



The Policy Implications of Social Capital

Forum Report No. 28

June 2003



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Foreword

A key challenge for Ireland in the 21st Century is to identify and harness the strength of community ties and resources in contributing towards a just and harmonious society. Against a background of unprecedented economic growth, but with widening economic and social divisions, our institutions need to be adapted so as to better serve the interests of all our citizens. Values of social solidarity, mutual respect and equality of opportunity should be given primacy of place in practice, as well as in statements of policy intent. The State and the Market cannot meet every conceivable need and have to be complemented by a strong and vibrant civil society. Empowerment of local communities to develop their own solutions and models of self-help is an important challenge in the design of public policy.

The term *social capital* describes important social processes and relationships – informal social support networks, friendship, neighbourhood generosity, interpersonal trust and volunteering activity – but also aspects of local and community development, public-private-voluntary partnerships and civic spirit. Although the term is relatively new in Ireland, the underlying concepts are not. Social capital draws on processes which are crucial in community development and the functioning of a democratic, inclusive and cohesive society. Likewise, community development helps generate higher levels of trust and social participation. Effective democracies rest on two essential foundations: civic attitudes of inclusion, tolerance and regard for the rights of others, and civic behaviour.

There are a variety of possible perspectives on social capital. At one extreme is a “top-down” approach arising mainly from Government initiative and at the other end is a “bottom-up” approach which draws from the emerging experience and practice of various types of community. Social capital is not an alternative to existing policies; it is a potential complement.

A long-term strategic view emphasises the importance of community, co-operation and trust as essential building blocks of well-being, equality and sustainable competitiveness. Within the context of the current economic slowdown and fiscal readjustment, it is more important than ever to reflect on the benefits of investments in communities and facilities which underpin human and social capital in the long-term.

Our social and political life is experiencing great change. At such a transition a clear articulation of a public philosophy which has widespread support is needed. This Report seeks to contribute to this by placing *active citizenship* at the core of the Forum’s statement of broad values and principles for a just and inclusive society. This is also a key issue for the development of new structures of public governance and social partnership in the on-going debate about the future of the European Union. Strengthening of social capital at the local, national and European levels is an important objective. Examples of partnerships and direct engagement by citizens across all Member States including prospective members will be important – especially in the light of the impending Irish Presidency of the EU in 2004 and the deliberations on a new Treaty.

The inclusion of social capital as a concept for public policy in the recent *Agreed Programme of Government* is opportune as well as remarks by the Taoiseach:

“I believe that social capital is a concept which deserves to be discussed in much greater depth. It has the potential to be a very positive influence in public policy development in this country and throughout the European Union. It is a concept which puts communities at the centre of our debates and it helps us to find a framework to explain and address the linkages between areas which are seemingly very different. ...I believe that the concept of social capital has the potential to play a very positive role in the development and evaluation of public policy. In order to fulfil this potential it has to be used carefully and it requires the attention of a much bigger body of researchers and commentators”¹.

¹ From the Speech of the Taoiseach, Mr Bertie Ahern, T.D., at a conference organised by the Department of Social, Community and Family Affairs on 29 March, 2001 in Dublin.

Summary of the Report

Summary of the Report

Why Social Capital?

There is a growing international debate about the meaning and impact of social capital. The Forum has taken up this theme as a way of exploring new policy and partnership approaches to addressing social inclusion and the quality of life. The role of learning and skills (human capital) together with relationships, networks and social norms (social capital) are recognised as being important for these purposes.

The NESF *Strategic Policy Framework for Equality Issues* provides an important point of reference for this work. This sets out criteria for evaluating the various aspects of social equality and goes to the heart of *what* Government, the social partners and other groups in society do and *how* they do their business. The 4 key principles are: Redistribution, Recognition, Representation and Respect. The *Agreed Programme for Government* (2002) under the heading of “Building an Inclusive Society”, states:

“We will fund an ambitious programme of data gathering on social indicators, including consistent poverty and social capital, to ensure that policies are developed on the basis of sound information. We will work to promote social capital in all parts of Irish life through a combination of research and ensuring that public activity supports the development of social capital, particularly on a local community level”.

This present Report focuses on seeking to:

- clarify the concept and use of “social capital” in policy discussions;
- situate the debate on social capital in an Irish context and set of policy concerns;
- identify a limited range of priority socio-economic issues to be addressed; and
- provide a set of policy options or recommendations based on a process of consultation and review of existing evidence.

What is Social Capital?

Social capital is defined as *networks together with shared norms, values and understandings that facilitate co-operation within or among groups*. Properly applied and developed, it can play a role of leverage in linking to public agencies, bridging across to other disadvantaged groups and bonding in terms of developing crucial community level supports and mutual care at local level. Social capital is one resource, among others, which can be used in support of community development and social inclusion.

There are a number of inter-related and overlapping key dimensions: *community engagement*; *community efficacy* (a shared sense of empowerment and capacity to effect change at the community level); *volunteering*; *political participation*; *informal social support networks* (e.g. who knows who); *informal sociability* (speaking, visiting, writing, emailing); *norms of trust and reciprocity*; and *trust in various institutions* (public, corporate, voluntary).

An important distinction is frequently made between the following types of social contact:

Bonding (to people like you *for getting by in life*); **Bridging** (to people not like you *for getting on in life*); and **Linking** (to people at a different step in the social ladder *for obtaining access to resources and knowledge*). A mix of bonding, bridging and linking social capital is desirable because too much of one without the other can distort the benefit of social connections.

Not all forms of social capital are positive. For example, tightly knit networks can use their access to financial assets, information or authority to exclude others. Innovation, enterprise and reaching-out to individuals and groups beyond one's immediate network may be impeded by exclusive, in-group solidarity.

What is the Impact of Social Capital?

The international research evidence suggests a generally positive gain. However, questions about the direction of causation and the size of impact arise. Given the difficulty in precisely defining and measuring social capital for empirical research purposes, some caution is needed in interpreting the results. The main potential benefits are summarised under the following headings: poverty and social exclusion; economic productivity; job search; educational achievement; personal well-being and health; public governance and citizen engagement; crime and various forms of social deviance.

How is Social Capital Distributed in Ireland?

The NESF Survey of Social capital indicates a number of areas or groups where engagement is lower:

- young adults (18-29) and the elderly (65+);
- people living in rural and large urban centres;
- lower socio-economic groups; and
- those with a disability or those who are ill.

Ireland is average to above average in European comparisons of the overall level of social capital. Informal social contact and local community involvement are above average here in European comparisons but there are subtle differences with respect to which dimension or level of formality of social engagement is being measured. A headcount of memberships of voluntary associations may, for example, miss out on the quality of this engagement.

Social Capital and Public Policy

There are a number of broad principles and civic values which have immediate and practical relevance to policy formation. Heavily top-down policy formation tends to operate in isolation from communities and citizens and can lead to a “one-size-fits-all” approach to public service whether in the areas of health, education, social support, etc. On the other hand, the greater policy-making is accountable, transparent and accessible to citizens and communities, the greater the possibility of increasing trust and drawing on the skills and potential of local communities. Highly-centralised and dependency-related models of decision-making and delivery can limit the scope for engagement, flexibility and trust. Hence, subsidiarity, autonomy and partnership are key areas and concepts for developing social capital. However, an exclusive reliance on “bottom-up” approaches may miss out on areas of disadvantage and access to important social networks. The right balance needs to be struck, therefore, between self-help and externally provided support.

Some key issues and challenges are:

- balancing between “bottom-up” and “top-down” approaches;
- listening to, and engaging with, all communities;
- respect for the rights of citizens and communities;
- fostering mutual help and self-reliance;
- supporting partnerships to draw on key civic energy and potential;
- recognising volunteering effort and rewarding achievement; and
- recognising the importance of the local and locality in addressing complex and cross-agency issues.

Active Citizenship and Community Development

There is a continuum from informal, unstructured networks of friends, neighbours, relatives and others right up to more formal participation in intermediary structures between public agencies and the citizen. Social capital, active citizenship and community development are all inter-related. A broad concept of active citizenship relates, by right, to all members of society including those who are presently excluded on grounds of ethnicity, social position or other identities.

The local level is a natural one in which to consider initiatives, measures and responses which strengthen network ties and tap into shared norms of co-operative behaviour. There are many examples of long-established organisations and networks which support social capital at this level. An incremental and experimental approach, jointly-owned and tailor-made to local circumstances, seems to offer the best approach to developing social capital at local level.

Community initiatives and supporting measures by public agencies need to develop sustainable models which promote an inclusive system of trust and mutual support. Finding a mechanism, such as the new *Community and Voluntary* Fora, to engage a wider range of ordinary people at local level can lead to a continuum of action and partnership. This application of thinking on social capital has the potential to harness valuable local and voluntary resources and can also complement public programmes in support of local social capital as indicated in the recent *Agreed Programme for Government*.

Work-Life Balance

Work-life balance concerns the relationship between use of time, pressure of commuting, working and other aspects of life including caring and personal well-being. Policy responses are suggested at a local and organisation level to enhance choice and flexibility. However, in addition to changes in working arrangements, “hard supports” in the form of childcare, public transport and regulatory or voluntary-based codes of practice need to be further developed.

Community-Based Learning

Learning to co-operate, communicate and engage for a more open, tolerant and active civil society is, potentially, a major part of a policy response to the development of social capital. At school level, the involvement of communities and learning partnerships of students, teachers and parents in governance, curriculum design and implementation at local level is one response. Also, the content and process of learning in schools can be more closely linked to service and active engagement in the local community. In adult education and other areas of learning, including informal educational settings, the role of social networks and support is crucial.

Spatial Planning

There are no quick-fix solutions, and still less, no blueprint for planning either in terms of high-density urban dwellings or policies for one-off rural housing or dispersal. Consistency in terms of guidelines for planning decisions, attention to the likely long-term community impacts, flexibility and adaptation to local circumstances and genuine input from, and consultation with, the local community are important. Initiatives by local communities in meeting local needs as well as partnerships with planners, Local Authorities and private interests are needed.

Developing an Overall Policy Framework

The development of such a framework should take into account the need for:

- a stronger empirical base including indicators of change in key resources of organisations, enterprises and communities (data);
- a better understanding of how various interventions and initiatives can assist public goals (policy mainstreaming and applied research);
- initiatives which assist communities, groups and individuals to participate more effectively in society including voluntary effort, political activity and shared responsibility (practical application); and
- improvement on how public administration is carried out with regard to mutual respect, inclusion and adaptation of provision to specific needs (quality of public governance and administration).

Perhaps the greatest contribution the Government and the social partners can make to investment in social capital is through actions that encourage social inclusion, fairness, transparency and equality of opportunity. It is also evident that the development of social infrastructure from education, health and welfare to employment and training support are needed to provide crucial supports in an era when traditional forms of family and local neighbourhood social capital are weaker. The State can never substitute entirely for these other forms of social capital. But, it has an important role to play through a proactive and enabling process in partnership with a mobilised and empowered civil society.

A compendium of the Report's key policy recommendations is set out in the schedule overleaf.

Compendium of Key Policy Recommendations

(The reference numbers are to corresponding paragraphs in the Report)

<i>Measuring Social Capital</i>	<i>Key Agencies/actors</i>
5.29/9.8 Link indicators of social capital to measures of poverty, social exclusion and inequality in line with the recommendations in the NESF <i>Framework on Equality</i> Report.	CSO and various Government Departments including DFAS and CRAG.
5.30 Develop (a) a module on Social Capital for application in various household surveys including the <i>Quarterly National Household Survey</i> ; (b) a limited core of questions on Social Capital for use in various surveys at national level; and (c) contribute to international comparative work in this area.	CSO and National Statistics Board.
5.32 Develop community surveys involving local communities, intermediary bodies, area-based partnerships and public authorities to measure the level and distribution of social capital at local level.	Partnerships, Local Authorities, local communities, research bodies.
<i>Mainstreaming Social Capital</i>	
6.20 Mainstream social capital dimensions in public programmes, service delivery and policy statements – “impact statements” provide one possible approach.	Various Government Departments and public agencies.
6.22 Promote the integration, co-ordination and active involvement of all citizens (irrespective of social position, ethnicity, etc.), through the County/City Development Board process and other means in the delivery and planning of public services.	CDBs, Local Authorities, various public agencies and local communities.

Compendium of Key Policy Recommendations *(continued)*

(The reference numbers are to corresponding paragraphs in the Report)

<i>Enhancing Active Citizenship and Community Development</i>	
7.10 Implement – on the basis of agreed timetables and targets – the Government White Paper on <i>Supporting Voluntary Activity</i> , including the establishment of <i>Voluntary Activity Units</i> in relevant Government Departments.	CRAG, other Departments and Local Authorities.
7.10 Implement – again on the basis of agreed timetables and targets – the recommendations of the <i>National Committee on Volunteering</i> including the establishment of a National Centre for Volunteering and a network of local volunteer centres.	CRAG, Local Authorities, local communities, volunteering groups.
7.12 Encourage initiatives at local level to increase voter registration, education, political awareness and turnout.	DELG, Local Authorities and local community groups.
7.17 Support the work of the <i>Community and Voluntary Fora</i> and <i>County Development Boards</i> to engage citizens, especially young people and other groups at risk of alienation from politics and civic engagement, and broaden the representative base of the Fora and Boards.	DELG, CDBs and local community groups.
4.40 Increase support for research on social capital, including extent and impact of Community and Voluntary activity.	CRAG, DES and HEA.
7.53 Provide public support for local-based Information and Communications Technology and other local media (e.g. community notice boards, community Time Banks etc.) to facilitate exchange of information, volunteering and mutual help and use e-Government and the New Connections Programme to better connect communities and public service providers.	CRAG, CDBs and Local Authorities.
7.54 Pilot new policy-learning innovations at local level – e.g. community time banks, deliberative polling, youth parliaments, etc	CRAG/Local Authorities/local communities.

Compendium of Key Policy Recommendations *(continued)*

(The reference numbers are to corresponding paragraphs in the Report)

<i>More Flexible Working Arrangements</i>	
8.18 Develop local and specific workplace partnerships and arrangements to enhance trust and engagement in the workplace and provide greater flexibility to facilitate voluntary caring outside the workplace.	DETE, other Departments, IBEC, ICTU and public agencies.
5.31 Develop a national <i>time-use survey</i> to measure progress in equality of access to childcare, training and parental leave as well as provide a more general view of how time is spent in work, commuting, caring, volunteering, education, etc.	CSO, Government Departments, Social Partners.
<i>Opening up Lifelong Learning</i>	
8.21 Support greater involvement of parents, communities and voluntary organisations in the life of schools – through family-community-school-teacher partnerships and use of existing schemes such as the Home-School-Community liaison scheme.	DES, local communities, DSAF and other public agencies.
8.25 Encourage better use of local publicly-funded schools at primary and second levels at evenings, weekends and holidays as meeting places for local youth and community activities and meetings.	DES, CDBs and Social Partners.
8.26 Promote links between youth voluntary organisations, youth parliaments, Comhairle na nÓg, local voluntary youth councils and schools; support for student councils in schools and promote links with youth organisations.	DES, National Children’s Office, CDBs and local communities and partnerships.
8.27 Extend links between schools and communities in support of active and service-based learning in schools (Leaving Certificate Applied Programme, Transition Year or Civic, Personal and Social Education) and extend community-based programmes to Junior Cycle.	DES, NCCA and local communities.

Compendium of Key Policy Recommendations *(continued)*

(The reference numbers are to corresponding paragraphs in the Report)

8.30	Develop local-based adult learning centres, learning networks and initiatives to assist those alienated from formal educational settings and develop targeted supports in association with local communities.	DES, FÁS, VECs, local communities and partnerships.
8.32	Strengthen community and business links to institutions of further and higher education (e.g. service learning) through distance education, outreach centres, accreditation of community learning and access to courses and facilities.	DES, HEA, various public agencies and Social Partners.
<i>Managing Space for Social Engagement and Sustainable Communities</i>		
8.51	Incorporate social capital dimensions in the design and layout of the built environment.	DELG and Local Authorities.
8.56	Support public transport and other alternatives to the car. Informal car-pool arrangements as well as measures to provide incentives for alternatives to city or town centre parking (e.g. “park-and-ride” facilities and safe-cycle provision) should be considered.	DOT and Local Authorities.
<i>Joining-up Government and Communities</i>		
9.10	Facilitate strategic thinking and response on the inter-connected areas of active citizenship, community development, work-life balance, community learning and spatial strategy.	Various public bodies and agencies.
9.11	A lead Department needs to be designated by the Government to co-ordinate strategic thinking and policy design in relation to social capital.	Government.
<i>Acronyms:</i>		
CDBs: County/City Development Boards; CRAG: Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs; CSO: Central Statistics Office; DELG: Department of the Environment and Local Government; DES: Department of Education and Science; DETE: Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment; DFAS: Department of Family and Social Affairs; DOT: Department of Transport; FÁS: Foras Áiseanna Saothair ; HEA: Higher Education Authority; IBEC: Irish Business and Employers Confederation; ICTU: Irish Congress of Trade Unions; NCCA: National Council for Curriculum and Assessment; NSB: National Statistics Board; VEC: Vocational Education Committees.		

Section I

Introduction

Introduction

- 1.1 Interest by the *National Economic and Social Forum* in the concept of social capital is directly related to the mandate given to it by the Government on equality and social inclusion. In the *Third Periodic Report of the National Economic and Social Forum* the link between social capital and inequality was noted:

“Given its remit from Government in relation to equality and social inclusion issues, the findings of the OECD report [The Well-Being of Nations²] are of particular interest to the Forum as regards the relationship between social capital and inequality, social fragmentation, educational development, increasing productivity in firms, and influencing the organisational culture of firms” (NESF, 2001:88).

- 1.2 With the growing national and international interest in the concept of social capital it is necessary to clarify the term and its implications for public policy and community practice in Ireland. Following a decision of the Forum’s Management Committee, a NESF Project Team was set up in May 2002 to advance the work and produce this Report. A full list of Team members is provided in Annex IV. The Terms-of-Reference are contained in Box 1.1, below. As part of the project, the Forum Secretariat commissioned a special survey of social capital in August, 2002³.

Box 1.1

Terms-of-Reference of the NESF Project on Social Capital

- 1 *clarify the concept and use of “social capital” in policy discussions;*
- 2 *situate the debate on social capital in an Irish context and set of policy concerns;*
- 3 *identify a limited range of priority socio-economic issues to be addressed; and*
- 4 *provide a set of policy options or recommendations based on a process of consultation and review of existing evidence.*

- 1.3 An early version of the Report was discussed at a Plenary Meeting of the Forum on 23 September, 2002. Following up on this as well as subsequent discussions and comments by members of the Forum’s Project Team and Management Committee, a revised draft was prepared by the Team. The Team would like to thank all contributors to the Report.

2 *The Well-Being of Nations: The Role of Human and Social Capital*, (OECD, 2001a).

3 Details of the survey questionnaire are available on request. The Survey was undertaken by the *Economic and Social Research Institute* as a module in the monthly *European Consumers Survey*.

- 1.4 At the outset, the Forum welcomes the commitment by the Government to strengthen the knowledge base for more effective public policy support in the area of social capital. *The Agreed Programme for Government* (Fianna Fáil and Progressive Democrats, 2002), under the heading of “Building an Inclusive Society”, states:

“We will fund an ambitious programme of data gathering on social indicators, including consistent poverty and social capital, to ensure that policies are developed on the basis of sound information. We will work to promote social capital in all parts of Irish life through a combination of research and ensuring that public activity supports the development of social capital, particularly on a local community level”.

- 1.5 A key aim of the *National Anti-Poverty Strategy* is to “develop social capital – particularly for disadvantaged communities”. Applied research suggests that disadvantaged communities may perform very differently in response to public programmes and services (Fahey, 1999). This may arise from crucial differences in local community capacity and leadership, as well as norms of behaviour. In the *NESF Strategic Policy Framework for Equality Issues* (NESF, 2002a), poverty and inequality are viewed from the standpoint of various dimensions and barriers that are embedded in the attitudes, powerful networks, structures and discriminatory practices in our society.
- 1.6 Other agencies have noted the potential of social capital as a concept to inform policy debate. The *National Economic and Social Council*, in its recent strategy report, referred to the work of the Forum on social capital which it saw as linking with the social partnership agenda along with the *Strategic Management Initiative* in the public service and reform of local government (NESC, 2002: 58). *The National Competitiveness Council* has examined links between social capital and competitiveness and included indicators of social capital in its *Annual Competitiveness Report* (Forfás, 2002: 40). The *Institute of Public Health in Ireland* (IPH) is also exploring the issue of social capital and public health. Social capital is also emerging in debates in areas such as active citizenship, spatial strategy, transport and physical planning.
- 1.7 The present examination of the policy implications of social capital by the Forum is potentially significant and unique by international standards in so far as it involves a national-level social partnership process as well as a dialogue on its practical application to public policy design, both at national and local development levels. Following earlier work by the World Bank on the role of social capital in poverty reduction in developing countries, the *Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development* (OECD) commenced work on social capital, as part of its work on human capital and lifelong learning, towards the end of the 1990s. OECD is presently working with member countries in developing new measures of social capital for international comparison.

- 1.8 Concepts such as active citizenship and its connection to social solidarity and cohesion are also emerging in debates within the European Union. The European Commission has been examining the policy implications of human and social capital in the knowledge society of an enlarged European Union. At the end of 2002, the Danish Presidency of the European Union invited Member States to cooperate at international level in dialogue with the US authorities in arriving at policy-relevant measures of social capital. More recently, the Commission has called for a Tripartite Social Summit for Growth and Employment with a focus on a wide range of issues relevant to the European Social Agenda, including the role of human and social capital. The Commission commented that *“Social partnership and social dialogue play a crucial role here by reducing actors’ uncertainty about the behaviour of others. In this sense they contribute to social capital”* (European Commission, 2003:25).
- 1.9 The Sections of this Report are structured according to the Terms of Reference of the project. Sections I through VI “clarify the concept and use of social capital in policy discussions” and “situate the debate on social capital in an Irish context and set of policy concerns”. Sections VII through IX “identify a limited range of priority socio-economic issues to be addressed” and “provide a set of policy options or recommendations based on a process of consultation and review of existing evidence”.

Section II

Why Social Capital?

Why Social Capital?

Introduction

- 2.1 Associational life, social trust and the quality of public governance are linked. The international evidence reported in OECD (2001a) and elsewhere suggests that communities, regions and nation states which enjoy a high level of associational life and civic participation tend to sustain higher levels of co-operation, trust and efficiency of Government.
- 2.2 This Section addresses the contextual setting for the Forum's Report under a number of headings:
- Irish society in transition;
 - the emerging shared values of a society based on active citizenship, pluralism and solidarity; and
 - the importance of community development in relation to social capital.

Irish Society in Transition

- 2.3 Communities have various types of resources. Alongside investment in roads, high-technology and physical capital, investment in human skills and knowledge is important. The latter is frequently referred to as human capital in the sense that investments in human creativity and skill can generate economic wealth and human well-being. Social capital is an additional resource. It refers to the social ties, shared norms and relationships among people and communities. It acts like a social glue or lubricating agent in association with other forms of resources.
- 2.4 There are important changes taking place in Irish society which impact on these shared norms and relationships. These include:
- pressure on people's time and quality of life (e.g. dual-career families, childcare, commuting time and house prices);
 - an ageing society in which inter-generational support and transfer of resources and caring will be critical;
 - an increasingly diverse society in terms of beliefs, aspirations, identity and needs; and
 - the new economic and social realities where the capacity to think, co-operate and adapt to new opportunities will be a critical resource for survival and progress.

- 2.5 A key challenge will be the development of opportunities and incentives for different groups to work together effectively for the common good. This will require a broader and deeper level of debate about the sort of society we want to develop – taking account of the diversity of norms, values and beliefs and identifying participatory mechanisms and shared values for a more cohesive society.
- 2.6 Some of the traditional sources of social capital such as families, extended families, faith-based communities and many of the large-scale national voluntary, sporting and cultural organisations are undergoing rapid change. Some of the traditional ties and forms of belonging are weakening, while new forms of social engagement are emerging. Some of the empirical evidence around these issues will be considered in Section IV below.
- 2.7 A feature of social change is the often-expressed view that there is a growing sense of disconnection from others and a lack of common purpose and values (see Box 2.1 below). These comments are often expressed in the context of rising levels of reported crime, drug addiction and youth suicide – especially among young men – or in the belief of a ‘*mé féin*’ or self-interested approach to living and engagement. In the absence of solid evidence over time, a claim of generalised decline in civic and moral standards – whether in public or political life or in family or civil society is difficult to substantiate. Certainly, the speed of economic and social change as well as instances of declining standards in political and religious institutions have left many people bewildered, lonely, frustrated and feeling disempowered or let down.

