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...y of the Interim Report on the
...-Based Initiative on Long-Term
Unemployment established under the
Programme for Economic and Social Progress

A Partnership Approach to Long-Term Unemployment

by
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with the assistance of
Kieran Mc Keown, Ph D



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A Summary of the Interim Evaluation Report on the Area-Based Initiative on Long-Term Unemployment established under the Programme for Economic and Social Progress

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Foreword

The Area-Based Response to Long-Term Unemployment has been in operation on a pilot basis since 1991. It is an extremely important and radical initiative. The importance of the initiative lies in the fact that it is addressing the single most urgent problem facing this country, long-term unemployment. Any major initiative aimed at developing new and better responses to this issue merits the most serious consideration. Its impact and effectiveness is of importance not only to those who are suffering long-term unemployment but to Irish society as a whole and to the future development of the economy.

The radical aspect of the Area-Based Response is that it is developing an approach which directly challenges our excessively centralised and compartmentalised bureaucratic and administrative system. By putting the emphasis on partnership between the social partners, government agencies and local communities, by emphasising the need for a much more integrated, holistic and wide-ranging response by the different agencies, by stressing the active involvement of those affected by unemployment and poverty in the planning and implementation of the initiative, by focusing on local communities experiencing the greatest disadvantage and by stressing the decentralised nature of the initiative the Area-Based Response represents an enormous contrast to the traditional ways of doing things.

To date the Area-Based Response has been on a pilot basis in twelve areas. However, in the Programme for Economic and Social Progress (PESP), the intention to extend the initiative nationwide was indicated. If this is to happen it is important that lessons are learned from the pilot phase. The need to learn lessons is reinforced by the importance and radical nature of the initiative. Thus, the Central Review Committee of PESP decided that the pilot phase should be evaluated. The Combat Poverty Agency was asked to take responsibility for commissioning and supervising the evaluation. The evaluation of the programme is being undertaken by Sarah Craig with the assistance of Dr. Kieran Mc Keown.

From the beginning it was agreed that it would be important to draw out

lessons as the initiative evolved. Thus an initial report was produced on the setting up phase. It was then decided that in the course of a two year evaluation a mid-point or interim report would be produced. That report has been submitted to the Central Review Committee.

The purpose of this short publication is to make the main findings of the interim report as widely available as possible. It summarises the key findings and lessons to date. In publishing this summary the Combat Poverty Agency hopes that it will be of interest and help to those involved in the twelve pilot partnerships and to many others considering similar initiatives elsewhere. Those who are interested in pursuing any of the issues raised in more detail should read the full Interim Report. Copies are available in all the twelve pilot partnerships or in the Combat Poverty Agency's library.

There are two points that readers of this summary should bear in mind. The first is that this is a mid-way report and it is too soon to reach definite conclusions about the effectiveness and impact of the area-based response to long-term unemployment. The second point is that a programme such as the area-based response cannot be expected to solve the problem of long-term unemployment. The success of an approach such as the area-based response depends to a large extent on the climate within which it is operating. Thus, effective job-creation strategies combined with a significant increase in the amount of EC and national resources devoted to tackling long-term unemployment will be vital if the commitment and dedication of those involved in the area-based partnerships is to have its full impact. I would like to acknowledge all the hard work and expertise which has gone into the preparation of the Interim Report by the researchers Sarah Craig and Dr. Kieran Mc Keown. The co-operation and assistance of the twelve partnerships and members of the National Co-ordinating Team, and in particular of Dr Tony Crooks, has been greatly appreciated.

