

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Foreword

Introduction

1. An Introduction to the FRC National Forum	4
1.1 Vision and Values	4
1.2 Objectives	5
1.3 Core Capacities	5
1.4 FRC Forum Structure	5
1.5 The Community Development Context	6
<hr/>	
2. The Environment	7
<hr/>	
3. Strategic Priorities	8
3.1 Influencing national policy on family support	8
3.2 Promoting inclusive family support practice and provision within a community development context	10
3.3 Informing the future development of the <i>Family & Community Services Resource Centre Programme</i>	11
3.4 Providing guidance in the development of appropriate systems of supports for members	13
3.5 Promoting the organisational, resource and communications capacity of the FRC National Forum	14
<hr/>	
4. Goals and Strategies	15
<hr/>	
5. Implementation	20
<hr/>	
Glossary	
<hr/>	

Introduction

Supporting Families, Building Communities Strategy is the Family Resource Centre National Forum's Strategic Plan for the period 2006 – 2009. This strategic plan will help guide the development of the FRC National Forum. In doing so, the Forum will assist family resource centres (FRCs) in ensuring family support programmes are an integral part of local community activity. The overriding goal of this strategy is - in working from an equality and human rights perspective - to support family resource centres in ensuring families enjoy fulfilling lives, free from poverty, neglect, harm discrimination and abuse. Volunteers are central to the success of family resource centres. Given the decline in volunteerism in recent years, it is essential that volunteers are adequately supported in their work. The Forum recognises and values the commitment of volunteers in managing centres and in working for the benefit of their communities. Through this strategy the Forum will enhance volunteer participation through the delivery of key strategic supports.

The FRC National Forum is a support network working with family resource centres throughout Ireland. The aim of the Forum is to represent the views of all family resource centres nationally and provide practical support to family resource centres involved in family support and social inclusion initiatives. In using the term 'family support' the Forum is referring to a set of beliefs and an approach to strengthening and empowering families and communities so that they can foster the development of children, youth and family members. It entails statutory and voluntary agencies working together to become responsive, flexible, family-focused and holistic in meeting the needs of families. In adopting a family support methodology, family resource centres strive to transform Irish society into caring communities of citizens that put children and families first and that ensure all children and families get what they need to succeed.

The FRC National Forum established a strategic planning working group in 2005 to oversee the strategic planning process which informed the development of this strategy. This process entailed widespread consultations with key stakeholders working in family support in statutory and voluntary organizations; as well as a series of national and regional consultations with family resource centres.

Supporting Families, Building Communities 2006 – 2009 identifies seven strategic priorities which will support family resource centres in their work and inform the future development of the FRC National Forum:

- Influencing national policy on family support through participation of the Forum in key organisational and inter-agency fora
- Promoting inclusive family support practice and provision within a community development context
- Informing the future development of the *Family & Community Services Resource Centre Programme*
- Providing guidance and leadership in the development of appropriate systems of support for members
- Supporting Forum members through the development an effective organisational capacity
- Securing adequate sources of revenue to sustain the Forum's mission and strategic goals
- Creating a high level of awareness of the Forum and its work at a national level

The FRC National Forum will develop an implementation plan which will set out actions, timescales and responsibilities to ensure the full delivery of the *Supporting Families, Building Communities Strategy 2006 - 2009*.

1. An Introduction to the FRC National Forum

The Family Resource Centre National Forum was established in 1998 as a support and networking organisation for family resource centres throughout Ireland. The Forum aims to support family resource centres who are involved in anti-poverty and social inclusion initiatives in their communities. Both the Forum and family resource centres are funded by the Family Support Agency.

Family resource centres are community-based organisations who take a proactive and innovative approach in identifying the needs of family and in providing community-based supports. The aim of a family resource centre is, essentially, to help combat disadvantage by supporting the functioning of the family unit. Centres can provide services for lone parent families, young mothers and others considered in need of extra support and can act as a first step to community participation and social inclusion.

1.1 Vision and Values

The FRC National Forum supports those working with disadvantaged. The Forum adopts an integrative approach to community development in addressing the needs of those most disadvantaged and in need. It aims to be a well-structured and vibrant group with clear work practices and the ability to influence change. The values to which this Forum ascribes are equality, empowerment, openness, inclusiveness, and good practice.

