

'The Way It Is' Report

A Comprehensive Review of Community
Development and Community
Relationships in County Fermanagh - December 98

1.0 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 1.1 In geographic area, Fermanagh is the second smallest county in Northern Ireland; in terms of both population and its level of economic activity, it is the smallest. Unlike the other five, it is administered by a single Local Authority, Fermanagh District Council, whose boundaries coincide (almost exactly) with those of the county. At over 187,000 hectares, it is, by far, the biggest of the North's twenty-six local authority areas and, in population terms, it is very close to the average.
- 1.2 To the East, South and West, the County has a border with the Republic of Ireland, adjoining Monaghan, Cavan, Leitrim and Donegal, with the Cavan Border being the longest of these; but its longest overall border is with another of the Six Northern Counties - Tyrone - with which it has a border stretching from Pettigo in the West to Fivemiletown in the East.
- 1.3 Given its area, it is hardly surprising that it has the lowest population density in Northern Ireland at 0.288 persons per hectare, against a Northern Ireland average of 1.114 and, apart from Limavady, it has the highest proportion of males in its population. More than 75% of its population live in rural areas, including small villages and 'townland' communities. Over the period 1971-91, Fermanagh's population grew by about 6%; that rate of growth has accelerated since then, but, over the past three decades, its population growth has still been lower than that of Ireland's 'border areas' in aggregate - especially those on the Northern side.
- 1.4 To some extent this low population density and the sense of solitude that it creates, contribute to Fermanagh's attractiveness and it has many natural assets, ranging from the stunningly beautiful Lough Erne with its many islands, through the Marble Arch Caves and a variety of other archaeological and geographical features, to the county's highest point at Cuilcagh; to this is added, a good range of 'built' attractions, though more are necessary. The County is described in the *'Fermanagh Economic Development Strategy: 1995 - 1999'* as "...a place of beauty and tranquillity with a rich historical past...". But it also suffers from 'peripherality', high unemployment, large numbers of over-16's with no qualifications and a deficit in social, economic and infrastructural resources. It is heavily dependent on agriculture (which is in decline) and has a low level of business activity. Of its businesses, most are small and only a very modest proportion engage, to any significant extent, in exporting outside the British Isles. It also has the highest proportion of unfit housing of any county in Northern Ireland. Its mixture of *'the good'* and *'the bad'* is not quite unique, but both the positives and the negatives are considerable.
- 1.5 Against such a background, a high level of community activity is understandable. The precise number of community groups in the county depends upon what is considered to be *'a community group'*, but a case can be made for anywhere between sixty and two hundred (if residents' groups and single-issue groups are included); all of those groups which would definitely qualify as 'community' groups were consulted during the production of this report (a total of sixty-odd groups) and a sample from all the other types was also consulted.
- 1.6 In a very real way, this report involves an analysis of **perceptions**, though there is also a large amount of quantitative data, given the level of consultation undertaken. Nineteen individual areas of the county are analysed from a social, economic and communal perspective, and many of these - in fact, the majority of them - incorporate several townland communities. These detailed area profiles can be found in the addendum to this report.
- 1.7 It is highly unlikely that the problems identified in this report are unique to Fermanagh; for all its rurality, or possibly because of it, Fermanagh reflects a very big proportion of Northern Ireland - indeed of Ireland generally. And notwithstanding the various criticisms made in parts of this report, Fermanagh has been successful in its promotion of a 'bottom-up' approach to the development of the economy and society of the county. Above all else, that must be recognised as a core outcome of this study.
- 1.8 This study incorporated an extensive consultation process involving 196 face-to-face interviews, each lasting, on average, approximately 2 hours and twenty minutes and seven focus group sessions, with an average of eight people in each and each lasting almost three hours. The amount of data and opinions generated from that process was enormous.
- 1.9 While these findings contain a predictable mixture of positive and negative results, they produce very little that

is 'new'; that could be construed as a disappointment, but it can equally be interpreted as confirming the validity of the consultation process and the need for further efforts to improve what needs to be improved in Fermanagh. They certainly suggest that much remains to be done to create better social, economic, infrastructural and cross-community conditions in this county.

1.10 Because it was decided to include the main results from the data-collection process in the Executive Summary to this report (making that section unusually long), it is considered appropriate to summarise the broad conclusions in this 'Introduction'. An overview of those results is as follows:

- Community development is perceived to be, and has been, successful in Fermanagh, and has support from a broad spectrum of the people of the county, including (especially) its elected representatives in the form of Fermanagh District Council; there is, however, still a high level of apathy and scepticism about this type of activity in the county;
- The main problems, at 'grass-roots' level in Fermanagh, are social ones, but most community activity has an economic basis and an economic bias, reflecting the major funding agencies' priorities; consequently the congruence between the 'problems' and the 'solutions' is somewhat unclear; there are also major differences between the problems encountered in rural areas and those of the 'urban' estates in Fermanagh;
- There is no generally accepted view in Fermanagh on what the role and objective of community activity is, or should be;
- There are very clear distinctions between successful and unsuccessful groups; those which succeed have a clear focus, are well managed and have a 'driver'; those which are less successful have no clear focus, lack a 'driver' and, generally, attempt to do too much;
- The capacity of most community groups to undertake economic development, without the support of its local business sector, is very doubtful; furthermore, groups undertaking economic development need special capacity-building/training, as do groups which employ full-time workers;
- Community activity is stronger in 'Catholic' areas than in 'Protestant' areas, and this reflects other, more fundamental, differences of ethos between the two communities;
- Much of the support provided by the main statutory (and sometimes, non-statutory) agencies to community groups in the county, is not considered satisfactory by the community-led organisations; this reflects as much on the attitudes portrayed by the agencies and their 'remoteness' from the groups, as on any more tangible measure of their support, and those agencies and agency personnel who maintain regular contact with the groups and treat them "...with respect and appreciation for their efforts..." are, in turn, highly regarded and appreciated by group members;
- The efforts invested in promoting cross-community activity through the voluntary/community sector have had only limited success; they have succeeded in strengthening the links which already exist, but, generally, not in creating new relationships; and this reflects a broader finding that attitudes towards 'the other' community continue to be very 'hard' in the county, and that politics, beyond the local level, have damaged the prospects for improved inter-communal links.

These conclusions are detailed in the Executive Summary, and their basis is provided in the main consultation section of the report.

1.11 *Peter Quinn Consultancy Services wishes to acknowledge the assistance and time given by all those who agreed to be interviewed as part of this survey of community activity in Fermanagh, and to thank them for their help.*

2.0 **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 2.1 Fermanagh Partnership in Practice is an umbrella organisation representing the Fermanagh Trust, Fermanagh District Council, Fermanagh Rural Community Network and Fermanagh District Partnership. This study was funded by the four agencies above together with the Community Relations Council, Central Community Relations Unit, and Northern Ireland Voluntary Trust. This county-wide audit was commissioned not only to obtain a 'picture' of the current position and progress of community development in Fermanagh and whether it has been successful in addressing the needs of the county, but also to assist in the development of a 'strategic direction' and more relevant focus for future community-led development and activity in Fermanagh. This study examines the types of activities and relationships which have developed, the reasons for their development and the impediments to developing further activities and relationships.
- 2.2 The study was carried out during the January-April 1998 period; the county was divided into nineteen geographical areas, and a profile of each area is attached in an addendum to the report - it includes a socio-economic summary and a synopsis of current community development activity and resources within each associated townland community. The report also addresses the subject of community relations within the county.

For the purposes of this report, the following definitions have been assumed:

Community Activity: Any activities undertaken by a number of people having common ties, or interests, and agreeing to pursue a common objective(s)

Community Development: Any activity undertaken by a group for the benefit of the overall community. According to the "*Community Development Review Group, 1991*" **Community Development in Northern Ireland** is a process which embraces community action, community service, community work and other community endeavour - whether geographical or issue based - with an emphasis towards the disadvantaged and powerless within society. Its values include participation, empowerment and self-help. Community development challenges prejudice, sectarianism and the unequal distribution of resources."

Capacity Building: An enabling and empowering process which adds value to community development projects by strengthening the ability of organisations and individuals to reach and deliver to target groups.

It is accepted that these are very broad definitions, but they best summarise the views and feedback from those involved 'on-the-ground' in this area.

- 2.3 A very wide-ranging consultation process was undertaken to elicit views and perceptions from all possible perspectives; it involved 196 face-to-face interviews (lasting, on average, 2.35 hours each) and 7 focus group sessions (lasting an average of just under three hours each). Almost by definition, these interviews contain a high level of subjective data, but at the same time, they reflect the opinions of a sufficiently wide cross section of the County's population to be seen as a 'fair' reflection of what people think, or know, about community development in Fermanagh. Details of the consultations are provided later in this report and, in summary, the overall process included:

128 Interviews in Nineteen Areas of the County, Covering Sixty-Nine Community Areas (Including Townland Communities);

15 Interviews with Business People;

4 Interviews with Representatives of Credit Unions;

13 Interviews with Representatives of Cultural Organisations;

25 Interviews with Representatives of Statutory Agencies;

9 Interviews with Councillors/Politicians;

2 Interviews with Consultants/Advisors Operating in the County (one of whom is based outside Fermanagh).

- 2.4 The interviews and focus groups generated a vast number of opinions and ideas including many which could best be described as 'minority' views and are excluded from the data in this report. While there was much praise for the concept of community development and many generally positive comments about Fermanagh as a place in which to live and work, it was obvious that many interviewees took the opportunity to express their dissatisfaction with what they perceived to be happening in that sector. Accordingly, there was a heavy emphasis on those aspects which interviewees felt most needed to be improved. Among the issues which received relatively strong support were those in the paragraphs below; for ease of comprehension, they are grouped under thirteen headings and very few of the individual views received unanimous support.

(Where direct quotations are used in this summary, they are used to encapsulate and to illustrate a view which had relatively broad support among those consulted, and to reflect the general tenor of the views expressed to the interviewers.)

"In Northern Ireland, it is the reality of perceptions that is important, not the actual reality of events" (Paul Sweeney CDPA (Community Development in Protestant Areas) Seminar, 1991). This report deals with issues as people on the ground see them - 'perceptions' - many of which were confirmed by empirical data, though this report does not purport to advance the case for, or against, the perceptions provided by those interviewed and representing (on a statistical sampling basis) the views of a much wider proportion of the people of Fermanagh.

The main results from the consultation process were as follows:

2.4.1 Overall State of Community Development in Fermanagh

- (i) The general perception is that the level of community development in the county is high, and that community development activity has, overall, been successful on many dimensions;
- (ii) At Central Government and Government-Agency level, Fermanagh is seen as having been very successful in promoting community development, and the county is seen as 'a model' of/for successful activity in this field;
- (iii) The primary benefit of community development is that "... it gives people a sense of identity ..."; this is not achievable unless people have a 'sense of ownership' of any activity being undertaken; some see the improved general welfare of the area (including its economic development) as its biggest contribution, but the stronger arguments related to the link between 'identity' and 'community';
- (iv) Fermanagh has a huge level of social need, which has not been, and is not being, addressed by past, or current, community development activity; such benefits as have accrued from community activity have not always percolated down to the most vulnerable and the most needy in the county's society;
- (v) The county's social problems are ranked more highly than its economic problems by those operating 'on the ground' within Fermanagh's communities; the only economic issue to rank on a par with the major social issues is unemployment/job creation;
- (vi) Future community development activity must take the social needs of each area into account; addressing social problems, reducing unemployment, training and capacity-building, improving cross-community linkages and improvements to the social and physical infrastructures of the county, are seen by the general public as the major priorities for Fermanagh's communities;
- (vii) Community development in the county is sporadic and unbalanced. Nevertheless there is a strong view that more full-time community workers would not be justifiable at this point, but that there should be a central 'pool' of expertise available to community groups, together with a county-wide strategic view within which any advice should be coordinated and offered; any such strategy should be inclusive, both geographically and in terms of social divisions and classes;
- (viii) Within Fermanagh there is a mixed reaction to the external perception of Fermanagh's success in community development and that applies to a variety of areas of the county (rural and urban);

- (ix) There is a high degree of apathy towards community development on the part of those not directly involved in it and there is also a very high level of cynicism of, and scepticism about, the value of this entire sector of activity to the economy and society of Fermanagh; the benefits have not been well sold to the general community, nor have the activities of community groups been communicated effectively to their communities (with some notable exceptions);
- (x) Such development as has occurred in the county, has been concentrated in Catholic/Nationalist areas and Catholic/Nationalist groups/communities; the Protestant community (with the notable exception of Kesh) has not involved itself fully in community activity, though that is now seen to be changing;
- (xi) There is a perception that much of the community activity in Fermanagh has been motivated by a desire to secure funding "... because it is available ..." rather than in response to an identified need; this is compounded by those who are concerned about "...missing the boat..."; the result is a perception that community development needs to become more focused and/or may have lost its way – there is too much of a parochial and 'selfish' attitude involved;
- (xii) Community development, within virtually every active community in Fermanagh, is being sustained by a small corps of committed people, many of whom are starting to "...suffer from burn-out..." with little evidence of any 'succession planning';
- (xiii) There is a very prevalent view in the county that Fermanagh's remoteness from Belfast ("...the centre of power...") militates against its getting its 'fair share' of support; the major agencies are perceived as having far too much of a focus and emphasis on the Greater Belfast area and East of the Bann;
- (xiv) Many community groups have not the expertise to undertake economic development, and most of them acknowledge this; either they will have to amend their focus or a totally new range of supports will have to be developed;
- (xv) The Community Development section of Fermanagh District Council is very highly regarded by the community groups in the county, as are the representatives of some (a minority) of the statutory agencies.

2.4.2 Community Groups and Their Development

- (i) To be successful, a group needs a clear focus and a plan to achieve its objectives, with those objectives being properly prioritised so that when resources are limited, the main priorities can be pursued realistically;
- (ii) There is considerable merit in building up slowly so that capacity can be developed through experience;
- (iii) Successful community development groups tend to be those where there exists a level of creative/constructive tension, provided that tension is properly channelled and well managed by a good chairperson; if all members hold similar views, that creative tension tends to be lacking and the probability of success is reduced;
- (iv) There is a concern that some groups are driven by a "... greed ..." for money for their area (the 'what-can-I-get-money-for' syndrome), as a result of which they opt for unrealistically large projects with little initial realisation of the significance of the problems of raising the matching funding or managing the project when it is developed;
- (v) Communities feel (and sometimes are put) under pressure to show 'success' with some 'tangible' evidence of development;
- (vi) In general (but not universally), groups do not represent their areas as well as they believe they do; in particular, groups based in rural settlements/villages do not (generally) adequately represent the hinterland of that village, nor do they adequately represent the young, unemployed and disadvantaged sectors of their community;
- (vii) There is little evidence of mutual support for, or contact between, different community groups in adjacent areas due to (alleged) "... parochial attitudes ..." and "... personality clashes ..."; furthermore, there is/are no mechanism(s), within the county, for avoiding duplication of effort and/or projects; the growth of the partnership

ethos in the county appears to be changing this, but only very gradually;

- (viii) The needs of groups change as the group and/or its project develop. According to the literature, there are various models for the development of community organisations; as a result of the analysis of the consultations undertaken as part of this study, five distinct stages were identified as producing different types of needs:

Phase 1 (**Start-up**): they need to decide what their remit is and to obtain advice on how to establish the group;

Phase 2 (**Deciding on a Project**): they need to look at the various options open to them and to define, and then initiate, a project by considering what their area requires. This stage also involves the group in identifying and evaluating the various funding options which are available and how to meet funders' criteria;

Phase 3 (**Implementation**): they need assistance in establishing the project to get it up and running;

Phase 4 (**Operation**): they need help in establishing systems and controls to manage the project;

Phase 5 (**Maturity**): when the project reaches its conclusion, the group must identify a new project or, if it is a periodic event, wait until it is due to re-commence.

- (ix) The study has shown that the value of investment in capacity-building has been reduced by the failure to undertake it, directly with the group, in its own environment, and related to the group's specific project;
- (x) Many groups feel 'isolated' with no knowledge of where to turn for advice and no way of finding out how others coped with similar problems;
- (xi) The biggest single issue/problem for community groups is finance and fund-raising;
- (xii) Those involved in 'small' projects over a long period are sceptical of both the long-term viability of some of the major projects now being promoted, and of the commitment of those promoting 'big' projects; this is most keenly felt by groups which perceive that some of the newer groups have been encouraged by statutory agencies.
- (xiii) There is a need to involve young people in community work to a much greater extent than currently applies; there is a serious lack of turnover of personnel in community groups and there should be a defined, limited term of office for office-holders in community organisations;
- (xiv) Before undertaking new projects, community organisations should examine what is already there and assess whether more, or better, use of existing resources could be achieved.

2.4.3 **Catholic/Nationalist Compared To Protestant/Unionist Attitudes Towards Community Development**

- (i) Catholic/Nationalist communities have embraced the principles and practice of community development in a way in which Protestant/Unionist communities have not; as a consequence, they quickly became very knowledgeable about the whole community development process including funding mechanisms etc. whilst Protestant communities "... never saw any reason to get involved ..." in it;
- (ii) The Catholic/Nationalist community has a history of community support and a strong community base established principally around its sporting and cultural activities, whilst no corresponding base exists in Protestant/Unionist communities, though their 'church' structures are particularly strong;
- (iii) Protestants in Fermanagh have long perceived the government/state as their primary source of communal and social support; for Catholics, who largely have not given any allegiance to the 'state' of Northern Ireland, their own community has provided the surrogate support structure;
- (iv) Consequently, Catholic/Nationalist areas have been better organised to develop initiatives on a community basis and to take advantage of funding initiatives founded on a 'bottom-up' approach to regeneration and development;
- (v) There are fundamental differences in outlook between Catholics and Protestants in relation to accessing funding:
- In the past, Protestants have been reluctant to accept IFI (International Fund for Ireland) funding; Catholics

have not;

- In general, Protestants have a much stronger wish to operate on a single-identity basis than Catholics, though that appears to be changing;
 - Because of their lower level of experience of community activity, Protestants have less confidence in their ability to secure funding than do Catholics;
 - Within the Protestant community, a culture of 'individualism' predominates, whereas 'collectivism' dominates the Catholic culture;
- (vi) The majority of Catholic community groups perceive that "... giving people a sense of identity ..." is the main benefit of community development; Protestants, on the other hand, see economic development, wealth creation and the improved economic and infrastructural position of the area as the principal contribution;
- (vii) Insecurity amongst the Protestant community has resulted in concerns that participation in cross-community activities could (or would) lead to their being "... taken over ...", for which reason their preference is to build on their own identity and to have something which is 'theirs'; the benefits of community development have not 'been sold' to Protestants;
- (viii) During the consultations, Protestants complained that they had neither the leaders, nor the base of experience, to assist them in responding to the need for change which their less secure social, economic and political situations now demand;
- (ix) The fact that Protestantism is not homogeneous, combined with the strength of the commitment to their individual churches, reduces the potential for community involvement in the Protestant community;
- (x) The differences between Catholic and Protestant philosophies should be recognised and built upon, but not allowed to hinder progress;
- (xi) Confidence among Protestant communities needs to be raised by allowing them to develop their capacity through involvement in single-identity activity, using advisors they can trust, before moving to cross-community activity.

2.4.4 Cross-Community Activities

It is recognised that community relations affect, and are affected by, many aspects of life apart from community development; this study, focuses exclusively on community relations from a community development perspective.

- (i) Investment in cross-community development has succeeded only in harnessing and strengthening links (predominantly of a socio-economic character) which already exist, rather than in creating new ones; but those links were important when things were bad, and as they are long established they should be capable of being extended in better times;
- (ii) Groups have become very aware of, and are now probably over-sensitive to, the desirability of establishing their cross-community credentials (and their cross-border links too) when they are attempting to access funding. Protestants, particularly, but Catholics too, believe that groups cannot be single-identity if they wish to attract funding;
- (iii) Possibly as a result, many interviewees perceived many current community relations activities to be "... contrived ...";
- (iv) There are concerns that on-going monitoring of community relations activities might only "...rake up..." dormant, but unresolved, issues in areas where communities mix well despite these unresolved differences, i.e. that raising the profile of issues could be counter-productive. The opposite view was also expressed during the consultations and some interviewees firmly believed that there is a need to develop trust at community level, before any progress on addressing the real issues can be made - otherwise community development and cross-community activities are "... only papering over the cracks ...";
- (v) Protestants have a concern that they are asked to participate in community activity solely in order that the group can demonstrate its cross-community credentials, whilst, (in reality, they feel) they are not genuinely wanted;

- (vi) There is a (minority) concern that cross-community activity could have a negative effect on commitment to the churches and could lead to a reduction in the level of involvement with church activities;
- (vii) The 'marching season' has a seriously detrimental effect on community relations and this, in turn, affects community activities.

2.4.5 Effects of The Political Context

(Note: Over 85% of these consultations were conducted prior to 'The Good Friday Agreement' at Stormont)

- (i) The political situation has had, and continues to have, significant knock-on effects on community development in the county; essentially, there is a view that politicians and the lack of political progress have hindered, and are hindering, community development in Fermanagh;
- (ii) At a local level, Fermanagh District Council is identified not with the elected representatives, but with the full-time staff, despite the fact that an increasing number of Councillors are directly involved in community development initiatives;
- (iii) Within communities in Fermanagh, there is a genuine fear that the failure of political progress will lead to an even greater 'opting-out' of the county's social and communal activities on the part of the so-called "... middle-class, middle-of-the-road ..." section of society, who are, already, only peripherally involved in community activities in many areas;
- (iv) There is a fear of politically-motivated violence at individual level and those who are "... in the public eye ...", as a result of their community activities, are seen as especially vulnerable;
- (v) Particularly within the Protestant community, there have been examples of pressure being exerted on individuals (from within their own communities) to withdraw their support for cross-community activities and to withdraw from community-based organisations;
- (vi) There is a perceived 'fear of change' which is hindering the prospects of social, economic and communal progress;
- (vii) The portrayal of Fermanagh as a county where people are united and which is peaceful, is resented by those who feel that this results in the county's real problems not being addressed ("...being glossed over..."), whilst, deep down, such problems are as real, and as bad, in Fermanagh as they are anywhere else in Northern Ireland;
- (viii) Protestants are unhappy about the lack of leadership available to them to facilitate their greater involvement in community development; they feel vulnerable and insecure, unhappy about the political uncertainty and unaware of the benefits of engaging in development on a community basis - they feel they have lost out so far.

2.4.6 Community Groups' Perceptions of The Statutory Agencies

- (i) Community groups perceive a major 'gap' between themselves and the funding and other statutory agencies; Fermanagh's communities perceive the central agencies to have a dominant focus on Belfast and the Eastern part of Northern Ireland;
- (ii) Some of the agencies are perceived to be excessively bureaucratic, willing to put voluntary people "...through a wringer..." for very little money and unappreciative of the fact that group members are contributing on a voluntary basis; community groups feel they are "... taken for granted ..." by the agencies;
- (iii) When asked specifically about their views on different agencies, there was a mixed reaction from respondents; some agencies are very highly regarded, others less so; a number of agencies have no significant profile in the county, while others were viewed in quite unfavourable terms. It was clear that there are certain similarities between the different agencies in each of four categories as follows:

Highly Regarded Agencies: these are easily identifiable as those which have adopted a very proactive approach, using representatives who work with groups 'on the ground', irrespective of whether or not they can assist them financially. These people play a key role in community development within the county (and sometimes further afield), have good interpersonal skills enabling them to communicate with groups (particularly if it is 'bad news'), and they have the ability to "...move groups along...";

Less Well Regarded Agencies: favourable responses were elicited from some interviewees, while others did not hold the same opinion of the agencies which fell into this category. The main stumbling block preventing this group from being viewed in more favourable terms appears to relate to attitude and systems; respondents felt that these agencies were bad at communicating and did not appear interested in trying to assist the group. In relation to systems, many welcomed the 'local-input' approach, but were critical of the bureaucratic administrative systems which many viewed as ways to "...trip (them) up..."

Agencies With Little Or No Profile: some of these agencies have yet to find their niche in community-led activity although, in theory at least, they should have a primary role in community development. Others have been doing a good job within the county, but have failed on their external (and sometimes, their internal) communication - people do not know what they have done or are doing.

Agencies Which Were Heavily Criticised: throughout the county there were agencies which received serious criticism from people from diverse backgrounds. In general, the views reflected the manner in which they deal with people and their apparent lack of real interest in the county or in the efforts of local individuals or groups, but some were also criticised for some, or all, of the following: lack of local input; having no proactive presence within the county; proposing unrealistic financial or managerial arrangements; providing inadequate feedback and communication; and 'moving the goal posts' without discussion. Two organisations in particular received specific and comprehensive criticism throughout the county - one in the economic development area and one agency of the Department of the Environment; however, neither of these have community activity as a central part of their remit.

- (iv) Even among those directly involved in community development, there is a concern that individuals and economic organisations do not receive enough support in promoting economic development;
- (v) Group members resent the fact that, on some major issues (e.g. planning), they are not consulted by the statutory agencies. Planning is a **major** issue in rural areas, where there is a strongly held view that the planners have no appreciation of the social implications of current planning regulations and of its contribution to rural depopulation;
- (vi) The time-scales operated by funders create problems for those contributing on a voluntary basis; the result is that projects are often poorly developed and groups have to proceed before they are fully prepared to do so;
- (vii) Delays in remitting the funds for approved projects create "... hidden ..." costs, such as interest charges, and there is a view that funders are "... insensitive ..." to the implications of these;
- (viii) Group members feel that funders, by implication, do not accept their *bona fides*;
- (ix) There are concerns that groups were poorly advised in the past; consequently, they believed that "... the goal-posts were moved ..." by some funders, after groups had (as they perceived it) "... agreed ..." their project, and the consequent refusal of funding came as a major shock and disappointment;
- (x) Groups want to have feedback on unsuccessful applications to find out why they failed;
- (xi) Different agencies use different criteria; there is a need for a co-ordinated approach and there is also a need for a single specific strategy for rural towns and urban estates throughout Fermanagh (and the rest of Northern Ireland);
- (xii) While attitudes towards the agencies themselves are mixed, the current local representatives of IFI, DoE/CRISP and RDC are highly regarded; major factors in how different agencies are perceived are the personality/manner of the local representative(s), how regular his/her contact is with the group and how sensitively he/she can impart 'bad news'. Those who adopt a positive approach to local people and local groups (the local voluntary 'workers') are viewed in a positive light.

2.4.7 Agencies' Perceptions of Community Groups/ Community Development

- (i) The agencies wish to see more 'partnership' between groups;

- (ii) Networking is seen as useful, but it cannot solve community groups' problems and is not an end in itself;
- (iii) If groups are to succeed, they must stay close to their communities;
- (iv) To date, monitoring of projects and follow-up with groups has been inadequate and the assessment of the 'value-for-money' aspect of community activity has been very poor;
- (v) The agencies are concerned that groups which add economic activities to their core objectives may be diverted from their real roles and invest too much energy and effort in ancillary activities;
- (vi) Agencies consider that those individuals who are involved in too many activities are unlikely to contribute adequately to any group;
- (vii) The funders have attempted to support economically sustainable projects, but they accept that, in the long-term, many projects will not survive; they recognise that the local group takes the biggest risk as its community's reputation and welfare is at stake;
- (viii) Agencies, particularly those administering European funding, were put under pressure to distribute monies within a relatively short time-frame; there was no 'test project' which would identify the 'best' distribution mechanisms - consequently, problems have occurred.

2.4.8 External Perceptions of Community Development

- (i) Community groups are often seen as small cliques run by "... busy-bodies ..." and "... do-gooders ..." who are divorced from the reality of the social problems of the area; in several quarters, community development has a negative image, is not taken seriously and needs to become more entrepreneurial. Their own communities do not appreciate the time, effort and energy invested by community groups in bringing projects to fruition;
- (ii) The business sector's involvement in community activity is an individual issue; some become involved for altruistic reasons, others for their own benefit, whilst most see it as entirely irrelevant to them. The business sector has no concerns about community businesses - they are seen as totally different in terms of objectives and approach, and as not being competitors to the private sector;
- (iii) Many in the business sector consider that there is too much emphasis on, and support for, community activity; despite the fact that businesses have more potential for success and longevity, they receive comparatively little support;
- (iv) There is a perceived danger that many community groups do not appreciate the magnitude of the problems associated with promoting economic projects; as a result they go "... too far, too fast ...";
- (v) There is a considerable level of scepticism about the long-term sustainability of many community projects and whether their 'real' role is as "...feel good activities..."; to many, they do not represent good value-for-money and will be incapable of sustaining themselves when funding dries up;
- (vi) Many groups are seen as parochial and inflexible; they are also seen as being motivated by "...£ signs..." with many of them replicating what has been done elsewhere and with little evidence of any innovation;
- (vii) Business-people perceive 'the funders' to be "... pushing ..." community activity and, therefore, to be, indirectly, responsible for the 'plastic' groups, at whom money is thrown simply because of who they are and because "... they say the right things ...".

