

Sustainable Communities

Presentation
17th January 2008
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INTERNATIONAL CENTRE FOR
LOCAL AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Promoting best practices in spatial planning and economic development.

Introduction

- Funded by the International Fund for Ireland and the Irish Government, this ICLRD research programme is assessing the linkages between promoting mixed income/integrated developments and the new policy agenda of developing sustainable communities.
- The research will identify good practices that bring together key stakeholders in shaping their communities and also assess how central and local government officials and practitioners can better promote the creation or continued success of sustainable communities.



Why this study

- An underlying notion within this research is that an incremental and more consistent long-term approach is required to achieving sustainability in relation to housing communities.
- Within Northern Ireland the issues of religion and religious segregation, income segregation and ethnicity are key issues
- Within the South, income segregation and ethnicity are key issues



Intentions

- This research, will include reviews of best practice and of the ways in which professionals and communities operate together/separately.
- The research will focus on new places, places undergoing regeneration and places evolving as it is widely accepted that sustainable communities principles can be applied to places at various stages of development
- The findings from the research, as well as identifying best practice, will be used to develop training modules for housing practitioners, policy makers and local officials.



Objectives of Applied Research Programme

- Define the key elements of a sustainable community;
- Identify the factors that provide a basis for the creation and maintenance of a sustainable community;
- Assess how current central government legislation and local government policy contributes or detracts from the establishment of sustainable communities;
- Establish the critical factors that lead to the creation and sustainability of a neighbourhood by learning from selected case studies throughout the island of Ireland and elsewhere at various stages of development; and
- Understand the impact of contextual influences including the neighbourhood, access to services, transportation and employment.



Key Research Activities

- Establish a panel of experts from both sides of the border to guide and inform the research;
- Review current policy documents and peer reviewed journals to consider the existing research base related to integrated and sustainable communities in Europe and the United States and to identify case study examples with relevance to the Irish context;
- Interviews, conference calls and focus groups with key stakeholders at policy level involved in the planning for, development of, and sustaining of communities with particular focus on social and affordable housing;
- Case study analysis of selected examples within the island of Ireland with visits to each case study location; and
- Interviews with residents and practitioners in housing estates and surrounding neighbourhoods. As part of the research, the team will interview youth living in the housing estates to better understand their perspectives on their quality of life.



Case Study Selection

1. Enniskillen: Carran Crescent
2. Antrim: Spring Farm
3. Derry: Shared Space
4. Sligo: Cranmore
5. Cork: Mahon
6. Dublin: Adamstown



Letter by 5 Protestant Church Ministers to News Letter 14th January 2008

- The Executive/Assembly seems to have been afflicted with collective amnesia.
- There is much emphasis on building a peaceful, fair and prosperous society, yet a flagship policy of recent years - A Shared Future - has disappeared without comment or explanation.
- Instead we are asked many times to march under another banner of 'Equality'. This too is highly desirable, but framed as it is primarily by law rather than by relationships, on its own it could well turn out to be a cold house for us all to inhabit. Equal in so many ways, yet still living in separate parallel universes.
- We have poor inter-community relationships, effective apartheid in housing across our villages, towns and cities; community division (exemplified in, but not confined to the physical structures of peace walls); the slow pace of reconciliation; the sectarianism and fractured educational provision.





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Northern Ireland's First Integrated New Build Scheme: Carran Crescent, Fermanagh

- 20 houses developed by Ulidia Housing Association in partnership with the Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE)
- first housing project to be completed under the principles of the 'Shared Future' document of April 2005
- The houses were allocated to applicants on the Housing Waiting List from diverse ethnic and religious backgrounds, each of whom signed up to a voluntary Neighbourhood Charter based on the principles of equality and respect for diversity.
- The community is also supported by a Shared Future Housing Officer, a post funded jointly by the NIHE and Ulidia.



Northern Ireland's First Integrated New Build Scheme: Carran Crescent, Fermanagh

- The project in Carran Crescent addresses the vision of shared communities in a deeply divided society by identifying ways in which imbalances in public housing patterns can be addressed and integrated communities achieved
- All tenants signed up to a voluntary neighbourhood charter based on the principle of equality and diversity
- Small but steady rising demand for mixed housing estates in NI







Existing Estates

- IFI Has funded £680,000 to the NIHE for Shared Neighbourhood project
- The NIHE are promoting 30 shared neighbourhood/areas in existing estates over the next 3 years
- This year the following have been selected:
 - Ballynafeigh, Belfast
 - Springfarm, Antrim
 - Lisanally, Omagh
 - Tonagh, Lisburn
 - Lissure, Banbridge



Antrim Springfarm

- Spring Farm built in 1977/78 and originally comprised of 500 dwellings.
- It is in the worst 10% of estates in NI for employment, health and disability living.
- It has, in the past, faced particular difficulties with anti social behaviour, drug dealing and paramilitary activity. As a result the NIHE demolished 55 dwellings
- These issues have largely been resolved and the area has now successfully attracted mixed religions and, more recently, migrant workers.
- The community has played a fundamental role in the resolution of the areas problems which make it an ideal case study from the perspective of community involvement and empowerment to enabling active change.



Antrim Springfarm

- Springfarm & District Community Association formed in 1992 and has use of 3 X 3 bedroom houses as a community house
- It is the most active community group in Antrim and instrumental in bringing stability to the estate.
- They are involved in two cross border projects where teenagers can avail of accredited training and develop inter-cultural relations.
- Spring Farm is of particular relevance to this research as it has strong youth involvement within the community which is a key dimension of this research.