The FRC National Forum will ensure that its activities are:

- Built on the strength of families and communities
- Family-centered, easily accessible and inclusive of family participation
- Reflective of the changing needs of families and communities
- Respectful and supportive of staff and volunteers

1.2 Objectives

The FRC National Forum works to:

- To influence national policy on issues affecting family resource centres
- To ensure a quality of service amongst family resource centres
- To introduce structures to support the work of staff and voluntary management committees and the ongoing development of family resource centres
- To provide a platform to facilitate networking between family resource centres
- To provide an opportunity to enhance skills through participation in Forum training programmes

1.3 Core Capacities

Since its inception, the FRC National Forum has provided an effective voice for family resource centres. The Forum has identified its current core capacities as knowledge building and information exchange, providing training opportunities, convening conferences and meetings and supporting individual family centres and staff.

1.4 FRC National Forum Structure

The FRC National Forum is the representative voice of family resource centres in Ireland. Membership of the Forum is open to all family resource centres operating within the *Community and Family Services Resource Centre Programme* of the Family Support Agency. In 2006 there will be 100 Family Resource Centres established within this programme. Family Resource Centres are managed by voluntary boards of directors.

The Forum is a company limited by guarantee, with an elected Board comprising two directors and two alternate directors from each of the eight regions within which family resource centres are based. Directors are nominated for election from within the Forum membership base on a regional level. Both staff and volunteers of Family Resource

Centres comprise the Forum Board. The Board sets the direction for the organisation and is the legal authority entrusted with the responsibility to ensure the organisation is soundly governed.

The Forum meets nationally every four months, and on a regional basis every two months. Such regional meetings are co-ordinated by regional representatives elected at national meetings. It is the responsibility of these representatives to promote the work of the Forum at a regional and local level and to relate issues of concern and information.

1.5 The Community Development Context

Social justice will be achieved through the participation and action by those experiencing marginalisation in addressing their own needs. The Combat Poverty Agency (CPA) defines the community development process as “*people working collectively for social change which improve the quality of their lives, the community in which they live and the society of which they are part*”. The FRC National Forum takes this community development approach to supporting families. It incorporates key principles such as collaborative and inclusive action, building on community strengths and contributing to family and community capacity building in its work. The FRC National Forum recognises community development as a process enabling people to develop their capacity to actively participate in shaping the society of which they are a part. Community Development seeks to challenge the causes of disadvantage and poverty and to offer new opportunities for those lacking choice, power and resources. The Forum works towards enhancing groups and communities ability to articulate their needs so that they can influence the processes that structure their everyday lives.

Family resource centres provide a model of community-based intervention and support for disadvantaged families, groups and individuals. They actively foster the participation of local people in all aspects of the work of centres and participants are involved in the planning and management of centres as well as the design and delivery of specific programmes. The *Supporting Families, Building Communities Strategy* works towards ensuring that community development is a central element of the Forum's work.

The Forum acknowledges this community development approach and is fully committed to using the principles of community development in all aspects of its work.

2. The Environment

The environment in which the FRC National Forum operates is a changing one. Families in Ireland today have wide-ranging and diverse needs. Issues such as childcare, balancing work and family life, caring for family members, lone parenting and low income supports have all contributed to the pressure and burdens of family life.

The establishment of the Family Support Agency (FSA) in 2003 marked an important step in the development of effective and responsive services and supports for families today. Further developments in family policy must hold the well-being of all families and individuals at its centre and be informed by a set of inclusive principles. These recognise the diversity of family make-up and the rights of all families to be treated equally.

The Family Resource Centre model is ideally placed to meet the diverse needs of families. In representing Family Resource Centres, the FRC National Forum faces expectations from its constituents and other stakeholders. In order to support its members in strengthening and supporting families, it is essential that the Forum develops strong links with other agencies working, not only in family support, but in social inclusion. The FRC National Forum will become involved in the *National Action Plan against Poverty and Social Exclusion* through participation in the Social Inclusion Forum. It will influence the development of inclusive social policy through participation in 'social partnership' structures at a local level, regional and national level.

The Forum will strengthen its relationship with the Community Development Programme (CDP) and will participate in and contribute to the social inclusion strategies of the Local Development Social Inclusion Programme (LDSIP) at local and regional levels.

Establishing and maintaining formal linkages with agencies such as Barnardos, Combat Poverty Agency, Support Agency Network (SAN), and The Wheel will also be a central element to the Forum's future development.

