

## Social regeneration: beyond bricks and mortar

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### Contents

Editorial	1
Executive summary and introduction	2
Classifying disadvantage	3
Area-based interventions	4
Area development programmes in Ireland	5
The acutely disadvantaged	6
The importance of the family	7
Case Studies	8
Funding regeneration	10
Conclusion	12

### Editorial

This *Spotlight* looks at social regeneration and the geographical (or spatial) concentration of disadvantage. While area-based policies attempt social regeneration by targeting localities with a high level of disadvantage, some studies indicate that contrary to popular belief, most poor families do not live in poor areas. Therefore, by confining disadvantage to a geographical area, many socially excluded families and individuals are removed from the equation.

The *Spotlight* looks at the use of Area-based initiatives (ABIs) and considers arguments for and against the use of ABIs as a means of social regeneration. The *Spotlight* also includes research which suggests that interventions targeted at family and individual level may have the greatest effect on the life prospects of those involved.

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## Executive summary

One of the central tenets of area-based policies, is that the most effective way to use scarce resources is to target areas with a high concentration of disadvantage.

However, critics of area-based policies argue that such policies will not reach all disadvantaged households, as many do not live in poor areas. Another argument made is that social disadvantage is caused by factors such as unemployment and low levels of education. As these problems are not confined to any given locality, the argument goes, neither are their solutions. These critics argue that policies should focus on specific problems such as reducing poverty and increasing employment instead.

Studies find differences in the level of financial well-being and quality of life within disadvantaged communities. Some households are acutely disadvantaged when compared to their neighbours and may suffer from problems such as:

- poverty;
- mental illness; and
- addiction.

Other households in the same locality may not suffer from these problems. Therefore, sub-groups of the disadvantaged may require specific services.

In addition, the issues experienced by communities differ from one another, leading some experts to argue that a more tailored approach to regeneration is needed.

Researchers have found that family supports have the greatest effect on the lives of those who are socially excluded. These are particularly effective when they take place early in the life of the child and when the service is flexible and provided locally.

The bulk of funding for regeneration budgets come from the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government. The Department will spend €124.6 million this year on regeneration projects. Pobal, which manages area-based programmes, now operates under the aegis of the Department of the Environment,

Community and Local Government. A recent review of these programmes concluded that while many are effective, overall targeting criteria need to be reviewed so that programmes reach those who are most in need.

## Introduction

While regeneration is often thought of in terms of the built environment, e.g. demolishing old and dilapidated housing to be replaced by new and modern units, there is also a social (sometimes called 'soft') side to regeneration.

Social regeneration focuses on themes of:

- health;
- education;
- community facilities;
- arts and culture; and
- family and child well-being.

The Department of the Environment's statement on housing policy *Delivering Homes, Sustaining Communities* (2007) writes that past attempts at regeneration of disadvantaged communities:

"...can be criticised for an over-reliance on refurbishment of the buildings, rather than the development of a strong community."<sup>1</sup>

Developing strong community is a core concern of soft regeneration policies. Social regeneration is often referred to as people-focused as it focuses on the quality of life of residents and addresses problems at the individual and household level. It can work in tandem with physical regeneration, as part of an overall programme, or separately through the work of area-based initiatives (ABIs), involving local partnerships. In these instances there may be no visible regeneration, in terms of building work, but provision of childcare facilities, employment and training programmes enhance the lives of residents. An example of this is shown in Box 1.

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<sup>1</sup> Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government.(2007). *Delivering Homes, Sustaining Communities*. Accessed on 1<sup>st</sup> June 2011 at <http://www.environ.ie/en/Publications/DevelopmentandHousing/Housing/FileDownload,2091,en.pdf>

### **Text box 1: Partnership initiative in Ballyfermot<sup>2</sup>**

The Ballyfermot Partnership Local Employment Services (LES) is a community based organisation set up under Ballyfermot Partnership in 1998. LES provides a range of services to the local community focusing on the provision of practical support, advice, guidance and information relating to employment, training and return to work and welfare rights options.

The concentration of poverty or disadvantage in neighbourhoods and communities is well understood but more difficult to define. What defines an area as disadvantaged? What indicators should be used? The answer to these questions is particularly salient for policymakers seeking to improve social conditions for the residents of disadvantaged localities. Of equal importance is how to target those who are most in need.

Policymakers attempt to maximise resources by targeting areas where there is a large concentration of people living in social disadvantage. In order to do this they must first discover where these areas are. The next section looks at how certain areas in Ireland come to be classified as disadvantaged.

## **Classifying disadvantage**

Social disadvantage is a term that can apply to both people and places. A person can be defined as socially disadvantaged when, for example, they are unfairly treated by others, whereas a place is socially disadvantaged when opportunities or services are more limited than they are elsewhere.<sup>3</sup> Other related concepts are poverty, deprivation and social exclusion. These concepts are defined in Box 2.