Hugh Frazer

Director, Combat Poverty Agency

April 1993

Evaluation of the PESP Initiative on Long-Term Unemployment

1. Introduction

1.1. This document presents, in summary form, the main findings of the interim evaluation of the Programme for Economic and Social Progress (PESP) Area-Based Initiative on Long-Term Unemployment. The initiative was established in 1991 on a pilot basis as: 'an integrated approach designed to implement a community response, in particular local areas, to long-term unemployment and the danger of long-term unemployment'. Twelve partnership structures were set up between May and November 1991 to work on a pilot basis at local level. The 1991 Review report has already documented the setting-up of the partnerships. The aims of the interim report are to describe and analyse the structure and process of the initiative and to examine the interim outcomes of the work to date. The report focuses on the period from June 1991 to December 1992. The work was commissioned by the Central Review Committee and was carried out under the responsibility of the Combat Poverty Agency. The report has been finalised following consultation with the twelve partnerships and members of the National Co-ordinating Team (NCT) about its contents. Since the report is an interim document it does not make conclusive statements about the work of the pilot partnerships but, instead, raises issues about the functioning of the initiative.

1.2. Twelve pilot areas were selected for participation in the initiative, five in Dublin: Tallaght, Finglas, Dublin Inner City, Coolock/Darndale and Ballymun, four in rural areas: South West Wexford, South West Kerry, North Mayo and West Waterford, and the remaining three in urban areas outside Dublin: Dundalk, Limerick and North Cork City. The twelve areas were selected on the basis of three criteria: geographical spread, the extent of unemployment and long-term unemployment and the existence of structures and activities already in place on which the PESP initiative could build.

1.3. The areas show considerable differences in relation to population levels and spread. They also differ significantly in the levels of unemployment and long-term unemployment they present. As a consequence, responses to the problem of long-term unemployment have not been identical across areas.

2. Background to the Initiative

2.1. Section VII of PESP described a local area-based initiative as a pilot scheme to combine modules of education, social welfare, training and work schemes with job-creation and enterprise for the purpose of reducing the numbers of long-term unemployed. Partnerships were established to provide a structure whereby greater co-ordination of existing services for the unemployed could be rationalised and monitored and through which enterprise could be encouraged at a local level.

2.2. The pilot period for each partnership was set at approximately two and a half years, until the end of 1993. It was envisaged that as these partnerships developed, similar structures would be put in place elsewhere as resources became available. It was understood that after the pilot phase, the initiative would be implemented nationwide in 1994, if successful.

3. Partnership Composition

3.1. Each partnership consists of a chairperson, a board of directors and a manager. The manager and his/her assistant(s) are full-time members of staff. The partnerships were established as limited companies. The board is a tripartite structure of:

- community representatives

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- statutory agencies
- social partners.

Most boards have about eighteen board members. The board of directors is mainly composed of local people including professional community workers and activists working at community level, the main State agencies providing education, training and job-creation services as well as the health, welfare and housing agencies within the area and local employers, farming organisations and trade union representatives. The main task of the board is to direct policy in areas of education, training, employment and community development at a local level.

4. Methodology and Data Sources for the Evaluation

4.1. The methodology used for the evaluation is based on a model which examines three aspects of the initiative:

- the range of inputs into the initiative
- the range of outputs which the initiative has produced
- the set of processes by which inputs are translated into outputs.

In this context, seven modules of work which cover these three aspects have been carried out. These modules are:

- the context and characteristics of the pilot areas which presents a profile of the areas where the initiative is being implemented
- *the resource base of the initiative* estimates the total amount of resources used by the PESP initiative both directly and indirectly
- *processes at work in partnerships* describes the organisational structures and procedures within partnerships
- *activities of partnerships* analyses the range of activities initiated by partnerships
- *outputs of the initiative* looks at the impact of partnership activity on service delivery, unemployment and job-creation
- *the role of the National Co-ordinating Team* assesses the

contribution of the National Co-ordinating Team in the setting up and development of the initiative

- *overview of the initiative.*

It should be noted that this report will only address the issue of intermediate outputs in the initiative; final outputs can only be determined when the pilot stage is complete. This part of the evaluation does not include the views of long-term unemployed people in the twelve areas about the impact of the initiative on them. However, this work will be included in the final evaluation.