Box 2.1 Recent Social Trends

“He thought increased prosperity was a “part of the puzzle” to explain the increased cocaine use, ‘but there’s also a sense that people are lost, directionless, without good emotional infrastructure”, reported comment made by Mr Stephen Rowan, Director of the Rutland Centre in Knocklyon, Dublin on the large increase in cocaine addiction among middle class youth (Irish Times, 13 June 2002).

- 2.8 Inter-related changes in the economy, society and culture – such as increased working time, urban sprawl and the prevalence of materialist values – can undermine some forms of social engagement. On the other hand, recent economic and social change may open up new forms of social interaction and solidarity. Perceived declines in social capital should not necessarily be associated with a moral panic. As in other countries, individuals may be less inclined to offer allegiance to a uniform and detailed set of values or to engage in traditional mass civil society organisations (OECD, 2001a). Rather, they are more likely to engage on their own terms and in conformity with shared values within a specific setting or community identity (Halpern, 2003).

- 2.9 The Guinness UDV Ireland *Quality of Life in Ireland* Report published in 2002⁴ showed that 57% of individuals, in 2001, said that they would use any extra time to “enjoy themselves more”, compared to 26% who said that they would use it to “help a good cause”. By contrast, an identical question asked in a survey in 1989 showed a reverse picture with 30% saying that they would use extra time for enjoying themselves compared to 39% who would use it to help a good cause. It is difficult to draw any general conclusion from data elements such as these, however, given the different economic and social environment in the 1980s.
- 2.10 Economic growth cannot be an end in itself (see Box 2.2). The rapid increases in living standards, employment and levels of education and health over recent decades have provided a basis for a higher quality of life. However, a rising tide does not raise all boats – at least not to the same degree – and beyond certain levels, higher living standards are likely to have less impact on happiness and well-being than at earlier stages of economic development. Attention to issues of equity and social connection is, therefore, all the more timely given the evidence cited in Section IV below on the contribution of social capital to well-being.

Box 2.2 Prosperity, Anxiety and Opportunity

“The deepest anxieties of this prosperous age concern the erosion of our families, the fragmenting of our communities, and the challenge of keeping our integrity intact. These anxieties are no less part and parcel of the emerging economy than are its enormous benefits; the wealth, the innovations, the new chances and choices.”

Former US Secretary of Labour, Professor Robert Reich (Reich, 2002).

- 2.11 Public policy does not seek to intrude into the moral choices and values of individuals beyond what is appropriate for the common good. Neither can it make social capital happen. However, it can provide an enabling environment in which individuals and communities can act together to achieve social change. A sense of hope and belief in the capacity of communities, especially those which are marginal or excluded, to effect desirable change can be facilitated by leadership at the local level and supportive approaches on the part of public agencies and other interests.

4 http://www.amarach.com/study_rep_downloads/guinness_qol_report.pdf

Values of pluralism and social solidarity

- 2.12 The fundamental transformations in our society in recent years have paralleled a growing international openness in economic trade, ideas, culture and movement of people. There is a new confidence and sense of empowerment and less deference to traditional authority or “all-encompassing” value systems. Individual freedom of thought and self-expression have a higher value than before.
- 2.13 Balancing rights with responsibilities and self-reliance underlies the idea of active citizenship. A set of principles for *active and inclusive citizenship* can provide a useful values-framework for a discussion of social capital. The age-old values of equality, liberty and fraternity have resonance here (Honohan, 2002). These principles refer to (see O’Ferrall, 2000):
- the interdependence of all human beings based on values of mutual support and participation in pursuit of the common good;
 - the fullest civic liberty of each citizen;
 - equality of treatment and opportunity;
 - the promotion of an ethic of care and justice;
 - the development of laws and widely accepted norms through inclusive public participation, debate and consensus; and
 - celebration and acknowledgement of good civic behaviour.
- 2.14 Lack of recognition, respect and status are fundamental barriers to the achievement of equality and social cohesion based on trust and co-operation. This goes to the heart of *what* the Government, the social partners and other groups in society do and *how* they do their business.
- 2.15 The NESF *Strategic Policy Framework for Equality Issues*, (NESF, 2002a), has put in place a set of criteria for evaluating the various aspects of social equality (see Box 2.3). That Report calls for policies to enhance social capital for groups encountering disadvantage or exclusion under each of the nine recognised areas of equality under our recent Equality legislation. This present Report builds on that Framework by seeking to identify some of the obstacles and opportunities for addressing equality and social inclusion.

Box 2.3 The Four Equality Objectives of the NESF

“The Forum recommends that four equality objectives, which are directly interlinked, should be established as the foundation pillars for the Strategic Framework for action on equality. These are:

- 1. Redistribution, that is, the maximisation of human welfare and the sharing of benefits equally;*
- 2. Recognition, that is the according of visibility and value to diversity;*
- 3. Representation, that is the maximisation of participation of those experiencing inequality in decision-making; and*
- 4. Respect, that is maximising opportunities to value the interdependence and mutual support aspects of human welfare.”*

(Source: Strategic Policy Framework for Equality Issues, NESF, 2002a: 25).

Community Development and Social Capital

2.16 There are many approaches to defining and applying the concept of community development. These will be discussed later in this Report. Two key considerations in its link to social capital are:

- the potential for the many existing models of community development to generate networks based on trust and shared values; and
- the role of social networks and norms in fostering particular types of community development.

2.17 Community development is an important context for applying social capital in Ireland. However, it is not the only one as social capital also relates to a wider range of issues including public governance, corporate social responsibility, work-life balance and other areas. Section VII will examine further the policy implications in applying social capital through various models of community development.

Conclusions

2.18 The discussion in this Section has referred to social capital as a potentially useful concept and tool for policy purposes in Ireland at this time. These relate to:

- *social values and equality* – providing an environment for individuals and communities to achieve social change;
- *role of community development* – and its contribution to public welfare and social cohesion;
- *contemporary active citizenship* which requires new impetus and expression at a time of significant societal change and transition; the challenge remains to translate this into an active citizenship based on a more clearly defined set of rights, opportunities and responsibilities;
- *public-private-voluntary partnerships* and their contribution to releasing new civic and community energy especially in relation to care and social services in the community; no one actor can do it all;
- *quality of public governance and public sector reform* where the requirement to become more “place- and people-specific and deeply grounded in local needs and circumstances” (Stewart-Weeks, 2000: 291) is likely to grow; and
- *social partnership process* which has provided an institutional setting to accommodate the views, capacities and needs of the various stakeholders.

Section III

What is Social Capital?

What is Social Capital?

Introduction

3.1 In terms of skills and knowledge, human capital is held by individuals and can help generate well-being, income and norms of co-operation. By contrast, social capital is held by communities and societies. There are different approaches to defining, measuring and applying the concept. It is not proposed to address these in detail in this Section. The reader is referred to the references in Annex II of this Report, including the review of the international evidence and thinking in this area by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 2001a)⁵. The aim of this Section is to describe, briefly, some of the key aspects of the concept and its potential application in an Irish policy context. The main issues are:

- What do we mean by social capital?
- What are its key dimensions (volunteering, community development, etc.)?
- What differences are there in types of social engagement (bonding, bridging, linking)?

Defining the Concept

3.2 Early users of the term included writers such as James Coleman (1990), Pierre Bourdieu (1986), Francis Fukuyama and Robert Putnam who emphasised the role of *social networks, trust, norms and sanctions* in facilitating collective action⁶. Fukuyama focuses on the role of trust as a key mediating factor in lowering “transaction costs” in communities and enterprises and enabling people to work together more effectively (Fukuyama, 1995). A definition adopted in a recent OECD report, *The Well-Being of Nations*, is:

“networks together with shared norms, values and understandings that facilitate co-operation within or among groups” (OECD, 2001a: 41).

3.3 The above definition provides a flexible and broad definition of social capital that draws attention to social connections as community resources, whether in regions, neighbourhoods, enterprises, families and community and voluntary associations. For a practical and “user-friendly” example of how the term is used at a local level in the Cork County Development Board, see Box 3.1.

5 The special website of the World Bank also contains many articles and links to research and literature on social capital: <http://www.worldbank.org/poverty/scapital>.

6 However, the roots of the term go back to 19th and 20th Century writers in political economy and sociology (see Farr, 2003).

Box 3.1 A Definition of Social Capital

“The concept of social capital sounds abstract, but it couldn’t be simpler; do you trust people? How many clubs, societies or social groups are you a member of? If your child gets sick do you have support to call on? Basically how much social contact do you have in your life? These social ties, according to research will help you live longer and are probably worth money to the economy.”

Cork County Development Board

[http://www.cdbcorkco.ie/aboutus\(march02\)_seminar.htm](http://www.cdbcorkco.ie/aboutus(march02)_seminar.htm)

- 3.4 The OECD definition of social capital is also compatible with a policy approach which focuses on social inequality and exclusion. Viewing social capital as a group resource, it is possible that certain individuals and groups are *excluded* from social networks of the advantaged or powerful elites. “Not-in-my-back-yard”, NIMBY, behaviour is also manifested in closed social groups. Similarly, innovation, enterprise and reaching-out to individuals and groups beyond one’s immediate network may be impeded. Hence, social capital can be used as a resource to *strengthen* community belonging and engagement on the part of the disadvantaged as well as a resource which can be used *against* them.
- 3.5 The NESF *Strategic Framework on Equality Issues* has noted that:
- “One of the factors that makes economic inequality so destructive is the potential it offers those who are economically powerful to easily and visibly convert money (economic capital) into other valued forms of capital. Those with most economic capital are best positioned to acquire cultural capital such as formal education but also work-related learning or social capital, such as valuable social networks a fact that further reinforces their dominance (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1977; Woolcock, 2000). Through gaining the combination of social and cultural capital those with most economic capital are also best positioned to exercise political power (Phillips, 1999)”*
- 3.6 Closely associated with the term social capital is the notion of community development – which itself admits of many different approaches and definitions. Community development can draw on active citizenship to become authentically the property of those who reside in communities – whether geographic or interest/identity-based. A broad concept of active citizenship relates to all members of society including those who are presently excluded on grounds of ethnicity, social position or other identities.

3.7 Social capital is a set of resources inherent in communities, networks and relationships. By contrast, community development describes a process and outcome arising from a whole range of community-level resources. In that sense, community development *does* or functions with a set of human, social, institutional and environmental resources. Development may refer to communities which are geographically-based, or dispersed communities of shared interest or identity. Social capital – seen as the property of specific communities – can assist community development. At the same time, community development can increase the quality and extent of social ties and trust in a two-way flow.

Different Dimensions of Social Capital

3.8 There are a number of inter-related and overlapping dimensions associated with social capital:

- *Community engagement* – various types of social networks and volunteering effort;
- *Community efficacy* – a shared sense of empowerment and capacity to effect change at the community level;
- *Volunteering* – defined in the recent Government White Paper, *Framework for Supporting Voluntary Activity*, as: “the commitment of time and energy, for the benefit of society, local communities, individuals outside the immediate family, the environment or other causes. Voluntary activities are undertaken of a person’s own free will, without payment” (Government of Ireland 2000a: 83)⁷;
- *Political participation* – patterns of active citizen engagement, voting etc.;
- *Informal social support networks* including their structure, density, size and composition by age, class, gender, ethnicity etc. (e.g. who knows who);
- *Informal sociability* – regularity of social contact with others (speaking, visiting, writing, emailing);
- *Norms of trust and reciprocity* – mutual “credits”, expectations and obligations as well as sanctions on opportunistic or anti-social behaviour (also understood as the formal or informal social “rules” that guide how network members behave towards each other); and
- *Trust in institutions* (public, corporate, voluntary).

7 A similar definition is used by Donoghue (2001): “both individual and group activities engaged in the selfless or altruistic acts benefiting individuals outside the immediate self or family network”.

- 3.9 At the core of the concept of social capital are social networks and the information, knowledge, values and control that flow through them. Social networks rest on mutual obligations and expectations as well as norms and sanctions. The capacity of any group to sanction behaviour as well as prescribe appropriate social behaviour is important. In neighbourhoods or communities where people act or watch out for each other there is a built-in brake on anti-social behaviour.
- 3.10 A *narrow definition* of social capital emphasises the role of social networks and associated norms of behaviour (e.g. propensity to co-operate, volunteer or reciprocate in social networks of various types). This would be consistent with the approach taken by Robert Putnam and others⁸.
- 3.11 Slightly *broader definitions* would include social norms and shared values which underpin behaviour and motivation (OECD, 2001a or Fukuyama, 1997). Believing that it is unacceptable to cheat, take money not belonging to oneself or treat others, especially strangers, with disrespect or violence are seen as an integral part of the context in which social norms of behaviour and co-operation work. Citizens decide to vote even when one extra vote, of itself, is most unlikely to change the overall outcome. Neighbours watch out for an elderly person living on their own or report child abuse. These, and many other examples of civic behaviour, constitute a vital and beneficial community-level resource. They are reinforced by patterns of co-operative behaviour and interaction at the community level and as well they contribute directly to civic engagement.
- 3.12 Some understandings go still further by including various types of social institutions in a broad understanding of social capital and social capabilities including the rule of law, conflict-mediation structures and institutions of public governance (Ritzen, 2001). The approach taken in OECD (2001a:13) is to refer to “political, institutional and legal arrangements” as “the rules and institutions in which human and social capital work”. The role of the State and public policy remains crucial to the impact of human and social capital. However, we need to distinguish between the role of legal structures and programmes of public action on the one hand, and the role of various types of networks and social norms which underpin and complement these.
- 3.13 The advantage of a somewhat “narrow” definition of social capital is that it lends itself to easier application and generalisation in empirical models of research and policy analysis. However, considerations of cultural and institutional context make it difficult to apply the concept as a universal and culture-free property against a background of different types of communities and underlying value systems and meanings.

8 Putnam has defined social capital as “features of social organization such as networks, norms, and social trust that facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit”, (1995: 67). However, in more recent writings, Putnam has located trust as an outcome of social capital which he understands to refer to as social networks and associated norms of reciprocity (see Woolcock, 2000).

- 3.14 Hence, the importance of culture and institutional context needs to be taken on board – especially for the purposes of a policy approach which is sensitive to local, and even idiosyncratic, features of communities. Rather than seek definitional purity or precision in measurement, a pragmatic approach to applying social capital in any given circumstances and compatible with the experience of actual communities on the ground is called for.
- 3.15 Frequently, the notion of social capital is confused with simply “doing good” or any type of meritorious volunteering. It is important to draw attention to the following crucial distinctions:
- social capital refers to *all* types of social contact and norms – it is not merely giving, caring or positive social action in support of others;
 - “narrow” and “broad” definitions are not mutually exclusive – “broad” definitions simply include more than “narrow” definitions;
 - social capital refers to cumulative resources in the form of networks and mutual obligations – it is not to be confused with possible (beneficial) *outcomes* such as social harmony or quality of life;
 - social capital does not refer exclusively to those aspects of social contact which have economic or monetary value – it is capital to the extent that it can generate benefits of various kinds *over time* including personal health and well-being.
- 3.16 In summary, the term social capital implies that networks, social ties and mutual obligations have a dual function:
- they are accumulated or acquired *over time* and can be drawn upon and used in a way that produces personal, economic and social gain *over time*; and
 - they are shared or group resources and therefore potentially constitute a *social* resource.

Bonding, Bridging and Linking

- 3.17 An important distinction is frequently made, for analytical purposes, between the following types of social networks:
- bonding;
 - bridging; and
 - linking.

- 3.18 “Bonding” occurs more frequently in families or other relatively more “alike” groups. Bonding social capital can provide important emotional, personal and health-related benefits to its members through close ties and support (*for getting by in life*). Bonding typically arises in connections among families or specific ethnic or kinship-based groups. It might also arise within a particular social group bound together by shared identities, interests and place of residence. Bonding social capital is not necessarily negative or exclusive of groups who are not alike. However, in some cases, it excludes others from the “club” or “circle of trust” and mutual support.
- 3.19 “Bridging” social capital connects different types of people and groups (e.g. ethnic, social, gender, political or regional) and can be particularly effective for people seeking social and economic gain beyond their immediate society (*for getting on in life*). This type of social capital arises when associations and connections are made across social, geographical or strong “identity” lines.
- 3.20 “Linking” connects groups and individuals to others in a different social position (e.g. more powerful or socially advantaged). In an Irish context, examples of this form of social connection are in the area-based partnerships and other intermediary structures which effectively link local groups and individuals with statutory and public agencies.
- 3.21 Too much bonding and too little bridging can stifle and restrict personal initiative and innovation. Too much bridging and too little bonding can leave individuals personally vulnerable. On the other hand, insufficient linking social capital can leave specific social groups isolated from the centres of power and influence necessary for realisation of their rights and interests. A deficiency of both bridging and linking social capital among ethnic minorities leaves them exposed to continuing marginalisation and disempowerment. Hence, a mix of bonding, bridging and linking social capital is desirable. A key challenge, however, is to promote the best possible balance between different types of social engagement as well as the inclusion of disadvantaged groups.

Conclusions

- 3.22 Social capital is defined as networks together with shared norms, values and understandings that facilitate co-operation within or among groups. Properly applied and developed, it can play a role of leverage in linking to public agencies, bridging across to other disadvantaged groups and bonding in terms of developing crucial community-level supports and mutual care at local level. However, social capital is but one resource, among others, which can be used in support of community development and social inclusion.

Section IV

What is the Impact of Social Capital?

What is the Impact of Social Capital?

Introduction

4.1 There is a growing body of evidence at international level on the impact of social capital. Much of this has built on previous research in diverse areas such as public health, schooling and business innovation. The principal levels where the impact is analysed are:

- micro-level (individual/family/friends);
- intermediate-level (neighbourhood/community of identity); and
- macro-level (region/Local Authority area/national/international).

4.2 Following preliminary observations on the underlying causal mechanisms and relationships, the discussion in this Section is organised under the following headings:

- poverty and social exclusion;
- quality of governance and civic engagement;
- personal well-being, health and life satisfaction;
- job search;
- economic performance;
- standards of achievement in school/adult literacy; and
- crime and social deviance.

The Causal Mechanisms

4.3 As with many areas of social analysis, the pathways of causation and linkage are difficult to prove. Many factors are at work in shaping people's civic behaviour and community engagement. In addressing those which influence learning behaviour, for example, a range of factors are relevant including the quality of home environment, the standard of teaching, the example of peers, etc. Disentangling the impact of any one factor is very difficult.

- 4.4 The level of aggregation is also important. The research evidence on social capital spans a range of levels from interpersonal interactions through neighbourhood effects up to the macro-level societal level. Neighbourhood social capital is, however, more than the sum of social capital in the individuals or households within an area. Although analytical distinctions are useful to understand the connection between these, it is not possible to entirely separate out any one level.
- 4.5 Accounting for all types of social connection is also difficult. For example, informal social networks and contact through chance conversations, unstructured social contact and unplanned initiative and reciprocity all play their role in the process of social capital formation and its impact. The quality of relationships and detailed organisational and community practice may also be as important as the number of civic organisations or memberships in a given society.
- 4.6 In the literature, social capital is frequently described as the unintended consequence of engagement in various social networks and associated attitudes to co-operation and give-and-take. Engaging in sports and other aspects of social life, for example, can be significant by way of building mutual acquaintance, trust and reciprocity which can have important “spillover” effects in other areas including education, the local economy, public health, etc. Accounting for the potential complementary impact of social capital in association with other factors would require a very extensive set of measurement tools and research methodologies which go beyond any one research discipline or set of data sources. Nevertheless, the available research evidence reviewed in OECD (2001a) and elsewhere suggests important linkages (especially at the micro-level) to personal well-being or health, as the following sub-Sections will show.

Poverty and Social Exclusion

- 4.7 There is a likely link between social capital and socio-economic inequality at the macro-level. Knack (1999) finds a positive correlation, for example, between equality of income and trust at the cross-country level. The evidence suggests that countries and regions which achieve higher levels of social equality (such as in Scandinavia) tend to experience higher levels of trust, voluntary effort and civic engagement. In turn, countries and regions with high levels of trust and civic engagement tend to be more equal in terms of income, adult literacy and access to further learning (OECD, 2001a:56). Moreover evidence from the International Adult Literacy Survey (OECD and Statistics Canada, 2000) indicates a positive cross-country relationship between the degree of adult literacy, community engagement and trust (see Table A.4 in Annex 1).

- 4.8 One possible explanation for a positive relationship between social capital and equality is that greater equality of condition and opportunity facilitate co-operation through a lowering of barriers and greater contact and trust between different social groups. However, the reverse may also be true and the *direction* of causation needs to be explored further.
- 4.9 Rather than viewing social capital as a separate influence on poverty and other social outcomes, it is likely that some of its impact is indirect through the way it modifies or mediates the impact of poverty. Analysis of income distribution and health at State level in the United States suggests that inequality matters more than average income for health outcomes (Kawachi, Kennedy and Glass, 1999). Using cross-country and other data, these findings are supported by Wilkinson (1996). He emphasises the links between social inequality and health and claims that the greater the extent of social inequality together with a sense of personal or community disempowerment, the higher the incidence of ill-health. Inequality, distance from power and wealth, declining social institutions and growing anxiety are related to poor health outcomes in the aggregate, according to this view.
- 4.10 However, Lynch et al. (2001) warn against “overly simplistic interpretations of the links among social capital, economic development, public policy and health”. According to these critics, the limited conceptualisation and empirical evidence, which social capital is based on, calls for caution.

Quality of Public Governance and Civic Engagement

- 4.11 There is a likely connecting thread from some types of informal social networks to formal associational life to the quality of public governance. Interactions among people in these groups and organisations create horizontal networks of civic engagement that help participants to act collectively in a way that has an impact on community efficacy. For example, people who know each other through residents associations, parent-teacher meetings, school runs, sporting organisations and other forms of social contact are more likely to take an interest in their local communities and society more generally. It is also possible, of course, that the direction of causation runs in the opposite direction: interest and civic engagement has a spin-off in terms of greater informal social contact.
- 4.12 Empirical work by various political scientists including Robert Putnam in respect of Italy and the United States (Putnam, 1993 and 2000), has indicated a link between membership of community and voluntary associations, trust and active political engagement and interest. Citizens learn civic behaviour and attitudes in an active associational and community life. Putnam draws attention to the way hierarchical forms of social organisation such as in the South of Italy were less conducive to social trust and effective government. In his view, this could be linked, in part, to the inheritance of a hierarchical form of Roman Catholicism and associated social life. However, the nature and practice of public governance also impacts on associational life.

4.13 These findings echo other studies in the United States, Russia, Hungary and Germany. In the case of the latter, Cusack (1999) reports that municipalities in Germany with lower levels of conflict and higher levels of social trust were associated with higher ratings of Government performance. Boix and Posner (1996) suggest a number of ways that social capital might influence the quality of public governance:

- Citizens tend to be more civic-minded and co-operative;
- Citizens act as sophisticated and vigilant consumers of politics; and
- Public officials reflect the same facilitating skills as other citizens in a high-trust/high-associational society.

4.14 Social capital may be higher in cultures that are based on greater equality and less rigid and strongly hierarchical social structures. In hierarchical cultures, it is difficult to build trust outside immediate family or similarly-bonded groups and social distance between different groups is magnified. In these circumstances, it may also be more difficult to establish consensus to sustain higher levels of public social provision and welfare.

Personal Well-being, Health and Life Satisfaction

4.15 Evidence on possible macro-level links were discussed above (paragraphs 4.8 and 4.9). Other levels of analysis relate to the individual or intermediate (community/neighbourhood/organisational) levels. The relationship between socio-economic status (not to be confused with social capital) and health is well-documented. The findings are based on purchasing power (from income), knowledge power (from education) and employment power (from prestige and control). In addition to these, insights from psycho-social research have come to the fore and refocused attention on the role of *social ties* and *norms* as potentially important mediating factors in influencing the impact of income, education and social status on physical health and mental well-being.

4.16 There is a long tradition of research, internationally, which has established a link between the incidence of suicide and the degree to which individuals have a sense of belonging to the community (Durkheim, 1897). Rates of suicide have generally increased in periods of rapid social change when the fabric of society was under strain. Perversely, rates have tended to fall during periods of war or revolution – possibly suggesting the impact of national crises on community solidarity and purposeful collective action.