<sup>2</sup><http://www.ballyfermotpartnership.ie/employment.html>

<sup>3</sup> Fincher, R. and P. Saunders (2001). *The complex contexts of Australian inequality. Creating unequal futures rethinking poverty, inequality and disadvantage.*

### **Text box 2: Definitions of poverty, deprivation and social exclusion**

Poverty, deprivation and social exclusion are often treated interchangeably.<sup>4</sup> They are defined as follows:<sup>5</sup>

#### **At risk of poverty rate**

This is the share of persons with an income below a given percentage (usually 60%) of the national median income.

#### **Consistent poverty**

An individual is defined as being in 'consistent poverty' if they are identified as being at risk of poverty and are living in a household which is deprived of two or more basic deprivation items.

#### **Deprivation**

Enforced deprivation refers to the inability to afford basic identified goods or services.

#### **Social exclusion**

The concept of social exclusion describes the co-existence and co-development of a number of social problems.

**The Pobal Haase Deprivation Index for Small Areas** is the accepted measure of deprivation in Ireland. To compile the index, information is taken from the Census and the country is mapped according to an eight-point scale, ranging from 'extremely affluent' to 'extremely disadvantaged.' Regions are also given an overall deprivation score which is based on the following three dimensions:

- demographic profile;
- social class composition; and
- labour market situation.

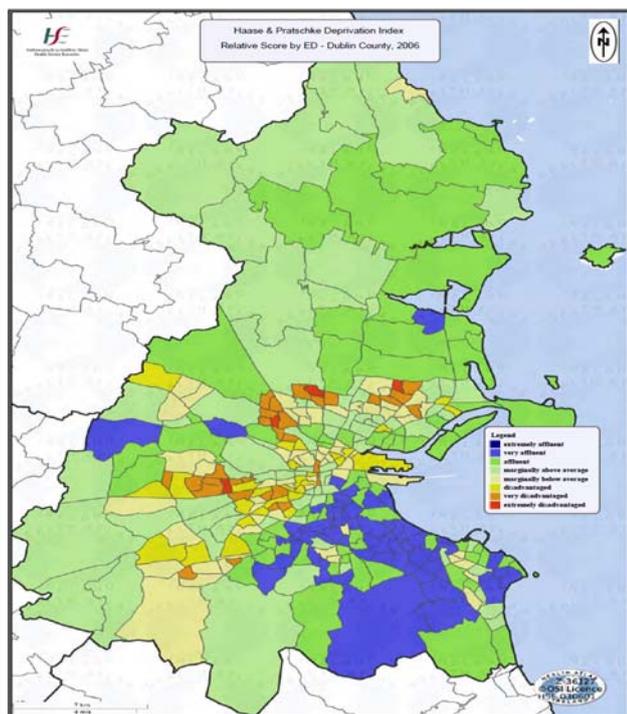
The image overleaf shows the deprivation rankings for Dublin County based on 2006 census, where very affluent areas are blue, affluent areas are green, and disadvantaged areas are yellow, orange and red (red being extremely disadvantaged). Click [here](#) for a link

<sup>4</sup> Haase, T. and Foley, R. (2009). *Feasibility Study for a Local Poverty Index.* Accessed on 28<sup>th</sup> April 2011 available online at

[http://www.cpa.ie/publications/FeasibilityStudyForALocalPovertyIndex\\_2009.pdf](http://www.cpa.ie/publications/FeasibilityStudyForALocalPovertyIndex_2009.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> Definitions are taken from the Survey on Income and Living Conditions (SILC) 2009.

to a larger version of the map. Interactive maps can be accessed [here](#).



The following section shows how deprived areas are targeted for funding and explains the rationale behind area-based interventions.

## Area-based interventions

Since the late 1980s, urban sociologists have been concerned with areas of concentrated disadvantage and the effects these areas have on those who live there.<sup>6</sup>

Urban neighbourhoods characterized by poverty, residential instability, and dilapidated housing are found to suffer from disproportionately high rates of infant mortality, crime, mental illness, low birth weight, tuberculosis, physical abuse, and other factors detrimental to health.<sup>7</sup>

'Neighbourhood effects', as they are called, refer to factors which affect the life prospects of

<sup>6</sup> Sampson, R.J., Morenoff, J.D., and Gannon-Rowley, T. (2002). Assessing "Neighbourhood Effects": Social Processes and New Directions in Research. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 28, 443-78.  
<sup>7</sup> Sampson, R.J. (2003). The Neighbourhood Context of Well-Being. *Perspectives in Biology and Medicine*, 46 (3).

individuals over and above their individual socioeconomic circumstances.<sup>8</sup> Where studies have found neighbourhood effects, however, they tend to be small.<sup>9</sup>

