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ACTION ON POVERTY TODAY

23 YEARS WORKING FOR
A POVERTY-FREE IRELAND



 **Combat Poverty
Agency** working for a
poverty-free Ireland

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POVERTY IS

Poverty is coloured red
Red searing brain pain.
Tortured mind cries stop
Agonised thought seeks shelter
Help wanted! Apply chaos within.
Anything sought to numb the cells.

Life hurts
Love tears out my being
As responsibility looms
And dooms me to continue.

The network of pain that
serves as my brain
is working on overload.

Cathleen O'Neill

From *Telling it like it is*, Combat Poverty 1992

VIEWPOINT

A final word from Combat Poverty

Welcome to this special issue of *Action on Poverty Today*, which marks the 23 years of Combat Poverty's existence. From 1 July 2009, Combat Poverty will be integrated with the Office for Social Inclusion into a new division within the Department of Social and Family Affairs. This issue of *Action on Poverty Today* provides a forum of contributions to mark the last 23 years of Combat Poverty's work and to look forward to the establishment of a new institutional mechanism to tackle poverty in Ireland.

This special issue documents Combat Poverty's work in developing innovative anti-poverty programmes, generating knowledge of the extent and causes of poverty, advocating new policy approaches for tackling poverty, and increasing public awareness of poverty. This work has contributed to the significant improvements in basic living standards and the notable decline in overall poverty levels over the last two decades.

Combat Poverty held up a mirror to Irish society and provided a far truer reflection of what we were than many in official circles would have preferred. Their work discomfited and discommoded many, which is as it should have been.

David Begg, General Secretary, Irish Congress of Trade Unions.

More generally, Combat Poverty, since it was established in 1986, has contributed to a sea change in the institutional approach to poverty. This has seen poverty move from being a peripheral issue to becoming a mainstream concern of public policy. For example, poverty is now officially recognized and reported upon, using national and European measures; groups campaigning on poverty have a voice at the social partnership table; and there is a robust policy framework for tackling poverty at local, national and European levels.

Combat Poverty has always been an outward-looking organisation, working across all sectors of society at local, national and international levels in the fight against poverty. Many people and organisation have contributed to the work of Combat Poverty over the years. In addition, Combat Poverty has worked with eight governments, 11 ministers and four secretaries-general in the Department of Social and Family Affairs.

There are also those who directly contributed to Combat Poverty as board members or as staff, including four chairpersons and three directors. We hope that these people and organisation will continue to engage with the new division that is replacing Combat Poverty and the Office for Social Inclusion.

It would be fitting if the wind-up of Combat Poverty as a stand-alone entity were linked to the elimination of poverty. Regrettably, poverty remains a major challenge for Irish society and is likely to increase in the economic recession. It is important, then, that the work associated with Combat Poverty continues in its new institutional format. This would be a fitting legacy for Combat Poverty.

Jim Walsh, Seán Mistéil, Joan O'Flynn, Julie Smyth, Liz Sullivan and Kasey Treadwell Shine, Management Team, Combat Poverty Agency. June 2009.



Old poverty; new poverty. Both need determination to tackle them

Helen Johnston looks back at old editions of this journal to see how the face of poverty has changed over 23 years.

A glance at early editions of *Poverty Today*, as it was then called, shows coverage of topics such as homelessness, unemployment, money-lending, urban disadvantage, rural poverty, Travellers' issues, EU poverty programmes and research on the extent of poverty. The most recent editions of *Action on Poverty Today* include articles on social inclusion work in local authorities, basic banking services for low-income consumers, employment barriers for lone parents, rural community health projects and EU social inclusion issues.

Some of the terminology may have changed but the experience of poverty and many of the issues remain the same. For example, a 1989 publication of Combat Poverty, called *Pictures of Poverty*, described a poor lifestyle as consisting of routine spending, constant indebtedness, inferior public services, powerlessness, isolation, a burden on women and a lack of opportunity. Many of these features ring true for people experiencing poverty today.

But many things have changed greatly over the 23 years of the existence of the Combat Poverty Agency. The extent and nature of

poverty has changed, our knowledge of poverty has developed, as have our responses to it. Combat Poverty has had a central role in many of these developments as it fulfilled its statutory role in providing policy advice, undertaking research, supporting and evaluating community development initiatives and other innovative approaches to tackling poverty, as well as public education on poverty.

Extent of poverty

Poverty was undoubtedly much more widespread in the late 1980s than in the late 2000s. In 1989, Combat Poverty published the results of the ESRI's first major national study of poverty and income distribution, which showed that one person in three was living below the poverty line. While ongoing debates continue about the measurement of poverty, the latest figures for 2007 estimate that one person in six are below the poverty line. An important element of this measure is that it relates to the average income standards prevailing in Irish society.

The nature of poverty has also changed over the 23 years. In 1986, poverty was characterised by high and long-term unemployment, emigration, low levels of





social welfare and large inner-city areas ravaged by disadvantage and drugs. Much has changed in the interim. During the Celtic Tiger years of the late 1990s and into the early 2000s, poverty concerns related to people who had difficulty accessing the labour market, such as lone parents, people with disabilities and people with low education levels and skills. With net immigration, the Irish population became more diverse. Poverty among non-Irish nationals and inequality and discrimination issues were a further concern. Child poverty remains a key poverty issue.

The nature of poverty is changing again with the onset of the recession and unemployment, indebtedness and financial stress are serious issues again.

Changed responses

However, the responses to poverty are where the biggest changes have been. Early interventions were focused largely on social welfare increases and locally based projects, which were mainly supported financially by the European Union. In the mid-1990s the most significant development was the introduction of the National Anti-Poverty

Strategy (NAPS), which has now evolved into the National Action Plan for Social Inclusion. Notable features of this approach have been a government-wide approach to poverty reduction with an agreed definition of poverty; the setting of targets for poverty reduction and the establishment of social inclusion committees, offices, staff, and budgets. Along with social inclusion programmes and actions, an innovative feature of NAPS was the introduction of poverty-proofing, where new policies and programmes are assessed for their impact on poverty.

The development of NAPS has been underpinned by advances in our knowledge on poverty, developing consultative mechanisms, a wide-ranging EU social inclusion programme, the engagement of local government, support for community development approaches, and moves towards the mainstreaming of poverty and social inclusion into policies and programmes. Nevertheless, shortcomings remain in relation to the lack of focused implementation of many initiatives.

Since 1994, when OPEN was established, we have recognized the valuable contribution that the Combat Poverty Agency has made to support the NGO sector. Combat Poverty played a vital role in supporting OPEN and others to participate in the National Economic and Social Forum when the community sector first became involved in social partnership.

Frances Byrne, Chief Executive, One Parent Exchange Network (OPEN)

Combat Poverty has instigated or supported many of these initiatives. A key feature of Combat Poverty's work over the years has been to act as a catalyst in supporting innovations, piloting and evaluating poverty initiatives, which have been mainstreamed or taken up by others. In adopting this approach a trademark of Combat Poverty's work has been its collaboration with others on many of its programmes – with government departments, local authorities, other agencies, researchers and research organisations, and with organisations and communities working with people experiencing poverty.