4.2. The evaluation of the initiative proved difficult in a number of respects. First, the local area focus of the initiative means that there are no identifiable baseline data that can be applied specifically to the pilot areas. Second, existing information sources are incompatible because they have different units of analysis (e.g. wards, postal districts, Employment Exchange catchment areas). Finally, the problems with information collection meant that the establishment of indicators of progress was virtually impossible. For the most part the evaluation has used existing data sources as estimates of the situation. The experience of the evaluation highlights the need for accurate and accessible information at local level for:

- the selection of local structures
- the establishment of criteria for monitoring and evaluation
- planning and implementation at local level.

State agencies have a particular role to play in making available the information they have.

4.3. The greatest methodological difficulty arose in determining the number of unemployed and long-term unemployed people in each of the partnership areas. The Dublin Inner City area in particular, presents difficulties due to the number of claimants who come into city centre

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Employment Exchanges to receive payments but do not live there. Figures from local Employment Exchanges provide information on the number of unemployed who are registered in each catchment area. Difficulties with the use of this information are as follows:

- persons residing in the catchment area may sign on at an exchange which is not in that area
- catchment areas are based on postal districts which do not necessarily correspond with partnership areas
- catchment areas for men and women are different
- individuals may sign on at exchanges in the PESP areas but do not live there.

In addition, the Live Register information does not strictly cover all the unemployed in any one area because it only applies to those who are registered for payments. There may be an additional number of unemployed people, particularly women, who are not on the Live Register because they are ineligible for payments. In the absence of any other information source the Live Register is used in the evaluation as an indicator of the extent of the unemployment problem but recognition has been taken of these limitations.

5. General Findings

5.1. The findings of the evaluation show that the initiative has been reasonably successful since its establishment. The main findings are:

- Partnership structures comprising the three sectors community representatives, statutory agency representatives and social partners have come together and have begun to establish a strategy for tackling the problem of long-term unemployment at local level.
- Given the nature of the partnership structure considerable time has gone into the establishment of working procedures at both

board and sub-board level.

- Board members have shown considerable commitment to the initiative, particularly with the level of time and energy given by them to attending meetings and other partnership activities since partnerships were established. The amount of time given by board members to board meetings alone is equivalent to thirty full-time positions from when the initiative began until the end of 1992.
- A significant achievement of the initiative has been the design and agreement of an Action Plan by the three sectors represented. Each partnership has drawn up an Action Plan for its area which has been agreed at board level.
- Aspects of the Area Action Plans are currently being implemented. The availability of an EC local area development grant - the Global Grant - at the end of 1992 has facilitated the implementation process.

6. Achievement of Objectives

6.1 The objectives of the initiative are:

- to work with people who are long-term unemployed and those in danger of becoming long-term unemployed in order to improve their skills and self-confidence, their involvement in the community and to increase their opportunities of getting a job or starting their own business;
- to promote the type of fundamental attitudinal change needed to enable individuals to generate enterprise thereby creating additional employment and to encourage a more positive attitude towards the recruitment of people who are long term unemployed;
- to work at the local level to generate more jobs through sustainable enterprises and through the promotion of local

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economic projects and initiatives which will stimulate confidence and investment.

The level of success in achieving each of the objectives of the initiative varies. In general, the progress of partnerships has been relatively better in working with the long-term unemployed and in co-ordination and integration of education and training than in enterprise, changing attitudes and job-creation.

6.2. To achieve the objectives of the initiative, each partnership spent the first half of 1992 designing and agreeing an Area Action Plan. For the most part, Area Action Plans incorporated a mission statement and objectives of the partnerships as well as key activities to be undertaken to fulfil them. The degree to which plans have assumed an integrated area development focus varies between partnerships. The emphasis on the elements of the process also varies in response to local undertakings. The value of the plans lies in their attempts to focus on the needs of the local area and, in a number of cases, to relate changes in service-provision at local level to the national picture. The design of plans was also useful as a means of bringing the board together around a common goal and forging cohesion at an early stage. Similarly, the gelling of sub-committees was also encouraged by each sub-structure playing a key role at design stage.