2.4.9 Social Versus Economic Development

- (i) The county's principal needs, at present, are social ones; consequently, there is a need for a much more proactive effort to reach the most disadvantaged and under-represented sections of society;
- (ii) While some groups have been established with a very specific focus e.g. women's issues, unemployment etc., there are many other directly comparable issues which equally deserve to be addressed;
- (iii) Economic sustainability appears to be the main criterion being applied, but groups argue that other criteria should carry equal importance;

- (iv) Value-for-money in current government policy is perceived to be based exclusively on economic value, rather than on social or community value;
- (v) There are strong links between the lack of transport in rural areas, and rural isolation and depopulation.

2.4.10 Need for Support

- (i) Most groups would welcome follow-up support and feel they need it;
- (ii) Support provided by way of general written advice is not really appreciated; group members feel that any worthwhile advice should be specific to the needs and circumstances of the individual group;
- (iii) There is a need for the direct targeting of resources towards those groups which are experiencing difficulty in developing their projects;
- (iv) Groups feel the need for assistance in selecting and appointing workers and in managing them to ensure that they achieve the targets set for them; this is a major concern for groups operating on a voluntary basis. (There are examples of cases where the community worker 'manages' the group, rather than *vice versa*).

2.4.11 Border Communities

- (i) Views on the impact of the border on local development are different in the East and the West of the county; they are also different between Catholics, who see the border as a hindrance, and Protestants who do not perceive it so;
- (ii) The closure of the border roads had an adverse effect on morale in both communities – but more so in the Catholic community;
- (iii) In border areas, exchange rate fluctuations are a major issue;
- (iv) For Protestants, social life along the border was severely disrupted by the road closures, resulting in feelings of isolation (however, the physical presence of checkpoints gave them some degree of comfort and security); for Catholics, social life continued on a cross-border basis, notwithstanding the road closures.

2.4.12 Community Workers

- (i) There is a need for a clear definition of the roles, responsibilities and rights of community workers, and of the legally enforceable employment-termination procedures to be applied, before any community group should be allowed to employ a worker. Groups do not have experience of employing people, with the result that the employer-employee relationship can be fraught with problems;
- (ii) Employment of full-time workers can have the effect of reducing the level of voluntary effort; everything may be left to the full-time person;
- (iii) There is a view that groups should not need development workers if the committee is good enough;
- (iv) Employment of community development workers creates "... a false economy ..." based on posts which are not sustainable in the long-term.

2.4.13 Urban Estates

- (i) Urban estates, whether they are in the middle of a town or on the periphery of a built-up area, experience a unique set of circumstances and needs which are not normally the same as those of the surrounding areas;
- (ii) Vandalism, speeding vehicles and petty crime rank as the three major concerns of many urban residents (especially of older residents), while top investment priorities include play facilities for children, provision for older teenagers and some form of community facility; transportation is also seen as a priority in the outlying

estates;

- (iii) So far, there has been no strategic nor integrated approach to the management of the social problems of urban estates; this has resulted in people in many estates feeling that they have "... been forgotten about ..." and that rural areas have received more resources and support. (In general, the urban area of Fermanagh has not received funding in proportion to its population, because the major funding agencies have tended to focus on rural needs);
- (iv) Estates which have to rely on voluntary support do not appear to have achieved as much as those which have the support of a full-time worker; resources have been targeted at the well-developed, better organised and more 'visible' estates;
- (v) Economic conditions within estates are epitomised by benefit dependency, lone-parent families, high unemployment and low incomes;
- (vi) While alcohol and teenage drinking are major problems throughout Fermanagh's communities, the incidence of drug abuse and drug-pushing is much higher in the urban estates - especially in those where community activity is weakest;
- (vii) 'Drinking Dens' have become popular within some estates and there are 'known houses' where drink and drinking parties are common place; this has created problems for neighbours who are forced to apply for a transfer, turning parts of some estates into 'undesirable' places to live, and producing almost deserted areas.

2.4.14 General Comments

- (i) There are several areas where there is no desire for community development activity of any form; either the locals are satisfied with their current position and wish to be left as they are (including having no new houses built in the area for 'outsiders'), or they are apathetic about community development and tend to associate with other development bodies in the wider area e.g. church, sport or social organisations;
- (ii) In some 'Protestant areas', the church structures take precedence over any community project, and this inhibits the growth of independent community activity;
- (iii) There is a view that where demographic, social or economic factors so dictate, single-identity development should be encouraged and funded;
- (iv) Recently formed women's groups have been especially successful in enhancing the quality of life and raising competence among females;
- (v) Not enough effort is being made by many community organisations to utilise or harness, the experience and expertise of local businesses for the benefit of the community.

Conclusions

2.5 Having analysed the foregoing comments, the following principal conclusions have been reached from this study:

- (a) The concept of community development has been well supported county-wide in Fermanagh and has been generally successful; the external perceptions of Fermanagh and of its community development activity are highly positive; nevertheless, there is a need to promote the concept of community development to a wider section of society in the county;
- (b) Community development has the capacity to give communities a sense of identity, which is at least as important as any improvement it might generate through bringing people together or raising the general standard of living and welfare in any area;
- (c) Social problems have not been, and are not being, adequately addressed by community activity within the county, although (as one example) an initiative has been established to deal with anti-social behaviour within the urban estates; but the county's social problems extend beyond the built-up areas - they are both plentiful and serious, and the resources needed to solve them have not been made available;
- (d) Community development has generally failed to achieve the cross-community benefits expected from it (by funders who have the remit of promoting community relations); to some extent, the current political situation has

contributed to this result;

- (e) There are a number of communities in Fermanagh which have no interest in any form of community activity and simply prefer to retain their own privacy without any external interference;
- (f) The more successful groups are generally those which have a clear focus, prioritise tasks and build up their capacity through experience of small projects initially; they are also the groups which maintain closest and most regular contact with their communities;
- (g) There are serious reservations about the capacity of most community groups to undertake economic projects which will be sustainable in the long-term, and there are also reservations about the degree of replication of projects (and the corresponding lack of innovation) being promoted by the voluntary sector; consequently, there is a clear need to build the capacity required by groups to undertake economic projects (where such projects are being proposed by a group) and, where possible, the support of local business people should be enlisted for such projects;
- (h) Community-based activity is not highly regarded by a section of the county's population and the motives of those involved in it are viewed with scepticism and/or apathy;
- (i) Community groups feel isolated when they encounter problems, and there is no adequate network through which they can access the help they need when under pressure; these pressures tend to arise principally from financial problems;
- (j) The agency-driven emphasis on increasing economic prosperity through community development has not succeeded in improving the position of the most marginalised groups in Fermanagh, and there is a major need to support community activity aimed at improving the social position of the more disadvantaged members of society;
- (k) The statutory (and other) agencies have not generally met the needs of the community sector and the two sectors (the public sector and the voluntary sector) are poles apart in terms of any agreed understanding of the issues and priorities involved in community activity; there is a need for the agencies to adopt a more positive and supportive approach to community activities and to those groups which promote them;
- (l) There are far too many agencies operating in a very bureaucratic way, claiming to support the community sector, with far too few of them having any genuinely beneficial input;
- (m) The Protestant community has not taken advantage of the opportunities created for the community sector, largely because of a philosophical anathema to collective activity;
- (n) In rural areas, current planning regulations are a major issue and they have a serious impact on the public's attitude towards the statutory sector generally;
- (o) There is considerable resentment that funding is being made available to the community sector on a basis on which it is not available to the private sector;
- (p) There is a need for the funding agencies to ensure that clear mechanisms are in place for monitoring and evaluating projects;
- (q) The closure of border roads provoked considerable resentment in border communities and affected social cohesion there;
- (r) There are very clear and very fundamental differences between the needs of rural areas and those of the urban estates in Fermanagh, and there are correspondingly major differences in the types of solutions which should be offered and implemented in those communities;
- (s) The growth in the numbers employed in the community sector is perceived as 'a mixed blessing' and there is considerable scepticism about the long-term viability of such employment;
- (t) In the case of community development, value-for-money cannot be measured purely in economic terms; the increased capacity of communities, the enhanced sense of identity and the overall vibrancy of the sector are just as important as the jobs created or the assets funded as a result of community activity.

Corroboration Of The Study

- 2.6 A major seminar (the first) convened to assess, specifically, Community Development in Protestant Areas (CDPA) was held in 1991; it identified many findings similar to those reported in this study, in relation to Fermanagh in 1998.

Since then, there have been other studies which expanded on the issues raised in that seminar which looked at the pockets of deprivation in relatively 'well-off' Protestant areas. However, this current report is the first to look at community development in a rural context and to cover a whole county. It indicates that the situation in Fermanagh has not really moved forward very much from that depicted in 1991. (An exception has been Kesh, a predominantly Protestant settlement, which has successfully embraced community development).

- 2.6.1 A paper by NIVT entitled "*Redressing the Imbalance*", in September 1998, advocated that single identity work would result in further division and would be "... unlikely to make a significant impact on targeting social need or furthering the aims of the Peace Programme ...". That may well be the case for areas with a predominantly urban character, but there was no evidence to suggest that it would be the most appropriate approach for a rural area and, given the insecurity of Protestants living in Fermanagh, it might even prove to be counterproductive; accordingly, it is not recommended in this report. However, its findings in relation to Urban Estates mirrored the findings of the Fermanagh report.

Recommendations

- 2.7 In light of the issues raised and the feedback provided, the following preliminary recommendations are made:

CONSOLIDATION IS REQUIRED

- 2.7.1 The overall support structures for the community development sector, especially the funding mechanisms involved, have become very confusing for voluntary groups; too many players have resulted in duplication of effort; consequently:

Recommendation One - The number and roles of support groups for, and funders of, community development activity should be consolidated so as to reduce the number involved.

Recommendation Two - Single-identity groups should receive support for good projects.

Recommendation Three - Specific initiatives should be designed to address particular social needs.

AREA STRATEGY FOR THE COUNTY

- 2.7.2 Due to Fermanagh's unique situation with the boundaries of the local authority area coinciding with the County, an 'over-arching' development plan for the county should be implemented; this should include the following:

Recommendation Four - A community development plan should be produced for the county.

Recommendation Five - Social problems must be identified as priorities and adequately funded.

LOCAL COORDINATION IS REQUIRED WITHIN THE COUNTY THROUGH A CENTRALISED BODY

- 2.7.3 In order to assist the community sector, the following recommendations have been made in relation to the need for a centralised unit and its role and responsibilities:

Recommendation Six - A central coordinating and advisory service should be established for the county.

Recommendation Seven - Information on the activities of other community-based groups within the county should be made available through a central 'clearing-house'.

Recommendation Eight - Meetings of all community groups in the county should be arranged annually so that groups can meet funders and each other.

Recommendation Nine - A proactive community development officer/worker should be appointed to work exclusively with the Protestant community in Fermanagh.

Recommendation Ten - A proactive community development officer should be appointed in Fermanagh to work with the urban estates.

Recommendation Eleven - A comprehensive strategy, to be implemented by all the relevant agencies, should be developed for the management of urban estates in Fermanagh.

Recommendation Twelve - Community development workers should be appointed only for consortia of community groups - not for individual groups.

Recommendation Thirteen - Groups should be given training prior to the employment of a worker.

Recommendation Fourteen - A pool of expertise should be made available to the community sector.

Recommendation Fifteen - Focused mentoring and training should be provided for the community sector - especially for new groups proposing to undertake major projects and for groups proposing to undertake economic projects.

Recommendation Sixteen - Special support should be provided for established groups which have not yet achieved their initial goals.

ACTIONS FOR GROUPS

2.7.4 The following recommendations are proposed for adoption by groups undertaking community activity:

Recommendation Seventeen - 'Succession Plans' should be drawn up by all community groups.

Recommendation Eighteen - The terms of office of office-holders in community groups should be strictly limited.

Recommendation Nineteen - Young people should be encouraged to become more involved in community activity.

Recommendation Twenty - Committees must proactively seek to involve representatives of the marginalised sectors of society.

GENERAL

2.7.5 The following general recommendation is also proposed in order to support community development within Fermanagh.

Recommendation Twenty-One - Agencies should adopt an obviously supportive role in relation to their contacts with individual groups, including working with the groups in their own environment.

2.8 In producing these recommendations, the consultants recognise that some will necessitate action at central government or statutory agency level, but the feedback during this assignment was that action needs to be taken because resources are not being used to maximise the benefit to society, given the way that agencies are structured at present.

2.9 It is also important that agencies recognise the magnitude of the gap which exists between the voluntary/community sector and the statutory sector; this report identifies very specifically that agency representatives need to be seen to assist community groups 'on the ground', that policies operated from a distance are unlikely to be effective and that the personality, attitude and manner of the person interfacing directly with the group is the single most important determinant of how groups perceive funders and other agencies.

2.10 The net outcome of this study is that Fermanagh is seen as a highly desirable place in which to live and work, but it has a huge range of needs, most of which are social. Those operating at community level need the continuing constructive support of funders and external agencies, if these problems are to be resolved in an

inclusive way.

3.0 TERMS OF REFERENCE

- 3.1 The overall objective for this assignment was set out in detail in the proposal on which the assignment was commissioned; it can be summarised as follows:

“to undertake a Fermanagh-wide audit of community development structures, inter-community relations and cross-community activities, and to determine the nature, extent, socio-economic and denominational profile of the existing provision on those dimensions”.

- 3.2 The audit involved a baseline assessment of community infrastructures and relationships within County Fermanagh, and the resulting report provides the basis for an agreed inter-agency strategy which, it is hoped, will promote effective measures to address the causes and effects of community division and social exclusion.
- 3.3 Within this overall objective, the consultants addressed the following sub-objectives/issues in undertaking the audit:

(A) The Current Situation

- examination of the extent of development of cross-community and other community-based activities in the County;
- assessment of the level of cooperation between the two traditions in community-driven activities throughout the County;
- assessment of the foregoing in the context of the geographical location of different initiatives, i.e.
 - towns and villages;
 - rural areas and townland communities;
 - border areas;
 - areas of identifiable interface between the two communities;
- examination of the composition of the groups in each case in order to establish whether the make-up reflects that of the local population;
- comparison of the levels of development and cooperation in areas where development is being undertaken by single-identity groups, by groups with a significant majority from one community (70% or more) and groups whose membership is relatively evenly divided between the two traditions;
- estimation of the extent to which the range of activities quantified above has contributed to social, economic or cross-community improvement in the County.

(B) Single Identify Communities

- conducting an in-depth review of the nature of community relations in single-identity communities and investigation of the opportunities for change in those communities;
- establishment of whether it was the aim of the various single-identity groups to develop single-identity projects as a precursor to commencing cross-community initiatives or whether such projects were intended as stand-alone developments;
- discovery of whether those groups belong to any cross-community networks, or, to single identity networks which are addressing issues of sectarianism and methods of combating it;
- establishment of whether there is a need, in any of these communities, for single-identity work to be undertaken because of the special circumstances involved; for example, if they are operating on behalf of specific groups, such as ex-prisoners, victim groups, border communities or interface communities;
- identification and documentation of the experiences of groups which have moved from working within a single-identity context to engaging in cross-community activities;
- examination of the range of cultural activities which have been introduced by these groups and whether the activities include those associated with the local minority tradition;
- identification of those communities which feel that inter-communal relations in their areas are satisfactory and that no further change nor development is required.

(C) Neutral Venues

- identification of all 'neutral' venues in the County, recording the location, type of facility and ownership in each community;
- identification of activities which are conducted in them;
- quantification of the level of use of each such facility by each of the two traditions;
- investigation of the reasons of under-use by members of either tradition, should that be evident;
- quantification of the number and type of 'non-neutral' venues; and
- identification of the views of local residents on how these properties might be made more accessible to all, if in fact they feel that they should be.

(D) Statutory, Semi-Statutory and Voluntary Agencies

- assessment of the input of statutory and semi-statutory agencies in relation to community relations training and skills development;
- identification of the views of these agencies;
- summary of the emphases which they place on partnership and reconciliation;
- identification of any short-fall in training provision;
- production of a review, similar to that outlined above on the input of the voluntary sector.

(E) Communities Which Are Not Yet Organised

- quantification of the number of such communities in the County;
- assessment of their needs through discussions with local leaders;
- identification of any impediments to the formation of groups for community development, socio-economic development or cross-community developments;
- assessment of what forms of encouragement might generate community activity in those areas; and
- evaluation of the needs and potential of such areas.

(F) Output

- establishment of guidelines for wider cross-community contact and measurable indicators of progress;
 - identification of any overall patterns to these developments and the implications of such patterns;
 - recommendations based on models which are most likely to succeed (based on the results obtained from the study);
 - recommendation on a way forward for the growth of community-based activities and the development of inter-communal relationships in the County; and
 - identification of ways of reducing social exclusion in all its forms in Fermanagh taking cognisance of the potential contributions of the various agents and organisations involved.
- 3.4 The overall emphasis of this assignment was on the identification of community-driven activities and cross-community links, and how they can be promoted more effectively and on a wider basis.
- 3.5 The original Terms of Reference included the stipulation that the consultants should liaise closely with the commissioning group in the course of the project and in the adoption of their consultation methodology; this report and the proposed recommendations have been completed in compliance with those requirements.

4.0 SOCIO-ECONOMIC SUMMARY OF COUNTY FERMANAGH

- 4.1 Fermanagh is the biggest of Northern Ireland's local government districts in terms of area, but it is one of the least densely populated; despite the existence of a major town, it is still a highly rural area which is suffering from the effects of the decline in agriculture. The following paragraphs provide details of its socio-economic position.

DEMOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS

- 4.2 According to the 1991 Census Report, Fermanagh Local Government District had a population of 54,033, comprising 27,095 males and 26,938 females, a ratio of 50.1:49.9. (The most recent statistics; supplied by the General Register Office indicate that this figure had increased by an estimated 2.7% by mid- 1997). Population growth over the 1971-1991 was as follows:

Year	Population	Percentage Increase
1971	50,255	-
1981	51,594	+ 2.7%
1991	54,033	+ 4.7%
1996	55,220	+ 2.2%
1997	55,500 (est.)	+2.7%

Increase 1971-1996 = + 9.9%

- 4.3 The following table indicates the breakdown of Fermanagh's population by age group, with the average Northern Ireland proportions provided for comparison:

Age	Number	Percentage Of Total	Northern Ireland Percentage
0-4	4,438	8.2	8.1
5-9	4,833	8.9	8.2
10-14	4,843	9.0	8.1
15-19	4,714	8.7	8.1
20-39	14,527	26.9	29.2
40-64	13,349	24.7	25.7
65+	7,329	13.6	12.6
TOTAL	54,033	100	100

Table 4.1 indicates that Fermanagh had a higher proportion of persons under-twenty than the Northern Ireland average - 34.8% compared to 32.5% - and a correspondingly lower percentage in the 20-64 groups at 51.6% compared to 54.9%. It also has a high proportion of pensioners; combined with the high young population, this produces a very high dependency level.

EMPLOYMENT AND UNEMPLOYMENT

- 4.4 The total population aged sixteen and over in Fermanagh (according to the 1991 Census Report) was:

19,440 Males
19,526 Females

Of these, 17,496 (44.9%) were registered as employed, and the following table outlines the employment categories of that 44.9%, with the Northern Ireland proportions provided for comparison.

Category	Fermanagh		N. Ireland
	Total Persons	Percentage	Percentage

Fermanagh Partnership In Practice

Community Audit - Report

Self-Employed	3,760	21.4	12.8
Managers	884	5.0	7.8
Foremen & Supervisors	569	3.4	4.0
Professional Employees	313	1.8	3.0
Other Employees	11,600	66.3	70.0
On A Government Training Scheme	370	2.1	2.3
TOTAL	17,496	100	100

The high proportion of self-employed persons in Fermanagh, compared to the overall Northern Ireland figure, reflects the large number of farmers in what is essentially a rural economy.

- 4.5 Table 4.3 (overleaf) has been compiled from data recently supplied by the Department of Economic Development. The Table indicates that the number of employees in the manufacturing sector in Fermanagh exceeds the Northern Ireland average - 19.9% compared to 18.7% while dependence on the services sector for employment, is less than for the region overall, with the main public services (education, health and related services) being particularly large components of the services sector in Fermanagh - as they are in most other local authority areas of Northern Ireland.

- 4.5.1 The Table suggests that there is only one sector of economic activity in Northern Ireland, in which Fermanagh's 'share' of the total employment is disproportionate to its population base viz. 'Mining and Quarrying' (Note: 'Agriculture' is excluded from these figures, and Fermanagh's share of that sector is also disproportionate to its population). In the 'Mining and Quarrying' sector, Fermanagh provides 15% of the total Northern Ireland employment - largely as a result of a major business in the South of the county, which is augmented by a number of smaller businesses spread throughout Fermanagh, though mainly in the border areas.

In most other sectors, Fermanagh's employment levels broadly reflect the county's share of the regional population, apart from the general area of Financial, Property and Business Services in which employment in the county is relatively low.

Sector	Number In Fermanagh	Percentage (%)	Number In Northern Ireland	Percentage (%)
Agriculture, Hunting & Forestry	-	-	596	0.1
Fishing	-	-	282	-
Mining & Quarrying	292	1.8	1,945	0.3
Manufacturing	3,161	19.9	103,968	18.7
Electricity, Gas & Water Supply	-	-	4,778	0.9
Construction	665	4.2	23,743	4.3
Wholesale & Retail Trade: Repairs	2,582	16.2	87,317	15.7
Hotels & Restaurants	871	5.5	26,922	4.8
Transport, Storage & Communication	707	4.4	22,129	4.0
Financial Intermediation	238	1.5	13,740	2.5

Real Estate, Renting & Business Activities	261	1.6	31,960	5.7
Public Administration & Defence	1,325	8.3	60,074	10.8
Education	1,943	12.2	60,018	10.8
Health & Social Work	2,994	18.8	93,012	16.7
Other Services	647	4.1	26,513	4.8
Other	225	1.4	-	-
Services	11,568	72.7	421,685	75.7
TOTAL	15,911	100	556,997	100

¹ Note: Figures exclude Agriculture

- 4.6 Recent statistics published by the DED (January 1998) show that the number of unemployed at that date was 2,380, comprising 1,886 males and 494 females. This represents an overall unemployment rate in Fermanagh of 9.3%; the regional figure was 7.8%. The District's number of unemployed has dropped by over 1,500 since 1991 when the respective overall rates for Fermanagh and Northern Ireland were 22.2% and 18.2% respectively. The number unemployed at ward level is shown in the following table (Table 4.4).

TABLE 4.4			
UNEMPLOYMENT IN FERMANAGH - SEPTEMBER 1998			
Ward	Male	Female	Total
Ballinamallard	36	18	53
Belcoo & Garrison	88	25	113
Belleek & Boa	88	26	114
Boho, Cleenish & Letterbreen	55	17	72
Brookeborough	78	18	96
Castlecoole	72	35	107
Derrygonnelly	59	34	93
Derrylin	63	18	81
Devenish	103	19	122
Donagh	89	24	113
Ederney & Lack	67	19	86
Erne	92	34	126
Florencecourt & Kinawley	63	15	78
Irvinestown	106	27	133
Island	81	36	117
Kesh & Lisnarick	58	28	86
Lisbellaw	48	19	67
Lisnaskea	123	29	152
Maguiresbridge	66	20	86
Newtownbutler	137	33	170
Roslea	131	36	167

Rossorry	73	34	107
Tempo	76	25	101
TOTAL	1,851	589	2,440

The two wards with the highest levels of unemployment (Newtownbutler and Roslea) are in the east of the county and along the border - precisely the areas which have most economic problems at present.

INDUSTRIAL SECTORS

4.7 Manufacturing

After agriculture, 'Manufacturing' is the sector which employs most people in Fermanagh. The table below indicates the employment figures for manufacturing in Fermanagh in 1993 and 1995, with the Northern Ireland figures provided for comparison.

Year	Fermanagh					N. Ireland				
	Males		Females		Total	Males		Females		Total
	No.	%	No.	%		No.	%	No.	%	
1995	1,928	61.0	1,233	39.0	3,161	69,769	67.1	34,199	32.9	103,968
1993	1,814	58.5	1,285	41.5	3,099	65,141	65.4	34,488	34.6	99,629

Figures provided are the most up-to-date available at this point.

Over the period 1993 to 1995, employment in manufacturing grew by 2% in Fermanagh and by 4.4% in Northern Ireland. The sector which grew most rapidly in that period was the Service sector, particularly Health and Social work in Fermanagh and Health and Social work along with Education for the whole of Northern Ireland (See paragraph 4.5 above for comment on the overall position in the county).

Predictably, males dominate employment in manufacturing both in Fermanagh and in Northern Ireland. Between 1993 and 1995, male employment in manufacturing grew, whereas the numbers of females in manufacturing declined, suggesting that females are finding employment in some other sectors of the economy.

Tourism

4.8 According to the latest Local Authority tourism estimates by the Northern Ireland Tourist Board, Fermanagh ranks third in terms of revenue generation in Northern Ireland after Belfast and Coleraine districts. Fermanagh's performance over a six year period is summarised below.

	Fermanagh			Northern Ireland		
	1990	1996	Percentage Change (%)	1990	1996	Percentage Change (%)
Number Of Trips (000's)	148.1	138.5	-6.5	2,177.3	2,204	+1.2
Number Of Nights (000's)	625.3	545.0	-12.8	10,421.0	9,910	-4.9
Spend (£m)	13.9	17.4	+25.2	210.2	266.0	+26.5

Although performance in terms of increasing tourist numbers (trips and tourist nights recorded) during 1990-1996 was not impressive either for Fermanagh or Northern Ireland, by comparison with other destinations (including the Republic of Ireland) revenue generated increased substantially (by 25%) in each case.

4.9 The following table gives the attendance figures (1996) at the most popular attractions in Fermanagh:

Attraction	Attendance
Belleek Pottery	161,000
Castle Archdale	100,000
Marble Arch Caves	60,000
Florencecourt Forest Park	35,200
Enniskillen Castle	21,762
Castlecoole	17,252
Florencecourt House & Gardens	14,059
ExploreErne Exhibition, Belleek	14,000
Crom Estate	12,156
Devenish Monastic Site	1,773

Agriculture

- 4.10** Agriculture is a very important sector of the Fermanagh economy. Overall, there are 6,653 persons (including full-time, part-time, and casual and seasonal workers) employed in agriculture in Fermanagh. Even with such large numbers involved in farming, there still are very few large farms, resulting in heavy reliance on small farms for income generation. The table below indicates the sizes of farms in Fermanagh, for both 1996 and 1997, and also includes the Northern Ireland figures for comparison.

There was a revision of the basis on which 'farms' were analysed and enumerated between 1996 and 1997, with the result that about 500 extra 'farms' were included in 1997 to incorporate those which had previously been considered 'statistically insignificant' or 'minor' holdings (normally less than a hectare).

Classification	Fermanagh				Northern Ireland			
	1996		1997		1996		1997	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Very Small	1,969	56.3	2,201	56.9	13,435	48.8	16,859	52.5
Small	1,282	36.7	1,425	36.9	10,359	37.6	11,386	35.5
Medium	231	6.6	228	5.9	3,215	11.7	3,322	10.3
Large	15	0.4	12	0.3	538	1.9	551	1.7
TOTAL	3,497	100	3,866	100	27,547	100	32,118	100

Source: Northern Ireland Agricultural Census

In broad terms, Very Small Farms are not large enough to provide full-time employment for one person, Small Farms are generally 1-2 person businesses, Medium Farms are 2-3 person businesses and Large Farms may provide employment for 3 or more persons.

- 4.11** It is clear from Table 4.8, that very small and small farms dominate the area. Whilst this is also true for Northern Ireland as a whole, a comparison of the percentage figures shows that the aggregate proportion of small and very small farms in Fermanagh is well above the corresponding Northern Ireland average, for both years. By contrast, 12% of farms in Northern Ireland were either 'medium' or 'large' in size, compared to only 6.2% in Fermanagh in 1997.

Very small farms produce an average Standard Gross Margin (SGM) of less than £6500 per annum and are not financially capable of supporting even one person; over half of Fermanagh's farms fall into that category, implying that most of the county's farms have to be operated on a part-time basis or are supplemented by other sources of income.