Some commentators argue that regardless of neighbourhood effects, area-based interventions are more equitable and a more effective way of targeting resources.<sup>10</sup>

### Arguments for area-based interventions

Taylor (2008) outlines the main rationale behind area-based targeting of funds:<sup>11</sup>

- the spatial concentration of poor individuals means that area-based targeting can be an effective way of reaching poor individuals;
- concentrated poverty may cause neighbourhood effects on individuals, organisations, and infrastructure;
- administrative convenience can make it simpler to target defined geographical areas;
- direct State interventions into the most deprived neighbourhoods correct market failures (investors usually avoid problematic neighbourhoods) and empower residents by improving their access to mainstream jobs.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Haase, T. and McKeown, K. (2003). *Developing Disadvantaged Areas through Area-Based Initiatives: Reflections on over a Decade of Local Development Strategies*.

<sup>9</sup> McKeown et al. (2008). *The Well-Being of Parents, Children & Neighbourhoods: A National Study of Families in Respond! Housing Estates*. Respond! Housing Association.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Tunstall and Lupton. (2003). *Is Targeting Deprived Areas an Effective Means to Reach Poor People? An assessment of one rationale for area-based funding programmes*. Accessed on 12<sup>th</sup> January 2011 at <http://sticerd.lse.ac.uk/dps/case/cp/CASEpaper70.pdf>

<sup>12</sup> Tosics, I. (2009). *Dilemmas of Integrated Area-Based Urban Renewal Programmes*. The URBACT Tribune. Accessed on 6<sup>th</sup> July 2010 at [http://urbact.eu/fileadmin/general\\_library/article-TOSICS\\_01.pdf](http://urbact.eu/fileadmin/general_library/article-TOSICS_01.pdf)

## Arguments against area-based interventions<sup>13</sup>

The following provide an outline of the main arguments against the use of area-based interventions:

- attributing poverty to an area denies the structural roots of economic and social problems;<sup>14</sup>
- area-based policies are short term and inequitable, in that deprived areas must bid against each other;
- area-based policies are undemocratic because they are often controlled by unelected partnerships; and
- many disadvantaged people do not live in disadvantaged areas and will not therefore benefit.

Critics argue that area-based policies do not solve the underlying issue<sup>15</sup> and are only effective if the problems experienced are as a result of the physical environment e.g. dilapidated buildings. If the problems are mainly social or economic, critics argue, then policy responses should not be area-based.<sup>16</sup>

These critics maintain that in such instances, 'horizontal' policies are needed, which target specific problems such as unemployment or low levels of education.<sup>17</sup>

Some examples of horizontal policies, include those which:<sup>18</sup>

- give equal opportunities to everyone in education through schools which are of equal quality;
- enhance the skills of residents in order to improve their chances of finding a job;
- improve access to information, e.g. through the internet; and

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Oatley, N (2000) 'New Labour's Approach to Age-old Problems: Renewing and Revitalising Poor Neighbourhoods – the national strategy for neighbourhood renewal', *Local Economy*, 15(2)

<sup>15</sup> Tosics, I. (2009). *Dilemmas of Integrated Area-Based Urban Renewal Programmes*. The URBACT Tribune. Accessed on 6<sup>th</sup> July 2010 at

[http://urbact.eu/fileadmin/general\\_library/article-TOSICS\\_01.pdf](http://urbact.eu/fileadmin/general_library/article-TOSICS_01.pdf)

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

- improve transport to enable residents of poorer areas to reach opportunities existing in other areas.

The following section examines area development programmes in Ireland.

## Area development programmes in Ireland

Area-based policy responses to disadvantage have proliferated in Ireland since the early 1990s.<sup>19</sup> By the year 2007 there were 23 separate national programmes. Of these, some had strong spatial targeting, while in others, spatial targeting was 'weak'.<sup>20</sup>

Since 1992, Area Development Management Ltd. (ADM) (which was renamed Pobal in 2005) has been responsible for the management of area-based programmes on behalf of the Irish Government and the EU.<sup>21</sup> Pobal is subject to audit by the Comptroller and Auditor General.

In the early 1990s, the EU funded the Community Support Framework (CSF), which had nine operational programmes. One of these programmes was the Local Urban and Rural Development (OPLURD) programme, which aimed to target disadvantage by providing community support.<sup>22</sup> OPLURD provided that in each of the 38 designated areas of disadvantage, partnership companies were set up to co-ordinate the delivery of local action plans.<sup>23</sup>

Partnerships bring together representatives from four sectors:<sup>24</sup>

<sup>19</sup> Fahey, T. (2009). *Combating Neighbourhood Disadvantage: Where Family Support Fits In*. Presentation for Conference 'Family Support Now: Reflecting on Contemporary Challenges.'