6.3. The experience of partnerships in the planning stage indicates that sufficient time and commitment to the process are needed to ensure that all interests are represented. The work carried out by partnerships in 1992 suggests that, where there are good levels of consultation across sectors and involvement by a range of local groups within the PESP area that plans have developed on a consensus basis. The identification of a broad range of activities which require funding has been useful in raising issues about accessing other sources of funding for these activities. The additional work undertaken by some

partnerships in preparing submissions for EC Structural Funding (1994 - 1997) is also a positive step in encouraging a local area development focus. The experience of partnerships suggests that at the planning stage in future similar initiatives, the following issues ought to be considered:

- the amount of time given to the planning phase - four to six months is needed.
- the level of consultation undertaken locally in relation to the plan - the greater the level of consultation the more comprehensive and locally acceptable the plan will be.
- the availability of base-line information on the area is vital for local policy planning.

6.4. Working with the Long-Term Unemployed to Improve their Opportunities

6.4.1. Work of partnerships at local level highlights the need to focus on the long-term unemployed as the group for which there is least likely to be opportunities. The Initial Contact programme undertaken by each partnership was carried out in a number of different ways but the emphasis was on assessment of the needs of the long-term unemployed and in designing ways of meeting these needs. In total the partnerships made contact with about 11,000 unemployed and long-term unemployed people in the pilot areas. The main findings in respect of this work are:

- that the long-term unemployed are not a homogeneous group and that they present a range of needs to be met
- there is an underlying need for tailored approaches to meet the range of needs presented by the long-term unemployed.

The work of partnerships highlights the need for a progression of interventions which range across the spectrum from initial needs assessment to suitable education and training, encouragement and support for enterprise and to employment all of which need to be

accessible at local level.

6.5. Co-ordination and Integration of Education and Training

6.5.1. Partner agencies with responsibility for the provision of education and training have responded for the most part in a positive way to the demands of the initiative. Successful interventions include:

- an increase in the number of Vocational Training Opportunities Scheme (VTOS) places in the twelve areas from 200 to 784, representing an increase from 30.3% to 39% of the national provision for VTOS
- an increase in Youthreach places provided through the VEC from 333 to 580 places across the twelve areas
- a general increase in the number of people resident in the twelve pilot areas participating on training courses in those areas from 3.7% to 5.5% of the total unemployed across the areas
- establishment of the Community Employment Development Programme (CEDP) on a pilot basis in the twelve areas. The CEDP is an enhanced employment programme for the long-term unemployed similar to the Social Employment Scheme (SES) but in which levels of training are included for participants. Eligibility for the CEDP was made considerably easier with the inclusion of those over 18 years as opposed to 25 years. In addition, lone-parents were eligible. At the end of 1992 the number of participants on CEDP from within the twelve areas was *circa* 2,000.
- partnerships have developed in conjunction with FAS and the VEC a range of short 'taster' and feeder courses for the long-term unemployed to encourage them to get involved in training and education initiatives.

At partnership level there has been a considerable improvement in the

co-ordination of service-delivery for the long-term unemployed. This has been facilitated by staff from the different agencies working together at partnership level and by the involvement of service-providers from both the VEC and FAS on the education and training sub-committees of the partnerships. The accessibility of services has been greatly improved by:

- providing information on available services in a more co-ordinated fashion
- development of a one-stop shop approach e.g. Dundalk, Wexford. This helps to reduce the segmented nature of service-provision.

The work undertaken by partnerships has succeeded in placing over 5,000 people in educational courses and a further 6,000 on training courses run by the main provision agencies across the twelve areas. Although the findings of the evaluation suggest that there has been an overall improvement in the provision of training at local level, the findings show a disappointing level of change in relation to the redirection of resources to those areas most severely affected by unemployment. Increased provision is not in line with levels of registered unemployment across the twelve areas. This suggests that there is considerable work to be done in this area in 1993 to make a substantial impact on the problems of long-term unemployment within the pilot areas.