- 4.17 The psychological literature which spans more than three decades of work, confirms the association, at the micro level, between supportive relationships and mental health (e.g. Brown and Harris, 1978). Elderly people living alone and without friends or relatives have a relatively greater risk of developing dementia or Alzheimer's disease, other factors being constant. A survey carried out by the Stockholm Gerontology Research Centre showed that, among other factors, an extensive social network protects against dementia (Fratiglioni et al., 2000). The importance of satisfying contact with others, especially immediate family and children was highlighted. This seemed to slow the growth in dementia, even if the contact was relatively infrequent.
- 4.18 *The All-Ireland Social Capital and Health Survey, 2001* (Balanda and Wilde, 2003) of the Institute of Public Health included a number of statistical measures of health and life satisfaction at the individual or neighbourhood level. In a forthcoming publication of the Institute, multivariate modelling will confirm the very important role of socio-economic factors and lifestyle behaviours in health. These same models also show that people's views about their local physical and social environment had a significant independent effect. A person's social contacts, whether or not they trusted most of his/her neighbours, whether or not he/she felt that he/she lived in an efficacious neighbourhood, and his/her perceptions of the services in the local area, all play a significant role in their health and life satisfaction. The consistency of these findings across a range of measures (including general health, satisfaction with health, limiting long term illness, general mental health and quality of life) highlights the potential importance of local social capital in health.
- 4.19 Berkman and Glass (2000) found that survival rates following major surgery or illness in later life are strongly predicted by marital status and the presence of close confiding relationships. If "bonding" social capital tends to be associated with getting by in life "with a little help" from family and friends, then, in an appropriate mix it may prove to be relatively more significant for health than "bridging" social capital.
- 4.20 Similarly, there is a link between a sense of personal control over one's work and health. A study of the British civil service ("The Whitehall Study") over a ten-year period found that death rates from cardio-vascular disease were lowest in the administrative and managerial grades and highest in the lowest grade (Stansfeld et al., 1999). Those in higher grades felt more in control of their work and better supported by friends and colleagues so that, although their lives appeared more stressful, they were better able to cope. They reported more hobbies and interests outside work.

4.21 Some possible reasons for the link between social capital and health, discussed in OECD (2001a) include the following⁹:

- social networks furnish tangible assistance and care which reduce psychic and physical stress; and
- social capital may trigger a physiological mechanism stimulating individuals' immune systems to fight disease and buffer stress.

Job Search

4.22 In addressing social exclusion and long-term unemployment, the issue of access to diverse social networks assumes increased importance for disadvantaged groups. More important than the number of social connections available to individuals, successful job search may be more related to the quality and range of networks that an individual can draw and rely on. Lack of employment opportunity has a strong negative impact on personal self-esteem, social connection and access to valuable social networks, especially bridging social capital.

4.23 The importance, for job search, of networks of friends and personal contacts – especially those that cross locality and social class boundaries – has been reported (Perri 6, 1997). Patterns of informal sociability differ for various social groups. In the case of socially disadvantaged groups, contacts are likely to revolve more around close family contacts and a small set of friends and associates. By contrast, social interaction for other groups is likely to be more extensive and diverse. Consequently the latter is likely to be more significant when it comes to social advancement and employment search.

4.24 Hall (1999) has found that individuals from middle-class backgrounds are likely to join new associations at more frequent intervals, accumulate more memberships over their lifetimes, and join diverse and extensive social networks. Those from working-class backgrounds, on the contrary, tended to join fewer associations, often associated with specific tasks, and stayed in them for longer periods of time.

9 For further discussion of the literature on the impact of social capital on health, see Szreter and Woolcock (2002).

Economic Performance

- 4.25 Enterprises and organisations can benefit from norms of co-operative trust embodied in various types of intra-firm or inter-firm networks. Trust underwrites transactions whether they are private, social, economic or political in nature. It has many dimensions including a belief in the good intentions of others as well as their competence and reliability in delivering on promises or agreements. Reputation, familiarity and informal sanctions can complement the role of formal contracts and legal sanctions. However, “transaction costs” increase when lengthy negotiations and costly norm-enforcing mechanisms have to be put in place.
- 4.26 Knowledge is frequently referred to as the key productive asset in the new economy. Organisational culture and networks, including the way in which internal, tacit knowledge is harnessed and communicated, can constitute important intangible resources for performance. In the pressure to compete and search out new ideas and new talent, networks based on trust and sharing of information externally can also assume competitive importance.
- 4.27 In developing the capacity and competence of an organisation, greater stress has been placed in management studies on the value of relationships and group identity. Workers in firms and enterprises who feel that they are part of the organisation and share its goals and values are more likely to contribute more effectively (Cohen and Prusak, 2001). “Learning organisations” are supported by a sharing and dissemination of professional and practitioner knowledge and experience.
- 4.28 A clustering of industries and diverse networks can yield benefits by way of chance friendships, contacts and acquaintances. Network links among suppliers, customers and researchers generates a flow of knowledge and, at the same time, reinforces norms of behaviour. Hence, regional industrial systems based on local learning networks are potentially more flexible and dynamic than those where learning is confined to individual firms. Landry, Amara and Lamari (2000) report from a survey of manufacturing firms in Canada that diverse forms of social capital in companies contribute more than any other explanatory variable to the likelihood of radical innovation.
- 4.29 Finally, at a macro-economic level, the international evidence suggests a link between levels of interpersonal trust and economic growth (Knack and Keefer, 1997 and Knack, 2001). They estimate that, over time and on average across industrial countries, a level of trust that is ten percentage points higher is associated with an annual growth rate that is 0.8 percentage points higher. However, care is needed in interpreting these results as these may also be correlated with other features of the political and social environment that are omitted from the underlying data.

Standards of Achievement in School/Adult literacy

- 4.30 The importance for learning outcomes of social networks in families and the wider community has been noted in educational research. Motivation, “learning to learn” and other essential building blocks of lifelong learning are related to the quality of engagement and normative influence of home, school, peer and neighbourhood communities. These normative and behavioural relationships impact on learning in association with teaching methods and the curriculum. Learning and teaching also impact on behaviour and attitudes and can, thereby, increase social capital.
- 4.31 A child’s early interactions with attentive, responsive and consistent primary caregivers are important for the acquisition of social and cognitive skills (McLanahan and Sandefur, 1994). Research work by Willms (2001) across Canadian provinces points to the importance of disciplinary climate, parental involvement and high expectations in raising school and literacy standards confirming work by other researchers such as James Coleman from the 1960s. Trusting relations that are learned and fostered in families can assist young people in their transition to adulthood and their full civic participation (Teachman, Paasch, and Carver, 1999).
- 4.32 Coleman argued that learning can be supported by social capital through the existence of many types of supportive relations among adults who are parents of the children in the same school (Coleman, 1990). The types of support relate to homework, out-of-school activities, and direct parental involvement in school activities and support for families and children in difficulty. Cross-national comparisons of achievement at age 15 in Mathematics and Reading in the recently-published OECD PISA study of achievement also point to the importance of home and family environment (OECD, 2001b).
- 4.33 International surveys of adult literacy and student achievement by organisations such as the OECD suggest that the responses of societies to disadvantage are an important determinant of how well they perform in terms of overall literacy. Cross-country differences in adult literacy and skill levels are greater for lower socio-economic groups. This suggests that a key element in strategies to improve overall literacy standards is the identification of the needs of the socially disadvantaged, especially those with poor access to social networks.

Crime and Social Deviance

- 4.34 Key associated variables with criminal behaviour include age (crime is higher among the young), gender (crime is higher among males), socio-economic disadvantage and urbanicity (higher in urban and working class areas). Young men in poor, urban areas are likely to be more disconnected from social networks and norms at a crucial transition stage in life. Anti-social behaviour is frequently at its greatest among young males who have weaker bonds with parents and families and have not yet formed new bonds to a family, workplace or neighbourhood of their own (Smith, 1995).
- 4.35 Counteracting crime among young males relates, in particular, to the development of skills and social ties. Family bonds, marital or long-term attachment, job stability, occupational role and commitment to education are important factors. Strong emotional support and positive affirmation early in life can underpin more trusting and socially responsible behaviour throughout life.
- 4.36 However, in cases of shortfall in emotional support and role modelling early on, it is still possible for individuals to “buck the trend” through involvement with someone who is connected to the mainstream of society (Halpern, 2003). Social norms and sanctions including expressions of self-interest and civic responsibility are important factors relating to the incidence of crime and associated forms of social deviance. The presence of strong and supportive networks in families and communities can provide significant “social control” mechanisms to sanction anti-social behaviour (as well as, unfortunately, encourage it in a few cases).
- 4.37 Understanding these “ecological effects” is important. A neighbourhood undergoing change and fast residence turnover may be more prone to “tipping” – where some families and groups move out leading to a downward spiral in social capital. The role of leadership and spontaneous self-organisation can be important in reversing a trend such as this. Research work by Sampson, Raudenbush and Earls (1997) indicates that “community efficacy” (a sense of community capacity to change things for the better) may be more important than organisational participation, neighbourhood services and kinship ties. In this respect, it is likely that social norms matter more than social networks in explaining anti-social behaviour.

Conclusions

- 4.38 The research evidence outlined in this Section suggests a generally positive gain from social networks and norms of co-operation. However, given the relative newness of the concept and the difficulty in precisely defining and measuring it for empirical research purposes, caution is needed in interpreting the results. Moreover, it is important not to interpret all types of social connection as positive for democracy or social cohesion. Compared to human, and especially physical capital, it is possible that the benefit of social capital in organisations, neighbourhoods and other communities is under-valued and under-recognised because of the difficulty in measuring and explicitly building it into existing public programmes and policies.
- 4.39 The OECD Well-Being of Nations Report (OECD, 2001a) concludes that: *“The evidence reviewed here of the benefits of access to social capital is sufficiently impressive to establish social capital as a dimension to be explored when looking at policies for dealing with poverty and social exclusion – indeed the very term social exclusion implies the denial of access to social capital”*.
- 4.40 In line with the commitments in the White Paper on Volunteering, and other commitments to research on social capital in the *Agreed Programme of Government*, the Project Team supports the development of a Research Programme which would help quantify the full extent of voluntary and community activity in Ireland and its contribution to economic and social development. This would involve Third Level institutions and other research bodies and various research-funding bodies.

Section V

A Statistical Profile of Social Capital in Ireland

A Statistical Profile of Social Capital in Ireland

Introduction

5.1 How does Ireland compare internationally on social capital? Which groups have more access, than others, to social capital? Which aspects of social capital are more unevenly distributed than others? Is social capital declining in Ireland in recent years? These are not easy questions to answer. There are many dimensions involved and it is difficult to measure all of these. The Forum commissioned a special survey in August, 2002 to take a quick picture of some key dimensions and the results of this form the main substance of this Section. Other data sources, including international, are referred to, or compared with, our results. The order of the topics followed corresponds to the principal dimensions of social capital discussed in Section III, above:

- community engagement and volunteering;
- community efficacy;
- political and civic participation;
- informal social support networks/sociability; and
- norms of trust and reciprocity.

5.2 As with all data findings, the results reported in this Section need to be treated with caution as many underlying and complex interactions are not accounted for. For example, there are strong correlations between age, housing tenure, employment status and educational attainment which can hide or exaggerate relationships between any one variable and a measure of social capital. Further analysis will be needed to tease out more fully some of these relationships. It is also important to bear in mind the various cultural and contextual conditions that influence and impact on quantitative analysis¹⁰.

5.3 Finally, some international comparisons are drawn on towards the end of the Section in order to shed some light on recent trends in Ireland as well as cross-country comparisons in the level of various dimensions of social capital.

¹⁰ For example, the meaning of questions on trust, volunteering and civic engagement can vary across different cultures – not only across countries but within countries.

Community Engagement and Volunteering

- 5.4 Table 5.1 shows the percentage of adults who are engaged in the local community, or who undertake any type of volunteering. There is a clear pattern of higher involvement for more educated groups – while controlling for age. Similar patterns of higher involvement apply in the case of household income. Together with findings from the *National College of Ireland* survey of volunteering in the mid-1990s (Ruddle and O'Connor, 1999, and Ruddle and Mulvihill, 1999), these results suggest greater community engagement and volunteering among higher socio-economic groups (although the unemployed are an exception).
- 5.5 A number of other interesting results emerge from Table 5.1. There is a lower level of engagement among the elderly (65 and more) and those who are engaged in home duties as well as those who are ill (or have a disability of some kind). Community engagement and volunteering is higher among the unemployed and average to above average for those in employment. There are no large differences between men and women, although there is a higher level of community group membership among men. The data also indicate higher levels of community engagement and volunteering in areas outside large urban conurbations (with the exception of community group membership in Dublin as shown in Column B)¹¹.
- 5.6 The overall level of community involvement or volunteering is in the region of around 20% across the whole population– consistent with the findings of the *All-Ireland Social Capital and Health Survey* of the Institute of Public Health in Ireland (Balanda and Wilde, 2003)¹². Of concern is the conclusion that approximately 80% of the population is *not* involved in local community groups or in any type of volunteering, and that this proportion is even higher for particular groups.

¹¹ Controlling for age differences in the population of each area does not alter these results.

¹² Data from the IPH survey refers to the South, only.

Table 5.1 Active Community Involvement and Volunteering

Percentage of adults, who are: (A) taking a regular part in any type of unpaid voluntary activity or service outside the home or workplace; and (B) actively involved in any type of voluntary or community group in the last 12 months

	A	B
All respondents	17.1	21.7
Gender		
Male	18.9	25.3
Female	15.4	18.4
Age category		
18-29yrs	16.9	24.8
30-39yrs	19.3	20.7
40-49yrs	22.8	25.7
50-64yrs	18.5	25.5
65+yrs	6.1	7.3
Educational attainment		
Primary level	6.3	11.0
Junior Certificate (or equivalent)	15.5	16.4
Leaving Certificate (or equivalent)	21.3	25.8
Other second level	24.1	29.5
Third level (including Institutes of Technology)	27.0	39.7
Employment status		
Unemployed	30.0	31.0
Full-time in education	19.8	24.8
At work	19.5	27.1
Retired	10.6	10.1
Domestic duties	10.5	11.0
Other/ill/disabled	11.1	11.8
Size of location/settlement		
Open countryside	19.8	26.7
Villages < 1,500 population	21.7	35.0
Towns 1,000 - < 5,000 population	21.8	21.6
Towns 5,000 - < 10,000 population	24.6	23.0
Towns 10,000+ population	10.6	12.0
Dublin (City and County)	15.3	21.4

Source: NESF Survey of Social Capital, August 2002.

5.7 The Report of the National Committee on Volunteering has remarked: “*Young men, particularly those aged under 30 are least likely to volunteer. There is also the possibility that the potential pool of volunteers amongst those who are retired is not being sufficiently tapped at present. This group has always been under-represented among volunteers and, like those who are in lower socio-economic groupings, may need to have special measures and supports targeted at them so that they are enabled to ‘hear’ the message*”. The NESF Survey indicates a somewhat lower rate of volunteering among the young (aged 18-29) compared to those in mid-life (30-49). However, these differences are not large and the prevalence of a large deficit in youth volunteering – compared to older groups – is not supported by these figures¹³.

Community Efficacy

5.8 Community efficacy refers to the capacity of a community to effect change – on the part of its members. Data from the *All-Ireland Social Capital and Health Survey*¹⁴ of the Institute of Public Health in Ireland are shown in Table 5.2. These show that community efficacy is positively related with age, level of education, ownership of accommodation and length of residence in the local area.

Political and Civic Participation

5.9 Questions were asked in the NESF Survey about the extent of participation in various forms of political or civic action. Table 5.3 indicates wide variations by type of activity measured. Whereas 64% of respondents made a voluntary donation of money to charities, schools or Churches, less than 20% attended a public meeting, joined an action group or contacted an organisation, public official or representative about some issue of concern. Gender differences tended to be limited, although men were more likely than women to have attended a public meeting. Taken with the results in Table 5.1 above, this may indicate, in part, the influence of child-minding constraints and other factors on women’s ability to take an active part in local groups or meetings.

13 These findings with respect to age are also confirmed in the NCI survey (Ruddle and Mulvihill, 1999).

14 Questions on community efficacy were not asked in the NESF Survey since they had already been addressed in the IPH Survey.

Table 5.2 Community Efficacy

Percentage of adults, who agreed with the statement: “By working together, people in my neighbourhood can influence decisions that affect the neighbourhood”

Age	**
Less than or equal to 24 years	75
25-39 years	86
40-54 years	88
55-69 years	88
70+ years	81
Educational attainment	**
No formal/primary	75
Lower Secondary level	78
Upper Secondary level	84
Third Level	78
Housing tenure	*
Owns/buying	87
Renting – private sector	77
Renting – public sector	77
Length of residence	*
0-4 years	81
5-19 years	80
20+years	87

Source: Balanda and Wilde (2003)

Note: ** significant difference across category items in this cell at the 99% confidence interval (controlling for sex and gender only).

* significant difference across category items in this cell at the 95% confidence interval (controlling for sex and gender only).

- 5.10 Differences by age indicate, as might be expected, much lower levels of activity and engagement by the elderly (apart from donations of money to charity, schools and churches). There was no marked difference in levels of civic engagement among young people (aged 18-29).
- 5.11 Differences by level of educational attainment told a different story. For example, the proportion of adult respondents with primary schooling only, who contacted a local organisation to deal with a problem was 5% compared to 18% in the case of third level graduates.

Table 5.3 Civic Engagement

Percentage of adults who, in the previous 12 months: [A] attended a public meeting; [B] joined an action group of any kind; [C] contacted an appropriate organisation to deal with a particular problem (e.g. a local County Council or residents association); [D] contacted a T.D., public official or local representative; and [E] made a voluntary donation of money e.g. to charities, school, Church

	A	B	C	D	E
All respondents	17.5	5.5	10.7	14.0	63.6
Gender					
Male	21.6	6.7	11.2	15.1	60.6
Female	13.4	4.3	10.4	13.0	66.5
Age category					
18-29yrs	15.3	7.8	9.4	11.0	51.4
30-39yrs	20.3	3.8	13.5	16.8	68.8
40-49yrs	22.8	6.5	10.2	16.7	68.1
50-64yrs	21.4	4.3	15.3	18.1	71.9
65+yrs	6.7	3.4	4.0	6.9	62.8
Educational attainment					
Primary level	13.1	3.4	5.2	8.3	65.2
Junior Certificate (or equivalent)	14.5	6.8	11.0	14.9	55.7
Leaving Certificate (or equivalent)	17.0	4.0	11.5	14.3	62.6
Other second level	21.8	6.3	12.7	21.5	69.2
Third level (including Institutes of Technology)	30.5	8.6	17.8	17.9	77.5
Employment status					
Unemployed	23.8	2.4	9.8	12.2	28.6
Full-time in education	13.0	3.0	7.1	8.1	38.0
At work	22.2	7.6	13.5	15.1	66.7
Retired	8.6	2.2	6.5	10.8	65.7
Domestic duties	10.5	2.9	6.7	14.6	71.2
Other/ill/disabled	5.9	5.9	5.9	-	76.5
Size of location/settlement					
Open countryside	21.4	5.9	12.6	17.0	65.5
Villages < 1,500 population	10.8	5.0	13.6	28.3	60.0
Towns 1,000 - < 5,000 population	24.8	5.1	8.1	12.0	63.0
Towns 5,000 - < 10,000 population	26.2	8.2	14.8	13.1	37.7
Towns 10,000+ population	9.5	5.4	5.0	8.8	56.8
Dublin (City and County)	15.7	5.1	12.9	12.9	71.2

Source: NESF Survey of Social Capital, August 2002.

- 5.12 Very sizeable differences emerged in relation to employment status. For example, 24% of the unemployed attended a public meeting in contrast to 6% for those who were ill or who had a disability.
- 5.13 Similarly, large differences emerged with respect to size of location/settlement. For example, those living in rural areas were much more likely to have attended a public meeting or contacted a local representative or public official.
- 5.14 Data on voter turnout in the last general election (May 2002) are shown in Table 5.4. The overall rate of turnout according to the sample estimate, at 75.7%, is well in excess of the true national turnout rate (62.6%). Apart from possible survey bias, over-reporting of voting behaviour is common in many surveys of voting. The NESF Survey findings also confirm those of Lyons and Sinnott (2003) that voting behaviour is lowest among the young, urban dwellers and lower socio-economic groups. The relatively high turnout results in Dublin in Table 5.4 are likely to conceal significant differences by local areas within the city and county if more detailed data were available at that level. An interesting point to note is the positive association between frequency of attendance at religious services and voter turnout (which also applies when age is controlled for).

Informal Social Support Networks/Sociability

- 5.15 Data on the extent of informal social contact are shown in Table 5.5. Just over a half of respondents had received a social visit in their own home. A similar proportion had visited someone else in their home. Some other key findings relate to: (i) the elderly are less likely to make social visits to others (but are more likely to receive); (ii) higher education graduates are more likely to visit or receive visits; (iii) the unemployed are much less likely to visit or receive visits; and (iv) respondents living in medium-sized towns (between 5,000 and 10,000 inhabitants) visit less than those in other size locations.

Table 5.4 Voter Turnout

Percentage of adults, who voted in the May 2002 general election

All respondents	75.5
<i>Gender</i>	
Male	75.5
Female	75.5
<i>Age category</i>	
18-29yrs	48.8
30-39yrs	77.3
40-49yrs	86.1
50-64yrs	90.2
65+yrs	89.6
<i>Educational attainment</i>	
Primary level	85.6
Junior Certificate (or equivalent)	74.6
Leaving Certificate (or equivalent)	63.7
Other second level	86.1
Third level (including Institutes of Technology)	80.4
<i>Employment status</i>	
Unemployed	54.8
Full-time in education	24.8
At work	78.5
Retired	94.1
Domestic duties	83.3
Other/ill/disabled	76.5
<i>Size of location/settlement</i>	
Open countryside	82.1
Villages < 1,500 population	74.6
Towns 1,000 - < 5,000 population	83.2
Towns 5,000 - < 10,000 population	55.7
Towns 10,000+ population	70.8
Dublin (City and County)	74.3
<i>Frequency of attendance at religious services</i>	
Once a week or more	85.9
A few times a year (but less than weekly)	67.0
Less frequently or never	59.2

Source: NESF Survey of Social Capital, August 2002.

Table 5.5 Informal Social Contact

Percentage of adults, who in the last 4 weeks, (A) have made a social visit to someone in their home (excluding family member or other relative), and (B) have received a social visit at home from someone (excluding family member or other relative)

	A	B
All respondents	50.2	51.6
<i>Gender</i>		
Male	47.9	49.6
Female	52.4	53.6
<i>Age category</i>		
18-29yrs	48.9	46.9
30-39yrs	55.1	51.1
40-49yrs	50.0	48.4
50-64yrs	52.5	53.2
65+yrs	44.2	62.2
<i>Educational attainment</i>		
Primary level	46.9	59.2
Junior Certificate (or equivalent)	47.9	47.3
Leaving Certificate (or equivalent)	50.2	47.9
Other second level	50.6	46.8
Third level (including Institutes of Technology)	60.8	57.9
<i>Employment status</i>		
Unemployed	19.0	11.9
Full-time in education	54.5	47.5
At work	52.6	51.1
Retired	49.6	56.7
Domestic duties	48.1	61.3
Other/ill/disabled	41.2	35.3
<i>Size of location/settlement</i>		
Open countryside	48.8	55.6
Villages < 1,500 population	53.3	53.3
Towns 1,000 - < 5,000 population	44.6	41.6
Towns 5,000 - < 10,000 population	36.1	27.9
Towns 10,000+ population	69.0	72.5
Dublin (City and County)	62.2	36.5

Source: NESF Survey of Social Capital, August 2002.

- 5.16 Social support networks can be important for various personal reasons including job search, health and well-being. Table 5.6 provides data on the proportion of adults with three or more “close friends”. “Close friends” are defined as those with whom one feels at ease, can talk to about personal matters, share a confidence or seek advice from or call upon for practical help. Apart from relatives, spouses or partners, relatives “not living at home” constitute the main source of social network support: over 60% of respondents have 3 or more “close friends” compared to 36% among work associates. Surprisingly, perhaps, no major differences in pattern arose between men and women. Young people are more likely to draw on support of “others” (who are not neighbours, work associates or relatives).
- 5.17 Once again, these findings do not account for support within families or other household members. The unemployed stand out as one of the groups with the least social support (as measured by the number of “close friends”) and the least social contact (as measured by visits at home in Table 5.5).

Norms of Trust and Reciprocity

- 5.18 As an outcome, as well as a source, of participation in community and networks, measures of interpersonal trust in various surveys are viewed as a proxy for the level of social capital in a community or among a particular group. The results of the NESF Survey question on trust, presented in Table 5.7, indicate that around one quarter of adults believe that “most people can be trusted”. This figure does not vary much across demographic or socio-economic groups. However, those who are unemployed, living in large towns other than Dublin (with a population over 10,000) as well as those with a disability or illness tend to be less trusting of others in general.

