

Local Development Strategies for Disadvantaged Areas
Evaluation of the Global Grant, 1992-1995

A Report prepared for Area Development Management Limited

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Draft

September 1995

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Acknowledgements

The authors would like to thank the many individuals and Groups who facilitated the production of this evaluation. We would first like to thank the Boards, Managers and staff of the 28 Groups and 12 Partnerships which are the subject of this evaluation. We appreciate their willingness to respond to our queries and thank them for the patience shown during the extensive interviews. We would further like to thank Terence Larkin, Tony Crooks and Siobhán Lynam (all ADM) and Margaret Barry, Sarah Craig and Hugh Frazer (all Combat Poverty Agency) for the time and effort given to our discussions with them. We would like to acknowledge the assistance given to us by Jonathan Gillmor of GAMMA in preparing the data for the Census analysis in Chapter Two.

A special thanks to Liz Hayes who held most of the interviews, and Jonathan Pratschke who assisted in the profiling of the disadvantaged areas.

We would like to emphasise that any errors of fact and issues of interpretation are not the responsibility of any of the aforementioned but of the authors.

Chapter One

Background to the Global Grant

1.1 Introduction

In January 1992 the Irish Government and the Commission of the European Union (EU) agreed, in principle, to initiate a Global Grant to promote and assist local social and economic development in Ireland. In order to develop the organisational and operating details of this Grant, Area Development Management Limited (ADM) was formed in October 1992 as the responsible intermediary. In January 1993 the EU Commission and ADM signed the agreement for the Global Grant (1992-1995). This agreement provided for the allocation of IR£8 million towards the continued support for the twelve area-based Partnerships set up under the Programme for Economic and Social Progress (PESP) and other local development groups.¹

The purposes of the Global Grant (1992-1995) were outlined in Article 4 of that agreement; these were:

- *to promote and assist integrated local socio-economic development and make a positive contribution to economic and employment development in local communities in terms of enterprise creation and development leading to increased employment;*
- *where possible, to bring about an explicit and targeted redistribution of job chances towards the unemployed by providing training/education necessary to enable them to participate in local development programmes; and*
- *to support the main forces of local development by contributing to capacity building of local organisations with the view to enabling them to participate as primary movers in local development programmes. (Agreement between ADM and EU Commission, 1993).*

The above aims were to be achieved by working through local area-based Groups and Partnerships. Furthermore, the Global Grant agreement required that eligible bodies submit “*an integrated area action plan drawn up in consultation with such other local groups and bodies, public agencies and local representatives of the social partners, as the eligible body sees fit. This plan will set out the basic strategy whereby it seeks to achieve its objectives of economic and social revitalisation in its area*” (ibid.).

1.2 The Concept of Local Development

¹ One group, Dublin Travellers Education and Development Group (DTEDG), also received funding from the Global Grant (1992-1995) although it is not a local development group in the usual sense of the term. Founded in 1985, DTEDG comprises both Travellers and settled people and its main activities involve public education and campaigning for the rights and culture of Travellers. As such it is quite different to the area-based models of local development in the 12 Partnerships and 28 Groups which were funded under the Global Grant (1992-1995) and which are the focus of this report.

Ireland has made encouraging progress in the economic and social field in the recent years up to 1995, despite the difficulties facing a small economy on the periphery of Europe. Output and average living standards have been rising, inflation is at a low, and the public debt is falling; social benefits have, in the main, been protected and enhanced. Notwithstanding such achievements, few inroads have been made to reduce the high level of unemployment prevailing throughout the country. Furthermore, whilst *average* social and economic development has been encouraging, this does not apply equally to different regions and localities throughout Ireland. Contrary to the belief of some, the rising tide has not lifted all boats. As has been particularly shown through the work of the Combat Poverty Agency (Donnison et al., 1991; Nolan, 1991; Murphy Lawless, 1992; Williams and Whelan, 1994; and Rottman, 1994) and the ESRI (Nolan and Callan, 1994), there are substantial proportions of the population that remain in poverty and the dominant structural processes at work in society seem to endlessly reproduce the incidence of poverty amongst the same social groups and geographical localities.

To redress the uneven outcomes of social and economic restructuring that constantly takes place in society, there has been an ongoing search for appropriate actions over the past decades. Of relevance here are the three Anti-Poverty Programmes of the EU (1975-1980; 1985-1989; 1989-1994). These show that initiatives on the small scale of urban and rural neighbourhoods are unlikely to succeed unless they are coupled with others operating on the scale of cities, regions surrounding it, and the national level. *“These initiatives require close co-operation at every stage with community-based people who actually experience the problems to be tackled. Unless they are given a voice which cannot be disregarded in debates about their needs, the dominant groups in society will always misunderstand some aspects of the problem and prescribe mistaken solutions for it”* (Donnison, 1991).

Building on the experience of Irish initiatives under the Second and Third EU Anti-Poverty Programmes, the search for solutions to the uneven development process gained particular momentum under the Programme for Economic and Social Progress (PESP). Under PESP, the pilot initiative to combat long-term unemployment (1991-1993) instigated, for the first time, a major programme of state-sponsored, local area-based Partnerships, that were built on a principle of equal representation of the social partners, state agencies and local community groups. The success of this pilot initiative, documented in Craig and McKeown (1994), is the essential precursor of the Global Grant (1992-1995) and finds its culmination in the Operational Programme for Local Urban and Rural Development (1994-99).

Local development, as pursued through the Global Grant (1992-1995), is explicitly focused on areas of high socio-economic disadvantage, the long-term unemployed and other people who are socially excluded and economically marginalised. There are four central characteristics associated with the local development approach promoted by the Global Grant:

- (i) It involves the establishment of appropriate *partnerships* or alliances at the local level. The state cannot work in isolation from the community and the social partners or *vice versa*. Each sector has an important input to make in

improving the quality of life for local residents. These partnerships can either be formal alliances (e.g. Area-Based Partnerships) or looser structures in form of local development groups. Whilst all of the existing programmes were designed at either EU or Irish government level, it is important that the local actions proposed by the Groups/Partnerships reflect the reality of the situation in their local area.

- (ii) It requires the *participation* of the target population at which any particular initiative might be focused. Local development can only be achieved and sustained if it provides opportunities for ‘clients’ to help shape and design programmes intended for their benefit. This participation can take many different forms, ranging from representation on Boards of Directors or management committees to involvement on specific projects or working groups. A key element in the work of the Groups/Partnerships relates to identifying participation as a major objective and providing the necessary resources (time, money, and training) to enable this objective to be realised.
- (iii) It utilises the formulation of an Area Action Plan as a key *planning* concept. Groups and Partnerships were asked to systematically identify needs and opportunities within their community, draw up appropriate plans and actions and implement these development proposals. It is crucial, that the development of the Area Action Plan is done not simply to draw down central funds, but that the process is used to develop a broadly shared vision within the community about the relative priorities of actions needed to assist those who are most disadvantaged amongst them.
- (iv) It is *multi-dimensional* and works from a premise that social exclusion and deprivation are not only the result of low incomes and unemployment - and often transmitted from one generation to the next - but also rooted in poor health and environment as well as an expression of lack of social services, transportation, and education. Thus, a holistic approach, incorporating all or a number of the above aspects, is required when dealing with the needs of particularly disadvantaged communities. Furthermore, the approach also attempts to be sustainable in the long run and, for this reason, without necessarily involving substantial additional expenditure, focuses on the integration and co-ordination of existing services.

1.3 Local Development in Context

International Context

“A growing consensus has emerged that local development is a mechanism for offering new solutions to problems which defeated conventional services operating in conventional ways” (Donnison, 1991). This viewpoint is supported by the Irish government’s analysis of what is happening in other countries: *“there has been growing international acceptance of the importance of area-based interventions to complement the mainstream or structural policies addressing long-term unemployment, economic marginalisation and social exclusion”* (National Development Plan, 1994-99).

Throughout Europe, the past two decades have witnessed the emergence of collective, localised responses to the problems of economic and social regeneration. There is now increased awareness of the importance of directing programmes to tackling deprivation and disadvantage specifically at those neighbourhoods where the characteristics of disadvantage are concentrated. The French Development Sociale des Quartier programme and Barcelona's Integrated Plan approach both focus on tightly defined small areas. Equally, regeneration programmes in the old city of West Berlin and Rotterdam, comprising local project groups in each of the 11 renewal areas, are evidence of the potential role and impact of local development companies which embrace the concepts of partnership, participation, planning and multi-dimensionality.

In the United Kingdom a variety of projects have had a small area integrated approach focusing on issues like education (the Educational Priority Areas), poverty and social deprivation (the Community Development Projects), improving access to economic opportunities (Task Forces) and environmental and infrastructural improvements (Urban Development Corporations). Other innovative programmes and initiatives have included the Community Development Trusts and the City Challenge schemes, which both provide a basis for the direct participation of local residents in local development, as well as the formation of four partnership initiatives in Scotland. The latter programmes, which are located in four large local authority estates on the urban periphery, involve the establishment of committees to develop and oversee the implementation of a comprehensive area regeneration strategy, usually over a 10 year period. (For details, see McArthur, 1993).

These programme references are merely intended as indicative examples of the range of actions which are taking place throughout Europe. This growing awareness of the potential of local development concepts and approaches is reflected in the operations and focuses of the EU. Indeed the EU has played a lead role in advocating local development strategies. The Single European Act affirms the concept of subsidiarity, i.e., the right of smaller bodies in society to a certain amount of control and authority. Since the signing of the Single European Act, the EU has been increasingly concerned to deliver its commitment to social cohesion as well as economic development. It is addressing regional imbalances and local problems by means of the Structural Funds and a wide range of social action programmes (including Poverty 3, Employment, Adapt, Horizon, *et cetera*). These programmes stress the importance of involving local residents in projects and partnerships designed to overcome disadvantage and social exclusion. For example most of the Poverty 3 actions (55 MECUs, 39 projects) were structured along partnership lines.

Irish Context

Ireland has had a long history of community self-help and community development; however, these were not generally based on the principles of partnership, participation, planning and multi-dimensionality. This particular approach to local development began to evolve in the late 1980s in response to widespread concern about unemployment and emigration. There was a realisation that the conventional ways of delivering programmes were simply not impacting on a fairly significant minority of the Irish population who were not accessing available provision. A recognition existed that new alliances needed to be formed and collaborative projects/programmes established. This

type of thinking led to the establishment of the COMTECs (1985-87), and the Pilot Area Programme in Integrated Rural Development (1988-90). Both of these initiatives involved a local dimension in enterprise and employment creation, and encouraged local communities to develop their own capacity - essential elements in the model of local development which has been supported through the Global Grant.

These programmes helped to inform public policy thinking in the 1980s. In *Strategies for the Nineties* (NESC, 1990) it was argued that special measures to create employment in the economy - labour subsidies, direct job creation and enterprise schemes - would have no impact on the long-term unemployed because “*all the evidence suggests the slowly rising demand for labour will not reach into that particularly disadvantaged group*”. In order to be effective these special employment measures “*need to be targeted in an integrated fashion in the context of local area-based strategies*” (ibid.). This policy recommendation was subsequently adopted in the negotiations between the Government and the social partners, which eventually led to the Programme for Economic and Social Progress (PESP) in 1991.

The PESP objective, in respect of local development, was to establish an integrated local approach in areas with high concentrations of people who are long-term unemployed or at risk of long-term unemployment. The 12 pilot areas for this Area-Based Response were selected in 1991 on the basis of criteria which included the extent of unemployment (especially long-term unemployment), geographical spread and the existence of structures and activities on which the proposed Partnerships could build. The development of these 12 Partnerships has been well documented in a series of evaluation reports produced by Craig and McKeown (1993, 1994, 1995). It is important to recognise the close linkage between the 12 Partnerships and the Global Grant (1992-1995). The Global Grant (1992-1995) helped to support many of the actions developed by the Partnerships; these will be examined in greater detail at a later stage in this report.

The experiences of the 12 Partnerships have effectively established the basis for the next phase of local development strategies in Ireland. The fostering of local development through state-sponsored area-based Partnerships has clearly moved up the political agenda, as evidenced by resource commitments, references in national policy agreements, and favourable commentaries by various bodies and organisations. Indicators of the increased emphasis on local development include:

- The National Development Plan (1994-99) which recognises the importance of local development and refers to the experience in local development gained through a number of initiatives, including the Global Grant (1992-1995). It outlines a detailed strategy for local development including an area-based local development sub-programme for areas characterised by a high concentration of long-term unemployment, economic marginalisation, social exclusion and economic deprivation.
- The Operational Programme for Local Urban and Rural Development (1994-99) which is the practical manifestation of the Government's intentions, as expressed in the National Development Plan. The primary objective of this programme, scheduled to cost IR£208 million, is to provide a framework in

which communities and individuals become the prime movers in an integrated approach which will:

- promote enterprise and employment;
- reintegrate the long term unemployed and other marginalised groups into the labour market;
- promote education and training measures to tackle exclusion and marginalisation resulting from long term unemployment, early school leaving and poverty;
- regenerate the environment in cities, towns and villages.

It is interesting to note that the principle features of the model of local development considered in this report (partnership, participation, planning, multi-dimensionality) are re-affirmed in the text of the Operational Programme for Local Urban and Rural Development (1994-1995).

- The Programme for Competitiveness and Work (PCW) contains a renewed commitment to the local development strategy outlined in the National Development Plan by stating that *“the strategy for local development outlined in the National Development Plan will be further developed with concrete actions directed especially at areas with a high concentration of unemployment, characterised by social exclusion and environmental degradation. Area Partnership Companies will develop co-ordinated responses, including the contribution of relevant promotional and social agencies, to agreed priority needs within an expanded number of designated areas of disadvantage”* (1.134,PCW).
- There is endorsement and expressions of support from a variety of notable organisations. These include the National Economic and Social Forum which comprises representatives of the social partners, political parties and a range of disadvantaged groups. In commenting on the National Development Plan it stated that *“the emphasis on a bottom up and integrated approach to harnessing local and community leadership, and targeting communities marked by social exclusion is an important extension and development of the Area-Based Partnership approach under the PESP”* (NESF, 1993). Also the National Economic and Social Council has re-emphasised the need for locally based initiatives both to support the needs of disadvantaged communities and to promote local enterprise development.

Thus, there have been significant advances in the levels of awareness, interest and activity taking place within the local development arena, especially since 1990. Whilst this has been partly due to the work of Groups and Partnerships supported through the Global Grant (1992-1995), other initiatives have also helped in the process. These include the Third EU Anti-Poverty Programme (1989-1994), the Community Development Programme co-ordinated by the Department of Social Welfare and the Combat Poverty Agency (established in 1990 and ongoing), the LEADER Programme (Liaisons Entre Actions de Développement de L'Économie Rurale, 1991-1994) and the trilogy of EU Initiatives (NOW, Horizon, Euroform, 1991-94).

1.4 The Global Grant (1992-1995)

In January 1992 the Irish Government and the EU agreed, in principle, to initiate a Global Grant which would assist local socio-economic development in Ireland. In order to develop the organisational and operating details of the grant a consultancy report was prepared on behalf of the EU by Local and Regional Development Planning (LRDP). This report sets out the focus, contexts and mechanisms for the delivery of the Global Grant. This formed the basis for the EU decision on 4th September 1992 and the signing of the Global Grant agreement on 6th January, 1993.

The Global Grant in Ireland for the 1992-95 period was IR£8 million, comprising a 64% contribution from the ERDF and 36% from the ESF and has been administered by Area Development Management Ltd. (ADM), an intermediary organisation established in October 1992. The functions of ADM are to evaluate proposals from eligible bodies including the 12 Partnerships, to allocate funds in accordance with the Global Grant agreement, and to monitor and evaluate the application of the Global Grant. A detailed description of the initial process of Grant allocation is contained in Rourke (1994).

Article 7 of the Global Grant agreement between the EU Commission and ADM states that eligible measures funded by the Global Grant (1992-1995) must be the subject of 'a qualitative and quantitative assessment'. The agreement further sets out a series of projected results and outcomes which have to be achieved through assistance from the Global Grant. In respect of the targeting of the Global Grant, these include

- that, in excess of the 12 Partnerships and the Travellers' Education and Development Group, at least 17 further community-based organisations will be supported under the scheme
- that, within 3-4 months, each approved group should have prepared a detailed Area Action Plan

In terms of the actual results of the work of the Groups and Partnerships the agreement expects :

- that financial assistance and information be provided to up to 300 new and existing enterprises
- that at least 400 people be trained/educated in enterprise and business skills
- that some 30 studies and/or local promotion activities will be undertaken
- that some 800 unemployed people receive training/education relevant to enterprise creation, business development or employability
- that 8 small-scale projects receive funding for infrastructure and environmental measures
- that at least 30 international contacts be established

(Commission of the European Communities, 1993, Annex Two)

This evaluation examines the extent to which the above targets had been met through Global Grant support. The evaluators are also conscious of the particular local development strategy underlying the Global Grant (1992-1995) i.e., one that builds on the principles of partnerships, participation, planning, and multi-dimensionality. Through these principles, the Global Grant (1992-1995) has the potential to make a

significant contribution to local development strategies as promoted by the PESP Partnerships and the impending Operational Programme for Local Urban and Rural Development (1994-1999). Thus, in addition to assessing quantitative outcomes, this report also considers the contribution which the Global Grant (1992-1995) has made to the profile, understanding and credibility of this particular local development strategy in Ireland.

1.5 Evaluation Modules and Methodology

Evaluation Modules

There are four modules in this evaluation which closely follow the modules and their respective evaluation mechanisms as outlined in the original evaluation proposal by Kieran McKeown Limited; these are:

- (i) An evaluation of the effective *Targeting of the Global Grant*, including:
 - a multivariate analysis to determine the areas of greatest disadvantage throughout Ireland;
 - a description of the location of the 12 Partnerships and 28 Groups funded under the Global Grant (1992-1995);
 - a detailed analysis of the key socio-economic characteristics of the areas targeted through the Groups/Partnerships.
- (ii) *Analyses of Area Action Plans* involving:
 - analysis of information on the process used to produce the Area Action Plans;
 - interviews with the Groups on their qualitative assessment of this planning process;
 - interviews with key personnel of ADM.
- (iii) *Analysis of actions* including:
 - a financial analysis of the allocation of Global Grant funds between the different types of actions and measures;
 - quantitative indicators of the impact of each kind of action, comparing the actual with the expected results;
 - a descriptive account of the different types of action undertaken by groups, within the three main categories.

The main information for this module stems from a detailed interview and written questionnaire held with each Group/Partnership.

- (iv) *Issues in the local development process:*

This module considers in a structured way the qualitative issues arising from the interviews with the Groups/Partnerships. Themes covered are:

 - problems arising in the organisational development of Groups /Partnerships;
 - the role and purpose of partnership in the local development process;
 - problems in participation and representation;
 - issues arising in context of the disbursement of finance; and finally
 - a review of the relationship between the Groups/Partnerships and ADM.

As was the case for the previous module, the main information for this module originates from interviews held with the representatives of the Groups /Partnerships and key personnel with ADM.

Methods of Evaluation

To carry out the evaluation, a detailed questionnaire was prepared which addressed issues relating to the Area Action Plans, group development, measures/actions carried out and relationships with ADM. The questionnaire was filled out by the evaluation researchers during the interviews. The information thus collected was supplemented by written information produced by the Groups/Partnerships. Interviews lasted between 1½ to 2 hours and were held with 70 individuals representing 10 Partnerships and 28 Groups; despite our best efforts, interviews with two Partnerships could not be arranged. Interviews generally took place with two members of each Group/Partnership, one of whom was a founding member (usually the Chairperson) and the other a key employed member, usually the Manager.

The evaluation made use of information produced by and for ADM. This included the returns of the quarterly financial accounts from each Group/Partnership (Form 2a) for December 1994 and March 1995 and other project related information.

The evaluation contains a detailed examination and analysis of the 28 Area Action Plans produced by the Groups, as well as a detailed study of the Global Grant reports produced by the 12 Partnerships which detail how they spent their Global Grant allocation.

The formal analysis of the spatial distribution of disadvantage in Ireland, presented in the first module, makes extensive use of the Small Area Population Statistics of the 1991 Census of Population.

Finally, the evaluators undertook a number of interviews with members of the ADM Board and staff team.

Structure of the Report

The remainder of this report is structured in the following way. Chapter Two appraises the geographical distribution of disadvantage throughout Ireland and assesses the effectiveness of the Global Grant (1992-1995) in targeting the areas of greatest economic and social need. Chapter Three examines the content and calibre of the Area Action Plans developed by the 28 Groups. Chapter Four analyses the actions which have been supported through the Global Grant and Chapter Five considers the key themes and issues which have arisen during the course of the evaluation. The final chapter draws together the main conclusions on the disbursement of the Global Grant (1992-1995) and makes recommendations in respect of future Global Grants to foster local development.

Chapter Two

Targeting of the Global Grant

2.1 Introduction

The area-based approach to combating long-term unemployment, under the Programme for Economic and Social Progress (PESP), has created a new focus on targeting social exclusion through local development. The Global Grant (1992-1995) builds on this achievement, broadening it beyond the original 12 Partnerships designated under PESP to include an additional 28 local development Groups. The new Operational Programme for Local Urban and Rural Development (1994-1999) represents a mainstreaming of this local development strategy. Expenditure under the Global Grant (1992-1995) and the Operational Programme for Local Urban and Rural Development (1994-1999) remains small in comparison to total government expenditure or Gross National Product (GNP); nevertheless, if such programmes manage to make up for some of the cumulative deprivation experienced in areas of deprivation, then these programmes are of fundamental importance to those who experience the effects of social exclusion in their neighbourhood.

The aim of the analysis in this chapter is to offer an insight into the geographical distribution of social exclusion in Ireland and thereby provide an objective view of the background to the spatial targeting of the Global Grant (1992-1995).

2.2 Distribution of Disadvantage throughout Ireland

At the outset, it is important to stress that disadvantage and unemployment are spatially pervasive phenomena which affect virtually every area in Ireland. The poor or unemployed are not singularly clustered in the major urban centres, and while there may be a high incidence of poverty on public housing estates, most poor households in Ireland do not live on such estates (Nolan and Callan, 1994). In Ireland, only 10 per cent of the population lived in local authority rented accommodation in 1991.

Whilst the above statement is intended as a warning against false expectations of what can be achieved through spatial targeting of the Global Grant (1992-1995), this by no means questions the validity of such a programme. On the contrary, whilst the spatially uneven outcomes of the social and economic development of Irish society are clearly the product of underlying structural changes, they nevertheless take on a distinct spatial dimension in the way they manifest themselves. Furthermore, this spatial dimension is increasingly seen to have an independent effect on the degree of social exclusion experienced by those living in these areas. This 'cumulative effect' has been clearly demonstrated in, for example, the area of educational research, where it has recently been shown that the scholastic achievement of students from equally deprived family backgrounds differs markedly depending on whether they attend an average class/school or share the school environment with students from equally deprived family backgrounds (Willms, 1985, 1986; Bryk, Raudenbush, Seltzer and Congdon, 1986). Unfortunately, no corresponding work has yet been undertaken to measure the spatial effects of social exclusion.

The methodological approach underlying the following analysis builds on previous work of Williams (1993), Haase (1993), and GAMMA (Geographical and Multi-Media Applications Ltd., 1993) who undertook a DED-level analysis of the 1986 Census of Population data.

The basic consideration underlying the work of these authors is that although unemployment is one of the most significant factors associated with disadvantage, unemployment rates alone do not provide a sufficient indicator of underlying disadvantage in an area. Long-term adverse labour market conditions may assert themselves through indicators other than the unemployment rate. For example, persistent outmigration from a given area may lead to a reduction in the working-age population. Such a scenario would reduce the unemployment rate, but would also be reflected in a rise in the age dependent population. Another example is on-farm under-employment. In areas which are largely dependent upon the agricultural sector for employment, a lack of opportunities will not necessarily lead to a rise in the unemployment rate, but may instead be absorbed by people continuing to working what would otherwise be considered unviable farms.

For this reason, the authors stress the need for a multivariate analysis. Williams carried out such analysis at the level of rural and urban districts (Williams, 1993), whilst Haase and GAMMA carried out a similar factor analysis at the level of District Electoral Divisions (3,438 DEDs), the smallest unit for which comprehensive data is available from the Census (GAMMA, 1986 Baseline Reports).

Multivariate Analysis of the 1991 Small Area Population Statistics (SAPS)

The analysis presented in the following sections largely repeats that of Haase and GAMMA carried out in 1986; it nevertheless differs in three important aspects. Firstly, the 1991 Census of Population has a larger number of variables, notably due to the inclusion of housing data and improved data on educational achievement. Secondly, a number of additional variables were taken into account to widen the coverage of poverty-related themes. These partly concur with those used in Robson's Northern Ireland study and therefore make the two studies more comparable (Robson, Bradford and Deas, 1994). Thirdly, the method of aggregating the individual factor scores on each of the underlying dimensions of poverty identified was reviewed and changed so that the direct factor scores were aggregated, and the resultant scores then ranked into deciles. In sum, the 1991 Deprivation Analysis includes the following variables:

- (i) the age dependency rate
- (ii) the proportion of lone parents
- (iii) the unemployment rate
- (iv) the percentage of those at work engaged in small farming (under 30 acres)
- (v) the proportion of households with two or more cars
- (vi) the percentage of the population in the combined higher and lower professional classes
- (vii) the percentage of the population in the unskilled manual class
- (viii) the percentage of economically active persons with third level education;
- (ix) the percentage of the adult population leaving school at 15 years or below
- (x) the percentage of the adult population leaving school at 20 years or above
- (xi) the proportion of permanent private households which are Local Authority rented
- (xii) the proportion of permanent private households which are owner occupied
- (xiii) the average number of rooms per person.

In the pursuing factor analysis, three dimensions were identified which account for 73 per cent of the total variation observed. The loadings of the individual variables on the three factors are shown in Table 2.1.

Table 2.1: Structure Matrix of Deprivation Factors Based on Multivariate Analysis of 1991 Small Area Population Statistics

Variable	Factor 1 Social Class	Factor 2 Urban Deprivation	Factor 3 Rural Deprivation
EDHIGH	.90		
LS200	.89		
ROOMPERS	.80		
LS15U	-.77		.66
HILOPROF	.73		-.62
UNSKILL	-.63		
OWNHOUSE		-.91	
LARENT		.85	
LONEPAR		.78	
UNEMP		.77	
SMALFARM			.84
CARSGE2		-.54	-.60
AGEDEP			.56

Source: Census of Population; own analysis

Given the extended scope of the 1991 Deprivation Analysis, the underlying dimensions are somewhat more complex than those identified in the 1986 analysis. The first factor, accounting for 39.7 per cent of variation, is clearly an indication of *social class*. The second and third factors (accounting for 24.1 and 8.7 per cent respectively) seem to be related to the distinct features of urban and rural deprivation. Large proportions of people in local authority housing, lone parents and unemployment are all distinctly '*urban*' indicators of deprivation, whilst the proportion of small farmers and the age dependency ratio are both distinctly '*rural*'. The proportion of households with two or more cars is loading almost equally onto both the urban and rural terms (obviously with an inverse sign).

The clear emergence of the overriding influence of social class together with two distinct but very clear indicators measuring urban and rural deprivation is of great interest, and concurs with the theoretical ideas present at the outset of the analysis.

After assigning individual scores for the three factors to each DED, these were then aggregated to derive a single indicator for the overall degree of deprivation prevailing in each DED. To further simplify the presentation, the DEDs were then ranked according

to their relative deprivation and assigned a decile rank factor score, whereby a score of 1 indicates that a DED is among the 10 per cent of most affluent DEDs, whilst a score of 10 indicates that a DED lies within the most deprived decile. The thus derived measure of overall deprivation was mapped out as a quintile distribution and is exhibited in Maps 2A to 2C.

Before interpreting these Maps, two characteristics inherent in the applied methodology should be noted:

- The more urban the area under consideration, the greater is the observed social segregation between social classes. As a result of this, rural DEDs tend to lie in the middle ground of any overall deprivation analysis, whilst more urban DEDs, particularly those within the five County Boroughs (Dublin, Galway, Limerick, Cork, Waterford), tend to sit at the extremes of the advantage/disadvantage spectrum.
- There is an important distinction to be made between the incidence and the risk of poverty. The former relates to the absolute number of poor people in any one spatial unit, whilst the latter refers to the proportion of poor people in any one unit or the risk of being poor. The maps accompanying this analysis refer solely to the risk of poverty. Thus it is possible that a spatial unit (DED) which is shown in the top quintile of deprivation contains less people who are actually living in poverty than another unit which is shown to be less deprived. The former would typically occur in less populated rural areas in the North West of the country, the latter at the periphery of urban centres where new disadvantaged suburban developments form part of an otherwise affluent 'green belt' area. Examples of the latter would be found in Galway, Blanchardstown or Bray.

When defining prospective Partnership areas, Haase (1993, 1995) suggests that a three-way classification should be adopted in the designation of areas under the Global Grant (1992-1995) and the Operational Programme for Local Urban and Rural Development (1994-1999) which allows consideration of both the risk as well as the incidence of poverty. The first category consists of those areas which are relatively homogenous in their degree of deprivation: in essence, this covers most of the Dublin Groups and Partnerships. The second embodies those areas which contain significant numbers of disadvantaged people, but which do not make up a homogeneously disadvantaged area. This category effectively describes the remaining four County Boroughs, but also towns like Drogheda, Dundalk, Dun Laoghaire and Bray. Some of Dublin's suburban areas (e.g. Blanchardstown, Clondalkin and Tallaght) may also best be conceptualised in this group. The third group contains larger rural areas of deprivation. This system of classification has effectively been adopted both in the designation of areas for the Global Grant (1992-1995) and the Operational Programme for Local Urban and Rural Development (1994-1999).

Interpretation

Disadvantage, as measured in this analysis, is a spatially pervasive phenomenon which affects almost every part of the country. However, there are differences in the degree to which disadvantage is clustered in particular areas, both urban and rural.

In **Dublin**, the analysis fully confirms the known areas of deprivation. These are the North and South Inner City, Coolock (with pockets in Kilbarrack and Raheny), Ballymun, Cabra, Finglas, parts of Blanchardstown, Rialto, Kilmainham, Ballyfermot, Cherry Orchard, Clondalkin, Kimmage, Crumlin, Walkinstown, West Tallaght, pockets in Dun Laoghaire and parts of Bray. The areas identified here are practically identical to those delineated in the 1986 study, the only marginal difference being a slightly better identification of pockets in Dun Laoghaire and Bray. This is particularly welcome since the 1986 study was not felt to have identified these pockets to the same extent as did the CODANS study (SUS Research, 1987). Rather than being the result of a real change between 1986-1991, the improved identification seems to have stemmed from the inclusion of housing variables, which were also part of the CODANS study.

In the **other urban** category, the same observations can be made as in Dublin. The inclusion of housing variables seems to have marginally improved the identification of disadvantaged pockets around large housing estates. The overall clusters of disadvantage are fully in line with those identified in the 1986 study. They include the four County Boroughs of Galway, Limerick, Cork and Waterford and the towns of Drogheda, Dundalk, Sligo, Kilkenny and Wexford.

In the **rural** category the analysis slightly differs from the 1986 results. Whilst the core areas of the 1986 study are all part of those identified by the 1991 data, one important difference is the extended identification of disadvantage in the border counties of Leitrim, Cavan, and Monaghan, as well as in Roscommon and with a wider coverage of Mayo. Following a number of varied factor analyses on the 1986 and 1991 data, it seems that the identification of these areas in the 1991 data is not a result of real change between 1986 and 1991 but stems from the widened scope of variables included in the 1991 analysis; as such it is more accurate.