6.6. Enterprise Development

6.6.1. Work on enterprise early in 1992 was slower to progress than the other areas of work undertaken by partnerships. It was generally agreed that this is one of the most difficult tasks undertaken in the initiative. In the latter half of 1992 a number of developments in this area have been positive. These include:

- the introduction of the Area Enterprise Allowance (see below)

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has successfully allowed over 200 people in the twelve areas to establish their own businesses while maintaining social welfare payments for one year

- the development of enterprise education modules for incorporation into existing curricula (e.g. Mayo, West Waterford and Tallaght).

The Area Enterprise Allowance has been facilitated by the provision of practical support through workshops and lectures e.g. in West Waterford and Coolock/Darndale) and through the support of enterprise development workers (e.g. in Dundalk and Wexford). In addition, some areas have undertaken the co-ordination of existing enterprise agencies within their area (e.g. Dublin Inner City). The emphasis of enterprise has mainly been on indigenous small-scale operations at the local level. The continued development of the enterprise initiative in 1993 is encouraged by the appointment in most partnerships of staff with responsibility for enterprise issues.

6.7. Attitudinal Change and Job-Creation

6.7.1. Through the work of Initial Contact a number of partnerships made contact with local employers. Reasons for contact were:

- identification of job vacancies which partnership staff then assisted long-term unemployed people locally to fill (e.g. in Finglas)
- assessment of recruitment practices with a view to encouraging employers to take on the long-term unemployed (e.g. Tallaght)
- promotion of programmes such as the Employment Subsidy Scheme (ESS) as, for example, in Wexford.

These interventions have been successful in ensuring that employers are both aware and supportive of the partnership approach being developed in their locality.

6.7.2. Attitudes of employers are an important aspect in the issue of access to work. Common perceptions about the long-term unemployed include that they have bad work habits and are difficult to train. Studies in a number of the PESP partnership areas showed that employers believe that the long-term unemployed are less employable. It was also noted that, in the eyes of employers, the long-term unemployed compared very unfavourably to young educated and trained job-seekers. In Tallaght, a study by the partnership highlighted that action on a number of fronts is necessary. Factors affecting the employment of long-term unemployed people included: measures to increase the demand for labour (e.g. reduction of PRSI, availability of subsidies), improvements in the quality of labour supply from among the long-term unemployed, namely work experience and recent job-related training. Employers also suggested the need to improve the job application skills of the long-term unemployed and the need for agencies to link into the specific requirements of individual companies. All of these factors represent a challenge to initiatives like the PESP initiative to respond to these issues on a multi-dimensional level.

At board level, employers generally agree that the process has raised awareness about the long-term unemployed and work to date has helped to refocus attitudes of employers about their worth as potential employees. In Coolock/Darndale, for example, employers on the board designed a proposal for a Job Placement Service.

At national level, the contribution of employers through the Enterprise Trust has been less promising. The Enterprise Trust was established shortly after the PESP partnerships were set up as a means of facilitating the involvement of employers in the enterprise elements of the Area Action Plans of partnerships. The role of the Enterprise Trust is to raise funds from employers to resource the enterprise element of the initiative. In the 1992 Budget, the Enterprise Trust was given approved status under

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the Finance Act so that contributions are tax deductible and have covenant status. Funding by the Enterprise Trust was only made available in November 1992, so its impact will be assessed at a later stage in the evaluation. However, in terms of distribution, the results are disappointing. At the end of 1992 only six of the twelve partnerships received funding. The total allocation was £95,000.

Since the initiative began, almost 400 unemployed people have been placed in jobs in the pilot areas. This is encouraging given the sharp rise in unemployment nationally and low levels of economic growth. Most of these 400 placements are as a result of improving access to the labour market as opposed to the creation of new jobs. The impact on job creation of the new enterprises established in the twelve areas will be evaluated at a later stage. However, progress to date in job-creation has been slow.