Derry/Londonderry

- The City of Derry / Londonderry is physically divided by the River Foyle which separates the City into east and west banks - known respectively as the Waterside and Cityside.
- However, the division of the City by the river goes beyond a simple spatial partition - it is symbolic of the impact of the “Troubles” and the consequent and historical segregation of community residential patterns within the City.
- Over the thirty years from the onset of the Troubles the Protestant community has tended to reside on (and has migrated to) the Waterside whilst the population of the Cityside has been predominantly Catholic.
- More recently Derry has moved towards stability and as a city is undergoing major regeneration with the creation of shared space being a core element of the proposed regeneration plans.



Derry/Londonderry

- In October 2006, in a tripartite arrangement between Derry City Council (DCC), Ilex and the North West Development Office (NWDO), three masterplans for the City were launched.
- The masterplans cover the separately owned sites of St Columb's Park (DCC), Ebrington (Ilex) and Clooney West (NWDO) and set out the proposals for the development and regeneration of these key sites.
- The proposals contained within the masterplans include many projects which have the potential to provide significant opportunities for rebuilding relations between all communities within the City.
- This vision for the future makes it an appropriate case study for this research and also timely in terms of feeding into the debate on the creation of shared spaces in the area.



Sligo Cranmore

- The Cranmore Regeneration Project was established by Sligo Borough Council (SBC) in 2004 to bring about the social, economic and physical transformation of the Cranmore Estate, in the East Ward of Sligo City.
- The Cranmore Estate is a local authority housing scheme built on a phased bases over the past 34 years. There are currently 499 houses in the Cranmore Estate, with 226 owned privately, 222 owned by Sligo Borough Council and 51 owned by Cluid. (ie a 55:45 social/private ratio in favour of social housing).
- The population of Cranmore accounts for approximately 10% of the population of Sligo City and as such plays an important role in the cultural, social and economic fabric of the City.
- The accumulation of local authority housing since the 1970s, combined with a lack of investment in infrastructure and minimal private sector investment has created a disadvantaged urban environment.



Sligo Cranmore

- Cranmore has suffered from negative stereo-typing through the years due to the high concentration of social housing and high levels of socio-economic deprivation in the area.
- The team are particularly interested in the Cranmore Regeneration Project that came about as a result of consensus between elected representatives, officials, local community representatives and public service providers who acknowledged that concerted action was needed to reverse the on-going social, environmental and physical decline in the area.
- This area is also of interest as there has been an attempt to establish a youth forum.



Cork Mahon

- Mahon situated to the SE of Cork City. Population of approx 4000. and 2100 Local Authority tenants living in 650 dwellings. Significant land bank acquired by the City Council in 1970s and the initial development constituted Local Authority houses.
- The Mahon Industrial Park developed in the 1980s was the first significant employment base in the area providing employment for locals and a demand for private housing ensued as a consequence of local employment. The Developer had provided training for local residents who subsequently took up employment in the area.
- The opening up of a road network improving links to the City and other suburbs as well as the construction of a ring road system linking the area to the national road network and orbital bus route providing ease of access to the area has made the location attractive to investors and residents.



Cork Mahon

- A Parks Development Plan has been the catalyst for the provision of parks and other recreation facilities including the provision of communal open spaces, walkways, and specific facilities including playing fields
- The Mahon golf course is the first municipal golf course in the country
- Area based Local Authority housing management was introduced with a Housing officer and Area Engineer located in the area.
- The construction of a group housing scheme for travellers has been integrated into the local community.
- Provision of mixed social, affordable and private neighbourhoods



Cork Mahon

Kearns & Mason (2007)

3 potential caveats to lower income residents living in an area with higher income residents

- Poor households may be negatively impacted in psychological and physical (stress related) terms by their observation and interaction with higher status households enjoying privileges and holding positions to which they themselves could not aspire.
- Higher income/owner occupied households may be negatively affected by living with high numbers of poor social renter households - their children may be influenced to engage in anti social behaviour.
- If particularly problematic behaviours are moved out of deprived areas into more affluent neighbourhoods in accord with mixed community policies, the receiving community could suffer a general detrimental effect as a result.









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Dublin Adamstown

- Adamstown is a new town being built in South County Dublin, ten miles west of Dublin. Adamstown over the coming years is to deliver 10,000 new homes along with a range of shopping, employment, leisure, civic & cultural facilities.
- It provides this research with the now rare opportunity to analyse the creation of a large new community which is planned within the government's sustainable communities agenda



Innovative Approaches

1. Youth

- Specific inclusion/focus of young people within research

2. NIHE Shared Future Advisory Committee.

3. North-South Conference of Isles to focus on 'Creating Sustainable Communities in Ireland'

- NIHE and Cork City Council have agreed to assist with conference organisation.

4. Approach to CECODAS (European liaison committee for social housing)

- Suggesting next meeting to hold session on Sustainable Communities - Good Practice from around Europe
 - Research team proposed to address meeting & ask for contributions from group



Timescale/Progress:

Project Commencement: 1st October 2007

Activities	Timescale 2007/2008	Progress & Revised Projection
Phase I— Scoping Exercise / Joint Diagnosis		
• Drafting of Research Proposal	October	Completed
• Identify and Appoint Steering Group	November	Completed
• Selection of Case Studies in conjunction with Steering Group	January	Completed – Final Agreement at forthcoming Steering Group
• Meeting of Steering Committee	January	November 2007
Phase II— Assessment and Preliminary Recommendations		
• Field Documentation (research team)	December/January 08	November/December 2007
• Structured field visits and reporting back	February/March	Jan/Feb/March 2008
• Draft report	April/May	April/May 2008
Phase III – Recommendations & Output		
• Present Findings	June	June 2008
• Draft Final Report	July	July 2008



Research Team

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