There are two other changes in the identification of disadvantage in rural areas. These are an extension of disadvantage from the North Kerry area into County Clare, and a reduction in the degree of disadvantage in County Wexford. Again, after numerous related factor analyses on the 1986 and 1991 data sets, we believe that these changes are an indication of real changes in the degree to which these areas are disadvantaged.

One of the most interesting features emanating from the 1991 analysis is the light it throws on the opposite of disadvantage, i.e., the geographical distribution of affluence. This is a topic that seldom receives attention. The 1991 analysis demonstrates, in a way not previously seen in Ireland, the location of 'belts of affluence' surrounding the five County Boroughs and other larger towns. Though this feature was detectable in the 1986 mapping, the 1991 analysis has dramatically improved the depiction of this phenomenon. This may be explained in part by the extended data set and the way that the factor analysis identified both a distinct urban and rural dimension of disadvantage. This obviously facilitates the observation of maximum values in extreme rural and inner city urban areas. However, following a number of related factor analyses, there also seems to have been a real change over the census period, resulting in a significant spread of these 'belts of affluence'.

Overall, the areas identified in various studies using 1971 (Breathnach, 1976), 1981 (CODANS, 1987), 1986 (Williams, Haase, GAMMA, all 1993) and now 1991 (Haase, 1995) data from the Small Area Population Statistics have been remarkably stable and consistent. There is little doubt that disadvantage in these areas is deeply enshrined in the social life of their inhabitants and that it is difficult for an area to break out of this. Whilst individuals may escape this reality through migration, the areas themselves at least remain deprived locations.

2.3 Location of Partnerships and Groups and Key Characteristics

After an extensive period of consideration, the Board of ADM finally decided in September 1993 on which Groups/Partnerships were to receive funding under the Global Grant (1992-1995). The discussions preceding this decision included extensive consideration of the geographical spread that would be achieved under the Programme as a whole, and Map 2D shows the location of the Groups and Partnerships that subsequently received Global Grant funding.

Comparing the distribution of disadvantage throughout Ireland, as presented in the previous section, with the location of Groups/Partnerships supported through the Global Grant (1992-1995), ADM clearly has to be commended on the targeting achieved under the Programme. The spread of the 28 Groups beyond the existing 12 Partnerships considerably improves on the targeting achieved under the PESP area-based initiative to combat long-term unemployment and effectively goes a long way to initiate area-based partnership structures in those areas which are likely to be designated under the Operational Programme for Local Urban and Rural Development (1994-1999).

At the end of the PESP area-based initiative to combat long-term unemployment (1991-1993), there was a strong feeling that the area-based partnership approach had worked best in the more urban areas. Whilst there were clearly differences in the tasks faced by urban and rural Partnerships, this may also have been an outcome of better targeting of initiatives in the urban areas compared to the rural. The urban PESP Partnerships were congruous with the most disadvantaged urban areas; in respect to the rural Partnerships, however, this was decisively not the case. The inclusion of 28 new Groups under the Global Grant (1992-1995) has effectively corrected many of the shortcomings in the selection of pilot areas under PESP and thereby laid the foundation for instigating area-based partnerships as a central model to local development in all areas that can be identified on objective grounds to be suffering disproportionate disadvantage.

Key Characteristics of Areas targeted under the Global Grant

The aim of this section is to describe the socio-economic characteristics of the areas in which the 28 Groups and 12 Partnerships are located. It is of fundamental importance to have a clear understanding of the problems which people living in these areas confront. Without this, it is impossible to understand the variety of groups that have a vested interest in the development of their area, the process by which these have come together under the umbrella of their respective Group/Partnership, the Area Action Plans which they have developed, and finally to appreciate the progress they have made in face of these overwhelming problems.

The analysis in Section 2.2 drew attention to differences between Dublin, other urban, and rural areas from the point of view of poverty indicators. The factor matrix in Table 2.1 showed that indicators of social class, educational achievement, density of housing and occupational class were all closely correlated and applied equally to urban and rural areas. Hence we will expect differentiation along these lines in all Group/Partnership areas. Low house ownership, high levels of lone parenthood, and unemployment are all characteristics of disadvantaged urban areas. Therefore we will expect these to reach high values in Dublin. In the 'other urban' category these may not reach high values for the areas as a whole, but will reach similar values in some districts/wards as those prevailing in the homogeneously deprived Dublin areas. In contrast, these characteristics are of little significance in rural areas. Instead, rural areas are distinguished by high proportions of their population engaged in small farming and a high age dependency ratio, indicative of high levels of emigration prevailing in these areas.

In the following three sections we will outline the key socio-economic features of Dublin, other urban, and rural Groups/Partnerships. In each instance, a number of sub-sections will be employed, moving from an analysis of population, through labour market characteristics, social class composition, educational attainment and, finally, housing.

2.4 Dublin

There are nine Group/Partnership areas considered under this category. These include the areas of the Dublin Inner City Partnership, the Northside Partnership (previously Coolock Partnership), Ballymun, Finglas/Cabra, Blanchardstown, Ballyfermot, Clondalkin, Tallaght and Dun Laoghaire. References to a particular area by its Group/Partnership name, are to be taken as synonymous with the area as defined for the purpose of the Global Grant (1992-1995).

Population

Overall population movements within Dublin City conform to a pattern which is echoed in most other urban centres in Ireland. The number of people residing in Dublin Inner City, and indeed across Dublin County Borough overall, has declined over the last ten years, whilst the populations of the more peripheral residential districts have increased. Decreases have been most dramatic in Dublin Inner City, parts of which have almost halved in population over the last decade. The population of Dublin Inner City as a whole fell by just over one-fifth between 1981 and 1991, and that of Dublin County Borough by 12 per cent. Population shifts away from these areas tend to leave an ageing and increasingly disadvantaged population in their wake in certain inner city areas (see for example, McKeown, 1991; McKeown, Fitzgerald, Deehan, 1993). These areas become increasingly polarised between deprived local authority estates and more affluent, privately rented accommodation.

At the same time, the number of people residing in the Blanchardstown, Tallaght and Clondalkin areas has risen very rapidly (by 58%, 13% and 68% respectively). These population increases have tended to occur in an uncontrolled way, without adequate planning; service provision and amenities have lagged considerably behind a rapidly

expanding number of residents. Where areas such as these absorb disadvantaged populations which have been dislocated from other parts of the city, they can rapidly become the location of acutely disadvantaged groups of people. In Tallaght, for example, the districts of Jobstown, Fettercairn, Kiltipper and Kilnamanagh display many aspects of multiple and cumulative deprivation in the context of young and expanding populations. Dunawley and Moorfield in Clondalkin, and Mulhuddart and Tyrrelstown in the Blanchardstown area are in similar situations.

It is interesting to note, that an equivalent pattern of population changes is also discernible *within* some of these suburban centres themselves. In Tallaght, for example, the older and more established residential areas such as Avonbeg and Millbrook have experienced substantial population loss since 1981, whereas the more peripheral housing estates have seen very rapid population growth.

Another characteristic shared by the most deprived parts of Dublin City is an above-average proportion of lone parent households. In comparison with a national average of 11 per cent, lone parent households account for more than 40 per cent of all those with at least one child under 15 years of age in parts of Rialto, more than 50 per cent in certain inner city areas and parts of Ballymun reach even higher levels. Nevertheless, lone parent households are extremely localised even within these three areas, and the proportion of lone parents in, for example, Cabra, Crumlin, Kimmage, Walkinstown and most of Clondalkin and Blanchardstown is only slightly above the national average.

Labour Market Characteristics

One of the most defining characteristics of disadvantaged areas in Dublin is their high rates of unemployment. Unemployment rates throughout the Dublin Group/Partnership areas are well above the regional and national averages and depend mainly on the homogeneity of deprivation prevailing within them. Thus unemployment rates are highest in Ballymun (45%), Ballyfermot (38%) and Dublin Inner City (32%), all of which are more than twice the national unemployment rate of 16 per cent. Unemployment rates are lowest - though still exceeding the national average - in those areas which are heterogeneous in their degree of deprivation; i.e., include both disadvantaged wards as well as more affluent districts. Examples of the latter include the Northside Partnership (20%, after being spatially redefined to include wider parts of Kilbarrack/Raheny) and Tallaght (23%).

Whilst deprived urban areas generally display high rates of unemployment, this is not *necessarily* the case. Even in Dublin, the unemployment rate is not an unambiguous indicator of disadvantage, with possible disparities between the male and female rates, or relatively low unemployment rates being accompanied by equally low rates of labour force participation. For example, in parts of Cherry Orchard, the male labour force participation rate is as low as 35 per cent; roughly half the national average. This may reflect disillusionment with the possibility of finding paid employment on the part of a significant proportion of the long-term unemployed, and their subsequent withdrawal from the labour force, resulting in an overall unemployment rate which does not reflect the extent of social exclusion in the area concerned.

In terms of their labour market composition, disadvantaged areas of Dublin are not defined by a single industrial profile; nevertheless, some general observations may be made. Firstly, manufacturing industry tends to be an important source of employment, although it ranges from providing roughly one-third of total employment (Tallaght) to one-sixth (Inner City). Conversely, areas where manufacturing employment is particularly important, exhibit generally low percentages of people working in professional services. For example, in the Ballyfermot area this sector accounts for less than one-tenth of all those at work, compared to one-fifth country-wide.

Particularly disadvantaged areas such as the Inner City and Cherry Orchard may diverge even further from this pattern, with comparatively small proportions of people in manufacturing employment but exceptionally high percentages - up to four times the national average - in 'Other Activities'. Whilst this is difficult to interpret on its own, in the context of other overwhelming indications of stark deprivation, this serves to reinforce the general impression that many people in these areas occupy a particularly insecure labour market position.

In this context, a key consideration becomes whether or not the employment opportunities available are sufficient to absorb the economically active population. In areas which experience rapid population growth and where manufacturing employment has been the principal source of work in the past, unemployment rates are likely to increase in the future unless access to a wider employment base is developed to compensate for the insufficient growth, or even decline, in the traditional parts of this sector.

Although the Census of Population does not provide a measure of the average length of time spent out of work, it is possible to further estimate relative labour market deprivation in other ways. The category of 'Unclassified' social class includes those who have never been in paid employment, or who live in households where the head of household has never been in paid employment. In areas where this category is disproportionately large, and where the unemployment rate is also high, social exclusion is likely to be particularly prevalent. In parts of Tallaght and Dublin's Inner City, roughly one quarter of the population are of 'Unclassified' social class, a figure which rises to more than one-third in Ballymun, and to more than half in parts of Cherry Orchard. This stands in sharp contrast to a national figure of 12 per cent.

Finally, employment in low-skilled or unskilled occupations is an equally important factor in determining the spectrum of social disadvantage, with strong links between disadvantaged social class composition and high rates of unemployment, including long-term unemployment. A large proportion of people residing in Dublin's designated areas fall into the semi- and unskilled manual social classes, in addition to a relatively large proportion in the skilled manual class.

Local labour markets need to be viewed in a dynamic way, and in the context of the wider division of labour. An important question is therefore how patterns of employment are changing over time, how these changes are related to population changes and what sectoral and geographical trends can be identified. Although the total number of people out of work has fallen slightly in Dublin County Borough over the last five years, this decline appears to have been driven, at least in part, by the decline in

population. In contrast, the number of people who are unemployed in South County Dublin has risen. However, this again may have been driven by the even larger population increase in this administrative area.

In Dublin County Borough, manufacturing employment has declined by more than 10 per cent over the last five years, in contrast to its expansion in South County Dublin. Commerce and professional services experienced moderate growth in the County Borough, although this was much greater in South County Dublin. As inner city working class areas are disproportionately affected by the decline of the traditional manufacturing base close by, it is important to secure adequate access for disadvantaged people in all Group/Partnership areas to the whole of Dublin's labour market.

Social Class Composition

The most deprived areas of Dublin, and indeed of Ireland overall, are those where the proportion of people in the semi- and unskilled manual social classes is highest (except where, as elaborated above, the percentage of the population who are 'Unclassified' is also exceptionally high). In the most disadvantaged areas of Dublin, the semi- and unskilled manual social classes together generally account for between 40 and 45 per cent of their population. This is a significantly larger share than is found in Ireland as a whole, where together they account for just under one quarter of the total population.

At the other end of the scale, the proportion of people classified either as higher or lower professionals tends to mirror the relative size of the manual classes. Ballyfermot is the clearest example of this, with roughly 40 per cent of people in the semi- and unskilled manual social classes and almost 15 per cent who are unclassified, but only about 6 per cent in the professional social classes. This figure is approximately one-quarter of the national average, and less than one-third of the average for Dublin County Borough. In Tallaght, the proportion of people in the professional social classes is ten percentage points below the national average, whereas the skilled manual social class is over-represented by almost the same proportion. In Dublin Inner City, there is a similar disparity in relation to the most privileged social classes, which is reflected in an overall bias towards the unskilled manual social class and the 'Unclassified' category.

In other words, an area is disadvantaged in terms of social class where the proportion of people in the higher and lower professional classes is significantly below the national average. However, at the lower end of the social class structure, this can manifest itself either as a bias towards the semi-skilled or unskilled manual classes, or as a disproportionately large number of people of 'Unclassified' social class.

Educational Attainment

The Census of Population allows the use of three indicators of educational attainment to assess the degree of educational deprivation in a given area; these are the percentage of the adult population who left education aged 15 or under, the percentage who remained in education beyond their twentieth birthday, and the proportion of people who are economically active and have received a third level education. It should be stressed, however, that the first variable does not yield a measure of 'early school-leaving', since the variable relates to the whole adult population and not just the current school-leaving

age cohort. Thus, a high value in this variable has a different meaning depending on whether it refers to an area with a 'young' age profile, or one where it is more 'mature'.

The link between low educational achievement and earning capacity - and ultimately the incidence and risk of poverty - are well documented (Nolan and Callan, 1994). It is therefore of no surprise that low levels of education are generally highly correlated with high proportions in the semi- and unskilled social classes and high unemployment rates, and all together are taken here as indicative of high levels of deprivation prevailing in areas thus characterised. Where this is combined further with a high proportion of population having left school at under 15 years of age *and* a 'young' age profile in a respective area, we also take this as indicative of early-school leaving being a particular problem in such areas.

It is interesting to note that those urban areas which are most educationally deprived are often also those with the youngest age profiles. In Ballyfermot, for example, roughly two-thirds of the adult population left education at the age of 15 or under, twice the national average of 36 per cent. In Ballymun, this figure stands at just over 50 per cent. Both areas have much 'younger' profiles than either Dublin or Ireland overall. Within Tallaght and Clondalkin, those districts with the lowest levels of educational attainment tend also to be those with the largest proportions of young children.

Housing

The proportion of households living in homes rented from the local authority provides an initial guide both to the character of a Group/Partnership area as a whole, as well to the distribution of deprivation within that area. In common with high proportions in lone parent households, the incidence of public housing tends to be a particular characteristic of Dublin's most disadvantaged areas. Thus, for example, Ballyfermot has not only a high overall rate of local authority housing (more than one third of all households), but this is concentrated in Cherry Orchard, where more than 80 per cent of all homes are in this category.

Another way of looking at the relative affluence/deprivation of an area is to look at the amount of living space available to its inhabitants. Those districts with the highest concentrations of local authority estates tend also to have the highest housing density, measured here as the average number of persons per room. However, there is no *necessary* connection between high rates of local authority housing and either overcrowding or disadvantage. The proportion of homes acquired from the local authority may also be significant in certain parts of the city, as may be the percentage of privately-rented accommodation.

2.5 Other Urban

Areas considered under this category include the Partnership areas of Dundalk, North Lee Development Partnership (Cork) and PAUL (Limerick), as well as the new Groups catering for the areas of Athlone, Bray, Drogheda, Galway City, Kilkenny, Waterford City and Wexford City.

Population

As is the case for Dublin County Borough, the populations of most other urban centres have declined over the last ten years. In Limerick City, the population fell by 14 per cent between 1981 and 1991, and in Cork City by 7 per cent. However, this pattern is not universal: the number of people residing in Waterford City, for example, increased by 5 per cent during this period, whilst in Galway City, the population rose by 18 per cent.

The age profiles of urban Group/Partnership areas outside Dublin show only slight variation around a dominant pattern. In comparison with the situation at national level, these areas tend to have slightly smaller proportions of young children and slightly larger working-age populations; most also have below-average percentages of elderly people. This age structure is characteristic of Limerick, Waterford and Cork Cities, as well as, Bray and Wexford, and reflects their role as centres of economic activity. The populations of both Drogheda and Dundalk are slightly 'younger', whereas Galway City is even more strongly skewed towards people of working age.

Waterford, Limerick and Cork all have a small number of wards with particularly young and rapidly growing populations. Where these districts are also deprived in terms of social class and educational attainment, the resulting disadvantage tends to be particularly acute. In contrast, the most disadvantaged districts of Galway city generally have elderly and declining populations.

Rates of lone parenthood in the 'other urban' category are generally only slightly higher than in Ireland overall, accounting for between 12-16 per cent of all households with at least one child aged under 15 years. In certain parts of Cork and Limerick, however, the lone parenthood rate exceeds 30 per cent, resembling rates pertaining in Dublin's most disadvantaged areas. High rates of lone parenthood therefore appear to be almost exclusively an urban phenomenon; outside the towns and cities they seldom account for more than ten per cent of all households with at least one child aged 15 and under.

Labour Market Characteristics

High unemployment rates are one of the defining characteristics of social disadvantage in the urban areas outside Dublin. Although not as spectacular as in Ballymun, Ballyfermot or Dublin's Inner City, rates are in excess of the national average and reach into the mid twenties. The highest unemployment rate amongst the Group/Partnership areas in the 'other urban' category is found in Dundalk (26%), where just over one quarter of the economically active population are out of work. This is closely followed by Drogheda and Limerick with 25 per cent each. Unemployment stands at 21 per cent in Cork, Waterford, and Bray. Galway City (15%) is the only major urban centre outside Dublin where this rate falls under twenty per cent.

In Limerick, the real unemployment problem may be further understated by the unemployment rate for two reasons. Firstly, the unemployment rate conceals the severity of male unemployment in the city; the male unemployment rate is 28% compared to 21% for females. Secondly, the unemployment rate is lower due to the lower than average male labour force participation rate prevailing in the city. It is worth

stressing that the unemployed population of these urban areas is not evenly distributed, but tends to be highly concentrated in specific districts within them.

In terms of population and household structure, levels of educational attainment, unemployment rates and housing density, the major urban centres of Ireland outside Dublin are remarkably similar to one another. However, industrial profiles vary considerably between them. Some areas rest on a much narrower industrial base than others, with rapid transformations in the sectoral composition of employment taking place. Manufacturing, commerce and professional services are generally the most important sources of employment, although these three sectors vary in their relative importance. On the whole, the more disadvantaged urban areas tend to be skewed towards manufacturing industry which, in turn, is equally reflected in their social class composition.

Manufacturing employment, as a proportion of total employment, is most pronounced in Waterford City, where it provides well over one-third of all jobs (37%). This is a higher percentage than is found in the most strongly industrial areas of Dublin City, and is significantly higher than the proportions which obtain in the towns of Dundalk and Drogheda, where figures for those employed in manufacturing industries stand at 31 per cent and 32 per cent respectively. This sector is also of great importance in Limerick, Cork and Wexford, albeit not to the same extent.

In most urban areas, the commercial sector accounts for approximately one-fifth of all employment, although Dun Laoghaire and Bray are exceptions to this pattern. In the Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown administrative area, commerce is the largest employer, providing almost one-third of all jobs, with only a slightly lower percentage in Bray. Since these areas are basically satellite commercial centres of Dublin City, their distinctive industrial profiles are not particularly surprising.

Professional services typically account for 15-20 per cent of total employment in urban centres outside Dublin. Unusually, in Galway City more people are engaged in professional services than in either commerce or manufacturing, and this sector provides employment to more than one quarter of all those at work. This stands in sharp contrast to a figure of 15 per cent in Wexford.

In a number of urban areas outside the capital, manufacturing employment fell dramatically between 1986 and 1991, contracting by over 15 per cent in Drogheda, and by an even greater proportion in Limerick City (-18%). The decline in Drogheda was accompanied by a considerable expansion in the area of public administration and commerce, suggesting that changes are underway in the town's sectoral composition of employment. This process, marked by a decline in its staple industries and the simultaneous emergence of new jobs in the non-manual occupations, is an essential process for the town as a whole to broaden its employment base. However, it is likely to put strain on the labour force in its more disadvantaged districts, as people may lack the qualifications to adjust to the changing labour market opportunities. This is likely to result in greater risks of unemployment and long-term unemployment among the most disadvantaged sections of the population. In Limerick City, the decline in manufacturing employment poses an even greater threat to vulnerable sections of the

labour force, since it has not been counterbalanced by significant growth in other sectors.

In other urban parts of Ireland, most notably in Wexford, manufacturing employment increased substantially between 1986 and 1991. The improvement in employment opportunities in the South East is also reflected in impressive employment growth in the Commercial sector.

Social Class Composition

The main difference between Dublin City and Ireland's other urban centres is not the nature or degree of social class disadvantage, but rather its distribution. The populations of the five County Boroughs (i.e., Dublin, Cork, Limerick, Waterford and Galway) are all polarised between areas with a disadvantaged social class composition and those which are comparatively affluent. However, the concepts of deprived 'clusters' and 'cumulative disadvantage' used to describe some Dublin Group/Partnership areas cannot be used in the same way in relation to other urban areas. Although certain districts and estates within the latter areas face levels of social deprivation and exclusion on a par with the most disadvantaged parts of Dublin, they tend not to be as clearly demarcated or as uniformly deprived.

As in Dublin City, the social class composition of the most disadvantaged urban areas tends to be skewed towards the semi- and unskilled manual classes or, in the most extreme cases, the 'Unclassified' category (e.g., parts of Limerick City). The skilled manual social class is disproportionately large in parts of Waterford City, where it exceeds its national level twofold. In a small number of districts in Limerick, Cork and Waterford, roughly half of the population fall into either the semi-skilled or unskilled manual social classes, indicating a very disadvantaged class composition. In contrast, these classes rarely exceed one-third of the population in other cities and towns.

It is more difficult to identify a district of social class *advantage* within the Group/Partnership areas in the 'other urban' category than it is to pinpoint those areas which are most disadvantaged. This is partly the consequence of residential patterns, since many of the most affluent households live in the suburban periphery, which often means that they fall outside the geographical boundaries of the urban centres and hence the areas as defined for the Global Grant (1992-1995). Social class advantage is most pronounced in Galway City where a number of districts exhibit proportions of the combined higher and lower professional social classes in excess of 60 per cent.

Educational Attainment

The value of overall statistics for educational attainment in urban centres outside Dublin is limited due to the uneven distribution of disadvantage in these areas. In most cases, city-wide levels of educational attainment compare favourably with the national average or are only marginally below it (e.g. Wexford). Levels of educational attainment throughout Galway City compare very favourably with the national average; both Dundalk and Drogheda, on the other hand, have low overall levels.

However, massive disparities in educational attainment exist within the boundaries of these towns and cities. The proportion of people who left school at the age of 15 or below ranges from 45 per cent in Dun Laoghaire, to 50 per cent in Cork and a massive 61 per cent in Limerick City. Another useful indicator of the average level of educational attainment in an area is the proportion of the labour force which received a third level education. In Dun Laoghaire, for example, this ranges from 13 per cent to 56 per cent (compared to a national average of 20%). In Waterford City, the lowest figure at district level is just 1 per cent, and the highest 47 per cent.

In summary, more than 40 per cent of the adult population of disadvantaged districts left school at the age of 15 and below, less than 6 per cent remained in education to the age of 20 and above; the proportion of the labour force with a third level education is generally below 15 per cent. In areas of extreme educational deprivation, more than half the adult population left school at age 15 or below, less than 4 per cent remained beyond their twentieth birthday and the proportion of the labour force with a third level education falls below 10 per cent. There is a strong association between on the one hand, a structured social class disadvantage which manifests itself in highly segregated residential patterns and, on the other, low levels of educational attainment. Educational deprivation is both a symptom of urban disadvantage and one of the key mechanisms by which it is reproduced over time.

Housing

The main difference between Dublin City and other urban centres in terms of housing is broadly one of higher owner occupancy rates within the latter, although these are not as high as in the rural Group/Partnership areas. On average, two-thirds of households in urban Group/Partnership areas outside Dublin own their own home. Local authority housing accounts for less than one-tenth of all homes in Galway City, between 10 and 15 per cent in the towns (e.g. Bray, Drogheda and Dundalk), and nearer 20 per cent in the cities of Limerick, Cork and Waterford. At ward level, Cork and Limerick have the highest concentrations of local authority housing, which accounts for three-quarters of all households in certain areas.

2.6 RURAL AREAS

Whilst the spatial remit of the Groups/Partnerships in the Dublin and 'other urban' category was clearly defined, this was not the case for all of the rural areas. For the former, preparations for designation under the Operational Programme for Local Urban and Rural Development (1994-1999) had been well advanced at the time the Global Grant (1992-1995) got under way, and Baseline Data Reports (using 1986 Census Data) were ready to be utilised by Groups and Partnerships in these areas for the preparation of their Area Action Plans. In contrast, with the exception of the four existing rural Partnerships (Kerry, Mayo, South West Wexford and West Waterford), the spatial definition of rural areas remained unclear for some time because there were no local development groups which were reasonably established to represent extensive rural areas and, moreover, it was unclear which rural areas would be represented in the impending Operational Programme. Hence, whilst partly being selected on the basis of underlying disadvantage of the wider rural areas surrounding them, the new Groups will seldom have taken on that spatial remit during the phase of the Global Grant (1992-

1995). Indeed, as we will see in Chapters Three to Five, they were predominantly concerned with establishing group structures at the local level. Nevertheless, in our description here, we will concentrate on the key social and economic characteristics of the *wider* rural areas, as these provide the focus on the underlying problems which Ireland's most disadvantaged rural areas face.

Population

The most disadvantaged rural regions of Ireland are located principally in the West and North-West of the country. In these areas, population changes between 1981 and 1991 were generally in line with the slight increase of 2 per cent in Ireland as a whole. The population of a minority of counties actually fell, with the largest drops occurring in the Border region. Population losses in Leitrim (8%) and Roscommon (5%) were extreme, with the number of people living in Mayo falling by 4 per cent and in Longford by 3 per cent. Population changes were generally distributed more uniformly across the rural areas than the urban ones, although a minority of districts diverged substantially from average rates of change over this ten-year period.

Population declines at the aggregate level were the result of high levels of outmigration from these areas over a number of years. There is a close relationship between the selective nature of such migration patterns and the age structure of the populations left behind. The proportion of people aged under 15 and over 65 years tends to be higher where a significant proportion of the working-age population have left an area, as reflected in above-average age dependency rates. The proportion of the population aged between 15 and 44 is smallest in the worst affected districts, with disparities often being greatest in relation to the 20-29 years age group.

Those counties which have been most affected by losses amongst their rural populations are Mayo, Roscommon and Leitrim and, to a lesser extent, Galway, Longford, Cavan and Monaghan. In Leitrim, an exceptional overall population decline of 8 per cent, the largest for a rural county, was further accentuated in just over half of all districts, which experienced population losses in excess of 10 per cent. Whereas 44 per cent of the Irish population are between 15 and 44 years of age, this applies to just 36 per cent of the population of County Leitrim, the lowest figure for any rural areas. In approximately one quarter of all District Electoral Divisions (DEDs), less than 8 per cent of people are aged between 20 and 29, compared to 15 per cent in Ireland as a whole. The proportion of the population which fall into the categories of age dependency (14 years and under or over 65 years of age) is larger than in Ireland overall (44% in Leitrim, compared to 38% of the Irish population). Mayo has the next highest age dependency rate (44%) followed by Roscommon (43%). It is worth pointing out, however, that rural areas generally have above-average age dependency rates, by national comparison, regardless of whether or not they have been affected by emigration.

Where rural depopulation is coupled with the prevalence of marginal agriculture (large proportions of holdings under 30 acres), the proportion of people over 45 years of age who are single tends to be well above the national average. In County Leitrim, for example, more than one-third (35%) of men over 45 years of age are single. This is one

of the highest percentages observed at county level, and is more than 50 per cent above the national average of 21 per cent. The degree of social exclusion implied in such average county figures becomes more apparent when looking at the incidence of this measure at the individual district level. In Leitrim, for example, the percentage of single men over 45 surpasses 40 per cent in one-third of DEDs, and reaches over 60 per cent in individual districts. The average proportion of single males aged over 45 is only slightly smaller in County Cavan (32%), closely followed by Monaghan and Galway (30% each).

Labour Market Characteristics

The key considerations in relation to labour market issues in disadvantaged rural areas are firstly, the main sources of jobs at the local level and, secondly, whether or not existing employment opportunities are sufficient to meet demands. Industrial profiles reveal as much variation in rural areas as in more urban ones, the main difference between them being the relative importance of agricultural employment.

It should be stressed, however, that none of the rural Group/Partnership areas depends exclusively or even overwhelmingly on agricultural employment. Even within generally rural areas, the proportion of people working in industries other than agricultural can be considerable; accounting for example for roughly two-thirds in County Louth, and half in Donegal and Westmeath. Sligo is also unusual in that professional services provide more jobs than any other sector of employment. With the exception of these four counties, Agriculture is the largest single sector of employment in Ireland's most disadvantaged rural counties. About one-third of those at work in Cavan and Roscommon are engaged in the Agricultural sector, with the equivalent figure for Leitrim only slightly lower at 32 per cent. Manufacturing employment reaches its lowest level in Roscommon and Mayo, where it accounts for just 13 per cent and 15 per cent respectively. In general, commerce and professional services account for a similar share of jobs at roughly 15 per cent each.

In areas where Agriculture is a particularly important source of employment, the proportion of people in farming and the average size of farms are both crucial considerations in locating disadvantage. In those counties which are most strongly weighted towards Agriculture, farmers account on average for about one-quarter of all occupations. The county with the largest proportion of small farmers is Mayo, where 43 per cent of all farmers have landholdings of less than 30 acres and where 32 per cent work between 30 and 49 acres. The equivalent national averages are 21 per cent and 22 per cent respectively. Leitrim also has a comparatively large number of small farmers at almost 30 per cent, as do Monaghan, Longford and Sligo. Although social disadvantage in Donegal and Louth is not primarily related to marginal agriculture, small farming in these counties is highly localised and indicative of poverty and social exclusion.

In Ireland as a whole, Agricultural employment declined by 5 per cent between 1986 and 1991, but in some disadvantaged counties much greater decreases occurred. The greatest drop took place in Sligo (-15%), followed by a decline of 14 per cent in Galway. In Roscommon, there were 13 per cent fewer people working in this sector in 1991 compared to five years earlier; a decline of 12 per cent took place in Leitrim. The

number of people working in Agriculture also fell significantly in Longford and Cavan, where decreases of 10 per cent and 7 per cent respectively were recorded.

Focusing on those engaged in farming, as opposed to those employed in the agricultural sector more generally, it is clear that small farmers have been disappearing at a disproportionate rate over the last number of years. In Donegal, the number of farmers with less than 30 acres of land declined by more than one quarter, in contrast with a marginal increase in the number of larger farmers (i.e. those with 50 acres and more). In Leitrim, small farmers declined by 17 per cent, and those with between 30 and 49 acres declined by 23 per cent. Both of these figures stand in contrast to the increase of 6 per cent amongst larger farmers. A similar pattern is also found in Longford, Monaghan and Roscommon.