Looking to the future

The staff of Combat Poverty can be proud to have made a strong contribution to advancing knowledge, expertise and skills, and raising the profile of combating poverty in Ireland. They will bring this expertise to bear in a new, strengthened division in the Department of Social and Family Affairs. Much can be achieved by having a key division within government focused on tackling poverty and promoting social inclusion. But it must have the resources and a strong mandate to carry out this task effectively. In the context of the current recession, efforts must be strengthened to ensure that the advances made over the last 23 years are not lost and that poverty reduction is a government priority.

Helen Johnston is Senior Social Policy Analyst with the National Economic and Social Council and former Director of the Combat Poverty Agency.

OFF THE WALL

The scream started again to-day
A slow silent scream of frustrated anger.
Today I wailed at the wall of officialdom

Smug, smiling, filing-cabinet face,
Closed to my unspoken entreaty
Social justice is my right
Don't dole it out like charity!

Robbed of independence, dignity in danger
I stood, dead-locked, mind-locked.
Helpless in his sightless one-dimension world
I walked away
My mind screamed a long sad caoin for us
And
Damned their 'Social Welfare'

Cathleen O'Neill

First published in *Notions Dublin*: Klear/Borderline,
1987 also in *Telling it like it is*, Combat Poverty 1992

Combat Poverty educated a generation in the human cost of living in poverty

Reports, books and an independent voice were often a challenge to the status quo, writes **Sara Burke**.

Cathleen O'Neill's seminal book, *Telling it like it is*, was one of the most formative books in my life. I read it first when I was an outreach worker with homeless teenagers in Focus Point in the early 1990s.

Cathleen's powerful description of how she coped when her children asked her why the milk in their house was blue but white in their friends' houses remains with me to this day. Cathleen's tight budget meant she watered down the milk to spread it out, to make it last. Her courageous book was one of the first Irish publications to show the human reality of poverty in Ireland then.

Her words motivated many to become activists, researchers, community workers and policy analysts in Irish social policy. She kindled a generation of advocates who have attempted to change the structures that bring about and perpetuate poverty.

Information and ammunition

Telling it like it is was one of many quality publications from the Combat Poverty Agency over the last 23 years that have educated and motivated individuals and groups to promote a more just and inclusive society by working for a poverty-free Ireland.

Pre-budget submissions and post-budget analyses provided community and policy workers with ammunition with which to make the case for a more equitable distribution of the State's resources. They challenged the prevailing status quo view that the economic success was lifting all boats and put a spotlight on government measures that reduced or increased the number of people living in poverty.

Combat Poverty's campaigns and public voice, singly and in collaboration with others such as the *Open Your Eyes To Child Poverty Initiative*, allowed individuals and groups to say things together that they could not say alone. Their independent, rigorous analysis provided uncomfortable reading and challenges for government during the boom years of the celtic tiger. Their publications, training programmes and funding initiatives enabled innovation, public discourse and the inclusion and participation of people experiencing poverty in national policy-making processes.





'Mark of maturity'

Set up by the Minister for Social Welfare in 1986 with four core functions – policy advice; project support and innovation; research; and public education, Combat Poverty carried out these roles with purpose and effect, often pioneering new solutions to poverty at both policy and project level.

Speaking at a conference to mark 20 years of Combat Poverty's existence, Professor Séamus Ó Cinnéide, of the Centre for Applied Social Studies, NUI Maynooth, said: 'The Combat Poverty Agency is one of the great institutions of the Irish state that proves our maturity as a nation; that proves our commitment to civilised values'. He singled out Combat Poverty's 'important task of reminding this rich and self-satisfied society of the continuing existence of poverty, social exclusion and inequality, and the continuing stunting of human lives as a result'.

Combat Poverty's greatest strength is its independent voice, combined with its ability to influence government policy at local and national levels. The biggest challenge ahead is to maintain independence and influence post integration into the Department of Social and Family Affairs.

Let's hope it can and it does.

Sara Burke is a Journalist and Health Policy Analyst.

My role on the NDST (1997–2006) of trying to reflect the perspective and concerns of local communities was greatly enhanced and supported by the Combat Poverty Agency's work on the drugs issue with marginalized groups and also by its intelligent and evidence-based submissions and papers.

Fergus McCabe, National Drugs Strategy Team 1997–2006



Independent policy and research work recognised by EU and wider world

Kevin P O'Kelly highlights how Combat Poverty influenced social policy beyond Ireland.

Since it was established in 1986, the Combat Poverty Agency has made a significant contribution to our understanding of poverty, the development of public policies to tackle it and to the evolution of social policies in Ireland.

The work of Combat Poverty was not always appreciated by policy-makers in Ireland. However, it was well recognized elsewhere. Its work was noted by governments and organisations working to overcome poverty in other EU member states, by the European Commission and further afield. Its directors and other staff members regularly contributed to European and international events dealing with poverty and social exclusion, such as the annual EU Presidency Round-table on Poverty and Social Exclusion and regular conferences to address different aspects of poverty organised by the European Commission or by member states. Combat

Poverty's first director was seconded to the European Commission to work on the design and implementation of the Commission's anti-poverty strategy.

A model for others

Combat Poverty regularly hosted delegations that wanted to learn about its research and project work. One recent visit was from Canadian members of parliament and representatives of a federal government-funded NGO working on poverty issues. This visit followed a presentation by video-link to a hearing of the Social Affairs Committee of the Canadian Parliament by the director and the head of communications and public affairs. There were similar visits from the Australian prime minister's office and from the Flemish regional government in Belgium, all keen to look at Combat Poverty as a model for independent, anti-poverty state agencies, which these countries proposed to set up.

The European Anti-Poverty Network (EAPN) Ireland has worked closely with Combat Poverty since our establishment in 1990, co-operating to ensure that poverty and social inclusion are at the heart of the Irish and European agendas. Combat Poverty has played an important role in supporting the development of a progressive European response to poverty, and its role has often been held up as a model by our European partners.

Anna Visser, Director, European Anti-Poverty Network Ireland (EAPN Ireland)

Combat Poverty has contributed to the evolution of European social policy through its participation in a range of European Commission-funded research projects. These included a three-year project to develop social inclusion policies at local government level, the LASI project. A final report was published on local level good practice for the promotion of social inclusion from across the EU. Combat Poverty was also a partner in a study, co-ordinated by EAPN Ireland, on the setting of minimum social standards within the EU.

Financial exclusion is one of the priority social policy issues for the European Commission and Combat Poverty participated in a number of EU projects designed to address this. One such project, co-ordinated by Réseau Financement Alternatif in Brussels, culminated in a major conference hosted by the EU Commission in May, 2008, to discuss financial services provision and the prevention of financial exclusion. This work, and on the related problem of over-indebtedness, continues with member state partners.

Social inclusion methodology

Another European study co-ordinated by Combat Poverty was on the Mainstreaming of Social Inclusion. This three-year project examined the commitments on poverty and social inclusion set out in the Lisbon Strategy (2000). It developed a methodology

to measure the progress of member states in implementing these commitments, which was tested in nine partner countries through research with public sector employees, representatives of NGOs and social partners. The findings were widely disseminated throughout EU member states and were used by the European Commission in the drafting of its social inclusion guidelines.

Finally, Combat Poverty recently completed a report on low-income workers in Europe, which was drafted in collaboration with representatives of 12 Council of Europe member states. This report will be the basis for a major Council of Europe conference in Malta next October.