Table 5.6 Social Support Networks

Percentage of adults with 3 or more close friends (defined as people with whom one feels at ease, can talk to about personal matters, share a confidence, seek advice or call upon for practical help)

	Neighbours	Work Associates	Relatives (not living at home)
All respondents	44.9	36.0	62.4
Gender			
Male	47.3	38.0	60.5
Female	42.5	34.0	64.2
Age category			
18-29yrs	39.6	38.6	51.1
30-39yrs	45.7	34.8	68.1
40-49yrs	38.7	32.2	53.1
50-64yrs	47.9	25.4	56.4
65+yrs	56.6	4.3	64.6
Educational attainment			
Primary level	56.0	14.2	66.2
Junior Certificate (or equivalent)	43.5	20.1	57.2
Leaving Certificate (or equivalent)	42.7	31.6	58.6
Other second level	41.8	30.3	49.1
Third level (including Institutes of Technology)	33.6	35.1	59.2
Employment status			
Unemployed	44.2	25.0	41.4
Full-time in education	44.6	20.3	50.0
At work	42.9	43.4	57.4
Retired	54.9	6.2	65.3
Domestic duties	45.8	1.0	62.5
Other/ill/disabled	33.3	5.6	40.0
Size of location/settlement			
Open countryside	57.6	26.9	62.5
Villages < 1,500 population	59.3	33.9	53.3
Towns 1,000 - < 5,000 population	44.6	24.2	55.4
Towns 5,000 - < 10,000 population	38.7	27.4	63.4
Towns 10,000+ population	36.6	33.2	75.4
Dublin (City and County)	36.6	24.9	48.2

Source: NESF Survey of Social Capital, August 2002.

Table 5.7 Social Trust

Percentage of adults agreeing with various statements about the extent to which other people can be trusted (“Generally speaking, would you say that most people can be trusted or that you can’t be too careful in dealing with people or it depends on the people in question?”)

	“Most people can be trusted”	“you can’t be too careful”	“depends on the people in question”
All respondents	25.7	34.6	39.0
Gender			
Male	28.1	30.5	40.9
Female	23.9	37.7	37.5
Age category			
18-29yrs	23.2	35.5	40.4
30-39yrs	23.5	30.5	45.5
40-49yrs	20.4	35.6	43.5
50-64yrs	27.8	38.4	33.5
65+yrs	28.2	40.9	29.3
Educational attainment			
Primary level	23.3	43.8	32.4
Junior Certificate (or equivalent)	22.9	39.2	37.0
Leaving Certificate (or equivalent)	27.2	33.9	38.0
Other second level	23.5	32.7	43.2
Third level (including Institutes of Technology)	29.7	25.1	44.5
Employment status			
Unemployed	18.8	34.4	46.9
Full-time in education	44.4	26.4	27.8
At work	24.4	30.2	44.9
Retired	28.7	41.6	28.1
Domestic duties	23.4	41.5	34.3
Other/ill/disabled	13.6	50.0	36.4
Size of location/settlement			
Open countryside	26.0	28.5	45.0
Villages < 1,500 population	26.6	21.9	50.0
Towns 1,000 - < 5,000 population	29.7	32.7	37.6
Towns 5,000 - < 10,000 population	29.7	21.9	48.4
Towns 10,000+ population	17.5	45.0	37.6
Dublin (City and County)	27.7	37.7	33.0

Source: NESF Survey of Social Capital, August 2002.

Note: The columns in the above table do not sum to 100 since there was a small percentage of respondents replying as “don’t know”.

International Comparisons

5.19 Comparisons with other countries are shown in Annex I. These indicate that Ireland is about average or above average for European countries on most indicators of social capital – for example, membership of voluntary or community associations, volunteering, interpersonal trust, trust in various institutions and voter/political engagement. Informal social contact is likely to be higher in Ireland – although the evidence is very limited. As in all international comparisons, care is needed with respect to the basis of comparison, the meaning and interpretation of particular data findings given the diversity of cultures, institutions and patterns of social interaction, and the set of comparator countries chosen. Within Europe, there are large differences between Southern and Northern Europe with much higher levels of trust in Scandinavia. Ireland and the United Kingdom show medium levels in many of the comparisons. A summary of the findings in Annex I is presented in Table 5.8.

Table 5.8 Summary of International Comparisons

(Ireland with various European countries)

Dimension	Overall comparison (Ireland compared with European average)	Detail
Membership of community and voluntary associations	Above average	65% in Ireland (1999) compared to an average of 48% across 32 European countries.
Volunteering (unpaid)	Average	With above average here in sports, recreation and faith-based related activities.
Interpersonal trust	Average	Large differences internationally.
Trust in various institutions	Above average	Caution is needed as two different data sources give divergent results.
Interest and engagement in political and civic activity	Average or above	
Voter turnout	Average	Large differences internationally.
Informal social support networks/sociability	Above average	From two different data sources.

Source: Annex I.

- 5.20 International comparisons of involvement in various types of community and voluntary organisations are shown in Table 5.9 below. In addition to the more mainstream organisations, there are many new movements and groups organised around some particular shared interest, hobby or wider social concern. These range from adult education groups, women’s groups, environmental groups, self-help networks to cultural interests.
- 5.21 The most striking result in Table 5.9 is that over one quarter of Irish adults are members of a sports or recreation community or voluntary organisation compared to only just under one in six on average across 32 European countries. The proportion of Irish adults volunteering time for such organisations is 13.5% compared to only 6.6% across Europe, on average. Membership of other organisations here is about the same as the European average (except for trade unions where membership is lower here).

Trends in Social Capital in Ireland

- 5.22 Since the NESF Survey was a one-off survey, other surveys need to be drawn on to assess trends, through time, in social capital. These are described in Annex I of this Report. The overall picture which emerges is that some aspects of social capital, notably interpersonal trust and levels of election turnout, have declined in Ireland in the recent decade. These results are broadly consistent with patterns in the USA, United Kingdom and Australia (OECD, 2001a).
- 5.23 However, it is difficult to draw any definite conclusions about trends in volunteering at this point. The results shown in the National College of Ireland Survey (Ruddle and Mulvihill, 1999) suggest some decline – especially among men, lower socio-economic groups and those in mid-life (the latter possibly connected to increased pressure of working time). However, further research and data collection are needed to monitor trends as well as to focus on (i) the nature of volunteering and voluntary organisations, and (ii) the extent of difference across socio-economic, gender, employment and regional groups.

Table 5.9 Membership of Community and Voluntary Organisations*(Data are ranked by percentage of adults who are members in Ireland)*

Nature of organisation	Ireland		Average of 32 European countries	
	% of all adults who are members of these	% of all adults who do unpaid voluntary work for these	% of all adults who are members of these	% of all adults who do unpaid voluntary work for these
Sports, recreation	27.6	13.5	15.6	6.6
Religious or Church organisations	16.2	7.7	14.0	5.8
Education, arts, culture, music	10.1	4.5	9.6	4.8
Trade Unions	10.0	1.7	16.7	2.8
Professional associations	7.7	3.1	5.3	1.9
Youth work	7.1	4.7	3.8	2.9
Social welfare services	5.9	3.8	6.1	3.9
Local community action (poverty, employment, housing, racial equality)	5.6	3.6	3.0	2.0
Women's groups	4.4	2.6	2.5	1.3
Political parties/groups	4.4	1.7	4.3	1.9
Voluntary organisations on health	4.1	2.8	3.5	2.3
Conservation, environment, ecology, animal rights	2.8	0.9	4.8	1.9
Third World/human rights	2.4	1.8	3.1	1.3
Peace Movements	1.7	0.8	1.0	0.7

Source: European Values Survey, Halman (2001:18-31)

5.24 Finally, no time series data are available with respect to informal social networks or sociability. Starting from a likely high historical level, according to international comparative data cited in Annex I, it is possible that increased work pressure, commuting and other factors are beginning to impinge on patterns of social contact and network support. However, a comparison of trends over time is not possible until the data coverage in the recent surveys undertaken by the NESF and the Institute of Public Health is repeated at a future date, or a comprehensive Time-Use Survey is undertaken.

Time-Use Survey

5.25 The initiation of a Survey of Time-Use has been under consideration for a number of years¹⁵. The Central Statistics Office conducted a pilot EUROSTAT survey in the late-1990s. Further survey work would require significant funding – possibly from a range of interested agencies. It would be desirable to develop such a survey in association with policy information needs in areas such as: gender and social equality, participation in lifelong learning and volunteering.

5.26 Time-Use Surveys have been used extensively in other countries to measure the way individuals allocate their time between different activities and with whom they spend their time in any given activity. Typically, the Survey is conducted by means of a recorded diary of time spent in 10 minute lots over two 24-hour periods (e.g. weekday and weekend). Such a Survey could provide useful data across a broad range of social and economic areas including:

- energy usage research – where and how people spend their time;
- consumer behaviour – shopping time patterns;
- working time including informal work from home or in travel;
- distribution of working, caring, leisure and other time by gender, age, unemployed, etc;
- inter-culturalism (how various migrant groups spend their time and the extent to which they integrate with others);
- commuting patterns including forms of transport used;
- use of Internet and other electronic media;
- informal economic activity;
- trends in leisure time and usage; and
- participation in formal or informal learning activities.

15 Along with Luxembourg, Ireland is unique in the European Union in not having a Time-Use Survey.

Conclusions

- 5.27 A key area for policy attention is young people. From the data presented in the NESF Survey, young people are not significantly less engaged socially (volunteering, voting, trusting and socialising) than older groups. However, voting turnout is lower. A consideration in any comparisons such as these is that, apart from lifecycle differences, it is likely that some forms of social interactions among the young are poorly captured in existing survey questions on social capital. For example, young people rely more on new technology to communicate and may interact with their peers on a less formal and structured basis.
- 5.28 According to data from the IPH (Table A.3 in Annex I), groups most likely to be less socially engaged are the young, unmarried, lower socio-economic groups, city or rural dwellers and those in short-term or rented property. The NESF Survey indicates a number of areas or groups where engagement is lower:
- the elderly;
 - people living in rural and large urban centres;
 - lower socio-economic groups; and
 - those who are ill, disabled or engaged in home duties (although these results are correlated with age).

It is significant to note that the above groups are among those considered ‘hard-to-reach’ in terms of participation in learning activities by adult education policy-makers and providers. They are also the groups that appear at the bottom of the league in what are termed PET (participation in education and training) statistics.

- 5.29 The issue of data collection on social capital has already been linked to improved indicators of consistent poverty in the Agreed Programme for Government. In the future, broader measures of poverty, based not only on income and possession of essential consumer goods, but also access to various social networks could be considered. In developing a framework for social and equality statistics, it would be desirable for the Central Statistics Office and the National Statistics Board to include indicators of social capital and link these to poverty, social exclusion and inequality.
- 5.30 The Project Team recommends that the Central Statistics Office: (a) develop a module on Social Capital for application in various household surveys including the *Quarterly National Household Survey*; (b) develop a limited core of questions on Social Capital for use in various surveys at national level; and (c) contribute to international comparative work in this area.

- 5.31 The Project Team specifically supports the setting up of a national time-use survey to measure progress in equality of access to childcare, training and parental leave as well as provide a more general view of how time is spent on work, commuting, caring, volunteering, education, etc.
- 5.32 Given the likely variation in the quantity and quality of engagement at the local level, the Project Team also recommends the development, on a pilot basis, of community surveys involving local communities, intermediary bodies, area-based partnerships and public authorities to measure the level and distribution of various resources, including social capital at local level.
- 5.33 The development of *National Progress Indicators* might also draw, over time, on a wider range of relevant data on civic engagement and volunteering. As noted in Section I, above, the National Competitiveness Council is already in the process of developing indicators on social capital.
- 5.34 An important consideration in any quantitative examination of social capital is that there may be a trend towards less formal and less traditional types of engagement. “Singular focus” engagement (e.g. recreational/sporting involvement, single-issue campaigns) or more transitory commitments are likely to replace older forms of involvement. A mix of qualitative and quantitative data is needed to explore the emerging values, underlying motivation and type of voluntary engagement of individuals in a changing society. This will require more extensive work on a wider range of surveys and sources of evidence.
- 5.35 Another important area – for policy planning – which remains to be developed is the extent to which people engage with, or trust, others from different social or racial backgrounds as well as the extent to which they relate to others in different positions of power and access to resources. Accounting for bonding, bridging and linking social capital remains a challenge. These aspects will also need to be addressed, to the extent feasible, in any new data questions or survey modules.
- 5.36 Finally, there is the question of the relationships between indigenous learners and tutors with learners from other cultures. This is now beginning to be an issue in literacy schemes in further and adult learning programmes and centres and also in higher education.

Section VI

Social Capital and Public Policy

Social Capital and Public Policy

“To foster autonomous community organisations is an important step in turning around government... such communities would create a new centre of meaningful citizenship. This would require a social sector as well as the two normally recognised Public and Private sectors”
(Drucker, 1993).

Introduction

- 6.1 What can public authorities do to enhance trust, engagement and participation in decision-making? What role is there for the social partners and communities – both local and national? In this Section a number of broad principles will be considered before more specific policy responses are discussed in later Sections. The emergence of a new public policy agenda which reflects the realities of a more knowledge-driven economy and diverse society calls for review and adaptations to existing policy responses. Government can become more effective in this respect by sharing some of its role in planning, delivery and evaluation with communities or with intermediary bodies.
- 6.2 Following a discussion of this new public policy agenda, a number of key areas for policy design are discussed in this Section. These are:
- subsidiarity or de-centralisation of decision-making to the lowest level possible and the highest level necessary;
 - ownership of personal and community development by those directly engaged in the process;
 - transparency and accountability of public policy; and
 - mainstreaming of social capital in public policy.

New Public Policy Agenda

- 6.3 In the latter half of the 20th Century there have been powerful trends towards more rational, scientific and evidence-based methods of policy-making and development. Ireland has been no exception. The emphasis has been on uniformity and centralised control in many areas of public service delivery and support. As experience has shown, however, these developments now need to take into account and be balanced with greater adaptability to local circumstances and needs.

6.4 Such an approach necessitates both programmes of delivery and community participation with flexibility and local adaptation coming to the fore. One size does not fit all. A broader appreciation is needed of the complex environment in which policies operate as well as the new realities of globalisation and inter-dependence. Human skills and social contact are essential for survival and growth strategies more than ever before. Rigid, compartmentalised, hierarchical structures are less suited to the task of a reforming public service system and a renewed civil society. An emerging policy design which reflects these realities is one which gives primacy to “self-organising networks of relatively autonomous players” (Stewart-Weeks, 2000).

Ownership of Community Development

6.5 A Report of the Forum in 1995 has already drawn attention to the importance of engaging citizens in the delivery of quality public services (NESF, 1995). A recent report by the OECD has addressed the link between active citizenship and public governance. It observed that *“there are no clear institutional responsibilities for active participation in OECD countries so far. Government can help the development of active participation by a number of activities aimed to: collect good practices, raise awareness, develop guidelines for engaging with citizens”* (OECD, 2001c).

6.6 In a similar vein, in its report to the German Parliament, the Bundestag Study Commission¹⁶ on the future of civil society activities (Bundestag, 2002) commented:

“The Study Commission recommends that public authorities be made more citizen-oriented and that citizens no longer be looked upon merely as customers. They are also co-designers and co-producers of services”.

6.7 Blockages to effective policy impact may occur at the local or intermediate levels where relationships, attitudes and behaviour are critical to success. Just as the importance of global networks and markets grow, the role of local interdependence becomes more critical.

6.8 An excessive reliance on self-help and own capacity-building could mean that neighbourhoods and communities that lack the critical knowledge, social contact and internal cohesion miss out. Even where communities are successful in developing their own resources, there may be a lack of contact with wider networks. Some form of partnership and external intervention is, therefore, justified to meet these needs.

16 The Study Commission comprised eleven Members of the Bundestag and eleven experts. In its report to the Bundestag, it made a number of recommendations for public support of active civil society as well as more research in the field of civic engagement. A “Volunteering in Germany” Survey was carried out in 1999 for the first time. In its report, the Commission has advocated the setting up of a permanent commission attached to the Bundestag to monitor report and advocate on behalf of civil society participation. Further details of the Commission report are available at http://www.bundestag.de/gremien/enga/enga_stu.htm.

- 6.9 On the other hand, over-reliance on external help can undermine efforts to develop own-community strengths and resources. The right balance needs to be struck between self-help and externally-provided support. Government has an important role in this area in working with, and funding, community and voluntary interests in a way that does not displace their legitimate role and sphere of responsibility. Public agencies may not be able to directly invest in informal social networks – but can offer appropriate support and advice – and thereby harness some of the energy and dynamism of local engagement. The provision of suitable “spring boards”, incentives and signals is important.
- 6.10 Subsidiarity recognises that the main “doers” of social capital investment include a range of civil society, corporate and informal network of local actors. Any public support for social capital needs, therefore, to respect the principle of empowerment and facilitation. Too much control, social engineering or provision of external incentives could negate the very principle of an active civil society which is based on voluntary effort and support motivated by a collective desire and endeavour for the common good.
- 6.11 An effective approach is to put communities and individuals in the driving seat of change and responsibility by giving non-directive and non-intrusive support (see Box 6.1). The ultimate aim is not to control the actions of those directly engaged in community development, but rather to give them the means to discover their own solutions and strategies.

Box 6.1 Ownership of Community Development

Writing in 1951, the social psychologist, Dr Carl Rogers quotes from a memo of Clifford Shaw in 1944 about experience in a Chicago-area community project:

“Attempts to produce these changes for the community by means of ready-made institutions and programs planned, developed, financed, and managed by persons outside the community are not likely to meet with any more success in the future than they have in the past. This procedure is psychologically unsound because it places the residents of the community in an inferior position and implies serious reservations with regard to their capacities and interest in their own welfare. What is equally important is that it neglects the greatest of all assets in any community, namely the talents, energies and other human resources of the people themselves ... What is necessary, we believe, is the organization and encouragement of social self-help on a cooperative basis” (Rogers 1951:59).

Source: Cited in Ellerman, D. (2001).

Public Policy Transparency and Accountability

- 6.12 Transparency and accountability are important for rebuilding civic trust and re-engaging citizens in the context of recent public scandals. Listening to, and engaging with communities, lowers the perceived distance with decision-making as well as the costs associated with transaction and conflict (NESF, 1995). Closing the gap between the language of public policy and the needs and everyday language of people in communities is one way of building trust and voluntary engagement.
- 6.13 Changes in the way public agencies deal with individuals and groups are part of an effort to increase customer-friendly practices and modernise public services. Dealing with individuals as citizens – and not just customers – changes the role of the State as benefactor and provider to that of partner in shaping the quality of public service delivery. Respect for the individual is a primary value. The case for “active partnership” models in public service planning and delivery is made by O’Ferrall (2000) in contrast to dependent partnership models in which there is little scope for voluntary initiative and input.
- 6.14 The “Community Participation Guidelines” published here by the Health Boards Executive Group emphasise the role of effective community participation and consultation in the evaluation and implementation of the Government’s Health Strategy (Government of Ireland, 2002a). A number of different models for community involvement in framing needs and priorities are outlined in these Guidelines (Health Boards Executive, 2002). The Office for Health Management has also published a discussion paper entitled “Public and Patient Participation in Healthcare” (Office for Health Management, 2002) where participation and partnership among various stakeholders in healthcare is discussed. A common theme is that participation is not just about achieving an outcome. It is about a meaningful and real process of engaging and informing communities of health practitioners and users.
- 6.15 The roots of volunteering and giving are in shared norms and values of respect and care for others. The NESF *Strategic Policy Framework for Equality Issues* referred to the role of respect and recognition as dimensions of socio-cultural inequality. It stated that: “*relations of solidarity, care and love give people a basic sense of importance, value and belonging, a sense of being appreciated, cared for and wanted*” (NESF, 2002a:23).

6.16 The *Equality Framework* also discussed the negotiation of diversity “where the practical implications of identity and diversity are named and negotiated into policy, practice and provision” (NESF, 2002a: 24). What it describes as “the unequal distribution in relationships of love, care and solidarity with others” can have a powerful impact on participation by individuals and groups in society. The transparency, accountability and respect that authorities – political, civil, religious – demonstrate in their internal and external relationships has an important impact on trust as well as the capacity of individuals and groups to play a more active and effective role in society.

Mainstreaming Social Capital in Public Policy

6.17 “Do no harm” may be just as important, if not more, as to what Governments can do directly by investment in social capital. Accounting for the impact of any programme or policy initiative on social capital could be approached in a number of different ways through, for example:

- a formal social capital audit/policy proofing mechanism;
- development of performance indicators which measure in some limited way the contribution of a policy initiative or proposal to social capital; or
- informal acknowledgement of the importance of social capital in assessing the costs and benefits of any proposal.

6.18 In the context of new and regenerating communities, there is an opportunity to “get it right”, or at least, to build in more consciously the social capital impacts of new housing development and physical planning. “*The development of social capital in new and regenerating communities should be adopted as a core objective of social housing provision*” (Combat Poverty Agency proposals to the NESF Plenary in June 2000 on social and affordable housing and accommodation).

6.19 A number of existing proofing mechanisms already bear directly on social capital and could be considered as aspects of social capital proofing. For example, under the *National Spatial Strategy* (Government of Ireland, 2002b: 103) the stated criteria for evaluation of proposals for housing location in urban areas contain a number of “tests” including a “community test” (“Will the proposal reinforce the integrity and vitality of the local community and services that can be provided?”). Also, the Government White Paper on *Supporting Voluntary Activity* provides for the development of mechanisms in Government Departments to check the impact of existing policies and proposed developments on the Community and Voluntary sector in terms of input and implications for activities of volunteers. Likewise, Equality-, Poverty- and Rural-proofing contain elements relevant to an evaluation of the impact of policies on social capital.

6.20 The view of the Project Team is that, as part of the moves under way by the Government to develop increased effectiveness and integration between the various policy proofing measures currently in place, consideration should be given to having included in this process “impact statements” as a basis to “mainstream” social capital concerns. A number of broad areas where this could feature, if they do not so already in policy-making are:

- mechanisms to consult local communities in the decision-making process and monitoring;
- impacts on local community involvement, networks and volunteering;
- impacts on family-friendly practices in the workplace;
- connections between diverse groups (e.g. social or ethnic);
- balance between autonomous models of community development and targeted external interventions to meet specific needs;
- public accountability, openness and respect of individual rights, dignity and responsibilities; and
- provision of infrastructure (e.g. local community services, health facilities, schools, post offices, sporting facilities, meeting places).

Conclusions

6.21 The rationale in public support for social capital can be summarised as follows:

- growing awareness of its importance for a wide range of social objectives from inequality to local development;
- recognition of its potential role for achieving more equitable access to local public governance and decision-making; and
- limitation on the extent to which any one actor – public, market or voluntary can provide the necessary support for social capital in every case.

6.22 Where ordinary people still perceive a distance from effective decision-making, mechanisms should be developed to provide a greater sense of civic ownership and engagement, and public service delivery and decision-making points should be located as closely as possible to the citizen. Integration and co-ordination of services (e.g. through, for example, the County/City Development Board process) would assist in this regard as well as the development of greater consultation and partnerships in service planning and delivery. These themes will be discussed further in Section VII.

6.23 The following principles should underpin these developments:

- keep an appropriate balance between “bottom-up” and “top-down”;
- practise and foster mutual respect in public policy delivery for the individual and his/her rights;
- facilitate active citizenship based on principles of mutual help and responsibility;
- support partnerships of citizens, communities, intermediary agencies and Government;
- recognise community voluntary effort and reward achievement; and
- recognise the importance of the local and locality in addressing complex and cross-agency issues.

6.24 The remainder of this Report considers a number of more specific “policy malleable” areas. Active citizenship in the process of community development has been identified as a key cross-cutting area. This will be considered in the next Section. Other areas relating to work-life balance, lifelong learning and spatial strategy will be considered in Section VIII.

Section VII

Active Citizenship and Community Development

Active Citizenship and Community Development

Introduction

- 7.1 Identifying and valuing community resources is a first step towards making better use of them. Long-term sustainability of communities is underpinned by conserving, investing and using the shared resources inherent in those communities. Leadership, competencies and shared values are of key importance. A learning community is one which reappraises, questions and moves forward on the grounds that no one individual or group has all of the answers.
- 7.2 This Section gives examples of different aspects of community involvement and networking in Ireland. It describes a continuum from informal, unstructured networks of friends, neighbours, relatives and others to organised, local community groups and right up to more formal participation in intermediary structures between public agencies and the citizen. Parallel to a decline in some of the more traditional forms of social capital and provision of services and care, new partnerships of the public, private and voluntary sectors have come to the fore in the 1990s. These have partially filled a gap in terms of service delivery and have also drawn on the possibilities opened up by new forms of engagement and financial support from national Government and the European Union.
- 7.3 Rather than thinking of these as separate or conforming to some underlying philosophy or approach, it is helpful to evaluate the role of the actors involved. The Section addresses the following areas:
- social capital and community development;
 - encouraging community and voluntary effort;
 - participatory and representative democracy;
 - involving young people in civic life;
 - public-voluntary partnerships;
 - local area partnerships and intermediaries;
 - voluntary and community-led initiatives;
 - information and communications technology;
 - Community Time Banks; and
 - other initiatives.