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> <http://www.adm.ie/programs.htm>

<sup>22</sup> <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/bureau/inst/publications/discussion/dp15604.pdf>

<sup>23</sup> [http://www.ndp.ie/documents/publications/pub94\\_9\\_9/chapter\\_1.doc](http://www.ndp.ie/documents/publications/pub94_9_9/chapter_1.doc)

<sup>24</sup> Combat Poverty. (2006). *Communities Voices and Change*. Accessed 6<sup>th</sup> July 2010 at

- The statutory sector, including government departments and state agencies and organisations;
- Trades unions, employers and, in rural areas, farming organisations;
- The community and voluntary sector; and
- Elected public representatives.

The Local and Community Development Programme (LCDP), along with the Rural Development Programme is administered by 53 Local Development Companies and is managed by Pobal.<sup>25</sup> Other operational programmes include Equal Opportunities Childcare Project (EOCP), LCDP and the Revitalising Areas by Planning, Investment & Development Programme (RAPID).<sup>26</sup>

Listing the achievements of partnerships, Haase and McKeown (2003) write that the activities of the Partnerships have reached hundreds of thousands of people over the past decade, offering access to jobs, job search skills, and education. The Partnerships also had an important influence in the creation of the Drugs Task Forces.

However, Haase and McKeon (2003, 14) are concerned that:

*“ADM and the Partnerships seem to feel under constant pressure to justify their existence and have responded by concentrating on the number of beneficiaries reached through their actions....”*

The authors argue that emphasis should not be placed on the numbers of people reached by these programmes but on the effect these programmes have on alleviating disadvantage. This would move the emphasis to a more qualitative assessment.

[http://www.combatpoverty.ie/publications/CommunitiesVoicesAndChange\\_2006.pdf](http://www.combatpoverty.ie/publications/CommunitiesVoicesAndChange_2006.pdf)

<sup>25</sup>Irish Local Development Network. See

<http://www.planet.ie/about.html>

<sup>26</sup><http://www.ilo.org/public/english/bureau/inst/publications/discussion/dp15604.pdf>

Fahey et al. (2011) criticises the targeting criteria for some ABIs in Ireland, which target areas which are “not particularly disadvantaged.”<sup>27</sup>

The following section looks at differences within and between disadvantaged areas.

## The acutely disadvantaged

Studies show that within disadvantaged areas there is often a sub-set of people who are acutely disadvantaged.<sup>28</sup> Research has found large differences between and within social housing estates, despite an overall classification of deprivation.

Fahey (2009) refers to social housing estates where certain households are living below the poverty line or suffering from addiction, mental illness, anti-social behaviour etc., while other households in the same estate have none of these problems.

Fahey (2009) also refers to differences between social housing estates, some of which have poor building structure but good social conditions and vice versa. The point which Fahey (2009, 1999) and others make is that social housing estates are not homogeneous and therefore policy responses need to be tailored to the problems of the particular area or estate.<sup>29</sup> In some cases the built environment is the core problem, while in others crime or drug abuse are more serious issues.<sup>30</sup>

<sup>27</sup> Fahey et al. (2011). Combating Social Disadvantage in Social Housing Estates. [http://www.cpa.ie/publications/workingpapers/2011-02\\_WP\\_CombatingSocialDisadvantageInSocialHousingEstates.pdf](http://www.cpa.ie/publications/workingpapers/2011-02_WP_CombatingSocialDisadvantageInSocialHousingEstates.pdf)

<sup>28</sup>Fahey, T. (2009). Combating Neighbourhood Disadvantage: Where Family Support Fits In. Presentation for Conference ‘Family Support Now: Reflecting on Contemporary Challenges.’

<sup>29</sup>Norris, M. (1999). ‘The Impact of the Built Environment’, in Fahey, T. (ed.) *Social Housing in Ireland*. Oak Tree Press: London.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

## Secondary services

Fahey (2009) argues that there is a need for more focus on area-based 'secondary' services. These services engage the acutely disadvantaged<sup>31</sup> in contrast with 'primary' services which target the general disadvantaged population. Examples of secondary services are Springboard, the Community Safety Initiative (CSI)<sup>32</sup> and Local Drugs Task Forces. According to Fahey (2009) secondary services usually comprise a very small share of total ABIs (often less than 5%).

An extract from the Comptroller and Auditor General report on the Ballymun regeneration programme, reads<sup>33</sup>:

*"If crime and anti-social behaviour are not to undermine the sustainability of the regeneration programme, the underlying causes of anti-social behaviour need to be addressed and pragmatic countermeasures implemented."*

In the United Kingdom a Government strategy to tackle anti-social behaviour involves Intensive Family Support Projects, which work with families who are under the threat of eviction.<sup>34</sup> Families that have been involved in anti-social behaviour are referred to these projects, often displaying a range of dysfunctional behaviour.

