

## An Emancipatory Activation Policy

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## Objectives and structure

- Explore issues concerning activation of lone parents
  - Introduce Emancipatory Activation Policy
  - Explore Legal, Institutional and Staffing implementation challenges
  - Conclude with comment about discourse and politics of debate

## Policy approaches to Irish low income mothers

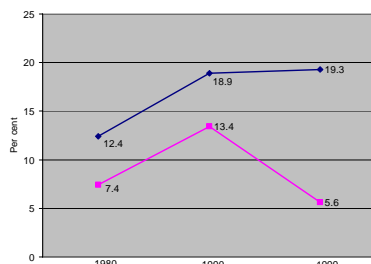
- Post famine and 1937 catholic consitution widows as deserving lone mothers, institutional/adoption response to lone mother hood
- Strong male breadwinner in tax and social welfare system (Shaver & Bradshaw 1995, Lewis 1992) , Concept of dependant qualified adult.
- Lone parents/qualified adults – till child 21 (Care ethic Slevik 2005), mid 1990's growing work focus 'OPFP'
- NESC, FAS, DSFA, OECD all encouraging activation but slow and nervous discourse. Stress on lone parents rather than qualified adults but still 'premature' given weak infrastructure, political resistance and possible constiitutional challenge

## Recent approaches to activation

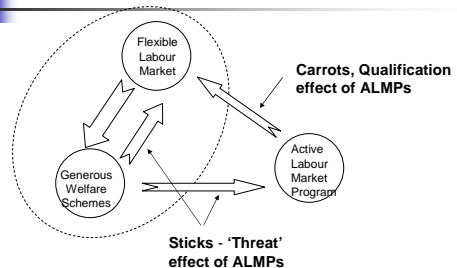
- 1980's high unemployment, EU structural funds focus on activation. 1986 CSW 'no point in conditionality', 1987 'Job search' political
- 1990-95 job growth, low unemployment, centre left 'supportive conditionality, sensitive activation'
- 1996-2000 EU NEAP, labour shortages, centre right 'reciprocal obligations, systematic engagement'
- Significant activation (in context of low social spending but low quality, little progression - largely effective rethoric – increased exit
- Relationship between PES/FAS and IS/DSFA Indecon 2005)

## NESC DWS focus on Dependency

pink – unemployment, blue – benefit dependency



## The "Golden Triangle" of Flexicurity



## DSFA Proposal 2006/T16/NDP

- Encourage family formation choices ↑
- End limitation and dependency ↑
- Encourage and support work ↑
- Oblige work ↓
- Abolish OPFP and QA
- Replace both with means tested Parental Allowance for primary carers of child under 8
- When child 8 transfer to Job Seekers Allowance but obliged to seek only 19.5 hours work

## Three stages of activation

1. Household means tested Parental Allowance till youngest child eight.
2. Engagement with DSFA 'job facilitator' (on threat of deferred payment) from when child aged 5-7
3. When youngest child eight then on NEAP in FAS JSA with full conditionality (but only for 19.5 hours)

## Age at which work requirement and economic participation rates (not correlated)

A U S T R A L I A	A U S T R I A	B E L G I U M	C A N A D A	D E N M A R K	F I N L A N D	F R A N C E	G E R M A N Y	G R E E C E	I R E L A N D	I T A L Y	J A P A N	L U X E M B O U R G	N E T H E R L A N D	N Z	N O R W A Y	P O R T U G A L	S P A I N	S W E D E N	U K	U S	
5	3	3	6	4		3			5/8	3	1	6	5	5	3			3		1	
46	80	60	51	73	65	66	67	75	53	65	83	82	42	45	68	88	68	68	52	68	

## International evidence

- Most countries have work requirement at around child enters primary school
- Significant change and experimentation depending on political hue (NL, NZ, UK, Canada)
- Local variation significant
- Discretion and exemptions for health, childcare, childwell being, rural, local attitudes, home schooling
- Evaluations mixed, too hard to generalise but over all impacts small and often negative given low earning capacity of lone parents.

## Value and practical issues

- Ethic of care
- Rationality mistake
- Class/race/age/culture differentiates mothers
- Different value placed on child rearing v paid work
- Working class value on being there
- Different experiences of paid work
- Discourse impacts on esteem
- Health (child/adult)
- Coordination
- Time
- Child well being – depends on financial return
- Control and quality of employment, adolescents
- Significant number of exemptions/discretion
- Evidence – making work pay is not sustainable

## Emancipatory Policy

- Lodomel and Trickey Less/More
- Torfing Defensive/Offensive
- Nicaise Workfare/Social Inclusion

Irish policy (NEAP) is work first stressing reductions in live register as main outcome

Emancipatory stresses empowerment, capability, choice and holistic sustainable family inclusion

### Comparing work focused and emancipatory approaches

- Work first
  - Targeted at welfare
  - Evaluated by savings and live register exits
  - No extra supports
  - Sanctions based
  - Negative discourse
  - IN work poor
  - OUT work poor
- Social Inclusion
  - Legal safeguards
  - Quality provision - costs
  - Evaluated by tracking longer term outcomes
  - Social integration valid
  - More education/training supports - universal
  - Generous welfare in and out of employment

