



Building inclusive Community infrastructure

COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE
CASESTUDY

SPAN



Casestudy Aim

- ❑ To track the experiences of Ballyogan Resource Centre and Mountwood-Fitzgerald Community Development Project as they worked to develop community resource centres in their areas, and their respective interface with local government around the issue of community infrastructure provision.



Aim

- ❑ Capture the process from the perspective of different stakeholders
- ❑ Identify the key issues at play
- ❑ Highlight learning emerging and the relevance in the wider national policy context.
- ❑ Provide opportunities to jointly explore issues and identify ways forward



Research Process

- Part 1 of a two part process.
 - Provides a snapshot of the situation at present
 - Part 2 will take the process from here to the completion of the two projects

- Process evolved over the research period (Oct 2006 – April 2007)
 - Originally a straightforward case study
 - Agreement that it would be more constructive and useful to adopt a more action research approach.
 - Opportunities for checking in and getting feedback
 - Key element – opportunities for the stakeholders to engage with each other
 - Real dialogue around these difficult and contested issues



Research Process

- ❑ Consultation with stakeholders
 - Two communities – individual interviews and focus groups
 - Dun Laoghaire Rathdown Co. Co.
 - Other stakeholders
- ❑ 2 SPAN conversations (Dec. 2006 and Jan 2007)
 - Present initial findings and issues emerging
 - Engage with different stakeholders around the issues
 - Opportunity for stakeholders to hear different perspectives to share and discuss the issues
- ❑ Draft report circulated
- ❑ Community Infrastructure workshop (April 2007)
- ❑ Final Report



Context - Local

- ❑ Areas experiencing disadvantage and social exclusion
- ❑ Failure by a range of agencies to respond over the years – acute sense of dissatisfaction
- ❑ History of suspicion and conflict between the Local Authority and the two communities
- ❑ Impact on communities of larger infrastructure developments



Against all odds – Family Life on low incomes; Combat Poverty Agency

- ❑ Social disorder impacts on residents quality of life, anti-social behaviour and a general loss of communal space
- ❑ The absence of a sense of community and an ability to participate in the decisions that affect their lives was expressed in a desire to escape.
- ❑ Recommendations
 - Opportunities need to be created whereby people can participate and co-operate locally
 - Affordable and safe play, sport recreational and cultural activities for young people should be given priority in disadvantaged areas



Context - National

- ❑ Events took place over a 15 year (early 1990s to today)
- ❑ A period of rapid change and sustained economic growth
- ❑ Policy focus on partnership, social inclusion, participation, quality of life
- ❑ Reform of local government and establishment of County Development Boards.
- ❑ Availability of funding for projects of this nature



Stakeholders

- ❑ Number and range of stakeholders (local, county and national)
- ❑ Stakeholders working towards a common goal – developing these two communities
- ❑ Consensus that both communities need and deserve community facilities
- ❑ However stakeholders using different lens to view issues.
 - Differences in how they perceive and respond
 - Tension between stakeholders and a break down in relationship



Fundamental Issues

- Roles
- Funding
- Capacity
- Governance
- Working in Partnership



Roles

- ❑ Whose role is it provide community infrastructure and to support communities in this process
- ❑ Lack of clarity regarding roles – creates confusion & environment for conflict
- ❑ Present at all levels from local to national
- ❑ Clarity about own role but not about how this fits into the overall jigsaw.



Roles

- Is the real issue competition – at different levels (Government Depts, agencies, local groups)
- Linked to other issues: communications, relationships,
- **Challenge**
 - How can we ensure that the roles of different actors are clearer, and facilitate more integrated local development processes.



Funding

- ❑ Complexity of funding structures a recipe for tension and conflict
- ❑ Multiple sources
- ❑ Complex distribution channels
- ❑ Linked to other issues (trust, respect communications)
- ❑ Challenge

How could these structures be more accessible and conducive to collaborative approaches



Capacity

- ❑ Two disadvantaged communities working in challenging circumstances (core project plus childcare)
- ❑ Taking on multi million € projects
- ❑ Lacking technical capacity in key areas - huge challenges for volunteers
- ❑ Capacity in this area also lacking in support agencies



Capacity ctd.