6.8. The Role of Community Development

6.8.1. Underlying the work of partnerships in achieving the objectives of the initiative is the development of a community-based and community-focused approach to long-term unemployment. However, the definition of community as it applies to the pilot areas differs significantly. Community representation on the partnership boards come from a diverse range of people. Existing networks like that of the Community Development Programme operated by the Department of Social Welfare through the Combat Poverty Agency, have facilitated the development of the community focus. However, the experience of the programme indicated the need for the community sector to be resourced for its participation in partnership structures.

7. Resources for Local Area Development

7.1. The main funding sources for partnership activity are: Department of the Taoiseach allocations (£1.5 million for 1991 and 1992), Enterprise Trust money (£95,000 in 1992), existing local activity funding such as LEADER, EC Poverty 3, Community Reserve and HORIZON, existing statutory agency expenditure and Global Grant money. The Global Grant is a local development grant of £8 million which was made available by the EC. Area partnerships were encouraged to apply for it. Half of the IR£8 million was allocated to the PESP pilot areas. The other half has been made available to other local community bodies who wish to apply. The management of the global grant is being undertaken by an intermediary company - Area Development Limited (ADM), comprising representatives of employers, unions, local authorities, business innovation centres and community representatives. At the end of 1992, each partnership was allocated £100,000 from the Global Grant.

Given that the Global Grant and Enterprise Trust monies were only made available at the end of 1992, their impact on the activities of partnerships has not been widely covered at this stage of the evaluation.

7.2. In estimating the resource base for the initiative in 1991 and 1992, the evaluation highlights that there are significant differences in relation to the level of resources available in the pilot areas. For example, South West Kerry, which records the second lowest unemployment figures of the twelve areas has the highest direct resource allocation of the twelve. However, it still receives the same administrative budget and Global Grant allocation as the other areas. The findings suggest that there has been no real attempts in the twelve areas to realign resource provision on the basis of unemployment.

7.3. The net resource base across the twelve areas is estimated at over £50 million for 1991 and 1992. Of this £50 million, over three quarters are controlled by the statutory agencies involved in the

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provision of education and training. By comparison, only one tenth of the resource base is under direct control of the partnership structures. This suggests that progress is dependent, not only on the amount of the resource base, but also on access by local bodies to decision-making on State agency expenditure.

7.4. The evaluation also shows that for all of 1991 and the most part of 1992 most partnerships did not have significant additional resources for project-based activity to be undertaken at local level. The experience of the initiative shows that, with regard to the resources needed for local area development the following are needed:

- additional input of resources for the long-term unemployed at local level
- commitment by the main delivery agencies to target expenditure in areas of highest unemployment and disadvantage
- commitment by statutory agencies to the redirection of resources based on needs highlighted at local level.

8. Responses at Policy Level

8.1. The initiative has created the opportunity to link the experience of partnerships at local level into the national policy making process through the National Co-ordinating Team structure. Since the initiative began, two main developments in central policy have been made in response to needs identified at local level. These are:

- the establishment of the CEDP on a pilot basis in the twelve areas (as discussed previously)
- the approval of Area Allowances in the pilot areas for those on CEDP, in education and training (Area Training Allowance), establishing their own business (Area Enterprise Allowance) or entering employment after a period of unemployment (Area Employment Allowance).

At the end of 1992, the Area Employment Allowance and the Area Training Allowance had not been implemented. Their take-up in 1993 is dependent on their promotion by the Department of Social Welfare.

8.2. In principle the work undertaken in relation to the establishment of the Area Allowances represents a response from central policy-making to issues identified locally and progressed by the mechanics established in the PESP pilot initiative. This has been an important outcome of the initiative and represents a worthwhile contribution to the work undertaken in 1992. The effectiveness of each of these developments will be assessed in the final evaluation.