Social Capital and Community Development

- 7.4 There is a wide variety in forms of associational activity ranging from single-issue and homogeneous-interest groups, at one end of the spectrum, to those that tend to “bridge” across different groups and provide a type of “social glue”. The emergence of new grassroots community groups and other types of engagement has been a feature of the changing landscape of the community and voluntary sector in recent decades. In some instances, volunteering has been evolving away from more traditional and paternalistic models towards models based on empowerment of those assisted and involved.
- 7.5 Many approaches to community development emphasise capacity development. The ability to participate more fully in society and decision-making is not equitably distributed: some groups and individuals with important human, social and economic resources have greater access to decision-making and social advantage. Hence, the focus of much community development in Ireland is in advancing the development of groups who are disadvantaged or excluded.
- 7.6 According to this view, community development is based on collective action, full participation (in the process as well as the outcomes), empowerment, innovation, quality of life and strategies to counter prejudice and discrimination. Community ownership and self-reliance are seen as critical issues. Socio-economic rights, justice, equality and inclusion are very much to the fore.
- 7.7 However, efforts to address social exclusion are not the only basis for community development. This may involve different types of groups within a shared identity or common geographical area. Indeed, an effective way in addressing social exclusion may be to strengthen cross-community links – especially those which give access by the marginalised to social networks outside their immediate area.
- 7.8 The vibrancy of the entire Community and Voluntary sector is facilitated by the engagement of many organisations from this sector in the social partnership process. Recent partnership agreements have involved the Community and Voluntary Pillar which includes a wide range of organisations such as the Community Platform of 26 participant organisations. The development of diversity within the sector has been acknowledged in the Government White Paper on *Supporting Voluntary Activity*:

“Another recent development is the emergence of The Wheel. This is a movement for groups and individuals who wish to explore ways and means in which the Community and Voluntary sector might come together in a more cohesive and meaningful way. It recognises the importance of education and training, of communications and of information technology in advancing this objective” (Government of Ireland, 2000a: 64).

7.9 Services to volunteering organisations include the work of groups such as *Volunteering Ireland* which was established from the Carmichael Centre in 2001. It

- promotes volunteering to the general public, the media and policy-makers;
- supports organisations wishing to implement good practice in their involvement of volunteers; and
- matches individuals who wish to volunteer with organisations which offer suitable volunteering opportunities.

Encouraging Community and Voluntary Effort

7.10 Enhancing opportunities, motivation and skills for volunteering remains a key challenge for all sectors of society. Following the UN *International Year of Volunteers* in 2001, various initiatives have been put in place to support the principle and practice of volunteering. The Project Team recommends the implementation – on the basis of agreed timetables and targets – of the Government *White Paper on Supporting Voluntary Activity*, including the establishment of *Voluntary Activity Units* in the relevant Departments. Recommendations for policy supports are also made in the recent report of the *National Committee on Volunteering* (2002). The Project Team urges that these should be implemented on the basis of agreed timetables and targets. Some of the key points are:

- a national policy on volunteering should be developed with specific strategies on:
 - support for volunteering activity and overcoming barriers;
 - identification of disadvantaged groups;
 - regulation and protection of volunteer and other interests;
 - promotion and “support strategies to raise awareness about the positive and diverse images of volunteering and emphasise its contribution to social capital” (NCV, 2002:108);
- establishment and funding of a national volunteering support infrastructure;
- integration of a national policy on volunteering with other social policies;
- facilitate voluntary participation in national and local partnership structures;
- provide recognition, validation and incentives for volunteering – create a Charter for Volunteers;
- support training, better management and accreditation;
- networking and exchange of knowledge at the European level;

- establishment of an independent, statutory and broadly representative National Centre for Volunteering together with an annual conference or forum;
- establishment of local volunteer centres – linked to the National Centre – across the country in association with existing structures (e.g. directors of community and enterprise) to provide support and placement for volunteers; adequate core funding from national budgets could be supplemented from other sources;
- training and awareness-raising for staff in Government agencies dealing with the Community and Voluntary sector; and
- harness information and communication technology for creating a knowledge base of voluntary activity as well as encourage volunteering behaviour.

7.11 As already mentioned, care is needed not to “crowd out” grassroots initiative, motivation and ownership of community action and service delivery. Research by Donoghue (2002) indicates that the three most commonly reported motivations for volunteering are, in order of importance: “belief in cause”, “was asked to help” and “wanted to help”. Direct approaches to encouraging voluntary effort such as financial compensation or obligatory frameworks are likely to be less effective compared to arrangements and mechanisms that put individuals and communities in the driving seat. The very nature of volunteering is that it relates to activities which are undertaken (i) freely and (ii) without pay. The trend towards professionalisation of these services may change the nature of volunteering effort. On the other hand, it can put various services on a more solidly-funded and professionally-staffed basis.

Participatory and Representative Democracy

7.12 The results of the NESF Survey, discussed in Section V above, show a very unequal pattern of voter turnout at elections. To address this, greater use could be made by community groups, public agencies and local media to encourage more civic participation and voting. Lyons and Sinnott (2003) have noted that voting tends to be lower among the young, urban residents, lower socio-economic status and the unemployed. The initiative, prior to the 2002 general election, of the South West Inner City Network in Dublin in commissioning research and producing policy proposals for increasing voter turnout is welcome¹⁷. Likewise, the URBAN community-based group in Ballyfermot undertook a voter mobilisation campaign involving leaflet drops, workshops, poster campaigns and a taxi service on polling day. Local Authorities and communities could do more to encourage initiatives such as these to increase voter registration, education, awareness and turnout.

¹⁷ The information regarding this Network and the URBAN initiative is cited in Lyons and Sinnott (2003).

7.13 A better relationship between partnership/community groups and local government (County/City Development Boards and Strategic Policy Committees) is already the subject of various initiatives. The Community and Voluntary Fora were developed in association, in many cases, with partnership companies and other local and community groups as well as with the County/City Development Boards¹⁸ (CDB) process. The CDB process invited inputs for the 34 County and City Strategies from the broad community. The work of the Fora is facilitated by the recently-appointed Community and Enterprise Development Officers (CEDOs) in each local authority area. The Fora seek to involve ordinary people in a meaningful way in the decision-making process. Some are focusing on involvement by young people and other groups at risk of alienation from politics and broader civic engagement. Examples of recent activities undertaken by the Fora are provided in Table 7.1.

7.14 These Fora comprise representatives from approximately 10,000 community groups across the country. Area-based groups and issues-based groups have been brought under the one umbrella as have community groups primarily focussed on alleviating social exclusion and other community groups such as sports, recreational, residents' groups etc. Key positive features of these Fora include:

- giving communities the right to a voice in local decision-making;
- providing local political and community representatives with an opportunity to listen to the community and report back to them;
- enabling local groups and ground-level activists to find a focus and sense of unity and dialogue; and
- providing an opportunity for the Fora to define their own identity and policy issues.

18 The County/City Development Boards (CDBs) under the provisions of the Local Government 2001 Act have responsibility for drawing up and overseeing the implementation of economic, social and cultural strategies and for the co-ordination of the activities of the bodies and interests represented by the Boards.

Table 7.1 Examples of Work by the Community and Voluntary Fora in 2002

Carlow	Production of a newsletter, website, social inclusion activities.
Cavan	Development of a community/voluntary activity database. Measures to involve young people.
Clare	Training.
Cork City	Volunteer bureau, community forum training, and network development.
Cork County	Capacity-building, seminars.
Donegal	Residential workshops, community studies programme.
Dublin City	Poster awareness campaign on anti-racism, local sports partnership research and development. Learning city review, newsletters, forum for strategic planning, enterprise focus group development.
Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown	Recruitment of a Development Officer, community facilitation.
Fingal	Research/policy papers, public debate, corporate identity, regional forum meeting.
Galway City	Community participation events, conferences – Travellers, health and community development.
Galway County	Gaeltacht/islands facilitator, Local area Fora workshops, Seminar and promotional events.
Kerry	Communicating with Fora in other counties, seminar for elected representatives. Website development.
Kildare	Strategic policy committee support groups, local area activities, team-building/residential events, multi-cultural events.
Kilkenny	Technical support for seven networks, geographical and interest group clusters.
Laois	Community seminars, capacity-building training.
Leitrim	Seminars/workshops, evaluation of the Forum's work and membership.
Limerick City	Directory of community and voluntary services in Limerick City, cluster meetings. Newsletters.
Longford	Community internet site, conferences.
Louth	Cross-border and cross-county links, policy development training.
Mayo	Training, recruitment of a support worker.
Monaghan	Volunteers drive, community supplement in local paper, lobbying and policy development skills, Youth Bill awareness.
North Tipperary	Recruitment of a development officer, training.
Offaly	Forum newsletter.
Roscommon	Diploma in community development, training, publicity.
Sligo	Enterprise management programme for community groups, research of community facilities within the County.
South Dublin	Promotional work, seminar on policy issues relevant to the South Dublin Community Platform.
South Tipperary	Recruitment of a co-ordinator.
Waterford City	Public relations and awareness raising, interpretation/translation of policy papers for asylum seekers and refugees.
Waterford County	Publications/newsletter.
Westmeath	Social inclusion measures, seminars.
Wexford	Training, facilitation, promotion.
Wicklow	Participation in County Strategic Policy Committee and County Childcare Committee.

Source: Department of Environment and Local Government.

- 7.15 New networks have been formed around the Fora in areas such as social inclusion, education, public transport, etc. The Fora could be further developed as key areas of civic engagement and connection between citizens and the various social partners and statutory agencies at local level (including, for example, the Strategic Policy Committees dealing with cross-cutting policy issues at local level).
- 7.16 More information is needed on the Fora, and local awareness needs to be raised of their potential. In this respect, the CEDO network can play a role. In common with all voluntary-based activity, they need to find creative ways to engage and retain volunteer leaders and innovators at local level and develop in partnership with statutory bodies but, at the same time, retain their own independence and identity. Resourced and facilitated, the Fora could help enhance the quality of civic engagement and impact of public services and programmes, not least in the areas of disadvantage where bridging and linking social capital need to be strengthened.
- 7.17 A review of the *Community and Voluntary* Fora is currently being carried out for the Interdepartmental Task Force on the Integration of Local Government and Local Development Systems that oversees the County/City Development Board process. The key objective of this review is to identify best practice and transfer this in a way that takes account of local circumstances. The Project Team supports the work of these Fora to engage citizens – especially young people and other groups at risk of alienation from politics and civic engagement. It urges action to achieve the broadest possible representative base for the Fora, and their development into more effective and inclusive mechanisms for civic engagement from the bottom up.
- 7.18 Another approach to greater engagement of citizens is through deliberative polls. Conventional public opinion polls take a once-off snapshot of public views, regardless of how well informed public opinion is before the poll. By contrast, deliberative polling has been used in some countries to assess changes and patterns of opinion over time as informed debate and information is used.
- 7.19 A deliberative poll is typically conducted in various stages. Following an initial poll of the national or local population, respondents are invited to take part in a deliberative poll over a period of time (for example a weekend). Then, respondents are provided with impartial briefing information prior to participation in focus groups and other meetings where alternative viewpoints are expressed. Following this, a further poll is taken to assess views. Changes in public opinion against initial reactions can be analysed in relation to the impact of how particular issues are better explained and discussed. Such polls can also reflect what a better informed public might wish policy-makers and others to do.

7.20 In a working paper of the European Commission’s Forward Studies Unit, Lebessis and Paterson (2000) discuss the gap between citizens and the European Union. They write: *“In such circumstances, therefore, public actors such as the Commission should be more ready to promote the use of ad hoc representative or consultative mechanisms on specific issues of concern such as citizens’ conferences, deliberative opinion polls, citizen’s juries, public hearings, focus groups and forums. It is more important, however, to realise that crisis situations are very frequently the result of a lack of appropriate information that other stakeholders could have readily provided, an overly narrow focus on the part of the policy process, an unwillingness on the part of experts to look beyond their immediate concerns or to admit of other viewpoints, and so on”*.

Involving Young People in Civic Life

7.21 The convening by the National Children’s Office of *Dáil na n-Óg* – or Youth Parliament – in recent years has provided an opportunity for children between the ages of 7 and 17 to participate in debates on issues of concern to them¹⁹. This has parallels to Youth Parliaments in other countries. The launching of the *National Play Policy* by the National Children’s Office is designed for children under the age of 12. The aim is to facilitate listening to their views and follow-up action. Both of these initiatives are being facilitated by Community and Enterprise Units within the Local Authorities.

7.22 More broadly, youth participation in public discussion and civic action needs to be encouraged and facilitated. This could be achieved through education-based initiatives as well as the development of mechanisms for involving young people in analysis, action and inclusion in decision-making. An extension of the Youth Parliament model as well as a greater focus on the needs of young people in the development of Community and Voluntary Fora would be helpful.

Public-Voluntary Partnerships

7.23 One option to further harness valuable local resources and energies is to develop public-voluntary partnerships for the delivery of some public services to local communities. An example of this might be in the domain of waste management where local communities could be encouraged to develop their own waste management and recycling projects. Local communities could share in the design, delivery and management of these services.

19 See <http://www.ispcc.ie/dailnanog.htm>

7.24 More facilitating and supportive structures would assist greater public engagement and active citizenship. This could extend not only to self-organised groups and associations but also to public services, consultation groups or decision-making bodies such as schools and Community and Voluntary Fora.

7.25 The *Local Authorities Estate Management Initiatives* can also make an important contribution to civic engagement in the area of sustainable community. In some local authorities, representative tenant associations deal with estate management issues such as maintenance or allocations as well as activities with a broader community impact such as youth clubs and playgroups. The Forum has already called for a partnership approach to estate management and the development of a variety of approaches and supports to encourage participation of tenants in the running of their own estates (NESF, 2000:75). The Fingal County Council Estate Management Committee web page (<http://www.fingalcoco.ie/services/housing/home.htm>) describes the potential of such partnerships in the following terms:

“There is a huge fund of energy, goodwill and civic spirit in all the Council estates and this new venture of participation by residents is already producing environmental improvements and action against anti-social activities”.

7.26 Other examples of community-based solutions might include the creation of community trusts – parks, recreation centres, etc., under local community control. However, the uneven access by various communities to resources at local or national level argues for a careful consideration of any policy option which is directed at community enhancement without safeguards and compensating mechanisms to assist those who are weakest in accessing these.

7.27 Public-voluntary agreements could also be used to provide flexible and cost-effective delivery of some social services at local level. Specifying clear roles and responsibilities with continuity of funding, evaluation and joint ownership of the delivery would provide a clearer framework for participants as well as draw on the talent and skills of the voluntary sector. Allen and Bradley (2002) suggest public-voluntary partnerships based on:

- defined, agreed and shared policy objectives;
- detailed performance measurements;
- clear medium-term commitments and security;
- clear structures or incentives to develop professional excellence and innovation; and
- adequate funding for professional development and human resources.

Local Area Partnerships and Intermediaries

- 7.28 The *Agreed Programme for Government* (2002) has specifically drawn attention to the ways that “public activity supports the development of social capital, particularly on a local community level”. The local level is a natural one in which to consider initiatives, measures and responses which strengthen network ties and tap into shared norms of co-operative behaviour. In this respect, the rise in local area partnerships, which bring together various interests and sectors of civil society, along with public service providers, represents another important community-level resource. Social cohesion through local employment generation and measures to support educational equality and community participation are key over-arching aims of these partnerships.
- 7.29 As part of the Local Development Programme, these partnerships offer the potential to facilitate a more integrated approach to problem-solving at the local level as well a more participatory approach to community development. Networking at national and regional level of local partnerships should also be facilitated through the County/City Development Boards. To be effective, such partnership arrangements need to be genuinely inclusive of all in the community as well as have the appropriate mix of local autonomy and freedom with structured official support and accountability. They also need effective leadership talent and shared experience, peer-review and learning.
- 7.30 Not all areas are served by area partnerships and of those that are, there are significant differences in levels of experience and performance. Many of the partnership arrangements are relatively new and will require time, experience and sharing of knowledge to embed them more firmly in the process of community development. Care is also needed in sharing knowledge and experience so that areas at risk of falling behind are brought along in terms of partnership best practice.
- 7.31 The *Area Development Management Ltd* (ADM) has played an important role in providing strategic supports to assist in the generation of local social capital. It has facilitated the involvement of community groups and Partnership Companies in the County/City Development Boards and supported other community capacity-building initiatives such as the County Childcare Committees.
- 7.32 Other initiatives include CLÁR (*Ceantair Laga Árd Riachtanais – High Need Disadvantaged Areas*) and RAPID (*Revitalising Areas by Planning, Investment and Development*). These have developed specially targeted investment programmes aimed at locations where “cumulative disadvantage is pervasive”. These programmes seek to address key needs in disadvantaged areas through front-loading of investment from the *National Development Plan* as well as closer co-ordination and integration in the delivery of local services. The RAPID programme, which is managed by ADM, has targeted 25 urban centres in Strand I and 20 provincial towns in Strand II. Another initiative is that of the Ballyhoura model of community development (see Box 7.1).

- 7.33 In Northern Ireland, the Rural Community Network together with Rural Support Networks represent an important form of networking, supported by public policy. They provide support for linking social capital from local groups to public authorities as well as bridging social capital in facilitating cross-community contact. They also help create stronger “bonding” social capital at the local level through community capacity-building and cohesion within particular geographical or shared interest communities.

Box 7.1 ADOPT Model of Community Development in Cork/Limerick

*ADOPT has been developed in the Ballyhoura area of North Cork and South Limerick as a model to strengthen the community sector in local development. The acronym stands for **A**udit²⁰ (area), **D**istrict²¹ selection, **O**rganisation, **P**lanning and **T**raining. Auditing involves identifying the community²² constituency and assessing its development status. District selection comprises agreeing suitable centres for provision of services in education, health, economic, employment and other services, agreeing what constitutes the district and establishing the organisational mechanisms for clients of these services to participate in their development. Organisation, Planning and Training are identified as precursors for individuals, groups and communities to actively participate in the local development process. The model is the result of an intensive action research study in the area. The researchers included academics²³, community activists and local development professionals²⁴.*

- 7.34 The *European Union Local Social Capital Intermediary Structures Programme* was piloted in Limerick and Cork along with 29 other locations in 12 Member States of the European Union under Article 6 of the European Social Fund. In each case, a non-Governmental organisation was responsible as an intermediary for channelling financial assistance to projects. The PAUL partnership in Limerick along with West Limerick Resources and Ballyhoura Development were responsible for implementing the programme through the payment of micro-grants (€10,000 for each approved project) to individuals, groups or networks in support of local employment creation or social cohesion. Discussions are currently taking place with a view to mainstreaming the programme at national level under the auspices of FÁS.

20 Area in this model refers to the local area represented by the 29 County Councils and 5 City Boroughs.

21 District refers to a sub-local area level represented by services centres and the communities they serve.

22 Parish or sub-parish.

23 From communications by Dr Pat Gibbons, Department of Rural Development and Agribusiness, UCD.

24 Development officers of Ballyhoura Development Ltd.

- 7.35 Local authorities also play an important role in supporting community initiatives. For example, two pilot community projects are run by the Galway County Council. One project has been set up in Kinvarra and a pilot rural regeneration project in Eyrecourt (both in County Galway). Both projects serve to strengthen relationships across different sectors of the community as well as facilitate access to resources in statutory agencies. A strategic vision has been developed in each case with an emphasis on a consensus vision of local community. *“Knowing your neighbours, creating a sense of optimism for the future, having a safe and friendly place for children, building community spirit are the types of issues and recurrent themes articulated by local people engaging in the process”²⁵.*
- 7.36 Galway County Council is seeking to improve the effectiveness of its own programme delivery and local services through partnerships with the local community. In the case of the Eyrecourt Pilot Project, the Council is working with a representative local steering group in designing a number of projects including, for example, participation in the National Children’s Day through organised activity for children in the locality.

Voluntary and Community-led Initiatives

- 7.37 There are many examples of long-established organisations and networks which support social capital at local level (see Box 7.2). Many of these are organised around local sporting and recreational activities. Other types of volunteering relate to faith-based or charity organisations, some of which have developed in the direction of engagement around social justice issues. Closely allied to sport is the role of pride of place as a motivation for local engagement. According to the European Values Survey (Halman, 2001), 72% of respondents in Ireland said that they would be prepared to do something to improve the conditions of people in their neighbourhood or community. This finding contrasts with 50% on average across 32 European countries. This augurs well for the potential to engage more people in volunteering and local endeavour, provided the right mechanisms, incentives and opportunities are created.
- 7.38 Citizenship advice and mentoring also offer possibilities for facilitating deeper civic engagement at the local level. Too often, opportunities for engagement are missed even though they are only a telephone call or a mouse click away. Information technology could be used in this respect. Information centres, visible volunteer centres and community time banks can both inform as well as remind citizens of available services, opportunities for volunteering and possibilities for linking up with other groups.

25 Communication by Ms. Eimear Dolan, Galway County Council.

- 7.39 Mentoring can also be effective in economic development and business start-up. Experienced mentors from local businesses or communities sometimes referred to as “Business Angels” can play a role in facilitating, advising and coaching new business start-ups. Mentoring could also extend to school-based learning activities (see Section VIII above). Local Authorities might give consideration to supporting such networks.

Box 7.2 A Self-Organised Community Development Initiative

Parents Alone Resource Centre (PARC) in Coolock, Dublin, was founded in 1986 by a group of concerned professionals/statutory agencies in the area. The group received support from the Combat Poverty Agency. From the outset, the founding group agreed that a resource/support centre would be established but that lone parents themselves would eventually run the Centre. Its ethos remains that of self-help. There are a number of programmes for lone parents at the Centre including: Night Art, Young Mother’s Programme and a Drop in Information/Advice Service. It also provides full and part-time childcare for local lone parents.

In 1994, the Centre, along with 24 other groups, helped set up OPEN – One Parent Exchange and Network. The Network is now made up of over 75 local lone parent groups across the country. Central to the ethos of the Network is that lone parents themselves organise in order to bring about policy change which will transform their lives²⁶.

Information and Communications Technology

- 7.40 The impact of media, especially TV, new mass communications and the Internet, on social capital remains uncertain. There is evidence from the USA and elsewhere that some aspects of TV-watching and uses of the Internet are highly negative with respect to socially engaged attitudes and behaviour (Putnam, 2000). On the other hand, new technology, if used properly, can connect people, facilitate learning and widen possibilities for social participation.
- 7.41 New and existing information and communications technology has the potential to increase the connection between various communities and individuals. However, they do not offer a panacea. Such media are more likely to strengthen social capital to the extent that they build on existing patterns of social contact and acquaintance. Virtual community cannot simply create real community; nor can it substitute entirely for it.

26 From information provided by Ms Frances Byrne, OPEN.

- 7.42 It can also offset the disadvantages associated with remoteness and restricted mobility. The *New Connections Programme* is an important initiative of Government to address e-inclusion – the capacity, skill and access to IT for disadvantaged communities and areas (Government of Ireland, 2002c).
- 7.43 Another initiative is that of the *Community Application of Information Technology* (CAIT) which is illustrative of a broader possibility of linking libraries, adult education and new technology in support of social capital. The potential of extending community connections through IT-based community “connectivity” is worth developing. In particular, it is possible to connect:
- individuals and communities that are geographically dispersed (rural, or nationally-dispersed interest or identity groups);
 - communities separated by social differences (for example work-rich and work-poor households); and
 - households and individuals living in close proximity (through, for example, electronic community Time Banks).
- 7.44 The use of new technology through local bulletin boards, discussion fora, e-mail exchange lists, etc., to inform, exchange and connect depends on widespread access to such technology as well as the presence of skills and capacity. However, some measure of initial trust and shared understandings is necessary for the effective working of new technology in supporting social capital.
- 7.45 More conventional forms of communication such as local radio can also be used to develop social capital. For example, the innovation in local radio around the creation of Raidió na Gaeltachta in 1971 had the effect of connecting very different Irish-speaking communities that were dispersed and disconnected by reasons of distance and dialect.

Community Time Banks

- 7.46 A potentially useful example of social capital in action is provided by Community Time Banks. These have been developed in many countries (notably USA, UK, Netherlands, Japan, Canada but also in a number of intermediate developing countries in South America). These are schemes which involve the giving of non-monetary credit to volunteers based on the number of hours they contribute. Such credits can be exchanged for other services in kind. One hour of time is the basic currency among members of a Time Bank. No money changes hands. Everyone’s time has equal value.