A process of consolidation in landholdings appears to be under way in many of the most disadvantaged rural areas of Ireland, whilst the numbers engaged in farming continue to fall. These two aspects - an overall decline in agricultural employment combined with a selective increase relative to farm size - are very important factors in the changing labour market situation of disadvantaged rural areas. Unless other sectors of industry are able to generate alternative employment opportunities for redundant agricultural labour, the conditions for either rising unemployment rates or for high levels of emigration will persist. Many rural counties have seen impressive percentage increases in the areas of commerce, professional services and public administration, albeit increases which took place from low starting points. Manufacturing employment has generally remained static or fallen slightly in rural Ireland. The two extremes in this respect are Longford, where manufacturing employment fell by one-tenth between 1986 and 1991, and County Waterford, where it rose by 6 per cent.

In addition to unemployment and emigration, the decline in agricultural employment in the absence of alternative employment opportunities increases the likelihood of underemployment in the agricultural sector itself, which can be as significant a cause of marginal incomes and social exclusion as unemployment itself. The prevalence of emigration and significant levels of on-farm underemployment can technically result in below-average unemployment rates. The lowest unemployment rate is found in County Roscommon (10%), with figures of 14 per cent in Leitrim and 13 per cent in Cavan. It would be grossly misleading to conclude that these areas occupy a favourable labour market situation. On the contrary, they are clear examples of counties where long-term adverse labour market conditions, seen in terms of the lack of new employment opportunities, result in persistent and high levels of emigration. In contrast, Donegal has a very high overall unemployment rate at 25 per cent - the highest found either at county or at County Borough level.

In Donegal, small farming is important in certain districts, although the prevalence of low-skilled non-agricultural occupations is of greater importance overall. These two aspects of disadvantage coexist with high rates of unemployment and long-term unemployment, especially among men. Small farming and emigration are more definitive of social deprivation in County Leitrim, with the result that some direct indicators of disadvantage fail to accurately describe its extent. It would appear, then, that Donegal and Leitrim represent two rather different patterns of rural deprivation, the attributes of which are reproduced and incorporated in different ways elsewhere.

Social Class Composition

When interpreting social class characteristics of rural areas, it is crucial to remember how the different classes are defined. Occupational criteria provide the basis for the seven social class categories used in the Census of Population, but farmers are included in a number of these classes, depending on the size of their holdings. The higher professional social class includes farmers with 200 acres of land and more, and those working between 100 and 199 acres are allocated to the lower professional class. The next class, Other Non-manual, includes farmers with between 50 and 99 acres, whereas those with 30-49 acres are described as 'Skilled Manual'. Finally, the semi-skilled manual category includes 'small farmers', i.e., those with less than 30 acres of land.

Bearing this in mind, the balance between the professional social classes on the one hand, and the semi- and unskilled manual classes on the other, provides important insights into the degree of social deprivation in a given area. In interpreting the relative sizes of these class categories, it is crucial to be aware of the distinction between social class disadvantage resulting from large proportions of low-skilled non-agricultural employees and that which derives from a high incidence of small-scale farming.

Social classes are generally not highly segregated in rural areas except where the workforce is dominated by either small or large farmers. Nevertheless, rings of relative affluence are often found on the outskirts of rural towns such as Sligo, Roscommon, Castlebar, Westport and Cavan. These are characterised by comparatively large proportions of people in the higher and lower professional social classes as well as levels of educational attainment which compare very favourably with the national average.

Educational Attainment

In contrast to urban areas outside Dublin, levels of educational attainment amongst the adult population in the most disadvantaged rural regions of the country are generally below the national average. In Cavan, Donegal and Monaghan, for example, the proportion of the adult population who left education at the age of 15 or under is much larger than in Ireland overall, with figures of 47 per cent, 52 per cent and 46 per cent respectively. The equivalent figures for Waterford, Sligo and Westmeath, by contrast, are in line with the national average of 36 per cent.

Despite evidence of widespread educational deprivation in the most disadvantaged areas, the aggregate statistics conceal much greater disadvantage in certain districts. In the most deprived of these - for example, the Border region - the proportion of the adult population who left school at the age of 15 or below exceeds three-quarters of the adult population. As mentioned above, this is contrasted by a small number of DEDs in the environs of towns such as Sligo, Roscommon and Westport, which have substantially above-average levels of educational attainment and are clearly linked to the more advantaged social class composition of these districts.

It should be noted that the above observations do not contradict the well-published fact that a larger proportion of the school-going age cohorts in rural areas attend third-level

education than in Dublin and other urban areas. Emigration from disadvantaged rural areas is highly selective and tends to leave behind those endowed with lower educational attainment. The figures quoted in the preceding paragraphs relate to the adult population as a whole, not the school-going age cohorts, and therefore are crucial for the long-term development potential of a given area.

Housing

Owner occupancy rates are generally higher in rural areas than in their urban equivalents and much higher than in Dublin City. The highest rate for a county is found in Roscommon (86%), followed by Galway (85%); Wexford and Louth have the lowest rates at 71 and 73 per cent respectively. As mentioned above, Agricultural employment is much lower in Wexford and Louth than elsewhere, and most of the workforce in these two counties are employed in manufacturing industry.

As in urban areas, local authority estates in rural Group/Partnership areas are generally concentrated in a small number of DEDs, often located at the outskirts of smaller towns and villages. Even there, they rarely account for more than one-fifth of all households. As a result of the high percentage of owner occupancy, poor housing in rural areas is not exclusively, or even mainly, associated with local authority accommodation. Household density, measured as the average number of persons per rooms, can reach very high levels even in those districts which have very high rates of owner occupancy. Such districts tend to be those in which large numbers of small farmers reside.

2.7 Summary

Disadvantage and unemployment are spatially pervasive phenomena which virtually affect every area in Ireland. Nevertheless, there are significant concentrations which are likely to result in considerable cumulative deprivation and social exclusion to be experienced by large numbers of the population residing in these areas.

Multivariate analysis of the Census of Population since the early 1990s has helped considerably to identify areas of overall deprivation on an objective and comparative basis. When defining areas for inclusion in area-based programmes such as the Global Grant (1992-1995) and the Operational Programme for Local Urban and Rural Development (1994-1999) it has proven useful to distinguish between Dublin, other urban, and rural based Groups/Partnerships.

ADM has to be commended on the targeting achieved under the Global Grant (1992-1995). The choice of location in respect to the 28 new Groups has vastly improved the overall targeting of the Programme compared to that achieved by the 12 existing Partnerships which were established under the PESP area-based initiative to combat long-term unemployment (1991-1993). The Global Grant (1992-1995) has thereby effectively facilitated the formation of Partnerships to be constituted under the Operational Programme for Local Urban and Rural Development (1994-1999) in areas where disadvantage is heavily concentrated.

Chapter Three

Area Action Plans

3.1 Introduction

The Area Action Plan is a key conceptual instrument of local development under the Global Grant (1992-1995). Article 5, Paragraph 3 of the agreement between ADM and the EU Commission states that local development groups can only receive Global Grant funding if they submit for ADM approval an Area Action Plan. This Area Action Plan must set out the basic strategy for economic and social development in the area and be *“drawn up in consultation with such other local groups and bodies, public agencies and local representatives of the social partners, as the eligible body sees fit”* (Commission of the European Communities, 1993, Article 5, Paragraph 3).

The Area Action Plans, as developed by the various Groups, differ considerably in their quality. Differences relate to the quality of the work of the consultants in preparing a profile of the area, the depth of analysis of the relative strengths and weaknesses of the particular area/community, the clarity with which the overall aims of the Groups have been identified and the detail in which proposed actions have been thought through. It is important that differences in the quality of the Area Action Plans are not simply viewed as how “good” or “bad” individual Groups have mastered a particular task, but are understood in the context of the particular situation of each of these Groups.

The Groups that have applied to ADM for funding and subsequently received monies under the Global Grant (1992-1995) diverge in their origins, in the context in which they operate and in the tasks with which they are confronted. Some Groups have been established for years, whilst in other areas the Global Grant (1992-1995) has instigated a bottom-up approach for the first time. The degree of consensus between participants varies greatly from area to area as does the degree of expertise available at local level. Complying under such varying situations, with relatively rigid funding mechanisms, put the Groups under very different strains and reviewing how they have coped under these circumstances must equally include the question of the appropriateness of the Area Action Plan as the most appropriate funding mechanism.

Later on in this chapter we will look at the aims and objectives which the Groups identified for themselves, and Chapter Four will analyse in detail the tasks which the Groups set themselves, and the progress made in respect of each of these tasks. Here, it will suffice to point out that the analysis of the Area Action Plans, which is the subject of this chapter, is intended primarily to provide an overview of the common themes that inform the approaches of all of the Groups that received funding under the Global Grant (1992-1995). It should also be pointed out that this chapter does not deal with the existing 12 PESP Partnerships, as these were not required to develop an Area Action Plan specific to the Global Grant (1992-1995). They had, however, to make a specific expenditure proposal, which will be dealt with in the following chapter in the context of the actual initiatives undertaken.

The present chapter is divided into ten sections: the next section (3.2) looks at the constraints which impeded the optimal development of Area Action Plans, followed by some general considerations about the general framework for the developing Area Action Plans (3.3). In section 3.4 we start with the formal analysis of the Area Action Plans as submitted by the 28 Groups. This includes sections on their mission statements (3.5), the area profiles included in the Plans and a review of the work of the consultants who were engaged in that process (3.6). Section 3.7 looks in detail at the process involved in drawing up the Area Action Plan, whilst the following two sections (3.8 and 3.9) deal with the subsequent analysis of the areas' strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats and the aims and objectives set by the Groups for themselves. Section 3.10 provides a brief summary of the main findings in relation to the Area Action Plans and make recommendations as to their improvement.

3.2 Constraints on the Development of Area Action Plans

It became clear in the course of the interviews that the production of the Area Action Plans was undertaken under far from ideal circumstances. The main obstacles fall under four headings:

- a tight time schedule for implementing the EU/ADM agreement
- a lack of existing group structures around which to build an Area Action Plan
- the absence of an existing conceptual framework for the development of Area Action Plans
- the uncertainty surrounding the future orientation of LEADER II (1996 onwards)

In the subsections that follow, we shall discuss each of these problems in greater detail.

Time schedule for implementing EU/ADM agreement

Advertisements inviting local groups to submit applications for funding were placed in the national newspapers in early June 1993. On expression of initial interest, the groups were sent a detailed information pack, outlining the framework under which the Global Grant (1992-1995) was to be implemented. On account of the clarity of the material contained in this pack and the detailed nature of the application form, just under one-third of those who sought initial information actually applied. Of the 385 applications received, approximately 70 (18%) were deemed ineligible. The closing date of 30 June 1993 was adhered to strictly. A sub-group within ADM drew up a set of procedures for processing the applications, which were agreed by the June 1993 Board meeting of ADM, and made recommendations to the July Board meeting in relation to which groups ought to receive funding for technical aid to produce Area Action Plans.

In July 1993, the ADM Board was unable to approve technical aid pending clarification of two issues (i) the overall geographical coverage of proposed grant recipients and (ii) the relationships between applicants within some of the proposed Partnership areas. As a result, funding decisions could not be made until early September 1993.

At the Board meeting of 1 September 1993, ADM approved the allocation of a total sum of IR£305,000 to 29 Groups to enable them to develop Area Action Plans for their

respective areas. In effect, this resulted in the compilation of 28 plans, due to the convergence of two Galway based recipients. In order to adhere to the time limits for drawing down Global Grant monies from the EU, Groups had less than 2½ months (September 1993 - November 1993) to develop an action plan for their area.

The time allowed for bringing together diverse Groups to formulate a medium to long-term strategic document for the development of their area was too short. Indeed, following the experience of the existing 12 PESP Partnerships it was widely believed that a period of six months would be the minimum necessary for this process. As will become apparent in the following sections, the shortage of time available to produce the Area Action Plans had serious implication not only with respect to their quality but, more importantly, for the group formation processes and for the role that the Area Action Plans were able to play during implementation.

Lack of existing group structures around which to build Area Action Plans

The second major constraint in the production of Area Action Plans was the lack of existing structures into which the Global Grant (1992-1995) initiative could feed. The agreement between ADM and the EU Commission specified that only half of the Global Grant funding could be channelled through the existing 12 PESP Partnerships. Therefore, the other half had to be spent on new initiatives outside existing structures. This was further complicated by the aspirations inherent in the Irish initiative: rather than simply responding to where groups seemed to be best positioned to handle funds of this order, there was an explicit expectation that funds should be allocated to those groups that are working in those areas which are objectively identified as being amongst the most disadvantaged in the country.

Following the positive experience of the 12 PESP Partnerships, the Irish Government had committed itself in the *Programme for Competitiveness and Work* (PCW) to provide for a nation-wide local development programme as part of the ensuing National Development Plan (1994-1999). Therefore, at least for Ireland, the Global Grant (1992-1995) played a crucial role (i) in providing continued funding for the existing 12 PESP Partnerships and (ii) in laying foundations in those areas which were likely to be designated under the Operational Programme for Local Urban and Rural Development (1994-1999). In all, 22 out of the 28 new Groups are situated within areas which were subsequently designated under the new Programme.

In practice, this meant that ADM could not simply respond to the applications it received, but had to comply with the additional expectation of channelling the funds to areas which were known to be amongst the most disadvantaged. At times, this meant that Global Grant funding was allocated to areas where only the most rudimentary structures existed, with almost no experience of community or local development and little experience in the handling of substantial funds. In other cases, the allocation of Global Grant funds meant bringing diverse, and sometimes competing, groups together into a single entity and facilitating them to develop a single agreed plan for their area.

Absence of an existing conceptual framework for the development of Area Action Plans

The third constraint in developing Area Action Plans was the lack of documented experience of bringing together the social partners, statutory agencies and community groups/voluntary agencies at the local level. Though valuable experience had been gained from the existing 12 PESP Partnerships, this was mainly available through the personnel involved in these pilot projects, and the final evaluation report on the PESP pilot initiative (Craig and McKeown, 1994) only became available to the wider public in the course of the following year.

To fill this information gap, the *Combat Poverty Agency* began to compile a handbook on strategic planning for local development partnerships (Flanagan, Haase and Walsh, 1995). This handbook, however, was geared primarily towards the ensuing Operational Programme for Local Urban and Rural Development (1994-1999) and was therefore aimed at larger groups with full tripartite partnership structures. In many cases this was inappropriate for the Groups applying under the Global Grant (1992-1995); at any rate, the handbook was only available in the form of early drafts when it was most needed. It is apparent from the interviews with the 28 Groups that the lack of guidance, particularly during the early stages of group formation and drafting of the Area Action Plans, was a major handicap for the individuals and Groups involved. This impression holds despite the very successful seminar held by ADM in Malahide in September, 1993.

It should be noted, however, that further advances have been made during 1994 and 1995 in disseminating existing experience. ADM itself published the proceedings of a meeting held in September 1994 on the issue of *Community Development within Local Development* (Rourke, 1994) and the Combat Poverty Agency published a follow-up to the handbook, which dealt specifically with issues of *Community Participation* (Craig, 1995).

The future orientation of LEADER

The fourth impediment to the production of Area Action Plans was the continued uncertainty about the future orientation of LEADER. The difficulties in relation to the successor of LEADER I (1991-1994) were manifold. Most importantly, it was unclear whether LEADER II (1996 onwards) would have a remit in relation to social exclusion, i.e., would be geared towards combating disadvantage and therefore be targeted mainly towards the most disadvantaged areas.

Whilst these issues were primarily of concern to ADM in the context of deciding which Groups should receive Global Grant funding, it was also of fundamental concern to the Groups themselves, because it raised the question as to whether they would receive separate funding under LEADER II and which kind of activities, if funded separately, should be pursued under which programme. It should be noted that this issue was not finally resolved at the time of writing this report (September 1995) and, consequently, the interviews reveal considerable uncertainty in this respect amongst the rural Groups and Partnerships.

3.3 A Framework for the Development of Area Action Plans

The most comprehensive guidelines for developing a local Area Action Plan are contained in the Combat Poverty Agency's (CPA) publication *Planning for Change* (ibid.). As not all of the new Groups funded under the Global Grant (1992-1995) would subsequently become an Area Partnership Company (APC) under the Operational Programme for Local Urban and Rural Development (1994-1999), care needs to be taken that the concept of a full-fledged Area Action Plan does not apply equally to all Groups. Indeed, there is a distinct line to be drawn between those Groups which are at the onset of forming a future Partnership Company, which we will call pre-partnership Groups for convenience, and those Groups which are unlikely to transform into an APC, either because they are not located within one of the designated areas or because they have not succeeded in creating the necessary preconditions to act as the focus for a future APC.

This situation was subsequently exacerbated by the fact that designation of areas in the Operational Programme for Local Urban and Rural Development (1994-1999) only emerged towards the middle of 1995, leaving the Groups in the unenviable situation of not knowing whether to plan the Global Grant initiatives in a pre-partnership context or whether the expenditure was effectively self-contained and of more limited duration. We shall return to this issue in our discussion of core issues emerging from the Global Grant (1992-1995) in Chapter Five. For the moment, we shall briefly outline the principal consideration in the production of an Area Action Plan.

Local development as an instrument for social and economic integration

At the outset it is important to state that Area Action Plans, as required under the Global Grant (1992-1995), are not simply a statement of initiatives intended over the pursuing years, but are in themselves a mechanism for bringing together the various interest groups in a community to facilitate the development of a unified vision for the area, particularly for those who are socially excluded. For the existing 12 PESP Partnerships it was rightly assumed that participative structures for the planning and implementation of Global Grant initiatives were in existence; for the 28 new Groups the emphasis was on developing these structures in the first place.

Most of the 28 Area Action Plans follow the broad outline proposed in the CPA handbook, namely an analysis of the area's key demographic, social and economic characteristics, a vision statement in relation to the long-term goals of the Group/Partnership, an analysis of the relative strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats facing the area (SWOTS), a statement in relation to aims and objectives of the Group, and a detailed outline of the proposed actions to achieve these objectives.

There is little doubt that the Groups are to be commended for what they achieved in the two-and-a-half months between September and November 1993. However, following in-depth discussions with key participants in the 28 Groups, the evaluators have some doubts as to the value that can be attached to the literal statements contained in some of the Area Action Plans. Indeed, quite a number of participants held the view that the process that was meant to be facilitated by developing an Area Action Plan had actually

been achieved during the consequent two years of work and not during the preparation of the Area Action Plans *per se*. The initial Area Action Plans were perceived first and foremost as a means by which to draw down funds from ADM.

If one acknowledges the inevitability of such an outcome, particularly in the context of the short time available to allocate funding, then questions arise as to whether it makes sense to make the funding for newly established Groups conditional upon the production of an Area Action Plan; it may be preferable to have phased funding, initially to facilitate the group formation process, and subsequently to produce an Area Action Plan.

It should also be mentioned that ADM, besides making available a technical assistance grant, provided considerable support for the production of local Area Action Plans firstly, by making centrally available *Baseline Data Reports (GAMMA, 1993)* on each of the areas included under the Global Grant (1992-1995), secondly through a seminar held in this context and, thirdly, through the considerable support of its staff. The *Baseline Data Reports* were produced by Geographical and Multi-Media Applications Limited (GAMMA) with the assistance of the Combat Poverty Agency.

3.4 Analysis of Area Action Plans

The following sections of this chapter deal systematically with the 28 Area Action Plans submitted to ADM. Local development clearly entails that Groups differ from one another at the local level. Indeed Groups, and even different people within Groups, may deviate considerably in what they understand by local development itself. Hence, it comes as no surprise that Groups differ in their priorities, how they formulate their aims and objectives and how best to work towards these. Nevertheless, one of the strengths of current initiatives from PESP (1991-1993) to Global Grant (1992-1995) to Operational Programme for Local Urban and Rural Development (1994-1999) - which makes it different from previous local development movements - is the co-ordinated nature of the effort and the collective learning experience thereby made possible. Hence, the purpose of the following analysis is, at least in part, to draw out the common elements of the initiatives pursued under the Global Grant (1992-1995) and thereby make possible a more generalised evaluation of same.

3.5 Mission Statements

Roughly two-thirds of the Area Action Plans contained an explicit mission statement. Themes centre around the integration of those socially excluded from mainstream society and a specific recognition of the model - partnership, participation, planning, multi-dimensional approach - required to achieve this. To quote only one: [It is the aim of the Partnership] *to foster economic and social integration through the development of new models of good practice for partnership, participation and integrated planning; to ensure improved job-chances for the long-term unemployed; to empower individuals and communities to be self-reliant; and to influence public policy and practice through experience gained.* But many similar examples could be given.

Differences emerge between statements, some of which lay stronger emphasis on the betterment of the locality as a whole, and others which seek to identify a limited number

of initiatives targeted specifically at those most disadvantaged. “...to be a vibrant, thriving city, where all people enjoy a good quality of life..”. or “...to create a community that is richer economically, socially and culturally, by stimulating our entire population to develop and use their potential to the best” could be interpreted as examples of the former, whilst “...to unite in thought, word and action: a community whose first concern is its people, especially the young, the elderly, the disadvantaged and the long-term unemployed...” may lean somewhat more towards the latter approach.

Such difference in emphasis could be rooted in a stronger consensus approach by the former, and an approach emphasising the need for redistribution of chances by the latter Groups. It is, however, interesting to note that such differences do not concur with a rural/urban dimension but are equally represented within both urban and rural groups.

In almost all cases, explicit emphasis is given to the need for an effective and truly representative Partnership, involving the social partners, statutory bodies and the community sector. But this is not the only way in which the mission statements clearly reflect the lessons learned from the PESP Partnerships. There is also a clear move away from an exclusive concern with long-term unemployment, towards a more encompassing concern with the general development of the local area and all the disadvantaged people residing in it.

3.6 Area Profiles and the Work of Consultants

The purpose of developing a comprehensive profile of each area lies in the need to assemble the necessary information on which to build a systematic analysis of the impending opportunities and threats to which people living in the area may be exposed in the future. Unfortunately, such data is not readily available in Ireland and in many instances is rather difficult to come by. Hence, it makes sense to employ expert advice to assemble an information base for the Groups/Partnerships. This was one of the reasons why ADM specifically made available technical assistance of about IR£10,000 to each of the 28 Groups. About four-fifths of the new Groups employed a consultant to assist them in the compilation of an Area Action Plan.

It is the belief of the evaluators that a comprehensive area profile should contain four essential elements: firstly, a socio-economic profile of the area; secondly, a consultation of the physical development plan for the area; thirdly, an assessment of the local labour market; and fourthly, a systematic inventory of the statutory, community and voluntary services that exist in the area.

It needs to be clearly stated that these elements were neither explicitly nor implicitly included in any of the guidelines provided to the Groups or consultants, nor are they sufficiently covered in the CPA handbook published since (Flanagan, Haase and Walsh, 1995). Hence there is no expectation as to the coverage of all of these areas, nor are the Groups to be judged harshly for failing to cover for all four. Nevertheless, it seems important to the evaluators to draw out the examples of best practice as contained in the present Area Action Plans and to learn from them for future initiatives. Virtually none of the plans contained good examples of all four aspects of the area profile, yet a number of plans contain good examples of how any one of these analyses can be

undertaken and subsequently used as an important source of information to guide the Group in the identification of the key issues which confront it.

Socio-economic profile

The socio-economic profile was effectively provided through the GAMMA Baseline Reports. In some cases, the Baseline Report was simply attached and some commentary provided within the main body of the Plan. About two-thirds of the Plans supplied the Baseline data in full and provided a sometimes extensive commentary on the data. Two of the Groups did not receive Baseline data as they fell outside the main disadvantaged areas. In two other cases, Groups received the data but for one reason or another the data was not considered in the Plan.

In a number of cases the consultants expended considerable effort amending the information through analysis of other data sources. This generally involved additional analysis of the Small Area Population Statistics (SAPS), but more often drew on current Live Register data. This was seen as particularly important, as the GAMMA Baseline data was based on the 1986 Census of Population and was rightly perceived as being dated. In some instances, consultants assisted Groups in re-defining the area to better reflect existing community structures and provided an adjusted socio-economic profile of the area. In a small number of cases, consultants drew on other existing local economic assessments, but there are relatively few in existence. In four cases, the consultants carried out their own local household survey to gain greater knowledge of the needs of particular neighbourhoods.

In all, the socio-economic analysis formed by far the strongest element in the overall area profiles. This was assisted in a major way by the decision of ADM to provide the Baseline data centrally. As will be seen in the interviews, the data was well received and generally seen as being of great help. However, it is also true that there are differences in the extent to which the data has been put to use. In general terms, one can make the observation that this kind of data was of lesser importance to those Groups which were primarily concerned with their own group formation and became more central as Groups moved towards the formulation and implementation of targeted initiatives. This is best exemplified by the way in which the original PESP Partnerships have learned to systematically exhaust this kind of information.

Physical Development Plans

Though not specifically mentioned in either ADM guidelines or CPA handbook, the consultation of existing physical development plans for the area can provide valuable insights into the major developments planned. Under the *Local Government Planning and Development Acts (1963-1994)*, every planning authority has to prepare a written plan every five years, detailing the major policies and objectives concerning their area. The plan has to be shown publicly and any public response to it has to be considered by the planning authority before it is given final approval by Councillors. The planning authority is then bound by the plan. The plans include important issues such as, for example, zoning for residential and industrial purposes, transport infrastructure, roads, sanitary services, environmental plans and overall settlement strategies. A typical plan

contains some 150 pages, with several maps included, and is the first comprehensive source of information in respect to any county development.

It is surprising, therefore, that only six of the 28 Area Action Plans contain reference to their respective development plan. Clearly, it would make sense for any local group which wants to get involved in local development to do so by reference to the overall development plan of the area, and the consultants engaged by the Groups should have been well positioned to undertake this research. It should also be noted that only two of the Area Action Plans made reference to publications of the Regional Review Committees and the allocation of EU funding contained in these. These publications form another important source of information about likely developments within the locality over the next five years.

Assessment of Local Labour Markets

Although again not specifically required, fifteen of the Area Action Plan contain some form of analysis of the local labour market. This ranges from the analysis of the composition of the local workforce and skill audits to listings of the major private and statutory employers. Where prominent, reference was made to major closures and redundancies. Some Plans make reference to underlying development trends, drawing on the Census of Industrial Production and the Census of Services; in a number of cases the IDA publications were vetted to provide details on grant aided establishments.

The view of the evaluators is that, despite the efforts made, these attempts fall far short of what is needed to provide local Groups with sufficient information to assess the relative strengths and weaknesses of their area and to correctly identify from these the resulting threats and opportunities. The fact that fifteen Plans nevertheless include elements of such an analysis shows the importance given to this aspect. At the same time, data sources in Ireland do not easily allow such an analysis, and it is most likely beyond what individual consultants can offer at the local level, particularly within the time and finances available. The evaluators therefore strongly suggest that, as with the socio-economic profiles, efforts be made to provide relevant data relating to the analysis of local labour markets centrally through ADM.

Inventory of Statutory and Community Services

Nearly half of all Area Action Plans contain inventories of statutory and community services at varying levels of detail. These range from a mere listing of local community groups to extensive surveying of the services provided by both statutory and voluntary organisations. In one case, this also included a detailed analysis of the respective location of these services and hence the access that people have to them. In a small number of cases, details were provided of the throughput in educational programmes relevant to those who are excluded from mainstream educational provision.

Generally, where consultants have provided an overview of local groups and services, this has been of good quality and shows that local consultants are well positioned to undertake such analysis.

Satisfaction with the work of consultants

When reviewing the engagement of consultants, it emerges that there were really two different tasks involved: firstly, the preparation of an area profile, which at least in part requires considerable desk research, and secondly, the task of facilitating Groups in bringing together the various interest groups in the area. Whilst Groups had the option to bring in separate consultants for these two tasks, none of them actually availed of this. In most cases (85%) the consultants were asked to help in the production of the area profiles. In three-quarter of all cases they were asked to act as a facilitator and in all cases they were requested to help in the actual drafting of the final Area Action Plan for ADM.

It appears from the responses of the individual Groups that consultants had a considerable influence on the formulation of the Area Action Plans, an impression that is reinforced by reading through the 28 plans themselves. This is despite the fact that a majority of Groups would have rated the influence of the sponsoring committee above that of the consultants.

When the Groups were asked to rate their overall satisfaction with the work of their consultants, one third (32%) found their work very satisfactory and another third (32%) satisfactory. However, in one third (36%) of all cases the Groups were either unsure how to evaluate the work of their consultants or found it unsatisfactory.

The picture, however, becomes more differentiated in relation to how Groups would judge the quality of individual aspects of the area profiles. About half (48%) feel that the socio-economic analysis was carried out well or excellently. In relation to the physical development plan and the local employment structure, this proportion declines to 24 per cent or one-quarter of all cases. By contrast, 40 per cent described the inventory of services as being carried out well or excellently.

It should be kept in mind that the details of what was to be included in the area profiles was not clearly stated at the time that the work was commissioned, and therefore neither the Groups nor the consultants should be measured against this yardstick. Nevertheless, the responses of the Groups clearly support the analysis of the evaluators in this respect and show firstly that this data is required for the work of the Groups, and secondly, that clearer guidelines should be issued in respect of the content of the Area Action Plans in future initiatives.

3.7 Processes involved in drawing up the Area Action Plans

One of the principal difficulties in programmes such as the PESP pilot initiative to combat long-term unemployment (1991-1993), the Global Grant (1992-1995) and the new Operational Programme for Local Urban and Rural Development (1994-1999) is that they have to deal with vastly differing group processes at the local level. Indeed, the very essence of the local development philosophy is that it respects the individuality of local actors and communities and accepts that community development may mean

different things to different people. To combine this aspiration with the demands imposed by a centrally administered programme can at times be taxing, to say the least, for both the individual Groups involved as well as for the central agency administering the programme.

As mentioned at the outset, the Area Action Plans are not only a statement of intent, but equally serve as a means by which to organise the process of bringing together different interest groups within a community in a structured environment. The following subsections deal with different aspects of this process, drawing both on the descriptions of this process in the Area Action Plans themselves, and on the findings from the interviews with the 28 Groups.

Differences in starting points

The 12 PESP Partnerships, at the time of receiving Global Grant funding, can all be conceptualised as full-fledged partnerships. By this we mean that they have incorporated themselves as limited companies and that they represent the social partners, statutory agencies and the community sector on a reasonably even footing. A detailed account of the early experience of these Partnerships is given in *Progress through Partnership* (Craig and McKeown, 1994) and lies outside the scope of the present evaluation.

In contrast, most of the 28 new development Groups were, at the time of applying for Global Grant funding, at the very beginning of their experience of group formation. The majority described themselves as “a core group of interested parties” with no claims to represent the three sectors in any way. One Group described itself as having “no structure at all”, whilst a number declined to even perceive themselves as a “Group” at that time as they were really a number of groups with quite different interests at heart. The latter is of particular relevance where a number of groups from the same area had applied for Global Grant funding. In these cases ADM strongly encouraged groups to work together, and funding was at times made conditional upon their coming together to form a single umbrella group.

Not surprisingly, all but one Group stated that they actively sought to engage community groups and voluntary organisations in the process of drawing up the Area Action Plan. The degree of emphasis on the means by which this was attempted differs according to the context in which Groups operate. Three-quarter of all Groups (75%) issued specific letters of invitation to existing groups and individuals in the area. In several instances these numbered between 100 and 200 invitations. Outside the Dublin Area, local newspapers and radio stations were an important means of publicising the impending initiatives, both in terms of placing advertisements and in the reporting of events. Within the Dublin area, local media were of lesser importance and Groups had to rely on the distribution of leaflets and posters. Some Groups issued their own newsletter to keep the wider community informed.

