

# Network

# UPDATE



FOR THE COMMUNITY & VOLUNTARY SECTOR IN THE NORTH-WEST

*"Promoting equal citizenship, justice and equality of opportunity"*

SUMMER  
2011

## Critical Cross Border Conversations

The Network, Donegal Community Workers' Co-operative and Community Dialogue recently hosted a collaborative seminar entitled *Critical Cross Border Conversations*.

This seminar arose from a previous 2010 seminar - *Bordering on the Possible*. Following this seminar an ad-hoc cross border policy group, consisting of staff members of the Community Dialogue, NWCN & the CWC, met to progress issues raised at the seminar. On reviewing the notes and feedback from this seminar, the group realised that we were really going back to a discussion (or critical conversation) which we had previously engaged in through cross border projects which ran from 1996 to 2002.

The main work of the PEACE I funded project in 1996 was the development of an agenda to combat unemployment and low pay by the creation of a North West Forum. The agenda is set out in the *Indicative Integrated Area Plan for the North West*, a document commissioned by the Network and the Community Workers Co-op. It was published in 1999 after extensive consultation, particularly among the Community & Voluntary sector.

The Plan was one of the first documents to articulate the views of locally-based organisations in Border regions and at that time was instrumental in broadening the debate on poverty, looking beyond economic regeneration and inward

investment. It was decided to draw up the Plan because the debate on unemployment and poverty in the mid-1990s failed to address itself to realities in Border areas.

However, on reviewing the document, the group sadly realised that many of the issues identified at that time are still valid, i.e.

- Difference on *currency* issues – where budget announcements on either VAT or Excise Duty can determine which side of the border is the best to locate your business in.
- *Competition* by investment agencies IDA and Invest NI to attract inward investment instead of marketing the Border region in a collaborative manner.
- *Poor roads infrastructure* – while the roads infrastructure has improved significantly in recent years and has attracted investment by the Irish government as part of the National Development Plan 2007-2013, there is still a lot of work to be done.
- *Underdeveloped railway infrastructure* and the regional airports of the City of Derry & Carrickfin in Co. Donegal compete with each other for Public Service Obligation (PSO) contributions.
- *Unemployment blackspots* - we still have highest levels of poverty and unemployment in the border areas.
- Meeting the *needs of the community sector in the region* and the *barriers to cross-border development*.

The IIAP called for the establishment of a North West Forum to bring together all interests in the pursuit of eradicating poverty. It would advocate for change and would encourage co-operation cross border and across sectors. The idea was that the forum would work with other Border regions to put in place policies that favour Border areas.

Guest Speaker at the recent seminar, Dr. Chris Mc Inerney, Department of Politics and Public Administration, University of Limerick, in his presentation *Building Cross Border Capacity to Tackle Poverty and Social Exclusion*, reflected on the experience of the Community & Voluntary sector in the Republic of engagement in the social partnership process. He presented a model of a virtuous cycle of participatory democracy, leading to progressive governance and, ultimately, social inclusion. He challenged participants to rethink what was perceived as the role of civil society and the community/voluntary sector. He proposed that civil society should, perhaps, have four principal roles:

- changing the terms of political discourse;
- legitimating different forms of collective action;
- convening policy oriented fora;
- generating responses from government as a result of fear of political instability.

The key issues emerging from the Critical Conversations seminar workshops included:

1. The need to foster improved interaction between Community & Voluntary sector organisations in the North-West region on both sides of the North-South border.
2. The need to develop a coherent structure in the border corridor that will support collective positioning and lobbying on a NW platform and affect policy change on issues of poverty, social exclusion, racism, sectarianism

and the effect of the border and the conflict.

3. The need to jointly campaign on issues of poverty and social exclusion in the border corridor.

It was agreed that the first priority should be to immediately conduct a mapping exercise of the sector in the North West.

It became clear from the feedback at this seminar that *Pobal*, in its Cross Border Peace & Reconciliation Framework, echoes the sentiment of community workers on the ground as it seeks:

- To ensure there are sustainable solutions for cross border issues in order that a prosperous and peaceful society will exist,
- To strengthen institutional capacity in terms of peace building, reconciliation and cross border work
- To proactively influence the development of policies and structures which support cross border work.

Those living in the border counties know the issues of concern are well researched and documented. The Centre for Cross Border Studies and other organisations have demonstrated the need. The challenge is now for both governments North & South to engage in this critical conversation.