McKeon (2000) quotes from the Commission on the Family (1996, p.13) that: "The experience of family living is the single greatest influence on an individual's life ...". Haase and McKeown (2003) argue therefore that anti-poverty measures should be aimed at individuals, families and households.

The next section looks at what is currently being done in Ireland to support families living in disadvantage.

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<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> In Tallaght West.

<sup>33</sup> <http://www.audgen.gov.ie/viewdoc.asp?DocID=1091&CatID=5&StartDate=1+January+2010>

<sup>34</sup> <http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/housing/pdf/hrs230.pdf>

## The importance of the family in social regeneration

The report on the Commission on the Family (1998) advocated a response to families living in adversity, which would be preventative and based on community development principles such as empowerment, building self-esteem, and building on strengths within the family.

The Family Support Agency (FSA) was introduced by the Family Support Act 2001 and it provides mediation services, counselling, and the development of family and community service resource centres.<sup>35</sup>

Since May 2003 the Family Support Agency has overall responsibility for management of the Family and Community Services Resource Centre Programme. This programme provides financial assistance to Family Resource Centres (FRCs) which provide a focal point for community development activities.

FRCs serve as points of contact for the most excluded sections of communities and so are a useful way of reaching these members of the community.<sup>36</sup>

Research indicates that family interventions are more effective the earlier they take place<sup>37</sup> and when provided locally and made accessible.<sup>38</sup> A recent review conducted in the UK found

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<sup>35</sup> <https://www.pobal.ie/Funding%20Programmes/Rapid/Beneficiaries/Documents/FamilySuptGuidanceNote.pdf>

<sup>36</sup> Family Support Agency. (2004). *Family and Community Services Resource Centre Programme: Trends 2004-2007*. Accessed on 5<sup>th</sup> May 2011 at [http://www.fsa.ie/fileadmin/user\\_upload/Files/SPEAK\\_FRC\\_Trends\\_Report\\_2004-07.pdf](http://www.fsa.ie/fileadmin/user_upload/Files/SPEAK_FRC_Trends_Report_2004-07.pdf)

<sup>37</sup> McKeown, K. and Sweeney, J. (2001). *Family well-being and family policy: a review of research on benefits and costs*. Department of Health and Children.

<sup>38</sup> The Family Support Agency. (2008). A formative evaluation of the Community-Based Family Support Programme. Accessed on 9<sup>th</sup> May 2011 at [http://www.fsa.ie/fileadmin/user\\_upload/Research\\_Reports/2008\\_a\\_formative\\_evaluation\\_of\\_the\\_community\\_based\\_family\\_support\\_programme](http://www.fsa.ie/fileadmin/user_upload/Research_Reports/2008_a_formative_evaluation_of_the_community_based_family_support_programme)

“overwhelming evidence” that the first five years of a child’s life have the most impact on their life chances.<sup>39</sup> The following family support measures are found to be the most effective:<sup>40</sup>

- Therapeutic interventions;
- Parent education programmes;
- Home based-family support programmes;
- Child development and education interventions;
- Youth work; and
- Community development.

Family support programmes place a particular emphasis on the family’s own supportive resources. A wide range of organisations, (including schools, voluntary organisations and community groups) can have a role in providing family support.<sup>41</sup>

### Case Study A – the Inverclyde Initiative, Scotland

Inverclyde is an area with a high level of disadvantage, crime and anti-social behaviour. The area is rife with gang violence, youth disorder, as well as alcohol and drug misuse.<sup>42</sup>

<sup>39</sup> Field, F. (2010). The Foundation Years: preventing poor children becoming poor adults. The Report of the Independent Review on Poverty and Life Chances.

<sup>40</sup>McKeown, K. (2000). *A guide to what works in family support services for vulnerable families*. Department of Health and Children. See <http://www.dohc.ie/publications/pdf/whatworks.pdf?direct=1>

<sup>41</sup> The Family Support Agency. (2008). A formative evaluation of the Community-Based Family Support Programme. Accessed on 9<sup>th</sup> May 2011 at [http://www.fsa.ie/fileadmin/user\\_upload/Research\\_Reports/2008\\_a\\_formative\\_evaluation\\_of\\_the\\_community\\_based\\_family\\_support\\_programme](http://www.fsa.ie/fileadmin/user_upload/Research_Reports/2008_a_formative_evaluation_of_the_community_based_family_support_programme)

<sup>42</sup> <http://www.inverclyde.gov.uk/council-and-government/community-planning/inverclyde-alliance-single-outcome-agreement-2009-2011/social-regeneration-and-area-renewal/social-regeneration-area-renewal-case-study-one>

The Inverclyde Initiative was developed by the Inverclyde Alliance. The aims of the initiative are to:<sup>43</sup>

- reduce incidents of ‘youth disorder’;
- reduce crime and anti-social behaviour;
- reduce risks to young people;
- provide early and quick Child Safety and Child Protection interventions; and
- raise awareness and signpost young people and their guardians to positive alternatives.