The Combat Poverty Agency had the expertise, dedication and commitment to make these contributions at European level and internationally. Its legacy is very significant and will live on well after it is closed. It is very doubtful if any alternative structure will replace or replicate this work in the very difficult years ahead.

Kevin P. O'Kelly is former Acting Director of the Combat Poverty Agency.

Local authorities will seek resources to strengthen social inclusion work

Frank Dawson highlights how local authority corporate plans are becoming anti-poverty strategies.



At EU and national levels, local authorities are recognized as key stakeholders in progressing local anti-poverty strategies. While local government in Ireland has been tackling social exclusion for over 100 years, the implementation of *'Better Local Government, A Programme for Change'* during the last decade has presented new challenges. The Combat Poverty Agency has been to the forefront in supporting local authorities in addressing these challenges, in order to help us play a more strategic role in the prevention of poverty and social exclusion.

Following the adoption of the revised National Anti-Poverty Strategy in 2002, Combat Poverty was invited to assist local authorities

in adopting a 'whole of organisation' approach at policy and planning levels. Its contribution included:

- providing more intensive training
- setting local social inclusion performance indicators
- linking the work of strategic policy committees to the advancement of social inclusion objectives at an operational level
- developing the internal structural capacity of local authorities.

Inclusive approaches

Local authorities were encouraged to engage in participative consultation; to seize the opportunity to embed social inclusion as a corporate objective; and to ensure that social

During my time on the *Having Your Say Programme* steering committee, I was given the opportunity to raise issues with members who were able to influence policy and I believe that I brought the community voice to the table, and it has given me the confidence to remain at other forums where it is important that community voices are heard.

Jim Prior, Co-ordinator, Southill Family Resource Centre

inclusion objectives were translated into meaningful programmes and outcomes for target groups.

Today over half of local authorities have social inclusion units in place, while most have adopted formal social inclusion strategies. Combat Poverty supported members and staff in building a strong social inclusion ethos while raising awareness and promoting research. In essence, corporate plans are becoming anti-poverty strategies.

Combat Poverty also helped staff in developing new approaches to service delivery and improved methods of consulting with customers, leading to improved services and customer satisfaction. Development of poverty profiles provide baseline data on poverty while the provision of training and awareness of social inclusion has led to shared understandings.

Development of poverty indicators helped to create awareness and enabled us to discuss the underlying causes of the problems in an economic and social context within the county and city development board process.

New agenda and resources

The next stages include more formal links between corporate plans of local authorities and those of other agencies. With the forthcoming integration of Combat Poverty and the Office for Social Inclusion, local authorities look forward to a continuing relationship with the new body, particularly in strengthening the role of our social inclusion

units. We echo the recommendations of the Fitzpatrick evaluation of local government's approach towards the social inclusion agenda, which highlighted the need to frontload resources towards such work.

While the economic downturn may worsen the circumstances of those who are at risk of poverty, *Building Ireland's Smart Economy*, the Government's recently published framework for sustainable economic renewal, highlights how a sense of community and shared values can contribute to the cohesiveness of society. The framework will be highly significant in promoting the well-being of the population which, in turn, will drive economic and social progress.

Local government is committed to playing our part in sustaining that sense of community and shared values by embedding social inclusion even more intensively in our corporate strategies.

Frank Dawson is County Manager of Roscommon County Council.



Meeting the challenge of evidence-based advice

Combat Poverty's research focus on both existing and new forms of poverty helped government and voluntary groups, writes **John Monaghan**.

Over the past 23 years the Combat Poverty Agency has provided independent, evidenced-based advice to Ministers for Social and Family Affairs and to other departments on issues such as health, education, housing and local government. This advice was based on research projects conducted to the highest international standards or on various projects that captured the daily lived experience of vulnerable individuals and communities. It included research on areas such as financial exclusion; indebtedness; lone parents and much more.

Through its active involvement with vulnerable people, Combat Poverty has produced ground-breaking evidence from programmes such as the *Building Healthy Communities Programme* and the *Having Your Say Programme*, and on issues such as fuel poverty or the factors affecting access

to a medical card. Apart from benefits to government, this evidence proved immensely useful to NGOs and voluntary groups.

One of the greatest assets of Combat Poverty has been the dedication and commitment, indeed the passion, of the staff in providing evidenced-based advice to help eradicate poverty and social exclusion. But the research focus was never just on current problems but also on new, emerging poverty issues such as the changing nature of child poverty or the growing number of working poor during a period of economic boom.

Combat Poverty Agency has been invaluable to the NWCI in supporting our work to eliminate poverty for women in Ireland. Combat Poverty has particularly assisted the NWCI in providing advice and support for our research into the causes and effects of women's poverty and in making proposals to government for policy reform. Where will this support come from now?

Orla O'Connor, National Women's Council of Ireland (NWCI)

Crucial message

A crucial role of Combat Poverty was to communicate to the Government the evidence-based message that, despite economic progress, not everyone benefited and that poverty, inequality and social exclusion still affected many people. It provided detailed advice as to how problems might be tackled. One classic example was the advice that led to the establishment of the Money Advice and Budgeting Service (MABS).

While the numbers 'at risk of poverty' and those experiencing consistent poverty have dropped over the past 20 years, the concern is that during the current economic downturn the number of people requiring assistance from the State will increase. A key challenge over the coming years will be tackling the problems arising from increasing unemployment among people who have only known good times and who are ill equipped to cope with their changed circumstances. This recession is very different to that of the late 1980s or early 1990s. True, we don't have high interest rates or inflation but, while many unemployed people are now better educated, they often have huge personal debts, and the safety valve of emigration is not there. So, new solutions are required.

Opportunities and challenges

The amalgamation of Combat Poverty and the Office for Social Inclusion to produce a new division to tackle poverty and social exclusion presents both an opportunity and a significant challenge. It's an opportunity to use the combined talents of the staff of the new division to continue to seek out the real needs of vulnerable people and provide evidenced-based advice to government. The challenge will be to ensure that the structure of the new division is sufficiently agile to achieve this. If the division is only expected to monitor and evaluate current government programmes, or offer uncritical advice to 'support' the minister, then a real opportunity to investigate the causes of poverty and social exclusion will have been lost.

John Monaghan is Vice-President of the Society of St Vincent de Paul, and a board member of Combat Poverty.

The relationship between the Combat Poverty Agency and Pobal has been an important factor in the development of programmes and strategies to address poverty, social inclusion and the ground-breaking work that underpinned reconciliation in the aftermath of the Peace Process in Northern Ireland. Combat Poverty contributed significantly to the development of Area Development Management (ADM) and brought unique insights and expertise to many joint initiatives over almost two decades.

Denis Leamy, Chief Executive Officer, Pobal

Taking risks for peace

Since the mid 1990s, **Paul Skinnader** says the Combat Poverty Agency played a significant role in bolstering the peace process.

Combat Poverty acted as a joint implementing agent with Pobal on the Peace I and Peace II Programmes, from 1995 to 1999 and 2000 to 2006 respectively. They developed a new and innovative partnership approach to deliver European funding programmes and established a local and regional presence in the six southern border counties through Border Action (previously ADM/CPA).