*We are fortunate that NWCN is currently delivering the Participation, Engagement & Skills Programme funded by the Big Lottery and that both Community Dialogue and the CWC are funded through the PEACE III Programme. This has enabled us to recommence this cross border conversation. A follow-up event to progress the seminar's outcomes is planned for summer 2011.*

*This report was gratefully received from:  
Angela Holohan  
Harnessing Equality for  
Lasting Peace (HELP) Project  
Donegal CWC*

## CutsWatchNI - help monitor public sector cuts

As part of the Smart Solutions in Tough Times Campaign, NICVA is collecting data from voluntary and community organisations on the impact of public sector cuts.

NICVA has received information from a number of organisations on the capacity and services lost, and the impact this has on the people the C&V sector serves as a direct result of the cuts or the discontinuation of funding programmes.

NICVA has launched a new 'CutsWatch NI' website and seeks your help in raising awareness of where the cuts are being felt. CutsWatchNI allows you to input details on cuts that your organisation is experiencing. If you have information you would like to share please visit [www.nicva.org/cuts/report](http://www.nicva.org/cuts/report)

or to view the cuts other organisations have shared visit:  
[www.nicva.org/cuts/list](http://www.nicva.org/cuts/list).

Collectively, this information will help build a regional picture of how the government spending cuts are taking their toll on the Community and Voluntary sector. CutsWatchNI can be accessed by the public, politicians and the media, and will create an evidence base for our sector's policy and campaigning work to ensure we will not be treated unfairly.

Remember you can keep up to date with the cuts as they are reported via [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#). For further information or if you wish to report your cut to a researcher, please contact: [stephen.bloomer@nicva.org](mailto:stephen.bloomer@nicva.org)

## Voluntary Arts presents Epic Awards 2011

These awards are designed to shine a spotlight on the excellent work taking place within more than 70,000 voluntary and amateur art and craft groups around the UK and Ireland. The epic awards give groups an excellent opportunity to raise the profile of their work as well as the chance to win a package of prizes including training, equipment and publicity. There will also be a winners' reception in early 2012.

Following the success of last year's first ever Epic Awards, a video was produced to showcase the diversity of entries: <http://bit.ly/eCwWp9>.

Previous winners included Cobweb Orchestra who performed a flash-mob Bolero; Apsara Arts with their Story of London project and fashion show; UC Crew who used breakdance to educate people about the dangers of smoking and Milton Keynes Islamic Arts Heritage and Culture Organisation who teamed

up with Milton Keynes College to explore Islamic art. This year we're looking for even more talent from every part of the UK and Ireland. *The awards are open for entries now at [www.epicawards.co.uk](http://www.epicawards.co.uk).*

Speaking at the 2010 winners' reception at the House of Lords in January, Tom Glynn from UC Crew said: *"I would say to other groups wanting to get involved in the epic awards to go for it!"*

Robin Simpson, Chief Executive Voluntary Arts: *"We were amazed by the range of entries to the epic awards 2010, from breakdancers to basket weavers and painters to poets ... We're really looking forward to what the 2011 Epic Awards will bring as we know that there are many more excellent and innovative amateur arts and crafts groups out there."*

## Fair Play Call for C&V Sector

Eric Pickles, the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government in England, has outlined his expectations that local authorities embrace the contribution of the Community and Voluntary sector.

Speaking at the National Council of Voluntary Organisations annual conference in London, Mr Pickles was keen to highlight the benefits of a good relationship between government – central and local – and the Community and Voluntary sector. He branded those councils that fail to realise the potential of the voluntary and community sector as “*short sighted*” and said “*in many cases, Community and Voluntary sector groups are transforming the way public services are delivered. Bringing levels of expertise and care. Imagination and innovation, that rival the very best of the public or private sector. In doing so, they offer outstanding value for money*”.

The content of his speech will be of interest to Community and Voluntary organisations in Northern Ireland as events in England often provide a good indicator of future policy changes here. The cuts imposed in England, firstly by central government, and passed down via local authorities, are a good example of what may occur in Northern Ireland as budget cuts are agreed and filter down to organisations.

Pointing out that public spending needs brought under control, Eric Pickles was keen to emphasise that unreasonable and disproportionate cuts will not be tolerated. Making clear the reasonable standards expected of local authorities in dealing with the Community and Voluntary sector, Pickles warned that:

- councils should not pass on disproportionate cuts to C&V groups or inflict bigger reductions to budgets than they take on themselves.
- councils should talk to Community and Voluntary groups at an early stage about how services need to change.
- organisations will be given at least three months’ notice about the need to end or alter a grant or other support.

