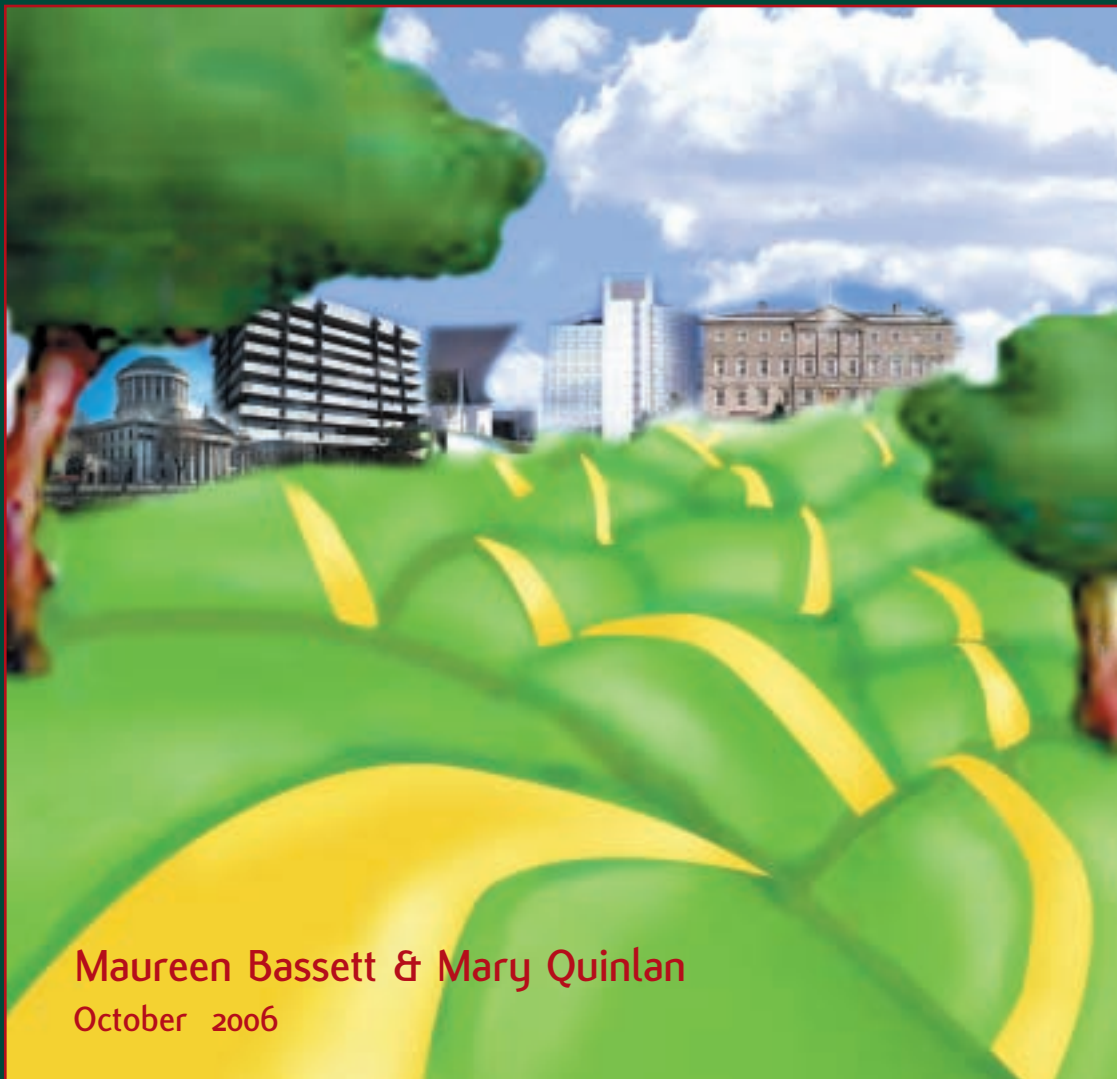


Pathways to Power

Women influencing decision-making in
Blanchardstown



Maureen Bassett & Mary Quinlan

October 2006

Without the active participation of women and the incorporation of women's perspective at all levels of decision-making, equality, development and peace cannot be achieved

(Beijing Platform for Action)

INVOLVE



Promoting opportunity & influencing decision-making

Supported by Blanchardstown Area Partnership



Pathways to Power

Women influencing decision-making in Blanchardstown

FINAL REPORT

INVOLVE PROJECT

PROMOTING OPPORTUNITY AND INFLUENCING
DECISION-MAKING

Strand 2

“Without the active participation of women and the incorporation of women’s perspective at all levels of decision-making, equality, development and peace cannot be achieved”

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Introduction



Introduction

On behalf of the Steering Group of the Involve Project, I am very pleased to introduce our Research Report, which presents the mapping of women's participation in local development and statutory organisations in Blanchardstown. This report represents the outcomes of the research carried out by Mary Quinlan and Maureen Bassett on behalf of Involve.

Involve is a project of the Equality for Women Measure under the auspices of the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform under the National Development Plan 2000-2006. The aim of the project is to address the gender imbalance that continues to be a feature of Irish society, by supporting an increasing number of local women to participate in decision-making in Blanchardstown.

The Project has three strands:

1. Leadership Training for women from RAPID (see note) areas of Blanchardstown
2. Research Report: mapping of women's participation in local development and statutory organisations in Blanchardstown with recommendations for improved participation of women
3. Organisational Change training with identified key organisations

Strand 1 has engaged 55 women in Leadership Training through the creative arts, investigating the reality of women's role in society from the individual and collective perspectives.

Strand 2 is this report.

Strand 3 will provide 4 organisations and networks with the opportunity to examine their policies and procedures in order to ensure women's participation in all levels of decision-making, as required by current legislation and policies.

The project aims to encourage the women in the leadership Training and the organisations in the Organisational Change Training to take the steps needed to prepare for the potential scenario in the near future, where all public authorities in the Republic will be required by legislation, as in Northern Ireland, to pro-actively promote equality, including equality between women and men.

I would like to thank the community and statutory organisations and the individual women from the Leadership Training for giving us their time and consideration by working with the researchers. I thank Maureen Bassett and Mary Quinlan for their hard work in producing a quality report in a short time frame. I would also like to thank the members of the Steering Group who had the task of overseeing the delivery of the Report, with the very valuable commitment and vision of Iris Lyle, the Project Co-ordinator.

The Steering Group acknowledges the additional financial and individual support provided by our community and statutory partners in Blanchardstown : Lead partner Blanchardstown Area Partnership, Fingal County Council, CoDVEC Adult Education Service Dublin 15, LES (Local Employment Service), Blakestown Community Development Project, Corduff Community Development Project, Greater Blanchardstown Development Project, Mountview Family Resource Centre, NYP (Neighbourhood Youth Project) and Wellview Resource Centre, HSE.

Gay Hogan,

Chairperson of Involve Steering Group.

Note: RAPID: Re-vitalising Areas through Planning, Investment and Development. This is a government initiative to fast-track money from the National Development Plan into designated RAPID areas.



Executive Summary



Executive Summary

Background

The Involve project is a community-based project in the Blanchardstown area of Dublin that aims to promote the participation of women in decision-making in organisations that impact on their lives. The rationale for supporting this approach is backed by evidence of more effective services, which contribute to greater equality and social inclusion. The particular target group are women from the four RAPID¹ areas of Corduff, Blakestown, Mountview and Mulhuddart.

The project identified four inter-related strands including leadership training, mapping the current levels of women's participation in decision-making, organisational-change training and evaluation of the project. This report focuses on the mapping activity carried out in June 2006.

The research identified the key existing service providers in Blanchardstown, and a questionnaire was sent to fifty-two organisations representing the statutory, public, local development and community development sectors. Completed questionnaires were received from seventeen organisations, and a small number of interviews were carried out with organisations which did not respond. Four best-practice case studies were identified and researched. Two focus group sessions were held, together with attendance and discussions with women from the RAPID areas currently taking part in the leadership training programme.

Context

The research is contextualised by a review of current policies and legislation within a gender equality and social inclusion framework. This review included:

- Equality for Women Measure (EWM)
- Equal Status Acts 2000 & 2004
- National Anti-Poverty Strategy (NAPS) and The National Action Plan Against Poverty and Social Exclusion (NAP/Incl.) including the responsibilities of Local Authorities
- Gender mainstreaming² both of NAP/Incl and the National Development Plan (NDP)
- Beijing Platform and The Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)
- Social Partnership
- Supporting Voluntary Activity 2000
- Taskforce on Active Citizenship
- National Plan Against Racism (NPAR) 2005

The importance of these in promoting greater participation for women affected by multiple disadvantages is noted. Also, the opportunities offered by a number of current and planned review and development processes are emphasised.

¹ Re-vitalising Areas through Planning Investment and Development. This is a government initiative to fast-track money from the National Development Plan into designated RAPID areas

² Gender mainstreaming means that in all policy areas attention should be paid to the impact on men and women



Participation

All the above policies emphasise the importance of participation in decision-making for socially excluded groups. There are, however, many different understandings of participation. For the purposes of this research Arnstein's Ladder of Citizenship Participation was adopted. This argues for a real participative democracy approach and by implication espouses real input into decision-making, as opposed to a more consultative approach.

Findings

Barriers

The slow pace of change in women's participation in decision-making is due to the many systemic, structural and practical barriers facing women. Systemic barriers include the deep rooted nature of gender inequality, as reflected and reproduced by the Irish welfare-state system, and the lack of change in the gender division of labour, particularly in relation to care work. The centralised nature of Irish policy-making is also seen as a barrier to participation of socially excluded groups. At organisational level deeply rooted cultures that promote certain ways of being and doing that favour the 'male model' were also identified.

These systemic barriers are often reflected in practical barriers such as:

- lack of quality childcare and support for other care roles
- prohibitive modes of recruitment to boards and other structures
- inadequate attention to ensuring meetings are inclusive in terms of format, timing and use of accessible language
- inadequate support for those with little experience of participating in such structures

Statutory organisational respondents also indicated challenges and barriers to further development of participation by service users. These include:

- difficulties in transferring policy lessons from local to national level
- resources, including time
- capacity issues at local service level
- conflicting and competing needs of service users
- ensuring inclusion of all groups, particularly the most marginalised
- lack of tested models of good practice

Organisational Ethos and Policy

The organisations that participated in the survey/interviews valued the inclusion of service users and used a range of structures to promote inclusion. However, in as far as could be ascertained participation was mainly achieved in a consultative rather than a participative way (see discussion above). This was most true of the statutory organisations.

The majority of organisations had equality and diversity policies but were less likely to have policies on gender equality, social inclusion or anti-racism. Very few organisations had an explicit policy on the inclusion of women from disadvantaged areas.



Representation of Women in Local Organisations

Whilst the local community organisations had a high representation of women from the RAPID areas, this was less likely to be the case in larger local development organisations. Most statutory organisations were not able to provide information on the level of representation by women from the RAPID areas. It was also noted that it is important to audit which subgroups of women from RAPID areas are represented. There was also evidence to support the trend that local women are less likely to be represented at higher levels of decision-making e.g. Strategic Policy Committees (SPCs).

Support for Participation

Organisations in the Blanchardstown area offer some supports to local women to promote their participation; these include childcare, training and capacity building. Other types of support are also outlined, drawing both on local examples and on case studies from elsewhere.

From an organisational perspective most of the organisations surveyed were interested in participating in the proposed Involve training, which aims to promote greater participation and develop capacities in this regard.

Gender Analysis

Generally it was found that there was insufficient attention to a gender analytic approach across many organisations. The fact that a considerable proportion of organisations believed that the gender of their service users was not relevant, aligned with a lack of emphasis on gender equality and social inclusion training points to this.

It was also noted that the implications of government policies regarding participation are not sufficiently reflected in the practices of many organisations in the Blanchardstown area.

The use of a number of frameworks was identified as needing development including gender analysis, gender mainstreaming, whole organisational approach and the development of progression routes for women from the RAPID areas.

Overall, the current policy context, aligned with the indications of interest in the further development of participation by service users, including women from the RAPID areas, offer opportunities to the Involve project. The partnership underlying the project, which includes statutory, local and community development organisations, is also a strength. It will be incumbent on all members to bring the learning from the project – including this research – into their organisations at senior level.



RECOMMENDATIONS

Leadership Training Course: Strand 1 Involve Project

The course should:

- Include a strong gender analysis based on an understanding of women's structural inequalities
- Include a component that outlines different models of participation and the implications of women's participation and inclusion in a deep sense
- Include a module that equips the women to understand policy-making and decision-making processes in key organisations
- Identify clear on-going mentoring and support for women who progress from the Leadership Training Programme
- Identify a range of progression routes that recognises that 'one size does not fit all'

Organisational Training

- Involve should focus on developing existing relationships with senior personnel in statutory/local development organisations to implement a gender analysis/gender mainstreaming approach to participation³ of service users
- Two courses should be developed in partnership with two statutory organisations, the Health Service Executive (HSE) and Fingal County Council, and two training courses should be developed with a range of organisations sharing a particular interest or focus
- The content for the course should include:
 - A strong gender analysis/gender mainstreaming approach
 - Inputs on social inclusion, focusing on models of participation and procedure
 - Focus on developing a greater understanding of the barriers to women's participation and how to overcome them for those women affected by multiple disadvantage

The course should draw on theoretical frameworks, for example whole organisational approach, but it should emphasise practical application within participants' organisations.

- Involve should identify a framework for on-going support to the organisations who take part in the training

Involve Project Overall

- Involve, in partnership with others, should begin the process of developing a strong infrastructure of women's groups in the Blanchardstown area, leading, within five years, to a Women's Network that will support women's participation in decision-making
- Involve should engage with key HSE personnel in relation to the imminent consultation process, which will inform the development of primary health care centres for Mulhuddart and Corduff
- Involve should consider drawing on the INGAGE (Inter Agency Group on Gender Equality) model, which involves partnership with Derry City Council, as a model of work with Fingal County Council
- Involve should identify a framework for continuing the work beyond the current project timeframe.

³ Participants should be informed by the model outlined in Chapter 2 of this report



CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

This report summarises the main findings of research conducted as part of Strand 2 of the Involve Project “Promoting Opportunity and Influencing Decision-Making”. This strand was to research current levels of participation by women in decision-making in a range of organisations in Blanchardstown in the county of Fingal.

1.1. BLANCHARDSTOWN – FINGAL COUNTY

Fingal County is one of the four Dublin local authority areas. It is the fourth largest county in terms of population size and the third fastest in terms of population growth. (Connecting People, Places and Prosperity, an Economic Strategy for Fingal 2001-2006). The preliminary total for the population of Blanchardstown enumerated on census night 23 April 2006 was 63,820 persons, compared with 50,607 persons in April 2002. This represents an increase of 13,213 persons or 26.1% in four years. In contrast, the population of the State increased by 8.1% and Dublin grew by just 5.6%. The proportion of members of Dublin’s new communities, which include ethnic minorities and migrants, is double the national average at 11%. The proportion of lone parents was 14.2%, with Corduff showing a percentage of 26.6%.

1.2. THE INVOLVE PROJECT

The Involve project is a community-based project in Blanchardstown and is funded by the Equality for Women Measure of the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform, under the National Development Plan 2000-2006. Involve is match-funded by Blanchardstown Area Partnership, Fingal County Council, County Dublin Vocational Education Committee (VEC) Adult Education Service Dublin 15, LES (Local Employment Service), Blakestown Community Development Project, Corduff Community Development Project, Greater Blanchardstown Development Project and Mountview Family Resource Centre.