9. Internal Structure and Operation of the Pilot Partnerships

9.1. The evaluation shows that, overall, the partnerships are working reasonably well at local level. The findings also suggest that reasonable levels of commitment need to be given to the initiative from the main delivery agencies for it to succeed. The experience of the initiative shows that at partnership level, statutory agency board members need to come from a sufficiently senior position in their organisation to be able to influence decision-making within their agencies. The experience of the evaluation in respect of the social partners suggests they have an important contribution to make to the partnership process but their role needs to be more clearly defined.

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9.2. Most of the work of the partnerships now takes place at sub-committee level. This structure works well because sub-committees tend to be focused on one aspect of the initiative and the boards of partnerships help to integrate these areas. Communication between sub-committees and the board of management is better if convened by managers and or staff members as opposed to individual board members. The co-option of non-board members onto sub-committees is a valuable means of engaging expertise on particular aspects of the initiative and of spreading the workload of partnerships more evenly at local level. Co-option is also an additional way of including the local community in the process. Executive sub-committees are, by and large, useful for moving along general issues but partnerships need to ensure that the power of the board does not become concentrated into a small group of individuals.

9.3. The role of the chairperson of the partnerships is significant. The need to have individuals who are of sufficiently high standing at local level and have an understanding of issues across the aspects of the initiative is acknowledged. The difficulties associated with finding such an individual are rooted in their availability and the amount of time they can offer on a voluntary basis. The manager's role is also crucial in ensuring the continuity of the work, co-ordination of activity at local level and maintaining links with central policy-making.

9.4. Staffing of partnerships has been low in relation to the amount of work generated at local level. Existing arrangements in respect of those members of staff seconded from FAS, the Vocational Education Committee (VEC) and the Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU) suggest that clearer terms of reference *vis a vis* parent organisations and the partnerships are needed. The task of bringing together staff from a number of organisational backgrounds has, in the experience of the initiative, been beneficial in terms of access to organisations, cross-fertilisation of information and methods of working, and, improving

relationships between agencies.

10. The Role of the National Co-ordinating Team (NCT)

10.1. The NCT has played a major role in the development of the initiative. The importance of having senior civil servants engaged in the process is vital in two respects. First, the commitment of key personnel to the concepts of the initiative has been crucial in ensuring that its value is recognised. Secondly, in co-ordination, the need for personnel who are sufficiently senior within their own organisations to be able to influence decision-making on issues of policy has been acknowledged through the experience of the NCT.

10.2. The role of the Department of the Taoiseach in the development of the initiative has also been of significant value. The appointment of that particular Department for the co-ordination of the initiative has been crucial in ensuring that all aspects of the initiative have been progressed. The experience of the programme also suggests that, for the initiative to succeed the implementing body must, at an early stage in the process, secure the commitment of the main delivery agencies to the programme. This means not only agreement in principle but also in practical terms in relation to the availability of information and resources and receptiveness to changes in service-delivery where that is necessary.

10.3. The evaluation showed that, in 1992, the NCT operated better than in 1991 because of delegation of particular functions to individual members. The partnership nature of the NCT was significant in ensuring an understanding of the need for a multidisciplinary approach. However, the NCT might have facilitated further development of the multi-disciplinary approach at local level by engaging in the organisation of more training programmes

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designed for staff and management of partnerships at an early stage.

10.4. The evaluation also shows a decline in satisfaction with the NCT in October 1992 by comparison with 1991. In spite of this, support provided at local level by NCT members was useful in ensuring links with central policy. Similarly, access to the CRC on issues raised at partnership level has also been useful for progressing policy issues.

11. Recommendations for the Establishment of Future Area-Based Partnerships

11.1. On the basis of the findings of the interim evaluation of the Area-Based Initiative on Long-Term Unemployment, the following recommendations should be applied to the development of future area-based partnership structures:

- **ensuring that the focus of the partnerships remains on the long-term unemployed:** The long-term unemployed represent that portion of the unemployed for whom it is most difficult to access opportunities. The need to provide services which are targeted towards the long-term unemployed should be continued.
- **development of a progressive approach to addressing the unemployment problem:** a progressive approach involves the development of a range of interventions from information to advice, education and training and enterprise and job-creation all of which are accessible to long-term unemployed people on a local community basis.
- **ensuring that adequate time is allotted for establishing partnership structures and for the design of plans:** the findings show that 4 - 6 months are needed for planning at partnership level. They also show that plans can only be

implemented after the establishment of working procedures and the agreement of priorities at local level.