Urging councils to support and nurture their relationship with the Community and Voluntary sector, Eric Pickles, and ultimately the Government, has taken an important step towards establishing the Big Society ideals and supporting the vital contribution of the Community and Voluntary sector. Sir Stuart Etherington, Chief Executive of NCVO, said: “*This is a very important statement from the Government. It fires a warning shot across the bow of local government not to make disproportionate cuts to the vital services that the voluntary and community sector provides.*”

## Rural Safety Fair

Thursday, August 11<sup>th</sup>, 2011  
10:30 AM- 2:00 PM  
The Vale Centre, Greysteel

*Presented by: RURAL NORTH WEST- ‘supportingcommunity’* in conjunction with: **Rural Enabler Programme; Tyrone, Derry & Donegal Action; Participation, Engagement & Skills Project.**

This is an informal event to launch the new office in The Vale Centre and with

our partner agencies to support rural residents, business, villages and the farming community in the rural North-West - Limavady, Derry/Londonderry and Strabane.

The event will feature displays; informal and practical talks; refreshments; freebies and much, much more.

For more information, please contact:  
Andrea 07708319749  
Anita 077 38449693  
Stephanie 00353 74 91 73747

# Volunteer Training

## **Certificate in the Effective Management of Volunteers**

This third-level Certificate is organised jointly by Volunteer Now and the School of Education at Queen's University Belfast (QUB). Part-time over one year, it provides an academically rigorous programme based on nationally recognised standards of good practice and is the highest level qualification available in Northern Ireland in volunteer management. The programme is open to individuals who have some current responsibility for managing volunteers.

### Course Details:

*Aim:* To enable students to analyse and evaluate their policies and practice for involving volunteers and to develop a coherent system for the effective management of volunteers in their organisation.

*Level:* This course attracts 60 credit points at Higher Education Level 1. This is equivalent to level 4 in the Further Education sector.

*Cost:* £680 – A limited number of 70% bursaries are available - see guidance notes in the course's Supplementary Application form. Applications for bursaries are open to those who:

- work or volunteer within the voluntary and community sector in Northern Ireland and;
- have been offered a place on the above course.

Applications are now open for September 2011 delivery. Please [click here](#) to access the Queen's University School of Education web site to download Application Forms (please note there are two forms – QUB application form and an additional Supplementary Application Form).

For further information please contact Fiona Nicol at Volunteer Now, 028 9081 8325 / [fiona.nicol@volunteernow.co.uk](mailto:fiona.nicol@volunteernow.co.uk).

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## **"When Everyone's A Volunteer!"**

Courses for volunteer-led organisations - these FREE courses of up to four hours duration are available to groups which are volunteer-led, or who rely mainly on volunteers to deliver their service. You just need to provide the venue and people - we will come to you.

The content of these courses is decided by you. When you call us, we will talk through your development and training needs with you and a course will be designed to meet these.

Courses delivered so far have included:

- Workshops to create a Recruitment Plan and Role Descriptions;
- Youth sessions on communication and leadership skills;
- Action plan sessions to decide what policies and procedures organisations need to develop;
- Sessions on developing a selection process;
- Support and Supervision of Volunteers;
- Volunteers and the Law.

The courses provide frameworks for groups to consider, clarify responsibilities in a volunteer environment and focus on formal practice but with an informal approach.

For further information or to book your course, please contact Lizanne Frawley: 028 90818308 OR [lizanne.frawley@volunteernow.co.uk](mailto:lizanne.frawley@volunteernow.co.uk)

# Funding Opportunities

## European Foundations' funding for Initiative on Dementia (EFID)

A group of European Foundations have banded together to organise a call for applications with 10 awards of €10,000 available for 'Living well with dementia - A European initiative for more dignity and solidarity for people with dementia.'

The project seeks to achieve:

1. A beginning of change in society's perception of dementia
2. To support people at local level to help them better integrate with their neighbours with dementia in their communities.
3. To help people with dementia and their carers to participate more fully in their communities.

Who can apply? - community-based organisations in places where people with dementia and their families could live well and be active participants in their community.

For more information please visit the NEF website: [nef-europe.org/content/news](http://nef-europe.org/content/news)  
*Closing date: 31 August 2011.*

## Arts & Business NI Investment Programme open

In response to the changing economic climate and the decrease in arts funding, Arts & Business have revised their investment programmes. They have combined two investment strands into one programme - the Arts & Business NI Investment Programme.