3. Strategic Priorities of the FRC National Forum

The FRC National Forum has identified seven strategic priorities for the period 2006 – 2009. These strategies are based on a belief that strengthening families is fundamental to the creation of an equitable society.

3.1 Influencing national policy on family support

The FRC National Forum should be strategically involved in local, regional and national structures. Participation in such structures from the local to the national arena will enable the influencing of national policy in terms of social inclusion and family support issues. Participation at a regional and local level, in particular, can have a positive effect on social policy as family resource centres can take the lead on a specific issue in partnership with other organisations and serve as an example for other parts of the country. A key element in the success of the Forum in influencing social policy will be in its ability to gather information and learning generated in local communities by local family resource centres.

On a regional level FRCs will seek representation and/or influence within the following local development structures:

- county/city development boards
- county/city childcare committees
- domestic violence networks
- local and regional drugs task forces
- VECs
- regeneration programmes in areas of urban and rural disadvantage (RAPID and CLAR)

- citizens information services
- Area based partnership companies

On a national level the Forum will seek to participate and/or influence within:

- the community & voluntary pillar of social partnership
- national social partnership structures such as the National Economic and Social Council and the National Economic and Social Forum
- consultation processes for the National Action Plan Against Poverty (NAPS) and Social Exclusion
- Family Support Agency (FSA)

Commitment to the ethos of social inclusion and a clear understanding of what participation means is central to any successful engagement within the above structures.

The FRC National Forum faces many challenges in undertaking effective participation. Firstly, clarity within the Forum on an agreed vision of an inclusive society and how using the instrument of social policy could bring this about is required. Such an understanding is essential in the Forum becoming an advocate for the socially excluded. Secondly, there needs to be an awareness of the Forum within the community and voluntary sector. The Forum will ensure other agencies understand the nature of Family Resource Centre work. Thirdly, Forum representatives need to have the necessary skills in order to effect change. Capacity building, training and support for staff and volunteers will be provided to ensure effective participation.

3.2 Promoting inclusive family support practice and provision within a community development context

Primarily, the role of Family Resource Centres is to facilitate the community development process by empowering and facilitating groups/individuals experiencing exclusion to take control of their own lives and address their needs. Family resource centres provide a model of community engagement and support for disadvantaged families, groups and individuals. They also build relationships and social networks within communities. The Forum endorses this community development approach and is fully committed to using the principles of community development in all aspects of its work.

Family resource centres are involved in service provision within a community development context and have a clear understanding of the symbiotic relationship between both. The role of the FRC is to enable service user participation through empowerment and support. Such support, if necessary, may take the form of service provision. FRCs should ensure that mainstream services in health, education, employment, childcare, transport are accessible to those experiencing exclusion. Provision of such basic services will facilitate the socially disadvantaged in moving towards social inclusion – in other words, out of service provision comes the engagement with the excluded. Such a progression will lead to a more cohesive social fabric within the community. This process enables the FRC to be flexible to the emerging needs of the individual/community.

Other identified service-related functions of Family Resource Centres include:

- Identification of existing service providers and supports and areas where gaps in provision exist
- Lobbying for adequate services and resources and ongoing liaison with service providers
- Act as a referral service and provision of related information
- Act as an outreach centre for other services e.g. MABS/CIS/LES

3.3 Informing the future development of the Family & Community Services Resource Centre Programme

Family resource centres are funded by the Family Support Agency under the *Family & Community Services Resource Centre Programme*. The stated aim of the FSA with regard to family resource centres is “to support, promote and develop the Family and Community Services Resource Centre Programme” (Family Support Agency Act, 2001). The support given to Family Resource Centres under this programme comprises core funding for staffing costs and overheads and once-off activity grants. By December 2006, the FSA will support 100 Family Resource Centres throughout the country. The challenge both for the FSA and the Forum is to ensure that existing family resource centres can deliver quality supports to their communities with adequate resources while - at the same time - allowing for new disadvantaged areas and communities to be supported.

It is necessary to support what is already in place. Existing family resource centres need to consolidate what they do now and their work and achievements need to be acknowledged. Such a consolidation will entail adequate resourcing.