The purpose of the project is to increase the level of participation of women from disadvantaged areas in decision-making in Blanchardstown. The motivation behind the project is based on the recognition that women, especially women affected by multiple disadvantage, are under-represented in policy decision-making fora in Ireland today. The expected outcomes of the project include increased gender awareness and gender mainstreaming within the key decision-making organisations and structures in the Blanchardstown area. Ultimately it is hoped that the project will ‘nurture participative democracy and assist organisations to mainstream their programmes’. (Involve Tender Document 2006: p3).



The project's activities focus on four inter-related strands. These are:

- Strand 1 Leadership training for women from the RAPID⁴ areas
- Strand 2 Mapping the current situation with regard to women's participation in decision-making in local development and statutory organisations
- Strand 3 Organisational-change training based on the findings of the mapping exercise
- Strand 4 Evaluation of the project

1.3. STRAND 2 – THE RESEARCH PROJECT

The aim of the research was to map women's participation in statutory organisations, public bodies and community and local development organisations in Blanchardstown. It also aimed to ascertain current procedures within organisations for the participation of women from RAPID areas and to identify how greater participation for women might be developed.

The research brief outlined the following aims:

- To review examples and literature of best-practice examples of promoting the participation of women from disadvantaged areas in local development within Ireland and elsewhere.
- Identification of existing service providers in Blanchardstown, including local authority, statutory, and key community and voluntary organisations.
- Description of consultative, advisory or decision-making structures that operate within the service providers and identification of the structures that currently allow or promote community participation.
- To describe the links, if any, between organisations and mechanisms to consult or integrate the voices of community representatives into decision-making.
- To provide a gender – and area – disaggregated map of participation in these structures.
- To review and record the organisations' interests, ideas and plans to promote participation of women from disadvantaged communities.
- To identify any best-practice case studies from among the organisations.
- To identify areas of work where the Involve programme can engage with agencies to develop policies to promote greater engagement.
- To highlight the implications arising from the findings for the project's leadership training strand.

1.4. APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY

A gender-analysis approach informed the research. This recognises that Irish society has yet to fully embrace the principle of gender equality, where all women have equality of access, opportunity and outcome. It also recognises that women are not a homogeneous group and some women, including the target group of this project, experience multiple disadvantages and therefore face even greater barriers to participation and risks of social exclusion.

A research plan was developed and agreed to guide the research process. This included the aims and objectives, expected outputs, target audiences and uses, scope, methods, stages and timeframes. The research was carried out in May and June 2006.

⁴ Re-vitalising Areas through Planning Investment and Development. This is a government initiative to fast-track money from the National Development Plan into designated RAPID areas



A range of methods was used for mapping the current situation with regard to women's participation in decision-making in the Blanchardstown area. Methods included:

- ▼ A literature review of the legislative and policy context most relevant to the participation of women affected by multiple disadvantage, together with review of key web sites, both in Ireland and overseas
- ▼ A review of some examples of best-practice case studies promoting the participation of women from disadvantaged areas in local development
- ▼ Discussion with key local informants to ascertain information on local organisations and research work carried out in the area
- ▼ Review of local research documentation
- ▼ Development of a data base of organisations to be researched, along with selection criteria
- ▼ Design of a questionnaire covering six broad areas: organisational culture and current thinking, policies, structures and decision-making processes, mapping, supports and linkages, and training
- ▼ Distribution of the questionnaire to fifty-two organisations and schools, together with pre-testing and follow up
- ▼ Interviews with personnel in three statutory organisations
- ▼ Interviews with key personnel involved in the three case studies chosen
- ▼ Facilitation of two focus groups
- ▼ Attendance at the Strand 1 Leadership Training Programme

Given the potentially large number of organisations in the target area a set of criteria was developed to guide the selection process of the most strategic organisations for inclusion in the mapping process. Existing local knowledge and documentation relating to key organisations was reviewed as part of this process. Criteria for choosing organisations for Strand 2 included:

- ▼ Their relevance to the needs of the target group
- ▼ Their strategic importance in terms of policy development and implementation
- ▼ The potential they have for leadership in the area of gender mainstreaming

A maximum upper limit of fifty-two organisations⁵ was agreed to ensure in-depth and quality information was collected. These were eight statutory organisations (these received nineteen questionnaires between the various different departments) seven public/local development organisations, ten schools and sixteen voluntary/community groups and organisations

The scope and parameters of Strand 2 were agreed at an initial meeting with the Co-ordinator and Project Steering Committee. The project was actively managed by the consultants to ensure that the key tasks and stages were completed within a negotiated and agreed timeframe and budget.

During the research process there were meetings with the Involve Steering Group, the Evaluator, and the Strand 1 trainers, and continuous liaison with the Co-ordinator.

⁵ See Appendix 2



1.5. STRUCTURE OF REPORT

The report is divided into 5 Chapters. Following the introduction, the report outlines the current policy context within a gender equality and social inclusion framework. A number of models of participation are highlighted and the current barriers to women's participation are also outlined.

Chapter 3 outlines the research findings, including the questionnaire analysis, interviews with personnel from statutory organisations, focus groups and a meeting with the women attending the leadership training programme. It also includes examples of two local organisational structures that offer opportunities for women's participation. Chapter 4 presents four examples of best-practice case studies in the context of a gender-analysis framework. Chapter 5 sets out conclusions and recommendations.



CHAPTER 2: CONTEXT

2.1. INTRODUCTION

There is an increasing recognition of the importance of engaging people affected by poverty and social exclusion in the shaping of policies and services that impact on their lives. The Combat Poverty Agency argues that policies intended to tackle poverty are more likely to work if people and communities affected by poverty are enabled to input into their design, planning, implementation and review (*Having Your Say Programme, 2005-2007*).

A feminist or gender-equality perspective places the emphasis on the engagement of women specifically. The National Women's Council of Ireland (NWC) states that the low representation of women at all levels of decision-making acts as a significant barrier to attempting to progress change for women's equality (*Women Creating Change, 2005*). In addition, they emphasise that whilst women share common experience of gender discrimination they are not a homogeneous group. They may also experience discrimination based on race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, disability, social class and so on. Therefore, the NWC proposes use of the concept of 'multiple discrimination' (*Women Creating Change, 2005: p10*). Efforts to include women in policy processes must reflect this reality.

There have been some advances in the participation of women, especially in the numbers of women who are involved on boards and committees at community and local development level. However, there are still serious imbalances in the participation of women *vis à vis* men in areas of decision-making at higher levels, where major decisions are taken on economic and social policies. It is likely that the situation of marginalised women is worse. Less is known about the participation of members of these groups; as the NWC report above highlights: 'the lack of information, research and disaggregated data on marginalized women is evident' (*Women Creating Change, 2005: p11*).

This chapter briefly outlines the legislative and policy context most relevant to the participation of marginalized women. It outlines a definition and understanding of participation, which informs this report, and it highlights the main barriers to women's participation.

2.2. EQUALITY FOR WOMEN MEASURE

The Equality for Women Measure (EWM) is a positive action programme developed to compliment the commitment to gender mainstreaming⁶ in the National Development Plan. The Measure is directly targeted at those areas of economic and political life where inequalities are known to persist. The objectives are to:

- Improve women's access to education, training and employment
- Achieve equality for women in the workplace and business

⁶ Gender mainstreaming means that in all policy areas attention should be paid to the impact on men and women



- Increase the number of women participating in decision-making.

Twenty-three projects were supported under the decision-making objective. This was a clear recognition by the EU and Government that women are under-represented in the economic, political, social and cultural structures of society.

2.3. LEGISLATIVE AND POLICY CONTEXT

There are also legislative and policy frameworks that can potentially act as drivers of greater equality for women and other marginalized groups, including increased participation in decision-making. It is important in developing strategies to promote greater participation that these contexts are highlighted. This will ensure that support for greater participation of marginalized women is understood by all organisations, including statutory organisations, as part of meeting obligations under national, EU and international legislative and policy commitments.

2.3.1. Equality Legislation and Framework

The Equal Status Acts, 2000 and 2004, are relevant to this area. These acts prohibit discrimination (with some exemptions) in the provision of goods and services, accommodation and education. The legislation prohibits discrimination on nine grounds: gender, marital status, family status, age, disability, sexual orientation, race, religion and membership of the Travelling community (Equality Authority 2004).

The Equality Authority has responsibility for overseeing the implementation of the Equal Status Act as well as the Employment Equality Act. It also works towards the elimination of discrimination and to promote equality of opportunity in relation to the areas covered by the legislation (Equality Authority, Strategic Plan 2003 -2005).

Drawing on the work of the National Economic and Social Forum (NESF), the Equality Authority seeks progress on the basis of an understanding of equality that has economic, political, cultural and affective dimensions. It outlines interlinked objectives for a more equal society flowing from these dimensions:

- Redistribution, involving access to resources and economic activity
- Representation, involving access to decision-making and a capacity to organize
- Recognition, involving an acknowledgement and a valuing of the different identities, experiences and situations of the groups experiencing inequality
- Respect, involving an underpinning of the interdependence and mutual-support aspects of human welfare (*Equality Authority, Strategic Plan 2003-2005: p3*)

The National Women's Council Strategic Plan also utilises this framework.

In this framework representation is seen as integral to the achievement of equality. The equal valuing of the affective domain – understood as the domain of human relationships, care work, mutual support and interdependence (Lynch, Cantillon and Baker 2001) – is crucial in considering greater equality for women. Also, the interconnectedness of all the dimensions is stressed.

Whilst the equality legislation is very important, many commentators, including the NWCI, point out that it needs to be strengthened by a rights framework underpinned by legislation. In the UK context a 'duties' approach is being introduced. The gender equality duty means that service



providers and public sector employers have to design employment and services with the different needs of women and men in mind. They will also be required to set equality goals 'in consultation with service users' and take action to achieve them. This duty is enforceable in law.

This duty has been in place in Northern Ireland since 1998, under the Ireland Act Section 75, and as part of the Belfast agreement. Government departments have to produce and submit equality plans to the Equality Commission. The Commission is currently reviewing implementation of the plans.

2.3.2. NAPS and NAP/Incl

The National Antipoverty Strategy (NAPS) is the government plan to reduce and prevent poverty. The strategy defines poverty as follows:

People are living in poverty if their income and resources (material, cultural and social) are so inadequate as to preclude them from having a standard of living which is regarded as acceptable by Irish society generally. As a result of inadequate income and resources people may be excluded and marginalised from participation in activities that are considered the norm for other people in society (*Ending Child Poverty, 2005: p23*).

The revised NAPS, *Building an Inclusive Society* (2002) identifies a number of groups considered at high risk of poverty, including women.

Whilst it is important that women are included as a target group, some commentators are critical of the lack of targets/commitments regarding such crucial aspects as child and elder care. (*Poverty Today, No 54, April 2002*)

As the NWCi points out, the causes and experience of poverty and social exclusion are linked to gender roles in society, and they conclude that policies, including those within NAPS and NAP/Incl, need to recognise the many facets of women's poverty and how poverty and inequality intersect to create structural barriers that prevent women moving out of poverty. (*Poverty Today, No.12, Spring 2006*)

NAP/Incl: The National Action Plan Against Poverty and Social Exclusion (NAP/Incl) 2003-2005 updates the Irish NAPS and is part of a European initiative to make an impact on poverty. The key objective is:

To build a fair and inclusive society and to ensure that people have the resources and opportunities to live a life with dignity and have access to quality public services that underpin life chances and experiences.
(*Social Inclusion Units in Local Authorities -Going Forward –the Lessons Learnt 2005*)

Combat Poverty highlights that this initiative recognises that ways have to be developed of increasing and improving participation for people affected by poverty in the NAP/Incl and in decision-making which affects them (*Having Your Say: Strengthening the Policy Voices and Practices of People in Poverty 2005-2007*)

Also, this EU initiative stresses the importance of mobilising all relevant bodies in society in pursuit of social policy goals, and Combat Poverty conclude that this must involve the participation and empowerment of people experiencing poverty and on-going consultation. (Combat Poverty Submission to NAP/Incl, 2003)



NAP/Incl 2006-2008 is currently being developed, a consultation process has taken place and the plan will be submitted to the European Commission in September 2006. Until this is published the NAPS/Incl 2003-2005 is official Government policy.

2.3.3. NAPS and NAP/Incl and Local Authorities

Of particular relevance to this study is that the local level is also stressed in relation to the roll-out of NAPS and NAP/Incl, and local authorities are seen as key to the delivery of the Strategy which is being rolled out by County /City Development Boards.

Local authorities are named specifically as one of the key players in reaching NAPS objectives as they have particular responsibilities and experience in delivering national strategies on the ground.

(From *National to Local – NAPS and Local Government*, Combat Poverty, 2002)

The establishment of eight Pilot Social Inclusion Units in 2001 was seen as mechanism for embedding the NAPS in local authorities. These were situated within the offices of the Director of Community and Enterprise. The Combat Poverty Agency commissioned a mid-term review of the pilot initiative entitled *Social Inclusion Units in Local Authorities – Going Forward – the Lessons Learnt* (2005) and makes recommendations as to how these can be strengthened. Recommendations include the embedding of social inclusion as a core objective and operating principle that permeates the way local authorities work. The report suggests a three-stage process:

1. Generating a commitment to social inclusion across the local authority
2. Broadening and embedding the commitment to social inclusion across the authority through the development of a clear strategic approach backed by monitoring and performance-management systems and through a range of initiatives
3. Embedding social inclusion in local authority policies and strategies so the local authority actions promote social inclusion and have positive outcomes for those who are excluded.

2.3.4. NAP/Incl and Gender Mainstreaming

The EU requires a stronger gender dimension to NAP/Incl. EU policy on gender mainstreaming means that in all policy areas attention should be paid to the impact on men and women, and policies to tackle poverty and promote social inclusion should take this into account (Combat Poverty Submission to NAP/Incl, 2003)

2.3.5. The EU & Gender Mainstreaming:

Gender mainstreaming refers to the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies and programmes. Articles 2 and 3 of the Treaty of Amsterdam formalises the EU commitment to gender mainstreaming; this is reflected in regulations regarding use of Structural Funds. These funds include the European Social Fund, the European Regional Development Fund and the guidance section of the European Agricultural Guidance and Guarantee Fund, and the Cohesion Fund. They are the principal means whereby aid is directed to less developed regions of the EU (Bainbridge, 2002: p487). It is stipulated that all measures supported by the Funds be gender mainstreamed.

This also resulted in a commitment by the Irish Government to gender mainstream the National Development Plan 2000-2006⁷. This also has implications for the rollout of government programmes such as the Local Development Social Inclusion Programme. (*Gender Mainstreaming the Local Development Social Inclusion Programme 2000*: p11). A new National Development Plan 2007-2013 is currently being developed.

⁷ With the exception of environment services, energy, coastal protection and roads



2.3.6. UN Level – the Beijing Platform for Action

The Beijing Platform for Action was adopted by governments from 189 countries – including Ireland – at the Fourth UN World Conference on Women, held in 1995 in Beijing, China. It is an agreement by governments to take action on women’s rights as human rights. Governments adopting the Platform promised to deliver equality, development and peace on twelve counts, including health, poverty, economic independence and women’s rights (*Women Creating Change*, 2005).

The Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) underlies the Beijing Platform. This was drawn up in 1979 and ratified by the Irish Government in 1985. This was the first convention to ‘comprehensively address women’s rights within political, economic, social, cultural and family life’ (*Women Creating Change*, 2005).

The above publication argues that the Beijing platform and CEDAW are important as they can act as lobbying tools by women’s organisations; for example, when demands for actions to meet commitments are being made. The Irish Government submitted their combined 4th and 5th reports to CEDAW in 2003. A ‘shadow’ report was also submitted. This was co-ordinated by the Women’s Human Rights project.

2.3.7. Social Partnership Agreements ⁸

The current agreement – *Sustaining Progress* – ends in 2006 and negotiations have been under way for some time around its replacement. These agreements are central to the development of economic and social policy, although the voices of those most affected by poverty, social exclusion and other forms of inequality have struggled to be present. The Community Platform, a network of 28 national organisations working to address poverty, social exclusion and inequality made a collective decision not to endorse the *Sustaining Progress* Agreement as they felt it did not address on-going problems faced by their members and the groups they represent. Since then they have been excluded from participating in consultative fora. They argue that one of the key tests of any new agreement will be the degree to which it advances meaningful participation and access to rights, especially for the most marginalized (www.eapn.ie).

2.3.8. Supporting Voluntary Activity 2000

The Government White Paper entitled *Supporting Voluntary Activity* (2000) stresses the importance of the community and voluntary sector in a mature democratic society. The White Paper emphasises that voluntary activity represents the engagement by individuals in their own development, in that of their communities and of wider society. It also makes particular reference to the following:

The sector has a specific role in ensuring that the experiences and interests of marginalized communities and groups are articulated and heard when decisions that affect them are being made.

(Cited in *Having Your Say: Strengthening the Policy Voices and Practices of People in Poverty*, 2005-2007: p10)

This White Paper also stresses the principle of active citizenship, and the current Taoiseach endorsed this at a conference in 2005. He alluded to the appropriateness of people who are excluded to have their voices heard and that Government should be required to take on board and reflect in policies and actions the needs and aspirations of communities (*Having Your Say: Strengthening the Policy Voices and Practices of People in Poverty*, 2005-2007: p 11). A taskforce on active citizenship was set up in April 2006 and is currently engaged in a consultation process. The aims of the taskforce are as follows:

⁸ Social partnership is a means of reaching agreement between the Government and the Social Partners on economic and social policy. It comprises 4 “pillars”: employers, unions, farmers and the community and voluntary sector. Its members are: Irish Congress of Trade Unions; Irish Business and Employers Confederation; Irish Farmers Association. The Community and Voluntary Pillar is made up of a number of community and voluntary organisations (www.cpa.ie/links/irishsocialpolicy.htm)



- Consider the extent to which people in Ireland play an active role as members of their communities and society
- Identify factors affecting the levels and nature of active citizenship in different areas of Irish life
- Suggest ways in which people can be encouraged and supported to play an active role (www.activecitizen.ie)

2.3.9. National Plan Against Racism (NPAR) 2005

This Government policy is particularly relevant to this study, given the high proportion of minority ethnic groups living in the four RAPID areas.

In January 2005 the Government published the National Action Plan Against Racism, *Planning for Diversity* (NPAR). Its aim is to provide strategic direction to combat racism and to develop a more inclusive and intercultural society in Ireland.

There are five key themes underpinning the plan 'that seek to translate the concept of interculturalism into a coherent and multifaceted policy framework' (Watt 2006):

- Protection
- Inclusion
- Provision
- Recognition
- Participation

The latter is particularly relevant to this study. The expected outcomes under this theme are:

- Ensure as far as possible that elections are conducted in a manner that does not contribute to racism
- Enhance the participation of cultural and ethnic minorities in political processes
- Enhance the participation of cultural and ethnic minorities in policy consultative forums and research
- Develop an intercultural forum to give further consideration to issues related to cultural diversity in Ireland
- Enhance the participation of cultural and ethnic minorities in community and local development (*Introduction, NPAR, 2005*)

2.4. DEFINING PARTICIPATION

All the foregoing policies emphasise the importance of participation in decision-making for socially excluded groups. As already highlighted, this is often posited in terms of active citizenship. The White Paper on Voluntary Activity states that this engagement

.... extends the concept of formal citizenship and democratic society from one of basic civil, political and social and economic rights to one of direct democratic participation and responsibility (Cited in *Having Your Say: Strengthening the Policy Voices and Practices of People in Poverty 2005-2007*: p12)

The former document also goes on to state that participation can be defined as an exchange between citizens and government, between those who make policy and people affected by policy choices [the precise form of which is shaped by the problem at hand] (Cited in *Building Solidarity, Women and Local Development, 2000*).



However, as this report points out, this understanding of participation raises the question as to who is allowed to initiate the exchange. It also flags the importance of examining what understanding of democracy is being employed. The authors suggest that the above definition implies representative democracy, which is based on the belief that existing structures e.g. local authorities and local development agencies have the capacity to represent their communities effectively.

On the other hand, participatory democracy is concerned with how the unequal distribution of power and resources affects people’s daily lives and how they can influence decision-making which affects them.

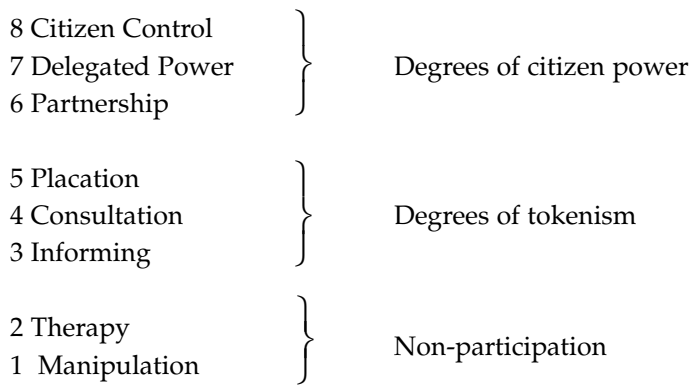
Participatory democracy implies that the power to make decisions should not be left to a small number of people but that power should be equally shared among citizens so that everyone has an opportunity to influence collective affairs.
(Building Solidarity, Women and Local Development, 2000: p7)

The fact that active, meaningful participation is not experienced by many excluded groups is highlighted by the experience of participants in the ‘In from the Margin (IFM) project’, developed by the NWCi and supported by the Equality for Women Measure. The report emanating from the project highlights

IFM participants wanted active and meaningful involvement in the shaping, planning and implementing of policies that affected their lives and their communities. They also wanted equal participation in education, employment and society *(Women Creating Change, 2005: p16)*

2.4.1. Arnstein’s Ladder of Citizenship Participation

This model is often employed to emphasise levels and degrees of participation



(Presented in Women Creating Change, 2005: p15)

As the above report highlights many non-empowerment approaches to participation can regard consultation as full participation. The Involve project argues in its Tender Document (03/06) for the development of a more participative democracy and by implication espouses the forms of participation which share decision-making power, at the upper end of Arnstein’s ladder.

Another approach put forward by Emmanuelle Abrioux (in Johnson et al. eds. 1998) highlights that socio-economic, political and cultural factors all play a role in determining the degree to which participation is possible. She argues that it is important to take these factors into account when considering types and stages of participation.



She presents what she calls a “spherical model of participation” and talks in terms of stages of participation rather than a ‘ladder’ or levels of participation. The spherical model takes account of the starting point and context of would-be participants and values even very small steps, which might be classed as tokenism on Arnstein’s ladder. However, it also emphasises the importance of incrementally building up participation at a pace suited to participants’ contexts (*Stepping Forward-Children’s and young peoples participation in the development process*, Johnson et al. eds. 1998).

The research for this study also found that an approach that stresses valuing small steps – as well as attention to pathways and progression – is useful in considering strategies to promote the greater participation of marginalised women.

These approaches are not necessarily mutually exclusive: the latter model is more concerned with the individual process whilst Arnstein’s could be seen as concerned with potential outcomes. Also, the NWCI report links the process and outcomes question by arguing for a community-development approach to supporting participation of marginalized groups. It states that the process should include active participation, capacity-building and empowerment of those invested in the outcome (*Women Creating Change*, 2005: p14). The report also stresses the value of a community development approach, as it has a collective focus, rather than being a response to individual crises.

2.4.2. Barriers to Participation

Whilst the legislation and policies outlined earlier demonstrate a recognition and commitment to the importance of participation in decision-making for socially excluded groups, including women, the reality is still far from the ideal. The following section summarises the key barriers (identified in the literature reviewed) to women’s meaningful participation in decision-making.

The emphasis is on systemic and structural barriers, as these have been identified as crucial to understanding the slow pace of change and the implications for strategies to achieve greater participation.

(i) Systemic – National

The deep-rooted nature of gender inequality, resulting particularly in inequalities for women, is emphasised. This is reflected in the gendered nature of the welfare state and welfare state policy (Williams, 1989; Daly, 2000). These authors and others argue that this not only reflects existing gender inequality in society but also, in many cases, has contributed to the creation of this inequality.

Lewis categorised Ireland as a ‘strong breadwinner’⁹ model, signified by women’s exclusion from the labour market and their being treated as dependent in tax and social security. This analysis has been endorsed by many subsequent commentators. However, with the recent economic development in Ireland and the huge increase in women’s participation in the labour market, commentators argue that Ireland could now be more rightfully categorised as a ‘dual-breadwinner model’ but still retaining many aspects of the former. In particular, the lack of major change in the area of unpaid caring work impacts on women in many ways, including their ability to participate in the labour market, on-going education and political life. This inequality includes unequal gender relations within families marked by, amongst other things, women doing the majority of the unpaid caring work. It is also sustained through weak childcare and poor early childhood education provision by the state (OECD 2005).

(ii) Other systemic barriers include:

- Institutional discrimination, both direct and indirect; this may be as women or based on one of the other equality grounds e.g. disability, ethnicity (*Women Creating Change*, 2005)

⁹ Lewis (cited in Cook and McCashin 1997) developed a categorisation of welfare states taking a gender relations perspective. These were 1. strong male breadwinner model, as above e.g. UK, Ireland, modified male breadwinner, marked by generous family policies and moderately high female labour participation e.g. France and weak male breadwinner model marked by individualisation of rights and entitlements and high female labour participation e.g. Sweden.



- Patriarchal nature of the political system, reflected in how it is organised and run
- Under representation of women at senior policy-making level in government departments and statutory bodies
- Nature of the Irish policy-making system: centralised, not transparent, not inclusive
- Nature of Irish civil society: weak-democracy
- Role of statutory bodies and their understanding and commitment to deeper levels of participation by excluded groups
- Under resourcing and funding of organisations and initiatives to support the development of women's organisations
- An implied assumption that gender equality has been achieved for/by women and should therefore no longer be a priority

(iii) Systemic – Local

All the above national-level barriers are also reflected at local level

- Weak local government
- Women under represented as councillors
- Women under represented in key decision-making bodies, particularly at higher levels
- Approach of providers at local level (particularly statutory) *vis à vis* formal consultation/participative structures
- Organisational cultures reflect patriarchal values, including assumptions re women as primary care givers and this latter work not equally valued
- Lack of or inadequate implementation of gender mainstreaming approaches
- Insufficient use of positive action approaches, which are allowed under the equality legislation in relation to gender
- Insufficient use of a gender analysis across all sectors
- Insufficient attention to the development of a women's infrastructure of groups and organisations

(iv) 'Practical' barriers

The following are often cited and mainly relate to the systemic barriers highlighted above.

- Lack of support for care role
- Expenses – women have less income
- Timing of meetings conflicting with care role
- Transport —less likely to have cars, linked to social class and gender
- Modes of recruitment to political/participatory bodies, transparency e.g. 'old boys' network'. Also, the need to hold senior positions in partner organisations to be selected as representative
- Inadequate induction/briefing
- Inadequate provision of accessible information, including language and literacy issues; also issues for those with disabilities e.g. visual impairment
- Physical accessibility
- How meetings are run e.g. time not taken to include or make allowance for those with less confidence
- Language issues for different language groups- even if English speaking but not first language e.g. accents and speed of talking can impact
- Use of jargon/technical language without clarification
- Lack of support generally to ensure full participation



(v) Women centred barriers

These are also mainly related to systemic barriers

- Lack of role models
- Lack of confidence/self belief
- Lack of /inadequate understanding of issues, systems
- Levels of skills and competencies and education

2.5. CONCLUSION

This chapter has outlined the major legislation and policies that highlight government recognition of on-going inequality for women and other socially excluded groups. They also demonstrate an understanding of the importance of the participation of these groups in decision-making on issues that impact on their lives. The model of participation is not always explicit and may vary depending on which statements are examined. The *Women and Local Development* report cited above stated that a model of representative democracy was implied rather than the stronger version of participatory democracy.

However from the point of view of the Involve project in terms of developing strategies for the development of greater participation of marginalized women it may be useful to think in terms of a continuum of participation, rather than mutually exclusive models. There are also challenges in terms of the degree of rights or duties accompanying policies, including those relating to participation.

The strengthening of this aspect is crucial to long-term change. The statement from an Taoiseach in 2005 and outlined above, stresses the need for Government to *'be required to take on board and reflect in policies and actions the needs and aspirations of communities.'* This is something still to be achieved.

At the time of writing this report (August 2006) many of the policy frameworks mentioned above are moving into new phases, which will provide opportunities for women's groups and networks to input into consultation processes - either in their own right or through representative bodies such as the NWCI, European Anti-poverty Network (EAPN) and Community Platform.

Policy frameworks entering new phases or being developed include:

- New NAP/incl 2006-2008
- New NDP 2007-2013 – in preparation
- New social partnership agreement – currently being negotiated
- Belfast Agreement – equivalence of rights provision in the agreement will arguably be the driving force for equality in Ireland, north and south; i.e. statutory duty may be extended eventually to government bodies in the Republic
- Gender Strategy for Women being prepared by Government as part of international treaty commitments
- RAPID programme to be continued – this may depend on which government is elected in 2007
- Taskforce on Active Citizenship – set up by the Taoiseach and currently consulting

Maximising the above opportunities will necessitate taking on board the deeply rooted and systemic nature of the causes of women's inequality and other structural inequalities. Involve and other projects face major challenges in attempting to address systemic change whilst also focusing on the development and support of marginalised women. Statutory organisations wishing to be part of the change process and to meet their commitments under the various policy and legislative frameworks also need to address these systemic factors. This will be addressed more fully in the final chapter.



CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH FINDINGS

3.1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter outlines the findings of the primary research carried out for Strand 2 of the Involve Project. Following a short profile of the Blanchardstown area, the chapter is then divided into three sections.

- Section 1 covers the findings and analysis of the questionnaire distributed to fifty-two organisations in the Blanchardstown area.
- Section 2 documents three interviews with personnel from three statutory organisations who did not return a completed questionnaire.
- Section 3 outlines the main findings from two focus-group meetings and attendance at the leadership training course of this project. Additional local opportunities for women's participation are also outlined

The chapter concludes with a summary of the overall findings.

3.2. BLANCHARDSTOWN: RAPID AREAS

During the years 2001 and 2002 an extensive survey (Blanchardstown RAPID Needs Analysis Report: undated) of households took place in the RAPID¹⁰ Programme areas of Mulhuddart, Corduff, the Fortlawn and Whitechapel estates in Mountview, and the Whitestown and Sheepmoor estates in Blakestown. A total of 2939 households were surveyed, with a response rate of 68.8% or 2,022 households.