Changes to the programme:

- Arts organisations who have secured a first-time cash sponsor can now apply for 100% match investment.
- Where arts organisations have secured in-kind support, applications can now be considered on an individual basis.
- They also want to make sure that the project really delivers for your business

partner by integrating their objectives into the very fabric of the project. The new application includes a simplified evaluation framework.

The amount available to any one arts organisation is £20000 per financial year.

If you have secured a first time sponsor for your arts organisation or you have brought an existing sponsor on board for a second or even third time you could access further investment from Arts & Business NI.

For more information or to apply see: [artsandbusiness.org.uk/NorthernIreland](http://artsandbusiness.org.uk/NorthernIreland)  
*Closing dates: 18 August & 17 November 2011.*

## New BT service aims to boost online fundraising

Online fundraising can transform charitable giving, says chief executive of BT Retail Gavin Patterson. Despite economic doom and gloom, commitment by the UK public to supporting more than 150,000 charities in this country is as strong as ever.

In connection with this, BT has created MyDonate, a new free online charitable fundraising service, highlighting staggering sums donated to charity by the average person last year. Londoners were the most generous, giving on average £367, followed by the Scottish who donated an average of £227.

Giving cash remains the most popular method of donation, but according to the Government's 2010 Giving Green Paper, there is the opportunity to make better use of technology, with only seven per cent of donors making donations online compared with 58% of adults who shop online.

For further information visit: [www.bt.com/mydonate](http://www.bt.com/mydonate)

# Network Membership 2011/12

NWCN, recently relocated to new city centre premises as part of the Walled City Community Partnership, is now making its annual membership call. As well as inviting existing members to renew subscription for another year, we ask all groups in the Community & Voluntary sector to invest a small fee as indication of support for the leading Community Development organisation in the North-West region.

Our regular updates in many formats help keep you, the grassroots organisations providing essential local services and advocacy, informed of and engaged with developments in the Community & Voluntary arena.

Alongside this, NWCN is just as active in detailing and promoting the value added by our sector and by the Community Development approach – at local and regional levels.

You now also have the benefit of PESP, a new practical support project to help groups develop understanding and skills around participation and engagement.

## **Membership of North-West Community Network entitles your group to:**

- Regular editions of Network Update – policy and strategic updates and commentary on sectoral developments
- Reliable electronic bulletins with up-to-date, relevant information for the Community & Voluntary sector
- Live consultation bulletins and response assistance
- Submit information for sharing/dissemination
- Identify and receive support on public policy issues
- Access to funding databases such as Grant-Tracker
- Make use of NWCN's comprehensive database
- Discounted use of meeting rooms (at discounted rate) + free use of equipment
- Invitation to all Network events, including member-only events
- Voting rights on NWCN policy
- Nominate to Executive Committee.

## **A diverse and vocal NWCN membership represents:**

- a strong signal that the Community & Voluntary sector will represent itself coherently and persuasively
- a clear mandate in advocating on behalf of the sector
- a significant lobby in bringing about social change, equality, inclusive practice and meaningful engagement
- a pathway for developing and sustaining strategic linkages with decision-makers
- a focus for collective action.

*NWCN is always alert to ways of enhancing member services and is keen to provide you with the best support and advocacy possible. You are actively encouraged to feedback all ideas and suggestions on how services might be improved.*

*Please complete and return the Membership Invoice on the reverse.*

## NWCN Membership 2011/12

To become a member of North-West Community Network for 2011/12, please complete and return this pro forma), with your £10/€13 membership fee.  
(Retain copy as Invoice)

*\*\*\*Membership is open only to Community & Voluntary organisations\*\*\**

### **Your Organisation:**

Name Of Organisation:	_____
Named Contact(s) & Designation:	_____
Address:	_____
	Postcode: _____
Telephone:	Fax: _____
Email(s): ( feel free to submit multiple emails but identify primary contact address)	_____
Website:	_____
Brief Description Of Organisation's Role & Activities:	

***Please make your cheque payable to North-West Community Network, or contact the Network if you wish to make payment in another way e.g. BACS, other electronic banking.***

### **Network Executive Committee 2011/12:**

You are also invited, if so desired, to nominate to the Network's Executive Committee 2011/12 – member organisations only.

Nominee:	_____
Role within organisation:	_____
<i>Signed</i> (on behalf of organisation)	_____
Contact Info: (if different from above)	_____

#### ***Return to:***

**North-West Community Network, 12 – 14 The Diamond, Derry~Londonderry BT48 6HW**

**Tel: (028) 71 279090 / E: [info@nwcn.org](mailto:info@nwcn.org) / [www.nwcn.org](http://www.nwcn.org)**

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