At a minimum family resource centres should be staffed to the following level:

- one full-time co-ordinator
- one full-time community development worker
- one full-time administrator

Financial support for programme activities and training and resources for staff and volunteers should be clearly outlined. The documentation and profiling of the work and achievements of family resource centres to date will strengthen the argument for consolidation and ensure adequate resources. It will recognise the increasing complexity of running a Family Resource Centre and will particularly recognise the role of centres in the development of major services in childcare, youth, parenting and the emergence of new communities.

Where there is a need to establish a new centre in an area, there should be active consultation with the existing family resource centres in local areas. Such consultation should incorporate an exploration of the potential for existing centres to develop satellite / outreach services. The Forum - through its active involvement on the FSA's Technical Group - will ensure co-ordination of new family resource centre applications and the criteria for the establishment of new centres.

Finally, it is the responsibility of the Forum to ensure a continued focus on social inclusion and community development within the *Family & Community Services Resource Centre Programme*.

3.4 Providing guidance in the development of appropriate systems of supports for members

Family resource centres receive technical support from a number of regional support agencies (RSAs) contracted by the FSA to provide support, training and advice to family resource centres operating within the *Family and Community Services Resource Centre Programme*. The nature of support varies depending on the life stage of the family resource centre.

FRCs in pre-development can avail of the following supports:

- community consultation and needs analysis
- identification of a core management team
- development of work plans
- training and groupwork

Established projects receive the following range of supports from RSAs:

- strategic planning
- evaluation and review
- design and implementation of good practice systems
- development of volunteer recruitment policies and training programmes
- project management
- organisational development
- mediation

The Forum itself provides national training opportunities for its members on an ongoing basis.

Many established family resource centres are now entering a phase of development which requires a more tailored approach to support needs. New pressures and demands on family resource centres, such as the growing importance of information and communications technology (ICT) and the increasing requirement for partnership working, emphasise the importance of having the right skills base and demonstrate how this can change over time. Pressures in terms of managing large amounts of funding and services - such as liaising with funders, building contractors and others; compliance with corporate governance and employer responsibilities - will all dictate the

nature of future support needs of both staff and volunteers of family resource centres. The Forum must be responsive to these pressures in meeting the needs of its members.

3.5 Promoting the organisational, resource and communications capacity of the FRC National Forum

3.5.1 Supporting FRC National Forum members through the development an effective organisational capacity

3.5.2 Securing adequate sources of revenue to sustain the Forum's mission and strategic goals

3.5.3 Creating a high level of awareness of the Forum and its work at a national level

The strategies identified above relate to the internal organisation of the FRC National Forum and are central to the successful achievement of all strategic priorities. The Forum will

- Seek to ensure the effective management of the organisation through best practice procedures and guidelines
- Pro-actively engage with family Resource centres at a regional and national level ensuring effective communications systems are in place
- Seek adequate funding to deliver on strategic priorities and will, at all times, ensure value for money in the implementation of its work

The value of the work of the FRC National Forum and individual family resource centres cannot be underestimated. The Forum will promote this work through the development of a communications strategy. Various media, such as the Forum website, information leaflets and quarterly newsletters will be used to promote this work.

4. Goals and Strategies

Supporting Families, Building Communities Strategy 2006 – 2009 builds on its strategic priorities, each of which is described in terms of specific goals, objectives and key results.

Strategic Priority 1:

Influencing national policy on family support through participation of the Forum in key organisational and inter-agency fora

Goal 1 : Participation in interagency fora within the voluntary and statutory sectors

Objectives

1. Create awareness of the FRC National Forum among agencies within the Statutory and voluntary sectors
2. Seek regional representation on local development structures
3. Link into National Anti-Poverty Strategy via Social Inclusion Forum and NAP/Inclusion consultation process
4. Build networks and partnerships with anti-poverty groups

Goal 2 : Influence national policy on family and community support issues

Objectives

1. Provide capacity building/training and support to members to ensure effective participation
2. Participate in the CPA *Having Our Say Programme* to promote awareness and knowledge of policy decision making processes
3. Create awareness of current social policy among members through national meetings, seminars and the dissemination of policy papers
4. Establish formal relationships with members of the Community & Voluntary Pillar of Social

Partnership

5. Promote the *Family & Community Services Resource Centre Programme* as a credible and effective model of family support

Key Result : Representation and advocacy of family policy issues at regional and national level on behalf of the members of the FRC National Forum.