- 7.47 Time Banks are similar to *Local Economic Trading Systems* (LETS). These originated in Canada in the 1980s in an area of high unemployment. It was found that people who were out of work enjoyed being able to carry on using their skills in the community. In addition they were able to receive other services or goods in return, which they would otherwise not have been able to afford. A number of LETS schemes are already in operation in Ireland.²⁷
- 7.48 Time Banks or LETS are typically low-cost, high-trust transactions. They involve some degree of prior trust and, possibly, community sanction for non-compliance with an implicit agreement. Donations of community time can be “banked” and turned into a form of capital for the development of communities – with the difference that, unlike most forms of financial capital, community time is “of the community” as well as “for the community”. Such schemes can also open up opportunities for sections of the community to become involved in various types of activity. For example, the elderly, retired or more experienced can be drawn into community exchange in a way that draws on their knowledge and experience.
- 7.49 A key benefit could be the promotion of equality (one hour of giving has the same transaction value), inclusion (all are welcome to join), mutual help (reciprocity and not just one-way charity), personal well-being and self-worth (based on the notion that each person without exception has skills and talents to contribute) and self-reliance (identifying both resources and needs at the individual and community-levels).
- 7.50 Various trial schemes and pilots have been implemented in other countries including, for example, the *Islington Street Project* in the UK. In the latter case, the benefits were more by way of incidental informal social interactions rather than the ingenuity of information technology itself (Aldridge and Halpern, 2002). The largest community Time Bank in the United Kingdom involves 130 people while in the United States a scheme in St Louis involves more than 12,000 people. There are approximately 25 schemes in the United Kingdom with at least 14 under development often with some form of Government support.
- 7.51 An example of community Time Banks in action is provided by a pilot scheme in Glounthane, County Cork. There the local Community Association and the local partnership company, East Cork Area Development Limited, have provided seed money for a local innovation focussed on encouraging mutual help through a sharing of time, effort and skills in the community Time Bank. The aim is to increase local social connections and involvement so that the maximum number of people can benefit from living in a more caring and vibrant community. Over 200 group activities and projects have been identified as part of the Time Bank. The potential value of this resource is estimated at around 20,000 hours, possibly equivalent in market terms to €500,000.

27 See <http://www.westcorkweb.ie/lets/index.html>

- 7.52 The principle of the initiative is to “*share a little and gain a lot, on your own terms, when it suits you and on the basis that you have something to offer and something to gain*”. Initially individuals might ‘bank’ 1% of their time – say 20 hours a year – in their community, on activities of particular interest to them. A computerised and confidential database debit/credit system is in place with the work of a Community Facilitator. This encourages ‘give and take’, so that nobody need feel that they are being patronised if they are helped in any way.²⁸
- 7.53 It would be worth exploring whether such projects could be developed on a trial basis here. They could also serve to link different local communities and disadvantaged groups. If such schemes proved successful on a local basis, they should be extended to other parts of the country²⁹. The Project Team recommends that local-based Information and Communications Technology and other local media (e.g. community noticeboards, community Time Banks, etc.) be developed by local communities with public support, where necessary. It recommends the use of e-Government and the *New Connections Programme* to better connect communities and public service providers.
- 7.54 The Team also recommends that new learning innovations at local level be piloted at local level – e.g. community Time Banks, deliberative polling, youth parliaments, etc. with the involvement of local partnerships, community groups, local authorities and community and voluntary fora.

Other Initiatives

- 7.55 Previous work at the Forum has drawn attention to the need for re-integration of former prisoners into the community with co-ordinated responses to open up new social and employment opportunities for individuals (NESF, 2002b). Examples of such measures include the *Connect Programme* in Mountjoy and Limerick prisons which seek to identify a range of resource shortfalls facing prisoners and prepare them for transition from custody to re-integration in the community after release. A major component of the Programme is vocational training. Preventive measures to counteract criminal or anti-social behaviour might include extra-curricular or team-based volunteering activities that involve and connect young people to a wider social network. A further example is that of the educational support provided by the City of Cork VEC for prisoners’ partners who felt that they were often ‘left behind’ because of the education opportunities that the men got while they were in prison.

28 The following are just a few of the projects which the Time Bank is facilitating: creative writing workshops, establishing the Facilitators Office, Resource Centre Steering Group in association with the Health Board, classical music group in association with Lyric FM, environmental clean-up involving young people, Italian and Irish language group formation, play activity areas and revitalising the Little Island Sports Complex.

29 An organised exchange of homes for holidays on a trans-national basis provides a ready-made example of informal economic exchange on a much wider basis. Such schemes have worked well on the basis of trust among relative strangers, partly because of the existence of a clear framework of agreed rules and sanctions.

- 7.56 Participation in cultural activities, sporting events, community events, etc. are important aspects of community engagement, spirit and belonging. These are facilitated in an important way by the activities of statutory authorities and local groups. The sustainability of Irish-speaking communities, including those based in Gaeltacht areas, is an important part of the shared values and belonging of many living on this island. Measures to assist cultural identity can help generate a sense of purpose, pride and belonging in the wider community.
- 7.57 Similarly, various ethnic and other cultural minorities can find their place in a more inclusive society. Providing support for integration and linkage to other communities is important alongside respect for diversity. Social capital – especially that which bridges across and connects different groups – is highly relevant to the realisation of a more open, multi-cultural and tolerant society.

Conclusions

- 7.58 It is not always possible to scale up lessons, practical insights and applications from a local experiment or project to national level. Hence, care is needed in disseminating “best practice”. Consequently, an incremental and experimental approach, jointly-owned and tailor-made to local circumstances, offers the best approach to developing social capital at local level.
- 7.59 A strategic approach needs to be adopted to supporting areas of disadvantage. In some cases, greater attention needs to be given to building capacity in a group or community through training and other supports. In other cases, communities and neighbourhoods are better organised and networked nationally and locally. In the latter case, “bridges” to other communities could be developed as well as incentives for sharing of knowledge and expertise.
- 7.60 A key area of policy design identified here is the importance of developing approaches which build on existing community capacities and not merely the relationship between community needs and public service delivery. Policy needs to be adapted to underline the role of the *enabling* State rather than the *controlling* State.
- 7.61 From the range of initiatives, examples and models of community practice discussed in this Section, a number of important principles are suggested:
- everyone should be valued for the unique skills and experience they can bring to community development and given the opportunity to be involved if they so wish;
 - a culture of celebration of individual and community should be fostered with awards and community credits for outstanding community service;

- activities which are served by the “faithful few” need to explore new ways of encouraging others to become active and to feel welcome and part of the process;
- in supporting and assessing community needs, it is important to attend to the capacity, empowerment and unique knowledge of communities;
- trust is an important *outcome* and *ingredient* in building and sustaining communities – communities must be trusted and given the opportunities to make their own decisions;
- groups should be centrally involved in decision-making and design of their own community solutions and not be seen as merely end-user recipients of targeted aid;
- Government at local and national level along with intermediary bodies have an important role to play in supporting social capital – especially in relation to targeted support for disadvantaged groups as well as facilitation of cross-community initiatives;
- structures are needed to promote a closer partnership relationship between the State and the Community and Voluntary sector with recognition of the value and autonomous identity of all groups involved; and
- the capacity of the Community and Voluntary sector needs to be resourced at a national, regional and local level (and specifically those groups which address the nine equality grounds); the sector needs to effectively engage with the statutory sector in a mutually-beneficial way.

Section VIII

Other Areas of Specific Policy Application

Other Areas of Specific Policy Application

Introduction

8.1 Social interaction and engagement involve the use of time, learning and space. This Section addresses three areas of specific current policy interest which are relevant to these themes:

- Work-Life Balance
 - family-friendly policies
 - corporate social responsibility
 - life balance and spirituality
- Lifelong Learning
 - human and social capital
 - supportive networks for learning
 - further and higher education
- Spatial Planning
 - recent trends and pressures
 - distance from services/work/school.

8.2 Work-life Balance has been increasingly to the fore in public discussion as a result of increased pressure of working time, a booming economy in the 1990s and the strains of combining work with home life and childcare. Given the trend towards increased participation in the labour market by women, as well as the policy target in the European Social Agenda³⁰ to reach at least 60% female participation in all Member States by 2010, the provision of high-quality childcare assumes key importance.

³⁰ Adaptability (work/life/learning balance) is part of the EU Employment Action Plan along with the other three pillars – employability (social inclusion); entrepreneurship (including social economy development) and equal opportunities.

Work-Life Balance

Family-friendly Policies

- 8.3 A balanced life between work, leisure, caring and other activities is an individual and personal choice. However, economic and social circumstances force many to spend more time in traffic and at work – possibly at the expense of the quantity and quality of time with others in their families and communities.
- 8.4 Free market approaches which allow families and individuals to purchase or make their own arrangements for caring, household work etc. are likely to create further inequalities, in the absence of public supports, in access to high-quality childcare and employment networks across social groups. On the other hand, “one-size-fits-all” approaches which seek to impose a uniform set of standards and rules for working time, as well as comprehensive public provision of childcare and eldercare, are unlikely to be effective or affordable. In this regard, flexible, local and partnership-based solutions can provide a partial and complementary response.
- 8.5 There is some evidence that increased working time among women has simply added to their total working time, inclusive of household care and work (e.g. Folbre, 1994). Men have not compensated for this. Barriers to greater social contact relate to pressure of paid working time as well as that of childcare and other care, according to the data collected in the NESF Survey of Social Capital (see Table 8.1).

Table 8.1 Perceived Barriers to Greater Social Contact

Factors identified as relevant – for all those saying that they would like to meet up with family or friends more often

	Men	Women	All respondents
Lack of time due to paid work	55.1	48.3	51.7
Lack of time due to childcare responsibilities	22.1	37.5	29.9
Lack of time due to other caring responsibilities	4.7	18.0	11.5
Can't go out because of other caring responsibilities	2.3	9.1	5.7
No vehicle	6.0	18.6	12.4
Poor public transport	11.6	12.8	12.2
Problems with physical access	2.4	2.4	2.4
Too ill, sick or disabled	8.2	4.7	6.4

Source: NESF Survey of Social Capital, August 2002.

Note: There was almost no difference in the percentage of men and women respondents saying that they would like to meet up with family or friends more often (83.5% for all respondents).

- 8.6 The NESF *Equality Framework* noted the “denigration of the role of care-giving” and suggested that this could not be sustained “if the work was accorded the same status as other productive work, notably by accounting for it in the national accounts and ensuring that it is possible to derive a decent income from it” (NESF, 2002a: 23). There is a need to incorporate non-market work and caring more explicitly in policy discussions.
- 8.7 A recent survey of work-life balance conducted in four EU Member States (Fine-Davis, *et al.*, 2002) showed that significant areas of domestic and childcare tasks are very unequally shared by men and women even where both are working. Of the four countries studied (France, Italy, Denmark and Ireland), Ireland stood out as recording the highest average time for travel to work. Also, 70% of Irish parents relied on the car as the main mode of transport to work compared to 47%, 65% and 49%, respectively, in France, Italy and Denmark.
- 8.8 It is noteworthy that in a statistical analysis of the ease with which individuals were able to combine job and family life, the five factors which proved to be most significant in easing difficulties for the four countries combined were (Fine-Davis, *et al.*, 2002:174):
- shorter working week;
 - shorter partner’s commuting time;
 - availability of help with domestic responsibilities;
 - greater acceptance among colleagues of arriving late/leaving early; and
 - greater compatibility of hours worked with childcare arrangements.
- 8.9 There is little evidence that increased female labour force participation has adversely affected recent trends in volunteering. Table A.2 in Annex I shows that most of the fall in rates of volunteering in this country between 1992 and 1997-98 applied to men (down from 37% to 28% compared, respectively, to 41% and 40% for women). Using 1997-98 data, Ruddle and Mulvihill (1999) showed that volunteering varied from only 18% in the case of the unemployed to 35% for those in full-time employment, 38% for those working in the home and 52% – the highest – for those working part-time. Part-timers bucked the trend by showing an increase in rates of volunteering over this period³¹.

31 For a summary of key findings see the Report of the National Committee on Volunteering (2002).

8.10 More generally, social policies in support of families and parenting are an important means of underpinning social capital. On average, being married or in a stable relationship has been identified as an important correlate of life satisfaction and social engagement (Fahey, Hayes and Sinnott, 2003, forthcoming). Positive relationships within families can serve as important building blocks in people's lives. Fiscal and other supports such as counselling services and networks provide general support for social capital.

Corporate Social Responsibility

8.11 Social capital also arises in debates about corporate social responsibility and the links between enterprises and the wider community as well as the nature of organisations and companies as social entities where networks and shared norms have value for performance.³²

8.12 Agreed codes of corporate social responsibility can facilitate civic and family engagements through flexible arrangements and can also establish stronger bridging social capital between different groups (e.g. the business community and civil society). These codes should also extend to the public sector.

8.13 Corporate volunteering relates to the role of business in releasing staff for training or community volunteering. The possibilities for expanding these activities can also involve trade union and professional associations. *Business in the Community* was founded here in 2000 as a business-led organisation to assist companies develop innovative community involvement and improve corporate reputation and responsibility services (for further details, see its website: <http://www.bitc.ie>).

8.14 Finally, public and private agreements to hire people from disadvantaged backgrounds can enhance connections to specific communities (with benefits also to the organisation or company) as well as diversify the workforce within an organisation in terms of skills, experience and insight.

Life Balance and Spirituality

8.15 Another dimension is that of balance and harmony in one's work and living environment. Traditionally, spirituality and faith have been important parts of the inherited culture in Ireland. These were also interwoven with formal education experience against a background of relatively stable – by Western European standards – family life. However, greater individual autonomy and choice, more

³² The Three-Year Strategy of the *National Centre for Partnership and Performance* envisages that the Centre will continue to give attention to the role of relationships and team-working in the workplace of the future.

diversity and secularisation and important shifts in behaviour and attitudes have occurred here, as elsewhere. Attendance at religious services has declined in recent years and it is likely that this has led to some decline in religious-associated social contact and voluntary effort. On the other hand, newer forms of social engagement have sprung up. It is too early to say how these will impact on social capital in the aggregate and in the long-term.

- 8.16 The US academic, Robert Putnam, has listed a number of areas where a response to social capital decline in the US can be addressed (Putnam, 2000). He mentions the need for a new “great awakening” and engagement in “one or another spiritual community of meaning”. Given a renewed awareness and debate about spirituality and values in a rapidly-changing pluralist and multi-ethnic society, it is timely to acknowledge the inter-connection between these broad areas. This is an area where many actors are potentially involved. The newly-established *Céifin Institute for Insight and Initiative*,³³ among others, may be able to address some of these questions.

Lifelong Learning

Human and Social Capital

- 8.17 “Human capital” is the natural complement to “social capital”. Individuals need skills and supports to co-operate with others. Learning within as well as outside formal education settings can build a sense of community identity and responsibility. It can also draw effectively on the unique knowledge, processes, self-reflection and expertise of specific communities where individuals live – whether as families, neighbourhoods, faith-based communities, disadvantaged minorities, etc. In addition to strengthening civic norms and values, schools provide important “meeting places” for civic groups and individuals³⁴. Grassroots movements such as “Educate Together” and Gaelscoileanna provide examples of important community and family social capital around shared norms and educational goals.
- 8.18 Bonding social capital is likely to be reinforced by learning in families and other like-minded communities. This can serve to build up confidence, self-esteem and emotional balance. Bridging social capital may be facilitated by a public system of schooling which connects people to others from different backgrounds as well as “socialise” people in the ethics and shared responsibilities of the larger society. Linking social capital can be created by means of education focussed on people’s rights and responsibilities in promoting justice and inclusion (Dunne, 2002). However, education can also serve to reinforce exclusion, excessive individualism and socially disruptive forms of competition and a focus on some aspects of knowledge and learning to the exclusion of other forms.

³³ Details on the work of the Institute can be obtained at www.ceifin.com

³⁴ Early educationalists including John Dewey and others have referred to schools as potential “social or community centres”.

8.19 The key goal of lifelong learning, acknowledged in the Government White Paper on Adult Education and the Report of the Taskforce on Lifelong Learning (respectively, Government of Ireland, 2000b and 2002e) goes beyond formal education to embrace parents, learners, communities and workplaces. In the case of primary and second level education, social networks involving a large and diverse range of adults in the local community and young people can provide important resources and values conducive to more effective learning behaviour³⁵.

Supportive Networks for Learning

8.20 The involvement of parents needs to extend beyond school fundraising or help with homework to include a more proactive and participatory role in the life of the school and the surrounding community. The existing Home-School-Community liaison scheme at primary level might be broadened on a voluntary and trial basis to more schools. The Forum has already called for the development of “a ‘whole community’/local area approach to delivery of education and training services on a partnership basis and actively involving parents, schools, community groups and employers” (NESF, 2002c:4 and NESF, 1997a).

8.21 The Project Team recommends measures to provide for greater involvement by parents, communities and voluntary organisations in the life of schools – through Family-Community-School-Teacher partnerships as well as use of existing schemes such as the Home-School-Community liaison scheme which applies to designated disadvantaged schools only.

8.22 Mentoring, including career and general counselling, at a sufficiently early stage of Junior Cycle can be crucial in addressing educational and social disadvantage for young people. These supports and “scaffolding” can impart a powerful effect on school achievement and progression to adult life – allowing young people to grow increasingly independent of adult guidance and manage their own learning and progress.

8.23 There is also a place for social capital in the professional development of teaching staff. Teachers observing each other at work, reflecting and talking about what they are doing are important aspects of practitioner learning. Social capital in the community of a school can also act as a lubricant of knowledge transfer and development.

35 There is some important evidence to link early work by philosopher and educationalist, John Dewey, on active learning in a community context, with the thinking and practical innovations sponsored by Lyda Hanifan who followed Dewey in applying the term social capital in the USA at the beginning of the 20th Century (see Farr, 2003).

- 8.24 Applied and group problem-solving learning can have greater long-term impact on behaviour and attitudes than more traditional citizenship education based exclusively on the transfer of knowledge and facts³⁶. The content and context of the learning process are also important for laying the basis for long-term civic awareness, shared values and responsibility for others (Sacks, 1997). An example is the *Civic Link Programme* facilitated by Cooperation Ireland with young people on a North-South basis. These projects serve a triple purpose of (i) embedding cross-curricular learning in community projects and civic action; (ii) establishing links and networks between different communities on the island of Ireland; and (iii) fostering greater awareness and understanding of civic responsibility and potential to act collectively for positive social change. The potential of social capital for addressing cross-community relations on the island of Ireland should be acknowledged more.
- 8.25 The Project Team recommends greater use of local publicly-funded schools at primary and second levels at evenings, weekends and holidays to provide a meeting space for local youth and community activities and meetings.
- 8.26 The Project Team supports stronger linkage between youth voluntary organisations, Youth Parliaments, *Comhairle na nÓg*, local voluntary youth councils and schools as well as support for Student Councils in schools as a way of encouraging young people to play an active role in community and voluntary activity as part of their on-going learning experience.
- 8.27 The Project Team supports the extension of links between schools and communities in support of active and service-based learning in schools (Leaving Certificate Applied Programme, Transition Year or Civic, Personal and Social Education). Consideration should also be given to the extension of more community-based programmes to the Junior Cycle. However, the pressures of part-time working on full-time students at second and third level – especially where it is poorly linked to learning or community development experience – are a matter of concern.
- 8.28 The role of adult education and learning networks is also important. In other countries, this has taken various forms including, for example, “study circles” in Sweden involving a very high proportion of the entire adult population and workers’ education associations in the United Kingdom. In Ireland, there has been a significant growth in women’s education groups at local level which has strengthened self-confidence, a variety of skills and also social networking. Also, schemes such as the Vocational Training Opportunities Scheme (VTOS) for unemployed adults testify the crucial importance to success in adult learning of social capital in the sense of support from co-learners, tutors, family, friends and neighbours (Keogh and Downes, 1998). The same is true of adult participants in community education and of mature students in higher education.

36 “Tell me and I forget; Show me and I remember; Let me do and I understand” (Confucius).

- 8.29 Accrediting experience in the community as well as providing suitable premises and other supports and new ways of incorporating community knowledge need to be explored. Standardised, classroom-based assessment and accreditation of learning outcomes need to be adapted to reflect this. Schools and other educational and training institutions could evolve towards more community-friendly environments facilitating activities and courses which enhance community capacity and establish outreach to specific communities. Credits for learning in community service could be recorded in the learning portfolios of individuals.
- 8.30 Finally, education and training provide opportunities for the formation of area-based or national learning partnerships involving individual learners, community and voluntary associations and businesses. For example, the North Dublin Development Coalition (NorDubCo) in association with the area-based partnerships, local institutions of higher education and a Local Authority facilitate a learning network on the northside of Dublin. The Project Team supports the development of similar local-based learning networks, adult learning centres and initiatives to assist those alienated from formal educational settings. Targeted interventions need to work with local communities.

Further and Higher Education

- 8.31 “Bridging social capital” can be an important outcome, among others, for young people in further or higher education. However, access to higher education remains highly unequal by social background. Addressing this is important in improving access to wider social capital for all groups. Voluntary schemes to provide more opportunities for disadvantaged youths to spend time with others outside their immediate community to learn new skills in a new environment, establish social contact, etc. could be developed. Other opportunities are provided by student and staff exchange programmes – including cross-national programmes at EU level such as *SOCRATES*.
- 8.32 For those in colleges of further education in the VEC sector or in higher education institutions, greater recourse to “service learning” and community-based credits built into the learning programme could help to widen the learning experience of students as well as enhance education-community links to the benefit of many outside specific disciplinary communities. Recent innovations around service learning in the Dublin Institute of Technology as well as the *Community Knowledge Initiative* at NUI Galway are welcome and could act as models for similar application elsewhere. The Project Team recommends a strengthening of community and business links to institutions of further and higher education through distance education, outreach centres, accreditation of community learning and access to courses and facilities. Linkage of volunteering, learning and applied knowledge should be promoted through a series of pilot schemes.

Spatial Planning

Recent Trends and Pressures

- 8.33 The publication of the *National Spatial Strategy* in 2002 (see Box 8.1) represents an important step in terms of consultation with key stakeholders as well as identification of needs for sustainable and balanced development across the regions. Sustainable well-being requires investment in key resources – natural, human, social and institutional. Changes in the various forms of “capital” including the built environment can undermine long-term sustainability if sufficient attention is not paid to the quality of investment and renewal in key areas.
- 8.34 The potential of neighbourhoods or larger geographical entities is defined in the *Strategy* as “*the capacity that an area possesses, or could in future possess, for development, arising from its endowment of natural resources, population, labour, its economic and social capital, infrastructure and its location relative to markets*” (Government of Ireland, 2002b: 12).

Box 8.1 National Spatial Strategy

The Strategy outlines four main themes in regional spatial planning:

- (1) *Frameworks for spatial planning of cities around the country and their catchments must be developed and implemented.* This involves addressing the planning issues for metropolitan and hinterland areas of cities in an integrated way. Cities and surrounding counties must put in place sustainable and public transport-centred settlement and development strategies within the planning system to support continued progress and competitiveness into the future.
- (2) *The county town and large town structure must be strengthened.* This will be achieved through regional and county level settlement and planning policies. These should support the towns, as both generators of business activity and delivery points for the key services that people need if they are to continue living in or be drawn to a particular area.
- (3) *A renewed emphasis is needed on the potential role of the small town and village structure.* This can be achieved through public and private investment in essential services such as water services and the use of local authority powers to tackle blockages in the supply of development land. It will also be important to improve the attractiveness of towns and villages through community and other activities such as urban and village renewal schemes and urban design initiatives by local authorities.
- (4) *Key rural assets must be protected and the local potential of rural areas developed.* This will be achieved through identifying, conserving and developing on a sustainable basis the various types and combinations of economic strengths of rural areas, with the support of appropriate levels of infrastructure provision.

Source: Government of Ireland (2002b).

- 8.35 The rapid growth in cities and towns as well as the emergence of new forms of housing settlement in rural areas places a strain on existing infrastructure. According to the background research conducted for the National Spatial Strategy (2002b), over the past five years approximately one in three new houses have been built in rural areas. These are mainly single-site developments in open countryside. The growth in dormitory towns and villages in areas close to the major urban growth centres arises from pressure on land and housing prices in the larger urban areas.
- 8.36 People who spend the bulk of their time working and commuting have less time to engage locally. Added to this, counties in the border areas, midlands and West continue to encounter demographic and social decline which places strain on the structure and viability of local services and needs. Urban sprawl has been identified by Robert Putnam as a factor (even if a limited one) in the decline in social capital in the United States.
- 8.37 Concerns have been expressed about the implications of such factors as commuting, car-dependency, isolation of the elderly from services as well as the sustainability of developments for the natural environment. For example, *The Health Strategy* (Government of Ireland, 2002a:58), draws attention to the important relationship of space to social engagement:
- “Commuter towns, where those living in new developments spend their days travelling to a distant employment, may give rise to a loss of ‘community’ associated with more traditional neighbourhoods. The loss of such community support also has implications for the care of young children and for support for older people”.*
- 8.38 It is important to bear in mind that settlement patterns and traditions are not the same in Ireland as elsewhere. A rural way of life is desired by many who have spent most of their lives in the countryside, or who have strong community and family ties there. An important distinction is required between the many uses of housing in the countryside and their links to local community capacity and development. The Government White Paper on Rural Development is committed to *“encouraging, supporting and empowering active rural communities to plan and contribute to the development of their own areas and so maintain the quality of life and sense of community which make rural communities attractive places in which to live and work”* (Government of Ireland, 2002d).
- 8.39 Public spaces such as parks, village squares and other areas – cultivating places where people can spontaneously meet – are important for the creation and development of social capital. These are some of the enclaves where information is shared and people connect. Various studies have shown that the layout and design of residential areas and their impact on the functional distance between neighbours has a strong impact on patterns of social interaction and contact (Halpern, 2003, forthcoming). For example, semi-detached houses with pairs of front doors facing each other are more likely to facilitate social contact than other arrangements.