4.12 The tables which follow indicate the breakdown of the Fermanagh figures into the three designated rural areas.

TABLE 4.9						
NUMBER OF FARMS IN EACH AREA BY BUSINESS SIZE (JUNE 1996)						
Classification	Enniskillen		Irvinestown		Lisnaskea	
	No. Of Farms	(%)	No. Of Farms	(%)	No. Of Farms	(%)
Very Small	592	50.7	554	64.4	796	56.4
Small	483	41.4	257	29.8	518	36.6
Medium	87	7.5	49	5.7	90	6.4
Large	5	0.4	1	0.1	8	0.6
TOTAL FARMS	1,167	100	861	100	1,412	100

TABLE 4.10						
NUMBER OF FARMS IN EACH AREA BY BUSINESS SIZE (JUNE 1997)						
Classification	Enniskillen		Irvinestown		Lisnaskea	
	No. Of Farms	(%)	No. Of Farms	(%)	No. Of Farms	(%)
Very Small	682	52.2	586	63.7	892	57.0
Small	530	40.6	288	31.3	580	37.1
Medium	91	7.0	44	4.8	89	5.8
Large	3	0.2	2	0.2	6	0.1
TOTAL FARMS	1,306	100	920	100	1,567	100

(Note: There are small discrepancies between the analysis above and the County total as provided in Table 4.5; these differences occur in the official statistics produced by DANI.

These tables indicate that Irvinestown has the largest percentage of 'Very Small Farms' much larger than the other two districts, and this holds true for both years. Consequently, Irvinestown has a much smaller number of 'Medium' and 'Large' sized farms. Overall, the number of 'Large Farms' represents a very small proportion of the totals for the area (with the percentage having fallen in both Enniskillen and Lisnaskea as a result of the changes in the basis of the data collection).

4.13 Cattle and sheep rearing predominate in Fermanagh; 79.5% of farms are engaged in this type of farming compared to 67.9% in the region generally (see Table 4.9 below). As would be expected, cereal production or mixed farming are not practised to any great extent.

TABLE 4.11								
NUMBER OF FARMS BY FARM TYPE								
Classification	Fermanagh				Northern Ireland			
	1996		1997		1996		1997	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%

Cereal	0	-	0	-	484	1.8	544	1.7
General Cropping	3	0.1	2	0.1	499	1.8	443	1.4
Horticulture	6	0.2	5	0.1	398	1.4	402	1.3
Pigs and Poultry	23	0.7	21	0.5	598	2.2	846	2.6
Dairy	697	19.9	655	16.9	5,343	19.3	5,233	16.3
Cattle and Sheep	2,664	76.1	3,072	79.5	17,841	64.8	21,815	67.9
Mixed	16	0.5	13	0.3	1,429	5.2	1,567	4.9
Others	88	2.5	98	2.5	955	3.5	1,268	3.9
TOTAL	3,497	100	3,866	100	27,547	100	32,118	100

This table reinforces the view that Fermanagh depends heavily on Dairy, Cattle and Sheep farming i.e. on a gross-based agriculture. The figures indicate that over 75% (in both 1996 and 1997) of the farming population depend on Cattle and Sheep farming alone, and when combined with Dairy farmers, they represent over 90% of the farming community. These figures are much greater than the corresponding figures for Northern Ireland. These results could be expected given the quality of land in Fermanagh. The area is suited only to Cattle and Sheep farming.

The breakdown of Fermanagh's 'farm-type' figures is provided in tables 4.12 and 4.13 below.

TABLE 4.12						
NUMBER OF FARMS IN EACH AREA BY FARM TYPE (1996)						
Classification	Enniskillen		Irvinestown		Lisnaskea	
	No. Of Farms	(%)	No. Of Farms	(%)	No. Of Farms	(%)
Cropping ¹	2	0.2	1	0.1	5	0.1
Pigs and Poultry	7	0.6	2	0.2	14	1.0
Dairy	263	22.5	76	8.8	332	23.6
Cattle and Sheep	869	74.5	756	87.8	1,012	71.7
Mixed	4	0.3	3	0.3	8	0.6
Others	22	1.9	23	2.8	41	3.0
TOTAL FARMS	1,167	100	861	100	1,412	100

¹ This category includes Cereals, General Cropping and Horticulture

TABLE 4.13						
NUMBER OF FARMS IN EACH AREA BY FARM TYPE (1997)						
Classification	Enniskillen		Irvinestown		Lisnaskea	
	No. Of Farms	(%)	No. Of Farms	(%)	No. Of Farms	(%)
Cereal	0	0	0	0	0	0
General Cropping	0	0	0	0	2	0.1
Horticulture	3	0.2	0	0	4	0.2
Pigs and Poultry	8	0.6	1	0.1	11	0.7

Dairy	244	18.7	73	7.9	319	20.4
Cattle and Sheep	1,022	78.3	816	88.8	1,184	75.6
Mixed	1	0.1	2	0.2	10	0.6
Others	28	2.1	28	3.0	37	2.4
TOTAL FARMS	1,306	100	920	100	1,567	100

The figures above confirm the dominance of Cattle, Sheep and Dairy farming. However they produce one interesting contrast: Irvinestown depends much more heavily on Cattle and Sheep farming than the other areas, whereas Enniskillen and Lisnaskea have a lesser dependence on this category and higher utilisation of land for dairy farming. In each case, pigs and poultry, and mixed farming tend to make up the other sections.

4.14 Most of the farms in Fermanagh are located in Less Favoured Areas (LFA) as indicated in the table below (SDA = Severely Disadvantaged Area; DA = Disadvantaged Area).

TABLE 4.14								
NUMBER OF FARMS BY LFA DESIGNATION								
Classification	Fermanagh				Northern Ireland			
	1996		1997		1996		1997	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Mainly SDA	3,217	92.0	3,589	93.0	10,575	38.4	12,170	38.0
Mainly DA	238	6.8	247	6.0	8,554	31.1	10,151	32.0
Mainly LFA	3,455	98.8	3,836	99.0	19,129	69.4	22,321	69.0
Mainly Non-LFA	42	1.2	30	1.0	8,418	30.6	9,797	31.0
TOTAL	3,497	100	3,866	100	27,547	100	32,118	100

It is evident from this table that much of the farm land in Fermanagh is classified as being Severely Disadvantaged - a figure more than twice the Northern Ireland average. Nearly all land in Fermanagh is classified as Less Favoured Area, - again a percentage which is much higher than the Northern Ireland average. There is only a very small proportion which is a Non-Less Favoured Area, whereas Northern Ireland as a whole has over 30% classified as such. Within Fermanagh there is some variation in land categorisation; the figures, broken down into the three sub-areas, are shown in the tables below.

TABLE 4.15						
NUMBER OF FARMS IN EACH AREA BY LFA DESIGNATION (1996)						
Classification	Enniskillen		Irvinestown		Lisnaskea	
	No. Of Farms	(%)	No. Of Farms	(%)	No. Of Farms	(%)
Mainly SDA	592	50.7	554	64.3	796	56.3
Mainly DA	483	41.4	257	29.9	518	36.7
Mainly LFA	87	7.5	49	5.7	90	6.4
Mainly Non-LFA	5	0.4	1	0.1	8	0.6
TOTAL FARMS	1,167	100	861	100	1,412	100

TABLE 4.16						
NUMBER OF FARMS IN EACH AREA BY LFA DESIGNATION (1997)						
Classification	Enniskillen		Irvinestown		Lisnaskea	
	No. Of Farms	(%)	No. Of Farms	(%)	No. Of Farms	(%)
Mainly SDA	592	50.7	554	64.3	796	56.3
Mainly DA	483	41.4	257	29.9	518	36.7
Mainly LFA	87	7.5	49	5.7	90	6.4
Mainly Non-LFA	5	0.4	1	0.1	8	0.6
TOTAL FARMS	1,167	100	861	100	1,412	100

Mainly SDA	682	52.2	586	63.7	892	56.9
Mainly DA	530	40.6	288	31.3	580	37.0
Mainly LFA	91	7.0	44	4.8	89	5.7
Mainly Non-LFA	3	0.2	2	0.2	6	0.4
TOTAL FARMS	1,306	100	920	100	1,567	100

These tables show that in each area under both methods of farm enumeration, over 50% of Enniskillen's and Lisnaskea's and over 60% of Irvinestown's farming land is Severely Disadvantaged. Inevitably, these figures have impacts on the levels of social and economic disadvantage suffered in the county.

Category	Number in Fermanagh	Percentage of Total	Number in N. Ireland	Percentage of Total
Farmers & Partners				
Full-time	2582	38.8	22409	36.2
Part-time	1951	29.3	16878	27.2
Spouses	793	11.9	7001	11.3
Other Workers				
Full-time	213	3.2	2981	4.8
Part-time	259	4.0	3038	4.9
Casual/Seasonal	855	12.9	9570	15.5
TOTAL	6653	100	61877	100

- 4.15 The higher percentages of full-time and part-time farmers and partners in Fermanagh by comparison with the regional averages is due to the greater number of small farms in the county where the work load does not necessitate hiring additional workers.

JOB CREATION AND FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE - LEDU AND IDB

Local Enterprise Development Unit (LEDU)

- 4.16 During the period 1st April, 1995 - 27th December, 1996 LEDU created 804 jobs in Fermanagh at a cost of £1,521 per job; per head of the Fermanagh population this represented £22.63 per person. By comparison, the average cost per job during the period for Northern Ireland was £912, converting to £29.00 per head of the population.

	Number Of Jobs	Number Of Offers	Commitment
Fermanagh	804	282	£1,223,128
Northern Ireland	50,286	6,950	£45,844,538

Since 1995/6 to date it has offered assistance to 295 businesses in Fermanagh with the potential to create up to 420 jobs.

- 4.17 Fermanagh's share of jobs in the 1995/96 period was thus 1.6% of the Northern Ireland total and 2.7% of total investment. These percentages, on a population basis, are significantly lower than would be expected; the population of Fermanagh is in excess of 3.4% of the Northern Ireland population.

Industrial Development Board (IDB)

Fermanagh Partnership In Practice

Community Audit - Report

- 4.18 The number of IDB client companies in Fermanagh over the 1993-1997 period varied between 27 and 30 or 4.1 to 4.6% of the Northern Ireland total. Employment in these companies during the period was as follows.

	1993-1994	1994-1995	1995-1996	1996-1997
Number	2,880	2,833	3,085	3,259
Percentage Of Total	3.5%	3.4%	3.6%	3.8%

- 4.19 A summary of investment and job creation is provided below for the same period with the percentage of the Northern Ireland total indicated in each instance.

Year	Jobs (New And Safe-guard	Percentage Of N.I Total	Total Investment (£m)	Percentage Of N.I Total	IDB Assistance (£m)	Percentage Of N.I Total
1993/1994	205	2.2	5.3	1.0	1.5	1.2
1994/1995	204	2.3	12.7	3.2	2.3	2.3
1995/1996	663	8.3	15.4	3.1	5.2	3.4
1996/1997	170	1.5	7.7	1.2	1.6	1.0

These figures have to be interpreted against Fermanagh's share of the Northern Ireland population, and on that basis the county has fared poorly in terms of assistance provided, apart from the 1995/96 period.

HOUSING

- 4.20 The 1991 Census Report indicated that 67.9% for houses in Fermanagh were owner occupied with 23.6% rented from a local or public authority; this compares with the respective Northern Ireland figures of 62.3% and 29.4%. (The Fermanagh percentages are in line with other rural areas since most farmers own their own houses). The percentage of householders sharing shower or WC, or with outside flush toilet was similar (1.3% in Northern Ireland and 1.4% in Fermanagh). However, 23.4% of homes in the County had no central heating compared to 17.3% for Northern Ireland.
- 4.21 A Housing Condition Survey, completed in September 1996 by the Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE), indicated that Fermanagh had the highest percentage of unfit dwellings - 17.5% compared to the Northern Ireland figure of 7.3%. Fermanagh had also the highest proportion of unfit homes in 1991, with 23.3% compared to the Northern Ireland figure of 8.8%, so that, while the absolute percentages are decreasing, the relative disadvantage has been increasing.
- 4.22 In Fermanagh there are 544 persons requiring housing from the Housing Executive. Of these, there are 143 considered 'Urgent Need' candidates, which represents 26.29% of the total. Urgent Need candidates are those who fall into one of the following categories:
- are homeless or emergency candidates;
 - require housing in accordance with medical/social reasons;
 - live in unfit houses; or
 - are incoming workers.

Enniskillen alone accounts for 45.04% (247) of persons in need of housing, with 63 persons (25.51% of the Enniskillen total and 11.58% of the Fermanagh total) classified as 'Urgent Need' candidates.

EDUCATION

- 4.23 There are currently fifteen post-primary schools in Fermanagh, distributed as follows:

Town	Number Of Schools	Type
Enniskillen	8	4 Grammar; 4 Secondary*
Kesh (Incorporating Ballinamallard Campus)	1	Secondary
Lisnaskea	2	Secondary
Derrylin	1	Secondary
Roslea	1	Secondary
Belleek	1	Secondary
Irvinestown	1	Secondary

* This includes 1 Integrated, grant maintained school.

- 4.24 The total enrolment during the 1996-1997 school year was 6,006; 2,637 in Grammar schools and 3,369 in Secondary schools. The breakdown by religious affiliation was as follows:

School Type	Mainly Catholic	Percentage Of Total	Mainly Protestant	Percentage Of Total
Grammar	1,673	63.4	964	36.6
Secondary	2,298	68.2	1,071	31.8
TOTAL (All Schools)	3,971	66.1	2,035	33.9

The Integrated Secondary school in Enniskillen had an enrolment of 223, which represents 3.7% of total post-primary enrolment in Fermanagh.

TOWNS AND VILLAGES

- 4.25 Most towns and villages in Fermanagh registered significant population growth rates over the two inter-censal periods 1971-1981 and 1981-1991. The exceptions were Lack and Tempo, whose populations decreased. The populations of Derrylin, Newtownbutler and Roslea all increased by over 100% over the twenty year period.

Town/Village	Population		Percentage Change
	1971	1991	
Ballinamallard	580	1,068	+84.1
Belcoo	188	327	+73.9
Belleek	386	550	+42.5
Brookeborough	379	541	+42.7
Derrygonnelly	538	716	+33.1
Derrylin	152	321	+111.2
Donagh	176	230	+30.7
Ederney	482	626	+29.9
Enniskillen	10,305	11,436	+11.0
Garrison	226	325	+43.8
Irvinestown	1,565	1,906	+21.8
Kesh	350	670	+91.4
Lack	161	157	-2.5
Lisbellaw	529	632	+19.5
Lisnaskea	1,592	2,457	+54.3
Maguiresbridge	480	645	+34.4
Newtownbutler	448	953	+112.7
Roslea	245	529	+115.9
Tempo	302	292	-3.3

DEPRIVATION

- 4.26** According to a 1994 survey, *Relative Deprivation in Northern Ireland*, Robson *et al*, 1994, Fermanagh District Council area is the sixth most deprived of the twenty six Local Authority areas in terms of degree, fifth in terms of intensity and third in relation to extent. The five most deprived and five least deprived wards are shown in the following matrix (low ranking indicates severe deprivation, while high numbers indicate relatively prosperous wards).

Ward	Degree - Ranking	Extent - Ranking	Intensity - Ranking
Newtownbutler	21*	109	40
Belcoo & Garrison	23	57	23
Roslea	28	85	14
Brookeborough	47	98	11
Devenish	68	117	107
Castlecoole	511	-	379
Rossorry	470	-	274
Island	382	-	288
Ballinamallard	367	-	227
Lisbellaw	332	-	262

* Note: '21' indicates that Newtownbutler is the 21st most deprived ward out of 566 in Northern Ireland, i.e. within the worst 5%.

- 4.27** In Fermanagh there are 213 Enumeration Districts (ED's) in the twenty-two wards. Of these: 159 are

deprived, 14 of which are in the most deprived 5% of Northern Ireland's ED's; 11 others are in the most deprived 10%, 38 of which are in the worst 20% in Northern Ireland. The majority of these deprived ED's lie in wards in which all the enumeration districts are deprived, including Newtownbutler, Derrylin, Roslea, Belcoo and Garrison (with the exception of one enumeration district), and Brookeborough. An analysis of these indicates that deprivation in Fermanagh occurs mainly along the border areas, and in some of the more densely populated parts of Enniskillen (the Enniskillen ward of Devenish is totally deprived).

COMPARISON OF THE MAIN AREAS OF FERMANAGH IN SOCIO-ECONOMIC TERMS

4.28 The magnitudes and impacts of the different socio-economic factors vary in relation to the different geographic areas of Fermanagh. The table below provides a comparison of five broad areas covering the entire county. The wards included in each of the five are as follows:

North Fermanagh: Tempo, Ballinamallard, Irvinestown, Ederney and Lack, and Kesh and Lisnarick (5).

South Fermanagh: Derrylin, Maguiresbridge and Florence Court and Kinawley (3).

East Fermanagh: Roslea, Newtownbutler, Donagh, Brookeborough, and Lisnaskea (5).

West Fermanagh: Belleek and Boa, Belcoo and Garrison, Derrygonnelly and Boho, Cleenish and Letterbreen (4).

Mid Fermanagh: Rossorry, Portora, Devenish, Erne, Castlecoole and Lisbellaw (6).

TABLE 4.23					
ANALYSIS OF DEPRIVATION IN FERMANAGH					
	North Fermanagh	South Fermanagh	East Fermanagh	West Fermanagh	Central Fermanagh
Number of Wards	5	3	5	4	6
Total Population of Ward (1991)	11,290	6,709	11,433	9,126	15,475
Area (Hectares)	35,181	34,845	39,771	65,932	11,948
Population per Hectare	3.116	5.194	3.479	7.225	0.772
Average Deprivation Ranking	2.638	6.11	10.44	8.585	-5.058
Number of Wards in Worst 20% in Northern Ireland	2	2	4	3	1

**Since 1991 the population of the county is estimated to have increased to over 56,000 persons.*

From the table it is obvious that the entire East, South and West of the county are relatively deprived, with the county's prosperity being located in the Enniskillen area and, to a lesser extent, in parts of the area to the North of the county town.

4.29 The primary factors determining the deprivation ranking of the different wards in each of these regions of the county are indicated in the following table:

TABLE 4.24					
ANALYSIS OF CAUSES OF DEPRIVATION					
	North Fermanagh	South Fermanagh	East Fermanagh	West Fermanagh	Central Fermanagh
Poor Household Amenities	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Poor Public Services	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No

High Occupancy Density	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	?
Children in Low Income Families	No	No	No	No	No
Poor Health Statistics	No	No	No	No	No
Low Educational Standards	?	?	?	No	No
Unemployment	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	?

* ? indicates that the result is mixed.

It is evident from the table that the main contributory factors to deprivation in Fermanagh and 'Poor Household Amenities,' 'Poor Public Services,' 'High Occupancy Density,' and 'Unemployment.' These factors are worst in the three areas already mentioned i.e. South, East and West Fermanagh.

SUMMARY

- 4.30 Fermanagh has a growing population with high proportions of both young and old people and a lower percentage than the Northern Ireland average in the 20-64 age cohort. Its unemployment level is high and it is heavily dependent on low value-added farming, based on small farms of generally poor quality; agriculture is the only employment category where its proportion is above that for Northern Ireland as a whole. However, its tourism performance is also relatively good.
- 4.31 It is quite deprived with both the deprivation and the unemployment being particularly pronounced along the border to the East, South and West of the county. It needs investment in both economic infrastructure and physical infrastructure - especially housing, where the statistics on housing standards are quite bad - but it has been successful in community development, which is the primary focus of this report.

5.0 COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND CROSS-COMMUNITY ACTIVITY IN FERMANAGH

5.1 Although Fermanagh was divided into nineteen areas for the purpose of the consultation process in this study and in the analyses in the Appendices to this report, there are at least sixty-five identifiable village, or townland/cross-road communities in the county. (Whilst sixty-eight are listed in the Appendix, and elsewhere in this report, as being part of the consultation process, three of these are primarily outside the county boundary). Of these, thirty-eight (58.5%) have active community groups and twenty-seven (41.5%) do not.

Within the county, there are about twenty-seven identifiable, significant, community settlements, of which all but one has an active community group.

5.2 The main reasons for there being no community group in these twenty-seven (mainly small) community areas of Fermanagh, as indicated by the responses provided to the interviewers, are as follows:

- **Proximity** to an area where there exists an established community group and where there is evidence of local inter-community cohesion and participation/involvement which brings residents of both areas together e.g. Monea (with Derrygonnelly), or Dooneen (with Tempo).
- **Apathy** towards community development and involvement e.g. Churchill or Springfield (Derrygonnelly), or Tempo Road (in Enniskillen).
- **Population** being too small to justify the establishment of a community group e.g. Corranny.
- **Composition of the community** producing a situation where it is difficult to establish and maintain a community group e.g. Cavanaleck (where a number of attempts have been made, but none has survived, because of the transitory nature of the population); this phenomenon seems to be more common in urban estates or in areas on the periphery of major settlements.
- **Location** of the area, i.e. being surrounded by other areas which are perceived as having more to 'offer' in terms of facilities, tourism potential or economic prospects, producing a 'pull' on residents to the extent that it appears not worthwhile to establish a community group for the area e.g. Granshagh.
- The area's **religious community** being very strong and closely involved in community activity, including improvement, enhancement and development schemes i.e. taking on the role of a community group e.g. Ardess or Letterbreen.
- **No community venue** capable of accommodating group meetings and activities e.g. Aghadrumsee.

5.3 It would appear that, in these areas, without some form of external intervention the probability of establishing community-led activity (other than, possibly, single-issue 'lobbying' etc.) is remote and, even with such an intervention, there are cases where such an effort might not be worthwhile.

5.4 However, there are communities which are not significantly different from some of those mentioned as examples above, but which have succeeded in establishing a level of community support for one or more initiatives e.g. Garvary, Aughakillymaude, Derrykerrib, Clogh (and several others).

5.4.1 The consultants have analysed the differences between those areas which have a reasonable amount of community-led activity, and apparently comparable areas which have not any community-led activity, and have concluded that two principal factors account for the differences; essentially, community activity exists in the smaller settlements, where:

- (i) There is a local individual , with some standing in the community, who takes responsibility for establishing a group and provides the leadership and 'drive' to make things happen; or
- (ii) There is an issue of significant local importance or need which causes a number of people to come together to form a group and to establish objectives for its proposed activities.

5.4.2 Examples of groups which could be described as falling into one or other of these two categories are:

- Individually-led: Knock, Derrykerrib and Kilmacormick; and
- Issue-led: Inver and Topped Mountain.

This part of the analysis would suggest that, while the level of community-led activity in Fermanagh is already high, there is considerable potential for further voluntary and community sector input into the county's economic and social progress.

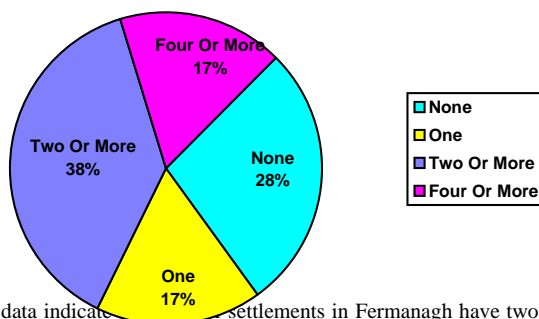
5.5 An equally important difference between groups (and areas) in Fermanagh is the number of projects undertaken. The following table illustrates the level of activity as reflected in the number of projects already undertaken, or in the final stages of development, in each of twenty-seven reasonably large and identifiably distinct (in community terms) areas of the county:

TABLE 5.1				
THE NUMBER OF COMMUNITY PROJECTS COMPLETED OR SECURED				
AREA	NONE	ONE	TWO/THREE	FOUR OR MORE
Aghadrumsee	√	-	-	-
Ballinamallard	-	√	-	-
Belcoo	-	-	√	-
Bellanaleck	√	-	-	-
Belleek	-	-	√	-
Brookeborough	-	-	√	-
Coa	-	√	-	-
Derrygonnelly	-	-	√	-
Derrylin	-	-	√	-
Donagh	-	√	-	-
Ederney	-	-	√	-
Enniskillen	-	-	-	√
Florencecourt	-	-	√	-
Garrison	-	-	√	-
Irvinestown	-	-	-	√
Kesh	-	-	-	√
Kinawley	-	√	-	-
Knocks	-	√	-	-
Lack	√	-	-	-
Lisbellaw	√	-	-	-
Lisnarick	√	-	-	-
Lisnaskea	-	-	-	√
Maguiresbridge	√	-	-	-
Newtownbutler	-	-	√	-
Roslea	-	-	√	-
Teemore	-	-	-	√
Tempo	-	-	√	-
TOTAL	8	5	11	5

5.5.1 The data above are represented more graphically and with greater visual impact in the following pie-chart

(overleaf):

**The Number Of Projects Completed, Or In Progress,
In Twenty-Seven Areas Of Fermanagh**



These data indicate that 38% of settlements in Fermanagh have two or more projects completed or in progress, with correspondingly high levels of benefit to their respective communities; 18.5% have four or more projects completed or in progress; most of these areas are large 'urban' settlements (Enniskillen, Lisnaskea and Irvinestown) but the list also includes rural areas where community spirit is strong e.g. Kesh and Teemore. A lower 11.1% of these communities have only one project completed, or in progress, whilst 29.7% of them have no project at all; these latter include places on the outskirts of larger settlements which have "...more to offer..." e.g. Lisbellaw, Aghadrumsee and Maguiresbridge.

- 5.6** These projects have been the result of massive investment in the county from various funding agencies between 1988-1998. Of the sixty-five areas covered in the audit, forty-four (67.7%) have received, or are currently guaranteed to receive, funding for a variety of community development projects in the county. The figures provided by the different groups, when reconciled with data provided by DoE/CRISP Office and FDC Community Development Office, indicate that a figure *in excess of £26 million* has come to Fermanagh-based groups from funding agencies - by far the most of it for capital projects. (The actual figure could possibly be closer to £30 million, given that not all groups were able to quantify the aid received, or receivable, with absolute precision, and some were unwilling to disclose financial details). Of these, CRISP and CPDS village projects account for approximately £11 million, or 40% of the total.
- 5.7** The next biggest contributor has been DANI's Rural Development Programme, with one area (Teemore) having received an especially large *tranche* and three others (Belleek, Derrygonnelly and Garrison) having received (or, in Derrygonnelly's case, being about to receive) significant funding - but several other areas got smaller amounts from this programme. Six other funders have each supported more than ten groups in the county, albeit with generally small amounts of money in each case. Those six are: FDC; IFI; Fermanagh Trust; NIVT; RDC; and

FDP. A total of forty other funders have supported eighty-seven projects in the county - many of them small, revenue-based activities, but all of them valuable to the recipients, and all of them giving a boost to the morale of the communities and the community groups involved.

- 5.7.1** Overall, this funding has created approximately thirty-three direct, full-time jobs in local communities - and this excludes about two hundred part-time posts such as caretakers, care-workers etc. When indirectly created jobs are taken into account, the grant-aid-per-job is reduced significantly; it is estimated that indirect job creation (excluding any jobs in the funding sector or in funding agencies in the county) amounts to considerably more than twice the number of direct jobs created - but this figure is difficult to quantify with precision, since some jobs which could be included, could just as easily be excluded. However, the real value of this investment relates primarily to its impact on local morale and capacity, and on the areas' social and communal development, as well as to its contribution to the empowerment of the recipient communities; but it has also left a very significant residue of valuable physical assets in the ownership of local groups and has created huge improvements to the environment of the county, and, together, these have the potential to contribute economically and infrastructurally, to the future prosperity of those areas.
- 5.8** Treating Enniskillen as a single community area makes for a very unbalanced comparison with other areas of the county. If this settlement was not taken as a single, built-up area, it could easily be divided into at least sixteen distinct smaller communities which have fundamentally different socio-economic characteristics. Those sixteen areas include places such as Windmill, Coleshill, Rossorry, Drumgallon, Cavanaleck, Chanterhill/Drumclay, Tempo Road, Castlecoole, Portora, Derrychara, Kilmacormick, Cornagrade, Hillview, etc, all of which would, on the basis of their populations, be considered as very substantial settlements in a more normal (rural) Fermanagh setting, and all of which have populations far in excess of any of the townland or crossroad communities analysed in this report.
- 5.9** In general, Enniskillen, because most of the town taken as a single entity, is relatively prosperous, has fared poorly in terms of support from funders. Despite its general prosperity, it has a number of pockets of considerable deprivation, with the Devenish ward having particularly bad socio-economic statistics - worse than those of some of the other areas which have been generously supported by the main funding agencies. Relative to the rest of the county, this deprivation is not reflected in the *per capita* grant-aid received by the community of that ward, nor in the figures for the county town as a whole.