Strategic Priority 2:

Promoting inclusive family support practice and provision within a community development context

Goal 1 : Ensure community development principles and practice are central to the work of Family Resource Centres

Objectives

1. Promote a social inclusion and community development focus within the *Family & Community Services Resource Centre Programme*
2. Build partnerships and strategic alliances with other organisations to ensure continuation of the community development approach to family support work
3. Create awareness of social inclusion policy among staff and volunteers of centres

Goal 2 : Maintain and develop the service delivery aspect to family resource centre work

Objectives

1. Assist family resource centres in identifying existing service providers and supports and areas where there are gaps in provision
2. Assist family resource centres in lobbying for adequate services and resources within communities and liaising with service providers
3. Assist Family Resource Centres in liaising with service providers, in establishing referral services and the provision of related information and in facilitating outreach centres for other services e.g. MABS/CIS/LES

Key Result: Recognition of the value of the FRC model as an effective community engagement for disadvantaged families

Strategy 3:

Informing the future development of the *Family & Community Services Resource Centre Programme*

Goal 1: Effective working partnership with the Family Support Agency to inform the future development of the *Family & Community Services Resource Centre Programme*

Objectives

1. Consolidate the existing work of family resource centres and their role in community development practice
2. Recognise the role of FRCs in the development of major services in childcare, youth, parenting and the emergence of new communities
3. Develop consultation mechanisms with FRCs and the FSA in the local expansion of the Family & Community Services Resource Centre Programme
4. Ensure that the community development ethos of the Programme is preserved

Goal 2 : Ensure family resource centres are adequately resourced to undertake and implement work programmes

Objectives

1. Ensure family resource centres are adequately resourced so that they may deliver effective supports to the community
2. Effectively advocate for the *Family and Community Services Resource Centre Programme*, developing and maintaining strategic links to government and other organisations

Key Result : A strong, vibrant and inclusive *Family and Community Services Resource Centre Programme*

Strategic Priority 4:

Providing guidance and leadership in the development of appropriate systems of support for members

Goal 1 : High standard training & development programmes available for staff and volunteers

Objectives

1. Undertake regular comprehensive training needs analyses with member FRCs
2. Establish a training and development working group to oversee the development of appropriate support systems
3. Liaise with the Support Agency Network in the design of tailor-made training programmes at local and regional level, as appropriate
4. Co-ordinate and deliver national training events, where appropriate, and secure adequate funding to do so
5. Establish links with relevant training agencies and explore the value and availability of accredited training programmes.
6. Facilitate FRCs in becoming members of the National Children's Resource Centre

Key Result : Effective, responsive and flexible support structures for family resource centre staff and volunteers established

Strategy Priorities 5 - 7:

Promoting the organisational, resource and communications capacity of the FRC National Forum

Goal 1 : An effective organisational capacity meeting the needs of members

Objectives

1. Build, maintain and review the performance of the Board through the delivery of key supports and training
2. Establish internal systems of communications and disseminate information to members in ways that are timely and user-friendly
3. Develop and review systems to support the future growth of the organisation including reviews of quality of service
4. Ensure all FRCs become active members of the FRC National Forum

Goal 2 : Adequate sources of revenue to sustain the Forum's mission and strategic goals

Objectives

1. Explore the broadening of the FRC National Forum's revenue base and develop effective strategies to address future financial viability
2. Review existing financial policies and procedures and develop new policies as necessary to improve accountability and financial safeguards

Goal 3 : Development of an effective communications strategy

Objectives

1. Devise a targeted media strategy

Key Result: Effective operational procedures enabling the achievement of all strategies and the efficient running of the organisation

Implementation of the Strategic Plan

The FRC National Forum seeks to ensure its work is inclusive, focused and measurable. This strategic plan reflects an organisation that is dedicated to assuring the well-being of all families. Responsibility for the implementation of the *Supporting Families, Building Communities Strategy* lies with the FRC National Forum. The Board of the Forum will actively support the achievement of the strategic goals and objectives described in this strategy. An implementation plan will detail tasks, assigned responsibilities and timeframes and will be monitored by a working group comprising members of the Board of the FRC National Forum.

The implementation of the strategy will be supported by an effective organisational structure, a prioritisation of key activities, development of an annual work plan, formal bi-annual reviews and the identification of performance indicators for the Forum's work.

Glossary

Combat Poverty Agency (CPA)

Established in 1986, the Combat Poverty Agency is a national statutory organisation in Ireland responsible for developing national strategies against poverty. It promotes awareness of poverty, undertakes research into poverty and supports community development organisations in fighting poverty.