Eight of the Groups (28%) invited written submissions towards the compilation of the Area Action Plan and six of these actually received them. Primarily these were from the community sector and often tended to resemble grant applications by individual interest

groups rather than a strategic statement concerning the priority issues arising in the area as a whole.

In only two cases did statutory agencies submit written statements and not a single submission was received from the social partners. Partly, this has to be understood in the context of Global Grant funding. The fact that the 28 Groups did not constitute themselves as full-fledged partnerships, but were eligible for funding on the basis of being a community group alone meant that participation by social partners and statutory agencies was not a necessary precondition. Indeed, whilst all but one Group stated that they saw it as “very important” to get community groups and voluntary organisations involved in the process of drawing-up the Area Action Plan, a considerable number attached a lesser degree of importance to engaging statutory bodies in the same process.

Despite the fact that many of the Groups saw themselves in a pre-partnership context, i.e., hoped that the emerging Group would in one way or another become part of a future Partnership Company under the Operational Programme for Local Urban and Rural Development (1994-1999), only a minority of Groups aimed at the early incorporation of these two sectors into the group-building process. Therefore, the overall poor response from these sectors may not necessarily be attributable to a reluctance on part of the social partners and statutory agencies to spell out their own views and to make them subject to broader discussion.

When the Groups were asked to reflect on their actions undertaken to achieve the broadest possible representation of interests in drawing up the Area Action Plans, two-thirds (67%) of the Groups answer with “good” or “excellent”, 15 per cent feel that their effort has been “sufficient”, and the same proportion feel that their efforts were less than sufficient. In one case, the Group made no particular effort to achieve broader representation. This, however, was explainable through the particular situation of the Group as it involved establishing new structures across a number of islands for the first time. The actual group processes will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter Five.

Participation in drawing up the Area Action Plans

The following table, Table 3.1, provides an overview of the groups that either directly participated or were consulted in drawing up the Area Action Plans. Obviously not all groups ought to have been involved in each of the areas. Firstly, there is a difference in the principal character of an area, for example, whether it is an urban or a rural area which, in turn, affects the kind of organisations that may be of relevance in the area. Secondly, even within the urban and the rural areas, the type of issues that were of major concern varied. Therefore, the list of groups in the table below reflects the characteristics of a large number of widely differing environments. Nevertheless, the table provides an overview of the range of involvement across all Groups. It distinguishes between three kinds of groups according to the sector to which they belong: (i) the social partners; (ii) statutory organisations; and (iii) groups representing the community sector and voluntary organisations.

Whilst 82 per cent of Groups indicate involvement of private companies, this is generally limited to a very small number of individuals who often act in their personal capacity. There are, however, cases where some larger companies have supported

Groups in drawing up the Area Action Plans, and made available professional advice. Notably this has involved the ESB and Bord na Móna. Otherwise it is remarkable how low the participation rates have been, particularly of the Trade Unions, but also the Organisations

of the Unemployed. But it has to be kept in mind that this was not a mandatory requirement, and that many Groups would have developed contacts with the social partners only at a later stage.

Table 3.1 Participation in the Preparation of the Area Action Plan for the Global Grant (1992-1995)

Sector	Group/Organisation	Proportion of Groups in which involved (%)
<u>Social Partners:</u>	Private Companies	82
	IBEC/local Chamber of Commerce	63
	IFA/IMSCA	22
	Trade Unions, Trade Council	33
	Organisation of the Unemployed	52
	other	11
<u>Statutory Agencies:</u>	Local Authority/Council	74
	CEB/County Development Officer	44
	RTC/University	44
	VEC	63
	FÁS/Cert	78
	Youthreach	19
	Local Schools/Home-School-Liaison Officer	44
	DSW	44
	Health Board	67
	Teagasc	37
	IDA/Forbairt	33
	Board Fáilte/local tourism organisation	56
	Garda Síochána/Probation Officer	15
	other	37
<u>Community Groups/ Voluntary Organisations:</u>	Tenants' groups/associations	59
	Resource Centres	52
	Welfare rights groups	41
	Women's groups	67
	Youth clubs and groups	63
	Sport clubs and groups	30
	Child care, nursery and playgroups	37
	Groups for the elderly	44
	Lone parents' groups	22
	Traveller groups	48
	Disabled Persons' groups	30
	Church or local parish groups	48
	Heritage and Arts/culture groups	44
	Credit Unions	44
	SVDP/Simon	56
	other	48

Source: Evaluation Interviews (28 Groups)

In relation to statutory agencies, the local authorities, FÁS, the Health Boards and the VEC are the ones most frequently mentioned as playing some part in drawing up the local Area Action Plans. As with the social partners, it is somewhat difficult to draw a strict line in identifying what agencies were directly involved from the beginning onwards, as their participation would often have come gradually into play over the two years of work. The relatively high level of participation by this sector, as indicated in Table 3.1, is also in slight contrast to the qualitative indications given by the groups. Alternatively, this could be an indication for the presence of the agencies whilst, at the same time, this may not have been equally reflected in their actual contribution towards developing a shared Plan for the area.

In relation to the community groups and voluntary organisations it is important to keep in mind that the table refers to categories of groups rather than individual groups. In practice, this sector was by far the most extensively represented sector in each of the Groups, and many of the Plans name fifty and more local groups as having been involved in the formulation of the Plan in one way or another.

Beyond inviting local interest groups to participate in the production of the Area Action Plans, most of the Groups also undertook deliberate attempts to involve the broader public. This was done mainly in the form of public workshops. More than half of the Groups ran a series of workshops to which they invited the broadest possible cross-section of people. Generally, these workshops were organised along thematic lines, such as Enterprise and Training, Housing and Environment, Education, Community Development, Tourism and Services. In some of the rural areas, workshops were staged to capture different communities in different locations. Here, each workshop tended to span all themes in a single session. Subsequent meetings of the organising committees took place to evaluate any written submissions they might have received and to discuss the work of the consultants.

When the Groups were asked to rate their satisfaction with the participation of the three sectors (social partners, statutory and community sector) in drawing up the Area Action Plans, the participants appear to feel that participation by the social partners, but also the statutory agencies was less than one might have wished. With respect to the social partners, 41 per cent of the interviewees describe their participation as either “less than sufficient” or as “completely missing”; 44 per cent describe their participation as “sufficient”, and only 15 per cent rate them as “good” or “excellent”.

In relation to the statutory sector the response is slightly better, with 52 per cent indicating “sufficient” participation, another 26 per cent “good” or “excellent” participation, but still 22 per cent describing the participation of this sector as “less than sufficient” or “completely missing”. However, as indicated before, questions need to be raised whether sufficient emphasis was put on getting these sectors involved in the working of the Groups, particularly during the early phase of drawing up the Area Action Plans.

In contrast, 81 per cent found the participation of the community and voluntary sector “good” or “excellent”, with only 15 per cent rating it as “sufficient” and a mere 4 per

cent as “less than sufficient”. Table 3.2 summarises the satisfaction ratings with the participation by the three sectors.

Table 3.2 Satisfaction with Participation of the Three Sectors in Drawing-Up the Area Action Plans

Satisfaction Rating	Social Partners	Statutory Agencies	Community/ Voluntary Sector
	%	%	%
completely missing	7.4	3.7	-
less than sufficient	33.3	18.5	3.7
sufficient	44.4	51.9	14.8
good	7.4	18.5	40.7
excellent	7.4	7.4	40.7
total	100	100	100

Source: Evaluation Interviews (28 Groups)

3.8 Identification of Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats

The importance of the collective process of identifying Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOTs) in the areas cannot be stressed enough. Many of the groups that have come together to apply jointly for Global Grant funding represent particular communities, interest groups and single issue campaigns. The whole idea pursued through the PESP area initiatives (1991-1993), Global Grant (1992-1995) and Operational Programme for Local Urban and Rural Development (1994-1999) is not simply to provide funding for whoever happens to be active on the ground, but to provide funding in such a way that local communities enhance their strategic influence over all matters that concern them locally. Proceeding from the information contained in the area profiles, the SWOT analysis is the central mechanism by which a common vision for the Partnership area as a whole can be developed, and by which the people within the area who are most at risk of poverty and social exclusion can be identified.

Whilst the area profiles can largely be prepared by externally-engaged consultants, the SWOT analysis has to be the collective effort of those who are involved in the Group, i.e., it has to include the social partners, statutory service providers and representatives of community groups and voluntary organisations active in the area. This is a time-consuming process and, whilst partly achieved through the holding of open workshops, there was clearly not sufficient time during the preparation of the Area Action Plans to do justice to this important task. Indeed, many Groups stated during the interviews that for them, the process of identifying priorities collectively was achieved at the end rather than the beginning of two years of work; it certainly could not have been done in two-and-a-half months.

It is therefore not surprising that, for many Groups, the Area Action Plan, though a starting point, has not had the importance for subsequent work that one may have expected. Indeed, a considerable number of interviewees clearly indicated that they saw the production of the Area Action Plan first and foremost as a means by which to access Global Grant funding. This is in stark contrast to how the existing twelve PESP

Partnerships view the relevance of their Area Action Plans in relation to their current work: for them the Plans contain their strategic visions with interim decisions on particular actions and initiatives effectively flowing from those Plans.

There are important questions arising from this as to the exact purpose of the Area Action Plans and the stage at which it is reasonable to expect Groups to have formulated a plan on which they can base their future initiatives. At worst, it could be counter-productive to force Groups to develop a plan the relevance of which they do not see at the time of its formulation and which may have little relevance to their subsequent work. On the other hand, it would be wrong to conclude that this was the experience of all, or even the majority of Groups. For some, the formulation of the Area Action Plan clearly had a significant meaning both in terms of developing a shared vision, as well as providing a strategic document on which to base future day-to-day decisions.

Raising questions about the overall importance and limitations of the Area Action Plans serves primarily to provide a context for the following sections on their respective components. It also explains variations in emphasis between Plans and obvious differences in understanding that underlie these. A SWOT analysis is contained in 22 of the 28 Plans in one form or another, but few plans elaborate separately on the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats confronting their area. Most used only one of the underlying dichotomies and a small number of plans analyse the weaknesses without assessing the strengths. It therefore makes sense to divide our analysis into two sections: (i) Strengths and Opportunities and (ii) Weaknesses and Threats.

Strengths and Opportunities

It may initially be useful to distinguish between the principal approaches that Groups adopted in analysing the strengths of their respective areas. The relative emphasis given to the characteristics of the area *per se* and characteristics relating to *the people living within the area* vary from one Plan to another. This is generally summarised in statements like “the area has a rich history” or “the strongest asset of the area is the people living in it”. It is not the purpose of this evaluation to question the validity of such statements; we are, however, concerned about what can be derived from them.

The whole basis of the Global Grant (1992-1995) and the other area initiatives is the recognition that, while poverty and social exclusion are widespread and encompass almost every area and community in the country, they are nevertheless more strongly concentrated in certain places and amongst certain groups of people. Hence, the approach is clearly a comparative one, based on the observation that social exclusion in any of the Group /Partnership areas is more acute than elsewhere.

It is, of course, correct to say that the principal asset of any area is the people who live within it; this however holds for every community throughout the country. The problem is that this asset, measured by levels of education obtained, work experience and people’s financial capacity to apply their skills in a well-equipped and professional work environment, varies from one community to another. In relative terms, the communities targeted under the Global Grant (1992-1995) tend to be those which are less favourably endowed with these assets than others. Therefore, when looking at the

strengths of a particular community or area, we are primarily asking what are its *relative* strengths, what is it that this community or area can offer that others cannot offer in the same way.

In certain situations, however, an asset may be directly realisable for a particular community, without it being a tradable good or service. Examples of this include a good community spirit, low crime rate and good local service provision for those in need. Thus, the successful development of a locality demands that both its material and non-material assets be taken into account. We shall begin by looking at some of the factors considered in the Area Action Plans which may influence the economic strength of an area.

(i) *Location*

Leaving tourism aside, the relative advantages deriving from location that are mentioned in the Area Action Plans are generally associated with good infrastructure. This could mean proximity to an airport or harbour, but is more likely the existence of good roads towards Dublin and other major towns. If these are present, a clean and pleasant environment is also considered to be an asset, not only for tourism, but also in the locational decisions of mobile industries. Proximity to major markets is stated repeatedly to be an important factor, both for productive and service industries as well as for retail outlets. Finally, some Plans refer to the presence of industrial estates and availability of land zoned for industrial development as a major asset in respect to location.

(ii) *Support infrastructure*

There is a growing literature that stresses the importance of a well established support infrastructure for the successful development of enterprises and this is reflected in the emphasis which a large number of the Area Action Plans attach to this topic. Apart from locational considerations, small and medium-sized firms are seen to depend on the availability of sound business advice, start-up capital and access to reasonable loan facilities. For more mature companies, the emphasis tends to shift towards networks of suppliers, an educated labour force and the presence of a sophisticated consumer market.

(iii) *Business ideas and start-up ventures*

A number of Plans mention the numerous business ideas which are latent within their community. Whilst new ideas are certainly an asset, putting them into practice nevertheless rests on the availability of adequate support structures. Business “incubation units” and other support structures are of assistance, but it should be borne in mind that large proportions of new ventures fail to survive beyond their first year of business and that a growing literature stresses the importance of aiding companies to survive beyond their first and second years and facilitating their first round of expansion.

(iv) *Availability of specialist skills and experience*

Compared to other European countries, Ireland has been relatively successful in attracting internationally-mobile investment. In addition to the generous support provided by the IDA, this is attributable, at least in part, to a relatively good educational system and the young age structure of the Irish population. A number of Plans mention these assets. However, some doubt needs to be cast on the general applicability of this argument in the context of areas targeted under the Global Grant (1992-1995). As pointed out in the Baseline Data Reports, and in greater detail in the 1995 profiles of the areas included in the Operational Programme for Local Urban and Rural Development (1994-1999), the areas targeted are characterised by their considerable educational disadvantage compared to other regions and to Ireland as a whole. The overwhelming experience throughout the Western advanced capitalist countries is that, since explicit regional goals for industrial development were abandoned in the early 1980, foreign firms have overwhelmingly chosen to locate new investment in the more prosperous regions of these countries.

There are, nevertheless, some situations where the availability of specialist skills and experience may be of particular importance; for example, in areas where there have been extensive redundancies in sophisticated and highly specialised industries. In Galway, for example, the well established history of the electronics industry has given rise to a strong regional skill base in this sector which could be an attraction for new firms.

(v) *Tourism*

A large number of Plans cite the tourism potential of their area as one of its strengths. This in turn tends to be backed up by an assessment of what their particular location has to offer in terms of major tourist attractions, and of the extent to which a tourism infrastructure has been developed. This includes the availability of quality accommodation, hotels, guest houses, B&Bs and restaurants, as well as the development of specialised and activity holiday packages and transport infrastructure. Whilst the majority of Plans contained some aspiration to develop the tourism industry, it needs to be stressed that few, if any, would have given tourism the highest priority in their considerations, but considered its potential as one of a number of potentials to be developed.

(vi) *Strengths and Opportunities in relation to the community and existing services*

The other major strengths highlighted in a number of Plans relate to the existence of better than usual community infrastructures and social services. Included among these are the strong involvement of the voluntary sector in housing and environment, the existence of well established support for Travellers, the elderly, disabled persons, lone parents and other groups with special social needs. The existence of resource and community centres, welfare rights offices, and the active involvement of women's groups and other community groups are all tangible assets. This becomes more pronounced where there are structures available to back up community-based initiatives through specific community capacity building programmes and support for community leaders.

Whilst good community support structures are not the prerogative of those communities and areas targeted under the Global Grant (1992-1995) they are, nevertheless, of disproportionate importance to these communities. They must not, however, be taken for granted. Generally, areas with high levels of unemployment and widespread social exclusion can easily become the locations of anti-social behaviour, drug dependency and high crime rates, and it is thanks only to the special efforts of the people residing in these communities if good community structures prevail.

All Groups and Partnerships funded under the Global Grant (1992-1995) are making specific efforts to improve existing community support structures and this is central to the philosophy underlying the programme. At the same time it is important that the improvement of community support structures is not perceived as an alternative to the improvement of the underlying economic base of the community or vice versa. It is noted that a number of Plans consider the relative strengths of their area only in one or the other of these two spheres and it will be essential that ADM provides the necessary guidance in this respect.

Weaknesses and Threats

Whilst many of the Plans include an analysis of both the relative strengths and weaknesses of the area concerned, it is nevertheless noticeable that the latter tends to be more comprehensive. This is understandable, as many of the Groups that have come together in formulating Area Action Plans are coming from a voluntary and community development background and are acutely aware of shortcomings on the ground. By contrast, to identify the potential strengths of an area is a more hypothetical exercise, and clearly lies outside what local groups and community initiatives may have encountered in the past.

The weaknesses identified in the Plans embrace a wide range of themes. To cover all of them would be a study in its own right and would indeed provide a vivid picture of how poverty and social exclusion affect people in those areas where they are concentrated. This clearly lies beyond the scope of this evaluation and we have instead grouped specific weaknesses under eight themes which we will outline in a concise manner.

(i) Contraction of the existing employment base

As is apparent from many of the Area Action Plans, one of the most fundamental threats to areas is the shrinking of the employment base. Many of the rural areas included in the Global Grant (1992-1995) are disproportionately threatened by the long-term contraction of employment in the agricultural sector due to the relatively larger proportions of small and under-capitalised farms.

However, marginalised rural locations are not the only ones to have experienced a contraction in their staple industry. Although not as pronounced as in Northern Ireland, the UK or other European cities, the decline of Ireland's manufacturing industry over the past two decades has been disproportionately concentrated in Dublin and other cities throughout the country. As the economy gradually shifts towards more service-based employment, this process of restructuring has resulted in considerable regional imbalances as new employment opportunities do not necessarily arise when and where

jobs in traditional industries have been lost. In many urban areas included in the Global Grant (1992-1995), and particularly in some inner city areas where skilled and semi-skilled manual occupations used to account for a large proportion of employment, this decline in manufacturing employment has had catastrophic effects, resulting in extraordinarily high unemployment rates - relative to the national average - and a particular risk of long-term unemployment.

Another example of areas which have been badly affected are those where extensive factory closures and redundancies have occurred. This has happened where traditional industries fall victim to the global restructuring process, and becomes particularly pronounced where areas have a narrow employment base and are highly dependent upon particular industries. In certain cases this has been further compounded by excessive exposure to transnational corporations which are highly mobile and, at times of international economic recession, have often been the first ones to close down surplus branch plants.

(ii) *Emigration*

Another theme that has been central to a number of the Plans is emigration. The long-term decline of agricultural employment, together with the lack of alternative employment opportunities, has put emigration pressures continuously on Ireland's more rural areas. Farm diversification and alternative farm-based enterprises have not had the alleviating effect hoped for over the past decade and many of the more marginal rural areas continue to experience high levels of emigration coupled with extensive hidden unemployment in the form of on-farm underemployment. Whilst areas affected by high levels of emigration tend to have relatively low unemployment rates, these areas nevertheless feel its effects. Long-term population decline sooner or later results in the shrinking of services, be it the closure of local schools, post offices, or the deterioration of local health services, public transport and so on. Furthermore, as emigration tends to be most pronounced amongst the working-age population, it leaves behind an ageing population and the very young, and adds to remoteness, isolation and feelings of loneliness.

(iii) *Lack of physical infrastructure*

The list of items mentioned in the Area Action Plans that fall into this category is almost unlimited and no attempt is made to be exhaustive on this account. The shortcomings which are mentioned repeatedly include poor roads, poor housing, pockets of concentrated deprivation, lack of low-cost housing, long housing lists, lack of proper halting sites for Travellers, poor shopping precincts, lack of public transport, and lack of recreational amenities. In one particular case, the water supply and river flooding were particular problems. Without doubt, the Global Grant (1992-1995) is too small to have anything but a marginal impact on the existing infrastructure of any area. However, as resources are scarce and different needs compete for these, the democratic expression of the broader public regarding relative spending priorities is crucial. This necessitates making information widely available and consulting those who are affected most by infrastructural weaknesses, which brings us to the next item.

(iv) *Lack of co-operation between the statutory service providers and the wider community*

There are numerous accounts in the Area Action Plans that highlight a lack of information from the local authorities, FÁS, VEC and other major statutory agencies. Even acknowledging that resources to improve services are not unlimited, the delivery of such services could nevertheless be considerably enhanced if there was a greater willingness to provide comprehensive information and co-operation. This issue lies at the heart of the Partnership concept and we will return to it in subsequent chapters when looking at participation in, and the working practices of, Groups and Partnerships.

(v) *Low educational attainment*

Low educational achievement is a core characteristic shared by practically all of the areas included under the Global Grant (1992-1995). This manifests itself in the high proportion of adults in these areas who left school at the age of 15 or below. It repeats itself in high rates of early school-leaving amongst contemporary school-age cohorts and an acute need for more extensive provision of remedial teaching. FÁS and the VECs provide important services, but where services exist there seems to be ample room for improvement; where they do not exist they urgently need to be put in place. Numerous problems remain: youngsters that are excluded from courses because they do not meet certain age requirements, lack of access to second-chance education, crèche facilities for single parents, and generally better access for women to attend further education courses.

(vi) *Lack of essential services*

The lack of essential services has two separate aspects: firstly, the general availability of such services, and secondly, the access that people have to them. The uncontrolled, or even worse, badly planned expansion of suburban housing estates on the outskirts of Dublin and other County Boroughs has led to huge concentrations of young disadvantaged populations in these areas. Sports and general youth facilities are scarce on the ground, leaving children to play in the streets. Health care, public transport and other key services have often trailed behind with a delay of years and even where available, these may be distant and difficult to access as a result of the massive scale of some of the housing estates. The provision of a community/resource centre still remains the exception for many of these areas and financial support for voluntary organisations and community groups falls chronically short of what is needed. The Global Grant (1992-1995) will be central to improving services in these areas and to improving the financial standing of voluntary and community groups. With this in mind, it is understandable that many of the Area Action Plans have provided quite detailed and accurate accounts of the shortcomings in these services in their respective areas.

(vii) *Lack of enterprise support services*

There is a strong perception in a large number of the Area Action Plans that not enough is being done to support the creation of new jobs and business ventures. At times, dissatisfaction is expressed with the work of the IDA, Forbairt, and County Enterprise Boards; more often the lack of designated space for industrial development and the

availability of work spaces and loans are emphasised. Concern is sometimes expressed at the lack of matching between the training provided by FÁS and others and the skills needed for actual job opportunities.

(viii) Drug-related problems

Although only mentioned in a small number of the Area Action Plans, juvenile crime and other problems related to drug abuse are of major concern in some of the urban and suburban partnership areas.

Lessons to be learned

A thorough analysis of an area's underlying strengths and weaknesses is a precondition for adequately identifying the potential threats and opportunities facing the people living in the area. Despite the efforts made by the Groups, the outcome of this analysis has been disappointing. This is not only the judgement of the evaluators, but is based equally on how the Groups see the relevance of the strengths and weaknesses identified in the original Area Action Plan two years on. None of the Groups view them as "very relevant", about half saw them as "related", whilst the other half judged them "not relevant" to their present understanding. Clearly, the experience of the last two years has brought considerably greater insights into the underlying problems of the areas and, as mentioned before, many of the Groups feel that they are now in a position to really assess these problems and formulate a strategic plan.

At the same time, this does not mean that the necessary knowledge is actually present in the Groups. When asked how they would rate their awareness of the relative strengths and weaknesses of their area, only one-quarter of Groups viewed it as "good" or "excellent", about half judged it as "sufficient", whilst another quarter saw it as "less than sufficient". Clearly, the day-to-day demands on Groups can make it difficult to maintain a strategic outlook on their work. But this effectively reinforces the view put forward earlier, i.e., that for some of the Groups at least the production of systematic Area Action Plans at the outset of the Global Grant (1992-1995) was somewhat premature whereas now, after an initial working period and advanced group formation process, these would be of much greater importance. In this respect, the real value of the strategic way in which the Global Grant (1992-1995) was implemented through ADM in view of the impending Operational Programme for Local Urban and Rural Development (1994-1999) cannot be stressed enough. As many Groups will now form part of that Programme, the forthcoming Area Action Plans for the 1994-1999 period can be expected to be of considerably greater strategic value to the new Partnerships.

3.9 Aims, Objectives and Actions

Whilst the analysis of the underlying strengths and weaknesses was somewhat disappointing, the Groups were nevertheless clearly able to formulate their aims and objectives for the foreseeable future. In part, this clarity may stem from obvious shortcomings within their area; it may also have been influenced by a degree of guidance from ADM. In relation to their aims and objectives, practically all Plans remain within a realistic perception of what a Group with a limited amount of Global

Grant funding can expect to achieve. This realism tended to dissipate, however, when actually proposing a plan of action. The interaction of competing interests and a perception on the part of Groups that it is better to ask for too much than too little may have been responsible for the resemblance of some of the proposals to shopping baskets rather than a collective expression of priority needs. However, the actual aims identified in the Area Action Plans are likely to remain relevant for the foreseeable future and are elaborated upon in the following sections.

Building a Partnership

Coming from the PESP experience, the building of genuine Partnership bodies, representing the social partners, statutory agencies and the voluntary and community sector was clearly central for most of the Groups. There are some exceptions, mainly in the context of very small Groups which would not have foreseen a role beyond that of representing the interests of a very localised community. However, particularly for those Groups which saw themselves in a pre-partnership context from the beginning, the building of an inclusive and effective Partnership body was an obvious priority. This included the aim of broadening and strengthening existing structures, setting up as companies, and gaining visibility and accessibility through the organisation of an office and core staffing.

Job creation and enterprise support

Whilst many of the Groups cite as one of their core aims the creation of as many sustainable jobs as possible, in reality their aims were generally more modest. Particularly in the early stages of the work of the 28 new Groups, project funding from the Global Grant (1992-1995) would not allow them to become significantly involved in direct employment initiatives. This effectively demands considerable mainstream funding through FÁS, the VECs, the Department of Social Welfare or other programmes; it also presupposes the existence of a full-fledged Partnership structure. However, many Groups aimed to improve existing advice for the unemployed and particularly the long-term unemployed and sought to set up initial support structures for new businesses in the form of Enterprise Centres.

Improvement of services

Clearly, most scope for improvement was seen where services could be developed without necessarily incurring large expenses. Many of the area profiles already contained extensive inventories of local services and explicitly identified shortcomings in mainstream service provision. The Groups also set aims for themselves in relation to further investigating the extent and nature of such shortcomings. Examples of these include assessing the needs of persons who are unemployed and long-term unemployed and identifying gaps in service provision.

The list of possibilities for improving service provision is almost never-ending. In the field of housing and maintenance, better co-operation between local authorities and

local communities is seen as an urgent first step. The improved provision of playgrounds and facilities for young people follow closely. The appropriate development of open spaces and the provision of accommodation for the homeless and Travellers are cited in a number of reports. Some explicitly mention the aim of overcoming the existing polarisation between better and worse-off areas. All too often it is apparent that the poverty prevailing in certain areas is not so much a natural attribute of the area or of the people living in it, but the outcome of previous planning failures, or simply a lack of planning.

In relation to education, again a plethora of aims emerge. Closer co-operation between FÁS and the VECs as the major service providers and the local community is seen as paramount to improve existing service provision to suit the specific needs of those who are most disadvantaged. Specific aims mentioned include better skill matching, better access for local people, improved provision for early school-leavers and the long-term unemployed, extension of adult education programmes and facilities, improved access to adult education and the availability of crèches.

It is worth noting that none of the Plans actually mention any aims or objectives in relation to primary or secondary education itself. Rather than taking this as an indication of complacency, the evaluators interpret this as an expression of the extent to which the core of the educational system is perceived as something completely outside the control of local communities. FÁS and the VECs often come in for criticism in relation to their lack of co-operation at the local level, but the idea of influencing the school system itself seems unimaginable. Yet this need not be the case. Important initiatives are already in place, both at primary and secondary level, to provide additional assistance to schools in disadvantaged areas. To a very large extent, these areas coincide with those included under the PESP (1991-1993) and Global Grant (1992-1995) schemes, and the Home-School-Liaison Scheme directly aims at closer co-operation with the parents in the locality.

Similar considerations apply to health services. Only two of the Plans mention as an aim the improvement of health services. Yet many of the rural areas that experience continued depopulation are facing an immanent threat to the provision of effective and affordable health care. There is available the experience of specific pilot projects such as the primary health care project run by FORUM, Connemara under the Poverty III Programme (see Harvey, 1994, Chapter 9) The outcomes of this should be evaluated and made available to the rural Groups/Partnerships.

Support for the most disadvantaged sections in the community

The ultimate cure for unemployment is the provision of jobs - either through employment or self-employment - and, as pointed out above, this is one of the major aims of all Groups/Partnerships. However, this focus, if approached in isolation, can introduce an unwarranted effect. Those who are most affected by unemployment, and particularly those who have been unemployed for successive years, are not the ones most likely to succeed as a "self-starter" or to command the necessary financial resources to start up their own business. Hence a careful balance needs to be found between enterprise support in general and support for those in particular need.

Practically all Plans place building of support for the most disadvantaged among their top priorities. Often this is elaborated upon in terms of particular sections of the population, such as the long-term unemployed, lone parents, Travellers, the elderly, disabled persons and sometimes more general support structures for women.

Community capacity building

One of the particular concerns of the Global Grant (1992-1995) as a whole is to enhance the community and voluntary sector's ability to influence the development of their own communities. Hence, the concept of Partnership and the active pursuit of building inclusive, participative and equitable representative bodies is naturally central for all Groups that receive funding in the Programme.

There is widespread recognition that groups in the voluntary and community sector are not equally positioned to participate fully in the newly emerging structures. Whilst executives of the private sector and statutory agencies are familiar with handling large amounts of money, and the control that goes with it, voluntary and community representatives usually depend on local fund-raising, with no administrative system at their disposal. Furthermore, whilst the former sectors are principally hierarchical in character, the community sector generally claims to represent the multiplicity of views found in the broader community in a more democratic manner.

To establish effective community participation therefore requires two particular inputs: firstly it requires the training of community representatives and community leaders; secondly, it requires structures, time and money to organise the democratic involvement of the broader public. Again, practically all Area Action Plans make specific reference to these particular aims and objectives. Examples include providing training for community groups to participate fully in the emerging Partnerships, community development programmes to improve the effectiveness of community participation and initiatives, to enhance the community's capacity to organise and to influence decision making, provision of a professional liaison team to draw community support together, to enhance capacity building for the voluntary and community sector, to ensure adequate communication and co-operation between community projects, and finally, to maintain the maximum community and voluntary focus.

Actions proposed and initial costings

The actions proposed by Groups do not always follow clearly from the analysis of underlying strengths and weaknesses or the aims and objectives agreed by the Group. The time available for the preparation of Plans was just too short to achieve a common vision right down to where the prospective money should go. Secondly, there were clear misperceptions as to the amount of funds available, which could be grossly misleading for the Groups. Thirdly, one should not underestimate the strength of past experience. Both LEADER I (1991-1994) and numerous other programmes have nurtured a culture whereby it is acceptable simply to submit proposals for individual projects which are not related to one another in any way.

The idea promoted by the Global Grant (1992-1995) differs fundamentally from such practices. Here, the central focus is on a single, though multi-faceted approach to

combat disadvantage and poverty, and it is of the essence that each community develops a shared vision of how to approach the problem.