The delivery of these new and substantial Peace Programmes also helped to develop new approaches to addressing the legacy of conflict. They highlighted the need for empowerment, accessibility, developmental support and local and regional collaborative approaches to building peace at community

level. This was a significant change from conventional approaches at the time and was widely acknowledged in the evaluation of the first Peace Programme.

Combat Poverty helped provide advice, resources and training for peace projects, to develop their capacity to address not only local issues but also to inform policy at local, regional and national level. *The Practice to Policy* and *Having Your Say Programmes* provide numerous examples of the impact of this. Furthermore, Combat Poverty ensured that the Peace Programme contributed to addressing social and economic deprivation through providing new skills for employment and addressing educational disadvantage.



Poverty and conflict

The contribution of the Combat Poverty Agency can be best seen in the consistent linking of the underlying causes of poverty and conflict. This can be seen in many publications it commissioned but in particular in the first study on the island of *Poverty and Conflict* (2005, Hillyard, Rolston and Tomlinson), which explored the complex relationship between conflict and poverty. This approach has had a lasting effect on the delivery of the Peace Programmes.

Combat Poverty championed the centrality of cross-border co-operation to reinforced progress towards a peaceful island. This was not, and is not, easy work. Together with Pobal, the Community Foundation for Northern Ireland and Co-Operation Ireland, they were prepared to take risks for peace. They supported actions that sought to bring about change for ordinary people in the border areas in extraordinary situations. It has meant dealing with the hard and real issues of division and coming up with viable, long-term resolutions.

Partnership for peace

The new Peace III Programme 2007—2013 has adopted a partnership approach to promote peace and stability. This includes the establishment of new peace and reconciliation partnerships, led by county councils in the southern border counties and within clusters of councils in Northern Ireland. The Office for Social Inclusion could help to ensure the link between the councils' social inclusion and peace-building work and the mainstreaming of both. This is an urgent policy task. The cross-border dimension of Combat Poverty's work and its expertise and experience should not be lost or forgotten. Combat Poverty's experience could add real value to the Office for Social Inclusion as there are many opportunities to spearhead all-island approaches and prevent duplication of analyses and developments. It is hoped the new division on poverty and social inclusion will not lose touch with the rising poverty in the border counties.

Paul Skinnader is Development Co-ordinator with Border Action.



Community development proved its worth against many faces of poverty

Philip Watt recalls how community development made huge inroads on poverty of the 1990s

In the early 1990s I developed a close working relationship with the Combat Poverty Agency as director of West Tallaght Resource Centre (WTRC), one of the first projects funded under the Community Development Programme (CDP).

It was an exciting and challenging time in community development, despite the immense poverty and social deprivation all too evident in many parts of Dublin. In West Dublin, unemployment in estates like Brookfield, Jobstown and Fettercairn was around 80 per cent at this time. There were very few facilities for children and young people, no shops, except for the recently opened 'Square' in Tallaght, and medical facilities generally consisted of part-time GPs working in poorly fitted-out surgeries. Mothers commuted to St James' Hospital via a long bus journey.

The Council was inefficient and ineffective in doing housing repairs, estate management and service co-ordination. I remember, following my first complaint to the Council maintenance department on behalf of an elderly resident, the maintenance manager laughing down the phone at the idea that the repair would be done. At that time, residents used family addresses outside of West Tallaght to apply for employment, such was the stigma of living in the area.

Traveller conditions

Travellers at that time were largely accommodated in compounds of 40 or 50 trailers with two standpipes, poor refuse collection and surrounded by banks of mud to ensure no one could see their appalling living conditions.



Tá tograí éagsúla bainte amach le tacaíocht
ón Gníomhaireacht do Chomhrac na Bochtaine,
chun áird a tharraingt ar chúrsaí bochtanais agus
toirmeasc shóisialta. D'fhéach an Gníomhaireacht
ar na cúiseanna agus tionchair ilghnéitheach a bhíonn
ag bochtanas ar an sochaí.

Anna Ní Fhlatharta, Oibrí Pobail, Pléaráca Teo

The other dimension of West Tallaght, which was less visible to outsiders, was the vibrancy and determination of key community leaders to address poverty in the area. These involved women's and lone parents' groups, residents' associations and youth projects. The emergence of the Tallaght Partnership in the early 1990s made a significant impact on strategic thinking and action. Reform of the local authority system began to make a difference, for example, in innovative and good quality accommodation for Travellers in many parts of south Dublin (although challenges remain).

The support of Combat Poverty, along with the support of Tallaght Partnership, was vital to the work of WTRC on issues such as fuel poverty, tenant participation and work with lone parents and Travellers. This resulted in a dedicated Community Development Programme for Travellers in Tallaght and the HEAT social economy project, which is still providing employment in insulation and related services in south Dublin.

Community development

Combat Poverty consistently played a strategic role at local and national level in networking, supporting and highlighting the work of community development. This involved working with the Community Workers' Co-operative and NUI Maynooth to publish reflections on practice, policy and the future direction of community work. Combat Poverty has since published an important

range of resources and policy documents related to community development and issues such as primary health care, local government and fuel poverty.

As Area Based Partnerships and the Local Development Programme emerged in the 1990s, Combat Poverty shaped the programmes to ensure a wider focus than unemployment. This was not easy as many at the time contended that employment was the only solution to poverty, a position that ignored the interaction of poverty with issues such as gender, family status, ethnicity and age. Combat Poverty played an important role, with others, in bodies such as ADM (now Pobal) to ensure that new programmes, including the Peace and INTERREG programmes, which had a cross-border dimension, also had a focus on community development and against poverty. The work with the Family Resource Centres (FRC) and Family Support Agency, an important anti-poverty initiative, has also been important.

As funding for community and local development projects increased in the 1990s, it became increasingly clear that many voluntary and community management committees were struggling with human resource management and the responsibilities imposed by company law. Then and since, Combat Poverty has published a range of important resource materials, and organised workshops, which helped to spread good practice in this area.

It is very important to record and acknowledge aspects of Combat Poverty's work that have directly benefited our community in Tralee. In addition to the positive impacts of policy work, Tralee benefited from a particular intervention concerning Educational Disadvantage and Early School-Leavers. Not only did the outcomes benefit those young people involved in the project, but the first coming together of a group of interested people laid the foundations for future successful Partnership initiatives addressing disadvantage.

Seamus O'Hara, Manager, Partnership Trá Lí

High standards

Action on Poverty Today provided information on the work of Combat Poverty and issues of community development and poverty remains a vital resource for practitioners. The consistently high quality of the publication reflected the high standards Combat Poverty set for itself. This was the case also in relation to research and analysis. It was evident from newspaper coverage that Combat Poverty's comments on the impact of the Budget were respected by the media. Such comment inevitably drew some criticism from government.

Combat Poverty's work in highlighting the often hidden story of child poverty has been very important in recent years when it became increasingly harder to raise issues of poverty. The criticisms and, on occasion, denial of the concept of 'relative poverty', despite its broad acceptance in most academic research, is another example of the difficulty at times in raising issues of poverty.

The reform of local government and community arts are other examples of Combat Poverty's important work. Lately, interaction between poverty, ethnicity and racism has become important and Combat

Poverty organised a major conference in association with the NCCRI and other bodies in December 2008, as part of EU Year of Intercultural Dialogue.

