

CLASS, VOICE, AND STATE:

Knowledge production in self-organised working class activity and the politics
of developing community television in Ireland using PAR strategies

Volume One (of Four)

Part 1

In Volumes One-Four:

Volume One: Thesis Part 1

Volume Two: Thesis part 11

Included on CD

Volume Three: Appendices Part A

Volume Four: Appendices Part B

Margaret Gillan

B.A.; H.Dip; P.G.C.E.

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Sociology Department

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Head of Department: Dr Sean Ó Riain
Supervisor: Dr Laurence Cox

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Declaration

I hereby certify that this material which I now submit for assessment on the programme of study leading to the award of Ph.D. is entirely my own work and has not been taken from the work of others save and to the extent that such work has been cited and acknowledged within the text of my work.

Signed

ID No: 60134771

Date:

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Community media is volunteer driven and despite the enormous benefits it provides to communities and to society at large it is extremely poorly funded. So I consider myself privileged to have worked, in one way or another, as a community media activist for the best part of thirty years. The PhD research process and this thesis provided an opportunity to put core concerns on record; the result of conversations with community media activists at the home base and from other countries. Any project such as this must acknowledge that it rests on the efforts of countless activists who struggle to enable working class voice.

This research has been supported by Community Media Network's activity. The many people who have contributed to the organisation, in particular all the participants on the Community Employment Projects (CEs) and the Community Services Project (CSP) are also the foundations of this work. The CE participants from 1994 – 2003 provided important supports that ensured CMN's visibility: performing administrative tasks, wo(man)ing telephones, maintaining and developing the website and the magazine "Tracking", and organising events such as "Unity" in 1998 - demonstrating the capacity of people working in common cause to open up hugely diverse perspectives within one framework.

Funding structures orientated to facilitate entrance to the labour market work against community needs to develop skills and capacities *and keep them within the community*. At the same time such funds have provided the infrastructure to support the training and personal development crucial to addressing poverty issues. Working class women are over represented in community development and on Community Employment Projects, reflecting their low economic status and the level of their exploitation. Current attacks on the CEPs and community development in Ireland will have a devastating impact on the quality of women's lives for some time to come, and without this community infrastructure there will be no potential for improved quality of life. While relying on CE in CMN was difficult, at best it brought about a workplace where the benefits of having a mix of ability, a focus on skill sharing, and a good gender mix could be envisaged. These are generally missing in well funded programmes, and this is particularly true of programmes incorporating media which are markedly male-dominated.

This project has taken place over a period of ten years during which time I had a wide range of supports and encouragement from many people and groups. I wish to acknowledge here the support given the project by the CMN Steering Committees (SC) active since the research project began in 2000. All the SC members demonstrated tremendous patience towards an activity that at times consumed my energies and so could be seen to tax other CMN work. Sean Ó Siochrú has always been at the forefront of lobbying efforts on behalf of non-profit community media and he particularly pushed the community television project within the CMN group; Robbie Byrne, Danny Burke, Chris Hurley, and Phillip Keegan, and our accountant, John Kilbride: all gave energy to CMN when the organisation was weak and gave me huge support during a time I found testing in both my personal and working life. Oliver McGlinchey in particular played a crucial role; he has anchored CMN, maintaining stability throughout periods of cuts and strife; he provided steady mentorship over many years posing critical questions that re-oriented the research at times when it appeared to flounder; above all he is a valued comrade and friend whose kindness and humanity I am privileged to have known.

We lost Danny Burke in April 2010 who consistently supported the research project and left us a legacy: he refused to pander to corporatism; he insisted people would only engage with community media around their 'burning issues'; and that community media also meant engagement with those who do not share our own worldview. These for me remain fundamental tenets of community media.

Activists need to get on with the work in hand and the demands of research for reflexivity and reading of long tracts creates strain; their long term support is greatly valued.

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Three years funding from the Royal Irish Academy Third Sector Research Programme was important recognition for the CTV project and without which the project would have been removed from academic supervision due to lack of funds for fees. Clearly more support like this is needed if we are to understand how people of no property exist within and contribute to the social fabric.