It is not surprising therefore that, once ADM approved main funding, many of the Groups had to go back to the drawing board. Firstly, monies approved to the new Groups ranged from IR£55,000 to IR£238,000, which often constituted only a fraction of what the Groups had asked for. Secondly, a number of Plans did not provide sufficient prioritisation to immediately identify which projects could be funded. Thirdly, some of the project proposals clearly lay outside the funding criteria of the Global Grant (1992-1995). This situation was exacerbated by the fact that these criteria were not actually known to the Groups at the time that they submitted their Area Action Plan.

When asked how their revised action plan compared with the original Area Action Plan, half of all Groups (52%) responded that only some of the actions were now pursued and that the choice of which actions were to be funded was made subsequently to the submission of the plan. Only one-third (37%) state that their actions were sufficiently prioritised in the original Area Action Plan to make decisions on that basis. In a minority of cases (11%), the Groups made a “cut across the board”, reducing all planned expenditures by roughly similar amounts.

It would not be meaningful therefore to review the full range of actions proposed in the original Area Action Plans. Instead, we will turn directly to the next Chapter which looks at the actions that were subsequently undertaken by the Groups and the achievements they have made in pursuing these actions.

3.10 Summary and Recommendations

The Area Action Plans are a new but key conceptual instrument of local development and aim at fostering a shared vision between a wide variety of local actors on the strategic issues concerning their area. Towards this end they aim at bringing together local groups and voluntary organisations with representatives of public agencies and the social partners. Core elements in the Area Action Plans include profiling of the area, analysis of potential threats and opportunities, development of shared aims and objectives for the future development of the area and finally identification of priority actions to be undertaken in the context of the Global Grant (1992-1995).

The agreement between ADM and the EU Commission makes the development of an Area Action Plan by local development groups an explicit requisite for receiving funding under the Global Grant (1992-1995). This chapter has reviewed the experience of the 28 new development Groups that have received Global Grant funding in respect of the Plans which they submitted. The analysis covered the content of the Plans, as well as the process by which these were developed and the significance which Groups assigned to these in hindsight.

As became apparent during the interviews, the development of the Area Action Plans was undertaken in far from ideal circumstances: (i) the time allowed for implementing the EU/ADM agreement (2½ months) amounted to half the time that is generally believed to be the absolute minimum time necessary to undertake this process; (ii) the requirement to channel half the Global Grant through local groups other than the

existing PESP Partnerships together with an aspiration to use the Global Grant strategically towards the establishment of local development groups in those areas which would be designated under the impending Operational Programme for Local Urban and Rural Development (1994-1999) meant that there was a lack of existing structures into which to feed a substantial proportion of the fund; (iii) despite the considerable experience from the PESP Area Partnerships to combat long-term unemployment, there was lack of documented knowledge which could be made available as guidance to the Groups involved in drawing up Plans; (iv) the ongoing uncertainty about the future format of LEADER II (1996 onwards) left many of the rural groups unclear about where the respective responsibilities of the two programmes lay.

Despite these impediments, both ADM and the local groups involved in drawing up the Area Action Plans have to be commended on what they achieved in such short time. Without exception, the socio-economic analysis constitutes by far the most comprehensive part of the profiling of the target areas and generally, the Groups made good use of statistical data on their area provided by ADM. In most cases, the Plans provided meaningful interpretations of the tables and maps provided. At times, however, too great a significance was given to minor deviations from regional or national means which indicates the difficulties in appropriately interpreting such figures.

In a number of reports, substantive additional analyses of the socio-economic characteristics was undertaken, further breaking down the data provided, or analysing Live Register data. Our impression is that the return on such analyses is low compared to the effort involved. One cannot help but feel that the work of consultants was partly driven by what was easily accessible, rather than identifying where the greatest shortcomings in terms of information persist. A similar point can be made about the extensive effort expended in some of the reports to reproduce large amounts of the Baseline Data. A simple inclusion of the complete Baseline Data Report in an appendix would appear the most appropriate way of saving time and energy.

More fundamentally, the comments made about the socio-economic characteristics of the areas were often aimed at proving their merits for inclusion in the Global Grant (1992-1995) and Operational Programme for Local Urban and Rural Development (1994-1999). This seems, in part, to be a waste of effort and indeed a misconception of the purpose of providing this data to the Groups and Partnerships. It does, however, reflect a real dilemma for the Groups that apply: whilst clearly being considered for inclusion in the Global Grant (1992-1995) and having received a technical assistance grant for producing an Area Action Plan, final commitment to funding was only to be made on the basis of submitting a satisfactory plan. It is important to clarify for Groups therefore that their inclusion in the Programme is decided on an objective and comparative basis and that the emphasis of their work has to be on the quality of the Action Plan.

Besides interpreting the information in the Baseline Data Reports, the area profiles should ideally have contained three other sections: (i) a consultation of the physical development plan relevant for the area; (ii) an analysis of the employment structure and history of the area, and (iii) an inventory of existing statutory and community/voluntary

services. Whilst there are some good examples of each of these, the coverage of the first two items is disappointing and indeed gives cause for concern. Even recognising that deadlines for the production of the Area Action Plans were very tight, one cannot help but observing that too little effort was made in respect of these two essential items which are vital for any meaningful SWOT analysis.

Recommendations:

- *For Area Action Plans to play a strategic role in the local development process, it is necessary that sufficient time is available to prepare them. Experience from the PESP area-based initiative to combat long-term unemployment (1991-1993) and the Global Grant (1992-1995) suggests that the time necessary to develop authoritative Area Action Plans is about 4 to 6 months.*
- *The experience from the Global Grant (1992-1995) also indicates that, where Groups are newly established, they are generally unable to benefit fully from the strategic approach inherent in the Area Action Plan concept. For this reason it would be preferable if funding was made available to Groups on a phased basis: firstly, to support their initial group formation process, and secondly, to develop an Area Action Plan.*
- *Clearer guidelines should be issued as to the essential elements of the area profile to be covered in each Area Action Plan. These are (i) a socio-economic profile; (ii) an evaluation of the likely effects of the physical development plan on the area as a whole and particularly on those who are disadvantaged; (iii) an analysis of the employment structure, including both industry and services, and highlighting the recent employment history; (iv) an in-depth inventory of existing statutory and community/voluntary services.*
- *There should be a more comprehensive interpretation issued with the centrally provided Baseline Data Reports on the socio-economic characteristics of each area.*
- *It should be emphasised to the Groups that any further analysis of the socio-economic characteristics of their area is of diminishing value and that efforts should be concentrated on the other three aspects of the area profile.*
- *It would be beneficial for ADM to clarify to what extent it expects the area profiles to demonstrate the relative disadvantage of the area as a whole. As each report is essentially dealing with only the partnership area itself, the main purpose of the profile analysis is to facilitate a SWOT analysis.*
- *The absence of any analysis of local employment and labour market structures in the current round of Area Action Plans indicates that not only the Groups, but also their research consultants experienced considerable difficulties in this respect. In the light of this, it may be an idea for ADM to engage a research consultant to draw up a blueprint of how such analysis could meaningfully be undertaken. Our own view on this matter is that it may be more worthwhile for ADM to get this work done centrally, in a similar way to the socio-economic profiles based on the SAPS analysis.*

- *Stronger emphasis needs to be given in the Area Action Plans to prioritise aims and objectives and develop a strategic vision. Towards this end it is necessary for the Groups/Partnerships to know in advance the range of funding that is likely to be made available.*
- *There should be a clearer separation of tasks between consultation and facilitation. Research Consultants are well situated to support Groups/Partnerships in the profiling in their area and related desk and primary research. For new Groups it seems preferable if a separate facilitator is engaged to assist the Group in their formation process and the working-out of a strategic vision.*

Chapter Four

Analysis of Actions

4.1 Introduction

When analysing the actions undertaken by Groups and Partnerships under the Global Grant (1992-1995), it is necessary to distinguish between the spending priorities of these two categories of grant recipients. Slightly more than half of the Global Grant (IR£4.2 million or 53%) was allocated to the 12 PESP Partnership Companies, equal to an average of IR£350,000 per Partnership; of this, IR£3.2 million was paid by December 1993, and the remainder (IR£1 million) was transferred during 1994. The Partnerships were asked to prepare a special expenditure programme outlining their intended work and, as all of the recipients were fully developed Partnership Companies, priority lay with specific employment-oriented initiatives rather than expenditure on the Partnership itself.

The 28 Groups received a total of IR£3.2 million, equivalent to an average of about IR£115,000 per group. In order to succeed in their applications for funding, the groups had to develop a full Area Action Plan, which process was outlined in the previous chapter. In contrast to the 12 PESP Partnerships, a substantial component of the funding for the 28 Groups was to be put towards establishing community and partnership structures in the first place. As will be seen, considerable differences in spending orientations emerged between the new Groups, depending on whether they perceived themselves as effectively being in a pre-partnership situation, i.e., believed that they would have an active role to play in the impending Operational Programme for Local Urban and Rural Development (1995-1999), or whether they saw the Global Grant (1992-1995) largely as a stand-alone funding programme. The principal differences between the original 12 PESP Partnerships and the 28 new Groups were in relation to their ability to implement labour market-oriented initiatives. Thus it was to be expected that the contribution of the latter towards the overall number of placements and employment initiatives would be small by comparison with the former.

The agreement between ADM and the EU Commission specified the proportion of the Global Grant (1992-1995) that should be devoted to each eligible measure. This information is summarised in Table 4.1, and reveals that nearly IR£5 million (62%) was earmarked for enterprise creation and development, whilst IR£2.4 million (30%) was to be devoted to a second category of measures, including training and education, infrastructural and environmental measures, and capacity building. Just IR£640,000 (8%) was allocated to operational costs, including ADM's operating costs, technical assistance, information and publicity.

From a methodological point of view, it is difficult to categorise the activities of Groups and Partnerships, as a considerable number of actions combine a multi-faceted approach and hence include expenditure for more than one measure. Where Groups were significantly involved in both enterprise support and education and training, the set-up costs of the partnership structures and the salaries of managers and staff have tended to be equally divided between the two measures. There is, however, a notable difference

between urban and rural Groups/Partnerships, insofar as rural Partnerships have tended to be more involved in job creation activities through the direct support of existing and new enterprises. In contrast, urban Groups/Partnerships tended to be more involved in training and educating the unemployed, and particularly the long-term unemployed, with a view to enhancing their chances of re-integration into the wider labour market. As such, where overall expenditure was leaning strongly towards a particular measure, the principal costs have also been associated with that measure.

Table 4.1: Expected Distribution of the Global Grant (1992-1995)

Measures	IR£	%
1. Enterprise creation and development	4,960,000	62
2. Training/education; infrastructural and environmental measures; capacity building	2,400,000	30
3. Operational costs, etc.	640,000	8
(a) operating costs of ADM	240,000	3
(b) technical assistance; information and publicity	400,000	5
Total	8,000,000	100

Table 4.2 provides a broad overview of the total Global Grant expenditure in the period from January 1992 to the end of March 1995. The main conclusion we can draw from this table is that, according to the expenditure returns of the Groups/Partnerships, the overall expenditure seems to have been geared more strongly towards the second measure than was originally envisaged. According to these returns, nearly half (47%) of all Global Grant money went towards funding training and education initiatives, and towards infrastructural and environmental measures, whilst slightly less (43%) went towards supporting existing as well as new enterprises. This distribution of funds applies not only to the Global Grant as a whole, but also to monies spent by the PESP Partnerships and the 28 Groups.

It is unlikely, however, that this distribution represents a real shift in emphasis in the overall Global Grant expenditure relative to that envisaged in the ADM/EU agreement. The reason for this is that Groups and Partnerships had particular difficulties in distinguishing between Measure 1.2 (training/education in enterprise and business skills) and Measure 2.1 (training/education relevant to enterprise creation, business development and employability). The 12 Partnerships accounted 85 per cent of their combined expenditure for these two sub-measures under Measure 2.1, with only 15 per cent accounted for under Measure 1.2. As many of the educational activities involved both unemployed people as well as targeting new and existing enterprises, it is likely that a substantial effort/expenditure under Measure 1.2 is subsumed under the heading of Measure 2.1.

Table 4.2: Actual Distribution of the Global Grant, 1/1/1992 to 31/3/1995

Measures	IR£	%
1. Enterprise creation and development 12 PESP Partnerships 28 Local Development Groups DTEDG	2,764,700 1,809,200 955,500	43
2. Training/education; infrastructure & environmental measures; capacity building 12 PESP Partnerships 28 Local Development Groups DTEDG	2,968,300 1,983,000 985,300	47
3. Operational costs, et cetera (a) operating costs of ADM (b) technical assistance, information and publicity	640,000 240,000 400,000	10
Total	6,373,000	100

Source: Cumulative Expenditure (Forms 2a) as submitted to ADM by 31 March, 1995.

If there has been a minor shift in emphasis towards the second measure, two reasons may have been responsible for this: firstly, the underlying philosophy of local development is on the redistribution of chances rather than on economic development per se; secondly, in many Partnership areas the Global Grant (1992-1995) co-exists with other funding mechanisms which tend to be geared more towards direct grant support. Indeed, as the Area Action Plans of the Groups and Partnerships have specifically tried to identify the gaps and shortcomings in mainstream and voluntary service provision at the local level, such a shift, if it exists, would be an expression of where the greatest unmet needs have effectively been identified by local Groups and Partnerships.

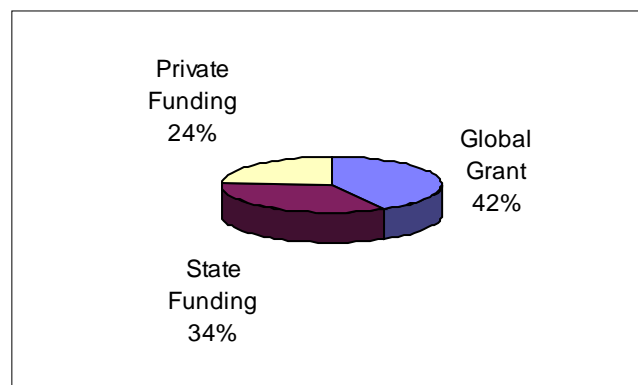
As will become apparent in the remainder of this report, the extent to which local Partnerships should become involved in the direct delivery of services or should focus on influencing mainstream service providers is a recurring theme running through discussions on the appropriate focus of local development. The evaluators have little doubt that, as a whole, those Groups and Partnerships which have concentrated on setting up effective Partnership structures to influence the much larger resource base of statutory and privately-funded projects in their locality have ultimately achieved the most significant and enduring results. Indeed, where this is reflected in the comparatively greater proportion of expenditure granted under Measure Two of the Global Grant, then it could be interpreted as an indication of success in getting away from the grant-giving mentality that informs a large number of other funding programmes.

4.2 Aid Rates

The agreement between the EU Commission and ADM states that up to 75 per cent of total expenditure on sets of actions or projects under Measures One and Two may be provided from the Global Grant, whilst initiatives under Measure Three could be funded at up to 100 per cent of total expenditure. However, ADM have sought to ensure that the level of grant support offered is the minimum necessary to enable any project to go ahead, and the actual rates achieved far surpass the requirements.

Taking total expenditures up to March 1995 under the three permissible measures, a Global Grant expenditure of IR£5.8 million has effectively been matched by Government expenditures of IR£4.7 million and private funds of IR£3.3 million for the same actions. Thus, out of a total of IR£13.7 million, 42 per cent came from the Global Grant (1992-1995), with Government and private co-funding accounting for 34 and 24 per cent respectively (Figure 4.1).

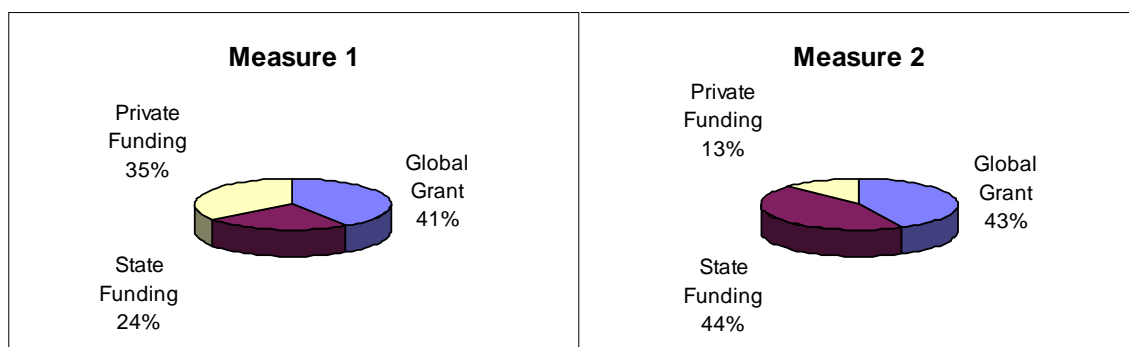
Figure 4.1 Composition of total Expenditure by Groups and Partnerships funded by the Global Grant (1992-1995)



Source: Cumulative Expenditure (Forms 2a) as submitted to ADM by 31 March, 1995

Whilst the proportion funded by the Global Grant (1992-1995) was more or less equal between Measures One and Two, accounting for 41 and 43 per cent respectively, the composition of the matching funds for the two measures differed significantly. Global Grant expenditure for enterprise creation and development amounted to IR£2.8 million. This was matched by IR£1.6 million of state support and IR£2.4 million in private funding, accounting for 24 and 35 per cent of total funding under this measure respectively. By contrast, IR£3 million of Global Grant monies designated for supporting training and education, infrastructural and environmental measures and community capacity building was matched by IR£3.1 million of state expenditure and IR£900,000 in private funds (44% and 13% respectively; Figure 4.2). These proportions apply not only to the Groups and Partnerships as a whole, but also in similar proportions to both of them individually.

Figure 4.2 Composition of total Expenditure by Groups and Partnerships funded by the Global Grant (1992-1995) by individual Measure



Source: Cumulative Expenditure (Forms 2a) as submitted to ADM by 31 March, 1995

The origin of differences in the composition of matching funds can be explained by differences in the nature of the initiatives funded. Enterprise support has been matched by considerably greater support from private funds. This was achieved in part through individual contributions; for example, in rural areas where funds were matched by personal investments to develop sustainable jobs which previously would have been marginal and insecure, and in part through considerable institutional support; for example, in the provision of backup for mentor programmes and (revolving) loan funds. In contrast, training and education for the unemployed and support for community capacity-building has depended to a much greater degree on financial support from the State.

Whilst these figures provide a broad view of the composition of Global Grant and matching funding, some caveats must be mentioned. There are no clear guidelines as to which state expenditures can reasonably be counted as matching funds; the same holds for contributions from the private sector. By and large it was left to the Groups/Partnerships to define what finances they considered themselves as having administered, and reporting differs considerably between them with respect to whether they perceive certain state expenditures to be co-funding or not. Equally, it was left open, particularly for the Groups whether, for example, they included in private matching funding an equivalent value for time and effort expended by Board members in the course of meetings, etc. Clearly, for future Programmes, these reporting mechanisms need to be further developed to make them more transparent. Table 4.3 below analyses for each measure the contributions of the Global Grant (1992-1995), State and private sector as they were available to, and accounted for by, the 12 Partnerships and 28 Groups.

Table 4.3: Global Grant (1992-1995) and Matching Funding Provisions By Measure

Measures	GG IR£	State IR£	Private IR£	Total IR£
1. Enterprise creation and development	2,764,700	1,634,100	2,366,100	6,764,900
12 PESP Partnerships	1,809,200	1,089,800	1,719,200	4,618,200
28 Local Development Groups	955,500	544,300	646,900	2,146,700
2. Training/education; infrastructure & environmental measures; capacity building	2,968,300	3,067,700	882,800	6,918,800
12 PESP Partnerships	1,983,000	2,335,000	480,400	4,798,400
28 Local Development Groups	985,300	732,700	402,400	2,120,400
3. Organisational Expenditure	37,500	5,000	16,800	59,300
Total	5,770,500	4,706,800	3,265,700	13,743,000

Source: Cumulative Expenditure (Forms 2a) as submitted to ADM by 31 March, 1995.

4.3 Expenditure by Sub-Measures (12 Partnerships only)

Before looking at the actual achievements of the Groups and Partnerships in Section 4.4, we will take a final look at how the Global Grant (1992-1995) expenditure was allocated in terms of individual sub-measures identified in the agreement between the EU and ADM. Unfortunately, the reporting mechanism through which the Groups/Partnerships had to account for their expenditures (Form 2a) did not allow the identification of each of these expenditure items in terms of their respective sub-headings, but only in terms of the broad measure. It was therefore impossible to assemble this information for the 28 Groups. For the 12 PESP Partnerships, however, it was assimilated by combining information from Form 2a with information emanating from written reports on the 1992-1995 funding period, and is detailed in Table 4.4.

Table 4.4 shows that the vast majority of Global Grant funding in the 12 Partnerships for enterprise and education was expended in the form of financial assistance and information services for small enterprises: the next section will deal in greater detail with the type of actions funded under this heading. Nearly IR£1.6 million was granted under this sub-measure, making up 87 per cent of the main heading, or 41 per cent of total Global Grant expenditure. This was matched by just under IR£900,000 of State funding, and private funding in excess of the actual Global Grant allocation (IR£1.7 million).

Table 4.4: Global Grant (1992-1995) and Matching Funds by Sub-Measure (12 Partnerships only)

Measures	GG IR£	State IR£	Private IR£	Total IR£
1. Enterprise creation and development	1,809,200 <i>(47.2%)</i>	1,089,800 <i>(31.8%)</i>	1,719,200 <i>(77.6%)</i>	4,618,200 <i>(48.7%)</i>
(i) financial assistance and information services for small enterprises	1,567,800 <i>(40.9%)</i>	890,500 <i>(26.0%)</i>	1,650,800 <i>(74.5%)</i>	4,109,100 <i>(43.4%)</i>
(ii) training/education in enterprise and business skills	157,100 <i>(4.1%)</i>	104,300 <i>(3.0%)</i>	43,400 <i>(2.0%)</i>	304,800 <i>(3.2%)</i>
(iii) studies of local needs and skills	3,900 <i>(0.1%)</i>	0 <i>(0.0%)</i>	1,900 <i>(0.1%)</i>	5,800 <i>(0.1%)</i>
(iv) promotion of local area	80,500 <i>(2.1%)</i>	95,000 <i>(2.8%)</i>	23,100 <i>(1.0%)</i>	198,600 <i>(2.1%)</i>
2. Training/education, infrastructure & environmental measures, and community capacity building	1,983,000 <i>(51.8%)</i>	2,335,000 <i>(68.1%)</i>	480,400 <i>(21.7%)</i>	4,798,400 <i>(50.6%)</i>
(i) training/education relevant to enterprise creation, business development or employability	906,200 <i>(23.7%)</i>	1,281,200 <i>(37.4%)</i>	190,800 <i>(8.6%)</i>	2,378,100 <i>(25.1%)</i>
(ii) infrastructure and environmental measures relevant to enterprise creation, business development or employability	400,600 <i>(10.5%)</i>	708,300 <i>(20.6%)</i>	149,700 <i>(6.8%)</i>	1,258,500 <i>(13.3%)</i>
(iii) training and advice for community organisations, networking, funding for community development staff	675,500 <i>(17.6%)</i>	345,600 <i>(10.1%)</i>	139,900 <i>(6.3%)</i>	1,161,100 <i>(12.3%)</i>
(iv) international exchanges	700 <i>(0.0%)</i>	0 <i>(0.0%)</i>	0 <i>(0.0%)</i>	700 <i>(0.0%)</i>
3. Organisational Expenditure	37,500 <i>(1.0%)</i>	5,000 <i>(0.1%)</i>	16,800 <i>(0.8%)</i>	59,300 <i>(0.6%)</i>

Source: Cumulative Expenditure (Forms 2a) as submitted to ADM by 31 March, 1995.

The sub-measures concerning training and education in enterprise and business skills (Measure 1.2), studies of local needs (Measure 1.3), and the promotion of the local area (Measure 1.4) are all comparatively insignificant. However, as already pointed out, it must be kept in mind that to some extent this could be an artefact of the reporting mechanism rather than a true expression of the activities carried out by the Partnerships. In many cases it may not have been possible for the Partnerships to precisely categorise an educational measure as Measure 2.1 or Measure 1.2, as both are described in very similar terms. Since the emphasis of the Partnerships would clearly lie on targeting the unemployed, most educational initiatives were likely to be accounted for under Measure 2.1.

Under Measure Two, the training and education relevant to enterprise creation, business development and/or employability (Measure 2.1) forms the largest sub-heading, amounting to just over IR£900,000 and accounting for nearly half of the Measure Two (46%), or 24 per cent of total Global Grant spending. As we will see, the vast majority of this spending was targeted at training unemployed and long-term unemployed people, although this item also covers a variety of measures aimed at school-going age cohorts perceived as being at risk either of early school-leaving or of becoming unemployed as first job seekers. State support under this measure actually exceeded the Global Grant allocation by about one-third, whilst private funding, though still significant at nearly IR£200,000, was nevertheless a small proportion compared to Global Grant and State funding.

The second largest sub-heading under Measure Two is training and advice for community organisations, support of networks and the cost of community development staff (Measure 2.3), accounting for one third of expenditure under the main heading or 18 per cent of total Global Grant expenditure. This is followed by expenditure on infrastructural and environmental measures relevant to enterprise creation, business development or employability (Measure 2.2), which account for one fifth and 11 per cent respectively. The funding of international exchanges are, financially, of minor significance.

One per cent of total Global Grant funding is marked as organisational expenditure, constituting Measure Three. The absolute figures for expenditure by the 12 Partnerships, and their respective proportions as part of the total Global Grant, State and Private funds are shown in Table 4.4.

4.4 Projected and Actual Achievements

Measuring the impact of the Groups and Partnership in terms of the stated objectives is far from easy. No attempt will be made here to assess the *deadweight effect* - this is the degree of achievement that would have taken place independent of the activities of the Groups/Partnerships; or the *displacement effect* - that is the degree to which certain achievements within the Group/Partnership areas may have been at the expense of neighbouring localities. It should, however, be noted that a certain degree of displacement effect would be well within the objectives of the area-based approach underlying the Global Grant. The Global Grant (1992-1995) specifically targets the most disadvantaged areas within Ireland, where one can assume some cumulative effects of poverty and social exclusion to persist. Hence, the redistribution of chances in

respect of access to jobs and services for the most disadvantaged amongst the population within these areas is consistent with the aims of the Programme.

Assessing the outcomes of the work of the Groups/Partnerships is further complicated by the absence of clear performance measures. The measure for financial assistance to small enterprises, for example, does not take account of the varying size of grants allowed, but merely provides a “headcount” of the number of firms assisted. Equally, the educational measures do not take into account the relative length and intensity of educational programmes or courses attended. Hence, the figures provided are an indication of the number of people assisted in education and training, be it for a week or a year. Educational and training measures of less than a week duration, however, have been omitted from the counts presented here under Measure 1.2 and Measure 2.1. Measure 2.3 (training and advice for community organisations etc.) may also include modules of shorter duration.

The achieved results presented in Table 4.5 are mainly based on the evaluation interviews and written documentation requested by the evaluators from the Groups/Partnerships. In relation to the 12 Partnerships they also take into account the Global Grant (1992-1995) reports which they submitted to ADM and, in some cases, their subsequently published reports for that period.

Even a cursory look at the achievements of the Programme in terms of the number of enterprises supported and people receiving education and training reveals that these outstrip expectations many times over. About 1,800 enterprises have been assisted by the Groups and Partnerships in one way or another, about six times the expected number. Nearly 1,600 individuals received training or education in enterprise related skills, four times the expected number. Thirty studies of local needs and skills were envisaged; the actual number achieved was 110. By far the greatest inroads were made with respect to targeting the unemployed: over 7,000 people, most of whom were unemployed, received some element of training or education either relevant to enterprise creation and business development, or to enhance their general employability. This is almost ten times the expected number. A total of 320 projects received funding to improve infrastructure and the environment generally with a view to enterprise creation and business development. In relation to community capacity building the record has been equally impressive, with well over a thousand community activists, staff and representatives on the Boards of the Groups and Partnerships taking part in training in one form or another. Finally, some eighty contacts were established with other European partners, almost three times the envisaged number.

The bulk of achievements in relation to both enterprise support and delivering training and education to the unemployed clearly lay with the twelve Partnerships, as these were readily able to put in place initiatives within an existing Area Action Plan and established partnership structures. On average, the twelve Partnerships each funded between 30 and 40 different initiatives, a total in excess of 400 individual actions. The 28 Groups easily account for another 300-400 initiatives, though generally smaller in size than those carried out by the Partnerships. Many of the initiatives relate to similar themes, including enterprise programmes, local placement services, accessible education and training programmes, and community development initiatives; it lies beyond this evaluation to

Table 4.5: Projected and Actual Results of the Global Grant (1992-1995)

Measures	Projected Results	Achieved Results
<p>1. Enterprise creation and development</p> <p>(i) financial assistance and information services for small enterprises</p> <p>(ii) training/education in enterprise and business skills</p> <p>(iii) studies of local needs and skills</p> <p>(iv) promotion of local area</p>	<p>(i) assistance to up to 300 enterprises</p> <p>(ii) at least 400 people trained</p> <p>(iii) 30 studies</p> <p>(iv) no projection</p>	<p>(i) over 1800 enterprises assisted</p> <p>(ii) nearly 1600 people trained or partly trained</p> <p>(iii) over 100 studies</p> <p>(iv) about 90 initiatives</p>
<p>2. Training/education; infrastructure & environmental measures; community capacity-building</p> <p>(i) training/education relevant to enterprise creation, business development or employability</p> <p>(ii) infrastructure and environmental measures relevant to enterprise creation, business development or employability</p> <p>(iii) training and advice for community organisations, networking, funding for community development staff</p> <p>(iv) international exchanges</p>	<p>(i) 800 unemployed people trained</p> <p>(ii) 8 small-scale projects</p> <p>(iii) representatives of 12 PESP +17 other groups trained</p> <p>(iv) no projection</p>	<p>(i) about 7350 people trained or partly trained (about 80% unemployed)</p> <p>(ii) 320 studies undertaken</p> <p>(iii) 1150 staff and community reps. trained</p> <p>(iv) over 80 contacts established</p>
<p>3. Operational costs, etc.</p> <p>(a) operating costs of ADM</p> <p>(b) technical assistance, information and publicity</p>	<p>(i) no projection</p> <p>(ii) no projection</p>	<p>(i)</p> <p>(ii) 29 Area Action Plans assisted</p>

Source: Interviews March - July, 1995

provide an in-depth account of all of the actions initiated by the Groups and Partnerships. Instead, we will aim on the one hand to provide a general overview of these actions and, on the other hand, to highlight some of the most successful interventions in order to provide some insight into the qualitative lessons that may be learned from these initiatives to date.

4.5 Measure One: Enterprise Creation and Development

As is already apparent from the financial overview in the previous section, support for new and existing enterprises was a priority funding area for virtually every Group and Partnership, with about 40 per cent of Global Grant resources being made available to the Groups/Partnerships for this specific measure.

In total, the Partnerships and Groups funded under the Global Grant (1992-1995) assisted some 1,800 enterprises in one way or another for the duration of the Programme. By far the largest proportion of these (1,560 or 86%) were assisted through existing PESP Partnerships, with the remaining 14 per cent being supported through the Groups. As was also mentioned in the previous section, how the Groups/Partnerships categorised their initiatives in terms of the various measures of the Programme may, in part, be an artefact of the present accounting procedures, and therefore one should be wary of attaching too much importance to the way in which initiatives are accounted for under each of the respective measures of the Programme. Nevertheless, some general observations may be made.