As Combat Poverty merges with the Office for Social Inclusion, there are many challenges, including preserving the 'critical voice'; the expertise built up in tackling poverty; and the work on community development. Combat Poverty, along with bodies such as the Community Workers' Co-operative, those involved in the CDP and FRC programmes, and academics, have played a leading role in developing effective community development strategies against poverty. In these challenging times, it is important to renew community development as an effective anti-poverty strategy, in particular as a means of ensuring the participation of excluded communities in decision making.

Philip Watt is an independent Researcher and is former Director of the National Consultative Committee on Racism and Interculturalism and of West Tallaght Resource Centre.

Direct experiences of poverty are recounted below from Combat Poverty publications. People's voices provide testimony to the reality of living on a low income in Ireland over the past 23 years.

Phil, mother of five children, husband working and earning £122 per week

“You have to do the best you can. You have to have the little bit of meat for them. I mean you can go without yourself but you can't say to a child 'I haven't got bread'. I'd go without altogether rather than tell a child I haven't got bread”

1989 from *Pictures of Poverty, Twelve Accounts of Life on a Low Income*, published by Combat Poverty

Anne and Noel talk about the experience of being unemployed

“Things have been very bad these last few years. He (Noel) doesn't look for work any more. He got very depressed when they told him he was too old for work – can you imagine the effect that has on a man his age? He was 43 at the time.”

1992 from *Telling It Like It Is* by Cathleen O'Neill, published by Combat Poverty

Case well proven that disease linked to poverty and social circumstances

It is wrong to say that health inequalities are inevitable, writes **Jane Wilde**. The challenge is to act on commitments to tackle them.



Combat Poverty has played a key role in making clear the link between poverty and health and addressing it. Its work in strengthening information for the public and policy-makers; supporting community development; and sponsoring research and publications has helped greatly efforts to reduce poverty and health inequalities.

Its direct work with communities who experience the effects of poverty has been crucial. The work of the *Building Healthy Communities* programme with Travellers, asylum-seekers, refugees and women with mental health problems benefited hugely from being driven by the voice of people experiencing poverty.

Producing up-to-date information on poverty and health inequalities has been a key part of Combat Poverty's role and has influenced policy-makers. Bursary schemes that have funded high-quality research and supported public health leadership have been invaluable.

Strategic targets

In 2000, a series of health targets was adopted in government strategies, the NAPincl and the health strategy, *Quality and Fairness*. This was the first time explicit targets to reduce health inequalities in Ireland had been set. Combat Poverty and the Institute of Public Health (IPH) played a key role in supporting a broadly-based Working Group, which included representatives from all government departments, the then health boards, social partners, the trade unions and, most crucially, the community and voluntary sector.

It is difficult to prioritise health inequalities within the policy-making and political agendas. Witness the hundreds of articles about cancer, suicide and heart disease that fail to mention the strong social pattern in these diseases. But gradually the importance of this link has gained traction and Combat Poverty has been crucial in creating this understanding.

While Combat Poverty funded the Galway Traveller Movement to carry out a health impact assessment on Traveller accommodation, they were much more than providers of funding; their expertise and understanding of the issues were invaluable as was their flexibility in allowing the project adapt the original objectives in order to respond to issues that emerged as the project progressed. Consequently, the project truly met the needs of the community.

Margaret Ó Riada, Co-ordinator, Galway Traveller Movement

International evidence shows that economic downturn will threaten people's health through rising unemployment, financial stress, rising child poverty and decline in the availability of essential food and fuel. Being poor or socially excluded makes it more difficult to access or afford health services. It is more important than ever that we act to reduce poverty and health inequalities, and hold to account those with the power to improve the quality of life of those who are most vulnerable.

Social conditions

The idea that health inequalities are inevitable is simply wrong. The link between poverty, health and health inequalities is strong and now well established in Ireland. Combat Poverty's work has been instrumental in this development. Looking at evidence from other countries, it is clear that health and health inequalities can be changed by changes in social and economic circumstances.

Our job now is to build on the work that has been done by Combat Poverty and ensure that we make a genuine and lasting contribution to eliminating poverty and health inequalities.

The importance of action has been reinforced by the recent report of the Commission on Social Determinants of Health, *Closing the Gap in a Generation*. As a contribution to this global movement, Combat Poverty and IPH produced their joint report, *Tackling Health Inequalities: An all-Ireland approach to Social Determinants*. The report states that 'policy commitments need to be championed, prioritised and resourced'. The challenge remains to honour these commitments.

Jane Wilde is Chief Executive of the Institute of Public Health.

Policy analysis is Combat Poverty legacy

Dermot McCarthy looks at Combat Poverty's contribution to the policy-making process.

The classic model of rational policy-making identifies a number of critical stages, each of which is necessary if the desired outcomes are to be achieved. Starting with a clear specification of the goal to be achieved, it identifies possible instruments to pursue that goal, systematically analyses their relative effectiveness, develops an appropriate implementation strategy for the chosen option and evaluates its implementation and impact. This is fed back into the understanding of the original problem and the appraisal of policy instruments is informed by evidence and stakeholder opinion.

The Combat Poverty Agency has made a remarkable contribution over the years in respect of each aspect of the policy process with regard to poverty.

Broad policy scope

In the first case, Combat Poverty has been highly influential in developing more comprehensive perspectives on poverty and social exclusion, and the social factors that create and continue the circumstances whose effects are reflected in the various measurements of poverty. Through original research, comparative analysis, support for active interventions, and reflection on intervention and delivery systems, Combat Poverty has contributed greatly to understanding the menu of policy and programme choices – and their interaction – that are relevant to achieving our poverty objectives.

Similarly, programme design and improvement, as well as a more fundamental critique of the assumptions underpinning policy, have been the focus of Combat Poverty's attention in all its activities.

Across all of these activities, Combat Poverty has made a very profound contribution to developing not only the analytical frameworks within which policy can be developed and evaluated but also the skills and personnel which have a contribution to make in this area, among the policy, academic, advocacy, and the community and voluntary sectors. This has been reflected not only in support for initiatives outside Combat Poverty but also in the quality of the people who have worked with Combat Poverty over the years.

Systemic approaches

The measure of Combat Poverty's success is the extent to which many of the frameworks and perspectives that it has sought to promote have become part of the core understanding of those who address poverty and exclusion from a wide variety of perspectives. In particular, I recall the critical contribution made by Combat Poverty in the development of the first National Anti-Poverty Strategy of 1997. Subsequently, the systemic approach to understanding and addressing poverty was picked up and developed further in various contexts, not least that of the Developmental Welfare State as proposed by the National Economic and Social Council.

Much has changed in the understanding and response to poverty since Combat Poverty was set up. Apart from developments in policy and practice, we have seen a very substantial growth in the number of bodies at national and local level that engage with anti-poverty measures. Explicit mandates in this area have been adopted as part of national policy frameworks, in local government and the health service, while the education system at all levels has become more explicitly challenged to meet its responsibilities in this area.

The strength of the community and voluntary sector, the development of partnership approaches to initiatives at both central and local level, the greater transparency and stakeholder engagement in the policy-making process at national level, and the more robust and focused evaluation to which it is subject are major changes since the early days of Combat Poverty.