- ❑ The Local Authority has this capacity (in other sections)
- ❑ There is a need for local communities to have ownership of infrastructure projects
- ❑ Linked to other issues (roles, funding)
- ❑ **Challenge**
 - How can communities develop the capacity or be supported to provide the necessary infrastructure



Governance

- ❑ Huge challenge to local communities – increasing burden placed on them
- ❑ Additional issues of burn out and lack of continuity in projects (retain capacity)
- ❑ Concerns that good practice has not always been followed in both projects
- ❑ Danger of groups becoming defensive and insular in stressful situations



Working in Partnership

- ❑ Some good examples of people working in partnership
- ❑ Overall it presents huge challenges when all the other factors are in play (roles, funding issue, capacity)
- ❑ Linked to other issues; consultation, communications and respect.
- ❑ A clash of cultures
- ❑ Language used may be a barrier. Do we all share the same understanding



Partnership

- ❑ Partnership involves a shared agenda, an equality between partners and a commitment to addressing the issue
- ❑ Ultimately it is the only way forward in these projects

Challenge

- ❑ How can we ensure more collaborative ways of working which can build partnerships



Other issues

- Mandate to represent the Community
 - Who has a mandate to represents the community and how is this managed in conflict situations
 - Presents challenges to all stakeholders in both projects
- Local government
 - A view that Local government it is now less accessible.
 - Are structures used to avoid real consultation



Other issues

- ❑ Political processes
 - Why hasn't this been addressed by the political process.
 - A good level of awareness among politicians at local and national level
 - There is a need to develop better relationship with the politicians and engage them in progressing these projects.



Community Infrastructure workshop

□ **Aim**

To present some of the key issues to stakeholders and to provide an opportunity for people to discuss these and to begin to progress them where possible.

□ **Wider context**

- What vision do we have for the development of our communities
- Do you agree that these are the key issues? Are these the only issues
- Do these issues have resonance in your work or in your community ?

□ **Looking at the specific issues**

Given that this is an issue

- What might be more effective/ how could things be done differently?
- What possibilities are there to develop shared solutions ?
- Can you agree on possible strategies to progress things/ identify first steps
- What can we learn from this?
- Can we learn from elsewhere.?



Workshop

- ❑ Mix of community, local agencies and government Depts.
- ❑ Real engagement with issues
- ❑ Positive atmosphere and energy
- ❑ A platform for further discussions and collaboration



Things to be considered

- ❑ L As needs to acknowledges the experience and expertise in local communities and ensure that this is taken on board .
- ❑ Representation - The local authority needs to acknowledge the validity of this and the likewise groups need to recognise the wider representative role of the local authority.
- ❑ Disadvantaged communities feel remote from those who make decisions about their lives. The challenge is to ensure that this gap is bridged as often as possible .
- ❑ Communities feel they have been excluded in the past . Challenges to ensure that these people are encouraged to reinvest in their communities. Build confidence that communities can engage on an equal footing.
- ❑ Challenge to ensure cohesion at the level of departments who are involved in funding local development.



Things to be considered

- ❑ There is a challenge for everyone to recognise the constraints in which the other stakeholders are working
- ❑ There is value in developing a culture of mediation both in local communities and among local authorities. .
- ❑ A significant challenge is how to engage communities in real planning processes without raising expectations.
- ❑ There is a need for evidence that the process is working and that there are real benefits to getting involved - people need to see a dividend. community.
- ❑ Everyone should be clear about roles, responsibilities and limitations before embarking on an infrastructure project.
- ❑ Major capital projects put huge pressures on communities and on the agencies supporting them. How can communities be supported through this process.



Good Practice

- ❑ The two communities have been brought into the process and consulted especially at the earlier stages.
- ❑ Steering groups/Taskforces set up involving all the main stakeholders including the DLRCC.
- ❑ When difficulties arose in both areas a number of efforts were made to get the different parties around the table.
- ❑ The role of the Southside Partnership has been important in facilitating s and acting as a bridge .
- ❑ DLRCC has on a number of occasions show leadership and driven these two projects.
- ❑ CCDA section has invested lot of effort both in wider developments in the two areas
- ❑ The research process and the community infrastructure workshop .



Conclusion

- ❑ Case study - captures the story at a particular time. Change is already taking place
- ❑ Important to remember why this has and is happening and not lose sight of the ultimate goal
- ❑ Need to view this in the national context. Other communities experiencing similar difficulties.
- ❑ Hopefully learning from here will have impact locally and nationally.