Within the 12 PESP Partnerships, which account for the vast majority of people and firms assisted under Measure 1.1 and Measure 2.1, there are notable differences in the relative emphasis given to these two measures. This reflects in part the extent to which Partnerships are either able to create and support enterprise initiatives within their own locality, or to which they have to restrict their efforts to improving the access of those who are unemployed or long-term unemployed to existing labour markets outside their locality. Typically, there seems to be two sets of factors that affect the degree of emphasis given to the direct financial assistance of new or existing enterprises.

Firstly, despite the considerable degree of deprivation in the rural areas included in the Programme, unemployment rates in these areas tend to be low by comparison with the disadvantaged urban areas, and, in absolute terms, the actual numbers of unemployed and long-term unemployed can also be relatively small in these areas. This is because people in disadvantaged rural areas who cannot gain access to a job in their locality tend to emigrate rather than exposing themselves to the likelihood of becoming long-term unemployed. In rural areas there is therefore a comparatively stronger emphasis on the support of both existing marginal jobs and the creation of new small scale enterprises. Particularly where incomes are marginal due to under-employment on small agricultural farm enterprises, small additional and sometimes seasonal incomes from off-farm activities can make all the difference as to whether a person is able to remain within the locality or decides to emigrate.

However, not all of the rural Groups/Partnerships emphasised this strand of activity to the same degree, reflecting a difference in the time scale which different Groups/Partnerships adopt. The support of existing enterprises and the creation of new

small-scale businesses is aimed at the immediate alleviation of an adverse labour market situation. In contrast, some Groups/Partnerships have developed an alternative strategy which puts considerably stronger emphasis on the long-term gains which they hope to achieve. Not all recent emigrants have left because they could not find employment locally, but have done so because of a mis-match between their longer-term educational and career aspirations and what they see as being possible to achieve locally. This has motivated some Groups/Partnerships to target in particular the school-going population, with the aim of influencing young people's attitudes towards enterprise and self-initiative, and hence their ability to anticipate a future career path which would not draw them away from the community in which they are growing up. Such emphasis is then reflected in a relatively larger expenditure under Measure 2.1.

The second set of factors mainly concerns the more urban Groups and Partnerships, and is related to the geographical situation of the Group's/Partnership's area relative to what could be termed the "effective local labour market". Particularly in Dublin and the other four County Boroughs, people who reside in certain unemployment blackspots are nevertheless part of a labour market area that spans most, if not all, of their respective cities. In this case, Groups/Partnerships may adopt varying strategies, depending on how realistic it is to promote new small-scale enterprises within their immediate vicinity. In certain areas where, for example, advanced factory space and industrial enterprise centres are already in existence, it may well be feasible to undertake a targeted initiative for fostering new enterprise initiatives and the integration of a significant number of unemployed into them. Alternatively, the Group/Partnership may adopt a strategy which views the actual creation of jobs in the immediate vicinity as unrealistic, and therefore focuses on the placement of the unemployed and long-term unemployed in the wider labour market. In this case, their emphasis will lie on the training and education of individuals in order to enhance their employment prospects, as well as providing infrastructural and environmental support through better physical access to the wider labour market.

Illustrative Examples

Generally, this report has refrained from referring to any particular Group or Partnership, as it would be impossible to do justice to them all. Nevertheless, it is difficult to describe the range of activities adequately without referring to at least some concrete examples. We will therefore draw on a few examples to exemplify the work undertaken, but on the explicit understanding that they are neither representative nor necessarily the most outstanding; they are meant to be illustrations only.

The *Finglas Business Initiative* was set up in 1993 to offer a comprehensive range of support services to unemployed people starting up a business and to established small businesses. To date, 500 people have made use of its services, and 132 long-term unemployed people were assisted into self-employment. A revolving loan fund gave 34 applicants low interest loans totalling IR£100,000. This loan fund helped people lever an additional IR£97,000 from other financial institutions and agencies. Further activities which form part of the initiative include a book-keeping service, training seminars, a support consultancy service and a graduate research programme which provides for qualified business graduates to work alongside unemployed people in carrying out feasibility studies on new business ideas. With the co-operation of Forbairt, a locally

based mentor programme was established, under which retired professional business people have offered advice and guidance to 22 local start-up and small businesses.

The Tallaght Partnership engaged in two major enterprise programmes. *Get Tallaght Working* provides information and advice to small and medium sized enterprises, as well as assistance to start-up businesses and additional workspace and incubator units for new and expanding businesses. A total of 109 enterprises were assisted, creating 133 full-time and 21 part-time jobs. The second major initiative, called *PLATO*, is a business development programme. The idea for PLATO originated in Belgium, where it has achieved impressive results since its inception six years ago. The programme has two objectives: (i) to protect existing jobs by providing support structures aimed at minimising the characteristically high failure rate among small companies, and (ii) to generate additional employment by facilitating the continued growth and development of small businesses. The programme is based on the 'parenthood' principle whereby large companies help and support managers of small businesses by making available skilled executives who act as PLATO councillors. Launched in 1993, the programme currently receives the support of 18 councillors from 11 of the largest companies in the Partnership area. These support 5 groups of 8-10 businesses each, with the groups themselves being stratified according to experience and progress already achieved.

Despite the short timespan of its operation to date, PLATO is being credited with having already established new sets of relationships and networks within the business community in the Partnership area. It has provided the small and medium sized business sector with access to information and advice which would not have existed otherwise, as well as with new contacts for the sourcing of products and services for parent companies within the local economy. Due to the significant impact on employment which PLATO is expected to have in the medium to long-term, the initiative is now to be reproduced in a number of other Partnership areas.

It should be pointed out, in this context, that the whole area of enterprise creation and development received a major boost with the introduction of the Enterprise Allowance (AA Enterprise) in 1992. The Enterprise Allowance permitted unemployed people in the 12 Partnership areas to set up their own business while retaining all of their social welfare entitlements during the first year. Since then, the Back to Work Allowance Scheme (BTWA) has been introduced by the Department of Social Welfare, allowing unemployed persons to retain 75%, 50% and 25% of their social welfare entitlements over a three-year period respectively, while employed or self-employed.

Since the introduction of the Enterprise Allowance and BTWA, the development of small businesses has been encouraging, and forms a central plank of every Partnership company. In Dublin's Northside Partnership, for example, 321 local people approached the Partnership with business ideas between 1993 and 1994. Of these, 95 were eligible to be placed on the Enterprise Allowance and are now actively developing their businesses, in some cases even employing other people. The remaining clients in the Partnership are now either participating in enterprise development training programmes, undergoing one-to-one business development counselling, or making use of other services provided by the Partnership such as Contact Point or Education and Training. In addition to this, the Partnership enterprise centre provides 13 incubation units for

start-up businesses, and operates a revolving loan fund which currently supports 12 small businesses.

An outstanding example of enterprise creation in the context of a rural area is the Waterford Development Partnership which developed an exceptionally large-scale enterprise programme. In the face of job losses, and against the backdrop of an already insufficient industrial base together with an inability to keep well educated young people in the area and increasing pressure from the reform of the Common Agricultural Policy, the Partnership Board put great emphasis on the development of support for new and marginal enterprises. Allocating about half of their Global Grant funding (IR£177,000) to this purpose, it was able to raise over half a million pounds in matching funding, three-quarters of which came from the private sector. A large proportion of these funds are held in the form of a revolving loan fund from which, to date, 16 companies have received major grants and loans, resulting in the creation of 63 full-time and 44 part-time jobs. It should be pointed out, however, that the emphasis of the Partnership's work on enterprise support through grants and loans has not been without contention, a point we will be returning to in Chapter Five.

Initial Contact

Before advancing to the educational and training initiatives under Measure Two of the Global Grant (1992-1995), a general reference needs to be made to an activity that has become central to virtually every Partnership in the country, and which as yet has not been systematically accounted for in the current reporting mechanism. This activity, which falls under Measure One; is commonly referred to as *Initial Contact*. (An extensive review of the Initial Contact for the PESP Partnerships in relation to the 1991-1993 period is contained in Craig, 1992; and Craig and McKeown, 1994).

Emanating from the PESP area-based initiative to combat long-term unemployment, the original Partnerships were particularly apt to provide improved services for the unemployed and long-term unemployed. One of the central improvements which emerged during that phase of local development was the development of a 'one-stop-shop' for unemployed people seeking advice on how they could overcome their situation. The Northside Partnership in Dublin, for example, established a professional placement and recruitment service to meet the employment needs of both local unemployed people and of employers. *Contact Point*, as it is called, is modelled on the *Tailor-Made-Method* developed by Bureau Maatwerk in Holland, and works to the advantage of both the long-term unemployed and employers. The service includes an assessment of the skills and abilities of clients and a placement path to help people choose appropriate courses and to ensure access. Contact with individual employers, designed to identify their recruitment and job requirements, allows these to be matched to the skills and abilities of the client. Contact Point also offers in-company placement and an after-placement follow-up service to employees and employers if required. In conjunction with the local Centre for the Unemployed, a Jobsclub has also been set up.

Clearly, the importance of Initial Contact Programmes undertaken by the various Partnerships lies in (i) their degree of accessibility, (ii) their strong links with the relevant state agencies and (iii) their equally strong links with local employers. Initial Contact has also been adopted by some of the new Groups, and its success is usually measured by the number of people who have successfully been placed on exiting jobs or

training programmes. As these are not, strictly speaking, new jobs, the number of placements in jobs and training programmes have been excluded from the present tabulations. Nevertheless, they constitute what is often the most tangible evidence for the efficient working of the Partnerships. The relative importance which is attached to the Initial Contact Programme relates back to the general question about the extent to which Partnerships should get involved in the *direct delivery* of services, or act as an intermediary to improve access to *existing* jobs and services and enhance the provision of these by influencing statutory and mainstream providers. This question will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter Five, but it should be pointed out under the present heading that the number of referrals successfully undertaken under the Initial Contact Programme runs into several thousand. The Government decision in 1995 to set up a Local Employment Service - based on the recommendation of both the National Economic and Social Forum (1994) and the Task Force on Long-term Unemployment (1995) - is based in part on the experiences of the Initial Contact Programme.

4.6 Measure Two: Training and Education

As Table 4.4 shows, the training and education relevant to enterprise creation, business development and the general improvement of employability has been the second axis of actions initiated under the Global Grant (1992-1995). The focus here was primarily on education rather than training, as there was generally a sense amongst Groups and Partnerships that education (which develops confidence, skills and knowledge) was an essential precursor of more intensive involvement in various training, enterprise and employment programmes. Access was a key issue for the large majority of Groups and Partnerships. Many tried to identify the blockages and disincentives which prevented the unemployed from accessing education and then took appropriate remedial action, for example, organising courses at times which suited the domestic circumstances of participants, providing childcare and financial assistance to young people from disadvantaged areas attending college (book allowances, travel subsistence, etc.). Many Groups and Partnerships also focused on the needs of young people who drop out of school early. Given the incontrovertible link between educational under-achievement and later life problems (e.g. unemployment, relationship difficulties) there was a widespread concentration on developing innovative programmes aimed both at those who were at risk of leaving school with no formal qualifications and those who had already done so. In the following sections, we will illustrate the main strands of the new educational initiatives undertaken by the Groups and Partnerships for the duration of the Global Grant (1992-1995).

Initial Contact Programme, career guidance and options

As was mentioned at the end of the previous section, particularly for the original PESP Partnerships, the Initial Contact Programme remained crucial in identifying the specific needs of the unemployed people in their area. Most of the Partnerships interviewed in excess of 500 unemployed people each as part of this programme. In some Groups/Partnerships, the Initial Contact Programme led to the development of a more structured locally based adult guidance service, with the explicit remit of enabling long-term unemployed people to access the necessary training and education needed to re-enter employment.

The Finglas Partnership has, for example, set up a Guidance and Placement Service, called *Options*. This service aims to provide a genuinely different approach to supporting the long-term unemployed. The service is client-centred and provides a range of support to enable unemployed people decide on a self-determined action plan for their personal, social and work lives. It includes continuous one-to-one support in developing a career path; a job placement service that establishes direct links between local employers, local unemployed people and jobs; a Jobs Club Programme which helps members to get the best possible job in the shortest possible time; and an information library related to careers, work experience, educational and business opportunities. Many of the new Groups have set up similar schemes over the past two years.

Since 1993, the North Lee Development Partnership in Cork has developed Initial Contact further into a fully computerised information system. This system, disseminated through Minitel to 11 different locations throughout the Partnership area, provides up-to-date information on the adult education and training opportunities which are available to long-term unemployed people either through FÁS, CERT, City of Cork VEC, or Cork Regional Technical College, and which includes a complete list of all courses available under the VTOS scheme. The system also contains information on the social welfare implications of participating in any programme on offer.

Access to existing education and training provisions

Initial research carried out by a number of Groups and Partnerships confirmed the low levels of participation, among unemployed people, and particularly amongst those who are long-term unemployed, in existing education and training courses (a comprehensive listing of work undertaken by the Partnerships is given by Craig and McKeown, 1994). In response, extensive efforts were made to address this issue, involving co-operation among the statutory agencies VEC, FÁS, CERT and other service providers. Often, this co-operation resulted in the design of new courses that would specifically meet the needs of those who felt excluded from mainstream courses for one reason or another.

The Dublin Inner City Partnership, for example, developed in conjunction with the VEC specific 12 week *feeder courses*, involving 66 people from two particularly deprived areas. As a result, 37 of these progressed to further education, training or work; 23 people took part in a two year *return to education* programme; 15 stayed on to complete the two year Vocational Training Opportunities Scheme (VTOS) course. In addition, the Partnership negotiated with the VEC a significant increase in the number of VTOS places in their area, as well as a re-design of these courses. *Taster* courses, which allow people to sample full-time courses before committing themselves, were first provided through Partnership funds. They are now funded by the VEC. This is a very typical example of actions undertaken, and many similar experiences could be quoted here.

Despite the many valuable initiatives designed to improve access for unemployed people, particularly the long-term unemployed, to education and training programmes, many Partnerships nevertheless felt that they still knew relatively little about the exact mechanisms which discourage people from participation. For this reason, in 1993, the Tallaght Partnership began an in-depth enquiry into the disincentives, obstacles and barriers that prevent unemployed people from participating more fully in education and

training. This study took the form of an action research project, whereby a project leader worked closely with a group of unemployed people, offering them intensive support and guidance and helping them to access a continuum of education and training opportunities. They hoped, through this process, to document the experience of the participants, and to provide a clearer picture of existing constraints and obstacles. Whilst the project had significant benefits for the 30 unemployed people participating in the group, its value as research did not fulfil expectations and failed to significantly contribute to the Partnership's thinking in relation to the problem of disincentives and barriers to participation.

Re-entering education

People who have left formal education at an early age have difficulties finding a way back into the more formal education sector. Typically, if these people are young, they may have attended a Youthreach course or a FÁS Community Training Workshop; if they are slightly older, they are likely to have been unemployed. The Groups and Partnerships have been innovative in the specific aids that they developed to provide incentives and opportunities to facilitate re-entry into the formal educational system.

The Finglas Partnership, for example, introduced the option of taking the Junior Certificate into the local FÁS Training Workshop; 12 people participated in this option, achieving excellent results. The Dublin Inner City Partnership undertook a joint initiative with FÁS to enable long-term unemployed people to pursue specific education and training courses in second and third level colleges. This package included the payment of fees and other costs associated with attending full-time and part-time courses; 132 individuals took part in this initiative, and the demand far outstripped the funds available. In 1995, the Northside Partnership introduced a *trial voucher scheme* to enable local unemployed people to undertake day and evening adult education courses. This scheme was subsequently replicated in a number of other Partnerships, and informed and influenced the introduction of regular *fee waiver arrangements* in all CDVEC schools.

Whilst many good initiatives were developed by the Groups and Partnerships during the present period of Global Grant funding, the concern now must be to bring this experience together, and to develop systematic paths of entry to second chance education that are centrally negotiated with the mainstream education providers and subsequently put into operation throughout all Partnership areas or throughout the country.

Prevention of early school-leaving

All of the areas covered by the Groups and Partnerships are characterised by disproportionately high levels of early-school leaving. The specific response by the VECs and the Department of Education to the needs of early-school leavers has been to set up Youthreach Centres throughout the country. This scheme commenced in 1989 and there are now 52 centres, many of which are servicing the same areas as the Groups and Partnerships. Two major problems have persisted in this context: firstly, the problem of progression (which we will address below) and, secondly, the question of

how one can prevent young adults from leaving the educational system prematurely in the first place.

To date, little progress has been made in this respect, and co-operation between Groups, but also Partnerships and schools has been limited. Despite the fact that the Department of Education is running a specific Scheme of Assistance for Schools in Disadvantaged Areas, and that a very large proportion of schools assisted under this scheme are located within the Partnership areas, co-operation in this respect has remained marginal. The same can be said of the Home-School-Liaison Scheme, which is operated in a subset of schools which receive assistance under the Department's disadvantage scheme.

The Groups/Partnerships could potentially play an important role in feeding back the experience of early school-leavers to the schools, and finding out what conditions might have prevented them from dropping out of school in the first place. The success of Youthreach and the Vocational Preparation and Training Programme (VPT1) has clearly demonstrated the need for more non-academic paths of education, yet the response to these needs within the school system has been half-hearted. The co-operation aimed at under the auspices of the Groups/Partnerships provides a unique opportunity to find a way into the mainstream school system, and to lobby for and practically support pilot initiatives that aim to develop responses to the as yet unmet needs of those at risk of prematurely dropping out of school.

Though the influence of Groups/Partnerships on the general school curriculum has been negligible, some of the Partnerships have nevertheless run successful pilot projects on specific employment-related issues with some of the schools in their area. In Tallaght, for example, the Partnership organised a pilot project involving an enterprise course in the fifth-year class of a Community School which dealt specifically with their pre-employment situation; in Mayo, Meitheal Mhaigheo has put particular emphasis in its strategy to undertake work in the formal educational sector. Through their *WISE* programme, they hope to provide specific parental education, more effective career guidance and counselling in schools, expansion of Youthreach facilities and youth clubs, play areas and other character developing facilities. To date, they are in close co-operation with five schools in their area.

It should be pointed out that, whilst co-operation with the school system has to date been marginal for most of the Groups/Partnerships, the Handbook (ADM, 1995) for the new Area Partnerships under the Operational Programme for Local Urban and Rural Development (1995-1999) places greater emphasis on this aspect. It is hoped that further advances will be made in this respect over the forthcoming period.

Mature apprenticeships

Unemployed young people, particularly those who are already long-term unemployed, have found it notoriously difficult to gain access to formal apprenticeships. This issue has been tackled head-on by the Dublin Inner City Partnership in an innovative way by directly funding places for the first year of the apprenticeship in two FÁS Training Centres. These places were made available to 9 young people, all of whom had been on the live register for more than 12 months and who had found themselves excluded from entering an apprenticeship. Whilst their first year participation has generally been

successful, difficulties nevertheless remain in finding employers willing to continue the apprenticeship following completion of the initial course.

Mature student programme

One of the typical characteristics of all disadvantaged areas is the low level of participation in third level education. A number of Groups and Partnerships have undertaken specific initiatives which would allow individuals normally excluded from such education to undertake selective third level courses.

For example, in 1994 Dublin's Northside Partnership began to examine the access routes into third level education which are open to people without the mainstream qualifiers. Together with the Centre for Educational Opportunities in the National College of Industrial Relations (NICR), the Partnership is now developing a new model designed to facilitate the admission of more mature students, who are already participating in access courses, such as VTOS, into third level education. The Partnership concentrates on the provision of financial support to cover registration fees, transport costs and providing some of the equipment costs incurred on the courses; other Partnerships provide introductory courses for pre-leaving certificate students.

A particular programme aimed at increasing participation at third level amongst pupils from low educational backgrounds was undertaken by the North Lee Development Partnership in Cork. Here the emphasis lay on the provision of improved information about third level education for senior and junior cycle students, and on the provision of supervised study space within their schools. At entry to third level education, students could avail of an advisory service, and a small number received supplementary grant support.

Fostering participation in third level education among students who are from a disadvantaged educational background can be an important initiative. However, demand can quickly out-strip the available resources, and Groups and Partnerships have to be very clear about the aims they want to achieve with such programmes. The individual students subsequently participating in such initiatives are not necessarily the most disadvantaged ones or those most at risk of remaining unemployed when they finish school. Nevertheless, the participation of students in third level education can have an important knock-on effect where it provides new role models for younger students in neighbourhoods where presently no such participation currently exists. It would be necessary to monitor for any such effects and to design initiatives accordingly.

Progression

A central shortcoming of the present educational system is the lack of integration between the various strands of education and training provision. Not only are responsibilities fragmented between different statutory agencies, but there is often poor integration even where the same governing body is responsible for various strands of education. This situation is exacerbated by a general lack of certification for any education received outside the formal education system, or accreditation for experience gained through learning by doing or in other non-formal educational settings.

To overcome the impasse that exists for many adult unemployed people in gaining access to training and education provisions, the Dublin Inner City Partnership convened a special task group, that included statutory and community education and training

agencies, with the brief to identify existing obstacles and to recommend solutions. As a result, the statutory agencies have undertaken steps to increase participation and to increase access to the existing FÁS and CERT training courses in the area.

Whilst initiatives like this are to be commended, such moves need to be undertaken on a much wider scale. Despite the inception of Youthreach, over five years ago, to cater specifically for the needs of early-school leavers, the progression of trainees that have successfully participated in the two-year programme has, to date, remained a major problem, and the same could be said about a number of other initiatives. The partnership approach underlying the present phase of local development could potentially provide an important stimulus in developing a client-centred approach to continued learning which can transcend the present fragmentation of educational provisions.

Community-based adult education

One area not dealt with so far is that of community-based education. As both the Partnerships and to an even greater extent the Groups originated in the community sector, the Groups/Partnerships have an acute awareness of the need for improved provision of community-based adult education.

In contrast to most of the above educational provisions, community-based adult education is not necessarily directed towards preparing people to return to work, but aims at improving the quality of life of communities by enabling people to respond to local problems collectively, and by encouraging the creative potential of the participants. Courses offered by the Groups and Partnerships range from literacy provision, parent education, introduction to learning and a large number of courses designed for particular groups of people. Most Groups and Partnerships have, for example, offered particular courses for women, and a significant number have also developed specific initiatives for the Travelling community within their area.

4.7 Summary and Recommendations

The Global Grant (1992-1995) amounted to IR£8 million. Just over half of this, IR£4.2 million (53%) was disbursed through the 12 PESP Partnerships, and IR£3.2 million (40%) through 28 new Groups. The agreement between ADM and the EU Commission specified that about IR£5 million of this (62%) was to be expended on enterprise creation and development (Measure One) and IR£2.4 million (30%) on training and education, infrastructural and environmental measures, and capacity building (Measure Two).

According to the cumulative returns made by the Groups and Partnerships in March 1995, there has been a slightly greater expenditure under Measure Two of the Programme, amounting to 47 per cent, whilst 43 per cent were used to fund initiatives under Measure One. This, however, is unlikely to represent a real shift in the expenditure of the fund. The reason for this is that Groups and Partnerships had particular difficulties in distinguishing whether an initiative was falling under Measure 1.2 (training/education in enterprise and business skills) or Measure 2.1 (training/education relevant to enterprise creation, business development and

employability). The vast majority (about 85%) of the Groups'/Partnerships' combined expenditure for these two sub-measures was indicated to have taken place under Measure 2.1, with only a minor proportion (15%) accounted for under Measure 1.2. As many of the educational activities involved both unemployed people as well as targeting new and existing enterprises, it is therefore likely that a substantial effort/expenditure under Measure 1.2 is subsumed under the heading of Measure 2.1.

The additional resources mobilised through the Global Grant (1992-1995) are substantial. The agreement between ADM and the EU Commission allowed 75 per cent of total expenditure on actions under Measure One and Two to be provided from the Global Grant, whilst initiatives under Measure Three were up to 100 per cent fundable. The co-funding achieved far surpasses these rates. Taking total expenditures up to March 1995 under the three permissible measures, a Global Grant expenditure of IR£5.8 million has effectively been matched by Government expenditures of IR£4.7 million and private funds of IR£3.3 million for the same actions. Thus, out of a total of IR£13.7 million, 42 per cent came from the Global Grant (1992-1995), with Government and private co-funding accounting for 34 and 24 per cent respectively.

The achievements of the Programme, in terms of the number of enterprises supported and people receiving education and training, far exceeds expectations. About 1,800 enterprises have been assisted by the Groups and Partnerships in one way or another. Nearly 1,600 individuals received training or education in enterprise related skills over 7,000 people, most of whom were unemployed or long-term unemployed, received some element of training or education either relevant to enterprise creation and business development, or to enhance their general employability. A total of 320 projects received funding to improve the local infrastructure and environment generally with a view to enhancing enterprise creation and business development, and over 1,000 community activists, staff and representatives on the Boards of the Groups and Partnerships took part in training in one form or another. Though performance measures lack accuracy as they do not take into account the length and intensity of respective educational measures, they nevertheless clearly surpass the number of assisted people and enterprises as projected in the agreement between ADM and the EU Commission many times over.

The majority of these achievements is accounted for by the 12 Partnerships, as these were already positioned to put into place substantial initiatives. The contribution of the 28 Groups towards these achievements varies greatly and partly depends upon the vision that Groups have developed for themselves in relation to their specific role in the local development process. The extent to which local Groups/Partnerships should become involved in the direct delivery of services or should focus on influencing mainstream service providers has become a major question in discussions on the appropriate focus of local development. In relation to the 28 new Groups funded under the Global Grant (1992-1995), the evaluators have little doubt that those Groups which have concentrated on setting up effective Partnership structures to influence the future spending of the much larger resource base of statutory and privately-funded projects in their locality, rather than engaging immediately in broad-based actions, have ultimately achieved the most significant and enduring results.

Recommendations:

- *Improved reporting mechanisms are needed to
 - (i) *provide clearer indications under which funding measure each initiative falls*
 - (ii) *provide clearly defined key performance measures which take into account not only the number of firms and individuals supported, but also a measure of the extent of that support.**
- *Guidelines are needed to clearly set out what State and private funding can be accounted for as matching funding.*
- *The 12 Partnerships and 28 Groups have accumulated a vast amount of experience between them on how to assist new and existing enterprises and how best to provide education and training to those who are unemployed or long-term unemployed. There is now a need for more systematic ways of sharing specific experiences and identifying role models that can be duplicated by the new Groups/Partnerships.*
- *A number of initiatives negotiated between the various partners at the local level have the potential to be meaningfully “mainstreamed”. There needs to be put in place a mechanism that allows Groups and Partnership to collectively identify such initiatives and to pursue their common interest in such ventures.*

Chapter Five

Issues in the Local Development Process

5.1 Introduction

In Chapter One of this report we outlined the special characteristics associated with the model of local development which has been supported through the Global Grant (1992-1995). Chapters Three and Four detailed the achievements of the Groups and Partnerships in terms of their Area Action Plans and the initiatives implemented. In addition to the tasks achieved, and which have been quantified in these chapters, significant qualitative processes have taken place which cannot be assessed in a quantifiable way.

For many of the main players, organisations and individuals alike, it was the first time in which they had been engaged in a process involving partnership, participation by all the key sectors, co-ordination and integrated planning, and approaching local development in a multi-dimensional way. It was a significant learning curve for virtually all new Groups. This chapter of the report aims to draw this learning together by systematically considering the issues under the following themes: (i) group and organisational development, (ii) the role and purpose of partnership in the local development process, (iii) participation and representation, (iv) disbursement of finance, and (v) the relationships with ADM.

5.2 Group and Organisational Development

The development of partnerships and other types of integrative structures are a central feature of the local development model as supported through the PESP area-based initiative to combat long-term unemployment (1991-1993) and the Global Grant (1992-1995). It is not just what you do, it is also how you go about it. In considering the issue of group and partnership development within the terms of the Global Grant (1992-1995), it is again necessary to distinguish between the 12 original Partnerships and the 28 new Groups. The Partnerships generally had their main structures in place before the disbursement of the Global Grant. In contrast, the Groups were conscious that, in addition to supporting different projects, their own development would have to constitute a central part of their work programme. Only a small number of Groups did not consider this as a necessary task and were happy to allocate virtually all their money to other local groups and actions.

The extent to which Groups struck various balances between their own organisational development needs and the funding of local actions was influenced by their expectations in relation to the impending Operational Programme for Local Urban and Rural Development (1994-1999). If they operated in an area which was likely to become designated under the new Programme and likely to form a central element within a new Partnership, the focus on partnership development activities tended to be greater than in those Groups which were unlikely to fall into a designated area. In these cases the Global Grant (1992-1995) allocation was often viewed as a once-off funding opportunity with no natural progression to a further stage in an ongoing local development process.

At the outset, however, it is important to recognise and note that the Global Grant (1992-1995) experience was an enormous learning process for all involved, regardless of their

likely designation. It represented a radically different way of doing business, involving co-operation between all key local actors, collectively drawing up plans for their own area, and investing in innovative pilot projects as well as more traditional delivery mechanisms. The extent to which Groups genuinely took on the principles and ethos of the partnership concept promoted by the Global Grant, depended primarily on their own understanding of how to effect local development, their ability to manage change, their self-confidence and their innovative and creative capacities. Whilst some Groups responded well to the challenge, others found it more difficult to break out of traditional roles and modes. A key aspect was the willingness of some participating partners and agencies to play an active and progressive role in the process: if this willingness was not forthcoming it made it extremely difficult for Groups to work effectively. This matter will be addressed in more detail in the section of this chapter which deals with participation.

The spatial remit

The development of the Groups took place at a number of different levels and involved, at least initially, a fairly radical realignment of relationships. Previously, the most common community development unit had been the immediate neighbourhood or locality (e.g., housing estates, villages, etc.), whilst the statutory organisations often worked on the basis of planning regions. The concept of local development underlying the Global Grant (1992-1995) helped to develop a new focus on area-based initiatives which were large enough to be of strategic significance in the overall process of social and economic development and yet small enough to enable them to target those in greatest need in an effective and co-ordinated manner.

The evolution of Partnerships and Groups supported through the Global Grant (1992-1995) forced and encouraged other more localised groups to co-operate on a wider area basis. Through this process groups could meet one another, and learn from each other's experiences. This interaction took place informally, at Board and Committee meetings and within the various sub-structures which emerged (e.g., sub-groups, working groups, etc.) Representatives of the three sectors represented also learnt from each other. Numerous interviewees commented during the evaluation on how their views of various agencies or organisations have changed, often quite significantly, as a result of their involvement in the Group/Partnership. There is little doubt that, as a result of the Global Grant (1992-1995), the co-operation between various statutory agencies, the social partners and local community groups has vastly improved, at least in relation to those issues which were approached in the Area Action Plans.

Clarity in focus

Groups have also had to learn how to accept more criticism and less popularity. To a large degree, participating Groups were free to determine the most effective usage of their Global Grant allocation, as this was not decreed by the EU or ADM. Therefore, Groups and Partnerships had to make choices and, quite uniquely in Ireland, local development groups had a high level of discretion and control in determining where the monies would be spent. Some interviewees felt that the responsibility of giving out money was onerous, whilst others considered it to be a necessary and critical progression, with trust and resources being invested in local organisations.

The agreement between ADM and the EU Commission clearly stipulated that monies of the Global Grant (1992-1995) could only be disbursed on the basis of an Area Action Plan being presented. This implied the development of a strategic plan and shared vision for the area, as well as a commitment to transparency in respect of all monies expended. In most cases, the sponsoring Groups that received funding had secured the broadest possible support by the local groups and organisations for the priorities identified in their Area Action Plans. Problems tended to arise where Groups were less focused about their Global Grant allocation, and permitted applications from local groups for actions not contained in the Area Action Plan. In such cases the Global Grant (1992-1995) ran into the danger of becoming a localised trust fund with all the attendant questions of why some groups received money and others did not. This situation was less likely to arise if the sponsoring Group had explicitly stated that *they* would decide on the actions to be funded, and would *not* respond to unsolicited requests for financial help but work to the agenda outlined in the Area Action Plan.