Ultimate mainstreaming

The integration of Combat Poverty into the Department of Social and Family Affairs represents the closing of a chapter of significant value and achievement. The story of the struggle against poverty continues. This, in some ways the ultimate mainstreaming of the poverty challenge, in many respects is a tribute to the achievements of Combat Poverty and its team over many years.

The legacy of the organisation is to be found, however, not just in the new organisational arrangements being put in place but in the developed understanding, the sharper analytical focus and the rigour and sophistication of approach that are now firmly embedded in our society's understanding and response to poverty and exclusion. Responding effectively to the fruits of this engagement with poverty will remain a challenge for policy-makers and the wider society, no less now than in the very first days of Combat Poverty. The task will continue to benefit from the immense contribution made by Combat Poverty and its staff.

Dermot McCarthy is Secretary General to the Government.



Working for better outcomes and life chances

Gerry Mangan writes of the future role of the merged Combat Poverty Agency and Office for Social Inclusion



The merger of the Combat Poverty Agency and the Office for Social Inclusion will result in a new division in the Department of Social and Family Affairs dedicated to supporting government and other stakeholders in continuing to develop policies for poverty reduction and social inclusion, and their effective implementation. The merger will take effect from 1 July 2009.

A primary role for the new division will be to monitor progress in achieving the stated objectives of the National Action Plan on Social Inclusion (NAPincli) and the EU Open Method of Co-ordination (OMC). The findings and analysis will be contained in annual reports for government. These findings will have a major influence on the functioning of the new division. They will help identify, for example, the policies to be selected for Poverty Impact Assessment including non-social policies. This will result in advice

on how policies can be better resourced, structured and integrated with other policies to achieve better outcomes and better value for money.

Policy analysis

The research agenda is likely to be set largely by the need for analysis of policy effectiveness and on how emerging issues can be dealt with best, including guidance from policies and best practice adopted in EU member states. Both these processes, in turn, are likely to require more concentrated work on developing more effective data strategies that deliver the data needed for monitoring progress, through the application of indicators, and the subsequent data analysis, including that of the EU-SILC.

Minister Mary Hanafin, TD, has asked the new division to give particular priority to achieving and maintaining meaningful engagement



with all relevant stakeholders, in particular people experiencing poverty and those who work with them, across all policy areas. This will involve ensuring structures are in place to obtain clear feedback on the effectiveness of policies and their implementation, and for reporting back on progress being achieved.

A related function will be to continually raise awareness of the nature and incidence of poverty and social exclusion, and of what is being done to tackle these realities by government and non-government sectors. This will involve developing effective communications across government and the wider society.

Equal to challenges

The staff of the two bodies will bring much experience, expertise, dedication and commitment to the new division, which will be located in Gandon House, Amiens St.,

Dublin. They are already working closely together to meet the 1 July deadline for the amalgamation. We in the new division will face formidable challenges, especially in the current economic climate. I am confident from my experience of both organisation that we are equal to the task.

I also look forward to the new division working closely with all stakeholders and continuing to receive the much appreciated support each of the original organisation obtained in the past in pursuing shared goals to improve the standard of living, life chances and well-being of the most vulnerable people in our midst.

Gerry Mangan is Director Designate of the new division in the Department of Social and Family Affairs.

Direct experiences of poverty are recounted below from Combat Poverty publications. People's voices provide testimony to the reality of living on a low income in Ireland over the past 23 years.

Parent talking about her daughter's future

“When my daughter says she hates it here, I say ‘Get your education and your qualifications and get a good job abroad if you can.’ The circle has to be broken. I don’t want them to put their children through what I’m putting them through. Paul is very bright and intelligent. Will there be a job for him? Will there be a way out of the ghetto? That would worry me with him. He deserves better. I would hope for more support to help children and parents, more prevention work. The families are forgotten. It’s always ‘Let’s blame the parents’.”

2000 from *Against All Odds, Family Life on a Low Income* by Mary Daly and Madeleine Leonard, published by Combat Poverty

Gerry from Donegal talks about the decline in local work opportunities

“This is meant to be one of Europe’s premier fishing ports and look at it. The mackerel season is just over. It used to last from September until April. This town boomed through the winter. You could make enough money on the mackerel to last you through the summer. This year I got just 13 days work out of it.”

2007 from *Silent People and Other Stories*, published by Combat Poverty

Preserving the record

Combat Poverty has donated its records to the National Archives of Ireland (NAI). This will ensure the preservation of a definitive documentary record of the work of Combat Poverty from its inception in 1986 to its integration into the Department of Social and Family Affairs in 2009. These records will be available for consultation in the National Archives www.nationalarchives.ie from 1st July, 2009.

All of Combat Poverty's publications from 1987 to 2009 have been scanned and are available on Google Books – go to <http://books.google.ie> and search for a particular title, or enter "Combat Poverty Agency" to see all our publications. Google Books does not allow printing, but you can still download and print PDFs from our archived website (see below).

On 30 June, 2009 the Combat Poverty Agency's website will be archived on the Internet Archive – go to www.archive-it.org and select Combat Poverty Agency from the drop-down list.

From 1st July, 2009, Combat Poverty will be integrated with the Office for Social Inclusion to form a new division on poverty and social inclusion within the Department of Social and Family Affairs. The location of the new division will be Gandon House, Amiens St. Dublin 1. For an interim period from 1st July to 30th September, Combat Poverty staff and services will remain in Bridgewater Centre, our current location. The postal address, email contacts, telephone contacts and web address will continue to operate for this period. New contacts will be issued in due course.



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Conyngham Road
Islandbridge
Dublin 8

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23 YEARS WORKING FOR A POVERTY-FREE IRELAND

1986

- Combat Poverty Agency Act
- First meeting of Combat Poverty September 1986

1987

- Establishment of Combat Poverty Agency
- Submission of first Combat Poverty Strategic Plan to Minister in March 1987
- Submission of Combat Poverty's first pre-budget submission which called for the establishment of an Anti-Poverty Programme to complement the Programme for National Recovery
- Launch of *Poverty Today* journal in December 1987
- Combat Poverty runs 9 projects (2nd EC Poverty Programme)
- First Poverty Survey - ESRI's Survey of *Income Distribution, Poverty and Utilisation of State Services*

1988

- Combat Poverty starts work with three women's projects:
- Ronanstown Self Development Group; The Women's Centre North Wall and the Little Bray Family Group
- *Moneylending and Low Income Families* Report published

1989

- Combat Poverty completed implementation of its first Strategic Plan

- Low Pay and Poverty conference run jointly by Combat Poverty and Irish Congress of Trade Unions in December 1989
- The nine projects in the 2nd EC Poverty Programme to combat poverty (1985-1989) contributed to a report *Poverty, Community and Development* published by Combat Poverty

1990

- January 1990 Establishment of Community Development Programme (CDP). 15 projects funded initially.
- Third EC Poverty Programme 1990-1994 initiated
- 1990 Budget announcement for funding for a grants scheme for locally based women's groups