A number¹¹ of important issues were highlighted with regard to the delivery of public services by various organisations. These include:

- **Fingal County Council** – Lack of play facilities and maintenance and up-keep of the physical environment – Good quality housing
- **Health Service Executive** – Good commitment of health care workers but lack of health centres and children's hospital or unit
- **Gardaí** – Slow response to anti-social behaviour and criminal behaviour but reasonably satisfied with youth initiatives
- **FÁS** – Satisfaction with CE and Jobs Initiative and training for youth but not enough information on services and lack of training centre
- **Department of Social & Family Affairs** – Positive response to delivery of services but critical with regard to information

¹⁰ Re-vitalising Areas through Planning, Investment and Development. This is a government initiative to fast-track money from the National Development Plan into designated RAPID areas.

¹¹ Selection of main responses only



- **Dublin Bus** – Positive improvement to No. 39 bus route but not enough routes to city and more indirect/internal bus routes needed
- **Adult Education VEC** – Good response from those who participate in youth and adult education and critical with regard to lack of information. Also better for programmes to take place within communities
- **Schools + Dept. of Education** – Positive reference to recent initiatives to counter disadvantage and early school leavers, critical with regard to lack of participation by parents and concern with future and expanding numbers of children
- **Drugs** were the worst thing cited about living in the area and not enough being done by way of leisure and recreational activities for young people.

These responses were both positive and negative, and the researchers took note of many of the challenges to those organisations highlighted in the report. Specific problems were also highlighted by the women attending the leadership training programme and these are outlined on pages 40 and 41 of this report.

3.3. SECTION 1: FINDINGS & ANALYSIS OF QUESTIONNAIRE

3.3.1. Questionnaire

In order to map women's participation in the Blanchardstown area it was decided and agreed to design a questionnaire as outlined in Chapter 1. The questionnaire was designed to be answered in less than ten minutes and was sent by email to fifty-two key organisations. It was pre-tested by three organisations, and small changes were made. Completed questionnaires were received from seventeen organisations, despite three follow-up calls and emails to the other non-returnees. Completed questionnaires were returned by five statutory organisations, four public/local development organisations and eight community/voluntary organisations.

The findings are as follows:

A: ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE & CURRENT THINKING

Table 1 (N¹² = 16)

Statements	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. Involvement of service users in shaping services contributes to a more effective service	11	5	–	–	–
2. The gender of those involved in this process is not a key factor	1	5	2	7	1
3. The effort required to engage service users outweighs the benefits	3	2	1	9	1
4. The involvement of people from the most disadvantaged areas is important	12	4	–	–	–
5. The most important motivating factor in engaging service users is to create a more equal society	7	6	3	–	–
6. Equality for women is of central concern in our organisation	7	2	5	2	–
7. Social inclusion is a fine aspiration but very hard to implement	2	6	1	5	2

All respondents considered a more effective service could be achieved with the involvement of service users. This thinking is reinforced by the response to statement 4, where again all respondents

¹² N = Total number of respondents given for each table or chart



considered the involvement of those from the most disadvantaged areas to be important. However, it is interesting to note that five respondents considered that it was not worth the effort required to involve this sector of people.

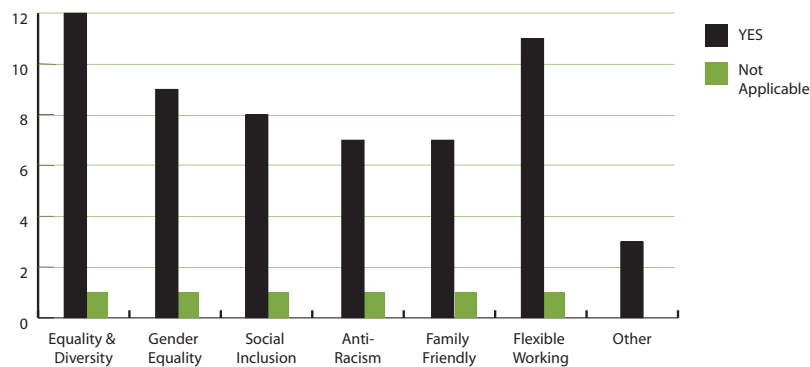
The commitment to implement social inclusion shows eight of the respondents indicating that is it hard to implement.

Equality for women was central to nine (56%) of the respondents, with two disagreeing and five neither agreeing nor disagreeing.

Six of the organisations do not consider the gender of their service users to be important when considering their service.

B: POLICIES

Chart 1: Organisational Policies in Place
(N = 14¹³)



Twelve of the organisations had an Equality & Diversity policy in place and nine organisations had a Gender Equality policy in place. Slightly in excess of half had a policy on Social Inclusion while only half had an Anti-racism policy. These are particularly relevant to the population profile of the RAPID areas.

The majority of organisations indicated that responsibility for policy was held by the CEO and/or boards of management.

C: STRUCTURES AND DECISION-MAKING PROCESSES

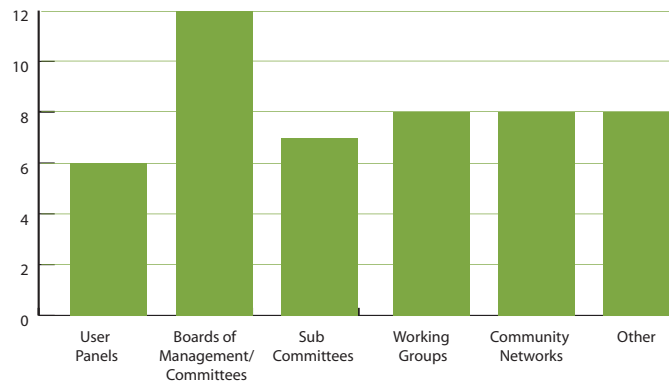
All the organisations (100%) stated that they had structures that enable local people to input into their services or programmes.

The most common form of structure used for involving local people was to recruit them on their Board of Management. All the other structures were used.

¹³ N = Total number of respondents given for each table or chart

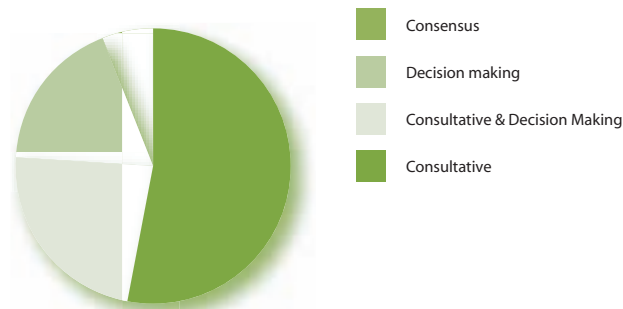


Chart 2: Form of Structures Utilised
(N = 17)



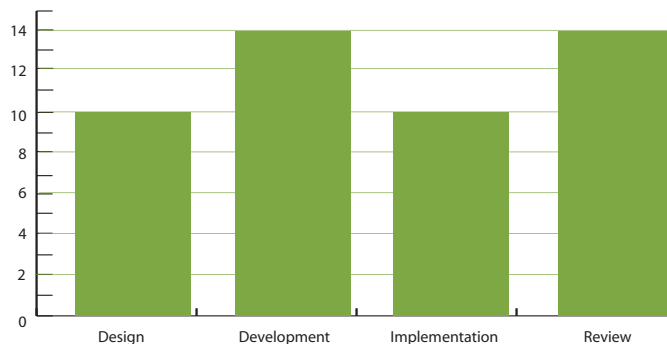
There was a 100% response to this question, with a variety of structures being utilized. The most commonly used were boards of management or management committees. Under the 'other' category structures described included a customer survey, and consultation with specific groups.

Chart 3: Decision-Making Processes
(N=17)



Over 50% of the organisations who had structures in place for local people to input into their services/programmes described these structures as 'consultative'; less than 40% indicated that their structures allowed service users to have a say in decision-making. One organisation indicated that they reached decisions by consensus.

Chart 4: Level of Influence
(N=17)



The information in this chart shows the level of influence service users had with regard to the design, development, implementation and/or review of policies, services or programmes. Ten organisations indicated that service users were involved in the design and implementation of policies, services or programmes, while fourteen indicated service users were involved in their development and review. Nine organisations said services users were involved in all four functions; one of these was a statutory organisation.



D: MAPPING OF NUMBERS INVOLVED

Table 2: Numbers of People Involved from Blanchardstown Area (N=11)

Total	Women	%	Men	%
49	26	53	23	47
3	1	33	2	66
8	5	62	3	37
50	40	80	10	20
43	27	63	16	37
21	19	90	2	10
13	10	77	3	23
8	7	87	1	13
30	25	83	5	17
25	21	84	4	16
100	80	80	20	20
350	261	75	89	25

Eleven organisations clearly answered this question: nine community or local development organisations, one statutory organisation and one school. There is a very high proportion of women involved in these local community organisations as compared to men: a clear ratio of 4 to 1.

Six organisations were unable to give precise information and four of these were statutory. One statutory organisation mentioned the kinds of organisations represented on their committees but without any indication of numbers.

Table 3: Structures Utilised by Service Users: Breakdown of Female/Male (N=11)

Structures utilised by service users	Total	Women	%	Men	%
User panels	50	38	76	12	24
Boards of management/management committees	120	77	64	43	36
Sub-committees	89	59	66	30	34
Working groups	42	35	83	7	17
Community networks	18	18	100	0	0

Again, the number of women represented on these structures is high. It should be noted that women are in line or above their pro-rata percentage (See Table 2) on user panels and working groups but are lower pro-rata on boards of management and sub-committees.

Eleven organisations answered this question on the number of women from the RAPID areas that are represented on organisational structures. However, five are unreliable statistically. Of the six organisations RAPID women represent between 12% and 90% of total service users; the average is approximately 44%. It is not surprising that the Community Development Organisations operating in the RAPID areas have the highest percentage of women from those areas participating in their organisations. The organisations operating in the whole of Blanchardstown have a smaller percentage.



Two of those organisations who do not have women from the RAPID areas on their structures have tried to recruit them.

Table 4: Specific Policy for Inclusion of Disadvantaged Women in Structures
(N=14)

	Yes	No	Totals
Statutory organisation	2	2	4
Public body	1	2	3
Community / Local	1	6	7
Total	4	10	14

Just in excess of a quarter of the organisations had a specific policy with regard to the inclusion of women facing multiple disadvantage. Six out of the seven community organisations have no specific policy; yet their membership shows a much higher percentage of women in their structures than men.

E: SUPPORTS AND LINKAGES

Chart 5: Supports offered for participation
(N=16)



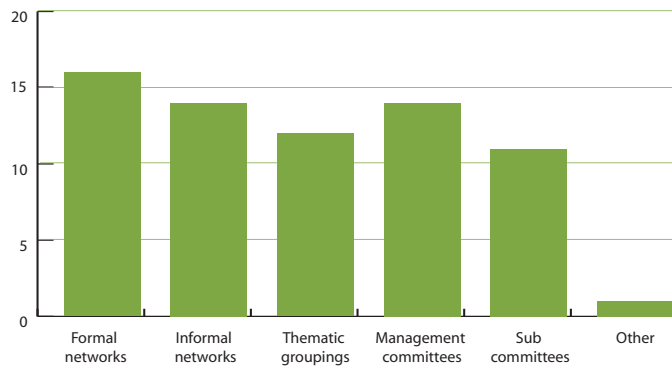
The main supports offered are training, attention as to how meetings are run and childcare. Little recognition is given to other care roles in the community. Only six organisations give attention to induction processes and seven to recruitment processes.

Fourteen of the organisations provide training to participants who are members of their structures. The majority of the training centres on management skills and effective participation. Six of the organisations offered training in equality and diversity, while three offered it in gender equality awareness.

Organisational supports suggested by respondents which could promote the further inclusion of women from the four RAPID areas included more resources, political will, training for staff and a greater willingness to be involved.



Chart 6:
(N=16)
How Organisations Link



All of the 16 respondent organisations link with each other in the Blanchardstown area. They use a variety of networks. Only one organisation did not indicate any linkages.

F: ORGANISATIONAL TRAINING

Chart 7:
(N=15)
Organisational Training



Twelve organisations offer a variety of training programmes. Only a quarter of organisations offer specific gender equality training (on its own and not part of equality training) and only one-third offered training in social inclusion.

Training was attended by a broad selection of staff, board members and volunteers. It is worth noting that of the five statutory organisations who responded senior management only attended the training in Fingal County Council and the VEC. From the Community Development groups only one Senior Manager attended. Seven organisations suggested that women from RAPID areas did attend training.

Training with Involve Project

Sixteen organisations said they would be interested in attending a training programme focusing on promoting the participation of women from the four RAPID areas.



Table 5.

(N=16)

Potential Trainees

Senior staff	4
Other management staff	6
Staff	14
Board members	6
Volunteers	5

Only four senior staff indicated they would attend the training; however, fourteen did indicate that staff would attend the training.

The majority said they would prefer training arranged around the type of organisation e.g. statutory or community, etc. Nine indicated they would attend if it was organized around organisations with a shared focus e.g. education or youth and only three organisations wanted customized training tailored to their organisation.

Table 6.

Content for Training

(N=15)

Content	
Introduction to gender equality & social inclusion	9
Introduction to equality legislation	10
Barriers for women participating	13
Analysis of current context	5
Identification of goals	7
Approaches & tools	6
Action planning	6

Interest is highest in learning about the barriers for women participating in decision-making and in introduction to equality legislation. Least interest is in the practical elements of the training such as action planning and analysis of the organisation's current context.

Table 7

Methods for Training

(N=14)

Methods	
Inputs	10
Case studies	12
Small group discussions	13
Creative methods	6
Planning activities	9

Interest was highest in small group discussion with least interest in the use of creative methods.

3.3.2. Discussion

The questionnaire findings do not give a comprehensive picture of the key organisations delivering services in the area, as findings are drawn from just seventeen responses. This was disappointing as the majority of the non-returnees were contacted approximately three times to encourage them to return the questionnaire. The timing of the survey unfortunately coincided with the end of the school year and this is reflected in just one response from ten schools surveyed.

A. Organisational Culture and Current Thinking

It is encouraging to note that all respondents, to one degree or another, indicated that involvement of service users contribute to the shaping of a more effective service. A little over a half of the



respondents agreed with the statement that women were of central concern to their organisation.

Some organisations considered that trying to involve service users from disadvantaged areas was difficult and perhaps not worth the effort. This has implications when compared to the practice of social inclusion policies and is of concern when only half of the respondents had a social inclusion policy. Six of sixteen did not think that the gender of their service users was important, indicating that the concept of gender mainstreaming is not a framework used in these organisations.

B. Policies

While organisations understood social inclusion as a concept, half of the organisations indicated that policies promoting it were difficult to implement. Twelve of the fourteen respondents indicated that they had equality and diversity policies yet only 57% had a policy on social inclusion. Slightly higher numbers had equality policies.

It is recognised that it is important to have well worked-out policies in relation to equality and diversity as a starting point. However, it is also recognised that robust implementation and review of these policies is crucial to successful outcomes; this aspect was not studied specifically in this research.