### Intervention

A safety centre was established in Inverclyde, staffed by Strathclyde Police officers, health practitioners, educators, and voluntary workers. Young people, who are identified as engaging in ‘risk behaviours’ are brought to the Safety Centre, where they meet with their parents, the Council’s ASB team manager and other professionals at the Centre who provide services under the themes of Lifestyle, Learning and Leisure.

The Inverclyde Initiative involves:<sup>44</sup>

- intelligence led deployment of partnership resources;
- high visibility uniformed police and warden patrols;
- increasing the availability of activities for young people at weekends;
- early engagement with parents and children where the latter are involved in ‘risk behaviours’ such as antisocial behaviour and underage drinking;
- referral of young people to educational programmes;
- ‘signposting’ young people to positive alternatives in terms of employment, education, and lifestyle; and
- intelligence gathering in relation to gang activity.

Figures provided by Strathclyde Police show a reduction of 32-54% in youth disorder calls

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

since the initiative began.<sup>45</sup>

## Case Study B – Airedale and Warwick, Wakefield, UK

The Partnership Initiatives for Communities (PICs) programme in the UK was a programme of research and social renewal funded by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation. The programme focused on 'hard to live on' council estates in England between 1998-2004. The PICs projects aimed to find routes out of social exclusion for individuals and communities through people-based regeneration. The three areas included in the programme were Wakefield, York and Lewisham. The first of these, Wakefield is looked at briefly here.

### Wakefield<sup>46</sup>

Airedale and Warwick are two estates located in a former coalmining area in Wakefield, England. The closure of the mines led to mass redundancies in Wakefield; in the region of 18,000 jobs were lost. These job losses were concentrated mainly in the council estates and mining villages. In the aftermath of the closures, services provided by the Coal Board stopped, shops closed and vandalism and drug use increased. In the course of a decade the Ward had become one of the 5 per cent of most deprived neighbourhoods in England.

In the case of Warwick residents, the researchers found that it was not the physical environment, but social factors such as fear of crime, and poor life chances for their children that were residents' main concern.<sup>47</sup> However, the researchers concluded that 'soft' regeneration, i.e. people-focused regeneration was not enough in itself to transform the neighbourhood.<sup>48</sup>

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

<sup>46</sup> Page, D. (2006). Respect and renewal: a study of neighbourhood regeneration. Accessed on 9<sup>th</sup> June 2011 at <http://www.jrf.org.uk/sites/files/jrf/1988-Neighbourhood-social-regeneration.pdf>

<sup>47</sup> [http://www.eukn.org/E\\_library/Urban\\_Environment/Urban\\_Environment/Respect\\_and\\_renewal\\_a\\_study\\_of\\_neighbourhood\\_social\\_regeneration](http://www.eukn.org/E_library/Urban_Environment/Urban_Environment/Respect_and_renewal_a_study_of_neighbourhood_social_regeneration)

<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

Wakefield Metropolitan District Council commissioned a needs audit on the Airedale and Warwick estates and found the following key priorities:

- unemployment;
- education and training;
- young people and children;
- crime and drugs;
- housing;
- environmental improvements;
- improving services, and
- health.

### Intervention

A qualitative research study in Wakefield identified the disaffection of youth as being particularly problematic. The council decided that they would encourage youth in the community to get involved in creative projects. A participatory arts project was set up for a period of three years. The council tendered established arts organisations with the following brief:

*To work with individuals and communities, especially socially excluded groups, to introduce a range of new experiences, encourage the expression of aspirations, inspire confidence and self determination and promote a sense of involvement in, and responsibility for, the regeneration of the community.*

The idea behind the project was that young people could engage with the arts and their community in a way that was not intimidating for them. It was hoped that the arts project would also connect these young people to resources and contacts outside of their estate. The young people who participated became involved in sculpture, video production, pottery, photography, dance, and the writing and performing plays and music.

### Outcomes

The aims of this programme were to create new skills and experiences and improve the self-esteem of participants and are therefore difficult

to quantify. Nevertheless, the following outcomes are documented by the researchers:

### Participation in the arts

More than 1,500 young people participated in the Youth Arts Project between April 2000 and September 2003 and over 200 individual projects were run, employing 33 artists. Movies and photographs were produced, documenting the changes made to the estate and their residents' lives. Some of these films were shown nationally, in schools as part of anti-drugs, anti-bullying initiatives.

### Crime

The crime rates in both of these estates fell by 48% by the end of the project. Importantly, there were other safety procedures taking place at the same time, such as on-foot police patrols, and redesign of space to improve surveillance.