Distance from Others/Services/Work/School

- 8.40 It is claimed that pedestrian-orientated, multi-use and self-contained neighbourhoods can facilitate social capital more than single-purpose residential or working areas (Putnam, 2000 and Leyden, 2002). Mixed-residential urban areas and “traditional” neighbourhoods are characterised by a multiplicity of services (childcare, shops, recreational facilities, etc.) within walking or cycling distance of an individual’s home. Driving to shops, work and other facilities probably lowers the opportunity for social contact, other things being equal. In areas of high car-dependency, there is greater need to drive children to school or other activities.
- 8.41 In a survey of residents living in Galway City, Leyden (2002) compared attitudes of people living in traditional, mixed-use and pedestrian-oriented neighbourhoods to those in other areas. Controlling for a range of factors, the results suggested that neighbourhood design had a strong effect on social capital (as measured by the degree to which people know their neighbours, trust others, and engage themselves socially and politically).
- 8.42 Furthermore, the location and concentration of different types of housing can reinforce social fragmentation and distance between diverse groups. Dispersed social housing is more likely to encourage more diversified social contact and “bridging social capital”, other things being constant. Apart from possible polarisation effects, attention has been drawn to the likely marginalisation impacts of low-density and poorly-integrated cities and towns where people with disabilities, women and parents with young children are frequently at a disadvantage.
- 8.43 Difficulties also arise in rural areas where population density, age-structure, transport and local public service provision reinforce social isolation (NESF, 1997b). Communities and individuals – especially the elderly and less mobile – face significant barriers in terms of effective social support and engagement. Rural development raises challenges and responses which are frequently different from those of urban areas. Rural poverty and exclusion are highly dispersed and, at times, hidden away in households or individuals. A whole-community response is needed.
- 8.44 On the other hand, proximity of extended family and other types of networks can impact favourably on childcare, care of the elderly and mutual support networks. In the specific area of elderly care, changing demographic patterns in the next decades will raise major issues with respect to public provision and design and location of facilities. The OECD *Well-Being of Nations* report suggests:

“Planning of health care and provision at the local community level, where the elderly and other groups can stay closer to their families and communities, may offer another way of sustaining social ties and reaping positive health benefits which the research has shown are linked to social capital” (OECD, 2001a: 69).

- 8.45 Access to transport in rural areas has been highlighted in various reports and surveys. For example, in a survey of single older men in Dingle, County Kerry, lack of transport, poor housing and the changing employment and social structure have been identified as important factors in contributing to feelings of low self-esteem and exclusion. Few regularly attended meetings, sporting events or church, mainly because of money and transport problems (“The Needs of Single Men Living on the Dingle Peninsula: Singular Responses”, produced by local community groups, Comhar Dhuibhne, Dóchas, Dingle Men’s Action Group³⁷).
- 8.46 In this regard, the *Rural Transport Initiative* (RTI), established in 2001 by the Department of Transport and administered on its behalf by ADM, is very welcome. This Initiative supports community-based approaches to providing transport in rural areas for people who do not have independent access to transport. The RTI is confined to community-based groups who have worked in association with other community and statutory bodies and local transport operators to identify the transport needs of the community and the types of responses which are most suitable for the local areas. The RTI is currently funding 34 pilot rural transport projects in most counties in the country and these services are being operated by community groups using either their own vehicles or vehicles contracted in from transport operators.
- 8.47 A nationwide audit of rural transport services and needs was carried out in 2001 by the County Development Boards of each rural county. These audits found that access to public transport was a key problem particularly for women, the elderly, the disabled, young people and people on low incomes. A project scheme involving participation by local communities started in January 2003 in Connemara to provide a limited number of transport connections to remote areas. A similar scheme operates in Portumna, County Galway to facilitate access to outreach education services and employment opportunities in the region.
- 8.48 Analogous to living arrangements, the layout and planning of buildings and space in the workplace has important implications for social contact and team identity. Partitioning of offices can increase contact and solidarity within particular groups as well as increase perceived distance and privilege among various groups at the same time. “Semi-public” spaces for informal contact and interaction are important in the workplace as in the residential neighbourhood. However, social connections cannot be forced or automatically produced as a result of “social space”.

37 Reported in the Irish Times, 11 February 2003.

Conclusions

Work-Life Balance

8.49 Government and the social partners can help to enlarge choice and safeguard the quality of family and community care by providing the necessary flexibility and social protection for those struggling to balance various demands. Many initiatives and policies are already in place seeking to address these issues, including:

- workplace flexibility in relation to time-off and starting/finishing times;
- establishment of committees to monitor progress on family-friendly policies at the local organisational level; and
- local measures in support of childcare and eldercare, employee assistance and counselling programmes.

8.50 Policy responses need to be devised at a local and organisation level to widen choice and flexibility. However, in addition to cultural and attitudinal change, “hard supports” in the form of childcare, public transport and regulatory or voluntary-based codes of practice also need to be further developed.

8.51 In addition to the issue of measuring the use of time (see Section V), the Project Team supports the development of local and specific workplace partnerships and arrangements to:

- enhance trust, mutual respect, engagement and commitment to shared organisational goals in the working place; and
- provide greater flexibility in working arrangements to facilitate caring responsibilities outside work and personal life-balance.

Lifelong Learning

8.52 Learning to co-operate, communicate and engage for a more open, tolerant and active civil society should be a major focus of a public policy response by the education sector to awareness and development of the role of social capital. Communities and learning partnerships of students, adult learners, teachers and parents need to be more centrally involved in designing and facilitating learning. The formal education sector involves over one million students at all levels of education. Together with parents and other family members, the great majority of the population is closely engaged in the education process. This provides a crucial arena where social ties can be sustained and strengthened while knowledge, skills and personal attributes are at the same time developed to support social capital.

Spatial Planning

- 8.53 Care is needed in drawing general conclusions about settlement patterns, given the unique nature and evolution of Irish population settlement patterns as well as the diversity of demand for housing in both rural and urban settings. There is no quick solution and still less no blueprint for planning either in terms of high-density urban dwellings or policies for one-off rural housing or dispersal.
- 8.54 An important consideration is the opportunity for meeting. It is not possible to force social interaction. However, it can be made easier through carefully-designed spatial and residential planning. Consistency in terms of guidelines for planning decisions, attention to the likely long-term community and environmental impacts, flexibility and adaptation to local circumstances and genuine input from, and consultation with, the local community are important.
- 8.55 The Project Team is of the view that social capital concerns should be more to the fore in the design and layout of the built environment – especially with reference to village and neighbourhood “hearths”/focal points or the use of pedestrian-friendly space through traffic calming. Details of residential lay-out can be important including use of alley-ways, walls, etc., allocation of common spaces, closure of particular roads to through-traffic and traffic calming.
- 8.56 Investment in, and incentives for, greater use of public or shared transport is an important area for action. The Project Team recommends that public transport and other alternatives to transport by car be better supported. Informal or publicly-supported car-pool arrangements as well as measures to provide incentives for alternatives to city or town centre parking (e.g. “park-and-ride” facilities and safe-cycle access) should be developed.

Section IX

Developing an Overall Policy Framework

Developing an Overall Policy Framework

Introduction

- 9.1 Social capital, with its focus on social networks, participation and civic values can provide a useful framework for developing new policy responses. However, there is no blueprint of uniform and top-down “best practice” when it comes to developing social capital at the local level. Social capital needs to be anchored on social justice, rights, accountability of various actors, relationships involving civil society and the quality of life. This Report has explored a definition and policy applications of social capital to this country and its links to the pursuit of an equality agenda. Social capital helps to focus on the community, and not just the individual, where equality issues can be addressed.
- 9.2 Its policy potential should relate to, and reflect, the specific local context. Social capital should not, therefore, be seen primarily as a “top-down” concept arising from Government initiative or intellectual thought. Neither can it be viewed as an exclusively “bottom-up” idea emerging from practical experiences in the community.
- 9.3 What is more measurable or integrated into an explicit economic cost and benefit model frequently attracts more attention and response. On the other hand, less tangible and measurable concepts such as social capital and social relations tend to be under-valued and under-estimated. And yet these relations can make a real difference in the way that particular groups and individuals seek to benefit from their participation in society as well as how policy-makers adapt their responses to reach certain policy goals, including that of greater economic and social equality.

Different Levels of Social Capital

- 9.4 The analysis in this Report has drawn attention to the many overlapping and complex strands in which social capital operates. In summary, three layers can be identified:
 - micro/individual (the impact of interpersonal relationships and support);
 - intermediate/community (the presence of community-wide norms of trust, belonging and co-operation); and
 - macro/societal (the presence of generalised norms of mutual help, civic responsibility and engagement in the wider political process).

9.5 Based on its deliberations and consultations with a wide range of interests, the Project Team considers that future policy work in this area should be guided by:

- a stronger empirical base, including indicators of change in key resources of organisations, enterprises and communities; however, policy planning and implementation cannot wait on such evidence;
- a better understanding of how various interventions and initiatives can assist public policy goals (putting in place flagship projects, for example, and linking research to more positive policy and community outcomes);
- initiatives which assist communities, groups and individuals to develop their own capacities and solutions to problems at the local level;
- consideration of how public administration can take better account of mutual respect, social inclusion and adaptation of provisions to specific and local needs; and
- integration and mainstreaming of social capital as a resource in support of social inclusion and equality.

9.6 More specifically, a number of key areas have already been identified in the Report:

- *Long-term planning* – spatial strategy, investment in various types of infrastructure;
- *Medium-term issues* – social capital awareness and insights in the design and delivery of public service (housing, education, health, etc.);
- *Immediate-term issues* – supporting volunteering, further development of mechanisms for civic engagement at local level through, for example, Community and Voluntary Fora; measurement of levels, distribution and progress at local/national level through new data collections on social capital.

Data, Indicators, Research and Targets

9.7 The Forum’s Report on a *Strategic Policy Framework for Equality Issues* (NESF, 2002a) has proposed the inclusion of a “social module” on equality in the Central Statistics Office *Quarterly National Household Survey* to measure and compare progress on equality. This should now be progressed further to cover a social capital module at a future date. The Report of the National Committee on Volunteering has also supported the inclusion of ongoing data collection on volunteering in the *Census of Population* and *Quarterly National Household Survey*.

- 9.8 The Forum urges the National Statistics Board and the Senior Officials Group on Social Inclusion to support the inclusion of social capital as an important dimension in the development of social statistics at national level. Progress in measurement of social capital at international level – especially in various national statistical offices – points up the need for a stronger statistical base in this country to measure levels, distribution and changes in various dimensions of social capital – both at national and also at local area levels.

The European Agenda

- 9.9 Also, a consideration of social capital raises a number of issues relevant to Ireland's participation in the European Union and the forthcoming Irish Presidency in 2004. The Convention on the Future of Europe is currently considering the future of governance at a supra-national level. It is timely that issues of citizen engagement and the creation of mechanisms and working methods to strengthen co-operation and trust from the local up to the European level should be considered. The possibilities of offering tangible experience and policy innovations could also be explored.

Policy Implementation, Monitoring and Lead Department

- 9.10 Further work should give greater weight to more effective co-ordination, implementation and monitoring in the policy-making design process.³⁸ This should focus on the cross-cutting effects of various policies and innovations on equality, social inclusion, community development as well as effective deployment of the various resources available to local communities. The idea of mainstreaming social capital has been raised in Section VI. In progressing a proactive and conscious approach to social capital development at national level, it is important that effective linkages are established with local communities, Local Authorities and other public bodies.
- 9.11 No one Department can fully address all of the issues raised in this Report or under the general umbrella of social capital. A lead Department needs to be designated by the Government to co-ordinate strategic thinking and policy design.

³⁸ The Minister for Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs, Mr. Éamon Ó Cuív T.D., announced recently that the providers of schemes and programmes and the social partners will be consulted on improving local delivery structures. This will include a review of ADM and Ministers have also decided that the various State agencies and boards should submit their business plans for this year to the City/County Development Boards for endorsement.

Conclusions

- 9.12 A key issue raised in this Report is the relationship between equality, social capital and public resource targeting. In designing programmes for the disadvantaged as a target group, it is important not to separate out particular groups from the rest of the community in a way that tends to reinforce (unintentionally) their isolation or stigmatisation. Also, training and support for disadvantaged groups should provide opportunities for greater connection to others in a more advantaged position as well as improved understanding of the factors that contribute to their exclusion. For example, interventions in support of employment or training may be enhanced and better targeted as a result of more information on the social support networks available to individuals and groups.
- 9.13 A society that welcomes diversity, inclusion and equality of opportunity is one that is investing in its own connecting fabric – the networks, shared understandings and common goals alongside cultural and other differences. Future sustainability of communities and society at large is predicated on the trust, social ties and shared ideals and values of all its citizens.
- 9.14 Perhaps the greatest contribution that Government and the social partners can make to investment in social capital is through policies, programmes and practices to encourage social inclusion, fairness, transparency and equality of opportunity. Exclusion and corruption undermine trust and civic commitment. It is also evident that the development of social infrastructure from education, health, housing, welfare to employment and training provide crucial supports in an era when traditional forms of family and local neighbourhood social capital are weaker. The State can never substitute entirely for these other forms of social capital, but it has, nevertheless, an important and supporting role to play.
- 9.15 The evidence cited in this Report and elsewhere (OECD, 2001a) suggests a link through time, across countries, and over generations, between societal commitment to equality and the development of civic norms of trust, co-operation and positive community engagement. A key factor to social capital renewal and strengthening is public and State action which is enabling and proactive and at the same time coupled with a mobilised and empowered civil society.

Annexes

Annex I

Statistical Data

This Annex presents additional data to that reported on already in the NESF Survey of Social Capital in Section V to illustrate:

- comparisons in levels of social capital in Ireland with other countries;
- trends in a limited number of dimensions of social capital in recent decades here; and
- socio-economic and demographic characteristics in the distribution of social capital.

1 International Comparisons in Levels of Social Capital

The main data source for comparing levels of social capital in Ireland with those elsewhere is to be found in the *European Values Survey* (EVS). This Survey has been carried out intermittently for the last two decades in a growing number of European countries. The findings for 32 countries throughout Europe in 1999 show Ireland in a favourable light with respect to various measures of social capital.

(i) *Levels of Voluntary Association*

The proportion of adults spending some time in clubs and voluntary associations in the previous 12 months was 65% in Ireland in 1999 compared to an average of 48% across 32 European countries (Halman, 2001:36). In a list of civic associations, Ireland had average to above average rates of membership in the following: sporting, educational, artistic, cultural, religious, local community, youth and women's groups (Halman, 2001). According to the same data source (Halman, 2001:28), rates of volunteering are above average for (a) sports and recreation organisations (14% here compared to 7% on average in Europe) and (b) religious-based organisations (8% here compared to 6% on average in Europe).

(ii) *Interpersonal Trust*

Levels of interpersonal trust in Ireland are about average by international or European standards. Reported trust³⁹ was 36% of the adult population here in 1999 compared to 40% in Northern Ireland, 30% in Great Britain, over 55% in most Scandinavian countries and under 20% in many Eastern and Central European countries (*European Values Survey*: data shown in Fahey, Hayes and Sinnott, 2003). Separate evidence from the IPH survey in 2001 (Balanda and Wilde, 2003) indicates higher levels of trust at the local neighbourhood level in the South compared to Northern Ireland or various regions

³⁹ The question asked was: "Generally speaking, would you say that most people can be trusted, or that you can't be too careful in dealing with people?".

of Great Britain (using an identical survey questionnaire throughout Britain and the island of Ireland). However, the survey highlights considerable socio-economic and demographic variations in the level of local neighbourhood trust within each jurisdiction.

(iii) Trust in Institutions

According to the EVS, trust in institutions in 1999 was the highest here of any European country. The average score for Ireland in the EVS was 2.77 in 1999 on a scale of 1 to 4 (where 2=not very much and 3=quite a lot). Institutions which tended to attract the highest level of public confidence among the Irish public in 1999 were (as measured by the proportion of respondents saying that they had a “great deal” or “quite a lot” of confidence): the education system (86%) and the Church (52%). The corresponding average European figures were 71% and 55%. An alternative data source to the *European Values Survey* on patterns of trust in institutions is the *Eurobarometer* which shows that, in 2001, average trust levels in four types of institutions (political parties, civil service, national government and national parliament) in Ireland was in sixth place out of the 15 EU Member States (Eurobarometer no. 55 cited in Lyberaki and Paraskevopoulos, 2002). Trust in the civil service in Ireland was third highest of the 15 EU States, according to the latter data source.

(iv) Voter Turnout/Political Interest

Voter turnout is about average in Ireland. At 63% in the 2002 general election, the turnout in parliamentary elections here in recent years has tended to be less than in Scandinavian countries as well as Belgium, Germany, Italy and the Netherlands (Table A.1). However, it is higher here than in the United Kingdom, United States, Japan and France. In common with the USA and UK, levels of turnout have dropped sharply here over the last two decades and the level is less than in many other European countries. In Ireland, 32% of respondents stated that politics was important in their lives, compared to 34% on average across Europe (Halman, 2001:11). However, 40% of respondents never “discuss political matters” when they get together with friends compared to an average of 28% across Europe.

Table A.1 Voter Turnout in Parliamentary Elections in Selected Countries*Votes cast as % of total registered to vote (with reference year in parentheses)*

	Early 1980s	Most Recent year	% difference
Australia	94.4 (80)	95.2 (98)	-0.8
Austria	92.2 (79)	80.4 (99)	-11.8
Belgium	94.6 (81)	90.6 (99)	-4.0
Canada	69.3 (80)	61.2 (02)	-8.1
Denmark	87.8 (81)	87.1 (01)	-0.7
Finland	75.3 (79)	65.3 (99)	-10.0
France	70.9 (81)	60.3 (02)	-10.6
Germany	89.1 (83)	79.1(02)	-10.0
Ireland	76.2 (81)	62.6 (02)	- 13.6
Italy	89.0 (83)	81.4 (01)	-7.6
Japan	74.6 (80)	60.6 (00)	-14.0
Netherlands	87.0 (81)	79.1 (02)	-7.9
New Zealand	91.4 (81)	77.0 (02)	-14.4
Norway	82.0 (81)	75.0 (01)	-7.0
Portugal	85.4 (80)	62.8 (02)	-22.6
Spain	79.8 (82)	68.7 (00)	-11.1
Sweden	90.7 (79)	80.1(02)	-10.6
Switzerland	48.1 (79)	43.2 (99)	-4.9
United Kingdom	76.0 (79)	59.4 (01)	-16.6
United States	76.5 (80)	48.5 (00)	-28.0

Source: Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA), <http://www.idea.int>.

(v) *Informal Sociability*

The *European Community Household Panel Survey* places Ireland at the top of a number of European countries with respect to measures of the frequency of contact with friends, neighbours and relatives (Stewart, 2001)⁴⁰. In the *European Values Survey* (Halman, 2001:33), out of 32 countries, Ireland shows the second highest proportion of people saying that they “spend time with friends” at least once a week.

40 The proportion of respondents who reported seeing friends and/or speaking to neighbours at least once a week was 99% in Ireland – marginally ahead of Greece, Spain and the United Kingdom. France recorded the lowest figure at 73%.

2 Trends in Ireland

Anecdotal evidence abounds about how increasingly hard it is to involve people as volunteers whether in sports, parents' associations in schools or other activities. How much of this is supported by reliable and comparable data over time? The sources for such information are extremely limited. What evidence there is – from a limited number of data sources reported below – does not indicate a clear pattern or trend. There are principally three known sources:

- *European Values Survey* (with questions on interpersonal trust in 1981, 1990 and 1999 and on volunteering in 1990 and 1999);
- *National College of Ireland* survey of volunteering in the mid-1990s; and
- International data sources on voter turnout (reported in Lyons and Sinnott, 2003) already discussed above.

Other sources of possible information which have not been examined here include trends in public attitudes and behaviour according to various marketing and opinion polls as well as administrative data on membership of various community and voluntary organisations.

(i) Trends in Interpersonal Trust

Reported levels of interpersonal trust need to be treated with caution especially when they are based on a single question from one survey. There may also be some level of unaccounted fluctuation in response to a very broad question such as that used in the EVS. The EVS data show a fall in Ireland (South) during the last 20 years (from 41% in 1981 to 36% in 1999 following a temporary increase to 47% in 1991). The NESF Survey of Social Capital is not directly comparable to the EVS results since the former included a response category of “depends on the people in question”, which was not contained in the EVS survey questionnaire.

(ii) Trends of Trust in Institutions

According to the EVS (cited in Fahey, Hayes and Sinnott, 2003), levels of trust in various types of institutions have been reasonably stable here between 1981 and 1999. This has not changed much between 1981 and 1999 with the possible exception of the Churches (Fahey, Hayes and Sinnott, 2003). However, these findings need to be contrasted against other possible sources given the variation in responses across surveys (differences in reported levels of confidence in institutions have been noted, above, with respect to the *Eurobarometer* data source).

(iii) Trends in Membership of Voluntary Organisations

The other evidence from the EVS is a question on membership of voluntary organisations which was asked in both the 1990 and 1999 surveys⁴¹. A comparison of the results show a net *increase* in membership of at least one voluntary association (from 49% to 57% over this period) as well as an *increase* in the proportion of individuals doing unpaid voluntary work for at least one organisation (from 27% to 33%).

The above results from the EVS are surprising in the light of widespread anecdotal evidence as well as survey data from the survey by the National College of Ireland (Ruddle and Mulvihill, 1999, National Committee on Volunteering, 2002 and Donoghue, 2002). The latter indicates a decline in rates of volunteering from 39% to 33% for the adult population in the six-year period to 1998 (see Table A.2). The more marked declines were for:

- men in general (down from 37% to 28% over the six-year period);
- the middle-aged (40-49 year olds) – where rates dropped from 51% to 41% over the same period; and
- the unemployed, unskilled and professional/managerial workers.

Table A.2 Recent Trends in Volunteering

	1992	1994	1997-98	% Change
All persons	38.9	35.1	33.3	-5.6
Men	37.0	30.9	28.0	-9.0
Women	41.0	38.9	40.0	-1.0
Age-group				
18-29	31.4	27.9	31.1	-0.3
30-39	39.6	39.0	32.8	-6.8
40-49	50.8	39.1	40.8	-10.0
50-59	50.4	46.5	47.8	-2.6
60+	30.5	27.8	25.4	-5.1
Socio-economic group				
DE (unskilled and unemployed)	34.0	-	25.9	-8.1
C2 (skilled manual)	34.5	-	35.5	1.0
C1 (non-manual and administrative)	44.7	-	40.6	-4.1
AB (professional and managerial)	50.4	-	44.3	-6.1

Source: Ruddle and Mulvihill, (1999), National Committee on Volunteering, (2002:16).

41 But not in the same way in the 1981 survey.

(iv) Trends in Voting Behaviour

Finally, patterns of voting have been examined by Lyons and Sinnott (2003). The data presented in Figure A.1, below, show a consistent decline in turnout at general, local and European elections since the late 1980s – consistent with patterns in many other countries. Voter turnout in the 2002 general election was 13 percentage points lower than in 1981. Ireland is not unusual in recording a fall in voter turnout. Table A.1, above, indicates declines over a 20 year period for all countries shown. In percentage terms, the decline has been greater in Ireland than in 10 other European countries. Of the 13 Member States shown, only Portugal and the United Kingdom showed higher rates of decline over this period. It is difficult to interpret these results as indicative of a general disengagement and a growing distrust of politics and politicians. It is possible that some of the decline is related to lower perceived levels of saliency of politics in the context of economic and social improvement on many fronts.