Organisational development

The Global Grant (1992-1995) allowed the sponsored Groups to learn about vital aspects of organisational development and how to effect development at local level. The experience of the 12 Partnership suggests that this is a most important, necessary and relatively time-consuming process. As the chairperson of one of the Partnership Companies commented: *“In 1991 we got to know each other, in 1992 we developed the structures, in 1993 we began our programmes and actions and in 1994 we implemented very effective programmes and interventions”*. The establishment of any ordinary group or organisation can be quite difficult, but these difficulties are increased when trying to tie together ten to twenty different strands of interest (statutory, community, business, trade union, etc.) through an approach which is quite innovative and new, at least in the current form of state-sponsored local development. Not only is time needed, but appropriate training and educational interventions - for example on themes relating to partnership building, establishing an agreed vision and agenda and working out appropriate representative and participative structures - are also necessary.

There were noticeable differences in the time and money invested in organisational development and group building. For some, this was the most important priority, with solid foundations being seen as a pre-condition for any further actions, whilst others failed to engage sufficiently in this type of endeavour. This could have been due either to not being fully aware of the needs pertaining to this particular local development model, or because of a feeling that they could not justify expenditure on their own training and educational requirements.

Effective education and training in partnership and group-building is critical to the local development process as pursued through the Global Grant. Where this is missing, structures tend to be fragile, increasingly prone to internal dissent due to the lack of an agreed vision and understanding of the purpose of the Group/Partnership, and more likely to fragment and self-destruct. A number of Group representatives stated that, in retrospect, they would have preferred the Global Grant (1992-1995) allocation to their Group to have been deferred until such time as they had the strength, skills and capacity to manage and administer a fairly large sum of money. One commented, *“we didn’t feel in control, there were too many things happening at the same time, we hadn’t built up trust within the*

Group, we weren't too sure of our own abilities and we were expected to determine how to spend thousands of pounds" .

Training and education needs of Groups and Partnerships

It is important to be sensitive and aware both of the limitations of local Groups and of their training and educational needs, but the capacity of the sponsoring Group to effectively handle a complex process and a reasonably large sum of money needs to be taken into account in any decision upon future Global Grant and local development allocations. For example, do they have a balanced Board/Committee? What is their level of understanding and awareness of local development? Do they possess the necessary project management and project assessment skills? Do they have a proven track record of administering large sums of money? What is the quality and relevance of the actions they propose? Do they have a common vision of the role and purpose of their Group/Partnership?

If Groups and Partnerships are able to respond positively to the types of questions posed above, then it is obviously unnecessary for them to take part in courses or programmes; indeed this could even become frustrating and counter-productive. It is, however, our belief that, in addition to centrally organised training and educational courses, there is a need for all Groups and Partnerships to engage in regular reviews and planning activities (What are we trying to do? What do we hope to achieve? What are our main objectives and targets? What have we achieved? Do we need to change our modus operandi? What are our plans for the forthcoming period?). Many of the Groups/Partnerships may need to be encouraged to take time out to reflect and plan, possibly with the assistance of an external facilitator. This suggestion follows the comments made by a number of interviewees who felt that they were so busy in their day-to-day activities that they were unable to consider issues such as how the Group itself was progressing or whether they were still on track to achieve objectives they might originally have established for themselves.

Problems associated with organisational development and team-building were particularly acute in those Groups where a number of groups had been encouraged to come together and develop a common strategy for their area. In these Groups a strong feeling prevailed that ADM could have provided more guidance and advice on the process of bringing together independent groups within their area, particularly where these had different agendas (e.g. enterprise, community development) or a history of suspicion and antagonism towards each other. It would have been helpful if ADM had initially convened area meetings in locations where clustering was being encouraged and assumed some responsibility for following the process through, rather than assuming that the relevant local groups had the motivation, skills or personal relationships necessary for them to sort the situation out alone.

In some instances independent facilitation or mediation was necessary, and ADM could have performed a more active role through outlining what was involved in these processes, or possibly by nominating or suggesting skilled facilitators or mediators who would be acceptable to all parties. On the other hand, the dangers of ADM becoming involved in the process must also be acknowledged, and these should possibly have been spelt out more clearly to the Groups. It was important that the new Groups did not lose their own identity in the process of getting involved in the process of Partnership building; e.g., enterprise groups which became constituent parts of pre-partnership Groups felt that their focus on

enterprise had been diluted and diminished on account of the need to embrace other issues (e.g. training, education, partnership building) which were not part of their original agenda, and vice versa.

Legitimacy of Groups/Partnerships

Once a Group or Partnership is established, more localised groups and bodies often feel threatened by this process. They often feel undervalued, e.g. “*striving away doing good work for years on a voluntary basis with little thanks*” and, as a result, their attitude to the emerging Group/Partnership organisations can be ambivalent: on the one hand they support the need for greater co-ordination and integration, on the other hand they feel that their funding base may be diminished due to money going to the Partnership or that local group workers are investing too much time in Partnership business to the detriment of their ‘real’ work with the local group. As this applies both to established and emerging Partnerships, the evaluators believe that this may be due only in part to the newness of the particular model of development as pursued under the Global Grant (1992-1995); it may also signal a real conflict inherent in the “state sponsored bottom-up approach” which this model of development represents.

For this model to be successful, greater efforts need to be made both to ‘sell’ the concept and benefits of formal Groups/Partnerships at a local level and to set up area information strategies through which local people can be regularly updated on the progress of their Group or Partnership. To the extent that Groups and Partnerships expand their range of services (local employment service, early-school leavers, etc.) it is likely that the number of sub-committees and sub-groups will expand and the demands on workers in the participating groups will increase. In anticipation of this situation, it may be useful for ADM to produce some guidelines on recompensing local groups for worker hours utilised by Partnerships.

Staffing arrangements

The final organisational development issue raised during the evaluation interviews concerns the position of paid staff employed by Groups and Partnerships. Whilst the 12 Partnerships have generally developed good employment practices, this has not been the case with many of the 28 Groups. In the 12 Partnerships, roles have been reasonably well worked out; by contrast, in the 28 Groups the development worker or co-ordinator has often been expected to take on too much work and responsibility. There is a growing litany of workers who have had to take time off work because of burn out, stress, etc., due partly to the pressure of ongoing work and partly due to uncertainty about their own future; e.g., if a pre-partnership Group is to be expanded into a county wide Partnership structure, will they be retained?

In part, this problem arises from the way in which the initial allocation of money received by the Groups has been put to use. Rather than keeping a reasonable amount to build up their own organisational infrastructure - e.g. two workers instead of one, comfortable offices with meeting rooms that could be used by other local groups, the purchase of necessary equipment - many Groups felt inclined to distribute a disproportionately high percentage of Global Grant money to local projects and actions. The net result was that one

worker might be expected to follow through the various actions and to service the needs of the main Committee/Board as well as perhaps 4 or 5 sub-groups.

Again, for the particular model of local development as pursued through the Global Grant (1992-1995) to be successful, it is essential for Boards and Committees to be educated in managing and supporting staff who, at present, have been left with a lot of responsibility but little support or back-up. In the past, this has led to a significant degree of demotivation and disillusionment, with a number of workers saying that they wanted to work through a process (e.g. strategising, analysing, consulting, prioritising) but that their Committees 'just wanted results quickly.' This task-oriented approach by some Committees obviously had implications for focus and targeting. If quick results are what is expected, there is not the time to invest significant amounts of energy in working with those people who need the most assistance - e.g. the long-term unemployed, those who are disadvantaged - nor are these groups likely to produce the necessary quick return on investment. Therefore, workers have often had to struggle to make the case for working with marginalised Groups. In this type of situation, some consideration should be given to the support needs of paid workers engaged with local development groups. Also, a module on employment rights and responsibilities, including equal opportunities policies, should be incorporated into any training schedules prepared for Partnership Boards and other local development committees.

5.3 Role and Purpose of Partnerships in the Local Development Process

Interpretations of the role and purpose of state-sponsored area partnerships in the context of local development clearly differ between the Groups and Partnerships who received funding from the Global Grant (1992-1995). Whilst the 12 Partnerships were reasonably focused and had a stronger sense of their roles as enabler, catalyst and influencer, these roles were less pronounced amongst the 28 Groups. This is to be expected to some extent since the latter did not have the same level of resources, status or access to influence. Furthermore, they tended not to have people of similar seniority or influence on their Boards or Committees, as many of the more influential local players seemed to be waiting for pre-partnership Groups to acquire full Partnership Company status prior to committing their personal time, energy and, most importantly, the commitment of their respective organisations.

The approach to local development, as fostered through the present phase of state-sponsored area partnerships, is principally committed to integration and better delivery of services at the local level. To achieve this, however, it crucially depends upon key local decision-makers (e.g. County Manager, FÁS regional director or manager, Health Board senior manager, Managing Director of a significant local employer or regional representative of the employer's organisation, head of the local Trades Council, director/manager of major community organisation) to be members of the local Group/Partnership. This level of seniority was generally not evident in the 28 Groups, at least not at the time of their inception. The net result was that it greatly restricted the capacity of Groups to make a significant difference at local level. In many cases, the person who was most able to effect or approve change, was not even in attendance when issues of direct relevance to his/her organisation were discussed. Often the issues would be picked up on later at a subsequent meeting; this tended, however, to reinforce the more traditional

donor/client type relationship rather than promote a collective planning approach in the context of a local Partnership. Thus, the potential and limitations of this model of local development are greatly effected by (i) the willingness of agencies and organisations to nominate individuals of appropriate calibre and seniority, and (ii) the willingness of those individuals to accept their nominations.

Direct delivery of services versus influencing resource base

Various balances have been struck between influencing policy budgets and delivering direct programmes and actions. As stated earlier, the ability to influence is far greater among the 12 Partnerships, which have the necessary access to mainstream service providers and the resources to either commission research or conduct their own analysis and to lobby in order to put forward persuasive arguments. In terms of influencing policies or spending priorities, there are different expectations of what can be achieved. These range from the ambitious (e.g. providing accessible and affordable child care for all, opening up training programmes to people not on the Live Register, changing industrial policy to facilitate the needs of service businesses), to the restricted (e.g. Approval of more CE workers for the area, approval of additional adult teaching hours from the VEC). The situation depends largely on the local context, and on local interpretations of what is needed and what might be possible.

Attempts to effect or influence change need not only take account of the changes which are required or proposed but also of the context of the particular local development model being pursued. Only a certain amount of change is actually being effected at local level, and a number of interviewees suggested that some of the changes which were desired would require a collective approach from all Groups and Partnerships. Therefore, mechanisms need to be established which enable collective lobbying and the sharing of experiences to take place, and then to reach the appropriate decision-makers. Many Groups and Partnerships are carrying out parallel work on areas of concern such as childcare, early-school leaving, local enterprise agencies, local placement services and progression routes through the various education and training options. A significant body of experience and evidence is being amassed which, if effectively analysed and disseminated, could be a powerful mechanism for positive change.

In terms of influencing spending priorities, it is difficult to determine what has been achieved through the Global Grant (1992-1995). There is no strong evidence to suggest significant budgetary shifts within the mainstream service providers in the 28 Group areas. Reasons for this have been discussed earlier, i.e., they did not have the status of Partnerships and they did not include people of appropriate seniority.

In relation to the 12 Partnerships, by contrast, individual programmes and projects have received increasing support. There is a need, however, to differentiate between helping to support Partnership-inspired actions and changing the way in which major statutory agencies expend their resource base (e.g. how existing money targeted at disadvantaged is spent is often the issue rather than spending more money; Community workers in disadvantaged areas, Community Employment Scheme, Community Training Workshops, Youthreach, VTOS, etc.). Evidence from the 12 Partnerships suggests that things are changing: roughly one third of interviewees regard their Partnership's influence on the

wider resource base as good, and nearly half as sufficient. Only two of the 12 Partnerships indicate that their success in this respect has been less than sufficient or practically nil.

At the same time, it is important to be realistic about the limitations of this model of local development in terms of issues like co-ordinating service delivery and influencing policy or spending decisions. As one interviewee noted, "*it should not be the responsibility of a local development agency to get statutory people to work with each other more effectively . . . give the responsibility to an organisation with clout and power like the Department of the Taoiseach*". There was a sense that it was unrealistic to expect Partnerships, working on budgets of around IR£500,000 per year, to be able to exert significant influence either in relation to the co-ordination of services or to spending decisions. Essentially, the Partnerships do not have any statutory role or mandate; they can exhort and encourage but cannot insist or demand.

The Groups/Partnerships are not only constrained by limitations in their statutory role, but also by the cultural and psychological mindset of local groups and individuals participating in it. Often these are more used to delivering services or running projects than co-ordinating the work of agencies, impacting upon the local resource base and influencing the policies of statutory agencies. This shift in emphasis - from delivery agent to catalyst, co-ordinator and influencer - will require time, as well as a willingness to change on the part of participating agencies. It is interesting to note, in this context, that local development groups are effectively being asked to adapt to a particular model of local development, one that did not emerge from the "grassroots" but from Central Government and the EU Commission.

Clarification of roles between varying development agencies

If the present model of local development is to become successful, the respective roles of area Partnerships, County Enterprise Boards, LEADER companies and projects funded under the Community Development Programme need to be clarified. There is a degree of confusion about how these organisations can meaningfully interact with each other at local level. For instance, with respect to enterprise, what is the optimum relationship between the enterprise activities of Partnerships and the County Enterprise Boards (CEBs); are they competing or complementary to one another? Equally there is a need in rural areas to work out the best possible relationship between Partnerships and LEADER companies. These issues will have a significant influence, both over the future role and function of local development Groups and Partnerships, and in determining the way in which local economic and social progress can best be achieved.

5.4 Participation and Representation

The issue of participation is central to all models of local development initiatives. The experience of the 12 Partnerships and 28 Groups funded through the Global Grant (1992-1995) suggests varying patterns of involvement and commitment. As with many other aspects of the process, distinct differences are noticeable between Partnerships, pre-partnership Groups and Groups which are located in less disadvantaged areas and hence unlikely to become designated under the Operational Programme for Local Urban and Rural Development (1994-1999). As already elaborated upon, Partnerships generally attracted representatives of appropriate seniority from across the various sectors, whilst pre-

partnership Groups often had difficulty in establishing well balanced, effective Boards/Committees prior to their subsequent designation as full-fledged Partnerships under the impending Operational Programme. The remaining Groups did not have the force to set up structures which would encourage authoritative partners to become involved, mainly on account of what is perceived as their transitory existence due to not having been identified as future Partnerships.

It needs to be stated very clearly that the equal representation of the statutory sector and the social partners in form of a formal partnership structure was not a pre-requisite for the receipt of funding under the Global Grant (1992-1995), and ADM did not communicate any such expectations to the new Groups. By and large, the desire to achieve such representation came from within the Groups, particularly those who saw themselves as being in a quasi pre-partnership situation in anticipation of future developments under the new Operational Programme for Local Urban and Rural Development (1994-1999).

The level of commitment displayed by members of Groups and Partnerships depends both on their individual motivation and on the commitment given by the organisation which they represent. Throughout the evaluation, constant reference was made to the relative interest or indifference of particular individuals in the work of their respective Group/Partnership. For instance, it was noted that contributions made by business or trade union representatives depended largely on the motivation of the individual rather than the commitment of IBEC or ICTU. There was a strong sense that their involvement was personally motivated as opposed to stemming from a strong desire for their participation on the part of the nominating organisation. Equally, the enthusiasm of representatives from the statutory and community sectors was largely an expression of individual rather than organisational motivation.

Gaining organisational commitment

There was a feeling that commitment to the process should be matched by appropriate educational and awareness interventions, i.e., if local development and partnership-building are to be key strategic aspects of the work of individual nominating organisations, then they should be reflected in the training activities arranged for the relevant employees of those organisations. There was a degree of disappointment that such interventions had not taken place within key participating bodies, such as statutory agencies, business and trade union movements. To enhance local development through effective area partnerships necessitates a change in emphasis and operation on behalf of all those involved in the process. Particularly, it requires insights and information on different ways/models of conducting business at a local, community level. Whilst there is some evidence that the community sector has been exploring the implications and potential of this model of local development (through seminars and workshops organised by the Community Workers Co-Operative and the Combat Poverty Agency), there is little to suggest that other sectors have been engaged in working through the implications of being involved in a growing number of area-based Groups and Partnerships.

There is a need to persuade and encourage various organisations to become involved. One cannot assume that these organisations will play their part, purely on the basis of a centrally determined model (i.e. tripartite combination of statutory agencies, community sector and social partners). Individual organisations need to be convinced of the benefits that can be

gained through participation in this model of local development. Many are sceptical of what can be achieved through the area-based partnership approach, which they see as the 'flavour of the month', and consider it to be a time-consuming exercise which will produce little return. These attitudes and prejudices need to be challenged if the partnership model is to work, not because organisations must become involved as a matter of duty, but because their involvement could enhance the work of their own organisation and benefit the people whom they aim to serve.

Participation by individual sectors

There was considerable variation in the involvement of the *statutory agencies* and, as was pointed out above, much depended on the status of the particular Group or Partnership. A problem exists in relation to the relatively centralised nature of Irish administrative systems. Although most of the statutory agencies have some regional administrative structures, there was a view that many decisions and issues still have to be referred up the line to the central level. Policy and programme development tends to take place centrally and inhibits the capacity of local officials to take unilateral action on new programmes being developed at a local level. The individual commitment of nominated representatives from statutory agencies nevertheless remains a critical factor. In some instances representatives were considered to be uncooperative and defensive (e.g. not disclosing information about how much agencies spent in particular areas, not being open to constructive criticism, considering the Partnerships to be a threat). In other cases, however, statutory officials were most helpful, and engineered ways of getting innovative projects and programmes through the system. Much relates to determination and commitment; if officials genuinely believed in the value of this model of local development, they were more likely to take risks and push the partnership approach within their own organisations.

The participation of the *business sector* was also largely influenced by individual commitment and enthusiasm. Although generally nominated by the Irish Business and Employers Federation (IBEC), there did not seem to be any obligation on the part of the various business people to report back to IBEC either on the progress of individual Partnerships and Groups, or on their own particular contribution to its work. Thus, the extent to which they made an active contribution in terms of attending meetings, taking on projects, etc., was largely at their own discretion. There was, however, general satisfaction with the positive role performed by individual employers and business people, and a feeling that they brought new perspectives and skills to the operations of Groups and Partnerships. A number of interviewees commented favourably on the way that employers applied various management techniques, acquired through their business experience, to the local development context. This often enhanced the effectiveness of Partnerships/Groups, and helped them to do their jobs more efficiently.

The Global Grant (1992-1995) was of particular importance in securing involvement from the business community. The access of Partnerships and Groups to independent funding meant that their approach to employers was not one based primarily on trying to extract finance. As one interviewee noted, "*we weren't going to employers with a begging-bowl approach, but rather asking them to contribute their skills and expertise*". The status and

credibility of Partnerships and Groups was, from the employers' perspective, significantly increased by the fact that money was available to pilot projects and deliver actions.

There was general disappointment with the involvement of the *trade union sector*. There are a number of instances where the unions failed to respond to requests for nominations from local Groups and Partnerships, or where the Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU) vetoed nominations emanating from the local level. In a number of areas, the local point of contact for ICTU was the network of Centres for the Unemployed, and the relationship between those Centres and the locally based Group/Partnership could vary quite significantly. Whereas in some locations the Centre for the Unemployed was an integral part of the work of the Group/Partnership (delivering services, piloting projects for the long-term unemployed, etc.), in other areas the relationship was one of conflict and tension.

The *community sector* has played an active role in the local development process. In many cases this sector was the prime mover, bringing in the others after a certain amount of groundwork had been completed. It has been a time of significant learning for the community sector. Local community activists (paid staff and volunteers) are generally more used to working in smaller geographical districts, and it was a challenge for them to devise strategies which had an area-wide as well as neighbourhood, relevance. The nature of roles and relationships within the new area-based Groups and Partnerships also posed new challenges for community activists. Traditionally they have tended to do the asking and requesting, and have rarely been in a position to draw up and implement integrated strategic plans for their own areas, in conjunction with the statutory agencies and social partners. In addition, the integrated nature of the process meant that community activists were dealing with an agenda which was not purely focused on community development. Most of the community workers seemed to welcome this opportunity to broaden the agenda; many would have argued that much of their work was concerned with education, employment, training, etc., and that it is both natural and appropriate that all the needs of an area should be considered in totality, rather than in isolation from each other.

Representation on Boards and committees

A distinction needs to be made between those community representatives sitting on Boards and committees, and those working in the community sector. The community sector is somewhat different to the other two sectors in that there is invariably a healthy demand for seats on Boards and Committees. In contrast, the statutory agencies virtually select themselves, whilst social partners often have difficulty filling the places reserved for them. It is important that Partnership positions are not considered elite or unattainable. Some concern was expressed during interviews as to the lack of movement of personnel within the community sector, and the fact that new people did not seem to be emerging. Mechanisms which ensure effective community representation and participation need to be established and it is critical that partnership development and capacity-building activities take place throughout the community, and not just at Board, committee or sub-group level. The Partnership or Group must be perceived as accessible, and should strive for maximum participation. Models for encouraging effective participation need to be developed; these should provide opportunities for local people to seek entry into all levels of the Partnership structure, including the main Partnership Board.

The issue of representation is closely connected to participation, i.e., the question of who is actually represented by those sitting on the various committees and Boards. As was stated earlier, IBEC and ICTU nominate people for these positions, but do those nominees then represent the interests of employers and trade unionists, or do they participate in a personal capacity? Evidence would suggest that representation on Partnership Boards does not carry all of the responsibilities one normally associates with representation, e.g. submitting regular reports on progress to the organisation or interest group one is representing, or helping to inform policy on the basis of on-the-ground experiences. It is important that these experiences are filtered vertically through the nominating organisation, be it a statutory agency, ICTU, IBEC or a community network. A key aim of the presently pursued model of local development is that local action informs national policy. If these actions are not being effectively disseminated, there is a real danger that a lot of learning will be lost, and policies will either not be formulated or will be noticeably flawed. To avoid this, Board personnel need not be concerned solely with the operations of individual Partnerships, but also with informing and influencing the organisations which they represent.

A final point on representation concerns the current bar on publicly elected representatives, TDs and local councillors. There was a sense that this ruling was divisive and unnecessary. Local representatives are generally well respected in their local areas, and can bring skills, expertise and a sense of added credibility and status to the process of partnership development. Also, in terms of shaping and influencing policy, local representatives can feed lessons and recommendations up the line within their own political parties. As such, it was considered, by a number of interviewees, to be both prudent and wise to reverse the ruling which excludes publicly elected representatives from participating on Partnership Boards. We will consider this issue in greater detail in the concluding chapter.

5.5 Disbursement of Finance

ADM is the intermediary agency vested with overall responsibility for allocating the Global Grant (1992-1995). They supported the work of 12 Partnership Companies, which received a total of IR£4.2 million, the balance being distributed between Groups outside the Partnership areas. In relation to the 12 Partnerships, there was disappointment at the IR£350,000 which each of them received. In formulating their expenditure plans, many worked on the assumption that they would receive between IR£750,000 and IR£1 million each. Equally, the 28 Groups which applied successfully to ADM for financial assistance were generally disappointed with the amount they received. Many had designed their Area Action Plan on the basis of a multiple of the amount that became available.

Whilst there was disappointment at the outset, a number of interviewees commented that handling too much money also has its drawbacks. Local expectations could be raised to unreasonable levels. Partnerships might become mere delivery agents, losing their influencing and lobbying function, and statutory agencies would not be under the same pressure to alter focuses or budget priorities if Partnerships had substantial amounts of money to run their own programmes and projects.

A number of the original Partnerships commented that, although disappointed with the IR£350,000 allocation, it was questionable whether they would have had the capacity, confidence or vision to handle a substantially larger sum of money at the time when the

Global Grant advance was first allocated in 1993. These Partnerships feel that they are now stronger and better able to manage such large sums. The Global Grant (1992-1995) was an important part of this learning process, giving Groups the opportunity to work through issues/questions like: in our work programme, which projects/actions are unlikely to be funded by other sources and will require a direct contribution from the Partnership? What system should we put in place for distributing the Global Grant (1992-1995) (e.g. decide upon the broad allocations to each work area such as enterprise and community development and allow the relevant sub-groups to come up with recommendations as to how the agreed allocations might most effectively be expended)? In thinking through these issues, the Partnerships developed structures and mechanisms for setting spending priorities, determining who should fund what aspects of the Area Action Plan, and monitoring monies which have been approved and paid.

Similarly, most of the 28 Groups felt that, in retrospect, the money that they received under the Global Grant (1992-1995) was reasonable. Most of the Groups were new and had not worked together before, and many members would have had no prior experience of allocating money (e.g. drawing up guidelines and criteria for spending). Their most pressing need was to develop as a strong, cohesive group, and not to spend a large sum of money.

Funding Arrangements between Groups/Partnerships and ADM

There was widespread positive feedback about the way in which the money itself was distributed. It was seen to be flexible, based on a relationship of trust between ADM and the Group or Partnership, and used for purposes directly identified by that Partnership/Group. The amount of money received was not subject to the proposed actions meeting narrow criteria or guidelines drawn up by a funding or intermediary agency. Access to Global Grant money gave Groups and Partnerships status, clout and some sense of control in their dealings with other organisations and agencies. On account of the trust invested by ADM, the Partnerships/Groups did not have to seek permission for every item of expenditure; thus, representatives of a Group/Partnership could make financial commitments to a project without referring back to the funding body for permission. This gave Groups and Partnerships a distinct sense of control over their own destiny, and also enhanced their credibility at a local level: they were seen to be in control, had access to independent resources and were not constantly being undermined by having to seek permission.

No contract was issued with the first advance of money (IR£100,000) to each of the 12 Partnerships; fortunately, no major problems arose between them and ADM. It is, however, important that both funding body and recipient should be clear about the nature of the financial arrangement (e.g. how much? for how long? for what purposes?). Although there was significant flexibility and trust built into the agreement between ADM and the Partnerships, it is nevertheless important to have a broad framework within which both parties agree to operate, and which includes information on payment schedules, use of monies, monitoring procedures and arrangements for evaluation.

This also includes the question of how much Groups and Partnerships are expected to contribute, and what form matching funds can take? A number of Groups/Partnerships have costed the time of people who voluntarily contributed their services to the

development of a Group or Partnership. There is no agreed way, however, to calculate the value of the time invested by Board and committee members, and it would be useful if ADM produced guidelines on this issue (what are the options? what are seen to be legitimate matching costs? how do you determine the value of time given by voluntary members and workers?).

As elaborated upon in the previous chapter, the agreement for the Global Grant (1992-1995), as set out in the contract between the EU and ADM, indicated that two-thirds of the Grant should have been expended on enterprise and employment development. This information needed to be communicated to the Partnerships and Groups at the outset of the process but did not become available until after the Area Action Plans had been submitted. Groups and Partnerships need to be alerted at an early stage to the particular measures eligible for funding. Whilst they would still have had the flexibility to determine their own funding priorities, they would at least have been aware of the overall spending parameters of the Global Grant (1992-1995).

There was some uncertainty about whether the establishment of loan funds (especially revolving loan funds for small businesses) was a legitimate use of Global Grant assistance. Different Partnerships and Groups appear to have received conflicting messages about the acceptability of giving out loans rather than grants within the terms of the Global Grant agreement. This situation needs to be clarified for those Groups and Partnerships who will be in receipt of Global Grant monies during the the Operational Programme for Local Urban and Rural Development (1994-1999).

Mainstreaming local action

When describing the various actions pursued by Groups and Partnerships in the previous chapter, we already flagged-up the question of mainstreaming local initiatives. Unlike other models of local development, it is a particular feature and possible strength of the partnership model - as exemplified in the trilogy of the PESP area initiative (1991-1993), the Global Grant (1992-1995) and the Operational Programme for Local Urban and Rural Development (1994-1999) - that it offers great scope for mainstreaming innovative actions. The reason for this is the relatively formal structure and the composition of the Partnerships, their modus operandi, and the synchronised timing at which they were set up. As the major national agencies are represented at almost all Partnership Boards and committees and in many of the Groups, exemplary initiatives towards the improvement of services for the most disadvantaged obviously lend themselves to repetition.

There has already been some degree of success in influencing central policies and budgets. Initiatives such as Area Allowances, the revamped Community Employment Programme and the Local Employment Service were influenced, to varying degrees, by the experiences of the Partnerships. Apart from these initiatives, which now transcend the 12 Partnership areas, there are other significant achievements which have taken place within individual Partnership areas, e.g., secondment of workers, opening up of physical facilities, and increasing numbers of VTOS programmes, etc.

These national and local achievements serve to highlight an issue of fundamental importance: since local development is primarily concerned with local affairs, how necessary or desirable is it for local actions to inform national policy or to be mainstreamed? A strong view expressed during the interviews was that one of the primary

reasons for the success of local projects funded through the Global Grant (1992-1995) related to local distinctiveness and relevance i.e. such projects were successful precisely because they could be shaped and moulded locally and were not part of an amorphous national programme. There was also a fear that projects could lose a lot of their impact if they became part of a national programme, administered by national agencies.

It therefore appears that the exact role of Groups and Partnerships in funding of innovative projects on an ongoing basis needs to be clarified. Whilst the Groups' and Partnerships' interest in receiving continued funding for, and hence control over, their particular innovative projects is understandable, there is equally a right for disadvantaged people in other Group/Partnership areas to benefit from the lessons learned. Relating this back to the question of whether Groups/Partnerships should become involved in direct service delivery or influencing the wider resource base in their area, it would be consistent to view the Groups' and Partnerships' role in this respect as primarily one of piloting innovative actions, particularly with a view of best practice being subsequently mainstreamed.

At this stage, Partnerships are maintaining programmes through their allocation from the Global Grant (1992-1995). However, given the relevance of many of these programmes to issues of national concern (e.g. local contact points for people seeking employment, enterprise development, etc.), it could plausibly be argued that the Irish Government (through its various agencies) should be providing mainstream funding for these programmes and projects. This would, in turn, free up future Global Grant money for the purpose for which it was originally intended, i.e., for capacity building and continuously testing innovation.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Whilst there was a need to preserve both the flexibility of the Global Grant approach and the way in which it can directly focus upon the local situation, there also was a need to guide and advise Groups about the most appropriate mechanisms for deciding upon expenditure and for monitoring spending approvals. As Groups and Partnerships have responsibilities to local residents, to other groups in the area and to funding sources, it behoves them that they spend the money for which they are responsible in a reasonable and effective manner. It has also been necessary to establish systems through which the impact of monies approved and spent could be assessed. This required Groups or Partnerships to draw up local agreements with those organisations who were delivering projects with the assistance of the Global Grant (1992-1995), and involved setting targets and goals against which progress could be determined.

As indicated in Chapter Four, reporting mechanisms for both financial and key performance measures were developed towards the end of the Global Grant (1992-1995) funding period and have not been fully operationalised by the present Groups and Partnerships. The decision by ADM to provide a computerised software package for Groups/Partnerships to ease the systematic feedback of both financial and key performance indicators is to be welcomed. This package will be introduced at the launch of the new Operational Programme for Local Urban and Rural Development (1994-1999).