C. Structures and Decision-making Processes

It is encouraging that all respondents indicated they had a variety of structures that enabled local service users to input into their services or programmes. It is interesting to note that just over 50% of structures within the organisations surveyed are consultative rather than decision-making. In the light of the model of participation envisaged by Involve, this finding indicates that further work would need to be done in this regard if the model is to operate successfully within these organisations.

The level of influence these service users have is not that clear, with nine organisations saying that service users are involved in the design, development, implementation and review of these services. Ten indicated service users were involved in the design of their services, this is ambiguous when compared to the number said to have a consultative role only.

D. Mapping of Numbers Involved

It is significant that only eleven out of the seventeen respondents attempted to answer this question. Of those who answered (mainly local and community development organisations), it is noteworthy that 75% of people involved are women. This is consistent with the level of participation by women generally in Ireland in community and locally based organisations; women are less well represented in organisations with higher levels of power and influence.

Overall, the level of participation by men in the organisations surveyed is 25%. However, on boards of management they represent 35%. This is also a pattern in male/female representation levels.

There are a high number of RAPID women represented in the community projects in the RAPID areas but they are less well represented in the organisations that have a wider geographical spread. The statistical information given is unreliable in many cases, as the total number of people given does not tally with the breakdown of users in the various structures.

Only four of the fourteen organisations had a policy on the inclusion of disadvantaged women, making their inclusion in real decision-making less likely.



E. Supports & Linkages

Training is the main support given to services users, and it is encouraging to note that twelve of the organisations give attention as to how meetings are run.

Whilst the majority of organisations try to facilitate women's participation through the provision of/support for childcare, other care roles in the community are given little recognition; this would have implications for the participation of many women who need to take care of elderly or infirm relatives.

Another implication for women's participation is that only six of the organisations pay expenses for attendance at meetings.

The organisations use a variety of networks/methods for linking and these could offer possibilities for the further inclusion of women.

F. Organisational Training

Two of the five statutory organisations who provided training in equality and social inclusion indicated that senior management was involved. In the organisations that indicated an interest in the proposed Involve training, only four indicated that they would send senior management. This will present particular challenges for the Involve project down the line.

3.4. SECTION TWO: INTERVIEWS AND FOCUS GROUPS

'People need to be heeded, not just heard'

3.4.1. Introduction

Interviews were conducted with personnel in three key statutory organisations. This was necessary to compensate for the fact that completed questionnaires were not received by these organisations, which had been identified by the participants in the Involve leadership training as being crucial to their lives. The organisations were the Gardaí, the Health Service Executive (HSE) and the Department of Social and Family Affairs (DSFA).

The interviews adopted a semi-structured approach and aimed to cover some of the core areas addressed in the questionnaires. These included:

- Current structures in place to facilitate the input of local people into shaping services and policies that affect them, and in particular women from the RAPID areas
- Other mechanisms utilised to carry out above
- Linkages with other key local stakeholders /services /organisations
- Levels of interest in the proposed Involve organisational training

The following sections summarise the key findings from the three interviews.

3.4.2. Structures

Whilst interviewees felt that they did consult with local people their organisations do not have formal structures to facilitate this input. In the case of the HSE it was highlighted that the new HSE strategy is proposing consumer panels. This development is underway and will be developed nationally over the next three to five years.

3.4.3. Other Mechanisms for Consultation/Participation

All those interviewed felt that they were broadly in touch with the needs of the local communities, including the RAPID areas, although all were open to the idea that further development could happen in this regard. They felt that their involvement in a range of local development structures



facilitated this. These include the Partnership Board, Drugs Taskforce, RAPID and the Local Employment Service.

They felt this also happens through engaging with locally based voluntary and community organisations.

The following examples were outlined:

- **The Gardaí** – through Neighbourhood Watch, Community Drugs Teams, the (proposed) Women's Refuge and Victim Support
- **DSFA** – through the Money Advisory Bureaux (MABS), Family Support Agency, Comhairle - Citizens Information Service (CIS)
- **HSE** – through the project in Wellview Green, Neighbourhood Youth Project and Barnardos, amongst others

They also believed their work on the ground brought them into contact with the local community and this also made them aware of their needs e.g. Gardaí through community police, DSFA through local offices and HSE through local health centres and the latter two also through feedback from local-level initiatives that they fund.

In addition, a number of specific initiatives were identified as attempting to further develop input from local communities.

The Gardaí are holding quarterly information seminars. These started in January 2006 and are held in the Blanchardstown Town Centre; the last one dealt with advice on security. They are also hosting quarterly sessions for specific ethnic minority groups built around different themes.

The HSE are currently developing an approach to a consultation process that will inform the development of a primary health care centre earmarked for Mulhuddart. The HSE North West local implementation group will oversee this and the Local Health Officer Manager will play a key role. A subgroup will be set up and this will involve representatives from local, voluntary and community organisations.

The DSFA representative used the conduit of her regional manager to feed information from the local level into policy committees and fora.

3.4.4. Other Issues Identified Relating to Consultation/Participation

It did appear that interviewees were working from different understandings of what it means for local people – including women – to input into shaping policies and services. Whilst all expressed a view that this was important, the model implied was of occasional consultation and information-sharing rather than deeper levels of input into decision-making as discussed in Chapter Two. However, the HSE representative did propose a deeper model and argued that Arnstein's model was a useful one and that the HSE should strive for the upper levels of participation.

All recognised the importance of the participation of women and highlighted that, in fact, it is mainly women who are participating at local level and in local groups.

The need to balance delivery of services with consultative processes was identified; e.g. the Garda representative pointed out that local people want more police patrolling the streets and that attending a lot of meetings can result in taking them off the streets.

The difficulty in reaching the most marginalised groups was highlighted. In the case of the HSE and the proposed upcoming process the HSE representative emphasised that the methodology chosen must ensure that these voices are included. She also noted that the process is as important as the outcomes. The need to recognise the differences in life circumstances of individuals and their ability to participate – particularly if they are in an acute or crisis situation – was stressed



Use is being made of guidelines for working with specific groups developed by national organisations; for example, the Combat Poverty Agency Guidelines on putting poverty and social exclusion at the centre of health practices and research carried out by bodies, such as the Office for Social Inclusion.

Interviewees highlighted that meeting competing and conflicting needs within local areas is a particular challenge to service providers. The need for statutory and local groups to work in a collaborative 'non-blaming' way was also stressed

Interviewees also recognised that attention also has to be paid to areas not included in RAPID (e.g. Tyrellstown) and to non-area specific groups, such as Travellers, people with a disability, other ethnic minorities and members of the gay and lesbian community.

There was also recognition of the danger of 'consultation fatigue' for local groups; it was felt that this was less likely to happen if outcomes from the consultation/participation processes were evident. The need for greater openness regarding what happens following consultation and how decision-making works was indicated by one interviewee.

The DSFA representative highlighted the difficulties of translating locally developed proposals for policy change to national level. The bureaucratic nature of large national statutory organisations and the difficulties this can cause for inputting to national policy level were alluded to.

The HSE representative stated that the HSE needs to be better at explaining what their policies are and the timeframes for implementation. She felt that the restructuring of the HSE does offer opportunities but that it will take two to three years to see impact on the ground. She also felt that the HSE Community Development Team would have an important role to play as 'honest brokers'. She also indicated that more formal structures are needed.

3.4.5. Involve Organisational Training

Two of the three organisations interviewed felt the proposed Involve training had potential value. One strongly argued, however, that the training would be successful only if it was supported and engaged with by senior management. Overall, the need to situate training within a model of organisational change was stressed. The HSE representative proposed that a meeting should take place with key personnel for promotion and consultation before designing the training.

3.5. SECTION 3: PARTICIPANTS IN LEADERSHIP TRAINING GROUP AND FOCUS GROUPS

Two focus groups were held to facilitate input into the research both by participants enrolled in the Involve Leadership training programme for local women and representatives of Community Development Projects (CDPs) and the Family Resource Centre (FRC).

The researchers also attended part of a training event which brought women from the three training groups together. The outcomes from this event will be recorded fully by the trainers. The following was noted by the researchers, as being particularly relevant to this study.

3.5.1. Key Issues from Leadership Training Programme – 31st May 2006

The women were asked to work in small groups and identify the key issues impacting on their lives and the key organisations that relate to these. There was considerable commonality across the groups and the following summarises the issues identified together with the key organisations responsible.



Key Issues	Key Organisations
Health - Medical centre needed for women & children - Not enough GPs & health centres - Women's health & domestic violence	HSE + Minister
Childcare - Lack of crèches - Good childcare for all + playschools - After-school care	Dept of Education + HSE + FÁS
Education - More primary & secondary schools needed - Smaller school sizes	Dept of Education + politicians
Housing - Lack of social housing - High rents - Housing allocation e.g. leaving empty due to vandalism yet families need them - Rent supplement & loss of this if earn over certain level. Lack of affordable housing resulting in discouragement of employment. Catch 22 leading to isolation & loss of self-esteem	Dept of Environment + Fingal CC + DSFA + local TDs
Discrimination - Many black people living in fear & therefore moving away - Ethnic communities experiencing this	All organisations + Dept. Justice Equality & Law Reform
Environment - Inadequacy of green areas - More playgrounds needed - Planning issues - Amenities/sports facilities	Fingal CC + Dept of Environment
Crime - Anti-social behaviour - Drugs/alcohol - Role of community Gardaí	Gardaí + Parents + all citizens. Minister for Justice + the courts + the legal system
Transport - More buses needed - More direct routes - Buses to run on schedule	Minister for Transport + Bus Eireann + Dublin Bus

Participants reinforced the need for strong democracy and endorsed the need for real participation and consultation.

3.5.2. Focus Groups

Focus Group 1: Women Participants in Leadership Training Programme

The above women were invited to attend a focus group to input further into the research. Six women attended. The discussion focused on their involvement with local organisations and issues.



The types of involvement and pathways identified by those who are involved included:

- Through a parent toddler group to get relevant advice and a chance to make friends and break the isolation; respondent hopes to get involved in another programme
- Through a lone-parent group, with a similar purpose as above
- Through Women's Studies, leading to a number of further involvements, e.g. CIS, MABS, Legal Aid Board and the BASE (Blanchardstown Area Small Enterprises) Enterprise Centre. She is now on the Board of BASE.
- Through involvement in CDP as information person; this led to engagement with the drugs issue in the area, which emerged as a major issue. She attended a course and subsequently funding was sourced by the community for research funding. This led to the setting up of the Greater Blanchardstown Response to Drugs (GBRD), which was a catalyst to the setting up of the Community Drugs Teams (CDTs) in Blanchardstown. She is now involved in the RAPID Needs Analysis Implementation Group in Hartstown

What forms and areas of involvement?

"Firstly you have to want to get involved or be interested in an issue. It is hard for women with small children"

The following pathways were identified with regard to potential involvement:

- Through Community Development Projects (CDPs) - call into one and talk about an area of interest and get involved
- Parent Teacher Association (PTA) – get on board or get involved in issues for children and youth
- Lobby politicians about issues. This is best done by women's groups who come together in issue groups and then lobby politicians
- Health care is a problem e.g. the area needs a bigger choice of doctors and more health centres; this is an issue to become involved in
- There are problems with getting involved e.g. interpersonal problems between women plus issues of power
- There can be a lack of knowledge on how to get on a committee and how to make it work effectively; good training courses are one answer to this problem
- Women need to be pro-active i.e. to access resource centres, get information eventually leading to a Women's Network
- Join Needs Analysis Groups or one of the Needs Implementation Groups

Focus Group 2: Community Development Projects & Family Resource Centre

The four Community Development Projects and the Family Resource Centre are key organisations within the four RAPID areas. Four people attended a focus group, and Corduff CDP and Blakestown CDP were represented. Unfortunately, due to annual leave and other commitments it was not possible for representatives of the other organisations to attend.

Current Participation of Women

Participants identified the following areas of involvement. This is not necessarily comprehensive.

Local women – including women from the RAPID areas – are currently participating in the following organisations either as volunteers or as paid workers:

- RAPID – in local implementation teams
- Subgroups and task groups of above e.g. health



- Drugs Task Force – women from RAPID areas are represented¹⁴
- CDTs – these each have a committee and include all local women
- Research is talking place on what services are needed in primary health care centres. Traveller women are involved and an action research approach is being used
- CDPs – many women are involved; possibly not enough focus on policy work
- Women's Refuge (see below)

Barriers and Related Issues

The following barriers were identified.

- Perception that others know more
- Use of jargon, particularly by statutory organisations
- Hard to get people to go for Strategic Policy Committees (SPCs)
- SPCs are seen to be particularly problematic, as community representatives rarely speak; there is an overuse of jargon and technical terms and they are timed to begin at 3.30pm, coinciding with school finishing time. No women from the RAPID areas are represented. They are generally seen as very disempowering
- Statutory providers don't understand issues on the ground

What Needs to Change

- Need for organisational change, particularly at statutory level with organisations such as Fingal County Council, HSE, and Gardaí. They are not listening and not consulting e.g. D15 Policing Plan – no consultation with local groups and three times fewer Gardaí than in Limerick.
Fingal is very weak on estate management
Schools – there is little known about parent representatives on boards and there are questions as to the role and influence of the PTAs
- Community representatives need more support
- Need for better cohesion across groups
- Mechanisms for bringing information back to community

Models of Good Practice Locally

The following were identified as models of good practice to support women's participation locally.

Drugs Task Force

- Community representatives meet with development worker before meetings to prepare and for support; although it was observed by another participant that a meeting to prepare may make this approach overly demanding on people's time

Active Citizenship Training

- This course grew from an earlier piece of training run by the Vincentians on voter education. The participants observed that this was the '*best piece of training*' they undertook. It acted as a bridge to move people from local involvement to policy areas. It also prepared participants to challenge politicians on the doorstep. It encouraged them to go onto other courses e.g. Community Development. Also, it had a knock-on effect, influencing other family members.

Level 5 FETAC course

- CDP Blakestown ran this course and it has moved many women to get involved in RAPID and other local development organisations. It was observed that all levels need to be offered, including Level 1, progression needs to be possible and certification is needed.

¹⁴ Representatives are elected locally but generally a low turnout of voters



Analysis re Women's Equality and Infrastructure

The researcher raised the question of whether an explicit gender analysis is introduced into courses and development work generally. It happens in some courses such as the active citizenship course. This looked at why women are under represented in all parties and also why the higher up power structures we go we see less and less women.

Participants recognised that women's development is essential both for their own development and that of the family but they also acknowledged that there is a weak infrastructure of women's groups in the RAPID areas. A small number were identified including: Blakestown 'Tuesday night group', a morning group made up of minority ethnic women which is less formalised (also in Blakestown), one group in Mulhuddart and a Traveller women's group

Two other initiatives with a women's focus were identified: A festival to mark International Women's Day (although it was stressed that it 'could be more political') and a women's refuge. The refuge has been funded but it provides accommodation only and will not offer training and support. The steering group includes local women.

Other Means of Affecting Change

It was observed that it is not necessary to sit on committees to affect change in policy and that campaigning can also be effective. An example given was getting a pedestrian crossing and 'dipped' kerbs at the Corduff Resource Centre.

Blakestown CDP has set up meetings with Gardaí to discuss the idea of a policing forum and has made some progress in engaging Gardaí. The representative did raise the question of whether or not there was a real process of policy change or whether changes were simply due to (and therefore dependent on) the good will of individual Gardaí.

3.5.3. Other Opportunities for Women's Participation Locally

The following two local initiatives were identified by local informants as offering opportunities for women's participation in decision-making.