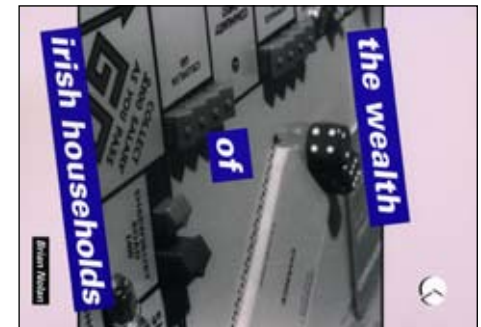
1991

- Community Development Programme expanded from 15-21 local projects
- Combat Poverty gave financial assistance to the formation of the European Anti-Poverty Network and Irish Rural Link
- Combat Poverty Conference and research report entitled *Urban Poverty: Strategies for the Nineties*
- September 1991 publication of *Fair Shares* a discussion pack on poverty for post-primary schools and youth groups

1992

- Two new pilot programmes initiated which continued until 1995: *Community Arts Pilot Programme* and the *Pilot*

First issue 1987



Dublin. Waiting to sign on, outside the Employment Exchange Lower Gardiner Street. Photo: Derek Speirs

Programme with Women's Networks

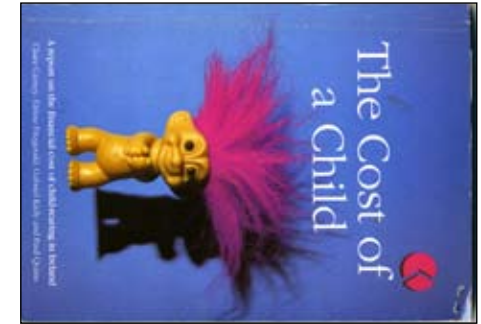
- Publications included: *Lone Parents, Poverty, and Public Policy in Ireland* *The Adequacy of Income and Family Expenditure*

1993

- President of Ireland, Mrs. Mary Robinson, visited Combat Poverty offices in Charlemont Street, Dublin
- First year in office of Combat Poverty's third Board and start of third Strategic Plan
- Start of support for National Anti-Poverty Networks Programme. Networks were Community Worker's Co-operative (CWC); European Anti-Poverty Network (EAPN); Irish Rural Link (IRL) and the Irish National Organisation of the Unemployed (INOU)
- Community Development Programme includes projects for single-issue groups such as women, Travellers and people with Disabilities
- Conference on the links between poverty and disability (in conjunction with Forum of People with Disabilities and the National Rehabilitation Board)
- Research projects completed: *Income Distribution within Households: Allocating Resources within Irish Families* and *The Cost of a Child*

1994

- End of Poverty 3 Programme



Dublin, Sherriff St. Photo: Derek Speirs

- Community Development Programme expanded to 52 projects. Support agencies set up regionally to support the Programme.
- Living in Ireland Survey - first round of a three-year panel survey collected information on household income and living conditions in Ireland.

1995

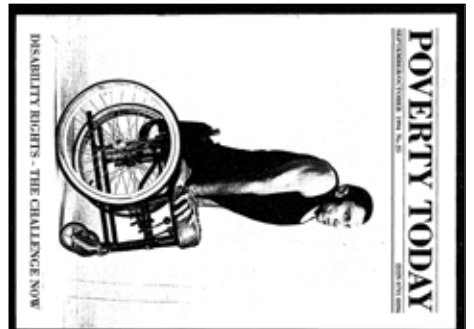
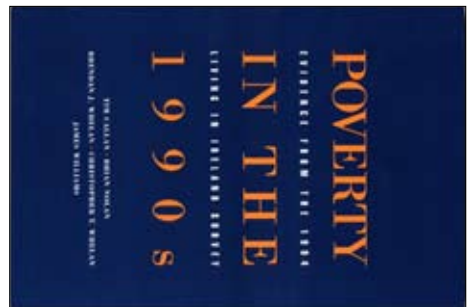
- March 1995 UN World Summit for Social Development in Copenhagen Irish Government commits to draw up by the end of 1996 a national strategy to address poverty
- Review of Combat Poverty by Goodbody Economic Consultants
- Combat Poverty takes on role of delivering part of the EU Peace and Reconciliation Programme in the border counties with ADM (now Pobal)
- Combat Poverty initiates a Demonstration Programme on Educational Disadvantage (1996-1999)
- Published research – *Poverty in Rural Ireland* and *Lone Mothers in Ireland: A Local Study*

1996

- Combat Poverty provided technical support to the Community Platform when it was involved in the negotiations of the national agreement *Partnership 2000*
- 80 Projects now in CDP



Mayo, Knock Airport. Families wave to relatives returning to England after the Xmas break. Photo: Derek Speirs



Twenty-fifth issue 1994

- **Combat Poverty moves to new premises - from Charlemont St to Bridgewater Centre, Islandbridge**

1997

- **Combat Poverty co-ordinates national consultation on development of a National Anti Poverty Strategy (NAPS)**
- **Launch of NAPS April 1997**
- **National Anti-Poverty Networks Programme expanded to include: Open Parent Exchange and Network (OPEN) and the Irish Traveller Movement (ITM)**

1998

- **Co-hosted a conference with the Children's Research Centre, TCD, on *Researching Young People's Experience of Poverty, Exclusion and 'Youth Problems'***
- **In conjunction with ESRI hosted an international conference on educational failure and underachievement and the consequences for labour market exclusion**

1999

- **January 1999 Combat Poverty's role in CDP reduced**
- **Publications included: *Women and Poverty in Ireland; Loading the Dice: A Study of Cumulative Disadvantage***
- **A study and national conference on *Social Housing in Ireland* complete**
- **A study on *Housing Income Support and the Private Rented***



Waterford. The SHY Project. Photo: Derek Speirs



Sector published

- Establishment of Local Government Programme to support anti-poverty and social inclusion work in local authorities
- Supported establishment of child poverty awareness campaign *Open Your Eyes to the Child Poverty Initiative* with Barnardos, The Society of St Vincent de Paul, the National Youth Council of Ireland
- Special supplement on child poverty *Against All Odds* published in conjunction with the Sunday Tribune
- Combat Poverty's website launched www.combatpoverty.ie
- National Anti Poverty Networks expanded to include Forum of People with Disabilities
- Introduction of *Working Against Poverty* Grants Scheme

2000

- Establishment of Local Government Anti-Poverty Learning Network
- Research report *Low Income Farm Households, Incidence, Characteristics and Policies* launched at National Ploughing Championships
- Research report *The Distribution of Income in Ireland* published
- Peace II Programme 2000-2004 (delays in implementation)
- Transnational seminar held in September in Dublin to share learning on a EU funded project involving five Member States. Project is entitled *Towards Effective Involvement:*



Kerry. Photo: Derek Speirs.

Involving Excluded People and their Organisations in Anti-Poverty and Social Inclusion policies.