Cross-Community Activity

- 5.10** The success of cross-community activity in Fermanagh is analysed from the perspective of the interviewees in section 6.9 of this report; it suggests that external factors have affected the potential for genuinely constructive contacts between the two communities. The result is that there is a high level of scepticism about the value of the efforts which have been invested in promoting this type of relationship and that success has been achieved only insofar as pre-existing links were concerned - and these have tended to be among the better-off section of Fermanagh's society.
- 5.11** One very obvious reflection of this is the existence, or lack, of venues to which both communities are attracted in significant numbers - so-called 'neutral' venues.
- 5.12** The statistical summaries of the nineteen areas covered by this survey (provided at the end of each of the Area Profiles) indicate that fifteen of the nineteen areas have some form of cross-community venue; in at least eleven of these, the facilities are not primarily social facilities but are used as venues for social events e.g. Kinawley (where the KITE building is used), Derrygonnelly, Teamore, Garrison, Belcoo, Lisnaskea, Irvinestown (where a publicly-owned recreational facility is used) and Belleek - most of the cross-community venues in these areas are primarily economic facilities which are adapted for some use as social amenities.
- 5.13** In some other areas where the amenity is designated cross-community, the community is primarily single identity and the 'neutral' dimension of the venue is minimal e.g. Knocks, Aughakillymaude and Boho where the communities are mainly single-identity (though in Boho, at least, great efforts are made to be, and to be seen to be, 'neutral' and with some success).
- 5.14** Therefore, in summary, Fermanagh is seriously deficient in 'genuine' cross-community venues and those which are being used as 'neutral' venues have not been developed primarily for use for social interaction on a cross-

community basis.

Summary

- 5.15 At a minimum of £26 million in support from various external agencies, and with the creation of about one hundred additional jobs, Fermanagh's community sector has fared well from the allocation of funding for community-led activity; some areas have fared especially well, with the result that the benefit has been distributed very unevenly across the county. Part of the responsibility for this uneven allocation of support lies with the communities themselves and the urban areas have suffered most from this.
- 5.16 Notwithstanding this large inflow of funding to Fermanagh, only about two-thirds of the smaller communities are organised to avail of the opportunities open to them, and the reasons for this low uptake are summarised above.
- 5.17 In terms of cross-community activity, the county's communities do not make any significant use of purpose-built social facilities for facilitating inter-communal contact and there are very few real neutral facilities for social intercourse.

6.0 CONSULTATION PROCESS

- 6.1 The consultation process commenced in January 1998 and was carried out over a four month period; the county was divided into nineteen geographical areas, see Appendix 1; a profile of each area is provided in Appendix 2 - it includes a socio-economic profile, a synopsis of current community development activity and of the resources within each associated 'townland' community, and a summary of comments from interviewees in each area. The nature of community relations within these areas is also reviewed.
- 6.2 During the consultation process, a variety of suggestions were made in relation to the parameters of this study; essentially they related to different views on the nature and interpretation of 'community'. For the purposes of this report, the following definitions have been used:

Community Activity: Any activities undertaken by a number of people having common ties, or interests, and agreeing to pursue (a) common objective(s);

Community Development: Any activity undertaken by a group for the benefit of the overall community. According to the "*Community Development Review Group, 1991*" **Community Development in Northern Ireland** is a process which embraces community action, community service, community work and other community endeavour - whether geographical or issue based - with an emphasis towards the disadvantaged and powerless within society. Its values include participation, empowerment and self-help. Community development challenges prejudice, sectarianism and the unequal distribution of resources."

Capacity Building: An enabling and empowering process which adds value to community development projects by strengthening the ability of organisations and individuals to reach and deliver to target groups.

It is accepted that these are very broad definitions, but they best summarise the views and feedback from those involved 'on-the-ground' in this area.

- 6.3 To ensure that the views, opinions and perceptions of as diverse a range of people as possible were included, a very wide-ranging consultation process was undertaken. Perceptions are crucial to a review such as this: "*In Northern Ireland, it is the reality of perceptions that is important, not the actual reality of events*" (Paul Sweeney CDPA Seminar, 1991).

This report deals with issues as people on the ground see them - 'perceptions' - many of which were confirmed by empirical data, though the report does not purport to advance the case for, or against, the perceptions provided by those interviewed and representing (on a statistical sampling basis) the views of a very wide proportion of the people of Fermanagh.

195 in-depth, face-to-face **interviews** (lasting more than two hours and twenty minutes, on average and ranging from fifty minutes, in one case, to over three and a half hours) and **seven focus group** sessions (lasting almost

three hours, on average) were conducted with a range of interviewees as follows:

SUMMARY OF THE CATEGORIES OF CONSULTEES			
Face-to-Face Interviews		Focus Groups	
Number	Category	Number	Category
128	Local Representatives in Nineteen Areas of the County, Covering Sixty-Nine Community Areas (including townland communities)	2	Protestant Community
15	Business People	1	Business Sector
4	Representatives of Credit Unions	2	Catholic Community
13	Representatives of Cultural Organisations	2	Cross-Community Groups
25	Representatives of Statutory Agencies		
9	Councillors/Politicians		
2	Consultants/Advisors Operating in the County		
196	TOTAL	7	TOTAL

- 6.4 Prior to conducting the interviews, all the interviewers were given directions on how to use the questionnaire (a copy of which can be found in Appendix 3); the objective was to make the interviews as ‘open’ as possible, so that, rather than restricting them to a standard ‘question and answer’ session/format which, it was felt, would limit the range and depth of feedback, with the probability that a ‘true’ reflection of the interviewees’ views and of the ‘real’ situation would not be obtained, the interviewers were encouraged to explore issues with the interviewees and to develop any issues raised, even if that meant digressing from the questionnaire; the result was that the questionnaire became only an *aide* to the interviewers who used it to introduce issues, but allowed the interviewees to express opinions on matters not directly covered in the questionnaire. For that reason, some of the findings in this report cover issues which could not have been obtained from the questionnaire as it stands; nonetheless, many of these views have been extremely valuable in reflecting what is important to groups on the ground. On the other hand, this approach also produced findings which were/are very difficult to analyse, since data are provided in a variety of different formats.

FEEDBACK FROM THE CONSULTATION PROCESS

- 6.5 The consultation process revealed a very wide range of issues, all of which impact on community development within the county. Some issues received consistently strong support; others could be categorised as ‘minority views’, but, for some of these, compelling evidence was adduced; the remainder were simply ‘one-off’ opinions with no general support nor validating evidence. Those which received reasonably consistent support, or for which acceptable external evidence was available, are the only ones which are incorporated into this report.
- 6.5.1 Because much of the quantitative data collected during the consultations has been provided in the previous section or in the Appendices, this section concentrates primarily on the **qualitative** results from the interviews and the focus groups. Generally, the focus group sessions (which were conducted after over 70% of the interviews had been completed) confirmed the findings from the interviews; in some instances, where apparently new issues were raised during the focus group sessions, the validity of the views expressed was tested in subsequent interviews and, where adequate support for those views appeared to exist, they have been incorporated in these findings. For that reason, in this analysis, views elicited mainly from the interviews are not distinguished from those derived initially from the focus group sessions - nor is one of these approaches to the data collection given preference over the other.
- 6.5.2 While the consultation process was designed to elicit both positive and negative views, the results indicate that, however good some aspects of life and community development may be in Fermanagh (and there were very many one-off, individual comments which expressed a favourable view of the county), most interviewees demonstrated a decided preference for discussing issues with which they were/are dissatisfied and in relation to which they feel improvements are necessary. There is absolutely no doubt about the determination of most of the interviewees to ensure a continued high level of innovative and successful community activity in Fermanagh; but

there is equally little doubt about their desire to ensure that the best possible structures and supports are in place to allow this activity to proceed as vigorously as possible. The result is that the majority of interviewees concentrated on areas where they perceived improvements to be either necessary, or possible, or both. As a consequence, many of the views might be interpreted as negative, but the intention behind them was, mainly, constructive, and they deserve to be considered in that vein.

6.5.3 *The views expressed in the following paragraphs, reflect the comments made by interviewees and are reported as accurately as the consultants could manage, given the need to protect themselves against potential legal action; for that reason, no comments are specifically identified with individual consultees, and no negative nor potentially actionable comments made about specific individuals, during the interviews, are included. Furthermore, the approach used in the consultation process allowed interviewees to raise issues about which they had strong personal feelings which might not reflect the general consensus in their area; to the extent to which it was possible, the interviewers have attempted to eliminate interviewees' 'grudges' from the findings, though it has to be acknowledged that this is very subjective and that it is impossible to guarantee that all such views have been fully discounted in this report.*

6.5.4 In this report, a number of direct quotes from individual interviewees are reproduced in quotation marks; where such quotes are used, they are given as illustrations of a sentiment which was widely voiced during the consultations and as representative of a view which had considerable support from interviewees. Minority views, which were not otherwise substantiated, are not reflected in the following analysis.

6.6 OVERALL STATE OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT IN FERMANAGH

The overall state of community development in Fermanagh has been examined in the preceding section of this report, and the situation in each community area is examined in detail in Appendix 2. The perceptions of interviewees are considered below under a number of specific headings raised during the data collection process.

There Is A High Level Of Successful Community Development Within The County

6.6.1.1 There is a generally-held view that the level of community development within Fermanagh is high and that the county has benefited from the development and the activities of the community sector. Broad support for community development initiatives has been forthcoming from interests ranging from the local District Council, through community activists, to the general public of the county; it is generally regarded as a worthwhile exercise which benefits the entire community. The results produced in the previous section of this report support that view.

6.6.1.2 Equally importantly, the community activity which has been undertaken in Fermanagh has been generally successful. There have been no major problems with projects in the county, and that is a tribute to all those who have sponsored, supported and promoted community-led projects here.

Fermanagh Is Regarded As A 'Model'

6.6.2.1 Consultations with central agencies indicated that Fermanagh is seen as a sort of 'prototype' or 'model' for community development. It has the advantage of having a single local authority for the entire county; this has meant that there is a stronger sense of identity within the area, and there is a view that this has resulted in a higher level of activity; but it has also meant that successful projects can easily be identified with the county. Groups in Fermanagh are much better than many others at communicating their successes; as a result, there is a general perception that although Fermanagh is affected by its remote location, it is not disadvantaged because of it.

6.6.2.2 There is little doubt that this perception of the county has been reinforced by the 'success' of a small number of high profile community-economic projects such as those in Belleek, Derrygonnelly, Garrison, Kesh and Teemore, as well as by Fermanagh District Council's promotion of projects with a social or community focus. In addition, the success of Lakeland Community Care's programme of support for those in relatively remote areas and its efforts to reduce the impact of rural isolation, have had a very beneficial effect on the county's image as a place where social issues are being addressed.

Different Benefits Can Be Derived From Community Development

- 6.6.3.1** There are a number of benefits derived from community development including, especially, the social implications of providing people with a 'sense of identity', although, this is not achieved unless people have a 'sense of ownership' of any activity undertaken.
- 6.6.3.2** On a superficial level, the benefits of community development are seen as improving the economic position of an area and its community and this is also the impression of some agencies; however, amongst those actively involved, the primary benefit of pursuing community development is that it develops "...a sense of identity...". The most successful projects are those which are identified with the local area, and owned by the local people; in general, those projects which are not generally identified with the local area are much less successful, though there is at least one high profile Fermanagh project which is perceived as being successful but with which only a minority of local people identify.
- 6.6.3.3** While the creation of economic activity and wealth is a priority for most groups, and even more of a priority for many funders, the net result of the consultations conducted during this study is that the strengthening of local identity is of paramount importance to successful community development.

As a Result of Over-emphasis by Funding Agencies on Economic Aspects, Social Needs Have Not Been Addressed

- 6.6.4.1** The view from those working with the marginalised and disadvantaged, and the evidence provided by them (even if it was mainly anecdotal) suggested, very strongly, that the benefits derived from community development activity have not percolated down to the most vulnerable and the most needy in the county's society. On this issue, groups like the St. Vincent de Paul Society and Residents' Groups (and several others) were at one. Although jobs were consistently mentioned as a priority, the main problems and needs raised could be categorised as social issues, only some of which could be solved by job creation. Among the most commonly raised issues were:
- **Alcohol abuse** - especially among the young; this is perceived as a much greater problem than drug abuse, even by those with responsibility for enforcing control over such abuse. There is however, a growing drugs problem in some of the urban estates in the county, and while it is, so far, only a minor issue, it has the potential to develop into something much bigger;
 - **Poor Parenting** - most of the blame for **teenage vandalism** and other forms of 'petty' crime is being laid (rightly or wrongly) with the parents, and the inability of a minority of parents to control their children is seen as a reflection of the inadequate preparation of many adults for the 'role of parent'; there is a belief that this issue is being either ignored, or that 'the authorities' are unaware of its significance, or unwilling to address it;
 - **Rural Isolation** - on the basis of these interviews, this is a major issue and it is becoming worse as family ties weaken; there are, at present, a huge number of single, old people in rural Fermanagh, and their needs are not being addressed in most communities. (The work of Lakeland Community Care was highly praised in this respect, and many other communities would wish to replicate what is being done by that organisation, but cannot access the funding to do so.);
 - **Poor Home-School Links** - there is a belief that links between the two primary influences on young people - the home and the school - are virtually non-existent at present; this is seen by some as an area where significant investment in support services should be a priority, but which is being largely ignored by both the voluntary and statutory sectors;
 - **Lack of Facilities for The Aged** - not only in rural areas, but also in the towns and 'urban' estates, the facilities available to the elderly are considered inadequate; isolation, as indicated above, is not restricted to

physical distance from neighbours - it exists in built-up areas too. While it is acknowledged that much progress has been made over the past two or three decades, the rate of social change has created an increased demand for social outlets for the elderly, who are increasing in number and mobility, but who are often becoming more removed from relatives. The view expressed was that this issue is not being adequately addressed;

- **Lack of Facilities for the Very Young** - while this situation is improving rapidly, there is still a shortage of affordable facilities for pre-school children and this continues to restrict access to employment for young mothers, apart from limiting the stimuli available to pre-school children;
- **Lack of Facilities for Those in Their Early 'Teens'** - this was/is a major issue in both townland communities and in built-up areas, but especially in the latter. The view was expressed that some effort is being made to address the issues of child-care and crèche needs, but very little is being done for those in their early years at second-level. Obviously this issue also relates to the school-home links issue above.

6.6.4.2 No effort was made in this study to identify whether, or to what extent, the issues raised under this heading had their primary roots in economic deprivation, or were/are amenable to resolution through economic activity or economic investment. However, there was a strong feedback that the perceived thrust of current government and agency policy is aimed, almost exclusively, at economic regeneration, whereas the problems are rooted in social shortcomings.

6.6.4.3 When respondents themselves were asked to suggest solutions to some of the above aspects, almost invariably they too suggested job-creation as their first preference - even those who criticised current government policy and its explicit, and/or implicit, economic objectives most vociferously. Nevertheless, there was a common view that "...the main problems are social ones, but the solutions being proposed are all economically-based..."; and, rightly or wrongly, the agencies are seen as falling into that 'trap'.

Future Community Development Activity Must Take Full Cognisance Of Social Issues

6.6.5.1 There is a perception that economic development will produce, almost on its own, the improvements to the area's social infrastructure which is patently needed; but local community activists are not so sanguine about that view. Their opinion, as expressed in the interviews, is that a proactive concentration on social issues will be needed if the issues raised above are to be addressed adequately. That will involve the creation of a stronger social infrastructure with a cross-community dimension and, in their view, the current emphasis on economic justification of all items of government expenditure is not conducive to such a solution.

6.6.5.2 Specific solutions, not all of which are directly related to the issues raised above, were mentioned; they included: training and capacity-building; the facilitating of improvements to actual and/or potential cross-community links; improvements to both the social and the physical infrastructures of the county (with transportation in both rural and urban areas being raised regularly in this context); the creation of jobs to mitigate the detrimental effects of unemployment. These are the areas in which interviewees perceived that solutions to Fermanagh's communities' problems should be sought.

Community Development Within Fermanagh Is Unevenly Spread

6.6.6.1 There is a view in some communities that a small number of areas have succeeded in attracting huge amounts of funding but that areas in greater need have got relatively little. It is recognised that some of the most deprived areas of Fermanagh are also among the least organised in community terms - as a result their relative disadvantage is compounded. The data in the previous section of this report supports that view.

6.6.6.2 There were suggestions that such disadvantages could be offset by the employment of full-time community workers; two arguments were advanced against that proposal:

- Firstly, it was accepted that 'weak' groups would be least capable of managing a full-time employee, unless those with a business background were willing to become involved and provide the group with experience of, and expertise in, managing employees; and

- Secondly, many groups felt that money could be better spent on the provision of facilities in those areas rather than on paying salaries (However, that is a priority area for the intermediary funding bodies of Special Support Programme for Peace and Reconciliation - SSPPR).

6.6.6.3 On the other hand, it was also acknowledged that full-time workers could raise the capacity of these groups and leave them in a position to advance on the same basis, or similar basis, as the groups which have already achieved success.

6.6.6.4 On balance (though by no means unanimously), the dominant view was that a 'pool' of expertise available on an equal basis to all groups in Fermanagh, would represent the 'best value' solution. This, however, could be implemented only if that expertise was utilised within, and operated within, a clearly defined strategic view applicable county-wide. It was also emphasised that any such strategy should not only be geographically comprehensive, but should also be completely inclusive in terms of social strata, disadvantaged groups, minorities, prisoners, women, the unemployed and the uneducated.

There Is A Need For A 'Balanced' View Of Fermanagh's 'Success'

6.6.7.1 Within Fermanagh's community/voluntary sector, there is considerable pride in the county's achievements through community-led activity; but there is also a view that this has been used to promote a perception of the county which is unrealistic and which "... talks down ..." the problems which exist there. The view was very clearly expressed, in both urban and rural areas, that the problems which exist in Fermanagh are similar to, and as bad as, those which exist elsewhere.

6.6.7.2 This has provoked some resentment and a considerable proportion of interviewees expressed annoyance at it. The attitude is that, in the long-term, it would be preferable to show the county's achievements in their true light and to let people see the "... warts and all ..." of Fermanagh's success.

Apathy, Cynicism And Scepticism In Relation To The Value Of Community Development In Fermanagh, Are Quite Strong

6.6.8.1 Of those who are not involved in community/voluntary activity, there is a high proportion who are apathetic towards it - it is neither highly regarded nor respected by them. There also exists a relatively high level of cynicism and scepticism about the value of this overall sector in terms of its impact on **real** progress (either social or economic) and the value of that impact relative to the level of investment which has been made. This view is not restricted to the business sector but it is particularly prevalent there.

6.6.8.2 It is a reality that, for those who hold such views, the value of community-led activity has not been well 'sold' to them. Overall, the activities of community groups and their successes have not been well communicated to the wider community (though there are several notable exceptions). The benefit of this approach to the wider society needs to be defined more precisely and 'sold' better - at present it is seen as benefiting a very small, group of activists, who have less support in their communities than their efforts often deserve.

Catholic/Nationalist Areas and Communities Have Benefited Most

6.6.9.1 There is a perception in the county, and it is justified on the facts uncovered in this report, that Catholic or Nationalist areas have fared better than Protestant or Unionist areas in terms of funding for community activity. By and large (for reasons described elsewhere in this report) the Protestant community has not involved itself in community-led activity; Kesh is a notable exception in Fermanagh terms. While that may now be changing, as Protestant communities realise that they have missed an opportunity to secure development in, and for, their areas, it is a reality that the Catholic and Nationalist community has moved very far ahead in this respect.

6.6.9.2 The reasons for this difference were highlighted by a prominent Protestant who stated that: "...Protestants see Nationalists as taking all they can, but giving nothing back. This is illustrated by the number of Catholic-dominated community development associations. Protestants are scared of a community hall in ... as they do not want to be associated with Catholic social activities... It is against the Protestant ethic to formally break the Sabbath...There is an element of independence that must be

looked at if Protestants are to be integrated into community development. Catholics are more community-orientated and will look to others for assistance and not see it as swallowing (their) pride. In the main, Catholics are much better at filling in application forms - be it for grants or for employment...Protestants are more amateurish in their attempts and will not seek advice...There now seems to be a greater willingness among Protestants to get together to obtain funding for different projects. They have quietly observed how the Catholics have obtained enormous amounts of money over the past ten years and are anxious to get in on the action. There is not a lack of confidence in this field, but a lack of experience and coordination..."

These comments reflect differences which are detailed elsewhere in this report (c/f 6.8).

Fermanagh's Remoteness From Belfast Militates Against Its Receiving Support

- 6.6.10.1** Belfast is seen as the centre of power when it comes to determining the distribution of agency funding. Many of Fermanagh's groups perceive themselves to be disadvantaged by their remoteness from Belfast; the agencies have a focus on the areas 'East of the Bann' and, as a result, in the view of many interviewees, Fermanagh does not get its 'fair share' of funding. The result is a feeling of resentment which is accentuated by the failure of some agencies to maintain regular, close and positive contact with the county's community sector. As is evident from views reported elsewhere in this study, this has a seriously negative effect on the way these agencies are viewed by the community sector in the county.
- 6.6.10.2** By comparison, local bodies, such as Fermanagh District Council is perceived as being supportive of the voluntary sector in the county; it maintains contact and, generally, good relationships with local groups, and this helps to increase its acceptability to groups in Fermanagh.

Many Groups Do Not Have The Expertise To Undertake Economic Development

- 6.6.11.1** Most community groups recognise that they have not the expertise to undertake economic development; notwithstanding that, a great number of them have projects which are primarily economic in nature. The shortfall in capacity is also a contributor to the sceptical view which was indicated earlier.
- 6.6.11.2** Two suggestions were made to rectify this deficiency: firstly, a new range of practical and useful supports could be developed to assist the sector by building its capacity to undertake projects of this kind; or secondly, the sector could adopt a new focus, with less emphasis on economic activity and more emphasis on social issues, which are seen as being the areas where voluntary and community-led activity in Fermanagh commenced, and as the areas where community groups tend to have the skills needed to secure positive and fruitful achievements. There is a concern, however, that this might not meet the needs of funders and could reduce the inflow of resources to the county.

Community Development Needs To Become More Focused - It Has Lost Its Way

- 6.6.12.1** There was an unexpectedly high level of criticism of the proportion of community activity in Fermanagh which is perceived as having been motivated by a desire to attract funding to a particular area without adequate attention to the greatest need(s) to be met in that area. The easy availability of funding, together with encouragement from funders, has led to a "... greed ..." for a project - any project! - which would attract funding and allow the community to show progress, but comparatively little effort is expended on identifying which are the most pressing needs. There is too much of a parochial bias and a degree of selfishness in the desire to get money "...for our area..." so that it can be seen to be as successful as any other.
- 6.6.12.2** This fear of "... missing the boat ..." has led to ill-thought-through projects and has, consequently, led to a perception that community development, in parts of Fermanagh, has lost its way and needs to re-focus itself on the needs and priorities which it should be addressing. This 'need to succeed' is one of the contributory factors to the high priority being given to economic projects, while the evidence suggests that social issues are much more in need of support and emphasis.

A Small Core Of Committed People Are Keeping Community Activity Alive In Fermanagh And There Is

Little Succession Planning

- 6.6.13.1 Community-led activity in Fermanagh is being sustained by relatively small proportions of the overall community in virtually every area; for the others, apathy, if not cynicism, has a much higher profile than commitment. Many of the current leaders within community groups have been involved in this activity ever since the first groups were formed in their respective areas, and they are still the backbone of the local efforts.
- 6.6.13.2 While that continuing commitment is very commendable, there were very many interviewees who complained of weariness and of being 'burnt-out'; when pressed on the reason for their continuing commitment to this activity, on behalf of their communities most of them said that there was/is no one to take over from them.
- 6.6.13.3 This raised the issue of group planning for 'succession' i.e. the plans they have made for ensuring that future officers are being developed to take over from those who have been carrying the burden for years. The responses indicated that, for virtually every group in the county, the issue of 'succession-planning' has not been addressed at all. This is an aspect which all community groups will have to examine, if the future vibrancy of this type of activity is to be secured.

COMMUNITY GROUPS AND THEIR DEVELOPMENTS

- 6.7 The main issues faced by community groups in Fermanagh, as they address the need for community-based activity in their different areas, were discussed at length during the consultations. An attempt was made to distinguish between 'more successful' and 'less successful' groups and to identify what the distinguishing characteristics are. The results are set out below under a number of distinct headings.

A Clear Focus Is Essential

- 6.7.1.1 To be successful, a group needs to have a very clear focus about what it is trying to achieve and, if several objectives have been selected, they have to be prioritised. The group should then draw up an implementation plan to ensure that these objectives are met. Prioritising objectives helps to give groups a 'focus' and it also ensures that, if resources are limited, the main priorities can be supported. Groups which do not pursue such an approach appear to 'flounder' and to be unsure of what they should be doing; consequently, their focus moves from one issue to another without really accomplishing anything of substantial benefit to the local area; they can be more easily swayed by 'what their neighbour is doing' – hence the complaints about the degree of replication of projects in the community sector.
- 6.7.1.2 There was some evidence (though it would not have rated as statistically conclusive) that groups which concentrate on a single project or a single issue tend to be more successful in that they reach the point of implementation faster; those with 'multi-purpose' aims tend to take longer to define their projects and to reach a position where a concrete plan (as opposed to some form of 'concept') can be put before funders. There was also some evidence that groups' focus can be distorted by their interpretation and implementation of the criteria being applied by funders, and these are often construed (rightly, or wrongly) as meaning that economic or infrastructural projects are preferred to social projects.

Phased Development Can Be Beneficial

- 6.7.2.1 There appears to be considerable merit in building-up slowly so that capacity can be developed through experience; groups should become involved only with projects which are in keeping with their own stage of development and experience. Newly established groups should start off with less demanding initiatives which are attainable; this will allow:
- group members to learn more about each others' capabilities, strengths and weaknesses;
 - groups to 'bond' and become cohesive units;
 - groups to gain confidence;
 - the groups' early successes to encourage them to move on to more ambitious projects;

- groups to obtain advice and training on areas where they are weak.

6.7.2.2 If a group ignores its own development, there is a danger that disunity will create division which will impact on any project being proposed or developed by that group. Ambitious projects should be undertaken only by groups which have experience of the way in which that particular sector operates - otherwise disillusionment may have a very negative impact on the group and on the entire local area.

6.7.2.3 Notwithstanding all this, however, there are examples of groups which have started with a 'big' project and brought it to a successful conclusion - Belleek, Derrygonnelly, Garrison, Kesh and Teemore are examples; nevertheless, in other areas e.g. Brookeborough, Knocks, Irvinestown and Florencecourt, the groups started with modest projects as a basis for building capacity for the development of a bigger project, later.

'Constructive Tension' Has Advantages

6.7.3.1 Successful community development groups tend to be those where there exists a level of creative/constructive tension and where there is an environment which encourages members to put forward different views and ideas. This tension has to be managed, and all views accommodated by a good chairperson - otherwise it will be self-defeating, and the group will not be able to function effectively. The rationale behind this is that, if all members hold similar views, the group gets 'comfortable', people simply agree for 'an easy time' and the probability of success is reduced; lively discussion stimulates and sparks new ideas in a classic 'thesis + antithesis = synthesis' syndrome - provided the process is well managed.

6.7.3.2 By the same token, excessive tension leading to conflict is also counter-productive; evidence collected during these consultations suggested that in at least two communities in Fermanagh, conflict and interpersonal problems caused a serious weakening of the groups' potential, and the final result of those groups' endeavours reflected that.

Too Many Groups Are Motivated by The Availability of Funding

6.7.4.1 There is a concern that many groups are driven by a "... greed ..." for money for their area; the first questions which some groups ask are 'what will we get money for?' and 'if we do this - how much money can we get?', rather than first discussing how the proposed project would meet the needs of the local area. In many cases there is very little congruence between the area's primary needs and the projects being proposed - though a case is always made for emphasising the needs which are being addressed. Groups which adopt this approach end up focusing on things which get funded, rather than tackling the most pressing needs within the area, and there is a danger that whatever projects they undertake could be seen as 'theirs' rather than belonging to the whole community.