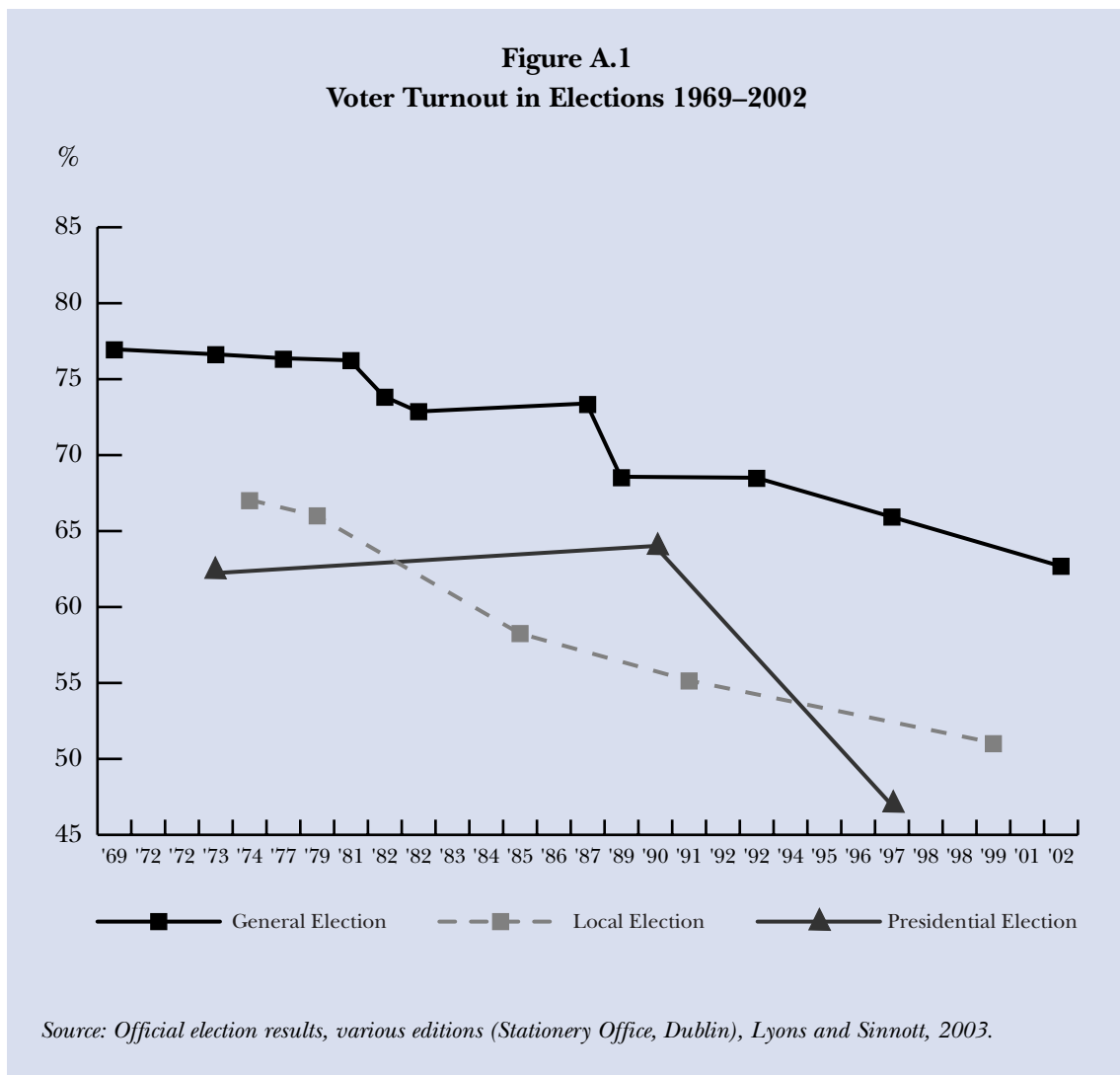


Table A.3 Summary Findings of the IPH Survey of Social Capital

	Informal social networks and support	Trust and reciprocity	Active involvement in the neighbourhood and community efficacy.
Gender	Informal networks and contacts tend to be stronger for women than for men. Not much difference for knowledge of people in neighbourhood.	Little difference.	Little difference.
Age-group	Compared to older groups, young people have higher contact with friends but lower contact with, and knowledge of, people in neighbourhood.	Younger people have significantly lower levels of trust. Also, lower levels of neighbourliness in the locality.	Significantly lower levels of active involvement for the under 40s compared to 40-69 year olds. However, over 70s are much less active (results broadly in line with Donoghue, 2002).
Town size	Small towns are highest on informal support and knowledge of people in the locality. However, cities other than Dublin are highest on frequency of contact with friends and relatives.	Trust is much higher in towns than in the cities.	Provincial towns have much higher levels of active involvement and perceived community efficacy compared to the cities – especially Dublin. However, perceived community efficacy not much different outside Dublin.
Marital status	Married/co-habiting have relatively more contact with neighbours; others have relatively more contact with friends. Social support networks (financial help) are weaker for the unmarried/separated.	Trust and reciprocity measures are higher for the married/co-habiting. As with all other results – need to interpret in a given cultural setting.	Active involvement significantly higher for the married/co-habiting.
Employment status	No clear relationship emerged.	No clear relationship emerged.	Much higher for the employed compared to unemployed, “inactive” or retired.
Income	No clear picture emerged.	No clear picture.	Weak evidence for higher involvement among higher income groups.
Education	Contact with neighbours and relatives is higher among the less educated.	No clear picture.	Active involvement is higher for higher levels of education.
Housing tenure	Knowledge of people in locality and social support networks are associated with owner-occupancy (caution due to presence of confounding variables).	Public sector tenants and owner-occupiers report higher levels of neighbourhood reciprocity compared to private renters.	Community efficacy and active involvement higher for owner-occupiers.
Length of residence	Neighbour contact and knowledge of people in the locality higher for people living the longest at their current address.	Trust and perceived reciprocity higher for the longer resident.	Perceived efficacy higher.

Source: Overview of preliminary data findings from IPH All-Ireland Social Capital and Health Survey, 2001, (Balanda and Wilde, 2003).

Table A.4 Adult Literacy, Community Engagement and Interpersonal Trust, 1999

	Active Community Engagement	Mean literacy score (document)	Trust (most people can be trusted)	Income Inequality (Gini coefficient)
Belgium	24.1	278.2	29.3	0.272
Denmark	29.5	293.8	66.5	0.217
Finland	22.3	289.2	58.0	0.228
Germany	25.6	285.1	34.8	0.282
Ireland	28.9	259.3	35.2	0.324
Netherlands	31.5	286.9	59.7	0.255
Norway	32.1	296.9	-	0.256
Portugal	10.1	220.4	-	-
Sweden	47.2	305.6	66.3	0.230
Switzerland	22.3	269.7	-	0.269
United Kingdom	19.2	267.5	29.8	0.324

Source: *International Adult Literacy Survey (OECD and Statistics Canada, 2000) and The European Values Study: A Third Wave, Halman, L. (2001), Tilburg University, the Netherlands.*

Annex II

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Annex III

Glossary of Terms

Active Citizenship – describes the active exercise of social rights and shared responsibilities associated with belonging to a community or society; the concept is broader than just a formal or legal definition and encompasses social, economic and cultural rights and obligations.

Area Development Management (ADM) – is an intermediary company established by the Government, in agreement with the European Commission, to promote social inclusion, reconciliation and equality and to counter disadvantage through local social and economic development. It supports and funds a total of 38 Area Partnerships and 33 Community Groups and 4 Employment Pacts under the Local Development Social Inclusion Programme.

Associational life – refers to activity and engagement in voluntary, professional or community associations. The term generally describes active membership of formal associations of a voluntary or not-for-profit nature rather than membership of informal social networks.

Better Local Government (BLG) – was launched in 1996 with a view to improving local development and local government, leading in time, to the creation of County/City Development Boards; and the publication of the Local Government Bill, 2000.

Bonding Social Capital – describes social ties and shared norms among families and other homogeneous groups.

Bridging Social Capital – describes social ties and shared norms among groups that are different by reason of gender, age, ethnicity, etc.

CAIT (Community Application of Information Technology) – this initiative is aimed at opening up the world of new technology and information systems to those in society who are unfamiliar with, and who do not use, the new technologies in their everyday lives. CAIT intends to harness the experience, local knowledge and relationships of the community and voluntary sector to implement demonstration projects, which achieve this aim (www.pobail.ie/en/CAIT/).

Capital – describes endowments, goods or relationships which are “productive” of some personal, social or economic benefit and which are “prospective” with respect to efforts, costs and benefits over time.

Citizenship – belonging to a society or community with prescribed rights and responsibilities in legal, social, economic and cultural domains.

Civic fora – see community and voluntary fora (below).

Civil society – is the domain of secondary associations which are distinct from primary domains such as families, Market and State. “Civil society refers to the set of institutions, organisations and behaviour situated between the state, the business world, and the family. Specifically, this includes voluntary and non-profit organisations of many different kinds, philanthropic institutions, social and political movements, other forms of social participation and engagement and the values and cultural patterns associated with them.” (London School of Economics, web page. www.lse.ac.uk/collections/CCS/what_is_civil_society.htm).

CLÁR Programme (Ceantair Laga Árd Riachtanais – High Need Disadvantaged Areas) – launched by the Government in 2000 as a programme separate from RAPID (see below). It is designed specifically to address the infrastructural and social needs of 15 designated remote, rural areas.

Community – a group of people who share a common residential area or a common identity or interest (cultural, social, professional, etc.).

Community Education/Learning – refers to participation in any learning activity taking place in a community rather than in a more formal education setting as well as to the methodological approaches to learning and teaching.

Community Capacity-Building – building up the human, organisational and other infrastructural capacity of community and voluntary organisations to achieve their various objectives.

Community Development – this may be defined in many different ways. Kimball (1994) wrote: “Community development can be defined as intricate networks of purposeful conversations about the issues that matter most to people”. The Government White Paper on *A Framework for Supporting Voluntary Activity* states that community development is “an interactive process of knowledge and action designed to change conditions which marginalise communities and groups and is underpinned by a vision of self-help and community self-reliance” (Government, 2000:49).

Community Development Programme – (CDP) was established by the Department of Social Welfare in 1990 in recognition of the role of community development in tackling poverty and disadvantage. The programme provides financial assistance to projects towards the staffing and equipping of local resource centres which provide a focal point for community development activities in the area and to other specialised community development projects and initiatives having a strategic importance.

Community Organisations – are “voluntary organisations arising out of communities of locality or interest and being mainly controlled by their own users” (Community Development Foundation, United Kingdom website www.cdf.org.uk/html/whatis.html).

Community Platform (Ireland) – was set up in 1996 to enable the community and voluntary sector to participate as a social partner in negotiations at a national level. It is made up of national networks and organisations within the community and voluntary sector which are engaged in combating poverty and social exclusion and promoting equality and justice.

Community and Voluntary fora – were recently established in each county and city as part of the (CDB) process (see below). The Fora are consultative bodies representative of the wider local community. They have facilitated local communities in making an input into the CDB process, including their County/City Strategies as well as the local authority Strategic Policy Committees (SPCs). These fora are currently under review.

Community efficacy – a shared sense of empowerment and capacity to effect change at the community level.

County/City Development Boards (CDB) – exist in each of the 29 county councils, and in each of the 5 major cities to bring about an “integrated approach to the delivery of both State and local development services at local level”. The CDBs are led by the Local Authorities and are also representative of local development bodies together with the State agencies and the social partners operating locally. The CDBs have a special emphasis on social inclusion and local community participation and consultation.

County/City Strategy for Economic, Social and Cultural Development – each CDB was required recently to publish and oversee the implementation of a ten-year county/city Strategy, which will provide the template guiding all public services and local development activities locally with the objective of bringing more coherence to the planning and delivery of services locally.

Dáil na nÓg – Youth Parliament which meets once a year. Children aged 7-17 participate.

Family-Friendly Workplace policies – policies in the workplace to assist employees in combining their personal, family and work responsibilities.

Human Capital – “The knowledge, skills, competencies and attributes embodied in individuals that facilitate the creation of personal, social and economic well-being” (OECD, 2001a: p18).

Human Rights – “Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, color, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status”, United Nations’ Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948.

Information and Communications Technology – refers to the use of computers for communications and information exchange (e-mail, internet and personal computers).

Integrated Services Process – a co-ordinated programme for delivery of State services in disadvantaged urban areas.

LEADER – Liaisons entre actions de développement de l'économie rurale (Co-ordination of development action of the rural economy). A national and EU-funded programme for local rural development.

Lifelong Learning – human learning in any setting which takes place throughout the life cycle – from birth to death.

Lifewide Learning – refers to learning for all aspects of life – personal, social, cultural, economic, political, etc. and takes place in a wide range of settings from formal schooling to informal, experiential learning.

Linking Social Capital – describes social ties and shared norms among groups in a social hierarchy (based on power, status or social advantage).

Local Partnerships – Local-based partnership structures involving the social partners, community and voluntary sector and State agencies to facilitate co-operation, co-ordination and effective decision making and service delivery.

National Anti-Poverty Strategy – provides a policy focus and framework within which various forms of poverty are addressed and progress measured.

National Spatial Strategy (NSS) – “is about a twenty-year planning framework designed to achieve a better balance of social, economic, physical development and population growth between regions. Its focus is on people, on places and on building communities” (Government of Ireland, 2002b:10).

Networks (as applied in the definition of social capital) – “a group of people who interact together”.

Norms (as applied in the definition of social capital) – external criteria, social conventions or prescriptions arising from interaction with others.

Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) – Inter-governmental organisation of 30 member countries of which Ireland is a member. It was founded in 1961. It provides statistics, information, advice and policy analysis for Governments of member countries as well as providing a forum for co-operation and dialogue across a wide range of economic, social and environmental policy concerns.

Physical Capital – produced goods and infrastructure for use in creating economic and social services.

Public Governance – forms of social control, deliberation and organisation which include political-administrative institutions as well as shared management of public concerns involving other social actors.

Public Policy – a course or principle of action adopted or proposed by key social stakeholders including public, private and civil society interests.

RAPID – Revitalising Areas by Planning, Investment and Development. The Programme is managed by ADM on behalf of the Government. Strand I targets 25 urban centres. The Programme is aimed at both facilitating front-loading of investment in disadvantaged areas as well as closer co-ordination and better integration in the delivery of local services. Strand II has targeted 20 provincial towns in a similar fashion.

Rural Transport Initiative – (RTI) supports community-based approaches to providing transport in rural areas for people with limited access. Community-based groups in association with community, statutory and local transport sectors help identify the transport needs of individuals and the types of responses which are most suitable for the local areas.

Service Learning – learning (typically in a formal education setting) which is directly linked to, and located in, service to the community. Course credits may be accumulated through service learning.

Social Capital – “networks together with shared norms, values and understandings that facilitate co-operation within or among groups” (OECD, 2001a: 41).

Social Cohesion – characterises a situation of co-operation and effective functioning in the main areas of societal action – civil society, private and public.

Social Economy – refers to enterprises or activities that engage in “not-for-profit” activity in the market to meet various social and economic needs. *The Social Economy Programme* supported by the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment is an EU-funded programme to assist disadvantaged areas and underpin sustainable employment.

Social Inclusion – full participation and access of individuals and groups to human, political, social and cultural opportunities and decision-making.

Social Partnership (in Ireland) – describes an approach to Public and Government Policy where various social and economic interest groups along with elected representatives play an active role in discussion, consensus, decision-taking and policy-implementation. This works at national and local level.

Strategic Policy Committees (SPCs) – Committees of the local authorities with membership drawn from elected local public representatives and relevant sectoral interests to provide coherence and input on matters of strategic policy interest.

Subsidiarity – central authorities perform only those tasks which cannot be performed effectively at a more immediate or local level.

Sustainable Development – “Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.” From *Our Common Future* (The Brundtland Report, WCED, 1987).

Trust – a belief or expectation about the good intentions of others (familiar, strangers, specified groups, or institutions). A narrower concept of trust includes an expectation that others can and will deliver on what they say.

Values (as applied in the definition of social capital) – internalized personal criteria for evaluation of human behaviour which may be shared in a group or held individually.

Voluntary Organisations – are “non-profit public-interest organisations outside the statutory sector” (Community Development Foundation, United Kingdom website www.cdf.org.uk/html/whatis.html).

Voluntary Sector – “often traditionally equated loosely with charities or with professionally-led non-profit organisations operating in the personal social services, but recently equal emphasis has begun to be placed on community organisations. The more usual phrase now is the ‘voluntary and community sector’” (Community Development Foundation, United Kingdom website www.cdf.org.uk/html/whatis.html).

Volunteering – “the commitment of time and energy, for the benefit of society, local communities, individuals outside the immediate family, the environment or other causes”, (Government White Paper on A Framework for *Supporting Voluntary Activity*, 2000: 4:30).

The Wheel – “a movement for groups and individuals who wish to explore ways and means in which the Community and Voluntary sector might come together” (Government White Paper on *Supporting Voluntary Activity*).

Annex IV

Membership of the NESF (Forum) Project Team on Social Capital

Maureen Gaffney (Chairperson, NESF)

Kevin Balanda (Institute of Public Health in Ireland)

Marian Byrne (Area Development Management)

Frances Byrne (One Parent Exchange Network)

Mary Doyle (Department of the Taoiseach)

Niall Fitzduff (Rural Community Network, Northern Ireland)

Joe Gallagher (European Anti-Poverty Network)

Heidi Lougheed (Irish Business Employers Confederation)

Blair Horan (Irish Congress of Trade Unions)

Eileen Humphreys (University of Limerick)

Paschal Mooney (Oireachtas)

Lorcan McCabe (ICMSA)

Joanna McMinn (National Women's Council of Ireland)

Deiric O'Broin (North Dublin Development Coalition)

John O'Dea (Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs)

Donal O'Donoghue (Galway County Council)

Fergus O'Ferrall (Adelaide Hospital Society/The Wheel)

Pat O'Hara (Western Development Commission)

Bridget Quirke (Community Workers Cooperative)

Tom Ryder (National Youth Council of Ireland)

Tom Healy (NESF Secretariat)

Terms of Reference and Constitution of the Forum

1. The main task of the Forum will be:
 - to monitor and analyse the implementation of specific measures and programmes identified in the context of social partnership arrangements, especially those concerned with the achievement of equality and social inclusion;
 - to do so through consideration of reports prepared by teams comprising the social partners, with appropriate expertise and representatives of relevant Departments and agencies and its own Secretariat;
 - with reports to be published by the Forum with such comments as may be considered appropriate; and
 - to ensure that the teams compiling such reports take account of the experience of implementing bodies and customers/clients, including regional variations in such experience.
2. The Forum may consider such policy issues on its own initiative or at the request of the Government.
3. Membership of the Forum will comprise representatives from the following four strands:
 - the Oireachtas;
 - employer, trade unions and farm organisations;
 - the voluntary and community sector; and
 - central government, local government and independents.
4. The terms of office of members will be for an initial period of at least two years during which alternates may be nominated. Casual vacancies will be filled by the nominating body or the Government as appropriate and members so appointed shall hold office until the expiry of the current term of office of all members. Retiring members will be eligible for re-appointment.
5. The Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson of the Forum will be appointed by the Government.
6. The Forum will decide on its own internal structures and working arrangements.
7. The Forum will be under the aegis of the Department of the Taoiseach and funded through a Grant-in-Aid which will be part of the overall Estimate for that Department. The annual accounts of the Forum will be submitted for audit to the Comptroller and Auditor General.
8. Finally, the staffing and conditions of employment of the Forum's Secretariat will be subject to the approval of the Department of the Taoiseach.

Membership of the Forum*

Independent Chairperson: Maureen Gaffney

Deputy Chairperson: Mary Doyle

(i) Oireachtas

Fianna Fáil:

Noel Ahern T.D.
Seán Haughey T.D.
Beverley Cooper-Flynn T.D.
Michael Kitt T.D.
Senator Margaret Cox
Senator Pascal Mooney

Fine Gael:

Gerry Reynolds T.D.
Paul McGrath T.D.
Bill Timmins T.D.
Senator Mary Jackman
Senator Therese Ridge

Labour:

Derek McDowell T.D.
Senator Joe Costello

Progressive Democrats:

Senator Jim Gibbons

Independents:

Michael Lowry T.D.

(ii) Employer/Trade Unions

(a) Employer/Business Organisations:

IBEC: Jackie Harrison
Heidi Loughheed

Small Firms Association: Pat Delaney

Construction Industry Federation: Mirette Corboy

Chambers of Commerce/Tourist

Industry/Exporters Association: Carmel Mulroy

(b) Trade Unions:

Eamonn Devoy
Blair Horan
Jerry Shanahan
Manus O’Riordan
Paula Carey

* The membership shown was that at the time work on this project was initiated.

(c) *Agricultural/Farming Organisations:*

Irish Farmers Association:	Betty Murphy
Irish Creamery Milk Suppliers Association:	Pat O'Rourke
Irish Co-Operative Organisation Society:	Seamus O'Donoghue
Macra na Feirme:	Eileen Doyle
Irish Country Womens Association:	Breda Raggett

(iii) Community and Voluntary Sector

Women's Organisations:

Gráinne Healy
Susan McNaughton
Joanna McMinn

Unemployed:

Eric Conroy
Joan Condon
Mary Murphy

Disadvantaged:

Joe Gallagher
Frances Byrne
Janice Ransom

Youth:

Valerie Duffy

Older People:

Paddy Donegan

Disability:

John Dolan

Environment:

Jeanne Meldon

Others:

Fr. Seán Healy
Audry Deane

(iv) Central Government, Local Government and Independents

(a) Central Government

Secretary-General, Department of Finance

Secretary-General, Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment

Secretary-General, Department of Social, and Family Affairs

Secretary-General, Department of Tourism, Sport and Recreation

Secretary-General, Department of the Environment and Local Government

(b) Local Government

General Council of County Councils:

Councillor Constance Hanniffy
Councillor Tom Kelleher
Councillor Patsy Treanor

Association of Municipal Authorities:

Councillor Tadhg Curtis

County and City Managers Association:

Donal O'Donoghue

(c) Independents

Professor Gearóid Ó Tuathaigh, National University of Ireland, Galway

Ms. Marian Vickers, Northside Partnership

Ms. Helen Johnston, Surg Equipment Ltd.

Mr. Niall Fitzduff, Rural Communities Network

Ms. Noreen Kearney, Trinity College, Dublin

Secretariat

Director: Seán Ó hÉigearthaigh

Policy Analysts: Sarah Craig
Tom Healy
David Silke
Gerard Walker

Executive Secretary: Paula Hennelly

Forum Publications

(i) Forum Reports

Report No.	Title	Date
1.	<i>Negotiations on a Successor Agreement to the PESP</i>	November 1993
2.	<i>National Development Plan 1994 – 1999</i>	November 1993
3.	<i>Commission on Social Welfare – Outstanding recommendations</i>	January 1994
4.	<i>Ending Long-term Unemployment</i>	June 1994
5.	<i>Income Maintenance Strategies</i>	July 1994
6.	<i>Quality Delivery of Social Services</i>	February 1995
7.	<i>Jobs Potential of Services Sector</i>	April 1995
8.	<i>First Periodic Report on the Work of the Forum</i>	May 1995
9.	<i>Jobs Potential of Work Sharing</i>	January 1996
10.	<i>Equality Proofing Issues</i>	February 1996
11.	<i>Early School Leavers and Youth Employment</i>	January 1997
12.	<i>Rural Renewal – Combating Social Exclusion</i>	March 1997
13.	<i>Unemployment Statistics</i>	May 1997
14.	<i>Self-Employment, Enterprise and Social Inclusion</i>	October 1997
15.	<i>Second Periodic Report on the Work of the Forum</i>	November 1997
16.	<i>A Framework for Partnership – Enriching Strategic Consensus through Participation</i>	December 1997
17.	<i>Enhancing the Effectiveness of the Local Employment Service</i>	March 2000
18.	<i>Social and Affordable Housing and Accommodation: Building the Future</i>	September 2000
19.	<i>Alleviating Labour Shortages</i>	November 2000
20.	<i>Lone Parents</i>	July 2001
21.	<i>Third Periodic Report on the Work of the Forum</i>	November 2001

22.	<i>Re-integration of Prisoners</i>	January 2002
23.	<i>A Strategic Policy Framework for Equality Issues</i>	March 2002
24.	<i>Early School Leavers</i>	March 2002
25.	<i>Equity of Access to Hospital Care</i>	July 2002
26.	<i>Labour Market Issues for Older Workers</i>	February 2003
27.	<i>Equality Policies for Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual People: Implementation Issues</i>	April 2003
28.	<i>The Policy Implications of Social Capital</i>	June 2003

(ii) Forum Opinions

Opinion No.	Title	Date
1.	<i>Interim Report of the Task Force on Long-term Unemployment</i>	March 1995
2.	<i>National Anti-Poverty Strategy</i>	January 1996
3.	<i>Long-term Unemployment Initiatives</i>	April 1996
4.	<i>Post PCW Negotiations – A New Deal?</i>	August 1996
5.	<i>Employment Equality Bill</i>	December 1996
6.	<i>Pensions Policy Issues</i>	October 1997
7.	<i>Local Development Issues</i>	October 1999
8.	<i>The National Anti-Poverty Strategy</i>	August 2000

(iii) Forum Opinions under the Monitoring Procedures of Partnership 2000

Opinion No.	Title	Date
1.	<i>Development of the Equality Provisions</i>	November 1997
2.	<i>Targeted Employment and Training Measures</i>	November 1997

(iv) NAPS Social Inclusion Forum: Conference Reports

1.	<i>Inaugural Meeting on 30th January 2003</i>
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