

What is 'Changing Ireland'?

'Changing Ireland' is a community development magazine published quarterly since 2001. It highlights efforts by government-funded yet independent community projects to fight the causes and effects of poverty and exclusion in Ireland. The magazine has an editor and an administrator and is based in Moyross, Limerick. It is distributed nationally by post and can currently be subscribed to for free.

Poverty and exclusion are real problems in Ireland and the causes and effects need to be tackled. In recognition of this, the Irish Government funds local communities to bring about positive change. *'Changing Ireland'* is the national newsletter of the Community Development Programmes (CDPs) a government-funded set of programmes administered by the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs. A total of 188 projects are funded through the CDPs and each project is managed by a committee of volunteers from the community.

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Why is *'Changing Ireland'* important?

The work by the CDPs projects in disadvantaged communities needs to be highlighted and a national magazine was seen as important in this regard. The setting up of a website should enable even more people to find out about the CDPs and efforts by communities in Ireland to combat poverty and exclusion. The title *'Changing Ireland'* was chosen to reflect the nature of community development work and the geographic area where the CDPs impact - the Republic of Ireland.

Who is *'Changing Ireland'* for?

The magazine is posted to readers throughout the country who work with Community Development Projects and Core-Funded Groups who receive funding from the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs under the Community Development Support Programmes. It also goes to Family Resource Centres, Government Departments, LEADER groups, RAPID co-ordinators, ADM, Partnership Companies, lecturers in community development, prison education centres, and other organisations and individuals working in the community and voluntary sector.

How is 'Changing Ireland' produced?

The bulk of the articles are written by the magazine's six part-time Regional Reporters, all of whom have worked or work currently in community projects. Production is overseen by an editor and part-time administrator, by voluntary management from the *Community Development Network Ltd. Moyross* (a CDP), and by an editorial team representing projects and the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs. The project is funded by the Department.

Where has '*Changing Ireland*' a presence? Where has it made an impact?

The magazine has a presence throughout the Republic of Ireland through its Regional Reporters, all of whom have worked in communities and have experience in combating poverty and exclusion. The magazine also has an Editorial Team whose membership is intended to reflect the geographic spread of projects throughout the country. The magazine is based in Limerick and funded by the Department which is based in Dublin.

To date, '*Changing Ireland*' has made a significant impact within the community and voluntary sector.

When does '*Changing Ireland*' publish?

Quarterly, namely in October, January, April and July.

'Changing Irelands' Mission Statement:

The magazine aims to enable projects to network more effectively and to assist in promoting the profile of the Community Development Programme and of community development generally. It is intended to be readable and interesting and written by community workers in various parts of the country - so that it reflects the experience of tackling poverty and exclusion at community level. The magazine is non-profit making and is distributed freely to project workers and volunteers in Ireland and abroad active in community development.

Editorial Team Members

Members:

- * Niamh Walsh, Department;
- * Viv Sadd, Mahon CDP;
- * Allen Meagher, '*Changing Ireland*' editor.

The Editor

Before starting as editor of '*Changing Ireland*', Allen Meagher worked as a journalist in a variety of local newspapers. In 1995, he went as a volunteer to The Gambia, West Africa, then under military rule. The APSO posting saw him work for over 2 years in a civil service position as a journalist / publications officer for the National Council for Arts and Culture.

In 1999, Allen graduated from UL with a Masters in International Studies and lectured in media studies and sociology.

His work as editor in setting up '*Changing Ireland*' brought together the skills he had learnt in journalism, development work and media training. He was attracted by the fact that the project is focused on poverty and exclusion and is located appropriately in a community setting, in Moyross, Limerick.

How CDN Moyross took on '*Changing Ireland*'

Since April, 2001, a small bungalow in Moyross, a local authority housing estate on Limerick city's northside, has been the headquarters for the national newsletter of the Community Development Support Programmes. The project came to Moyross after the management and staff of the Community Development Network Limited Moyross (CDN) responded to an invitation from the CDPs Profile Sub-committee to host the magazine.

"We felt and still feel that the magazine should be project-focused and be produced by and be about the people with experience of poverty and exclusion," said Juan Carlos Azzopardi, Project Co-ordinator with CDN. *"If readers feel it's full of jargon and empty of real people struggling to better their communities then we're not achieving what we set out to do."*

The national sub-committee had wanted to publish a newsletter and raise the profile of the CDPs. And both the sub-committee and the Department were keen on the idea of locating the newsletter in one of the communities and that one of the CDPs projects take on the responsibility.

Tony Lynch, a resident of Moyross for over 25 years and a founder member of the CDN first suggested taking up the challenge. The experience of producing a local newsletter, '*Moywrites*', and the CDN's involvement in organising a community journalism course made them confident they were up to the job. And the conviction that such magazine project should be managed by its target group provided the motivation for the CDN to apply.

Tony and staff members Juan Carlos Azzopardi and Geraldine Clohessy began the process and got great help from Limerick Leader journalist Billy Kelly and media trainer Tommy Byrne.

The editor, Allen Meagher, was charged with putting this vision into practice by setting up a network of regional reporters, an editorial team and by providing appropriate media training to support those projects and people who participate. *"It is a source of great pride to us in Moyross to be spearheading this national initiative. The fact that the office is located here and not in Dublin or even in a city centre location shows everything doesn't have to be centralised and it is a vote of confidence in a local project's ability to deliver nationally"*, said Elaine Slattery, then-chairperson of the Community Development Network Moyross.

<http://www.changingireland.ie/>