Care also needs to be taken that Groups and Partnerships develop procedures for disbursing money which are open and transparent, and that they are able to explain clearly the reasons why they decided to take certain funding decisions. Some interviewees contended that the

establishment of procedures and structures for spending was the most important part of the process, and provided a rationale and legitimacy for subsequent spending decisions. Although some of these might have been unpopular or called into question, the Group/Partnership was able to explain why they had been taken, and prove that all decisions were subject to agreed procedures.

5.6 Relationships with ADM

ADM had overall responsibility for channelling the Global Grant (1992-1995) from the EU to the 12 Partnerships and 28 Groups. Apart from its role as grant administrator, ADM also assumed a broader developmental function. This involved regular contact between ADM liaison staff and the Groups and Partnerships; acting as a conduit for filtering issues and problems through to the relevant agencies and interests (via liaison personnel seconded from those agencies/interest groups, and representatives on the ADM Board, the Inter-Departmental Committee for Local Development, and the Central Review Committee), and providing other appropriate developmental inputs (e.g. seminars, workshops, publications, guidelines, information dissemination).

ADM as Global Grant Administrator

Groups and Partnerships view ADM primarily as administrators and management agents for the Global Grant (1992-1995). There was a strong feeling that ADM staff were so busy sorting out technical, administrative and financial problems relating to Global Grant expenditure that they did not have enough time to provide a quality, ongoing developmental service. There was genuine sympathy and empathy for ADM staff members. It was recognised that, when there were only 12 Partnerships, it was possible with a liaison team of 4-5 people to give fairly intensive support to a portfolio of 2-3 Partnerships each (i.e. regularly attending Board meetings; being accessible and available to work through particular issues; pro-actively making the space to visit Partnerships; feeding information and policy matters from ADM to the Partnerships).

This type of support was no longer possible when the number of Groups/Partnerships increased to 40, with no significant increase in the size of the core staff of ADM. The net result of this was that, instead of working with 2-3 Partnerships, each liaison worker had to respond to the needs and demands of 8-10 Groups and Partnerships. This was in addition to the second role of those who were seconded from other agencies and organisations, i.e., to draw together local experiences as they relate to their seconding organisation, and to use those local experiences to help inform the national policies of that organisation.

Representation vis-à-vis statutory agencies

On account of both the severe workload of ADM staff and the absence of organisational guidelines for translating the experience of local actions into national policies, this conduit role (from the Groups/Partnerships to the upper echelons of various agencies and interest groups) failed to develop to any great extent. Interviewees referred to the links that have been established with the Department of Social Welfare (through the Department's nominee in ADM), and this might form the basis of some type of model which could be translated to other agencies. This, however, would assume that ADM wants to be in such role. From the interviews with ADM, the impression prevails that ADM perceives its role

as having changed in this respect since becoming incorporated as a private company. Whereas, up to 1991, ADM had a role in actually representing Groups and Partnerships vis-à-vis the statutory agencies and government departments, in 1995 they see their role as more detached. Whilst they may still lobby on behalf of the Groups and Partnerships, they do so without a mandate for representation.

Independently of how ADM perceives its own role, most Groups and Partnerships expressed a clear preference to work through their own Boards and committees when trying to influence, lobby and effect change. They considered this to be more effective than taking the issue to ADM. A number of interviewees were concerned that ADM was not independent enough, and that criticisms (constructive and otherwise) of the operations of different agencies and organisations might be blocked by the representatives of those bodies who sit on the ADM Board, the Inter-Departmental Committee on Local Development or the Central Review Committee. There was a feeling that ADM had not been sufficiently outspoken or assertive on issues which were causing concern at the Partnership/Group level (e.g. clarification on the future status of Groups/areas and whether they would become full Partnerships; interim funding problems encountered by Groups; difficulties in persuading certain agencies to nominate representatives onto Partnership Boards and management committees of Groups). It was recognised that many of the problems were not of ADM's making and were outside their direct span of control (e.g. one reason for the interim funding difficulties concerned the protracted negotiations between the Irish Government and the EU). There was a sense, however, that "ADM's hands were tied" and that they were inhibited from aggressively following through particular issues due to concern about negative reactions which this approach might provoke in different agencies and organisations, most of whom would be represented on the ADM Board or Central Review Committee.

Liaison with Groups/Partnerships

There were strong and widespread views expressed about the need to have good, accessible contact/liaison people within ADM. It is interesting that virtually every Group and Partnership considered ADM representation at Board and Committee meetings to be neither a threat nor an intrusion. On the contrary, they were pleased that they were able to discuss issues with a person who could (i) give them the latest information on the Operational Programme for Local Urban and Rural Development (1994-1999), (ii) clarify outstanding matters in relation to financial arrangements with ADM, and (iii) help them work through different issues. The ADM liaison person could bring his/her experiences of other Groups/Partnerships into the discussion and describe how issues relating to participation, community representation, etc. had been resolved.

Partnerships and Groups were most anxious for this liaison role with ADM to be maintained. They were also conscious, however, that it was unworkable in its present form: liaison people were simply too busy to give the time and degree of attention which was needed. This situation is likely to become exacerbated under the Operational Programme for Local Urban and Rural Development (1994-1999). At that time, ADM staff will be dealing not only with 35 Partnerships, but also with a substantial number of Groups in areas not designated under the Programme. As Groups and Partnerships greatly value the liaison offered to them in the past, ADM needs to clarify the role of their liaison staff and what it is able to offer to Groups and Partnerships in this respect.

Support for Groups and Partnerships

Apart from this liaison function, it was considered that ADM could help to enhance the work of individual Groups and Partnerships through a number of distinct undertakings:

(i) organising training and educational initiatives

Reference was made to the usefulness of meetings on community development which took place at Bellinter House, Navan, County Meath, and on enterprise development at the Business Innovation Centre, Dublin. These afforded Partnership/Group workers the opportunity to discuss issues of common interest and relevance, and to establish informal networks and support groups. It was recommended that ADM should continue to organise these types of events on a regular basis.

It was also suggested that ADM might facilitate training programmes and workshops for new Directors of Partnership Boards. Different initiatives have taken place within the community sector (through organisations like the Community Workers Co-Operative and Combat Poverty Agency); these initiatives have tried to increase the understanding and awareness of local development and partnership-building. No similar interventions have been organised within the other key sectors. ADM could perform a significant role in organising and facilitating training and educational activities for Board Directors, as it is extremely important that these Directors are conscious of what makes the present local development model different to more traditional models of social and economic development.

(ii) producing guidelines and information

Favourable comments were made about a number of publications produced by ADM during 1994 and 1995. Reference was also made to the computerised accounting package, provided by ADM. In relation to other materials, it was suggested that ADM might produce guidelines on issues such as employing staff; contracting out services to consultants and local delivery organisations; evaluation techniques and methodologies; matched funding; nominating or selecting community Directors onto Partnership Boards; bringing together different groups within a designated geographical area.

Information on the experiences of all Partnerships and Groups funded through the Global Grant (1992-1995) was also requested. In particular, the 28 Groups were conscious of the learning which had been accrued by the 12 Partnerships since their formation in 1991, and by the groups involved in the Poverty III initiative (PAUL - Limerick; FORUM - Connemara, and DTEDG - Dublin). Aware that they were likely to be confronted with many of the same problems and challenges, they felt that much could have been learnt through examining the experiences of the original 12 Partnerships. It was felt that ADM could perform a pivotal role in disseminating and sharing various experiences, both in relation to the focus of particular projects (i.e., projects developing initiatives in early school leaving, local placement services, child care, etc.) and the process of partnership (i.e., in respect of issues such as encouraging greater participation, keeping local residents and groups informed about what is going on, and community representation on Partnership Boards and how these matters have been dealt with in other areas).

(iii) encouraging nominations of appropriate stature and calibre

There was disappointment and frustration that some agencies in particular geographical areas have not exercised their right to nominate candidates to the Boards of Groups/Partnerships. Attempts by Groups and Partnerships to reverse this situation have not met with a positive response. There is a view that ADM might be able to exert more pressure at senior management level within the relevant organisations. In addition, it was considered important that ADM continue to 'sell' the potential of this model of local development approach, thereby swaying nominating organisations to select persons of senior standing and calibre who are committed to the process.

5.7 Summary and Recommendations

The Global Grant (1992-1995) has made a significant contribution towards the development of local area-based partnership structures in Ireland. In a very real sense, it has provided a framework for analysing the needs and potential of a large number of disadvantaged areas and for involving a broad spectrum of local players. The Global Grant (1992-1995) helped to ensure that the existing 12 PESP Partnerships and 28 new Groups moved beyond the stage of mere analysis and 'talking shop', allowing them to develop strategies, programmes, projects and interventions which could begin to impact upon the quality of life of the most disadvantaged amongst their local residents.

Partnerships and Groups need to be able to manage Global Grant monies effectively. The concept of local development, as promoted through the Global Grant (1992-1995), is a complex one and differs significantly from the traditional way of conducting business at the local level. It focuses particularly on the process of developing a shared vision for the development of the locality amongst all major interest-bearers, and radically differs from more traditional forms of support which took the form of local trust funds. It is important that members of Groups and Partnerships with responsibility for promoting local development have a clear understanding of both the theory and practice of this form of local development. Groups should have reached a certain level of awareness, understanding, confidence, self-knowledge and demonstrate certain skills prior to being given responsibility for expenditure of Global Grant (1992-1995) monies or for following through an integrated plan of development for their areas.

Both the original Partnerships and, in particular, the new Groups were unable to significantly impact upon the policies or spending decisions of statutory agencies and other organisations in their area. It is really only in 1995 - five years after they were established - that the original 12 Partnerships began to achieve some success in influencing the modus operandi of various agencies and mainstream service providers. A number of the original Partnerships still feel that the amount of movement has been minimal with 'policy' changes primarily concerned with loosening up criteria and guidelines rather than with major shifts in focus, and budgetary changes relating more to providing matching funds for individual projects and programmes than to significant re-alignments between key national and regional budget headings.

Partnerships have been most successful where they have abstained from becoming primarily direct delivery agents. Although they might be obliged to take on responsibility

for the delivery of particular projects due to the absence of any other suitable delivery conduit, the priority task for Partnerships and Groups is to influence the policy of existing service providers and thus to influence the overall resource base within their area. The dangers of over-involvement in delivering programmes directly are (i) that the Partnership might be perceived as a threat by other local delivery agents, and (ii) that the time and energy involved in delivering programmes is likely to distract them from strategically influencing mainstream service provision. Ultimately, the financial base of the main statutory agencies will always be many times greater than that of local development groups.

Consistency and continuity are critical elements in this new mechanism for planning and co-ordinating development at the local level. Partnerships and Groups need to know the support they are going to receive in the future. The uncertainty surrounding the designation of areas for inclusion in the Operational Programme for Local Urban and Rural Development (1994-1999), created unnecessary anguish for the Groups. Unclear whether they were in a de facto pre-partnership situation or a once-off funding situation, it was difficult for them to know the time scale for which they were planning. This question was crucial for Groups, as the time and money spent on setting up comprehensive and sustainable partnership structures itself depended on the perceived period of existence of the Group. Thus, whilst the Global Grant (1992-1995) was of particular value because it was part of a sequence of funding arrangements - from PESP (1991-1993) to Global Grant (1992-1995) to Operational Programme for Local Urban and Rural Development (1994-1999) - the uncertainty over the areas to be designated under the latter reduced the overall impact of this roll-over arrangement.

A need exists to develop mechanisms which allow greater sharing of information and experiences. An enormous amount of learning about local development has taken place during the first half of the 1990s, not only with respect to Global Grant supported Groups and Partnerships, but also in relation to other forms and types of local development (e.g. Community Development Programme projects, LEADER companies, Third EC Anti-Poverty Programme). New Groups and Partnerships could benefit from greater interaction with established projects. To date, there is no formal mechanism for such interaction.

In this context, the setting up of regional support and information networks might be worth considering. Informal contacts have already been developed in places like North Dublin, West Dublin, Louth and some of the rural areas. There is a sense that much can be gained from collaboration, especially where administrative boundaries include several Partnerships or Groups. The successful application of Dublin's three northside Partnerships to URBAN is only one example of a successful collaborative arrangement. Besides making joint applications, chief benefits of working together at a regional level include the running of training courses on issues of common interest and a broader level of support in the day-to-day work of the Groups and Partnerships.

Finally, there is a need to be aware of both the potential and the limitations of what can be achieved through this particular model of local development. Even if broadly supported, area-based partnerships are not a panacea for all the ills afflicting various communities throughout Ireland. In terms of finance, the funds available to local Partnerships and Groups will always be a small fraction of the annual expenditures of organisations like FÁS, the VEC, the Department of Social Welfare, or Forbairt. Partnerships should not set

themselves up, or be expected, to provide wholesale solutions to problems relating to unemployment, poverty, social exclusion, etc. There is a danger that they could become the 'dumping ground' for all types of programmes aimed at 'difficult-to-place' categories of people (e.g. early-school leavers, long-term unemployed, lone parents, etc.). Recent developments would suggest that Partnerships are increasingly being given responsibility for the development and delivery of programmes aimed at these Groups. Whether they will follow the path of direct delivery, or whether they will concentrate on influencing, integrating and co-ordinating the activities of these mainstream service providers remains the most important question for the future orientation of their work.

Recommendations:

- *Groups need to spend sufficient time, energy and resources on their own development. This is particularly important for newly formed Groups/Partnerships. Groups should not aim at immediately engaging in major initiatives, but allow sufficiently for developing trust amongst their members and a shared vision for the priorities to be pursued through their Area action Plans. There are three distinct recommendations which are related to this:*
 - (1) *Funding should be made available to Groups and Partnerships on a phased basis: firstly, to facilitate Group/Partnership formation; secondly, to develop an Area Action Plan; and thirdly funding for the implementation of the approved Plan.*
 - (2) *Clearer guidance should be provided to Groups/Partnerships so that the local development model supported through the Global Grant is not one of localised trust funds, but one which enhances the co-ordination and delivery of services from statutory organisations and other mainstream service providers through the work of effective Partnerships at the local level.*
 - (3) *For this development model to be successful it is essential that Board and committee members of Groups and Partnerships, as well as key personnel are well informed about the aims of the overall Programme. This also necessitates that effective education and training in partnership and group-building is put in place.*
- *There is a need to establish centrally organised meetings, involving all Groups and Partnerships, to collectively review on a regular basis the progress made and major issues arising.*
- *Greater efforts need to be made to 'sell' the concept of partnership at local level and, where not already in place, area information strategies should be developed through which local people can be regularly updated on the progress of their Group/Partnership.*
- *There is urgent need to work out the respective roles of the Partnerships, the County Enterprise Boards, LEADER II companies, and the Community Development Fund projects under the Operational Programme for Local Urban and Rural Development (1994-1999).*

- *Whilst the success of Groups/Partnerships will always depend to some extent on the commitment of members to their Boards and committees, greater effort needs to be made by the represented organisations that their nominees are of high calibre and authority within their respective organisation.*
- *Mechanisms which ensure effective community representation and participation need to be established and it is critical that partnership development and capacity-building activities take place throughout the community, and not just at Board, committee or sub-group level.*
- *Consideration should also be given to the establishment of a Research and Analysis Unit (either within ADM or outside) which would seek to draw together the lessons emerging from the different Groups and Partnerships, both in relation to the overall progression of local development and to issues which are being prioritised by a number of participants (e.g. childcare, early school leaving, local placement services, improving access to education capacity building, enterprise development etc.).*

Chapter Six

Conclusions and Recommendations

6.1 Introduction

The purposes of the Global Grant (1992-1995) were clearly stated in the agreement between the Commission of the European Union (EU) and Area Development Management Ltd. (ADM); these were:

- *to promote and assist integrated local socio-economic development and make a positive contribution to economic and employment development in local communities in terms of enterprise creation and development leading to increased employment;*
- *where possible, to bring about an explicit and targeted redistribution of job chances towards the unemployed by providing training/education necessary to enable them to participate in local development programmes; and*
- *to support the main forces of local development by contributing to capacity building of local organisations with the view to enabling them to participate as primary movers in local development programmes.*

The means for achieving these aims involved a model of local development whose four core principles are partnership, participation, planning and multidimensionality. This model of local development is relatively new - both in Ireland and Europe - but was piloted during the Third EU Anti-Poverty Programme (1989-1994) and the area-based initiative of the Programme for Economic and Social Progress (PESP, 1991-1993). The basic rationale for this model is that combating disadvantage through local development involves creating a partnership of all the key actors in the disadvantaged area - statutory providers, social partners and the community/voluntary sector - and facilitating a participative process particularly through developing a planned strategy for the area which addresses the multi-dimensional nature of its disadvantage. The Global Grant (1992-1995) was the largest initiative ever undertaken in Ireland using this model of local development - with 28 Groups and 12 Partnerships receiving funding² - and has formed the basis for its mainstreaming in the Operational Programme for Local Urban and Rural Development (1994-1999). This chapter draws together the key lessons and recommendations which have emerged from the evaluation of the Global Grant (1992-1995) in this report.

6.2 Targeting of the Global Grant

Disadvantage and unemployment are spatially pervasive phenomena which affect virtually every area in Ireland. However, there are significant concentrations which are likely to result in considerable cumulative deprivation and social exclusion of large proportions of the population residing in these areas.

² The Dublin Travellers Education and Development Group (DTEDG) also received funding but not to implement the model of local development described here.

The Global Grant agreement specifically requires that it be targeted at those populations/areas which are exceptionally disadvantaged. In Chapter Two we undertook a multivariate analysis of data from the 1991 Census of Population and identified areas of overall deprivation on an objective and comparative basis. Following the distinction between Dublin, other urban and rural areas, the following areas were identified to be most disadvantaged:

In **Dublin**, the analysis fully confirms the known areas of deprivation. These are the North and South Inner City, Coolock with pockets in Kilbarrack and Raheny, Ballymun, Cabra, Finglas, parts of Blanchardstown, Rialto, Kilmainham, Ballyfermot, Cherry Orchard, Clondalkin, Kimmage, Crumlin, Walkinstown, West Tallaght, pockets in Dun Laoghaire and parts of Bray.

In the **other urban** category, the most significant clusters of deprivation are found in the four County Boroughs of Galway, Limerick, Cork and Waterford and the towns of Drogheda, Dundalk, Sligo, Kilkenny and Wexford.

In the **rural** category the analysis identified significant disadvantage in the Western and Border regions. In the Border Region, this includes the whole of County Donegal, as well as significant parts of counties Sligo, Leitrim, Cavan, and Monaghan. In the Western Region, it includes the whole of counties Mayo and Roscommon, as well as significant parts of County Galway. In the Mid-West and South-West, it includes parts of County Clare and Kerry.

ADM has to be commended on the targeting achieved under the Global Grant (1992-1995). The choice of location in respect to the 28 new Groups has vastly improved the overall targeting of the Programme in comparison to that achieved by the existing 12 PESP Partnerships. This will be of significant advantage for the impending Operational Programme for Local Urban and Rural Development (1994-1999), since many of the Global Grant Groups/Partnerships will be involved in the delivery of this Programme.

6.3 Area Action Plans

The Global Grant agreement required that eligible bodies submit an integrated Area Action Plan, drawn up in consultation with such other local groups and bodies, public agencies and local representatives of the social partners, as the eligible body sees fit. This plan should set out the basic strategy whereby the Group/Partnership seeks to achieve the objectives of economic and social revitalisation in its area.

The Area Action Plan is a key conceptual instrument in the local development strategy promoted through the Global Grant (1992-1995) and aims at nurturing a shared vision between a wide variety of local actors on the strategic issues concerning their area. Towards this end it aims at bringing together local groups and voluntary organisations with representatives of public agencies and the social partners in a structured process of strategic planning. Core elements in the Area Action Plans are profiling of the area, analysis of potential threats and opportunities facing it, development of shared aims and objectives for the future development of the area and finally identification of priority actions to be undertaken in the context of the Global Grant (1992-1995).

The evaluation of the Area Action Plans in Chapter Three revealed that they were undertaken in far from ideal circumstances: (i) the time allowed for implementing the EU/ADM agreement in this respect (2½ months) amounted to half the time that is generally believed to be the absolute minimum time necessary to undertake this process; (ii) there was a lack of existing group structures outside the existing Partnerships into which to feed a substantial proportion of the fund; (iii) despite the considerable experience from the PESP Area Partnerships to combat long-term unemployment, there was lack of documented knowledge which could be made available as guidance to the Groups involved in drawing up Plans; (iv) the ongoing uncertainty about the future format of LEADER II (1996 onwards) left many of the rural groups unclear about where the respective responsibilities of the two programmes lay.

Despite these impediments, both ADM and the Groups involved in drawing up the Area Action Plans have to be commended on what they have achieved in such short time. However, it must be emphasised that, to assume the strategic role which the Area Action Plan is intended to play in setting out a framework for the development of a particular locality, it needs to be handled differently than has been done under the Global Grant (1992-1995). Principally, the shortcoming in this round of funding was the requirement for groups to furnish a development plan prior to the successful conclusion of the initial group formation process.

The present evaluation clearly illustrates the differences in importance of Area Action Plans for the 12 PESP Partnerships and the 28 Groups. For the former the Area Action Plan tended to express a strategic vision within which day-to-day funding decisions were made; by contrast, the latter were often unable to adhere to their original plans as these were soon superseded by group developments after the formulation of the plan. In such cases, the plans were not only of little use to the Group's subsequent work but, at times, it resulted in a cynical attitude to the Area Action Plan. That this happened was confirmed by the statements of a number of interviewees who saw the Area Action Plan as just another means by which to draw down funds.

Recommendations:

- *For Area Action Plans to play a strategic role in the local development process, it is necessary that sufficient time is available to prepare them. Experience from the PESP area-based initiative to combat long-term unemployment (1991-1993) and the Global Grant (1992-1995) suggests that the time necessary to develop authoritative Area Action Plans is about 4 to 6 months.*
- *The experience from the Global Grant (1992-1995) also indicates that, where Groups are newly established, they are generally unable to benefit fully from the strategic approach inherent in the Area Action Plan concept. For this reason it would be preferable if funding was made available to Groups on a phased basis: firstly, to support their initial group formation process, and secondly, to develop an Area Action Plan.*
- *Clearer guidelines should be issued as to the essential elements of the area profile to be covered in each Area Action Plan. These are (i) a socio-economic profile; (ii) an evaluation of the likely effects of the physical development plan on the area as a*

whole and particularly on those who are disadvantaged; (iii) an analysis of the employment structure, including both industry and services, and highlighting the recent employment history; (iv) an in-depth inventory of existing statutory and community/voluntary services.

- *Stronger emphasis needs to be given in the Area Action Plans to prioritise aims and objectives and develop a strategic vision. Towards this end it is necessary for the Groups/Partnerships to know in advance the range of funding that is likely to be made available.*
- *There should be a clearer separation of tasks between consultation and facilitation. Research Consultants are well situated to support Groups/Partnerships in the profiling in their area and related desk and primary research. For new Groups it seems preferable if a separate facilitator is engaged to assist the Group in their formation process and the working-out of a strategic vision.*

6.4 Analysis of Actions

The Global Grant (1992-1995) amounted to IR£8 million. Just over half of this, IR£4.2 million (53%) was disbursed through the 12 PESP Partnerships, and IR£3.2 million (40%) through 28 new Groups. The agreement between ADM and the EU Commission specified that about IR£5 million of this (62%) was to be expended on enterprise creation and development (Measure One) and IR£2.4 million (30%) on training and education, infrastructural and environmental measures, and capacity building (Measure Two).

According to the cumulative returns made by the Groups and Partnerships in March 1995, there has been a greater expenditure under Measure Two of the Programme, amounting to 47 per cent, whilst 43 per cent were used to fund initiatives under Measure One. This, however, is unlikely to represent a real shift in the expenditure of the fund. The reason for this is that Groups and Partnerships had particular difficulties in distinguishing whether an initiative was falling under Measure 1.2 (training/education in enterprise and business skills) or Measure 2.1 (training/education relevant to enterprise creation, business development and employability). The vast majority (about 85%) of the Groups'/Partnerships' combined expenditure for these two sub-measures was indicated to have taken place under Measure 2.1, with only a minor proportion (15%) accounted for under Measure 1.2. As many of the educational activities involved both unemployed people as well as targeting new and existing enterprises, it is therefore likely that a substantial effort/expenditure under Measure 1.2 is subsumed under the heading of Measure 2.1.

The additional resources mobilised through the Global Grant (1992-1995) are substantial. The agreement between ADM and the EU Commission allowed 75 per cent of total expenditure on actions under Measure One and Two to be provided from the Global Grant, whilst initiatives under Measure Three were up to 100 per cent fundable. The co-funding achieved far surpasses these rates. Taking total expenditures up to March 1995 under the three permissible measures, a Global Grant expenditure of IR£5.8 million has effectively been matched by Government expenditures of IR£4.7 million and private funds of IR£3.3 million for the same actions. Thus, out of a total of

IR£13.7 million, 42 per cent came from the Global Grant (1992-1995), with Government and private co-funding accounting for 34 and 24 per cent respectively.

The achievements of the Programme, in terms of the number of enterprises supported and people receiving education and training, far exceeds expectations. About 1,800 enterprises have been assisted by the Groups and Partnerships in one way or another. Nearly 1,600 individuals received training or education in enterprise-related skills; over 7,000 people, most of whom were unemployed or long-term unemployed, received some element of training or education either relevant to enterprise creation and business development, or to enhance their general employability. A total of 320 projects received funding to improve the local infrastructure and environment generally with a view to enhancing enterprise creation and business development; over 1,000 community activists, staff and representatives on the Boards of the Groups and Partnerships took part in training in one form or another. Though performance measures lack accuracy as they do not take into account the length and intensity of respective educational measures, they nevertheless clearly surpass the number of assisted people and enterprises as projected in the agreement between ADM and the EU Commission many times over.

The majority of these achievements is accounted for by the 12 Partnerships, as these were already positioned to put into place substantial initiatives. The contribution of the 28 Groups towards these achievements varies greatly and partly depends upon the vision that Groups have developed for themselves in relation to their specific role in the local development process. The extent to which local Groups/Partnerships should become involved in the direct delivery of services or should focus on influencing mainstream service providers has become a major question in discussions on the appropriate focus of local development. In relation to the 28 new Groups funded under the Global Grant (1992-1995), the evaluators have little doubt that those Groups which have concentrated on setting up effective Partnership structures to influence the future spending of the much larger resource base of statutory and privately-funded projects in their locality, rather than engaging immediately in broad-based actions, have ultimately achieved the most significant and enduring results.

Recommendations:

- *Improved reporting mechanisms are needed to
 - (i) provide clearer indications under which funding measure each initiative falls
 - (ii) provide clearly defined key performance measures which take into account not only the number of firms and individuals supported, but also a measure of the extent of that support.*
- *Guidelines are needed to clearly set out what State and private funding can be accounted for as matching funding.*
- *The 12 Partnerships and 28 Groups have accumulated a vast amount of experience between them on how to assist new and existing enterprises and how best to provide education and training to those who are unemployed or long-term*

unemployed. There is now a need for more systematic ways of sharing specific experiences and identifying role models that can be duplicated by the new Groups/Partnerships.

- *A number of initiatives negotiated between the various partners at the local level have the potential to be meaningfully “mainstreamed”. There needs to be put in place a mechanism that allows Groups and Partnership to collectively identify such initiatives and to pursue their common interest in such ventures.*

6.5 Issues in Local Development

The Global Grant (1992-1995) has made a significant contribution towards the development of local area-based partnership structures in Ireland. In a very real sense, it has provided a framework to analyse the needs and potential of a large number of disadvantaged areas in a manner involving a broad spectrum of local players. The Global Grant (1992-1995) helped to ensure that the existing 12 PESP Partnerships and 28 new Groups moved beyond the stage of mere analysis and ‘talking shop’, allowing them to develop strategies, programmes, projects and interventions which could begin to impact upon the quality of life of the most disadvantaged amongst their local residents.

Consistency and continuity are critical elements in this new model for planning and co-ordinating development at the local level. Partnerships and Groups need to know the support they are going to receive in the future. The uncertainty surrounding the designation of areas for inclusion in the Operational Programme for Local Urban and Rural Development (1994-1999) created unnecessary anguish for the Groups. Thus, whilst the Global Grant (1992-1995) was of particular value because it was part of a sequence of funding arrangements, the uncertainty over the areas to be designated under the impending Programme reduced the overall impact of this roll-over arrangement.

Partnerships have been most successful where they have abstained from becoming primarily direct delivery agents. Although they might be obliged to take on responsibility for the delivery of particular projects due to the absence of any other suitable delivery conduit, the priority task for Partnerships and Groups is to influence the policy of existing service providers and thus to influence the overall resource base within their area. However, it needs to be stated that both the original Partnerships and, in particular, the new Groups were unable to significantly impact upon the policies or spending decisions of statutory agencies and other organisations in their area. It is really only in 1995 - five years after they were established - that the original 12 Partnerships began to achieve some success in influencing the modus operandi of various agencies and mainstream service providers. But even then, policy changes tended to be primarily concerned with loosening up criteria and guidelines rather than with major shifts in focus, and budgetary changes related more to providing matching funds for individual projects and programmes than to significant realignment of key national and regional budgets.

A need exists to develop mechanisms which allow greater sharing of information and experiences. An enormous amount of learning has taken place during the first half of the 1990s, not only with respect to Global Grant supported Groups and Partnerships, but also in relation to other forms and types of local development (e.g. Community Development Fund projects, LEADER companies, Third EU Anti-Poverty Programme). New Groups

and Partnerships could benefit from greater interaction with established projects. To date, no formal mechanism exists for such interaction.

Finally, there is a need to be aware of both the potential and the limitations of what can be achieved through this particular model of local development. Even if broadly supported, area-based partnerships are not a panacea for all the ills afflicting various communities throughout Ireland. There is a danger that they could become the 'dumping ground' for all types of programmes aimed at 'difficult-to-place' categories of people (e.g. early-school leavers, long-term unemployed, lone parents, etc.). Recent developments would suggest that Partnerships are increasingly being given responsibility for the development and delivery of programmes aimed at these groups. Whether they will follow the path of direct delivery, or whether they will concentrate on influencing, integrating and co-ordinating the activities of the mainstream service providers remains the most important question for the future orientation of their work.

Recommendations:

- *Groups need to spend sufficient time, energy and resources on their own development. This is particularly important for newly formed Groups/Partnerships. Groups should not aim at immediately engaging in major initiatives, but allow sufficiently for developing trust amongst their members and a shared vision for the priorities to be pursued through their Area action Plans. There are three distinct recommendations which are related to this:*
 - (1) *Funding should be made available to Groups and Partnerships on a phased basis: firstly, to facilitate Group/Partnership formation; secondly, to develop an Area Action Plan; and thirdly funding for the implementation of the approved Plan.*
 - (2) *Clearer guidance should be provided to Groups/Partnerships so that the local development model supported through the Global Grant is not one of localised trust funds, but one which enhances the co-ordination and delivery of services from statutory organisations and other mainstream service providers through the work of effective Partnerships at the local level.*
 - (3) *For this development model to be successful it is essential that Board and committee members of Groups and Partnerships, as well as key personnel are well informed about the aims of the overall Programme. This also necessitates that effective education and training in partnership and group-building is put in place.*
- *There is urgent need to work out the respective roles of the Partnerships, the County Enterprise Boards, LEADER II companies, and Community Development Fund projects under the Operational Programme for Local Urban and Rural Development (1994-1999).*
- *Mechanisms which ensure effective community representation and participation need to be established and it is critical that partnership development and capacity-building activities take place throughout the community, and not just at Board, committee or sub-group level.*

- *There is a need to establish centrally organised meetings, involving all Groups and Partnerships, to regularly review collectively the progress made and major issues arising.*

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