6.7.4.2 Two results derive from this approach: firstly, some groups opt for unrealistically large projects with little initial realisation of the significance of the problems of raising the matching funding; and secondly, the project fails to address the area's real needs, thereby eroding confidence in the entire concept of community-led development. When this is supplemented by a perception that the project undertaken is really designed to meet the personal needs of the promoters rather than those of the community, support for community development is seriously damaged, and scepticism and cynicism replace conviction and commitment.

Community Groups Feel Under Pressure to Produce 'Success'

6.7.5.1 Communities and the groups which represent them, feel (and sometimes are put) under pressure to show 'success' with some 'tangible' evidence of development. The local community generally does not appreciate how long it takes to get things off the ground and believes that projects should progress a lot more quickly than they actually do; if nothing is seen to be happening, the local community can feel that the group has forgotten about the issue or that they are 'incompetent'. There is also a need for the individual group members to see something tangible happening. For these reasons, community groups tend to pursue visible schemes rather than tackling the more difficult needs, like anti-social behaviour, which are less concrete and less tangible.

6.7.5.2 But there is also the fact that groups (and funders!) perceive tangible outputs such as industrial units to be

preferable as symbols of success, and preferred by funders, to more socially-based activities - however much the latter might contribute to peace and reconciliation or to improved inter-communal relations. Again, this reflects another form of distortion of groups' focus.

Some Groups Are Not Representative Of Their Area

- 6.7.6.1** In general (but not universally), groups do not represent their areas as well as they believe they do. There was a suggestion that this is because they rely on volunteers and are thankful that people turn up at the meetings; as a result, they do not look at whether the more important sectors within the local area are represented. The consultations indicated that, in particular, groups based in rural settlements/villages do not (generally) adequately represent the hinterland of that village, nor do they adequately represent the young, the unemployed and the other disadvantaged sectors of their community. However, it must be recorded that some groups work assiduously to ensure that they represent their entire area, but there are in Fermanagh (according to the consultees) too many examples where that is not the case.

Networking With Adjacent Areas Is Weak

- 6.7.7.1** There is very little evidence of mutual support for, or contact between, different community groups in adjacent areas. A 'parochial' attitude prevails within the county; townland allegiances have existed for generations and they have the potential to inhibit cooperation between adjacent areas. There is a feeling that "...one can not be a prophet in one's own land...". It is also true that "...the further away you are, the more of an expert you are..." and some people find it easier to work with those who are further away, because there is not the same degree of 'local rivalry' and they are not seen as competitors in the same way as neighbouring communities might be regarded. There is/are no mechanism(s), within the county, for avoiding duplication of effort and/or projects; a well-organised networking programme would go some distance towards avoiding the excessive level of replication and duplication which occurs within the community sector.
- 6.7.7.2** As a result, of this relative lack of networking, groups with problems get little help from other groups within Fermanagh, and two groups quite close to each other may work on projects which are competitive, one with the other, (although there are some partnerships like Erne East, North Fermanagh-Donnegal Partnership and Slieve Beagh etc.) Furthermore, funders are blamed for offering support for cooperation on a cross-border basis, when much greater benefit to the area could be created by working with a neighbouring group. Consultees regularly expressed a need to learn from the experiences of others operating in the same environment and under the same constraints, but they need to be encouraged to network within their own geographic area. The growth of the partnership ethos in the county appears to be changing this, but only very gradually.

Groups Have Different Needs at Different Stages Of Development

- 6.7.8** Groups can be identified and categorised by their stage of development, and their needs change as the group and/or its project moves through the different stages; five distinct stages, as follows, were identified by various interviewees, and each produces different types of needs (there are other models of the stages of community development):

Phase 1 (**Start-up**): they need advice on how to establish the group; groups at this stage need to decide what their remit is and to obtain advice on how to establish the group. The group is at the 'learning stage' and it relies on direction and advice from others to steer it; training is generally required to familiarise the members with working within the community development sector and its special needs and funding options; but, more importantly, establishing the *modus operandi* of a group is a priority at this stage. In fact, in the long term, this is actually the most critical stage in a group's development as it dictates the entire future direction;

Phase 2 (**Deciding on a Project**): the group needs to look at the various options open to it and to define, and then initiate a project by considering what the area requires. This stage also involves the group in identifying and evaluating the various funding options which are available and how to meet funders' criteria. There is often reasonable awareness and knowledge about the workings of the sector but the groups need assistance on working-up their projects, and seeking funding, and they need advice on how to submit applications. Groups tend to feel most vulnerable and most insecure at this stage and they need reassurance, some of which could be provided by structured training;

Phase 3 (**Implementation**): groups need assistance in establishing the project and in physically getting the project 'off the ground' once the funding has been secured. There is a perception that some funders provide valuable support at this stage and groups' confidence tends to develop as their projects are being implemented;

Phase 4 (**Operation**): at this stage, groups need help in establishing systems and controls to manage their projects once they are 'developed' and to ensure that the projects are 'successful'; the realities of the problems involved in running a project tend to surface at this point and this phase requires careful management in the early months;

Phase 5 (**Maturity**): when the projects reach their conclusion, the groups must identify new projects to keep the 'vibrancy' of the voluntary activity alive; alternatively, if the projects involve recurring activities or events, they must wait until the next phase(s) is/are due to commence.

At any of the above stages, groups may experience problems with their projects and, occasionally, they may need help to rescue the project if it gets into trouble, or to exit from the project where that is appropriate. This tends to be very traumatic for them, but groups in Fermanagh have proved adept at 're-configuring' projects to keep them alive and viable; so far, the acknowledged failures have been few and this has strengthened the perception of Fermanagh as a model area for community development.

'On-Site' Assistance/Capacity-Building Is Required

- 6.7.9 The value of investment in capacity-building has been reduced by the failure to undertake it, directly with the group, in its own environment, and related to the group's specific project. Although training courses can be valuable, their benefit can be greatly increased by conducting the training on-site with group members, and by applying the theory to the specific situation facing the group. Some groups find it difficult to translate generic information to the needs of the local area and to their own specific project. There is a large variety of agencies providing training for groups, but their success has been limited because a proactive approach has not been adopted; much of the training available is centralised in Belfast, or in other larger population centres, rather than being available within the groups' local areas. In that respect, there was considerable criticism that very little of this type of activity is located in Fermanagh, and a typical view was summarised in the comment that "...Fermanagh appears to be much farther from Belfast, than Belfast is from Fermanagh...".

The overall message was very clear: training and capacity-building should be carried out on-site; it should be project-specific and tailored to the needs of the group and the particular area, if it is to have the most prospect of success and most value.

Many Groups Feel 'Isolated'

- 6.7.10.1 Isolation is a factor affecting many groups. Due to the 'parochial' attitude prevailing among groups in Fermanagh, there is no way of finding out how others coped with similar problems. Groups which are in the process of developing their projects and/or seeking funding, are often reluctant to share information with others at a similar stage of development, because of a 'fear' that another group might 'steal' 'their' idea or secure 'their' money from the funding agencies. (There is a need for reassurance from the agencies on these issues). However, when groups have got their projects off-the-ground and received money, they are generally more willing to meet with other groups and discuss their experiences. Apart from the high profile of some members, groups are often unaware of who the members of other groups are; they do not get the opportunity to meet, either formally or informally, with these other groups to establish contacts and build relationships.
- 6.7.10.2 Given the voluntary nature of many groups, it can be very difficult for them to find out where they should turn to for advice. Although there is a vast array of agencies to assist them, many groups are unaware of their existence and of what practical help these agencies can offer. For some, there is a feeling that the agencies themselves do not know how to tackle certain problems because they are 'outsiders' who are not familiar with the problems encountered by local groups. Ordinary members are not familiar with how the agencies operate, nor do the agencies know how to resolve the difficult problem of keeping a voluntary group

together. There is, therefore, a need for some mechanism(s) through which experiences can be shared, and for avoiding 're-inventing the wheel'.

Finance And Fund-Raising Are Major Issues

- 6.7.11.1** The biggest single issue/problem for community groups is finance and fund-raising. Long-term planning is hindered by short-term concerns and worries over money; e.g. groups have a constant need to find "...where the next pound is going to come from...", and this takes up a large proportion of their time and energy. It is for this reason that some groups have deliberately kept their scale of activities limited.
- 6.7.11.2** For some groups, direct fund-raising has generated significant revenue, but because there are so many other fund-raising campaigns in progress at any time, groups feel that it is difficult to find innovative ways of generating money while keeping the local community interested. There are also many areas in which fund-raising tends to be poorly supported and it often generates only small amounts. The net result is that, particularly for larger groups, fund-raising accounts for only a small proportion of their income and more emphasis is placed on securing funding from agencies or other donors. However, this puts groups into a different role from that for which they were initially established (as the members perceive it), and that puts greater pressure on them; for some, that is the reason for their reluctance to progress to the next level; for others, it means that they lose members - including, sometimes, those members with the most innovative ideas for the development of their communities. There is, therefore, a need for fund-raising and finance to be delegated to those with a willingness to take on such issues, leaving others to concentrate on aspects which fall within their specific areas of strength.

Dissatisfaction Exists Amongst Longer-Established Groups

- 6.7.12.1** Those involved in 'small' projects over a long period are sceptical of both the long-term viability of so-called 'flagship' and 'ice-breaker' projects, and of the commitment of those promoting such 'big' projects. They believe that the larger projects have a huge need for financial assistance, firstly when they are being established, and then later when they become established in order to keep them operational, and they fear that this may impose too much hardship on the community and that, should they fail, they would have a very serious, negative impact on morale in the local area. The groups which stick to smaller projects argue that they can provide the area with continuity and stability and, more importantly, that they will still be there long after the others have gone. There was a concern that some of the newer committees have been established for the wrong reasons and are being driven by money, and a view was expressed that "... we will see who the real community workers are when the funding dries up ...".
- 6.7.12.2** There was also a perception amongst the longer-established groups that some of the newer groups have received more support and encouragement from the agencies than the older groups have, particularly if the agencies had a hand in establishing and developing them. The older groups feel that they have not received the same level of support because the agencies did not have such an active role in their development; consequently, these older groups feel that they have been by-passed in favour of the newer groups, when, in fact, they would welcome agency support, and, they believe, they have much to offer in terms of experience and expertise.
- 6.7.12.3** These criticisms could be construed as reflections of jealousy or of self-justification, but the impressions of the interviewers were that, in general, they reflected genuine concern about the growth of a 'fly-by-night' ethos in community activity, and about the long-term viability of much of what is being done at present.

Young People Need To Be Encouraged To Become Involved In Community Development

- 6.7.13.1** There is a need to involve young people to a much greater extent in community development because, at present, this section of society is rarely actively involved in the development of community-based initiatives. At present, the majority of groups have a 'middle' or 'older' age focus; without young people's participation and their vision for the future, the long term perspective of the group and the development of local areas in a way which addresses real needs, will be stilted.
- 6.7.13.2** Consultees argued that this absence of young people from community activity is because the younger generation are not interested; but the onus rests with community groups to encourage these people to get involved, by promoting the benefits of community development, actively seeking young people to join the group, and facilitating their participation on committees by having defined, limited terms of office for

office-holders in community organisations. This would enable new blood, with fresh ideas to be attracted; it would reduce 'burn-out' amongst members of longer standing; and it would make the group more representative of the area. Although the current officers may be very capable and competent, without rotation, the talent within a group cannot be fully realised and utilised; inexperienced members must be given responsibility and "...left to get on with it..." as that is the best way for them to gain experience; the underlying rationale for that approach can be summarised in the old adage 'a boy will always be a boy until a man is needed'.

Existing Resources Should Be Utilised to the Full

- 6.7.14.1** Before undertaking new projects, particularly projects with a big 'property' content, community organisations should examine what is already there and assess whether more, or better, use of the available resources could be achieved. There is little point in duplicating what is already there, just so that the group members can put their own 'stamp' on it. Where there are existing facilities they should be used, even if this means 'desensitising' a building before it can be used e.g. an Orange, or Parish, hall could be renovated and used for the whole community, rather than building a new facility from scratch, while the existing one falls into greater disrepair.
- 6.7.14.2** Community groups should also consider whether/ or not it is appropriate for them to develop a property project, or whether they should be concentrating on other activities. Some groups (e.g. Lisnarick and Magheraveely), have decided that they have plenty of issues to tackle within their area which are more important than pursuing a property project. The duplication of resources applies not only within a given area, but also in relation to similar developments, or facilities, in adjacent areas. The current poor links between community groups will have to be strengthened in the interest of avoiding this type of waste of resources and investment.

6.8 CATHOLIC/NATIONALIST COMPARED TO PROTESTANT/UNIONIST ATTITUDES TO COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Major differences exist between the approaches of Catholics and those of Protestants to community-led activity. These have had significant implications for the sector's development in the different communities and those differences are considered in the following paragraphs.

Catholics Have Been Quicker To Embrace Community Development

- 6.8.1.1** Catholic/Nationalist communities have embraced the principles and practice of community development in a way in which Protestant/Unionist communities have not. They also had pre-existing structures (through cultural and sporting organisations, for example) which could be used to harness the opportunities as they arose. As a consequence, they quickly became very knowledgeable about the whole community development process including funding mechanisms etc. whilst Protestant communities "...never saw any reason to get involved..." in it. The result has been that, as EU funding mechanisms emphasised more and more, a 'bottom-up' approach to development, Protestants did not, and could not, react quickly enough and were left at a disadvantage.
- 6.8.1.2** The reason for this 'lack of involvement' by the Protestant community is attributed to differences in 'ethos' between Catholics and Protestants (see below). In order to move forward, these differences must be recognised and taken into account, and structures put in place to facilitate the type of development which will work within each of the two communities; if this does not happen, development will continue in the sterile way in which it has been occurring, with community development remaining predominantly one-sided. Attitudes have been shaped over a long period and, as such, it will be impossible to change them in the short term. Therefore, a long-term view must be taken towards this aspect of community development within the county.

There Is A Long History Of Community Support Within The Catholic Community

- 6.8.2.1** The Catholic/Nationalist community has a history of community support and a strong community base established primarily around its sporting and cultural activities, but also through organisations like co-operatives and credit unions, whilst no corresponding base exists in Protestant/Unionist communities, though their 'church' structure is very strong and has, heretofore, acted as a surrogate 'community-base'. Although

the church also plays an important role within the Catholic community, there appears to be a different focus on the role of the church within the two communities; within the Catholic community, church activities have been supplemented by other community-based organisations (e.g. sports and cultural organisations), which have 'reduced' the influence and importance of the Church in relation to the development of community initiatives (though some projects e.g. Teemore, were partially clerically-driven at the start). Within the Protestant community, this has not been the case, and the church remains the main focal point - consequently, its profile is very high within that community. Organisations identified with the Protestant tradition do not offer the same type, nor quality, of community support as is found in the Nationalist communities and, given that it is intrinsically linked to the church, there is no properly organised 'alternative' to the church within the Protestant community.

- 6.8.2.2** For many Protestants, the Orange Institution does not represent their views and they are not linked in any way to the Order, which leaves a void for them. The impression given by some Protestant interviewees was that the Orange Order did not rank as their 'community organisation' and that their Church structures did not have the capacity to initiate and deliver community-based actions in any significant quantities.

The Different Communities Have Different Support Structures

- 6.8.3** To some extent the differences in attitude to community activity between Protestants and Catholics mirror a more fundamental difference towards the role of the State in overall social and economic development. Protestants in Fermanagh have long perceived the government/state as their primary source of communal and social support; for Catholics, who largely have not given any allegiance to that state, their own community has provided the surrogate support structure. As a result, they have undertaken co-operative-type activity over many years and this has contributed to their head-start in community development. While this is a political reality, although it is not directly related to community development, it does have significant implications for the development of the voluntary/community sector, and explains to some extent, the failure of the Protestant community to react more quickly to the opportunities available for locally-led development.

Catholic Areas Have Been At An Advantage Because of Their Support Structures

- 6.8.4.1** Catholic/Nationalist areas have, therefore, been better organised to take advantage of funding initiatives which are based on a 'bottom-up' approach to regeneration and development. Community-based initiatives have gained acceptance within the Catholic community, as evidenced by the growth of Credit Unions and Co-operatives; outside the agricultural sector, this form of community activity has never been part of the Protestant ethos. The Catholic community had established structures into which its members could 'slot' and this provided them with a prototype for the bottom-up approach demanded by Europe; consequently, this has given the Catholic community an advantage.
- 6.8.4.2** Given the (alleged) political and economic disadvantages faced by the Catholic community over many decades, that community developed a system of cooperation to offset any disadvantage which they felt they might encounter; that is one of the reasons why the Catholic community has a longer history and tradition of community development.
- 6.8.4.3** By its very nature, 'collectivism' places a high emphasis on social and 'people-based' issues; consequently the Catholic community indicated that creating a 'sense of identity' is the most important result of community development (c/f 6.8.6). On the other hand, the 'individualism' inherent in the Protestant ethic (*à la* Weber) has not been conducive to collective action, nor, consequently, to community-led structures.

Comment:

Protestants And Catholics Have Different Attitudes To Funding

- 6.8.5** There are fundamental differences in outlook between Catholics and Protestants in relation to accessing funding and in attitudes to different funding sources. The following paragraphs summarise some of these differences as explained by the consultees:
- (a) **International Fund for Ireland:** In the past, Protestants have been reluctant to accept IFI (International Fund for Ireland) funding; this is because some of their politicians discouraged Protestants from seeking funding from this source by advising them "...not to go near the IFI..." as it was "...blood money...". This image has changed somewhat, and Protestants have applied for, and been successful in receiving, money from the IFI. However, applications from Protestants are very much the minority and, amongst some sectors of the

Protestant community, there is still a negative perception of the IFI (despite the efforts of the current IFI Consultant for the county - which are recognised and appreciated); many Protestants remain wary of it, and there is still a feeling that there is some "...hidden agenda..." and that there will be "...a pay-back ..." to follow. For these reasons, Protestants generally prefer to approach other, mainly European, funds as they "...are entitled to it, because we are part of the European Community...". The Catholic community has had no such reservations and has benefited from the different IFI schemes (Some sections of the Protestant community have been equally unwilling to accept funding from the **National Lottery** because of their antipathy to gambling).

- (b) **Single Identity:** In general, Protestants have a much stronger wish to operate on a single-identity basis than Catholics. This can be attributed to the fact that Protestants have a significant role in the running of their church and, with the large number of different denominations within Protestantism, the 'Protestant Religion' is not homogeneous like Catholicism; there are significant differences to be overcome within Protestantism and these need to be clarified and 'worked through' before Protestants can become involved with groups comprising people from other religious affiliations, like Catholics.

Single-identity is favoured by Protestants partly because they are relatively new to community development and they want to "...find their feet first..."; there is a feeling that, given their lack of experience, they would not be able to contribute to 'mixed' development - their ignorance would show, or they would be overruled by the more knowledgeable Catholic members. There is also a perception that, in light of the current imbalance, there cannot be equality between the two communities until Protestants move up the learning curve.

Nevertheless there is some evidence to suggest that Protestants are now becoming more willing to get involved in cross-community activities.

- (c) **Inexperience:** Community development is a new concept for many Protestants and, because of their lower level of experience of community activity, they have less confidence in their ability to secure funding than do Catholics. Protestants are unsure of what exactly is involved in the whole application process and which buttons must be pressed with funders; this is borne out by funders who find that, in general, applications from 'Protestant' groups are weaker, and fewer than others.
- (d) **Bureaucracy of Funders:** The bureaucracy and length of time involved is very off-putting for many, particularly when, at the outset, they are not aware, and certainly not sure, of what is involved; dissatisfaction with the system and their own inability to deliver a project to the local area can cause Protestants to 'drop out' or not become involved in the first place. These feelings are compounded by not having anyone whom they 'trust' and to whom they can turn for advice. Trust is a central element for Protestants and, during the consultations, the message was clear - Protestants are interested in community development, but are unsure of how to go about it or how to navigate the complexities of this sector.

Consequently, greater Protestant involvement can be achieved only by having a Protestant worker who understands the Protestant ethos and "...where they are coming from..." as a point of contact for groups requiring assistance. Protestants, by instinct, do not like asking for assistance, given their ethos of individualism; so, having a Protestant with whom to discuss ideas, would help to encourage them to become more involved in community development activity.

- (e) **Different Cultures:** Within the Protestant community a culture of 'individualism' and pride predominates; the attitude is 'if you want something done, you do it yourself rather than ask someone else to assist you'. The following example was provided by a (Protestant) consultee as a demonstration of the nature of the differences: if a Catholic farmer asks a Protestant farmer for the loan of a piece of equipment, he will get it; but it is very rarely that a Protestant would ask a Catholic farmer if he could borrow some equipment - rather he will do without it until he can afford to buy his own.

Protestantism is a 'private' culture which focuses on the individual and each person's right to do things his/her own way; this does not encourage broadly-based group activities but, rather, supports the concept of larger numbers of small groups made up of people with very narrow specific interests.

In contrast, 'collectivism' dominates the Catholic culture and it is much easier for individuals to work together as a group in order to address issues.

As a result of these different attitudes, Protestant involvement in community development has been hindered but, just as importantly, the benefits of community development have not been 'sold' to Protestants; agencies should recognise, and accept, that there is a difference between the 'mind-set' of Protestants and Catholics, and they should develop systems which will assist and facilitate the development of both communities in an integrated manner.

There Are Many Different Benefits To Be Derived From Community Activity

6.8.6.1 With the fundamental differences between the two communities, which are documented in this report, there is a philosophical difference between the two in relation to perceptions about what benefits are derived from community development. Many Catholic groups perceive that "...giving people a sense of identity..." is the main benefit of community development - but, then, this is a familiar concept within the Catholic community; it is in keeping with their tradition of group activity and collectivism (c/f paragraph 6.8.4) which places greater emphasis on social, less tangible aspects, and on co-operation in the interest of raising confidence, morale and self-esteem. The view was expressed that the political situation of the past forced Catholics to come together to support one another and, in the process, the concept of local identity was given paramount importance. That position has carried forward in the Catholic community to the present time.

6.8.6.2 Protestants, on the other hand, see economic development, wealth creation and the improved economic and infrastructural position of the area, as the principal contribution of community activity. Their focus is on things which are tangible and which indicate that the area is materially wealthy, physically attractive and generally 'well-off'. There is less importance attached to the social side, as that is regarded as being the preserve of the church, or a matter for individuals to sort out for themselves. This dichotomy of philosophical approach to the objectives of community development reflects the entire attitude adopted by the two communities to the development of their areas, and there is a need to acknowledge the impacts of these differences in a constructive way.

Protestants Feel That Cross-Community Activity Could 'Threaten' Their Identity

6.8.7.1 Protestants have a concern that participation in cross-community activities could lead to their being "...taken over..." (c/f 6.8.5 (c)), for which reason their preference is to create their own identity and have something which is 'theirs'. Protestant insecurity, which is a result of the many changes facing the people of Northern Ireland, has meant that now, more than ever, Protestants need to feel that they have an identity which will be preserved for the next generation. For this reason, some are not interested in cross-community activities, and there is a concern that their main focus should be on activities which will strengthen the Protestant culture.

6.8.7.2 Catholics have a strong Gaelic sporting and cultural tradition which is openly discussed within everyday life and (often) in front of Protestants; there is nothing comparable within the Protestant tradition. Orangeism is not as far-reaching nor as widespread in its realm of interest; it is mainly the preserve of men and, as a result of recent negative publicity, it is not an 'acceptable' topic in general discussion. For example, at a mixed gathering it is deemed acceptable to discuss the GAA match of the previous, or the following, Sunday, but it would be a brave person who would talk about the Orange band parade on Friday night. This has not always been the case and, until recently, it would have been discussed openly and even attended by both communities.

6.8.7.3 Amongst some Protestants there is a feeling that others have been quick to give up their Protestant identity; these people have not wanted to "...give offence to Catholic neighbours..." by putting up flags etc. (although, in the view of many Protestant consultees, this would not have been construed as being provocative years ago), nor to be seen as being associated with certain organisations because of the 'stigma' now attached to them. This has resulted in many Protestants not having an identity - they know what they are not part of, but do not know what they do stand for, given their reluctance to express any sort of opinion about certain issues. With the current political situation, it is hard for many Protestants to acknowledge openly what they stand for, as there is a fear that they will be branded as 'extremists' or made to feel 'exposed' given the lack of a support network within the Protestant community.

6.8.7.4 The consultations suggested that these fears and concerns are very real; they are not the result of posturing nor of jealousy - rather they reflect insecurity, reduced confidence, a sense of having lost out and general uncertainty about the future and about the value of their identity at this time.

Protestant Groups Perceive A 'Lack of Leadership' in Their Communities

- 6.8.8.1** During the consultations, Protestants complained that they had neither the leaders, nor the base of experience, to assist them in responding to the need for change which their less secure social, economic and political situations now demand. Interviewees gave personal examples of instances where they looked for support and advice from 'leaders' and did not receive any assistance. However, they felt that had they been Catholic, the situation would have been very different and they would have received support, and even though nothing concrete might have been achieved, there would at least have been some attempt to address the situation. When this was put to those whose positions would suggest that they are perceived as 'leaders', their view was that they have tried to offer leadership, but the Protestant community has not responded to their efforts, preferring instead to sit back, criticise and expect it all to "...fall in their lap..."; they saw leadership as a two-way process.
- 6.8.8.2** The result has been a further erosion of confidence and a very negative attitude to their leaders at national level - especially among the business community. (Most, but not all, local politicians, such as Councillors, have considerably more credibility in this respect and, in the minds of their neighbours, they are divorced from the failings of the main parties).

Protestantism is not homogeneous

- 6.8.9.1** The fact that Protestantism is not homogeneous, combined with the strength of their commitment to the individual churches, reduces the potential for community involvement in the Protestant community (c/f paragraph 6.8.4 (b)). For many Protestants, the Church holds a central role and the majority of activities within that community are organised by church leaders (c/f paragraph 6.8.2). Due to the range of activities provided by the church, individual members have a full schedule supporting those activities, and this makes it difficult to generate support for other activities.
- 6.8.9.2** Other Protestants, who are not 'church-goers', may either be actively involved in other organisations (e.g. the rugby or yacht club which provide them with group support), or may they be somewhat apathetic; it is not important to them to have an alternative support-group network and they are quite happy not belonging to any sort of active group.

Differences Between The Two Communities Must Be Accepted

- 6.8.10** The differences between Catholic and Protestant philosophies should be recognised and built-upon; these differences show through in a variety of ways, as is evidenced by this report. The view was expressed (and there was some evidence to support it), that Catholics find it relatively easy "...to forgive..." but have difficulty accepting that someone involved in a violent act is likely to, or can, change, whereas Protestants find it more difficult "...to forgive..." but are much more ready to accept that a perpetrator of violence can change or "...be converted...". It is important that the full extent of these differences (like the ones outlined above) and their implications are understood by everyone involved in community development. If properly handled, these differences do not mean that there can be no integration; rather the differences must be recognised and accepted as fact, and they can then become the starting point from which progress can be built.

Single Identity Work Is Required As A Precursor to Cross-Community Activity by Protestants

- 6.8.11** Due to the low level of confidence amongst Protestant communities, some single-identity work needs to be undertaken to boost their morale. This need is most obvious amongst new groups, those which have lost direction, and groups which have had limited success with their initial proposed projects. Single-identity work, using advisors whom the Protestant groups can trust, would raise their confidence by allowing them to develop their capacity within their own realm of certainty, before moving to what they perceive as more 'threatening' cross-community activity. Structuring development in this manner should attract more Protestants into the community development sector. If this does not happen, the reality appears to be that Protestants are likely to continue not to engage in community development to the same extent as Catholics; they must be provided with a base with which they feel happy and secure, before they can be encouraged to become involved in activities involving greater uncertainty and more stress.