### Increased self-esteem

The researchers reported that many of the young people who had difficulty reading and writing found that they could express themselves much more effectively in an environment less intimidating than that of school. The researchers also reported that when these children produced videos, music, or sculptures they felt pride and an increased sense of self-worth.

## Funding regeneration

Regeneration projects in Ireland are funded by the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government, though other agencies (both publicly and privately funded) are often involved. Area-based initiatives, which tend to deal with community development work are managed by Pobal on behalf of the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government (which took over these responsibilities on 1<sup>st</sup> May 2011).

All regeneration projects are required to set out a Master Plan (including costings and timelines for the project) developed through consultation with all key agencies through the County/City Development Board.<sup>49</sup> For larger projects such

<sup>49</sup> Department of the Environment, Community and

as Ballymun, separate agencies are created to drive the process. The structure of these agencies is explained in Box 3.<sup>50</sup>

### Text box 3: Regeneration agencies

Each regeneration agency will be a corporate body under Local Government legislation with a specific term of office. They will have a board, comprising the main statutory agencies that can contribute to the social, economic and physical regeneration of the area.

The board will be chaired by the relevant County/City Manager and the CDB will act as its advisory council. The agency will have a small staff, with expertise across a range of disciplines. The DoECLG will fund this agency for the defined period of the regeneration.

Local authorities will have to bid for funding and approval if they wish to establish such an agency. However, where the scale of regeneration is medium scale, it will more usually be overseen by a dedicated multi-disciplinary team reporting to the CDB.

### Regeneration in Ballymun

The Ballymun estate was built in the mid-1960s and suffered problems from its early days, due to a lack of local services and amenities.<sup>51</sup> In the early 1980s, campaigning by local people, projects and tenants associations, led to the formation of the Ballymun Community Coalition. Successful campaigns resulted in the establishment of the Ballymun Job Centre, the Ballymun Credit Union, and the Ballymun Housing Task Force (BHTF). The BHTF was particularly effective as it brought local people, Dublin Corporation, the Eastern Health Board and local TDs together to collectively lobby for the physical refurbishment of the Ballymun flats.<sup>52</sup>

Local Government. (2007). *Delivering Homes, Sustaining Communities*. Accessed on 1<sup>st</sup> June 2011 at <http://www.environ.ie/en/Publications/DevelopmentandHousing/Housing/FileDownload,2091,en.pdf>

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

<sup>51</sup> <http://www.tribune.ie/magazine/article/2009/may/17/no-line-on-the-horizon/>

<sup>52</sup> Ballymun Local Drugs Task Force: Revised Action plan. (2000). Accessed on 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2011 at

In 1997 the then Government approved the redevelopment of Ballymun. Ballymun Regeneration Ltd (BRL), a company owned by Dublin City Council (DCC), was established in 1997 to implement an open-ended programme including the demolition of all existing flats and their replacement with houses and low-rise flats, mostly to be managed by the local authority.

The aim of the regeneration, which is scheduled to be completed by 2014, is to improve the physical infrastructure of the locality and rebuild the area's economic and social infrastructure by encouraging private investment and promoting education, training and the arts.

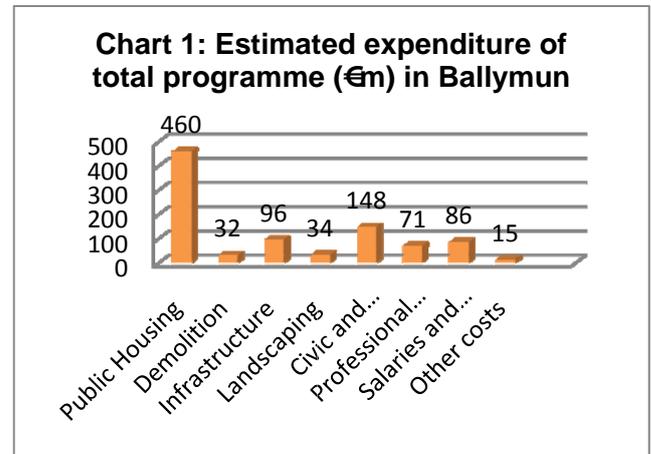
### Funding

The estimated cost of completing the regeneration programme, as of 2006, was €942 million. The bulk of the central government funding comes from the Vote of the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government.<sup>53</sup> The breakdown of projected costs of the Ballymun regeneration programme are shown in Chart 1. The chart shows that public housing is by far the biggest item of expenditure (48%), while the second biggest item of expenditure is Civic and Community Projects (16%).

Approximately €785 million of this money comes from the Social Housing subhead of the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government Vote. The remaining €157 million comes from:

- Ballymun Regeneration Ltd/Dublin City Council €117M;
- other State funding €12M;
- funding from non-State sources €10M; and

- an additional €18 million from the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government (funding ancillary works)



Source: Office of the Comptroller and Auditor General (2007).