Blanchardstown Area Partnership (BAP)

- The Blanchardstown Area Partnership's structure for community participation is formalised through Forum 15 (A network of community & voluntary groups in Dublin 15). Groups affiliate to Forum 15 and through this have access to membership of the Plan Implementation Boards (PIBs). The PIBs are the sub-structure of the Partnership through which the Local Area Strategic Action Plan is delivered. The Community Directors of the Partnership Board (7) are then elected from the community groups that are members of the PIBs. The community directors are supported by the Forum development worker and the partnership's deputy manager

Re-vitalising Areas through Planning, Investment & Development (RAPID)

- The RAPID programme in Blanchardstown is managed on a day-to-day basis by a full-time Project Co-ordinator. The Co-ordinator reports to a board (more commonly referred to as the Area Implementation Team (AIT)) who meet monthly. The AIT comprises representatives of a wide range of organizations, both statutory and non-statutory, from the Local Drugs Task Force and BAP to An Garda Síochána and the HSE. The AIT has four positions for members of the community who live in the RAPID areas of Blakestown, Corduff, Mountview and Mulhuddart.

¹⁰ Re-vitalising Areas through Planning, Investment and Development. This is a government initiative to fast-track money from the National Development Plan into designated RAPID areas.

¹¹ Selection of main responses only



RAPID community representatives are elected by members of the local community in a process supported and facilitated by Forum 15. Community representatives are supported in their role by the Co-ordinator (and in the past by Forum 15) to play as full and as active a role as possible in the planning and decision-making process of the RAPID programme. As well as the AIT, RAPID community representatives participate in local-area RAPID planning groups in which they reside, and they have been instrumental in setting priorities and determining leverage funding projects. RAPID community representatives have hosted visits from other RAPID areas and have taken part in visiting other RAPID areas. RAPID representatives also attend national conferences and seminars.

3.6. CONCLUSIONS

There is a high level of awareness of the issues, problems and concerns with regard to women's participation in the Blanchardstown area. This was borne out by the focus groups and statutory-body interviews and with the women taking part in the Involve leadership training programme. The questionnaire process threw up some very interesting information with regard to current thinking and practice in local organisations.

It should be noted from the field research that the implications of government policies are not reflected in the participative practices by organisations in the Blanchardstown area. It is clear also that there is further work to be done in developing a greater understanding of what models of participation mean in practice within these organisations. It would appear that there are many different ways of understanding participation: participation could include anything from a consumer survey to real decision-making opportunities. This is discussed in more detail in the final chapter.

There is a particular challenge to the Involve project with regard to the proposed Strand 3 of the project in relation to organisational training. Only four of the organisations are willing to send senior management personnel to a training course; yet if any real change is to happen, a whole organisational approach is important, especially at statutory level.





CHAPTER 4: BEST-PRACTICE CASE STUDIES

4.1. INTRODUCTION

An extensive search for best-practice case studies in the area of women participating in decision-making was carried out as part of the research process. This search was to identify the learning and concerns arising from similar projects in order to inform the Involve project. Many initiatives in the area of women and decision-making have been developed in Ireland and overseas; however, it would appear that the majority of these have focused on getting more women into the formal political arenas. It was more difficult to identify women's participation in statutory organisations, but the first two case studies listed below do have significant partnership approaches between the women's sector and statutory organisations.

The case studies chosen are:

1. The Donegal Women Network Projects
2. INGAGE Derry
3. Clondalkin Women's Network
4. Longford Women's Link

These case studies are contextualized by reference to certain approaches and frameworks that stem from fundamental principles and values. These principles appear time and again in literature as the ones without which real participation for women affected by multiple disadvantage cannot be either envisaged or achieved. Four particular ones are chosen here and they are:

- Gender Analysis
- Gender Mainstreaming
- Routes of Progression
- Whole Organisational Approach

These four frameworks should inform any project, programme or action that wants to meaningfully engage women in real participation and decision-making fora.

4.2. GENDER ANALYSIS

A gender analysis of equality and inclusion means seeing the world through women's and men's experiences and perspective and ensuring that all policies and practices are inclusive of women and men. However, it takes into full consideration the historical exclusion of women from full participation within traditional structures. It believes that this exclusion of women in decision-making leads to inequality and negatively impacts on society in general. It advocates a root-and-



branch transformation of traditional decision-making structures whereby men hold most power in government and policy-making organisations.

4.3. GENDER MAINSTREAMING

A gender mainstreaming approach to inequality is now the one most favoured by governments, both in Ireland and internationally. This approach is based on a gender analysis that centres on the social and cultural differences between women and men. These differences manifest themselves in the different roles ascribed to women and men. These roles are learned; they can change over time and they vary according to one's culture, class and age. The values and norms associated with these roles are more often than not reflected in policies and practice throughout the economic, political, social and religious sectors of society. For it to be totally effective equal value must be given by society to the work of women and men, and this core value must not reflect one gender at the expense of the other.

This approach implies that women and men must be given the opportunity to fully participate in and receive equality of treatment in all analyses, policies, practices and interventions, so that at every stage of development and implementation an analysis is made of the effects for women and men and appropriate action is taken. In theory this is a very effective way of addressing gender inequalities in society as it sets out explicit guidelines and recommendations for gender proofing policies, programmes and practices. However, it is not enforced by legislation and the centrality of 'the woman' is often forgotten in favour of broader equality principles. It is also not systemic in questioning the male traditional hierarchical structures so reflective of society in general.

A gender mainstreaming framework developed by the Equality for Women Measure (EWM) in decision-making is outlined below. This formed the basis of selection of the twenty-three projects funded under this action.

Equality for Women Measure: Framework

Focus	Objective	Actions
Systems, processes, structures	To identify and remove barriers to women's participation that exist within processes and structures	Research, data gathering, gender audits, developing action plans
Existing members of Boards, Committees, social partners, organisations, political parties etc.	To facilitate them to work for change within their own structure/organisation and to create a climate of support and acceptance among key players within those structures for greater participation of women	Clarifying core concepts of gender equality, understanding of social analysis, exploring organisational culture, training in gender awareness, gender proofing, and gender mainstreaming
Women		Capacity building, equality training, specific skills training, mentoring, personal supports, networking, information seminars



Under this framework three types of projects were funded. These were:

1. Strategies undertaken by political parties and social partner organisations to promote women within their own structures e.g. Irish Farmers Association, the National Youth Council of Ireland and various political parties.
2. Strategies to facilitate and promote women's participation in the structures of County Development Boards e.g. Donegal Women's Network (see case study below).
3. Strategies to promote women's participation in local social partnership and other local decision-making structures e.g. Community Workers Co-operative, National Traveller Women's Forum and Age Action Ireland.

All of these projects have women as the focus group; however, they are not aimed particularly at changing the systemic root causes of inequality within organisations but will in themselves raise awareness of gender inequalities.

4.4. ROUTES OF PROGRESSION

In order to increase women's participation in decision-making the main focus has been on women themselves and on offering training in personal development, awareness-raising, and most recently in leadership. (See, as an example, EWM framework above). These actions have been very beneficial to individual women and have increased the number of women involved, especially at community and local development levels. They do not have a systemic approach in that they are often once-off training programmes without support or mentoring follow-up. Little has been done to adequately support women already in decision-making structures to enable them move into more high-level bodies. Many women operate at local level initiatives but find it very difficult and 'daunting' to move into more strategic fora e.g. Strategic Policy Committees of the local authorities.

4.5. WHOLE ORGANISATION APPROACH

To refer to organisational culture is now quite common, but what does it mean? It is a complex term, but for the purposes of this report it can be referred to as the beliefs, expectations and shared values of members of an organisation (*Organisational Behaviour*, 1993: p171). Culture is everywhere in an organisation (and society) but is difficult to recognize, and each of us is largely unaware of the culture we have been reared in. It is the "way we do things around here". It is best seen if a new alternative is suggested or implemented.

Hofstede, in his seminal work *Culture's Consequences: International differences in work related values* (1980), developed a theory based on research on 64 different national subsidiaries of the IBM Corporation. He described four dimensions to predict the way national societies and organisational cultures operate. One of these was the extent to which a society was 'masculine' or 'feminine'. A masculinity dimension is the degree to which "tough" values like assertiveness, performance, success and competition (which in nearly all societies are associated with the role of men) prevail over "tender" values such as quality of life, maintaining warm personal relationships, service, care for the weak, and solidarity (which in nearly all societies are associated with the role of women). Many western societies scored high on the masculinity dimension and therefore need a systemic change in order to value and include the femininity dimension.



Can we relate this masculinity dimension to the under-representation of women in Irish society? The recent report of the Democracy Commission cites Ireland's record of women's under-representation in the political sphere as being "one of deep and systematic inequality" (*Report of the Democracy Commission, 2005: p8*). At present women represent 50% of the population, yet they represent only 13% of membership of the Dáil, 15% of County Councils and 28% of key state boards. The Commission recommends that obligatory gender quotas (50:50) be introduced for candidates being put forward by political parties.

At local level the setting up of County Development Boards in Ireland at the beginning of the new Millennium provided an opportunity for real local involvement in decision-making. These Boards were part of a strategy to reform local government and to integrate local government and local development. As women represent a very high percentage of community workers and members of local development/community committees and boards there was optimism that women would at least reach the 40% quota laid down by government. The picture in 2004 showed that 24% of board members were women and only 21% of Directors were women (*Mary Mullins, Roscommon CDB, Women taking Your Place! Conference Report, 2004*).

For any real change to take place, which will allow women's full participation in statutory and local development organisations, this whole organisational approach must include the full commitment of the CEO/director and senior management team. Senior managers must ensure that gender equality analysis/gender mainstreaming principles and practice are included in corporate plans, all management job descriptions and performance appraisals. Training for all management personal should be mandatory and include analysis, frameworks and practical action plans for implementation.

Case Study 1.

THE GENDER FOCUS GROUP AND THE DONEGAL WOMEN'S NETWORK –
DONEGAL GENDER EQUALITY PROJECT – "RESTORING THE BALANCE" 2002 – 2004.

Background

The Donegal Women's Network (DWN) and the Second Chance Education Project for Women were concerned at the gender imbalance on the County Development Board (CDB) when it was set up: only four out of 30 members (or 13%) were women. The network held discussions with the CDB and a Gender Focus Group (GFG) was set up and embedded in the structure of the CDB. The aim was to promote a gender equality culture throughout the Board and its structures; its members are from key county-level organisations.

The Donegal Gender Equality Project (DGEP) "Restoring the Balance" project grew out of the same concern i.e. low representation of women on the CDB. The aim of this project was to increase the effective participation of women in Donegal within key decision-making structures and selected workplaces. In order to achieve this, the project took a two-pronged approach.

The first was to develop women's leadership potential; to this end thirty-one women were trained. The second was to focus on raising gender awareness within the statutory and community sectors through gender equality training. They focused on three organisations: Donegal VEC, North Western Health Board and Údarás na Gaeltachta. The aim of the two-day training programme was to 'enable participating statutory organisations to develop clarity on gender equality within their organisations.'



Organisational Change & Relationship Building

A key learning from these projects is the understanding that organisational change in itself is very slow and complex, notwithstanding its relationship to gender equality. Developing and investing in relationship-building in order to 'sell gender equality' is an on-going but necessary part of this work. This is best achieved by well developed and established women's networks. The Equality for Women Measure indicates that "efforts to influence the drafting of CDBs strategies were most effective in those countries where networks of women's organisations were strong." (*Signposts to Gender Equality 3: Women and Decision-making, 2000-2006: p14*) The Donegal CDB set itself a target of at least a 30% gender balance by 2005. In August 2006 this is now at 21%, or nine women out of forty-three – a slow but sure increase in numbers (Donegal County Development Board Web Page – August 2006).

Before and during the training programme with the statutory organisations, a significant amount of time was given to awareness-raising and building relationships with senior and middle management personnel in order to "sell gender equality". The Co-ordinator stressed the importance of this step as being crucial to the success of any training programme. She stated this was as important, if not more so, than the training itself carried out with organisations.

The DGEP project also discovered another indicator of slow change within the organisational policy context. Family friendly policies were not being implemented strategically. Where it was done it was on an ad-hoc basis and seemed dependent on the goodwill of individual managers.

Training & Stages of Progression

The project trained thirty-one women who devised a series of recommendations published in a booklet: "Women Making Decisions – What Needs to Change." They made a call for the introduction of gender quotas to secure gender balance, which could be achieved by the introduction of legislation at national level and monitored at local level. This would be complimented by gender equality training to existing and new Board members. At their end-of-project conference, entitled "Women Taking Your Place", two of the keynote speakers¹⁵ stressed the importance of positive interventions such as quotas and affirmative legislation without which "things would not change by themselves".

The women also formed a Women's Political Forum, which aims to encourage women to participate in, and take up leadership roles at, all levels of society. Prior to the local elections in 2004 they sent questionnaires to all candidates asking for their response to a number of issues such as increasing the number of women in decision-making. All responses were published in the local paper.

Gender equality training was delivered to senior and middle management within the three organisations noted above. There was a positive response to the training, with an acknowledgement that this was the start of something that had to be maintained (*Restoring the Balance, Evaluation Report, 2004*) A suggestion was made to develop inter-agency training in order to share information and materials, whilst acknowledging that this could not replace the need for general awareness of gender equality.

Supports

A key challenge was the balance between supporting women who were already in decision-making positions and encouraging other women to take up these positions. However, support for women engaging in the decision-making structures is vital if it is to be successful.

¹⁵ Denise Fuchs & Anne-Marie McGauran – Evaluation Report Dr. Marie Hainsworth



Case Study 2.

INGAGE DERRY

INGAGE is an inter-agency partnership in the Derry City Council area, which is committed to challenging and changing the cultural attitudes, beliefs and practices that limit the experience of equality between men and women. The partners that make up INGAGE are Derry City Council, Northern Ireland Housing Executive, Western Education and Library Board, Altnagelvin Trust and local women and women's groups. It is funded by the Department for Social Development, Derry City Council and the Joseph Rowntree Trust (www.ingagewomen.com).

INGAGE is seeking to develop good practice on gender equality issues within the city council area, with a specific focus on the issue of inequalities facing women in relation to decision-making processes. One of the key goals of INGAGE is an increase in the number of women participating in decision-making, as senior managers within public bodies, as representative on boards and as leaders in civic society through the promotion of gender equality and use of gender targeting and budgeting. The second key goal is improved services for women through women's direct involvement in planning and decision-making (www.derrycity.gov.uk).

The material on the above website goes on to state:

It is INGAGE'S aim that sustainable mechanisms will be established and approaches developed to planning and decision-making, which will ensure women are fully participative at all levels of decision-making and planning, and that public bodies, partnerships and groups become beacons of good practice, in ensuring the integration of women in all aspects of public and community life.

The initial stage of INGAGE dates back to 1998, and this stage involved a research project that produced the *Finding a Balance* report (2001). One of the key proposals was the establishment of a women's forum. This is now one of the key objectives of INGAGE'S *Engaging Women* project. Due to a number of setbacks the forum is only now being developed.

The following outlines the proposed role and model for the forum.

The Role of the Women's Forum

It is proposed that the Forum will:

- create an effective channel of communication between local bodies and women
- represent the issues and concerns of women across the city
- make recommendations to public bodies on issues affecting local women, especially in the drafting of new policies, proposals and strategic plans
- facilitate the exchange of information and ideas between women and those public bodies
- increase the participation of women in areas of local decision-making.