2001

- EU member States required to submit National Action Plans on Poverty and Social Exclusions to the European Commission
- National Anti Poverty networks expanded to include: The Children's Rights Alliance; The Older Women's Network and the Irish Refugee Council
- By December 2001 a total of 1,387 projects funded through the first EU Programme for Peace and Reconciliation

2002

- Provision of training to Social Inclusion Units in local authorities (set up in 2001)
- Peace II formally launched in Carlingford, Co.Louth April 2002
- Joint seminar held with Money Advice and Budgeting Service to present the results of research on the saving needs of low income households
- EU funding secured for two transnational exchange projects under the Programme to Combat Social Exclusion : Project One *Mainstreaming Social Inclusion* and Project Two *Local Authorities and Social Inclusion*
- *Building Healthy Communities Programme* initiated



Fiftieth issue 2001



Bray, Marino School. Photo: Derek Speirs



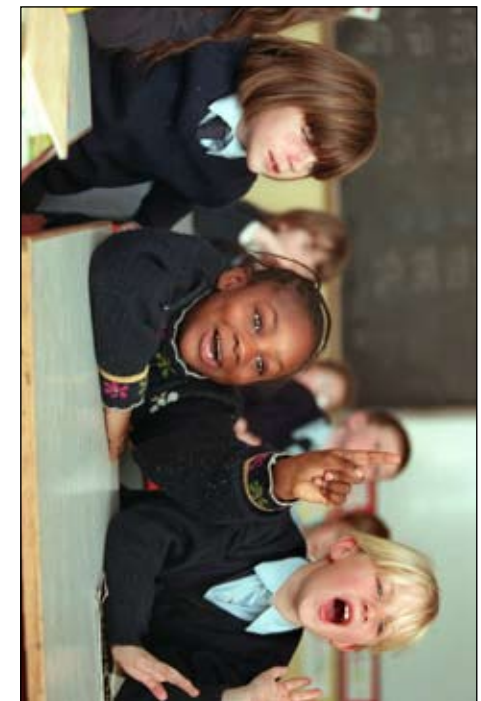
- *Against All Odds: Family Life on a Low Income in Ireland* published
- February 2002 the Government launched its National Anti-Poverty Strategy (NAPS) Review *Building an Inclusive Society*

2003

- National Action Plan against Poverty and Social Exclusion 2003-2005 initiated
- Completion of evaluation of National Anti-Poverty Networks Programme
- *Working Against Poverty Grants Scheme* moved from Combat Poverty to Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs
- Decentralisation announced in December 2003 – proposed that Combat Poverty move to Monaghan
- *Irish Social Expenditure in a Comparative International Context* published

2004

- Local Authorities and Social Inclusion Steering Group established to oversee mainstreaming of social inclusion agenda in local authorities
- Completed evaluation of the Local Government *Anti-Poverty Learning Network* and recommended the continuation of the



Dublin. Rutland Primary School. Photo: Derek Speirs

work as an essential element to support the NAPS at local level

- Combat Poverty successful under Phase II of the EU-funded Social Exclusion Transnational Exchange Programme and secures funding for another two years to develop work on *Mainstreaming Social Inclusion*

2005

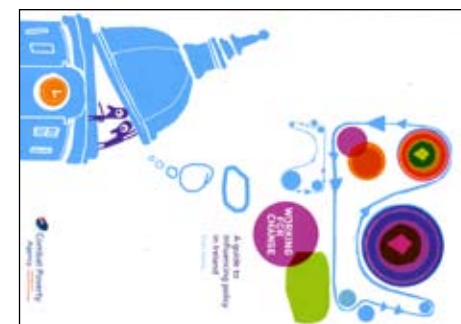
- *A Guide to Local Anti-Poverty Strategies* made available to all local authorities
- Policy statement *Ending Child Poverty* launched
- Publication of research on *Mapping Poverty: National, Regional and County Patterns*
- Combat Poverty funds the development of two pilot Local Anti Poverty and Social Inclusion Strategies in counties Wicklow and Laois
- Combat Poverty works closely with the Office for Social Inclusion (OSI) and contributes to consultations on the National Action Plan against Poverty and Social Exclusion 2006-2008

2006

- Institute of Public Administration takes over support of the *Local Government Anti Poverty Learning Network*
- *Day In, Day Out: Understanding the Dynamics of Child Poverty* published



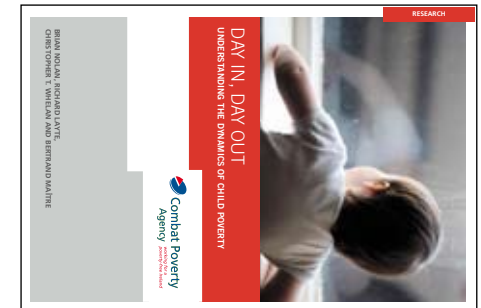
Dublin. 'Union Group' meet in Hill St. Photo: Derek Speirs



- *Tackling Child Poverty: a Dynamic Perspective* policy statement published
- *Financial Exclusion in Ireland: an exploratory study and policy review* published
- *Having Your Say* Programme to support participation in policy of people experiencing poverty and their organisations commenced
- *Finding Your Way Around Local Government* published followed by other titles in the series on welfare policy, the budget and the community and voluntary sector.

2007

- 20th Anniversary of Combat Poverty marked with Exhibition, publication and national conference on *Welfare, Poverty and Policy*
- *Poverty and Social Inclusion: Linking National and Local Structures* launched
- Community Participation and Primary Care Conference successfully held
- *Mainstreaming Social Inclusion Evaluation* launched in Brussels
- *Having Your Say Conference: Participation and Policy, Making it Work* successfully held in Croke Park
- *Silent People and Other Stories* a report giving voice to people experiencing poverty published
- *Health Policy Statement* published



- A research report *Poor Prescriptions Poverty and Access to Community Health Services* published
- *Economics and Poverty*, a community education resource published

2008

- *Tackling health inequalities: an all island approach to social determinants* published with the Institute of Public Health
- *Tackling poverty Tackling health inequalities* published
- *Voices of Poverty* CD developed giving voice to people's direct experience of poverty
- Educational resource for Transition Year students published called *Ireland - A Level Playing Pitch*
- *Feasibility Study for a Local Poverty Index* published
- *The Role of Early Childhood Care and Education - An Anti Poverty Perspective-* a policy discussion paper published
- *Together in Diversity: A European Conference on Community Development and Interculturalism* successfully held to mark EU Year for Intercultural Dialogue
- *Overcoming Barriers to Educational Disadvantage* national conference held in Croke Park
- Policy Briefing *Tackling Financial Exclusion in Ireland* published
- Government decision to integrate Combat Poverty and Office for Social Inclusion in a new strengthened division within the Department of Social and Family Affairs

Ballyfermot, Dublin, Ireland. Children playing in the street. Photo: Derek Speirs



2009

- Range of publications from *Building Healthy Communities* Programme published
- *People, Poverty and Participation* policy discussion paper published
- Launch of *A Policy Framework for Addressing Over-indebtedness*
- Combat Poverty and Office for Social Inclusion integrate. To mark this:
 - special edition of *Action on Poverty Today* published
 - book of eight essays published by Combat Poverty and the Institute of Public Administration called *Poverty, Policy and Practice* Combat Poverty 1986-2009
 - special lecture hosted by Institution of Public Administration to mark closure of Combat Poverty and its integration with the Office for Social Inclusion within the Department of Social and Family Affairs
 - Combat Poverty records transferred to National Archives of Ireland www.nationalarchives.ie
 - Combat Poverty publications from 1986-2009 available online <http://books.google.ie>
 - Combat Poverty's website available on Internet Archive www.archive-it.org



2009 Coláiste Cholmcille, Co. Donegal, winners of the Making Our Country Poverty Free Challenge with their project "Child Poverty - in Ireland"