### Recent cutbacks

In 2008 the budget for the Ballymun regeneration project was €80 million but the budget was cut to €45 million in 2009. After discussions between BRL and the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, beginning in January 2010, a revised programme for the Phase 4 Housing project was agreed with confirmed funding for the replacement housing projects to be built.<sup>54</sup>

### National regeneration budget for 2011

The Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government is providing €124.6 million towards regeneration projects around the country in 2011. The breakdown of this funding is shown in table 1. The figures are drawn from an answer to a PQ by the Minister of State at the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government on 12<sup>th</sup> May 2011. The table shows that the largest amounts of funding are going towards the regeneration of Ballymun (€53M), and Limerick regeneration (€35M).

[http://www.drugsandalcohol.ie/5027/1/230-1016Ballymun\\_Local\\_Drugs\\_Task\\_Force\\_Action\\_Plan\\_2000.pdf](http://www.drugsandalcohol.ie/5027/1/230-1016Ballymun_Local_Drugs_Task_Force_Action_Plan_2000.pdf)

<sup>53</sup> Office of the Comptroller and Auditor General (2007). Special Report 61: Ballymun Regeneration. <http://audgen.gov.ie/viewdoc.asp?DocID=1089&CatID=17&StartDate=1+January+2011>

<sup>54</sup> [http://www.brl.ie/pdf/nletter\\_92.pdf](http://www.brl.ie/pdf/nletter_92.pdf)

**Table 1: Funding regeneration projects 2011**

Project	Funding
Ballymun	€53,000,000
Dublin city	€6,000,000
St. Michaels Estate, O'Devaney Gardens, Dominick Street, Croke Villas, St. Teresa's Gardens and Dolphin House	€7,000,000
Dun Laoghaire Rathdown - Laurel Avenue	€1,100,000
Cork City – The Glen & Knocknaheeny	€14,000,000
Waterford City	€1,000,000
Limerick regeneration	€35,000,000
Sligo Borough - Cranmore	€2,000,000
Tralee town - Mitchel's Crescent	€5,000,000
Dundalk Town - Cox's Demesne	€500,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>€124,600,000</b>

Source: Department of Environment, Community and Local Government (2011).

## Value for money

Placing a monetary value on the social returns of regeneration projects is difficult<sup>55</sup> but Limerick Regeneration estimates that the long term socio-economic benefits of the regeneration project there will be €100M euro per annum through reduced crime, reduced social welfare payments, and increased economic activity.<sup>56</sup>

<sup>55</sup> [http://www.brad.ac.uk/acad/bcid/research/Regeneration/Conference\\_papers/David\\_Potts.pdf](http://www.brad.ac.uk/acad/bcid/research/Regeneration/Conference_papers/David_Potts.pdf)

<sup>56</sup> [http://www.limerickregeneration.ie/wp-content/uploads/2009/02/Investment\\_Economic\\_Benefit\\_Analysis.pdf](http://www.limerickregeneration.ie/wp-content/uploads/2009/02/Investment_Economic_Benefit_Analysis.pdf)

Notwithstanding the Comptroller and Auditor General's report on Ballymun, which is the most expensive regeneration project in the history of the State, there has been no comprehensive review in Ireland which gives a cost-benefit analysis of the various regeneration projects taking place here or weighs up the financial benefits of physical regeneration versus social regeneration.

A review of area-based interventions in Ireland in 2008<sup>57</sup> noted that while €968.8M was spent in 2006 on ABIs nationally, many of these programmes did not reach those most in need due to 'weak' targeting. The report also found that funding was often short-term while the problem of disadvantage is long term. No monetary value was placed on outcomes of these programmes.

## Conclusion

Evidence indicates that regeneration needs to be people-focused and not based solely on building or regeneration of the physical environment. Interventions which focus on providing support for the family are found by some studies to have the biggest effect on the life chances of individuals. This is especially true if they are flexible, take place early in children's lives and are based locally.

Research shows that there are myriad differences between and within disadvantaged areas and that within these areas, some households are more disadvantaged than others. Therefore policies should be tailored to the specific problems of the community and seek to reach the most acutely disadvantaged.

While area-based interventions continue to have an important role to play in alleviating disadvantage, a recent review indicates that some of these programmes may require tighter eligibility criteria in order to ensure that they target those areas most in need.

<sup>57</sup> [http://www.cpa.ie/publications/workingpapers/2011-02\\_WP\\_CombatingSocialDisadvantageInSocialHousingEstates.pdf](http://www.cpa.ie/publications/workingpapers/2011-02_WP_CombatingSocialDisadvantageInSocialHousingEstates.pdf)