It is also suggested that the Forum may form pro-active working groups or 'think-tanks' on priority issues to address issues that are wider than the responsibility of one particular agency.

The model proposed includes an Executive, the Forum and a series of wider consultation mechanisms, including focus groups and seminars. The registration process is underway. This process includes women and women's groups naming their priority issues; these will shape the agenda of the Forum.

INGAGE has asked public bodies to identify policy, service planning issues and consultations which will be tabled to the Forum. Officers, including senior managers of public bodies, will be invited to make representation to the Forum. Eventually INGAGE proposes to lobby for the Women's Forum



to become integrated into formal decision-making structures. Because Derry City Council is one of the partners they hope that they will co-opt women from the Forum onto its committees or nominate Forum members to represent them on public bodies (www.ingagewomen.com).

The significant aspect of this case study from Involve's perspective is that a local authority and other statutory bodies are key partners. This potentially may result in more mainstream outcomes. Also, Derry City Council has a Women's Officer employed specifically to address issues of women's inequality in the city. This also could be a model for Fingal County Council to investigate. However, it was also stressed by our informant that the seniority of this position is important in terms of the ability to influence the overall strategy and policies of the Council.

Case Study 3

CLONDALKIN WOMEN'S NETWORK

Background

The Clondalkin Women's Network (CWN) has been existence since 1991. It supports twenty women's groups, all of which are involved in anti-poverty work.

The Network sees the work of the women's groups as a process involving disadvantaged women and women affected by multiple disadvantage, identifying their needs collectively and acting as agents of change through the development of knowledge, experience and skills (*Steps to Effective Participation at Local Level*. Gallagher, 2000)

The network has been involved in a range of activities at local, regional and national levels. It places a strong emphasis on anti-poverty work and capacity building in its training and supports to the women's groups. It works from a community development approach, sees community education as a key developmental tool and places a particular emphasis on policy work.

It is represented on Clondalkin Area Partnership Board and on a number of its working groups. It is also represented on the Board of Aontas, the national organisation for adult education.

Systematic Analysis and Change

CWN recognises that the problems confronted by women affected by multiple disadvantage in Clondalkin are due to structural inequalities in Irish society. It consequently places a strong emphasis on social and gender analysis in the training provided to women. It accepts that training is essential in helping disadvantaged women understand why women in particular experience inequalities. Training also helps them to gain an insight into structural inequalities such as socio-economic background, ethnicity and race, which cross cut gender inequality.

Following such analysis women are supported to engage in activities and roles which highlight the issues and to work towards change.

Progression and Representation

Women are supported to move from roles within their locally based group to other fora, including the management committee of the network. It is recognised that women need high levels of support to move from the 'comfort zone' of their own group even to network level. This becomes even more challenging as they move to other groups/organisations such as Clondalkin Partnership. The Strategic Policy Committees (SPCs) of the County Development Board are seen by most women, even those with considerable experience, as very daunting. The Co-ordinator of the CWN observed



that the SPCs appear to be run in a way which is 'nearly orchestrated to be like this'. Thus the issue of the culture of committees such as SPCs is highlighted as needing attention.

The Network offers considerable support to women as they move into wider representational roles. Support can take the form of meeting women before committee meetings to inform and support the women or follow-up meetings to review and reflect on committee business. CWN is currently looking at the possibility of setting up a forum (informal, initially) for women who are in representative roles. Other supports include training (see below), care costs and travel expenses.

Campaigning and Lobbying

Women are also supported to be involved in campaigning on the issues that concern them (see below). They are also encouraged to challenge local politicians. Prior to the last local elections a meeting was organised. Candidates were invited to the meeting and a preparation session was run with local women before the meeting so they would be prepared to question and challenge the candidates attending.

Training

Training is a core element of the work of the network. A course entitled *Steps to Effective Participation at Local Level* was developed and run. A training manual was also produced. Local women have also participated in a level 5 FETAC course on Community Development and Leadership.

Working for Change – The Clondalkin Women's Health Forum

A needs-analysis using participative action research methods was carried out, and the issue of health emerged strongly. Following this, in 2003, the CWN held an information morning to float the idea of a health forum with an emphasis on proactive policy work. Fifteen women got involved. The starting point was a training course on poverty and health, and once again this included an analysis of the structural causes of ill health. In order to continue to support and progress the Forum funding was secured from the Combat Poverty Agency's Building Healthy Communities Programme. This Programme encouraged the use of creative methods and so the women decided, out of a range of suggested methods, to make a quilt to use in campaigning work.

The Co-ordinator of CWN stressed that this phase of the project took time and was a 'very slow process'. There was a 'lot of talking before (they) got down to it'. The women told personal stories relating to health and captured these in individual patches. However, the Co-ordinator also stressed that this process was very important.

The learning for CWN was that women had to go through this phase before they were ready for campaigning work. They have now taken a number of specific actions to campaign on health issues locally. This included a meeting with the Minister for Health and Children, Mary Harney, in June 2006. They questioned her on the removal of cervical smear services and on the development of primary health care services. The Forum includes women from a number of minority ethnic communities (proactively recruited); they highlighted issues specific to them e.g. sickle cell anaemia. The Minister was very struck by the latter and has promised funding to develop work in this area.

There are now thirty women in the Forum. They intend keeping up the pressure to try and ensure outcomes on the issues raised.



Case Study 3

LONGFORD WOMEN'S LINK

Background

The Longford Women's Link (LWL) has been in operation ten years. It began by accessing the New Opportunities for Women funding and it has aimed to give a voice to women in Longford. It has supported the development of nine women's groups in the county and has carried out various Leadership and Active Citizen Training programmes. They were part of an Aontas pilot project to develop a framework on the way that women's groups learn. They facilitate the participation of women by offering a nursery service and have recently begun working with a lone parents group.

They are represented on local decision-making bodies such as the Longford EQUAL Development Partnership, RAPID Area Implementation Team, Homeless Forum, and County Development Boards and their various sub-structures. They are presently negotiating with the County Development Board (CDB) with regard to a joint project. They have recently submitted a proposal for funding to commission an independent evaluation of the impact of the LWL, or, as the Co-ordinator said: "What difference has us being here in Longford made in terms of women's participation?"

Organisational Change/Relationship Building

LWL is a member of the Longford EQUAL Development Partnership, which is an inter-agency EU funded project to increase women's access to the labour market. Other partners are the CDB, County Enterprise Board, VEC and Community Resources Ltd (Area Partnership Company). The interest for the Involve project is the partnership approach adopted for involving eighty women in the project. The project was able to provide a strategically-integrated range of skills, resources and piloting opportunities that no one organisation could offer.

LWL are willing to lead initiatives but they are also willing to participate in initiatives set up by others. They prioritise and develop strategies to specifically target women experiencing particular disadvantage, exclusion or need. They recognise the need to negotiate with other organisations without compromising their principles and methods and are learning to look for a balance in their partnerships.

Stages of Progression

LWL at first were represented on the committees and boards of other organisations by staff but now they are getting more volunteers. They generally begin by getting inexperienced women on their own management committees first and then when they are familiar with this structure, and feel they are ready they 'send them off'.



4.6. CONCLUSION

This chapter has drawn together many of the commonalities faced by projects that have undertaken work with regard to women's participation in decision-making. These were:

- Building relationships and forming partnerships is very important for selling gender equality and engaging senior management for gender training; partnership working is good and important also to effect change
- Organisational change is slow and complex and carried out in Ireland on an ad hoc basis. A gender equality analysis approach is not systemic within organisations, and, in general, senior management do not commit to or engage with the process
- Training is generally aimed at women who have not been involved in decision-making and they are usually trained to engage at local level
- The training process should be slow and aimed at giving women a gender and or feminist analysis of participation and equality
- This training can lead eventually to campaigning e.g. health project (discussed above) or Women's Forum eliciting information from potential candidates going forward for election
- Actions have tended not to offer support and mentoring for women already in decision-making roles to enable them move up and on – a strong women's infrastructure could fulfil that role
- Women's networks take time to form and should be supported in order to effect real change as it is very important for women to work together to effect real change

The best-practice case studies show how a multi-faceted approach is best; this should include relationship building/partnership approaches and gender analysis training with senior personnel in statutory organisations. It should also include capacity building for women and women's groups, eventually leading to a strong women's infrastructure e.g. women's network. Such a body should then work at all levels e.g. representation, lobbying, campaigning, training and support.

The research indicates that a gender mainstreaming approach has some value in raising awareness of gender inequality and equips organisations with approaches and tools to embed gender equality within their organisations. However, it may not challenge the whole organisational culture or challenge the masculinity dimension that exists within Irish society today. This is the challenge facing projects such as Involve and the Blanchardstown Area Partnership and its partners at local, regional and national level.



CHAPTER 5: APPROACHES and MODELS of PARTICIPATION in DECISION- MAKING

5.1. INTRODUCTION

Whilst all seventeen organisational respondents to the questionnaire indicated they had structures to facilitate the input of local people - including women – into their services and programmes, it is difficult to assess the depth of this participation. The interviews with three statutory organisations highlighted a consultative (to varying degrees) rather than a participatory approach. It is reasonable to assume that other statutory organisations in the study may also adopt such an approach. A deeper qualitative analysis could reveal more on this aspect.

The limitations of consultation are already well documented and were also confirmed in the current study. These are not only from the perspective of service users but also from local providers; as one such respondent highlighted, there are considerable difficulties in having local inputs taken seriously at national policymaking level. Therefore, building support for deeper levels of participation is a key challenge facing organisations/projects such as Involve. This is furthered complicated by the lack of either a rights or a duties framework in the Irish policy context and the largely aspirational approach to consultation /involvement of socially excluded groups in decision-making in policy statements.

Nonetheless, it is important to build on emerging approaches at local level; for example, the proposed process regarding the development of a primary health care centres in Mulhuddart and Corduff offers opportunities for the greater participation of women. The HSE has also developed more inclusive models in partnership with Traveller groups, which are worthy of note.

5.2. CURRENT PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN

The research highlighted that there is considerable participation of women from the RAPID areas in community development organisations and to a somewhat lesser extent in local development organisations. Due to lack of responses to these questions on the part of many statutory organisations it is not possible to ascertain the degree to which women participate in this type of organisation. However, it is widely documented that women's participation in community development far outstrips men nationally but at higher levels of power and decision-making they are less visible. The research highlighted that although local men comprised 25% of those involved in the organisations who responded they comprised about 35% of local people on boards. This does not necessary tell us the overall picture regarding the gender division on boards in the



Blanchardstown area. It may be more disproportionate, as community organisations often appoint women as representatives in order to redress traditional under-representation; many statutory organisations still appoint on the basis of seniority.

Attention also needs to be paid amongst all organisations as to what subgroups of women from RAPID areas are participating, as the NWCI report highlighted a lack of information and data on groups such as women with disability and minority ethnic women which can render them invisible. This issue was also stressed by a number of the interviewees.

5.3. GENDER ANALYSIS AND GENDER MAINSTREAMING

The research highlighted the central importance of a gender-analysis approach. Unless the systemic and structural nature of women's inequality is examined and addressed it is unlikely actions will have long-term impacts. In the context of the RAPID areas this analysis also needs to take account of other structural inequalities including socio-economic status, race, ethnicity and so on. All types of organisations need to be supported in their attempts to develop a gender-analysis approach. There was no strong evidence found that this approach is currently being used in the organisations surveyed.

Such a gender analysis underlies a gender mainstreaming approach, which is also advocated to ensure greater participation by women. There are criticisms of gender mainstreaming, including the inherent danger that it may mask women's inequality in favour of a focus on men and that it can be reduced to a technocratic approach. However, others argue that if implemented in a full and inclusive manner it can offer organisational-level change. Once again, the research identified that this approach is not being utilised to any great extent in the organisations surveyed.

The research also found some evidence of a focus on the broader equality agenda (although it is difficult to ascertain the link between having an organisational policy and implementation and monitoring). This is to be welcomed, and while gender equality does specifically come under the broad equality framework, it is not clear if 'gender' as opposed to other equality issues is given sufficient attention under this framework. At organisational level also there appeared to be insufficient focus on social inclusion policies and practices.

5.4. CAPACITY BUILDING

The research identified the need for capacity building with all types of organisations and with individual women.

5.4.1. Capacity building within organisations

The challenge for interventions such as the Involve project is to establish where the balance lies in terms of use of resources. The importance of organisational change can't be overstated. To try and promote the inclusion of women affected by multiple disadvantage into organisations working from traditional approaches *vis à vis* women is likely to do more harm than good; the example of how women can feel intimidated by the Strategic Policy Committees came up a number of times. These are important in terms of local decision-making; however it would be very useful to work with the local authority and the county development board to examine how they operate from a gender and social inclusion perspective. This could contribute, in the long term, to increasing women's participation.



The importance of relationship building with key organisations for the purpose of change work was highlighted, as was the need to ensure that interventions be based on a partnership approach, with clear benefits and outcomes for all parties. The buy-in from senior management was seen as vital to success. The importance of working on organisational culture was also seen as key, as was a whole organisational approach.

5.4.2 Capacity building with women

The importance of capacity building for women was also stressed. This benefits from an emphasis on progression routes, mentoring and on-going support, particularly as women take on representative roles. The importance of the inclusion of a gender analysis into training and all work undertaken with women as well a broader social analysis was highlighted. Training on approaches and practices in active citizenship were also seen to be useful.

5.5. INFRASTRUCTURE OF WOMEN'S GROUPS

The experience of the case studies in particular highlighted the importance of the development of and support for women's groups, which over time may lead to the establishment of a women's network. In all four case studies this was vital to the very active role of local women and their ability to influence at local level.

5.6. RECOMMENDATIONS

Leadership Training Course: Strand 1 Involve Project

The course should:

- Include a strong gender analysis based on an understanding of women's structural inequalities
- Include a component that outlines different models of participation and the implications of women's participation and inclusion in a deep sense
- Include a module that equips the women to understand policy-making and decision-making processes in key organisations
- Identify clear on-going mentoring and support for women who progress from the Leadership Training Programme
- Identify a range of progression routes that recognises that 'one size does not fit all'

Organisational Training

- Involve should focus on developing existing relationships with senior personnel in statutory/local development organisations to implement a gender analysis/gender mainstreaming approach to participation¹⁶ of service users
- Two courses should be developed in partnership with two statutory organisations: the HSE and Fingal County Council, and two training courses should be developed with a range of organisations sharing a particular interest or focus

¹⁶ Participation should be informed by the model outlined in Chapter 2 of this report



- The content for the course should include:
 - A strong gender analysis/gender mainstreaming approach
 - Inputs on social inclusion, focusing on models of participation and procedure
 - Focus on developing a greater understanding of the barriers to women's participation and how to overcome them, for those women affected by multiple disadvantage
 - The course should draw on theoretical frameworks, for example whole organisational approach, but will emphasise practical application within participants' organisations

Involve should identify a framework for on-going support to the organisations who take part in the training

Involve Project Overall

- Involve – in partnership with others – should begin the process of developing a strong infrastructure of women's groups in the Blanchardstown area, leading, within five years, to a women's network that will support women's participation in decision-making
- Involve should engage with key HSE personnel in relation to the imminent consultation process, which will inform the development of primary health care centres for Mulhuddart and Corduff
- Involve should consider drawing on the INGAGE model, which involves partnership with Derry City Council, as a model of work with Fingal County Council
- Involve should identify a framework for continuing the work beyond the current project timeframe.