- **establishment, at an early stage, of criteria regarding the role of the main service-provision agencies and their potential contribution:** contractual agreements may need to be developed between service-delivery agencies and partnerships to ensure that information and/or resources are provided within a suitable timescale and that agency representatives at board level have a clear mandate from their organisations about their role in the partnership process.
- **development of procedures for aligning information sources and the establishment of base-line data at county level that can be used for planning:** in particular, that Social Welfare realign its payment mechanism on the basis of wards rather than on employment exchanges. This would significantly enhance the comparability of social welfare data with Census data and, thereby, provide a means for improving accessibility and comparability of information on a local area basis.
- **assessing the level of resources that will be available to each area and allocation of additional resources where required:** the availability of resources at local level provides the opportunity for development of a range of services at local level to tackle unemployment. Resources need to be sufficiently flexible and targeted at areas of highest unemployment and long-term unemployment.
- **ensuring a broad-based community representation that takes account of the range of groups that are included in the unemployed population:** the community sector can contribute substantially to planning and implementation of local

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designed for staff and management of partnerships at an early stage.

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11.1. On the basis of the findings of the interim evaluation of the Area-Based Initiative on Long-Term Unemployment, the following recommendations should be applied to the development of future area-based partnership structures:

- **ensuring that the focus of the partnerships remains on the long-term unemployed:** The long-term unemployed represent that portion of the unemployed for whom it is most difficult to access opportunities. The need to provide services which are targeted towards the long-term unemployed should be continued.
- **development of a progressive approach to addressing the unemployment problem:** a progressive approach involves the development of a range of interventions from information to advice, education and training and enterprise and job-creation all of which are accessible to long-term unemployed people on a local community basis.
- **ensuring that adequate time is allotted for establishing partnership structures and for the design of plans:** the findings show that 4 - 6 months are needed for planning at partnership level. They also show that plans can only be

implemented after the establishment of working procedures and the agreement of priorities at local level.

- **establishment, at an early stage, of criteria regarding the role of the main service-provision agencies and their potential contribution:** contractual agreements may need to be developed between service-delivery agencies and partnerships to ensure that information and/or resources are provided within a suitable timescale and that agency representatives at board level have a clear mandate from their organisations about their role in the partnership process.
- **development of procedures for aligning information sources and the establishment of base-line data at county level that can be used for planning:** in particular, that Social Welfare realign its payment mechanism on the basis of wards rather than on employment exchanges. This would significantly enhance the comparability of social welfare data with Census data and, thereby, provide a means for improving accessibility and comparability of information on a local area basis.
- **assessing the level of resources that will be available to each area and allocation of additional resources where required:** the availability of resources at local level provides the opportunity for development of a range of services at local level to tackle unemployment. Resources need to be sufficiently flexible and targeted at areas of highest unemployment and long-term unemployment.
- **ensuring a broad-based community representation that takes account of the range of groups that are included in the unemployed population:** the community sector can contribute substantially to planning and implementation of local

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- **continuing the integration and co-ordination of the functions of education and training at a local level:** this approach improves communication between the main delivery agencies and heightens awareness at local level of existing provision. This in turn leads to a tailoring of approaches to meeting need. For this approach to continue, a greater level of devolvement to local level is required by the agencies involved.
- **continuing development of enterprise and job-creation:** in particular, the support for small and indigenous enterprise ensuring that areas of greatest potential are identified and that enterprise initiatives are targeted towards the long-term unemployed.
- **continuing the multi-dimensional approach to unemployment:** thereby ensuring a combined focus on economic, social and community-based development as it impacts on unemployment.

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