

Responding to addiction: national perspective

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1. History, evolution of community-based services

- Ireland traditionally underdeveloped, peripheral European society, low priority for welfare, limited vision of relationship with civil society
- 1960s saw beginnings of voluntary, community-led responses to poverty, social exclusion
- 1975 1st programme against poverty, key landmark
- Validated action research, bottom-up, community-led, policy-orientated campaigning responses
- Ballymun Youth Action Project, 1981 very much part of this movement, tradition
- 1980s, 1990s, substantial expansion of community-led initiatives, projects, responses, which worked

2. The high point

- 1997-2002 marked high point of social inclusionary strategies, civil society
 - National Anti Poverty Strategy, 1997
 - *Supporting voluntary activity*, 2000
 - Range of sectoral strategies
 - E.g. National Drugs Strategy, 2001; implementation systems
 - National social partnership
 - Combat Poverty Agency with:
 - National Anti-Poverty Networks
 - Small grant schemes, research grants, capacity building
 - Programme of research
 - Community Development Programme (180)
 - Family Resource Centres (106)
 - Refining of policies against poverty e.g. child poverty

3. 2002: strategic turn

- *Supporting voluntary activity* repudiated
 - Funding for voluntary organizations delayed, reduced -47%
 - Research funding scrapped
 - Voluntary activity units not progressed
 - Removal of funding role of Combat Poverty Agency
 - Schemes hovered into CRAG, put under ministerial control
 - Charities Act 2009 passed but suspended
 - Human rights no longer charitable
 - Evidence of campaigning charities now refused status

4. 2008: Economic and social crisis

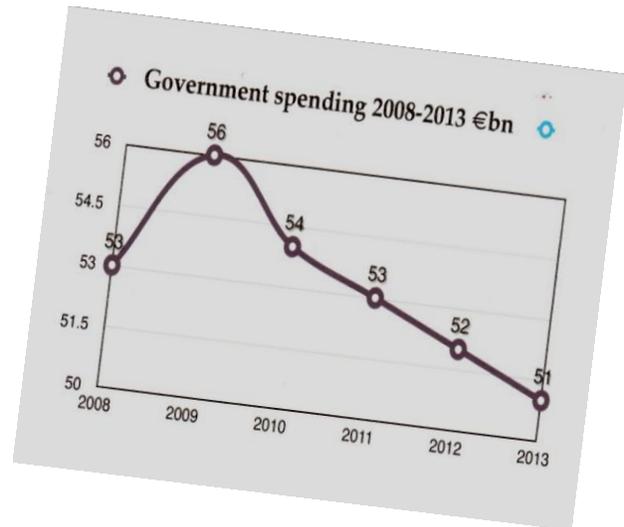
- Combat Poverty Agency abolished
- Other social agencies extinguished
 - National Council Ageing Older People
 - National Economic & Social Forum, Comhar
 - National Consultative Council Racism Interculturalism
 - Office for Active Citizenship. Homeless Agency.
 - Women's health, educational disadvantage, childhood devp.
 - Reduction of Equality Authority, Human Rights Cmsn
 - New economic agencies (FAC, NewERA, NAMA, Uisce)
- Community Development Programme closed
 - Dublin Inner City Partnership
- Setting limits to dissent (see Advocacy Initiative)

5. Looking at funding...

- Government spending -4.3% since 2008 (over)
- No formal statement social policy funding would be especially affected
 - But 'recovery programme' quite detailed in individual social spending reductions
- In practice, voluntary & community organizations reduced -8% to -10% annually, likewise never formally stated
 - Only statement is a commitment to retaining 'frontline' services

6. This is our **baseline** against which all spending should be measured

-4.3%



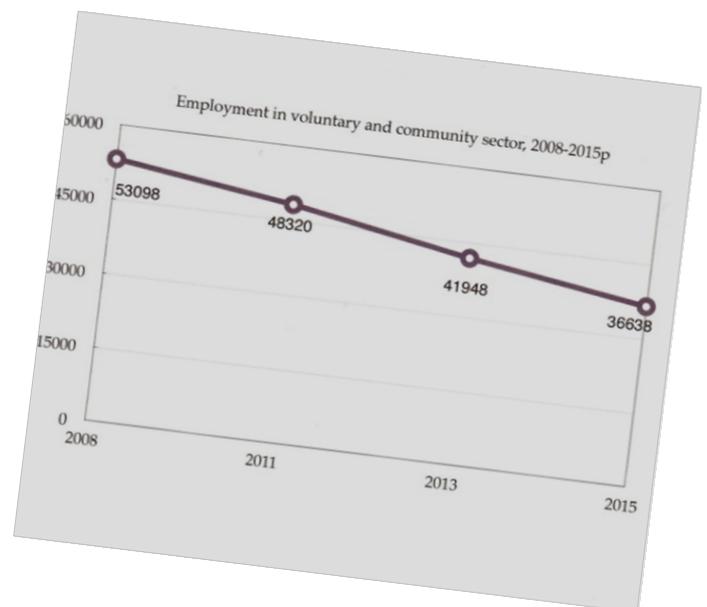
7. Community development

Change 2008-2013

- Local & Community Dev Prog -42.3%
- National voluntary organizations -36.6%
- *Initiatives against drugs* €44.3m > €29.9m -32.5%
- Special Projects for Youth (SPY) -20.6%
- Overall, community-based groups reduced most
 - By definition, this funding goes to most deprived areas
 - Traveller accommodation, education, -85%, -86%
- Health funded organizations less
 - Generally, this funding is spread wider