Community Development

Community Development is a process enabling people to develop their capacity to actively participate in shaping the society of which they are a part. Community Development seeks to challenge the causes of disadvantage and poverty and to offer new opportunities for those lacking choice, power and resources. It works towards enhancing groups and communities ability to articulate their needs so that they can influence the processes that structure their everyday lives.

Family

The FRC National Forum recognises 'family' in its broadest sense. Family defies definition, and any understanding of family needs to be encompassing of all sections of the community in recognition of diversity, rights and inclusion.

Family Support

Family Support is a set of beliefs and an approach to strengthening and empowering families and communities so that they can foster the development of children, youth and family members. It entails statutory and voluntary agencies working together to become responsive, flexible, family-focused and holistic in meeting the needs of families. In adopting a family support methodology, Family Resource Centres strive to transform Irish society into caring communities of

citizens that put children and families first and that ensure all children and families get what they need to succeed.

Family Support Agency (FSA)

The Family Support Agency (FSA) was formally established in 2003, under the Family Support Agency Act, 2001. The FSA has responsibility for a number of family programmes and services in line with the Government's *Families First* approach to the development of family policy and service.

Family & Community Services Resource Centre Programme

The *Family and Community Services Resource Centre Programme* provides financial assistance to projects towards the staffing and equipping of local family resource centres which provide a focal point for community development activities. The programme is aimed at addressing all areas of poverty and disadvantage and supports family resource centres in areas where communities are contending with multiple disadvantage and where families are facing significant challenges in trying to rear their children and secure positive futures for them.

Family Resource Centres (FRC)

Family resource centres are projects involved in anti-poverty and social inclusion initiatives in their communities. They have a clear focus in identifying the needs of family and in providing community based supports. The aim of a family and community Services resource centre is essentially to help combat disadvantage by improving the functioning of the family unit. Centres can provide special services for lone parent families, young mothers and others considered in need of extra support and can act as a first step to community participation and social

inclusion. Centres actively foster the participation of local people, in all aspects of their work. Participants are involved in the planning and management of centres as well as the design and delivery of specific programmes.

Family Resource Centres in 'pre-development' denotes centres in areas that have been approved in principle for inclusion in the *Family and Community Services Resource Centre Programme*.

Having Our Say Programme

This Combat Poverty Agency initiative aims to strengthen the voices and practices of people and communities living in poverty in the development and implementation of anti-poverty policies and programmes.

National Anti-Poverty Strategy (NAPS)

NAPS is a ten year plan of the Irish Government aimed at tackling poverty which involves consultation, target setting and poverty proofing.

National Action Plan Against Poverty and Social Exclusion (NAP/incl)

This is a two-year National Action Plans agreed by EU member states to work towards greater social inclusion through encouraging sustainable economic growth and quality employment for the poorer sectors of society. The Office for Social Inclusion, located in the Department of Social and Family Affairs, has overall responsibility for developing, co-ordinating and driving Ireland's National Action Plan against Poverty and Social Exclusion.

NAPS Social Inclusion Forum

The NAPS Social Inclusion Forum provides those who are not directly involved with the social partnership process with an opportunity to input their views and experiences on the implementation of the NAPS.

National Children's Resource Centre

Operated by Barnardos, the National Children's Resource Centre provides information, training and research on all aspects of childcare.

National Economic and Social Council (NESC)

Established in 1973, the National Economic and Social Council advises the Government on strategic issues relating to the development of the economy and the achievement of social justice and provides a forum for discussion on policy issues for government with social partners.

National Economic and Social Forum (NESF)

The National Economic and Social Forum (NESF) was established by the government in 1993 to develop economic and social policy initiatives, particularly initiatives to combat unemployment, and provide opportunities for discussion and developing consensus on social and economic matters.

Support Agency Network (SAN)

This is a network of regional community development support agencies that provide training and advice to family resource centres.

Social inclusion

Social inclusion is about ensuring the marginalised and those living in poverty have greater participation in decision making which affects their lives, allowing them to improve their living standards and their overall well-being.

Social Partnership

Social Partnership is a process where government, employers, trade unions, farmers and the community and voluntary sector devise economic and social agreements for an agreed timeframe. At local level, social partners are included in many decision-making and service delivery

structures such as county development boards and area-based partnerships.