme has worked well but after ten years it appears necessary to move it to a new strategic level. The Programme has had successful outcomes for many young mothers over this period but it needs to respond to current challenges. It is clear from discussions with the various stakeholders that Moving On could achieve more, for example, to provide more places for young mothers or to develop the Programme beyond the current one year course. This can best be accomplished through a strategic review of the Programme and the development of a medium term plan which would provide it with a solid basis for its future achievements. Such a review would address the issues of governance, management, staffing levels, administration, funding, external and internal relationships and service provision.

## **Recommendations**

The following are a list of recommendations which are made on the basis of an analysis of the information provided by the various stakeholders consulted for the evaluation. A number of the recommendations would become redundant if a strategic review were to be carried out. It is also our belief that central issues of concern, such as mainstreaming, the structure of the course and staffing levels should also be taken up in such a review and as a result no recommendations are made about these issues.

- Moving On is a very good programme; we recommend that the project is further developed to respond to existing and new challenges.
- We recommend that a strategic review of Moving On be carried out. Such a review should address issues of governance, management, staffing levels, administration, funding, external and internal relationships and service provision. This review should set out the future strategy for Moving On for a period of five years.

- We recommend reviewing and standardising the information maintained by all staff on young mothers participating in the course. Information on participants should be collated and retained in an appropriate form. We also recommend that in consultation with the young mothers a system to maintain contact with the graduates and to collect progression information for a specified period be established. This should also include details about those who do not complete the course.
- We acknowledge that many of the original aims, objectives and ethos have remained the same, but we recommend that these are updated, as there have been changes over the years.
- We recommend that ‘soft outcomes’ should be explained and included in all relevant reports on the Programme.
- We recommend that steps are taken to ensure that people at all levels of the organisation develop a greater understanding of the meaning of community education. This is particularly important for all staff working directly with the young mothers and ongoing training should be provided for them, as well as induction for any new staff members.
- We recommend that Moving On develops a system for assessing how its objectives are being met.
- We recommend that Moving On continues to develop its ability to change the content of the Programme based on needs of students each year.
- We recommend an improvement of the community development aspect of the course, in keeping with the philosophy of community education and Moving On’s own aims, objectives and ethos.

## Section 6

### Appendices

#### Appendix 1

#### Moving On Programme Evaluation

##### Questions for Funders

<i>Funder's perception of Moving On</i>
Please describe your understanding of the Moving On program?
<i>Funder's relationship with Moving On</i>
What aspect of the Programme does your organisation fund?
What is it about this Programme that attracts your organisation to fund it?
How much do you fund the Programme?
What are the conditions of the funding? How secure is this funding?
How does the style of funding impact on the Programme?
What impact does the funding have on benefits the participants might already be receiving?
What impact will the change from a Lone Parents allowance have on participants?
<i>Funder's evaluation of Moving On</i>
What are the aims of the Programme?
What kind of methodology does it employ to achieve these aims?
Do you feel that it reaches its aims?
How has the Programme changed over the years?
Where do you see the Programme moving to?
<i>Funder's understanding of context of Moving On</i>
Are there other Programmes that cater for young mothers?/young women?/early school

leavers?
Is the Moving On Programme redundant now ten years on?
Is the Programme well known amongst all agencies who work with the target group?
Does the Moving On Programme work in cooperation with other agencies
What could the Programme do to improve its profile?
What could other Programmes that you fund learn from the Moving On Programme?
<i>Comments that the funder would like to make</i>
Are there any other issues that you would like to raise regarding an evaluation of the Moving On Programme?



## Appendix 2

### Moving On Programme Evaluation

#### Questions for Staff of Moving On

<i>Development of Moving On</i>	
How was the Moving On Programme begun?	
How has the Programme changed over the last ten years?	
<i>Context of Moving On</i>	
How does it fit organisationally into St Catherine's Community Services Centre?	
How does it fit with the other activities of St Catherine's Community Services Centre?	
<i>Aims, Objectives, Ethos</i>	
What do you see as the core values of the Programme?	
What are the aims and objectives of the Programme?	
What kind of methodology does it employ to achieve these aims?	
How would you describe adult education?	
How would you describe community development?	
<i>Current logistics of the Programme</i>	
How is the Programme funded?	
What are the advantages and disadvantages of this?	
How does the wider St Catherine's setting	

impact on the Programme?	
<i>Perception of the Programmes effectiveness</i>	
Do you feel that Moving On reaches its stated aims?	
In what other ways has the Programme been successful?	
In what ways has the Programme been unsuccessful?	
<i>Future Directions</i>	
Where would you like to see the Programme moving to?	
<i>Comments that the interviewee would like to make</i>	
Are there any other issues that you would like to raise regarding an evaluation of the Moving On Programme?	

## **Appendix 3**

### **Moving On Programme Evaluation**

#### ***Focus Group Guiding Questions***

#### **How did you get involved in the Moving On Programme?**

- Were there any other programmes available that would have suited you at the time?
- What had your previous experiences of education been like? How was St Catherine's different?

#### **What was your experience of the years Programme?**

- Was it difficult to juggle all the things in your life? What helped you keep attending the Programme?
- What do you think of St Catherine's as a whole? Are they helpful? Did you have contact with them before? Would you have contact with them again?
- Is the crèche always the best option? Did everyone who wanted that option get it?
- Did you feel respected?
- Were the Programme modules and activities suitable to your needs? Were they adapted because of your needs?

#### **What impact has it had on your lives since?**

- Do you feel that you were more confident and more able to handle things in your life after doing the Moving On Programme?
- What did you find out about yourself?
- Did you each make an employment plan? Were you assisted to make these a reality after the course? Did they become real?
- Did everyone do a work placement? Was it helpful? How did it compare to work you've done since?
- What community involvement has arisen because of the course? How was it supported by Moving On?
- What were your options once you had done the course?
- Would you do it again if you knew then what you know now?
- If working, have the skills you learnt on the course been useful in the world of work? Are there other skills that you needed but didn't have?
- After completing the Programme is full time motherhood a negative choice because of lack of childcare or a positive choice because people wish to stay at home with their children and enhance children's development and learning until they go to school?
- 

#### **How do they think the Programme could be improved and developed?**

## **Section 7**

### ***Interview References***

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Funder 3, interviewed by the authors, 4<sup>th</sup> July 2006  
Funder 4, interviewed by the authors, 5<sup>th</sup> July 2006  
Non-completer 1, interviewed by the authors, 30<sup>th</sup> August 2006  
Non-completer 2, interviewed by the authors, 30<sup>th</sup> August 2006  
Participant Focus Group, interviewed by the authors, 30<sup>th</sup> August 2006  
Staff member 1, questionnaire, July, 2006  
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Staff member 3, questionnaire, August, 2006  
Staff member 4, interviewed by the authors, 1<sup>st</sup> August 2006  
Staff member 5, interviewed by the authors, 6<sup>th</sup> July 2006  
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