8. By 2015, 31% of workers in V&C sector may be gone.

No other country in Europe, so far as we know, has experienced such an extraordinary decline since 1948.



9. What's next? Projected reductions in programmes, *National Recovery Plan*

Supposed to be the 'bottoming out' of the cuts. Drugs spending down from €44m in 2008 to €23.8m in 2014, down almost half. Now €29.9m (2013)

Heading	2011	Cut	2014
National voluntary organizations LCDP	€10m €63.5m €73.5m	-€8.7m	€64.8m
Drugs initiative	€33.8m	-€10m	€23.8m
Integration projects	€4.2m	-€0.9m	€3.3m
Sporting bodies	€46.9m	-€5m	€41.9m
Cultural bodies	€65.1m	-€3m	€62.1m

10. Preserving 'frontline' services?

- "Once you get rid of the administration and all the other things you need to keep the service going, you don't have a 'front' line any more, because there's nothing behind the front line.
- By now, it's only a line."

11. Cuts: broad social impact

- Poverty level
 - Had been *falling* this century to 2009
 - 2009 marked turning point: began to rise again
 - Was 14.1%, now 16%, with 18.8% for children (2011 figs published Feb. 2013)
 - Higher *rate* of increase than Greece
- Increased pressure on V&C organizations
 - EU Social Protection Committee indicated governments should *help*, not inhibit, them to respond
- Coming: alignment process:
 - Transfer to local authorities will end last independent strand of community development for deprived communities

12. Why reduce *drug services* so much?

- We know local drugs services lead to gains in:
 - Health, criminal justice, policing, employment

- Between 3:1 and 9:1 cost/benefit gains (Home Office)
- We know gains deriving from local, community-based drugs services (over) (Goodbody *Expenditure review of local drugs task forces*, 2006)
- We know consequences of cuts (*Citywide*, over)

13. Goodbody findings

- Improved trust, cooperation with Gardai
- Identification of sources of supply
- Reduced use generally
 - Prevention, use by children
- Earlier interventions by teachers
- Challenging of open dealing
- More people drug free for longer
- Normalization of their lives
 - Practical help, support given to their families
- Prevention of relapse

14. Consequences of cuts (Citywide)

- Fewer using services, longer waiting lists
- Higher prevalence
 - Earlier addiction by children
 - More ill-health attributable to drugs incl. deaths
- Failure to stop supply, dealing
- Higher crime e.g. Intimidation, ASB, break in
 - Relapse by existing users, slower normalization
- Diminished ability of gardai to respond
- Decline in security, quality of life

15. Explaining cuts

- In an era of ‘evidence-based policy making’, they make no sense. They are, literally, irrational, anti-rational.
- Government approach runs counter to European advice, approach of *most* European governments.
- Cuts lack a coherent pattern. Why 42% here, 36% there, 20% somewhere else? No explanation.
- ‘Protecting frontline services’ a falsehood

- But an underlying, implicit pattern against:
 - Social policy and its institutions
 - Voluntary organizations in general
 - Community-based organizations in particular
- Settling scores with civil society?
 - Now prospects of its removal from constitution

16. Policy responses V&C and related

- Impact research carried out by ICTU, Pavee Point
- Budgetary analysis by The Wheel, Tasc, Neri Institute
 - Alternatives, other approaches presented
- Challenges in the Oireachtas
 - Principally independents, SF
- Range: from passivity to *Spectacle of defiance*
 - *'We not the Irish, we're the Greeks, we do not capitulate'*
- *Claiming our future*
- Academic analyses e.g. Mary Murphy *Second Republic*
- Little traction in media
 - *'Unfortunate effects of recession'*

17. Futures

- An unimaginable reversal from the high point 2000
- No one could have anticipated wave of destruction of our social, community development infrastructure, where Ireland was a European leader
 - Irrational departure from European social model
- Working assumption that 'with recovery, all will be well again' highly questionable
 - Growing hints of 'post-austerity austerity'
 - Can a deflated economy recover? Japan?
 - Do we really want the celtic tiger back?!
- Behoves us to make case for enlightened, balanced European social model, with civil society role
 - Irish civil society faced, overcame similar challenges 100 years ago
 - *Thank you for your attention*