Corroboration Of These Findings

6.8.12 The first seminar devoted exclusively to community development in Protestant areas was held in 1991. At that seminar many of the issues identified above were discussed and a range of conclusions were agreed; they included:

- *Protestants do not like asking for help, nor accepting it; for example, NIVT experienced a marked difference in the level of applications from the two traditions;*
- *Protestants do not know what is available, nor how to access resources;*
- *Parochialism and 'sense of place' is very important in the community development process; (This Fermanagh study suggests that that is more valid within the 'Catholic' community);*
- *There is a marked difference between urban and rural areas; (This Fermanagh study relates to what is essentially a rural county, so the differences are not quite so marked in Fermanagh);*
- *Fear of failure and humiliation holds Protestants back; Catholics have not been restricted in this way (because they can always use the State as a 'scapegoat' to explain any failure). Within Protestant areas there is a lack of confidence and lack of leadership; those who wish to become involved can become isolated within their own community and fearful that violence may be directed against them, as many still view community development with suspicion which may be based on their distrust of socialist politics; however, there is now more community development in Protestant areas than ever before;*
- *In the past, Protestants believed that the whole State functioned to serve them; therefore, it was perceived as disloyal to criticise it. But, now, many realise that this situation has changed and they do not have the same 'power' as in the past, and this must be recognised;*
- *The church plays an important role in Protestant communities; where that structure is strong, the potential for 'general' community development is limited; development is further restricted by the fragmentation of the Protestant Church;*
- *Mobility is more pronounced within the Protestant community - those who leave the area quickly forget their roots and have little, or no, desire to contribute to the area of their childhood (in marked contrast to those from the Catholic community). This raises the issue as to what impact the Protestant 'brain drain' will have on the calibre of future civic and commercial leaders;*
- *There is a great deal of apathy in Protestant areas; voting is defensive and Unionist politicians are said to have manipulated power, actively working to keep Catholics and Protestants apart (This latter claim was not substantiated in this Fermanagh report!);*
- *Good community leaders and workers are required for community development work and it is usually only a few people who keep the group going;*
- *Cross-community contacts are important, but first, groups need to build up their own confidence and strength. People may come together on common issues within their own community, but work across the community divide can be difficult to progress;*
- *There is a perceived lack of organisation in Protestant areas and a corresponding need for more workers, better networking and support;*
- *It would appear that development on a class basis may be more effective than any other, as Catholic and Protestant working classes have more in common than is generally assumed;*
- *Polite avoidance of issues serves both to make everyday life outwardly tranquil and to make sure that real feelings are never discussed; people share feelings only with their own people and this will remain the case until there is a 'safe environment' where people can overcome this barrier;*
- *Those who use political violence, even the small groups, have great capacity to disturb relationships between Catholics and Protestants generally;*
- *Community groups are often cautious about dealing with each other and appear to be in competition with each other; this is probably the reason why many groups are unaware of advances made, or common issues faced, by other groups;*
- *Practical directories detailing 'who does what' were found to be very useful tools for community groups;*

- *Alcohol is a major aspect of our culture, and its use is increasing amongst young people.*

In nearly every case, and especially in relation to Catholic/Protestant differences, the conclusions from that seminar corroborate the results of this study – notwithstanding the seven-year time lapse.

6.9 CROSS-COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES

One, but by no means the only, aim of the huge investment in community-led activity, in recent years, in Northern Ireland, was the hope that it would lead to an improvement in the scope and the quality of cross-community contacts and linkages. The following paragraphs indicate the thrust of the opinions expressed by those interviewed during this assignment, on the results of that investment and the related efforts and energy expended on that objective.

Only Already-Established Links Have Been Strengthened

- 6.9.1.1** The evidence from these consultations suggests very strongly that investment in cross-community development has succeeded only in harnessing and strengthening links (predominantly of a socio-economic character) which already existed, rather than in creating new ones. In one way, this is a rather worrying outcome, as one of the main thrusts of community development was to create new links between Catholics and Protestants, but this has not happened; it could, therefore, be argued that this activity has not achieved what it set out to achieve.
- 6.9.1.2** On the other hand, it was argued that it was not at all surprising that this has been the main outcome, because any group of people needs some common reason to come together, or some cause around which to unite in the first place, and it is much less likely that people from very different social, communal or religious backgrounds would find that ‘common’ factor easily - apart from some ‘single issue’ type cause(s) which affect(s) everyone equally. Those with different views and different interests are unlikely to have a common bond, and even less likely to find a basis for any form of coalescence.
- 6.9.1.3** This research did not find any significant evidence to suggest that community associations were successful in attracting a range of ‘different types’ of people; in reality, they generally tended to attract “...middle class types...” from the thirty-plus age category. Consequently, it came as no surprise to most consultees that these people tended to have very similar attitudes and would already be predisposed to working together. For both community development associations and residents’ groups, which serve the urban estates, this common factor existed in the form of the unique problems facing their communities; they tended to have similar views on these problems but it was perceived as highly unlikely that they would find much in common with community associations serving rural areas.
- 6.9.1.4** What was seen as most disappointing from a ‘neutral’ stand-point, was that it was agreed, and accepted as inevitable, that community development would not normally cross the religious divide, other than in the case of a minority of politically moderate, middle-class people who could unite around a problem, or a vision for their community, but who could not bring the majority of their community with them, nor into contact with those of a different religion. That appears to be a quite negative finding from these consultations.

The Need for Cross-Community Credentials Has Been Too Widely Promoted

- 6.9.2.1** Groups have become very aware of, and are now probably over-sensitive to, the desirability of establishing their cross-community credentials, when they are attempting to access funding. This situation has arisen because funders have provided groups with directions about funding criteria and the cross-community dimension has tended to be a central element of the criteria set by many funders. This has shaped how groups have been formed and, for some, any ‘natural’ coming together has been replaced by a forced, or false, co-operation created in the interest of accessing funding. Groups which were established and then went to look for money, stated that they are now very conscious of their religious make-up and, if one person leaves, they proactively look for someone of the same religious persuasion to take his/her place in order to maintain the cross-community balance; this would not have happened before - the position would simply have gone to the best, or first, person who came forward. In fact, this is how Irvinestown’s community organisation was first organised (at the start of this century) and it has been eminently successful.

- 6.9.2.2** Many groups expressed the belief that this new approach has resulted in an 'artificial' situation and there is evidence to suggest that a number of so-called cross-community groups are not regarded by their own community as being genuine, but, rather, they are viewed as "...only being in it for the money...". There is, according to the interviews, at least one example in the county of a group which is cross-community and has a very high profile (especially with funders at central level), but which is causing serious tension within the community - indeed many in that area believe that it has been responsible for dividing that community. This is an example of a situation where agency perceptions of the cross-community dimensions of a project are at odds with the reality on the ground.
- 6.9.2.3** Another perceived current favourite criterion with funders is cross-border activity, and groups feel they are being steered irrevocably in that direction. Evidence adduced during this study would question whether this is appropriate. One group has established links with a similar group in an adjacent parish; this arrangement has worked very well, but only because they are geographically close which enabled a long-term relationship to be developed; they are also very similar, on many different levels, and can relate well to each other. There have been other examples though, where a group expressed an interest in linking with another group close by on the other side of the border, as it had similar objectives and was also located along the Erne-Shannon Waterway; however, it was the group's understanding that this was not acceptable and that the main funder wanted them to link with a group in Dublin which, in their opinion, was not appropriate; nevertheless they have established the Dublin link - purely in order to access funding. Many other groups have cross-border contacts on paper, but the reality is that this is as far as the relationship goes because, for a variety of reasons (e.g. geographical distance, lack of transportation, absence of a real reason to join up in the first place, or lack of interest), genuine relationships have not resulted.
- 6.9.2.4** Protestants, particularly, but Catholics too, believe that groups cannot be single-identity if they wish to attract funding. The consultation process uncovered at least one group which was told directly by a significant funding body that they "...might as well forget it..." as they would not receive any funding if they remained single-identity; this was considered to be extremely off-putting for some groups, particularly for those which were new and unsure of how the funding sector operates. Many consultees (especially, but not exclusively, Protestant ones) questioned why single-identity activity cannot be funded; examples from within the county were cited to demonstrate that community associations, in predominantly single identity areas, have been very successful.

Community Relations Is Often Perceived To Be 'Contrived'

- 6.9.3.1** Consequently, many interviewees perceived community relations activities as being "...contrived...". The funders have attempted to speed-up the development of what they would regard as "...good..." community relations by "... throwing money ..." at various activities to bring Protestants and Catholics together. The development and enhancement of any relationship takes time, and there is some evidence to suggest that this attempt to short-circuit natural development has proved to be counter-productive; for example, in farming areas, people 'agree to disagree' during the marching session and relations are restored after the summer months, but community relations work has "...flagged up problems....", and by raising their profile, it has prolonged the disunity and, in some instances, contributed to the creation of hardened views where once "...sleeping dogs were left to lie...".
- 6.9.3.2** It was not entirely clear from the interviews, whether, or to what extent, some of the opinions expressed under this heading were excuses for specific situations which exist in certain parts of the county; while these views appeared to be honestly expressed, the possibility that some interviewees were attempting to justify incidents which have occurred, cannot be ignored.

Over-Zealous Promotion of Cross-Community Relations "...Will Only Open A Can Of Worms..."; Trust Must Be Established "...Before Issues Can Be Dealt With..."

- 6.9.4** Continuing the previous point, there are very real concerns that on-going monitoring of community relations activities might only "... rake up ..." dormant, but unresolved, issues in areas where communities mix well despite these unresolved differences. There are many complex issues impacting upon community relations; there are some issues which might best be left alone; and there are issues where trying to address them only creates more problems. Attitudes which are deeply ingrained cannot be changed overnight, and, in some

cases, it is just better to agree to disagree and move on from there with mutual respect for the other person's different views and traditions. The belief was expressed that raising consciousness of these issues has as much potential for harm as it has for benefit, and that any attempt to 'create' or 'force' better inter-communal links could backfire and make the situation worse.

Views of this kind were expressed by several who were keen to support the broad concept of cross-community activity but who were concerned about the "...artificiality..." of some of the means currently being used to promote it. However, there were a number of respondents who believed that, rather than ignoring the differences, trust must be established so that then these issues can be confronted. The need to develop trust, both within and between, communities is perceived as being of fundamental importance. Such trust is especially lacking on the Protestant side - not out of any feelings of resentment or antipathy, but out of their sense of insecurity and their questioning of their identity in the light of recent developments. But a long-term view must be taken of the development of this trust. Without the establishment of trust, there can be no genuine progress on addressing the real issues and community development and cross-community activities are "...only papering-over the cracks...". Organic development is seen as the key to real progress on this dimension; in that context, the relevance of single-identity activity as a means of building confidence and trust in the Protestant community, needs to be considered seriously (c/f 6.8.11).

Protestants Are Sceptical About Their Role in Cross-Community Groups

- 6.9.5 Protestants have a concern that they are sometimes asked to participate in community activity solely in order that the group can demonstrate its cross-community credentials to the funders. They feel that they are invited to become involved, just to make the project look good and to demonstrate that their area is 'okay'. Some (a minority) claimed to feel that they are just "...token..." and that, in reality, they feel that they are not genuinely wanted, nor is their input taken seriously - in such groups, there is an 'inner circle' which decides everything and dissenting views are not encouraged. Lack of experience and of the ability to converse knowledgeably about community-led activity and funding for it, on an equal level with Catholics, has compounded Protestant scepticism about others' motivations. On the other hand, there is evidence to suggest that such 'tokenism' does exist in one or two groups in Fermanagh. But there is also at least one group which, rather than appoint people from the (local) minority community to its committee, even though the proposed project would have only minimal relevance to such appointees, was prepared to, and did, abort the project; it was said (with some justification) that to proceed as was suggested by a government department, would be "...untrue..." and they preferred not to do that.

The Effects Of Community Development On The Churches Is A Concern

- 6.9.6 There is a (minority) concern that cross-community activity could have a negative effect on commitment to the churches and could lead to a reduction in the level of involvement with church activities. For some people, particularly Protestants, their church is their strongest support network, and ministers and church leaders are relied upon to establish the initiatives which are deemed necessary in the local area. The introduction of other groups which might 'take away' from the church could be threatening to the traditional way of life and, consequently, would not be accepted by the local community (c/f 6.8.2). (This view was also a factor in the aborted project referred to in the previous paragraph).

The Marching Season Has A Negative Impact on Community Activity

- 6.9.7 Predictably, the 'marching season' is seen as having had seriously detrimental effects on community relations over the past three years and this, in turn, has affected community activities. There is a belief (widespread in the Protestant community especially) that the reason this has become so controversial is not principally because of the situation in the local area, but rather because of media involvement and the involvement of outsiders (some of whom "...came into Fermanagh and stirred up trouble..."). In addition, organisations at central level have made policy decisions which have had an impact on the local area, but if the situation had been left to local people to deal with on their own (i.e. without policy decisions at some higher level) it would have been much easier to manage. In some of the areas of Fermanagh where the problems have received most media exposure, people have lived peacefully after the controversy has died down; this, it was suggested, indicated that such local issues could be resolved by local people, if there was no external interference.

6.10 **EFFECTS OF THE POLITICAL CONTEXT**

(Note: Over 85% of these consultations were conducted prior to 'The Good Friday Agreement' at Stormont).

It was obvious when questions were posed under this heading, that the primary 'political context' is not County Fermanagh, but the situation in the wider area of Northern Ireland primarily, with those in the Republic and Britain also having an impact. The following paragraphs provide a summary of the opinions expressed.

Politics Has Had A Negative Impact On Community Development

- 6.10.1** The political situation has had, and continues to have, significant knock-on effects on community development in the county; essentially, there is a view among community activists, in particular, but also in the wider community, that the lack of political progress has hindered, and is hindering, community development in Fermanagh. There were some suggestions that both politics and politicians are 'lagging behind' in terms of willingness to create progress at community development level, notwithstanding that, in Fermanagh's case, about half of the elected Councillors are actively involved in community activity of some sort, and some are very heavily involved in it. There is, therefore, little doubt that local views of politics and politicians are not Fermanagh-based, but are based much more on the national scene, and in that context, the performance of politicians is not perceived favourably. Local views are also influenced by the perceived performance of governmental organisations (the Planning Service, the industrial promotional agencies, NITB etc.) and the negative images of these are 'projected' onto politics and politicians generally.

The Officers Of The Council Are Perceived As The Council

- 6.10.2** At a local level, Fermanagh District Council is identified not with the elected representatives, but with the full-time staff, to whom either credit, or blame, as appropriate, is generally attributed. The general feeling amongst consultees was that local Councillors were not regarded as being the real decision-makers within the Council, and that, in any event, the Council itself has very limited power, or influence, over the issues that really matter. Both expressly and by implication, the view that a serious 'democratic deficit' exists, was indicated; the entire profile of the Council is seen as 'officer-based' rather than being based on the Elected Representatives, despite the fact that an increasing number of Councillors are involved in community development initiatives. Again, too, the perceptions of the Council are linked, to some degree at least, to perceptions of politics generally, and, as described above, those are not favourable.

There Is A High Level Of Apathy In Some Sections Of The Community

- 6.10.3.1** Within communities in Fermanagh, there is a genuine fear that the failure of political progress will lead to an even greater 'opting-out' of the county's social and communal activities on the part of the "...middle-class, middle-of-the-road..." section of society, who are already only peripherally involved in community activities in many areas. By contrast, therefore, the view was also expressed that this may not be important, because that section of society has already opted-out of community-led activity and they appear, at least to some, to be "...not interested..." in what goes on around them.
- 6.10.3.2** Many members of the business community also reflect this 'don't want to get involved' approach - in some cases at least, because of their reluctance to be associated with anything which, for whatever reason, may give offence, and/or have a negative effect on their business. There is also the fact that they are very busy developing their own businesses and genuinely do not have the time to devote to other activities. However, these people should be encouraged to become involved because they have many of the skills and strengths needed to undertake community projects, and these could be harnessed for the benefit of their local community.
- 6.10.3.3** There is another group whose apathy towards community activity is motivated by a scepticism about its value and about the long-term sustainability of some of the projects being undertaken. Some are also concerned about being seen as 'intruding' into areas best left to others; and for others, there is a lack of confidence in their ability to contribute effectively and a fear of being seen as "...having nothing to offer...". The result is that community activity is left to a relatively small, but influential and vociferous, segment of the community.

Some Community Activists Have A Concern for Their Personal Safety

- 6.10.4.1** There is (or was at the time of these interviews) a fear of politically-motivated violence at individual level and a concern that those who are "...in the public eye..." as a result of their community activities, are especially vulnerable to attack by men of violence. Both Protestant and Catholic interviewees recounted stories about how this manifested itself - if they 'spoke out' against actions perpetrated by members of 'their' community, comments were relayed (in strong language, and worse) about the inappropriateness of their action and about what would happen if they continued to adopt this stance. This particularly affected Protestant clergymen, who require the support of their flock if they are to retain their appointment to a particular community.
- 6.10.4.2** There are also instances of high profile members of cultural organisations who, given the political circumstances, felt that they, and their families, were very "...exposed...", thus making them have very serious reservations about whether, or not, it was advisable to continue with their activities.
- 6.10.4.3** Particular concerns were expressed by a minority of high profile, socially committed people who gave specific examples of pressure (mainly from those holding extreme Loyalist views) when they became involved in cross-community activities. One interviewee spoke of how such pressure and intimidation affected his willingness to continue to be involved in such work.
- 6.10.4.4** To this was added the potential effects of boycotts against those whose actions were interpreted as political and as giving offence, even though no offence was intended.

Pressure Is Sometimes Exerted on Community Activists By Their Own Community

- 6.10.5** Particularly within the Protestant community, there have been examples of pressure being exerted on individuals (from within their own communities) to withdraw their support for cross-community activities and to withdraw from community-based organisations. Some of the people interviewed were very candid about their experiences; for example, in one part of the county where a community group was set up in a predominantly Catholic area, Protestants were actively discouraged from getting involved; when one member did, he was told, in no uncertain terms, that he should end this association - otherwise he would not be welcome within his own community and would lose their support.

There Is A Widespread Fear Of Change in Parts of Fermanagh Society

- 6.10.6.1** There is a 'fear of change' (actual or perceived) which is hindering the prospects of social, economic and communal progress. Uncertainty about the future has created a situation which makes people feel uneasy and very insecure. For some, there is a perception that somebody must lose out in all this change (i.e. that it is a Zero-Sum game) and, amongst the Protestant community, there is a feeling that they are the ones who have done so over the past three decades, and that they will continue to lose out. This issue must be addressed, and fears allayed, if inclusive progress is to be made
- 6.10.6.2** On the Catholic side, the fear of change appears to be less and there is a growing confidence that they can successfully undertake initiatives which will create changes for the better.
- 6.10.6.3** On another dimension, there is a 'fear of change' on the part of those who do not want to see any form of economic or social change in their area, because they are happy as they are and they see change as unlikely to create benefit for them. Generally, these are middle-aged people who are long settled in the area, which, itself, tends to be relatively prosperous, and they are absolutely opposed to any growth of their community. This attitude was prevalent in at least three community areas in Fermanagh; predictably, none of them has any significant level of community activity - though some individuals from those areas are involved with community groups in adjacent areas or in the nearest significant settlement.

The Positive Portrayal Of Fermanagh Is Sometimes Resented for Being 'False'

- 6.10.7.1** The portrayal of Fermanagh as a county where people are united and which is peaceful and beautiful is very

much appreciated by most people. However, it is resented by some who feel that this results in the county's real problems not being addressed ("...being glossed over..."), whilst, deep down, such problems are as real, and as bad, in Fermanagh, as they are anywhere else in Northern Ireland. There needs to be some recognition of the fact that events in the wider area have had an impact on relationships within the county; they cannot do otherwise, so it is inappropriate to 'ignore' the true situation. The view is that "...owning-up..." to the situation will enable progress to be made.

6.10.7.2 After the Enniskillen bomb there was a lot of media-hype about the 'Spirit of Enniskillen'; although this created a good positive image (which, since then, has been the one which is portrayed outside Fermanagh), there has been a feeling of alienation on the part of those who do not recognise, nor accept as valid this view of Fermanagh as a county of "...peace, love and harmony...". This is felt by both sides of the community and, as far as the research could identify, is not restricted to those who were/are victims of violence.

6.10.7.3 There is, therefore, a need for balance between the positive portrayal of the county and the necessity to recognise its problems as a prelude to attempting to solve them. As indicated elsewhere in this report, any impression that community relations in the county does not need improving would be entirely false, but it would be equally wrong to suggest that Fermanagh is worse than other places, or even as bad as some of them.

Protestants Are Concerned About A 'Lack Of Protestant Leadership'

6.10.8.1 Protestants expressed unhappiness about the lack of leadership available to them to facilitate their involvement in community development. Increasingly, they recognise that community development and community self-help is the way forward, but they are also aware that they do not have any experience in this area, nor do they know how, or where, to access the necessary expertise. They feel that they lag behind the Catholic community, and that their leaders do not have the new skills required to help them. They see the Catholic community as being organised to undertake community initiatives, but this approach is (almost) ideologically foreign to them. Catholics have a wider variety of organisations which 'train' leaders in community and cooperative activity, using sport and culture as the focus, but no comparable organisations exist for the Protestant community.

6.10.8.2 In a very tangible way, they expect that help should be available from within their own community, but feel their 'leaders' have concentrated almost entirely on constitutional or church issues, with no emphasis on how to improve the social and economic bases of their communities. Consequently, they feel vulnerable and insecure, unhappy about the political uncertainty and unaware of the benefits of engaging in development on a community basis. They think that it is "...something we should be doing..." but they do not really understand why they should be doing it. There is an overriding view that they "...have lost out ..." so far.

6.11 COMMUNITY GROUPS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE STATUTORY AGENCIES

Many of the perceptions of the different governmental and non-statutory agencies were expressed quite forcefully with a tendency towards extreme views, though there was a considerable number of interviewees who refused to comment on them at all, in case their views would be relayed to the agencies, to the disadvantage of the groups and the areas. Some of the comments were very personal and it was obvious from the interviews that perceptions of these bodies are heavily influenced by the personalities of those representatives of the agencies with whom the community groups are in closest contact. A further major factor was that those who went out to visit the groups in their own area regularly, or who kept in close contact with them, were much more highly regarded than those who rarely, or never, visited them. This is a finding which the agencies could well bear in mind in their contacts with groups. The following are the main issues raised under this heading.

It is important to note that some of these organisations have a very wide remit in relation to community development, and that a number of them have either a limited presence, or no presence at all, in the county.

There Exists a Huge 'Gap' Between the Agencies and Fermanagh's Community Groups

6.11.1.1 There is a major perceived 'gap' between the community/voluntary sector, and the main funding and

statutory agencies. From a Fermanagh perspective, the Belfast-based agencies (especially) are perceived as having little, or no, interest in activities West of the Bann; there is undoubtedly still a residue of the old West of the Bann/East of the Bann dichotomy. Fermanagh's communities perceive the agencies as having their primary focus on the bigger centres of population - even in the case of those which exist to support rural communities - because "...that is where the power lies...". That gap makes for a generally uneasy relationship, with some groups feeling they are "...being talked down to..." by those who are construed as feeling "...more sophisticated..." than country dwellers.

- 6.11.1.2** This gap is not entirely an issue of emotional reaction; it also has practical implications. The belief is that the central bodies simply do not understand customs and practices in rural areas, and, since the policies are dictated from central level, consequently, their local agency personnel have much less to offer to the rural community than that community has a right to expect. Many groups are very sceptical of the agencies and their "...hidden..." agendas - though, in fairness, many others accept that the agencies operate within a system and are keen to offer as much help as is possible. One of the major consequences of the scepticism is that groups feel they should disclose only the minimum amount of information to the agencies and that, where at all possible, they should give the most favourable impression of their situation; the result is that agencies are forced to make decisions with sometimes inadequate information and/or on false premises; groups correspondingly fail to get support which might be made available if the real situation was known. There is, therefore, a major job to be done to reduce this 'gap' between Belfast (in particular) and Fermanagh's community sector.

The Agencies Are Perceived as Too Bureaucratic

- 6.11.2.1** The general perception is that governmental organisations are excessively bureaucratic and that the non-governmental agencies (e.g. IFI etc.) have accepted public sector systems and practices as being appropriate to the management of links with the community sector. Fermanagh is still primarily a farming county in terms of its mental approach to doing business; farmers conclude deals on buying and selling cattle, machinery, land etc. with a handshake, and these deals would be completed in virtually every case; within that society, it is a matter of honour that such deals should be completed as agreed. Against such a background, public sector bureaucracy is anathema to people from rural communities; some believe (though the basis for that belief was very strongly disputed by the agencies) that agencies have broken agreements because of "...red tape..." and that commitments made, have not been honoured nor any explanation given.
- 6.11.2.2** Community group members, especially those not directly involved in the negotiations, perceive the agencies as insensitive to the voluntary input of the group members. They see themselves as dealing with full-time employees, whereas they are taking time out from their jobs, or their businesses, at some cost to their incomes, to meet people who "...take (them) for granted...". The expression "...through a wringer..." and similar sentiments were repeated throughout these consultations; group members clearly resented being subjected to condescending treatment for relatively little money, given that they had been making huge efforts and great sacrifices to promote the development, or the regeneration, of their areas.
- 6.11.2.3** Among all these issues, one stood out from the interviews as significantly more important than any of the others: community group members expect "...**appreciation**..." and "...**recognition**..." for their efforts, and resent being treated as "...beggars..." or as people looking for some form of charity. Refusals of support from some agencies can be very blunt and delivered insensitively; if the refusal was explained better, with more dialogue, rather than being delivered in a matter-of-fact, non-negotiable manner, with an air of "...that's it; now we have better things to do; so we're off...", they would be more easily accepted.

There Are Serious Criticisms of Some Agencies from The Community Sector

- 6.11.3** At various points in all the interviews, the performance of the different agencies dealing with the community/voluntary sector was raised, and the questionnaire contained issues to be addressed in this area. The interviewees were instructed to allow interviewees to decide which agencies they wished to comment on; as a result, very few comments were received in relation to some agencies. But the main agencies were the focus of considerable comment - not all of which was favourable. The following paragraphs provide a summary of the main points raised.
- 6.11.3.1 LEDU:** Without any doubt, the most serious criticisms voiced during these interviews were of LEDU. It

was one of the most commonly mentioned agencies with just under 20% of interviewees commenting on it. Some of the views expressed were personalised and are not included in this report. LEDU is perceived as contributing virtually nothing to community development (many interviewees appeared not to be aware of LEDU's involvement in the Community Leadership Programme); more significantly, LEDU is perceived as offering very little to the development of economic activity in the county, on any dimension. It is seen as having an entirely Belfast-based focus, with little interest in the less populated areas West of the Bann, from its central level. Its bureaucracy, its rigidity and its very slow decision-making were foci of particularly extreme criticism.

- 6.11.3.2** Some specific and very trenchant comments from the interviews reflected a deep disillusionment with LEDU and scepticism about its capacity to deliver what is needed for Fermanagh's future development.
- 6.11.3.3** There was also considerable resentment of the fact that LEDU is proposing to reduce its commitment to social and community activity and will be concentrating all its energies on economic development in future - and this was confirmed from within LEDU's regional office. However, given the particularly trenchant criticisms from the business sector, it will have to make considerable strides, if it is to regain credibility in Fermanagh.
- 6.11.3.4** Against that background it is worth pointing out that since its 1995/96 financial year, LEDU has, according to its own data, offered assistance to 295 businesses in Fermanagh with a potential to create 420 jobs.
- 6.11.4.1** **NITB:** This organisation too was heavily criticised – by approximately the same proportion of interviewees as criticised LEDU, though by a smaller proportion from the business sector. A significant part of that criticism related to the lack of funds it has available for the development of B&B accommodation, or to support other forms of accommodation provision.
- 6.11.4.2** In general, NITB is seen as offering very little to the county, though there appeared to be a high level of ignorance of NITB's support for some successful community-based ventures in Fermanagh. It is seen as totally remote from the county at present, though some claimed that was not true in the past. In reality, in the ten years to the end of March 1998, NITB made 'financial commitments' of £12.5 million to Fermanagh District Council area – 14% of its total commitments to an area hosting 3.4% of the Northern Ireland population.
- 6.11.4.3** A specific criticism was that NITB is encouraging "...unbalanced development..." in the county, with its emphasis on self-catering accommodation, which is seen as adding relatively little economic value to the area, and in major flagship projects, any benefit from which is very thinly spread.
- 6.11.5.1** **Co-operation Ireland (formerly Co-operation North):** The biggest criticisms of Co-operation Ireland related to its Cross-Border Measure and to the fact that its criteria are seen as being ambiguous, and that virtually every business application is referred first to LEDU. The result is a seriously long-drawn-out process for most applicants.