I am deeply indebted to my Supervisor Dr Laurence Cox. His work on the PAR programme in NUI Maynooth provided the academic framework for this project; his guidance on the importance of methodology was of immense value being particularly pertinent to research with working class self-organised activity. PAR appears to be the only methodological approach that adequately addresses the needs for research in this area and NUIM now plays an important role in its development. Laurence brought to his task a keen understanding of working class activism and the realities of activists' lives. I faced many dilemmas in taking on academic research practice; this work took ten years from start to completion of thesis – giving ample opportunity for "life to get in the way" - Laurence met the many problematic moments with characteristic consideration and sensitivity.

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Introduction

- (i) Thesis summary
- (ii) Empirical conditions of community media
- (iii) Issues in theorizing community media
- (iv) History of the research process
- (v) Methodological issues
- (vi) Chapters and Chapter Structure

(i) Thesis Summary

This thesis is concerned with how working class self-organised communities use media as part of their process of knowledge production. It documents a participatory action research (PAR) project that sought to encourage the involvement of community organisations in the process of developing community television in the Republic of Ireland. It is particularly concerned with the involvement of Community Media Network (CMN) in the process of forming Dublin Community Television (DCTV) from vision to reality. The PAR project and the thesis form part of the knowledge production process around community media; the purpose of the thesis is to map the process of forming DCTV and to clarify the self image – what it has come to be; to identify fault lines in the ‘how-to’ knowledge that exists, and to identify the possibilities that emerge from the investigation.

My argument identifies community media (CM) in general and community television (CTV) in particular, as *activity* that is part of the process of working-class “voice” but constrained by interaction with the state. The relationship between knowledge production and ownership of the means of production is key to the organisation of community media; the dynamics and historical context of such organising shapes these media and determines directions and patterns in the movement’s activity.

Building the technological organisation needed to facilitate “voice” is a core focus of the investigation. A Participatory Action Research (PAR) approach provided a framework in which the tacit knowledge of participating groups could be brought to bear on the building of the new organisation. PAR means that the researcher is a participant and it also allows participants to engage in and direct the research process. This means that the researcher’s role can be complex; the interests and concerns of all involved are live and determining factors; and that the research question may be re-visited as the research – or knowledge production – process uncovers underlying needs and dynamics.

The thesis explores the contexts in which the organisation developed and the forces by which it was shaped. The challenge we faced is represented most by the changes in the research question - as the problematic focused on the evolving gap between building the technical organisation and the engagement of community organizers in the process.

(ii) Empirical conditions of community media:

There are media initiatives that take place within ‘community’ environments, in community organisations; alongside this there is also the growth of community media organisations - those who focus on the production of media that address the needs of communities. These groups produce their own knowledge and their interaction is also a site of knowledge

production. CMN in Ireland was itself a development of this kind of interaction between community activists and community media groups - CMN's activities to develop community television brought DCTV into being.

This kind of activity happens in many countries around the world and takes many different forms. In the Global North it can be highly organized and well resourced as in the US (Howley, 2005) (Klein & Mollander, 2005) and in some European countries (KEA, 2007), or it can be scattered, insecure, fragile, ghettoized, and underground. In reports there tends to be a bias towards radio as an appropriate medium (Dagron, 2001), although there are over 700 community or access television channels listed on the Global Village CAT website¹. Since 2000, the Internet, 'social media' and the digital era have also added to the mix of media forms being used.

Despite its oft-stated vulnerabilities, community media has achieved a singular amount of recognition around the world; the Declaration by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe² (2009) recognizing the *“role of community media in promoting social cohesion*

¹ Alfonso Gumucio Dagron's (2001) study commissioned by The Rockefeller Foundation catalogues 50 case studies of what they call participatory communication experiments with a strong focus on the Global South. The Foundation's introduction states there is a bias towards radio on the basis that:

. . . our research and conversations certainly suggest that community-based radio is one of the best ways to reach excluded or marginalized communities in targeted, useful ways. This bias towards radio also suggests that with participatory communication what matters most is the voice. (Dagron, 2001, p. 2)

But the collection of case studies still sports a significant amount of video and television projects (See Appendix No 1). The World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters (AMARC), states on its website that it

“brings together a network of more than 4,000 community radios, Federations and community media stakeholders in more than 115 countries”

and lists community based radio stations in nine global regions¹. It is also significant that over 700 community access televisions around the world are listed on the Global Village CAT website, a list that has grown exponentially since the last tabled listing posted in 2003 (see Appendix No 2).