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Appendices



9th June 2006

Dear

The Involve project is a community-based project in Blanchardstown, which aims to promote the participation of women in decision-making in organisations that impact on their lives. The particular target group are women from the four *RAPID areas of Corduff, Blakestown, Mountview and Mulhuddart. The rationale for supporting this approach is backed by evidence of more effective services, which contribute to greater equality and social inclusion. Meaningful bottom-up consultation and input into policy formulation by communities of interest assists government to fulfil its statutory duties and international treaty obligations.

In order to inform the project a mapping exercise is being conducted to ascertain current levels of participation. This exercise includes a survey of statutory, public and community organisations in Blanchardstown. The survey will establish current structures for consultation and involvement of this target group. It will also identify barriers and supports required to advance this aim. Finally it will identify levels of interest in participating in training to promote this approach.

Your organisation has been identified as a key service provider for women in the area and we would very much appreciate if you would take time to answer the attached questionnaire, which can be completed in approximately 10-15minutes. A report will be published outlining the key findings and distributed to all participating organizations, as well as to other key stakeholders.

We would be very grateful if you could complete the attached questionnaire devised by our researchers **Maureen Bassett and Mary Quinlan**.

The Involve project is funded by the Equality for Women Measure of the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform, under the National Development Plan 2000-2006. Involve is match funded by Blanchardstown Area Partnership, Fingal County Council, County Dublin VEC Adult Education Service Dublin 15, LES (Local Employment Service), Blakestown Community Development Project, Corduff Community Development Project, Greater Blanchardstown Development Project, and Mountview Family Resource Centre.

If you would like more information on Involve, please contact me.

Yours sincerely

Iris Lyle, Project Co-ordinator

* The RAPID Programme is a government initiative which targets 45 of the most disadvantaged areas in the country.



INVOLVE QUESTIONNAIRE

This questionnaire provides your organisation with an opportunity to contribute to the successful outcome of the Involve project. The accompanying letter outlines the aims of the project and of the research of which this questionnaire is a part. It has been designed to facilitate speedy completion in an estimated time of 10-15minutes. For those wishing to complete the questionnaire by PC please place an X beside answer boxes where indicated.

We would very much appreciate your co-operation by completing the questionnaire by **Tuesday 20th June** and returning it either by:
email to mquinlan@eircom.net or
post to M. Quinlan, 5 Waterloo Ave., Dublin 3

Thank you on behalf of Involve – Maureen Bassett and Mary Quinlan – Researchers

Name of Organisation:

Job Title of Person completing questionnaire:

Section One: Policies, Structures and Strategies

1. Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements (by circling or highlighting in bold only one in each line)

SA =Strongly Agree; A = Agree; N=Neither Agree or Disagree; D =Disagree; SD= Strongly Disagree

	SA	A	N	D	SD
Involvement of service users in shaping services contributes to more effective services	SA	A	N	D	SD
The gender of those involved in this process is not a key factor	SA	A	N	D	SD
The effort required to engage service users/participants outweighs the benefits	SA	A	N	D	SD
The involvement of people from the most disadvantaged areas is important	SA	A	N	D	SD
The most important motivating factor in engaging service users/participants is to create a more equal society	SA	A	N	D	SD
Equality for women is of central concern in our organisation	SA	A	N	D	SD
Social inclusion is a fine aspiration but very hard to implement	SA	A	N	D	SD

2. Does your organisation have any of the following in place? Please mark with an X those policies you have in place.

- Equality and Diversity Policy
- Gender Equality Policy
- Social Inclusion Policy
- Anti-Racism Policy
- Family Friendly Policy
- Flexible Working Policy
- None
- Other, Please specify



3. Who in your organisation has overall responsibility for equality and diversity?

- No One
- CEO/ Project Co-ordinator
- Board of Management
- /Management Committee
- Senior management
- Other Manager
- Member of staff
- Other, please specify

4. Who in your organisation has overall responsibility for social inclusion?

- No One
- CEO/ Project Co-ordinator
- Board of Management
- /Management Committee
- Senior management
- Other Manager
- Member of staff
- Other, please specify

5. Does your organisation have structures that enable local people input into your services/programmes?

- Yes
- No (go to Q.16 and Q.17)
- Don't Know

6. If yes, what form do these structures take? Please mark with an X as many as apply.

- User panels/fora
- Board of Management
- /Management Committee
- Sub Committees
- Working Groups
- Community Networks
- Other please specify

7. Are the structures indicated above mainly?

- Consultative
- Decision making
- Other please specify

8. What level of influence do these structures mainly allow? Please mark with an X as many as apply.

- Design of policies/services/programmes
- Development of policies/services/programmes
- Implementation of policies/services/programmes
- Review of policies/services/programmes
- Other, please specify

9. Currently how many people from Blanchardstown are involved in these structures?

- Total
- Women
- Men



10. Please give an indication of how many are in each structure?

Type of structure	Total	Women	Men
User panels/fora	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Board of Management /Management Committee	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Sub Committees	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Working Groups	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Community Networks	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Other please specify	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Not Applicable	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

11. Of the women involved how many are from the RAPID areas (Blakestown, Corduff, Mulhuddart, Mountview)?

12. If none, has your organisation tried to recruit women from these RAPID areas in your structures?

Yes

No

Don't know

_____ If yes, please elaborate.

13. Has your organisation any of the following supports in place to assist participation? Please mark with an X all supports in place.

Provision of or support for childcare	<input type="checkbox"/>
Provision of or support for other care roles	<input type="checkbox"/>
Training in participation skills	<input type="checkbox"/>
Guidelines on timing of meetings to allow for care/employment roles	<input type="checkbox"/>
Attention to how meetings are run to encourage participation	<input type="checkbox"/>
Use of range of recruitment methods	<input type="checkbox"/>
Induction processes	<input type="checkbox"/>
Expenses to attend meetings	<input type="checkbox"/>
None	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other, please specify	<input type="text"/>

14. Does your organisation provide training to participants in these structures?

Yes

No

Don't know



15. If yes, what specific areas are covered in the training? Please mark with an X all areas covered.

- Management Committee Skills
- Effective Participation
- Gender equality awareness
- Equality and diversity awareness
- Other, please specify

Note Q16 and Q17 are only for those who have not answered questions 6-15

16. If your organisation does not have formal structures, in what way do you ascertain the needs of your service users/participants?

17. Please name any actions taken by your organisation to promote the inclusion of women - from the four RAPID areas - during the past year.

18. Does your organisation link with other locally based organisations in any of the following ways? Please mark with an X as many ways of linking as apply.

- Does not link
- Formal networks
- Informal networks
- Thematic groupings e.g. youth
- Management committees
- Sub-Committees
- Other, please Specify

19. Does your organisation have a specific policy regarding the inclusion of women from disadvantaged areas, in your structures?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

20. What would support your organisation to develop structures, polices and plans to promote the inclusion of women from the four areas?



Section Two: Training to promote participation of women from the four RAPID areas

21. In the past five years has your organisation offered training in any of the following? Please mark with an X all areas covered.

- Equality
- Gender equality
- Diversity
- Social inclusion
- Anti-racism
- None
- Other, please specify

22. Please indicate who attended the training. Please mark with an X all those who attended.

- Senior management
- Other management
- Staff
- Members of Boards and Committees
- Volunteers
- Other, please specify

23. Did women from the four RAPID areas attend the training outlined above?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

24 If yes, how many attended?

25. Would your organisation be interested in attending training, focused on promoting the participation of women from the four RAPID areas, in your structures?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know



26. If yes, whom in your organisation do you envisage would attend this training?

Please mark with X all those you envisage attending.

- Senior management
- Other management
- Staff
- Members of Boards and Committees
- Volunteers
- Other, please specify

27. Please indicate which of the following arrangements you would most prefer.

Please mark with an X as many preferences as wish.

- Customised training tailored to your organisation
- Groupings of organisations with shared focus e.g. education or youth
- Organised around the type of organisation e.g. statutory or community
- Other arrangement, please specify

28. In terms of broad content please indicate specific areas you wish to see included in the training. Please mark with X as many areas as you wish.

- Introduction to gender equality and social inclusion
- Introduction to Equality and other relevant legislation
- Barriers to participation of women and responses/supports required
- Analysis of current context in own organisation
- Identification of goals for progress
- Approaches and tools to gender mainstreaming
- Action planning using these tools
- Other, Please specify

29. What teaching/learning methods would you prefer to be included?

Please mark with X as many methods as you wish.

- Inputs
- Case studies
- Small group discussion
- Creative methods e.g. role play, drama, voice
- Planning activities
- Other, please specify

Thank you for taking the time to fill in this questionnaire.

Please email it to mquinlan@eircom.net
Or post to M. Quinlan, 5 Waterloo Avenue, Dublin 3.



APPENDIX 2:

INVOLVE PROJECT:

LIST OF ORGANISATIONS FOR QUESTIONNAIRES/RESEARCH

ORGANISATION	SECTION	CONTACT	Number Sent
STATUTORY ORGANISATIONS			
Dept. of Family & Social Affairs	Area Manager Jobs Facilitator	Brian Chadwick (BAP) Patricia Swords	2
Dublin Bus			1
FÁS	Community Section	Charlie O'Connor (BAP Bd)	1
Fingal County Council	Manager County Development Board Community Section County Childcare Com Housing Planning Environment Library Services	John Tierney Senan Turnbull Pat Queenan Michelle Butler – Swords Alan Carthy DOS David O'Connor – DOS Gilbert Power – DOS Paul Harris – DOS	8
Gardai	Community Section Probation & Welfare	Insp. Peter Hughes (RAPID) Sgt Kevin Jennings Brian Santry (RAPID)	3
HSE	Local health off manager Area general manager	Bernadette Kilbert Paula Lawler	2
VEC	Adult Education	Gay Hogan (BAP-PIB)	1
LES	Social Inclusion Units	Gerry Keogh, Manager	1
Blanchardstown Area Partnership (BAP)	Staff	Linda Curren (CEO)	1
Drugs Task Force	Blanchardstown Local Drugs Task Force Hartstown/Huntstown CDT Mtview/Blakestown CDT Corduff/Mulhuddart	Joe Doyle Elaine Moore Ger Supple Marie McKay	4
RAPID	Staff	Breffni O'Rourke	1
Schools	Primary St. Pats, Corduff St. Phillips, Mountview Scoil an Cathair Allainn NS Ladyswell, Mulhuddart Mulhuddart NS Scoil Muire, Blakestown Secondary Blakestown Com. School Riversdale Com. College	Ms. Loretto Dullea – Junior Michael Shanley – Senior Mrs. Frances Cooke – Junior Mr. Michael Downey Mr. P. McDermot B.O'Dalaigh (Post) Marian Sheehan – Junior John Tyrell – Senior Mr. Victor Black Noel Gildea	10
Blanchardstown Institute of Technology	Human Resources	Eileen Quinn	1
Blanchardstown Centre for Independent Living	(BAP – PIB)	Michael McCabe	1
Chamber of Commerce	Treasurer – BAP Board	Colm O'Maolmhuire	1
Citizens Information Centre	(BAB-PIB)	Michela Benassi/ Siobhan Walsh	1



ORGANISATION	SECTION	CONTACT	Number Sent
STATUTORY ORGANISATIONS			
Community Development Projects (CDPs + FRCs)	Blakestown Mulhuddart Corduff Travellers Support Group Mountview Fam Res C.	Susan Fox Nuala Kane Felix Gallagher Catherine Joyce Eileen Nash	5
Dublin 15 Community Forum	Aisling Flynn Development Officer		1
Enterprise Centres	BASE (BAP – PIB)	Joe Keogh	1
Elder Groups	Evergreen Active Retirement Group	Kathleen Martin	2
Youth Groups	Blakestown/Mountview NYP Barnardos Blanchardstown Youth Service & Youth Information Centre	David Creed Marijka Walsh John Cahill	3
Blanchardstown Centre for Unemployed	(BAP – PIB)	Carmel Fitzpatrick	
TOTAL SENT			52



APPENDIX 3:

COMPLETED QUESTIONNAIRES RECEIVED FROM THE FOLLOWING ORGANISATIONS

STATUTORY ORGANISATIONS

Fingal County Council
Fingal Community Section
Fingal County Childcare Committee
FÁS
Adult Education Section, VEC

PUBLIC BODIES/LOCAL DEVELOPMENT

Blanchardstown Area Partnership
RAPID
School (Unnamed)
Blanchardstown Citizens Information Centre

COMMUNITY & VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS

Blanchardstown Youth Service
Blanchardstown Centre for Independent Living
Blanchardstown Drugs Task Force
Blakestown Community Development Project
Corduff Community Development Project
Mountview Family Resource Centre
Forum 15
Blakestown & Mountview Neighbourhood Youth Project



APPENDIX 4: INTERVIEWEES FOR INVOLVE STRAND 2 PROJECT

STATUTORY ORGANISATIONS

Representative from the Department of Family & Social Affairs
Representative from Community Development: HSE
Representative from Garda Síochána

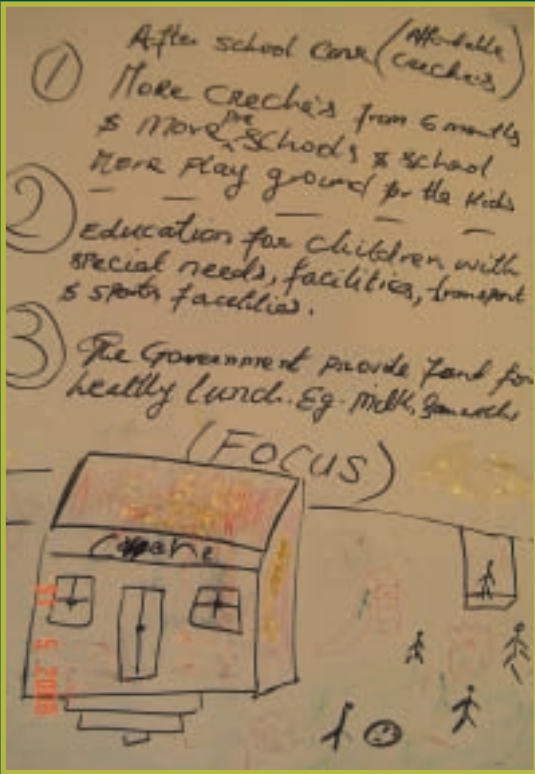
FOCUS GROUP WITH CDP PERSONNEL

Representative 1 from Corduff CDP
Representative 2 from Corduff CDP
Representative from Blakestown CDP
Representative from Blakestown CDP

FOCUS GROUP WITH WOMEN INVOLVED WITH CREATIVE TRAINING PROGRAMME – STRAND 1 – INVOLVE PROJCT

Six representatives

Vocal Women Creative Training Programme



The Involve project is funded by the Equality for Women Measure of the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform, under the National Development Plan 2000-2006.

Involve is match funded by Blanchardstown Area Partnership (lead partner), Fingal County Council, CoDVEC (Adult Education Service D15), LES (Local Employment Service), Blakestown Community Development Project, Corduff Community Development Project, Greater Blanchardstown Development Project, and Mountview Family Resource Centre.



INVOLVE



Promoting opportunity & influencing decision-making

Supported by Blanchardstown Area Partnership

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