It was also criticised on a number of other bases as follows:

- its administrative structures are perceived as being cumbersome and bureaucratic;
- there is no real local input into its decision-making systems and no local knowledge is applied in its evaluation procedures;
- the time-span between application and the receipt of money is such that the opportunity to get a new business started is sometimes lost;
- it is alleged to have proposed links with other bodies and suggested other arrangements which make no commercial sense and allow for no geographical synergies;
- its communication system, especially in relation to feedback on the progress of applications and on the basis of refusals, is perceived to be very poor;

- it appears to some groups, and also to some individuals, to reduce the amount offered to applicants in what is seen as an "...arbitrary..." manner, without any prior consultation or negotiation.
- 6.11.5.2** At the time when these consultations were being undertaken, Co-operation North was undertaking a review of its procedures; it is understood that some of the issues raised above, are being addressed (or may already have been addressed) in that review.
- 6.11.6.1 DoE's Planning Service:** While the strength of feeling against the Planning Service took the interviewers by surprise, it must be acknowledged that those who might have been satisfied may not have expressed opinions on this aspect (as indeed on most other issues), and that the most forceful criticisms may well have come from those with a personal, as opposed to a community, 'gripe'. Nevertheless, the criticisms were very widespread.
- 6.11.6.2** There was particular criticism that Planning Service's decisions appear to be driven, almost entirely, by concerns about the environment, about the appearance of the countryside and about the cost to other DoE divisions/agencies of providing the services for which the Department is statutorily responsible. The need to maintain viable rural communities is perceived as not being a factor in Planning Service's decision-making processes.
- 6.11.6.3** Once again the manner of dealing with refusals creates as much tension and ill-feeling as the refusal itself; the method of communication to, and perceived attitude towards, applicants is a major bone of contention; some officials were described as "... arrogant ..." in their approach to applicants.
- 6.11.6.4** There was also criticism of the way in which the Town and Country Planning Services' application of its document, '*A Planning Strategy For Rural Northern Ireland*' is used; the perception is that this was the result of a 'consultative process' which had only a very small 'two-way' element to it and which is perceived as having no conventional statutory basis, but is now being applied as "...the Bible..." for planning in Northern Ireland. It is seen as another manifestation of the 'democratic deficit' which exists.
- 6.11.6.5** The net result is that the Planning Service is perceived as one of the biggest contributors to the 'gap' which exists between the public of rural Fermanagh and the agencies which exist to act on behalf of the public generally.

Some Agencies Are Highly Rated

- 6.11.7** Positive feedback was received in relation to a number of other agencies; they can be summarised as follows:
- 6.11.7.1 Community Regeneration and Improvement Special Programme (CRISP),** and the CRISP representative for the Fermanagh area; the only criticism of this programme was that it did not apply more widely; it is seen as a very good funder and its local representative keeps in very close contact with the groups involved.
- 6.11.7.2 International Fund for Ireland (IFI),** and its consultant for the county, though this was more pronounced from the 'Catholic' and 'mixed' community groups - Protestant groups tended to have less contact with IFI; again the fact that the local consultant keeps in regular contact with the groups is much appreciated, as is her 'style' when communicating negative responses.
- 6.11.7.3 Community Relations Council (CRC)** is generally highly regarded by those with whom it has a working relationship and its objectives are very well received; while there were some criticisms of community relations policy, especially from the Protestant community, they did not appear to impact negatively on CRC.
- 6.11.7.4 Rural Development Council (RDC):** there were some criticisms, but, generally, the reaction was positive, and the local representative is highly regarded; it is not involved in major capital funding and is, therefore, less likely to create annoyance by refusing funding.
- 6.11.7.5 Fermanagh Trust's** local emphasis and the simplicity of its procedures were praised; again its direct and ongoing contact with the local groups is a major factor in attitudes towards the Trust.

- 6.11.7.6 Fermanagh Women's Network (FWN):** their proactive approach to visiting local areas was praised, but they have not, so far, succeeded in establishing widespread links in the Protestant community; this is an issue which needs to be addressed by the Network.
- 6.11.7.7 Northern Ireland Voluntary Trust (NIVT),** especially the personnel in its Derry office, received praise for its willingness to fund community development officers for groups in need. It is seen as an organisation which is prepared to adopt a positive approach towards applications for funding and to provide constructive advice to people.
- 6.11.7.8 Northern Ireland Council for Voluntary Action (NICVA)** whose advice, service and courses were deemed to be among the best available, although they are not available within Fermanagh.
- 6.11.7.9 Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE):** without exception, respondents who had contact with this agency found them to be very helpful and willing to do what they could to assist groups.

Mixed Responses Were Received In Relation To Other Agencies

- 6.11.8** There was a level of dichotomy between the responses of different consultees in relation to a number of other agencies; for some of these the major differences were between the attitudes of the business sector and those of the community/voluntary sector. The following is a summary of the attitudes encountered:
- 6.11.8.1 Department of Agriculture for Northern Ireland (DANI) - Rural Development Division:** while there were many positive comments about its achievements in the past, there were some very trenchant criticisms of its recent performance, and the 'manner' in which it communicates negative messages has left many community groups very dissatisfied.
- 6.11.8.2 Industrial Development Board (IDB):** only a small proportion of interviewees mentioned this organisation and most of the negative responses came from local politicians; but there were a few negative comments from the community sector about IDB's failure to promote Fermanagh (especially in the past) as a location for inward investment.
- 6.11.8.3 Training and Employment Agency (T&EA):** generally the business sector expressed some reservations about its effectiveness, but it was acknowledged that its current, more bureaucratic stance was justified by past abuses; the removal of the ACE scheme has been a great blow to some community organisations and was criticised.
- 6.11.8.4 Fermanagh District Partnership (FDP):** its bureaucracy was criticised as was the emphasis of its expenditure, but it was seen as generally being a good model because of its local input.
- 6.11.8.5 Rural Community Network for Northern Ireland (RCN):** it was criticised for its slow delivery of funds, though it was seen as generally supportive of community activity.

A Number Of Agencies Have Virtually No Profile In Fermanagh

- 6.11.9** Either no comment, or very few comments, were made in relation to a number of organisations, notwithstanding that they have the potential for a prime role within the community development sector. The following fall into that category:
- 6.11.9.1** Very few had any idea of what the roles of the **Fermanagh Volunteer Bureau** and its parent organisation the **Northern Ireland Volunteer Development Agency (NIVDA)** are; criticism of these two organisations came from both the voluntary and the statutory sectors.
- 6.11.9.2 Fermanagh District Council** was not mentioned as a major 'player' in community economic development, other than indirectly (though the Chief Executive's interest in that area was acknowledged, as was the work of the Community Development Officer in social-based community development); and the **Community Relations function within the Council** was not mentioned at all during the consultation process by people 'on the ground'. However, it has to be recognised that although community relations has an impact on

community development, it also affects many other aspects; consequently, it cannot be judged solely on this dimension;

6.11.9.3 The **Fermanagh Rural Community Network**: given its potential role, this organisation should have a major input into community activity in the county; in fact, it appears not to have a high profile, and among those who were familiar with it, it was felt that this organisation had not yet identified a clear role for itself.

6.11.9.4 **Fermanagh Local Action Group (FLAG)**: this group received surprisingly little mention during the consultation process, though the few comments which were made, were very positive (especially in relation to its insistence on the beneficiaries' adhering to the conditions of any scheme it supports); there was a view that given the small amount of funding available to it, its impact will be limited.

Agencies Which Keep In Close Contact With Community Organisations And Which Show Respect For Them Are More Highly Regarded

6.11.10 There is little doubt from the consultations that those agencies whose local representatives maintain close contact with the community groups, generate a far higher regard for themselves than do those which operate at a distance. It is also clear that 'attitude' and 'manner' towards the groups are critical factors; groups resent being "...talked down to..." by agency employees, and, unfortunately, the perception in Fermanagh is that far too many agency personnel adopt a superior and/or patronising attitude to the groups - it is not appreciated!

There Is Not Enough Support For Private Sector Economic Development

6.11.11 Notwithstanding the strong view that economic development has taken precedence over social issues, there was some very strong feedback that neither individuals nor organisations receive enough support for economic development initiatives. Possibly oddly, there was a forceful view from some community groups, that private sector activities should get more support to promote economic development in the county, as they were seen as having the capacity to make a real difference to Fermanagh's economy. Essentially the view implies that the community/voluntary sector could get funding for initiatives for which the private sector would not be supported, whereas these things were more properly the role of that sector.

There Is Resentment At The Lack Of Consultation On Major Issues

6.11.12 Community group members resent the fact that on some major issues (e.g. planning) they are not consulted by the statutory agencies; decisions are being taken which affect their lives and their futures without their having any input to those decisions. Again the 'democratic deficit' was raised and the application of "... Belfast-based rules ..." was criticised trenchantly, as being inappropriate to rural and border areas.

There Is Serious Dissatisfaction With Current Planning Policy

6.11.13 Planning is a **major** issue in rural areas of Fermanagh, where there is a strongly held view that the planners have no appreciation of the social implications of current planning regulations and of its contribution to rural depopulation. The inability of farmers to secure planning permission for dwellings for family members not involved in farming, is seen as anti-family and a reflection of a lack of understanding of rural life and the significance of family relationships. The entire issue of planners who are not accountable to the community of the county was one of the most emotive issues encountered in the entire consultation process.

The Rigidity Of Funders' Time-Scales Creates Problems For Groups

6.11.14 The time-scales operated by funders create problems for those contributing on a voluntary basis; it is impossible for those operating in the community and voluntary sector to meet short and very rigid deadlines. Predictably, therefore, decisions have to be, and are, hurried, and are often made without adequate consultation or discussion. The result is that projects are often poorly developed and groups have to proceed before they are in any real position to do so. Too often this leads to problems with the projects later on and the agencies wash their hands of any responsibility for the inadequacy of the proposals or of their implementation.

Funders Are 'Insensitive' To The Hidden Costs Of Delays

6.11.15 Most groups have experienced frustration at the slowness of agency decision-making, with the result that the implementation of projects takes longer than expected. As a result, costs tend to increase. This creates shortfalls in funding and the effects of these are compounded by delays in remitting the funds when the expenditures are incurred. Such delays create "...hidden..." costs, such as interest charges, price increases etc. and there is a view that funders are "... insensitive..." to the implications of these. The net effect is that the project starts off with a funding deficit and any further adverse changes to its performance have the potential to convert a potentially viable project into one which is financially non-feasible.

Funders Appear Not To Accept The Good Faith Of Community Groups

6.11.16.1 There is a view that funders "...are inoculated with suspicion..." of community groups and are unwilling to accept their *bona fides*. That is the only basis on which groups can understand the combination of:

- the aggressively negative and sometimes condescending, attitudes portrayed by some agency representatives in their dealings with the groups; and
- the very zealous scrutiny applied to community groups' applications for funding and the recurring requests for information on what the groups see as straightforward issues.

6.11.16.2 When these are taken in tandem with the paternalistic approach of some funders, the implication is that "...we must be stupid...". There appears, to the groups, to be a failure to recognise that should the projects fail, they and their communities will lose far more than the agencies, and they and their communities have a bigger interest and emotional investment in the success of these initiatives than anyone else.

Groups Believe They Have Been Misled At Times

6.11.17 There are concerns that groups were poorly advised; consequently, they believed that "... the goal-posts were moved ..." by some funders, after groups had (as they perceived it) "...agreed..." their project, and the consequent refusal of funding came as a major shock and disappointment. There was the contrary view from the agencies that, in general, the criteria have always been clear and they denied that any major post-agreement changes in policy occurred, but groups have a different perception. What is abundantly clear is that a communication problem exists.

Groups Want Feedback On Unsuccessful Applications

6.11.18.1 Many groups expressed more annoyance in relation to not being told why their applications had failed, than to the failure itself. They see the absence of any willingness to discuss the reasons for their failure as reflecting arrogance on the part of the funders, and, in some cases, an unwillingness to defend their decisions - partly because they may see such decisions as indefensible against the arguments which the groups could muster.

6.11.18.2 This too reflects on the communication systems of the funders and on their openness and accountability. Groups have difficulty understanding why they are required to be open and accountable, when they see the agencies as failing to meet those criteria. On the basis that both 'sides' have to work together, the same criteria should be applied to both, particularly as the funders are perceived as having a duty to disclose information to any applicant group which demands to see information about itself.

There Is A Need For A Coordinated Approach By The Agencies

6.11.19.1 As groups see it, different agencies use different criteria, and it is unreasonable to expect voluntary people, with other commitments, to be capable of working their way through the funding maze. Group members have difficulty understanding why there should be so many agencies in the first place, and then why they should all apply different criteria in assessing and funding proposals from groups in the community sector. The view was expressed quite strongly, that there is a need for the agencies "...to get their act together..." so that community development can proceed in Fermanagh, and the rest of Northern Ireland, without the agencies becoming 'hurdles' which groups have to negotiate if they are to be successful; i.e. there is a need

for uniformity/rationalisation of funding mechanisms.

- 6.11.19.2** In relation to both urban estates (especially) and rural towns, there is perceived to be a need for a single Northern-Ireland-wide strategy which is comprehensive, properly coordinated and fully integrated; it should involve all the main players in community development including the various agencies of the DHSS, NIHE, FDC, WELB, DoE, the police, the probation service, the voluntary/community sector and the local authority. The needs of such areas are seen as being entirely different from the needs of rural areas and villages, though some relatively small settlements (less than 1,000 population) were also perceived as possible candidates for such a strategy. The feeling was most strongly expressed in relation to a number of estates in Enniskillen (but not all of them).

Some Agency Representatives Are Highly Rated

- 6.11.20** While attitudes towards the agencies themselves are mixed, the current local representatives of IFI, DoE/CRISP, RDC, and NIVT as well as Fermanagh District Council's Community Development Officer are highly regarded. The conclusion was easily drawn that not only were these the agency people who kept closest to the groups, but also that they related to the groups best in terms of showing appreciation of what they are doing and not adopting any form of 'superior attitude' to them.

6.12 AGENCIES' PERCEPTIONS OF COMMUNITY GROUPS AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

A number of agencies with a role in community development were consulted. There was only limited agreement in their views on the precise future direction of this type of activity; but they all considered that this sector has the potential to make a significant contribution to both economic and social development in Northern Ireland in the foreseeable future - provided it is encouraged and well managed. The following principal comments were made.

Partnership Is The Way Forward

- 6.12.1** The agencies wish to see more partnerships between groups; there is a feeling that groups should 'pool resources' and that, by coming together in larger entities, they could access a broader range of experiences and develop further strength through inter-group synergy, which would bring about greater benefits to the local area. The current situation reflects fragmentation with, for example, small areas wanting their own hall and being unwilling to share resources with a group two miles up the road because "...they are not from this area..." and because of the intense rivalry between neighbouring communities which is prevalent in Fermanagh and which makes co-operation more difficult. This means that it is harder to have an overall strategy, as each townland community wants its own individual identity recognised and projects are usually based on the smaller area with little attention to the wider picture. This reflects the fact that 'community identity' operates at a very localised level in Fermanagh.

Networking Is Only A Tool

- 6.12.2** Networking is seen as useful, as it allows groups to find out how other groups have approached similar problems and, based on their past experience, allows the newer group to find out what not to do. The funders believe that community groups are very frank about their experiences (more so than businesses would be), and such information can be very valuable. This more open approach allows people to share information and establish links which might be useful outside the group, and it raises the profile of the group. However, there is a danger that a group may spend all its time networking, as there are so many opportunities to do so; they may believe that they are accomplishing something, when in fact they are "... going round in circles...". Networking cannot solve community groups' problems and it is not an end in itself; groups should carefully evaluate their networking activity in order to determine whether they are getting anything useful out of it, or if they could be doing something more beneficial with their time and for their area.

Close Contact Must Be Maintained With The Community

- 6.12.3** It is fundamentally important that if groups want to succeed, they must stay close to their communities. There

is a danger, particularly when they have succeeded in implementing a project, that they think they 'know it all' and can decide things for the community, without asking them what is appropriate, or what they want. Many of the community groups with whom the agencies deal, comprise similar types of people, and there is little evidence that the majority of groups have been proactive in attempting to get a truly representative cross-section of the community on board. If projects are developed which are not fully supported by the local community, there is a danger that they will not be accepted nor utilised by residents, and that they will not succeed in bringing the different sections of the community closer, resulting in 'white elephants'.

Monitoring By Funders Has Been Weak

6.12.4.1 It was readily admitted by funders that, to date, monitoring of projects and follow-up with groups has been inadequate. In some cases monitoring has taken the form of sending out an evaluation document for successful applicants to complete, which is very long (one has approximately 150 questions) and standardised. Very few funders actually pay a follow-up site visit to the group, though this would be preferred by the applicants and would facilitate a personalised approach and let funders see for themselves what has been achieved.

6.12.4.2 Abuses of the system have actually caused the bureaucracy to increase. There is a possibility that this bureaucracy will increase further because the funders may not be focusing on the right mechanisms. The assessment of the 'value-for-money' from community activity has been very weak. While many of the agencies stated that this was because it is a difficult concept to measure, others asserted that there should, nevertheless, be proper attempts made to do so. The overall conclusion was that there seems to be no concerted effort by the agencies to address the 'monitoring issue'.

Groups Can Lose Their Focus

6.12.5 The agencies are concerned that groups which add economic activities to their core objectives, may be diverted from their real roles and invest too much energy and effort in the ancillary activities. For some community groups, their primary focus was initially on social activities, but they added an economic dimension, e.g. work units, in order to generate some revenue and (sometimes) to maintain their project officer's job. As economic projects normally require significant investment, there is a danger that the community group may end up spending most of its time managing that part of the business, to the detriment of its main priority. Furthermore, the agencies perceive some groups as being inexperienced in managing a business, and a revision of its focus to increase its emphasis on economic and/or infrastructural dimensions could create major problems later. Therefore, the agencies believe that groups should concentrate on what they have selected as their core objectives and, if they decide to undertake supplementary activity, it should be delegated to experienced people to manage on the groups' behalf.

Focused People Are Required

6.12.6 Agencies consider that those who are involved in too many activities are unlikely to contribute adequately to any group. It is the belief of many agencies that the old adage, 'if you want something done, ask a busy person' is overrated; people who sit on numerous committees may not be able to commit enough time to each, particularly to a group which is involved in working-up a project and seeking funding. It requires a great deal of dedication to get a project up-and-running and, if committee members are not fully committed, it is more difficult for the group to work as a cohesive unit which can get things done.

The Biggest Risks Are Being Taken By Local People

6.12.7.1 The funders have attempted to support economically sustainable projects, but they accept that, in the long-term, many projects will not survive. Rather than being risk averse, they have adopted a pragmatic stance and have funded a wide range of projects in the realisation that some will not 'make it'. There are always risks involved in a new project and, normally the greater the risk, the greater the reward should the project succeed although funders seek to minimise these risks by having Economic Appraisals and Business Plans prepared. In much the same way that a certain proportion of new businesses will fail, so too will some community-led projects. Funders can, and often do, help to retrieve a project which is floundering by offering additional support and assistance - but the project may still fail.

6.12.7.2 It was also suggested that although funders invest money, at the end of the day the local group takes the biggest risk as their community's reputation and welfare and, possibly, their future are at stake. They are the

ones who identified the need for the project among their community in the first place and it is their responsibility to ensure that it succeeds and has a positive impact on that community. The promoters are local people who will be 'judged' by their fellow residents and will have to live with the stigma of having 'failed' if the project does not achieve the result sought - local people have long memories and the promoters need to be confident that they can make the project work, before they embark on its implementation.

Agencies Were Put Under Pressure To Meet Deadlines

- 6.12.8.1** Because many of the agencies were new, this caused problems in the administration of the initial funds, as new systems were being developed, policy was being refined and staff were 'learning the ropes' at the same time as the community groups were developing their proposals. Considerable funding was being made available for the agencies to distribute and those agencies, particularly the ones which were administering European Peace funding, were being put under pressure to distribute monies within a relatively short time. There was no 'test project' to identify the 'best' distribution mechanisms - consequently, problems occurred.
- 6.12.8.2** Agencies have been criticised for this, but it was a learning process for them and they recognise that the situation has not been 'ideal' but, as there was a desire, emanating from the centre, for things to happen over a relatively limited period, they felt that they had no alternative but to distribute the money as best they could. That is why groups which were established and in a position to have their programmes of activity properly developed and documented, received significant amounts of money. Controls are now more stringent and funders are now more aware of 'what they are looking for'.

Those Who Have Been Successful Are Well Placed To Undertake Additional Projects

- 6.12.9** There appears to be a policy amongst some of the funders that those groups which have a track-record and have demonstrated that they can implement a project successfully, should receive additional support for any subsequent project which they might propose; i.e. that the basic philosophy should be that of 'backing winners'. In the past there was an implied policy of 'spreading' the funding as widely as possible; that 'policy' is now being reconsidered and those who have succeeded with previous projects and have built a track-record are being viewed more favourably now.

6.13 EXTERNAL PERCEPTIONS OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

The following comments were expressed by people who had only limited, or no, experience of community development, and, in some cases, no desire to become involved in it. They are given to represent the general 'layman's view', as required by the assignment brief, which was to document all views so that those working in the sector could have a better understanding of how they are generally perceived.

Community Development Does Not Promote Itself Positively Enough

- 6.13.1.1** Community groups are often seen as small cliques run by "...busy-bodies..." and "...do-gooders..." who are divorced from the reality of the social problems of the area. They are regarded as being interested only in getting involved in "...nice, easy..." projects such as economic and tourism initiatives, and projects which are highly visible and regarded as more prestigious, even though the group may not have any experience of running such projects. Some people have a negative image of the sector and do not take it seriously for a number of reasons including:
- their views of the people involved;
 - the perceived lack of experience and expertise of such people, and
 - the fact that operating by committee is regarded as less effective.
- The view of some of these consultees was that the community sector needs to become more entrepreneurial, less risk adverse and able to differentiate its projects from those being proposed by other groups.
- 6.13.1.2** They do not appear to tackle the more difficult problems such as social need, nor do they proactively encourage others to become involved. There is a general perception that others are not welcome, as the groups appear to be satisfied with things the way they are, with the current members in control.

6.13.1.3 Their own communities do not appreciate the time, effort and energy invested by community groups in bringing projects to fruition. There is a lack of understanding on the part of the general public about what exactly is involved and the problems/obstacles which are faced by groups and, because they hear of the vast amounts of money which have been, and are being, channelled into community development, they think that groups just have to ask for money and "...it's yours...".

The Majority Of The Business Community Regard Community Activity As 'Irrelevant'

6.13.2.1 The business sector's involvement in community activity is an individual issue; some become involved for altruistic reasons as they believe that they have a responsibility to "...put something back into the local community..." which has provided them with support; others become involved for altruistic reasons, but their main motivation is because of the positive knock-on effect which they believe it will have on their own business and for the networking opportunities which it can provide. The third category, which is also the largest, see it as entirely irrelevant to them, as they:

- a) Do not see it as having an effect on their business; or
- b) Do not have the time to devote to community development as they are too busy trying to build-up their own businesses.

6.13.2.2 The business sector has no concerns about community businesses; they are seen as totally different in terms of objectives and approach, and as not being competitors to the private sector. Community enterprises are still controlled by committees, making it relatively difficult for them to make decisions quickly; they (normally) also lack a strong focus and clear direction which, in the private sector, is provided by the owner/manager; consequently, even though they may have received considerable amounts of money to set-up, and might be competing within the same industry, the business sector does not fear these ventures.

Businesses Feel 'Left Out'

6.13.3 Many in the business sector consider that there is too much emphasis on, and support for, community activity. Although they feel that this sector is important and should be supported, they believe that the business community should also receive more assistance than is currently being made available to them. Businesses have more potential for success and longevity, as the owners have shown their commitment to the enterprise by putting their own money, time and energy into building the business; they tend to have a good head for figures and to know what is feasible, what is required and how to go about it. Consequently, the business sector believes that if it received even a small percentage of what is available to the community sector, it would have a greater impact on the area by creating sustainable jobs.

Community Groups Are Perceived As Not Being 'Economically Minded'

6.13.4 There is a perceived danger that community groups do not appreciate the magnitude of the problems associated with promoting economic projects; as a result they go "...too far, too fast...". They do not realise what is involved in implementing an economic project and their enthusiasm may prove their undoing, as their expectations can be unrealistic and the project may be too ambitious for them to manage. Particularly in the case of voluntary groups involved in business enterprises, key personnel may not even be aware of the ramifications for their personal lives in relation to personal liability for any debt etc. There is also a concern about those groups which have an economic project but which have not engaged in long-term strategic planning and which do not have an 'exit strategy' should the project prove to be impossible for the group to manage.

Poor Project Selection Is A Problem

6.13.5 There is a considerable level of scepticism about the long-term sustainability of many community projects and whether their 'real' role is as "...feel good activities..." rather than as projects which attempt to tackle areas of particular need. Some of the projects are regarded as simply being a 'promotional job' to make the area, the funders and the promoters look good, but which has a very limited impact on the everyday lives of local residents. To many, these projects do not represent good value-for-money and will be incapable of sustaining themselves when funding dries up. This "...should have been obvious from the very start...".

Desire For Money Has Motivated Many Groups

- 6.13.6.1 Many groups are perceived within the agency sector as being parochial and inflexible. They are regarded as being only able to see the smaller, local picture, desperately fighting for their own small area, without addressing the larger picture or considering how fragmentation and failure could have a negative impact on the overall development of the county.
- 6.13.6.2 Community groups are also seen as being "...motivated by £ signs..." and some people believe that they simply replicate what has been done elsewhere, when they see others have received money for that same type of project. There is little evidence of any innovation or of groups doing "...something different...", although it was accepted that the needs of various areas can be similar with the result that many of the community projects are alike. However, there is still a feeling that there is also an element of 'keeping up with the Jones'.

Funders Have 'Pushed' Community Development

- 6.13.7 Business people perceive 'the funders' to be "... pushing ..." community activity by "... throwing money ..." at the community sector in order to "...speed-up..." its development, rather than allowing it to continue at a slower, more gradual pace. Therefore, they are, indirectly, responsible for the "...plastic..." groups, at whom money is thrown simply because of who they are and because "...they say the right things...". Groups, particularly those which are 'cross-community' are regarded with suspicion - "...are they genuine, or are they there just for the money?..." Many believe the latter is the more accurate view of this sector because, prior to the availability of all this money, there was only a limited number of community groups operating in the county; this begs the question as to whether they will still be there when the flow of money ceases. Some people, particularly business people, believe that groups are purposely established and re-engineered to comply with the desires of funders, irrespective of the needs of an area; the agencies are the groups' main audience, as they hold the purse strings.

6.14 SOCIAL VERSUS ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

During the consultation process, the social development of the county was constantly highlighted as the major issue which deserved most attention. The following is a summary of the views expressed.

Tackling The Social Needs Should Be A Priority

- 6.14.1 The county's principal needs, at present, are social ones; consequently, there is a need for a much more proactive effort to reach the most disadvantaged and under-represented sections of society. If these issues are to be tackled seriously, there must be a change in focus; while the creation of jobs can have a positive effect on social issues, it cannot address them all, nor get at the heart of many of them, e.g. poor parenting or substance abuse, and other initiatives are needed. It is recognised that these are going to be difficult issues to address and that it will take significant time before it will be possible to ascertain whether programmes have been successful - there are no short-term solutions to these problems.
- 6.14.1.1 Nevertheless, there is a manifest concern throughout the county that its social problems are not receiving the priority they warrant. Whether community groups, as currently structured, are the most appropriate vehicle for such action was not unanimously agreed, but social activity is seen as their *forte* and they are perceived to be the only available mechanism for addressing certain local issues which are seen as being more appropriately the remit of the public sector.

Opportunities Exist For Developing Other Specialised Groups

- 6.14.2 While some groups have been established with a very specific focus e.g. women, the unemployed, the elderly, children etc., there are many other directly comparable issues which should be equally addressed and other groups of people who require targeted assistance, e.g. young men living in rural areas. It is accepted that groups which focus specifically on single issues or readily identifiable constituencies, have been very successful, and it is thought that similar groups focusing on other sectors could achieve comparable success on other issues. However, there was no agreement on which issues should have priority, and it was obvious that each interviewee had his/her own preference in this respect.

Broader Criteria Should Be Used To Evaluate Projects

6.14.3 Economic sustainability appears to be the main criterion being applied, but groups argue that other criteria should carry equal importance. Many of the projects make a very important and valuable contribution to social development, but, as they may not be self-sustaining, they find it very difficult to attract funding. It is recognised that it would be difficult to assess projects on other dimensions which would have to be evaluated in a subjective manner, making it very difficult to justify certain decisions, but it was felt that this issue must be investigated further in order to see if a compromise, or an alternative, could be reached.

6.14.3.1 Groups feel that qualitative measures should be agreed and incorporated in the analyses of community proposals in some standard form - though the precise parameters of that standard were not indicated by anyone. The real core of the objection was that too much emphasis is given to the economic aspects.

Value-For-Money 'Equals' Economic Value!

6.14.4 Value-for-money in current government policy is perceived to be based exclusively on economic value, rather than on social or community value. Projects are being evaluated primarily on the basis of their economic value-for-money, rather than having any real assessment of the value which is placed on them by the community or their value as social projects to local community development. This is an extension of the point above.