### Features of emancipatory framework

- Social and human capital or education is start point of longer term strategy
- Education guarantee before work guarantee
- Less sanctions, more enabling (still compulsion?)
- Legal rights and obligations of both parties clear
- Rights to due process & social protection clear
- Resource commitment of state clear
- Discretion, local, flexible, accountable

### Implementation strategy

- What about compulsion
- Legal changes – primary/secondary, guidelines, training and development
- National institutional changes
- Local institutional challenges
- Case management process
- Make work pay
- Political mediation and discourse

### Implementation challenges. Compulsion?

- Citizenship implies freedom, limited by conditions
- Capability (Sen), limits personal autonomy/well being
- Quality of jobs, schemes and case worker relationship better when claimant has choice.
- Danger of holistic power over personal behaviour (Allen)
- Importance of applying due process after all obstacles explored and removed (Waddan)
- Mandatory interviews than participation (UK, NZ)
- Compulsion used as tool to scare people of welfare 'change expectations'

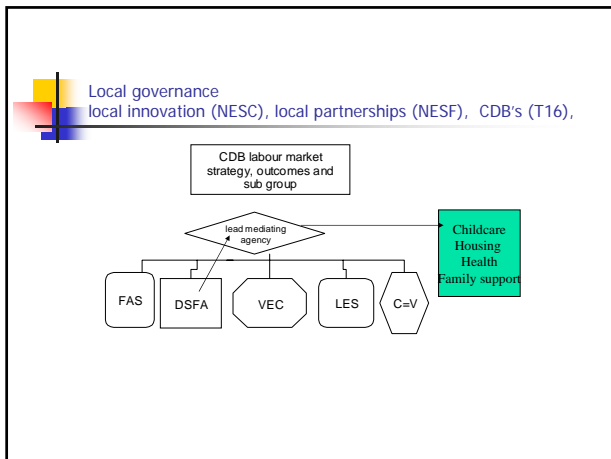
### Legal Safe guards

Developing a rights and standards approach

- Preventative measures built into the legal/policy framework to protect existing rights a) to care for children and b) minimum income. Hierarchy of rights.
- How to legally institutionalise accountability about discretion, what redress, what monitoring
- How to ensure conditionality is proportionate to expected outcomes and investment by state
- How to legislate for high standards, defining training standards, equality provision, rights to consultation and information

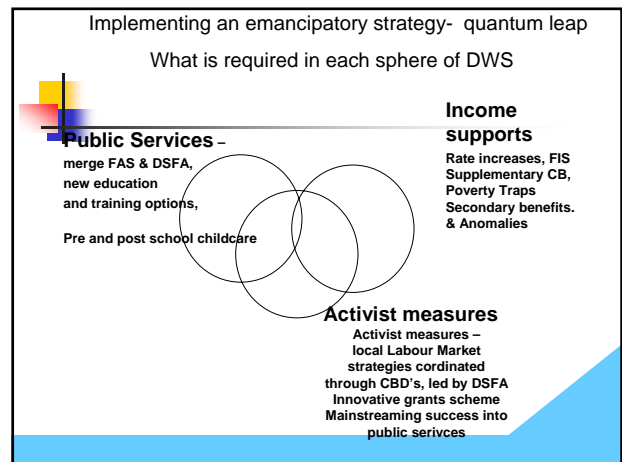
### National Institutional Challenges

- Organisational structure, shifting expectations
- DSFA 1996, Varrala Finnish Presidency
- Ireland still separate benefit payment (DSFA) & employment agency (FAS).
- NZ, Australia, UK NL, Belgium all merged
- Clear blockages and design faults (INDECON)
- Continuity of mediation process
- Access to holistic menu integration supports



- ### Case management process
- #### Role of mediator
- Street level bureaucrats make/break (Lipsky)
  - Holistic and integrated access to information
  - Tracking & post employment supports
  - Networking built into job description
  - Accountability about discretion
  - Training. Context, micro counselling/ listening
  - In work benefit calculations
  - Statutory or non statutory provision

- Work not a sufficient route out of poverty...  
Make Work Pay implementation strategy
- Second tier child income support for low-income workers
  - Secondary benefits RAS, Medical card
  - Childcare subsidy for low income households  
Child-care pre post school hours and holiday/days off
  - Refundable tax credits
  - Data sharing DSFA/Revenue/PES



- Need to challenge social construction of discourse
- Child poverty/costs of benefit dependency/equality
  - Equality not 'same' but 'difference' – gendered policy
  - No such thing as dependency – all interdependent
  - No one self sufficient – middle class public spending
  - Ambiguity about women working – support for 'at home spouses' – electoral veto
  - If about child poverty than all low income mothers will need to benefit.
  - Proportional debate about supports before obligations
  - Protect against retrenchment and loss of rights while enabling recalibration and supports