Rural Isolation And Depopulation Are Major Problems

6.14.5 Rural isolation and depopulation remain very real problems within Fermanagh. It has been suggested that the lack of transport in rural areas has contributed to the current situation. Parts of both East and West Fermanagh have shown serious declines in population (even after allowing for boundary changes to some of the wards with the Roslea, Coonian and Garrison areas being particularly badly affected).

6.15 NEED FOR SUPPORT

This section indicates the attitudes of community groups as reflected during the consultations, towards support and further assistance.

Additional Assistance Is Required

6.15.1 Most groups would welcome follow-up support and feel they need it. The community groups were open to accepting additional assistance and, even the groups which have been successful in securing funding for projects, would still welcome continued support and follow-up. The attitude of the newer groups was that "... any help is welcome ..."

A 'Hands-On' Approach Pays-Off!

6.15.2 Support provided by way of general written advice is not really appreciated. Groups feel that any worthwhile advice should be specific to the needs and circumstances of the individual group. Many groups had difficulties in relating the general advice back to their group situation; the result is that the agencies with people on the ground, who were known to the groups, attended their meetings and worked with them in their own environment, were much more highly regarded, than the others. These people, through their actions, demonstrated that they thought the group was worthwhile and that they were willing to really 'help' them. A letter from someone, whom the group almost certainly does not know, conveys an entirely different message.

Resources Should Be Targeted Better

6.15.3 There is a need for the direct targeting of resources towards those groups which are experiencing difficulty in developing their projects. Groups which have been around for a reasonable length of time, but which have not successfully developed a project, experience huge personal and communal disillusionment; these groups should be supported with targeted assistance to help them in the right direction.

Advice On Being An Employer Is Necessary

6.15.4 Groups feel the need for assistance in selecting and appointing workers and in managing them to ensure that they achieve the targets set for them. Group members may not have experience of being employers and, consequently, may find it difficult to appreciate the different roles of each party if, or when, they get an employee. Managing this situation is a major concern for groups operating on a voluntary basis. There are examples of where the community worker runs the group, rather than *vice versa* and this is not satisfactory for the development of the group. Information may not get passed on to the group and should it no longer be possible to fund the worker's position, the group will be even worse off if all the responsibility has been delegated to that person.

6.16 BORDER COMMUNITIES

As part of the consultation process, the border communities were analysed as a separate unit in order to ascertain if there were any different issues in those areas, which were not raised throughout other parts of the county.

Differences Are Evident Even Within These Areas

6.16.1 Views of the impact of the border on local development are different in the East and the West of the county; they are also different between Catholics, who see the border as a hindrance, and Protestants who do not perceive it as such. Consequently, it is impossible to segregate the community implications of the border from its political context.

Road Closures Caused Low Morale

6.16.2 The closure of the border roads had an adverse effect on morale in both communities. It has had the effect of underlining and reinforcing the situation in Northern Ireland, making the 'Troubles' very real and something of which the residents are constantly conscious. It also caused serious resentment within the Catholic / Nationalist community.

Price Differentials and Exchange Rate Are Problems Along The Border

6.16.3 In border areas, exchange rate fluctuations are a major issue; the current large price differential has had a significant impact on businesses in Fermanagh, particularly those located in the border areas, forcing some, e.g. petrol stations, to close down. While some thought that this was very harmful, others thought that it was just the turn of Southern businesses as Northern traders have had Southern trade over the years and now it is simply that "... the shoe is on the other foot ...".

Social Life Along The Border Was Disrupted

6.16.4.1 For Protestants, social life along the border was severely disrupted by the road closures as many of their churches are located on the southern side. As the blockages resulted in detours, it has been more difficult to carry on everyday activities, resulting in feelings of isolation and being 'cut-off'. In many parts of the county, Protestants are in a minority along the border; this has left them feeling very vulnerable, particularly when there was paramilitary activity and they believed that there was a policy to force them from the area. For these reasons, the physical presence of checkpoints gave them some degree of comfort and security and a feeling that they were "... not alone ...", although the checkpoints were disruptive

6.16.4.2 For Catholics, social life continued on a cross-border basis, notwithstanding the road closures. There appears not to have been the same feelings of isolation or concern as were expressed by Protestants, but, possibly this can be attributed to the fact that their social and community support networks are much stronger and more far-reaching as their numbers are greater.

6.17 COMMUNITY WORKERS

With the increased flow of funding, the recruitment of community workers has increased dramatically. Little

analysis has been undertaken on the 'value' of that development.

The following section relates to the effects which their employment has had on community development.

Roles Must Be Clearly Defined

- 6.17.1** There is a need for a clear definition of the roles, responsibilities and rights of community workers, and of the legally enforceable employment-termination procedures to be applied, before any community group should be allowed to employ a worker. Groups tend not to have experience of employing people, with the result that the employer-employee relationship can be fraught with problems and the situation may not be acceptable to either party. An example of what can go wrong was highlighted by a situation where a voluntary member of the group became its paid worker but, as the new roles of each were not clearly set-out, dissatisfaction resulted in the worker leaving and the group lost a valuable paid, and voluntary, worker; as a result, there was much ill-feeling within the local community over the issue.

The Voluntary Effort May Be Reduced

- 6.17.2** Employment of full-time workers can have the effect of reducing the level of voluntary effort as the volunteers feel that because someone is getting paid, there is no need for them to do as much as they once did. There is also the feeling that as the worker has knowledge of community development (having taken formal courses etc.), he/she is in a better position to know 'what will work' than group members; consequently, everything is left to the full-time person. If this happens, it is easy for the worker to become de-motivated as he/she will not be receiving adequate direction and support. This is a particularly difficult trade-off to reconcile and the worker often becomes the 'scapegoat' for the failure of group members.

Are Workers Required?

- 6.17.3** An interesting view was expressed that groups should not need development workers if the committee is good enough. This presupposes that committee members have adequate knowledge of community development and of know-how to initiate and implement new projects. Although that appears, in theory, to make perfect sense, the reality is that many do not have this level of confidence and that, in order to get them to that stage, a worker is required. Experience of community activity suggests that many groups have major problems, and even more problems in implementing them.

Workers' Posts Are Not Sustainable

- 6.17.4** It was suggested by some that employment of community development workers creates "... a false economy ..." based on posts which are not sustainable in the long-term. The salaries which community workers receive are regarded as being "... above average ..." and, had the job been created in the private sector, it would not have attracted the same level of remuneration. Unless a group can develop an economic project, which the worker would be capable of operating, it is unlikely that the worker could justify his/her wage in the longer term. As things stand the majority of community posts are dependent on grant-aid and it is unlikely that such funding will be available indefinitely.

6.18 URBAN ESTATES

Urban estates were analysed as a separate group to see if they exhibited aspects, which were not identified in other parts of the county. Previous studies had suggested that urban and rural environments produced different problems. The following main issues were raised.

Estates Are Different

- 6.18.1** Urban estates, whether they are in the middle of a town or on the periphery of a built-up area, experience a unique set of circumstances and needs which are not normally the same as those of the surrounding areas. Problems are mainly internal and estates appear to relate comfortably only to other estates; they also appear to have problems identifying with any different type of housing development, even if it is geographically adjacent to them. In reality, this appears to be based on perception rather than on any major distinction between built-up areas, but the estates are seen to be different and their residents perceive them as being different.

Residents Have Real Concerns

- 6.18.2.1** The differences between estates and other areas are best highlighted by an assessment of the concerns which rank highest with residents; vandalism, speeding vehicles and petty crime rank as the three major concerns of many estate residents (especially of older residents); those would not be the highest ranking issues in other areas.
- 6.18.2.2** Top investment priorities for those urban estates include play facilities for children, provision for older teenagers and some form of community facility so that the residents can feel ownership of, and have a 'say' in the activities which occur in the local area. Despite their misgivings on many dimensions of life in the urban estates, interviewees were unanimous in their support for the Housing Executive and its performance in Fermanagh.
- 6.18.2.3** Lack of public transport is also an issue in the outlying estates; many residents find it difficult to get into the centre of Enniskillen - taxis are expensive and people are uncomfortable about their children having to walk long distances on their own.

Estates Residents Feel 'Left Out'

- 6.18.3** There has been no strategic, nor integrated approach to the management of the social problems of urban estates; this has resulted in many estates feeling that they have "... been forgotten about ..." and that rural areas have received much more resources and support. There are many agencies with a specific remit for the estates and it is, therefore, more important that an integrated strategy be agreed in advance, rather than having a number of different agencies, each pursuing its own strategy. Although the agencies currently operating in the estates (Housing Executive, DHSS, Sperrin Lakeland Trust, Police etc.) have made progress, there is no overall policy for the estates in the realm of community development. Interviewees indicated that they feel that locals should have a significant input into any such strategy, but it should be initiated by the agencies – not by any one of them, but by all the relevant agencies operating together.

Groups Are Floundering

- 6.18.4** Estates which have to rely on voluntary support do not appear to have achieved as much as those which have the support of a full-time worker; for example, under the umbrella of the Devenish Partnership Forum, the four estates of Kilmacormick, (1 and 2), Hillview and Cornagrade share a worker (and administrative support), and this has greatly enhanced the profile of these areas and has led to other initiatives there (these are relatively settled communities which retained their previous links when they transferred from the town to the 'then' new estate). However, other estates feel that this has resulted in resources being targeted at the well-developed, better organised and more 'visible' estates (i.e. the ones which have been more vocal and proactive); there was a view expressed that these estates have received more attention because they are prominently situated in the middle of Enniskillen town, whereas other estates do not have that advantage and are "... easier to forget about ...". One result is that many of these newer (mainly out of town) estates have no prior bonds nor facilities and consequently no significant community-led activity, and appear to be having problems developing a project (any project!) to address the issues of their areas.

Economic Conditions Within Estates Are Poor

- 6.18.5** Economic conditions within estates are epitomised by benefit dependency, single-parent families and low incomes; these exacerbate the social problems, which exist within the estates. The socio-economic data (c/f Robson *et al*) indicate clearly that both social and economic conditions in some of the estates (e.g. in the Devenish ward) are relatively poor. This lack of economic prosperity makes it difficult to tackle the needs of the area because of the numerous interlinking issues and the different 'cause and effect' relationships which must be addressed. While most of the issues themselves are socially-based, their resolution will necessitate a considerable improvement in economic circumstances.

Drugs Are A Big Problem In The Estates

- 6.18.6** While alcohol and teenage drinking are major problems throughout Fermanagh's communities, the incidence

of drug abuse and drug-pushing is much higher in the urban estates. Drugs were raised as a major source of concern by residents within the estates and they are particularly worried by the increase in their usage; this is more prominent within the estates which do not have a high level of community involvement and where community activity is weakest; but the solution of this problem will require input from outside the area and from other than the community itself.

'Drinking Dens' Proliferate In Some Areas

- 6.18.7** 'Drinking Dens' have become popular within some estates and there are 'known houses' where drink and drinking parties are commonplace; this has created problems. Tenants do not wish to live beside these houses, and they are forced to apply for a transfer, turning parts of some estates into 'undesirable' places to live. These houses are then filled by others with similar life-styles to those who created the problems in the first place; this results in an enlargement of the undesirable area, turning the situation into a vicious circle which needs to be broken. Again, external assistance will be required to solve this problem.
- 6.19** While many other 'minority' comments were also made, the above represents the overall thrust of the feedback from the consultation process – including both the interviews and the focus groups.

Corroboration Of Urban Findings

- 6.20** Corroboration of the findings in relation to Urban Estates can be found in a recent action research report by the NIVT, "*Redressing the Imbalance*." This report concluded that there was a proven need for a sustained and targeted community support programme for estates, whether they are located in rural or urban areas, due to the fact that the areas exhibited weak community infrastructure, minimal local involvement in community initiatives and an inability to access any community development support measures to date.

CONCLUSIONS

- 6.21** Having analysed the foregoing comments, the following principal conclusions have been reached from this study:

Community Development Has Been Successful

- (a) The concept of community development has been well supported county-wide in Fermanagh and has been generally successful; the external perception of Fermanagh and of its community development activity is highly positive; nevertheless, there is a need to promote the concept of community development to a wider section of society in the county.

Community Development Brings A Number Of Different Benefits

- (b) Community development has the capacity to give communities a sense of identity, which is at least as important as any improvement it generates through bringing people together or raising the general standard of living and welfare in any area.

Social Problems Must Be Addressed As A Priority

- (c) Social problems have not been, and are not being, adequately addressed within the county, although an initiative has been established to deal with anti-social behaviour within the urban estates; but the county's social problems extend beyond the built-up areas - they are both plentiful and serious.

Community Development Has Only Had A Limited Effect On Improving Community Relations

- (d) Community development has generally failed to achieve the cross-community benefits expected from it; to some extent, the current political situation has contributed to this result.

Not Everyone Is Interested In Community Development

- (e) There are a number of communities in Fermanagh which have no interest in any form of community activity and

simply prefer to retain their own privacy without any external interference. Likewise, there are many of the county's citizens who have no interest in being involved in community development.

Clear Characteristics Differentiate The Successful Groups

- (f) The more successful groups are generally those which have a clear focus, prioritise tasks and build up their capacity through experience of small projects initially; they are also the groups which maintain closest and most regular contact with their communities.

Capacity Building Is Still Required

- (g) There are serious reservations about the capacity of most community groups to undertake economic projects which will be sustainable in the long-term, and there are also reservations about the degree of replication of projects (and the corresponding lack of innovation) being promoted by the voluntary sector; consequently, there is a clear need to build the capacity required by groups to undertake economic projects (where economic activity is being considered by a group) and, where possible, the support of local business people should be enlisted for such projects.

Community Development Has A Negative Stereotype

- (h) Community-based activity is not highly regarded by a considerable proportion of the county's population and the motives of those involved in it are viewed with scepticism and/or apathy.

Groups Need A Support Network

- (i) Community groups feel very isolated when they encounter problems, and there is no adequate network through which they can access the help they need when they are under pressure; these pressures tend to arise principally from financial problems.

The Focus Of Funders Is Still On Improving Economic, Rather Than Social, Well-Being

- (j) The agency-driven emphasis on increasing economic prosperity through community development has not succeeded in improving the position of the most marginalised groups in Fermanagh, and there is a major need to support community activity aimed at improving the social position of the more disadvantaged members of society.

Agencies And Community Groups Must Work Together

- (k) The statutory (and other) agencies do not generally meet the needs of the community sector and the two sectors (the public sector and the community/voluntary sector) are poles apart in terms of any agreed understanding of the issues and priorities involved in community activity; there is a need for the agencies to adopt a more positive and supportive approach to community activity and to the groups which promote it.

The Excessive Number Of Agencies Has Led To Confusion

- (l) There are far too many agencies operating in a very bureaucratic way, claiming to support the community sector, with far too few of them having any genuinely beneficial input. Ultimately, the statutory sector has not provided the community sector with the support to which it feels entitled, and some agencies have contributed very little to progress in this area.

As Protestant Attitudes Are Different, Community Development Has Not 'Taken-Off' In The Same Way As It Has Within The Catholic Community

- (m) The Protestant community has not taken advantage of the opportunities created for the community sector, largely because of a philosophical anathema to collective activity. This is accentuated by the absence within that community of structures on which to build significant community-led projects and by the failure of that community's leaders to endorse or even to facilitate such activity.

Planning Has A Significant Impact On Life Within Rural Communities

- (n) In rural areas, current planning regulations are a major issue and they have a serious impact on the public's attitude towards the statutory sector generally.

The Private Sector Should Receive Support To Encourage Its Development

- (o) There is considerable resentment that funding is being made available to the community sector on a basis on which it is not available to the private sector, with the result that private sector activity is relatively inhibited.

Funding Agencies Should Follow Up Projects

- (p) There is a need for the funding agencies to ensure that clear mechanisms exist for monitoring and evaluating projects to which monies have been advanced. There is also a need for them to maintain on-going contact with groups as the project develops.

Road Closures Have Had An Adverse Effect on Community Morale

- (q) Closure of border roads provoked considerable resentment in border communities and affected social cohesion there. In different ways, the two main communities suffered from these effects.

Rural And Urban Areas Have Very Different Needs

- (r) There are very clear and very fundamental differences between the needs of rural areas and those of the urban estates in Fermanagh, and there are correspondingly major differences in the types of solutions which should be offered and implemented in those communities.

The Sustainability Of 'Community' Jobs Is Being Called Into Question

- (s) The growth in the numbers employed in the community sector is perceived as 'a mixed blessing' and there is considerable scepticism about the long-term viability of such employment.

- 6.22 This review of the responses provided by interviewees during the consultation process suggests that, however successful community activity may have been in Fermanagh to date, there is a need for a number of initiatives if that success is to be maintained and advanced. Those initiatives relate to Fermanagh specifically, though it is highly probable that many of them may have application on a wider basis. The recommended courses of action are detailed in the next section of this report.

7.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 7.1 The following paragraphs outline a number of recommendations which the consultants have identified as a direct result of the consultations with the residents of Fermanagh and with those agencies with a community development remit. They have been shaped by first identifying the current gaps in provision, and then considering how those gaps could be rectified. The recommendations have been included, in order to provide the promoters with general guidance as to what is required to further community development within Fermanagh. It is not the intention of the consultants to set out unrealistic recommendations; but the precise course of action to be taken as a result of this study, will be determined by the statutory agencies and the community / voluntary sector agreeing on the way forward. The recommendations are detailed below.

CONSOLIDATION IS REQUIRED

- 7.2 The overall support structures for the community development sector, especially the funding mechanisms involved, have become very confusing for voluntary groups; too many players have resulted in duplication of effort. Consequently the following proposals are made:

Recommendation One - The Number And Roles Of Support Groups For, And Funders Of, Community Development Activity Should Be Consolidated So As To Reduce The Number Involved: Support organisations for community groups and community activity should be consolidated into a reduced number of agencies. This will require policy changes at central level and is not within the compass of Fermanagh Partnership in Practice, nor any other group within the county. However, the existing plethora of agencies is confusing for most groups, and benefits only those with full-time support capable of working through the alternatives; to that extent it leads to 'unbalanced' development and to a degree of inequity.

Recommendation Two - Single-Identity Groups Should Receive Support For Good Projects: Single identity projects, where they can be justified on a demographic or cultural basis, should not be disadvantaged by funding agencies; but there should be some indication that, ultimately, they will have the capacity to contribute to the improvement of inter-communal links, even if they do not change their own structures.

Recommendation Three - Specific Initiatives Should Be Designed To Address Particular Social Needs: Programmes should be designed to tackle the major social problems within the county; these include rural isolation, rural suicide, substance abuse, (including, especially, abuse of alcohol), dysfunctional family structures, lack of parental control/inadequate parenting, inadequate school-home links, poor day-care and home-care for the elderly, and inadequate facilities for the very young and for teenagers.

AREA STRATEGY FOR THE COUNTY

- 7.3 Given Fermanagh's unique situation with the boundaries of the local authority area coinciding with those of the County, an 'over-arching' development plan for the county should be implemented; this should cover the following aspects:

Recommendation Four - A Community Development Plan Should Be Produced For The County: This plan should take full cognisance of the needs of each area; it should be used to avoid duplication, identify 'gaps' and avoid inappropriate development and unrealistic projects. The plan should provide for the integrated development of the county - if necessary through the provision of a central coordinating body. In order to ensure the success of this plan, all funders would need to consult it when evaluating projects initiated in, or designed for, Fermanagh.

Recommendation Five - Social Problems Must Be Accorded Top Priority And Provided With Adequate Funding: The current balance between the capital funding of economic projects and the revenue funding of social projects should be reassessed by funding agencies to ensure that social problems are adequately addressed; at present, there is an excessive emphasis on economic viability, whilst Fermanagh's biggest problems are social ones. The social problems in each area must be addressed comprehensively, though the potential of economic development to contribute to the alleviation of social problems should be fully recognised and utilised.

LOCAL COORDINATION IS REQUIRED WITHIN THE COUNTY THROUGH A CENTRALISED BODY

- 7.4 In order to assist the community and voluntary sector, the following recommendations are made in relation to the need for a centralised unit and its role and responsibilities:

Recommendation Six - A Central Coordinating And Advisory Service Should Be Established For The County: Such a central advice service should be responsible for the implementation of the county plan and be capable of advising community groups, and others, on the range of available funding services, on the criteria used by the different agencies and on any changes which have occurred in these aspects. For such a service to be successful, it will have to be negotiated with a range of central agencies which will need to accept their own specific role in the provision of what is needed.

Recommendation Seven - Information On The Activities Of Other Community-Based Groups Within The County Should Be Made Available Through A Central 'Clearing-House': Such a central unit should publish a directory of groups in Fermanagh, their activities and a contact name, so that groups can 'know what's out there'; this would help to develop local networking opportunities within Fermanagh.

Recommendation Eight - A Proactive Community Development Officer/ Worker Should Be Appointed In Fermanagh To Work Exclusively With The Protestant Community: A Community Development Officer, with the specific remit of working proactively with the Protestant community, should be appointed; he/she should be someone to whom Protestant groups could relate, whom they could trust, and with whom they could identify; and any such person should work with those communities in their own areas, rather than act as a co-ordinator based primarily in a central office.

Recommendation Nine - A Comprehensive Strategy, To Be Implemented By All The Relevant Agencies, Should Be Developed For The Management Of Urban Estates In Fermanagh: Agencies with a key role in the development of the estates (e.g. DoE, DHSS, NIHE, RUC etc.) can achieve only a limited amount on their own; however, by pooling resources and working together within defined parameters and a comprehensive strategy for the solution of urban problems, they can have a much greater impact.

Recommendation Ten - A Proactive Community Development Officer Should Be Appointed In Fermanagh To Work With The Urban Estates: Given the unique situation within them, a worker focusing on the urban estates should be appointed to ensure that development occurs evenly throughout the county; ideally, such a person should operate within an integrated strategy for such estates; this strategy should be a joint product between the agencies mentioned in the previous paragraph and, Social Workers, Representatives of Residents' Associations and DED's objective of Targeting Social Need. Again, such a person should work 'on the ground' in these communities.

Recommendation Eleven - Community Development Workers Should Be Appointed Only For Consortia Of Community Groups - Not For Individual Groups: Given the way in which community workers can influence the distribution of funding, they should have responsibility for broad areas of the county rather than for individual communities. Their work should be co-ordinated through the central body, and they should act primarily as facilitators rather than 'deliverers', but they should work with the community groups in their own areas.

Recommendation Twelve - Groups Should Be Given Training Prior To The Employment Of A Worker: Any community group(s) proposing to employ a worker should be given training covering what is involved in defining roles and responsibilities, and advice on planning and control mechanisms, particularly on how to ensure that the worker's 'Action Plan' is implemented properly. Training will be even more crucial, if one worker is employed on behalf of a consortium of groups.

Recommendation Thirteen - Meetings Of All Community Groups In The County Should Be Arranged Annually So That Groups Can Meet Funders And Each Other: The central body should be responsible for organising these sessions and a 'programme of events' (e.g. a series of talks about, and visits to, areas, both within, and outside, Fermanagh), to learn about different projects, should be provided.

Recommendation Fourteen - A Pool Of Expertise Should Be Made Available To The Community Sector: Any community development plan for Fermanagh should ensure that access to expertise will be available to all

community groups and areas in the county, either through resources within the central body or by that body 'buying in' expertise for groups.

Recommendation Fifteen - Focused Mentoring And Training Should Be Provided For The Community Sector - Especially For New Groups Proposing To Undertake Major Projects And For Groups Proposing To Undertake Economic Projects: Funding Agencies should include mentoring and training as part of the package for any new project; this should be provided on-site, within the local community/environment and in a hands-on way, rather than through courses - though it may have to be supplemented by courses.

Recommendation Sixteen - Special Support Should Be Provided For Established Groups Which Have Not Yet Achieved Their Initial Goals: Established groups, which have not yet developed a significant project, should be identified and provided with special mentoring and 'hands on' training.

ACTIONS FOR GROUPS

7.5 The following recommendations are proposed for adoption by groups undertaking community activity:

Recommendation Seventeen - 'Succession Plans' Should Be Drawn Up By All Community Groups: All community groups should be required, as a condition of funding, to indicate what plans have been made for succession, and the realism of these plans should be tested to ensure that regular infusions of 'new blood' can be achieved and that over-dependence on any specific individual is avoided.

Recommendation Eighteen - The Terms Of Office Of Office-Holders In Community Groups Should Be Strictly Limited: There should be a pre-agreed, limited period for the chairmanship of any community organisation; at present, the turnover of office-holders is very low and this inhibits young people who feel that others 'own' the group and that their input would not be welcome.

Recommendation Nineteen - Young People Should Be Encouraged To Become Involved In Community Activity: Every community group's constitution should make provision for the inclusion of some under-25's on the committee; this would increase the probability of the 'succession problem' being more easily solved.

Recommendation Twenty - Committees Must Proactively Seek To Involve Representatives Of The Marginalised Sectors Of Society: To ensure that the young, the unemployed, women returnees, ex-prisoners etc. - all the most disadvantaged sectors of the community - actually become involved, committees should be required to be proactive and go out and 'head-hunt' individuals to represent 'the marginalised' in the development of group policy; whether these people would be retained on the group directly involved in implementing any project(s) would then depend on what expertise they had to offer and what already exists within the group.

GENERAL

7.6 There is one further recommendation which, although general in nature, would make a significant contribution to community development within Fermanagh:

Recommendation Twenty-One - Agencies Should Adopt An Obviously Supportive Role In Relation To Their Contacts With Individual Groups, Including Working With The Groups In Their Own Environment: There is a need for the specific training of agency personnel who have contact with community groups; as these people are mainly volunteers, agency personnel need to adopt a particularly supportive approach when working with them; deeper relationships can be developed by the agencies only through understanding the needs and frustrations of community workers, and agency personnel should be trained to match the standards required to satisfy these demands.

Conclusion

7.7 It is recognised that many of the recommendations suggested above can be implemented only by central and/or local government working in conjunction with all of the agencies with a community development remit, through the adoption of a partnership approach. One of the overall findings of this report is that there does not appear to be any central, integrated community development strategy to which all community development players within the county could adhere. This lack of coordination and cohesion has created confusion within the community/voluntary sector; it has resulted in duplication; and some agencies appear to be 'at odds' one with

another, even though their aims may be broadly similar.

- 7.8** Community development has become a significant segment of Fermanagh's overall economic and social activity, only as a result of the funding and targeted assistance which has been provided in recent years. However, the sector does not appear to have engaged in any serious level of forward planning and its development has been *ad hoc* and 'allowed to occur'. With the growth of this sector, that uncoordinated form of development cannot be allowed to continue; on its current basis, scarce resources are not being put to optimal use. The partnership model is accepted as being the best way forward for this sector and it is believed that the time is now right to apply that model to the decision-makers who are responsible for the structures and shape of the sector.

On that basis it is concluded that there is considerable scope for further successes through community-led development in Fermanagh.

8.0 CONCLUDING COMMENTS

- 8.1** Community-led activity in Fermanagh has a fully justified profile of success; throughout the length and breadth of the county local people have come together to undertake initiatives designed to improve the social and economic position of their people. Inevitably, some have been more successful than others, but the study described in this report indicates that the people of the county have improved their well-being and prosperity through their involvement in this type of activity.
- 8.2** The issues addressed in this report relate not so much to whether community activity has been successful - that can be taken as read - but more to how it can be made more successful; to how the energy, enthusiasm, experience, and expertise of Fermanagh's citizens, can be harnessed to improve what already exists and to create whatever is needed to make the county more prosperous on any dimension or, preferably, on all dimensions. That is the real challenge arising from the issues in this report.
- 8.3** Some dissatisfaction with aspects of the performance of various entities involved in, or with, voluntary activity surfaced during the consultation process; that too was inevitable - it would have been foolhardy to expect the expression of total satisfaction by the public of Fermanagh, or any other place. But, in general, the level of satisfaction was reasonable; those who were criticised, failed to meet the standards set by others - their relative performance as much as their absolute performance dictated the level and strength of the criticism.
- 8.4** Whatever the misgivings, they do not detract from the overall favourable impression of community activity in the county. There are far too many people committed to local empowerment and to the grass-roots of Fermanagh's communities having a real 'say' in their own future and that of their county, for any significant probability of failure on the part of the community sector. And there are far too many in positions of power and leadership in the county for local groups to be worried about any future failure to get for Fermanagh its fair share, or more, of the funding being made available for this type of activity in Northern Ireland.
- 8.5** But the ultimate determinant of the future of community-led activity in Fermanagh will not be funding - it will be the people of the county. So far they have performed well; with proper structures and a very modest realignment of their approach, they will do even better in the future.