² Declaration of the Council of Ministers on the role of community media in promoting social cohesion and intercultural dialogue” <http://www.mediaparlament.hu/cikkek/eudeclaration.pdf> accessed 1st March 2009

and intercultural dialogue" is one recent expression of this recognition. Importantly, this demonstrates the level of organisation amongst community media promoters that has elicited this political response - the work of all the global organizations such as AMARC, Videazimut, The People Communications Charter, Indymedia, Communication Rights in the Information Society (CRIS), WACC, and OurMedia. It also reflects, arising from the interactions of these organizations, an international networking capability that again has its own dynamic and involves a range of other actors and groupings (see Appendix No 3). There is clearly a live network of community media activists worldwide and an obvious ongoing and heightening need for community media.

(iii) The historical background on community media

Historically contextualizing manifestations of community media can pose difficulties since the emergence of specific forms is sporadic; rarely do community media entities have a coherent chronology and continuity or connections between episodes is either non-existent or there is little evidence of continuity. However there are links that deserve more attention than can be given here which provides ground for further research. This section identifies historical precedents of community television and approaches the historical evidence as a discovery process. By doing this I mean to highlight the processes that bring community media into being: people do not usually come to community media through a knowledge of community media and its history, but through their need and activity which drives them to find tools for communication. Contextualising the social and historical contexts of those sporadic episodes is an effort to expose the forces that drove the activity. For the reader I had intended this to be an entry point to the study, but the coherence of a PhD thesis demands that theoretical frameworks take precedence, and so this chapter has been moved to its current position.

(iv) This is not a media thesis:

For clarity I need to state that this is not a media studies thesis. Mainstream media is part of the social fabric and so it enters the discussion here as a necessary element to understand where community media activists are coming from. The concern in this thesis is the dynamics within the movement and the forces it encounters as it tries to claim part of the broadcasting spectrum for voices from below. It is therefore a sociological study of the struggle to develop community television in Ireland in a period when neo-liberalism is the dominant ideology and within the particular ingrained approaches to struggle that are found within self-organised working class activity in Ireland.

As I write, we face what is arguably the greatest ever crisis of capitalism globally, and Ireland in its Celtic Tiger boom period has been a significant player. This is a serious testing ground for the community channels in their aim to be the voice of the voiceless.

The understanding of the value of ‘voice’ is located in moments when people are able to (and even forced to) form movements to change things. In doing so they also need to control the means of producing their own knowledge and use that knowledge to direct action. So I am looking here at an activity that is older than modern media and the theories that help me look at this phenomenon are those that address the self-organised activity of working class people.

In this PAR project the concern is with self-organised working class knowledge production and its need for voice. What we first have to take on board is that because the working class does not control the means of intellectual production they have to struggle very hard to sustain any knowledge production that will result in re-making the world in their own image. The effort to accumulate and develop knowledge is literally huge. On all levels they need to contend with forces that build enclosures to exclude them from having any influence on how the world is organised – i.e. from having a voice. Media is one such

enclosure that people in struggle sporadically attack, try to raid, to take its tools and use them in the movements’ interest. The public sphere is largely controlled by this media enclosure and working class people and realities are excluded from it by its bulwarks of privileged technicians, gate-keepers, and the myth of the objective journalist. It is within these enclosures that the terms are set and that the language to be used is formed; these essentially classify access to the enclosure and the use of its tools. Media studies which focuses on this enclosure, is therefore part of the problem. Because of this, if this thesis was to be written or read from a media point of view it would miss this conflict.

The development of community media organisations to facilitate working class voice is inevitable and this thesis shows how this need emerges; but the problem then for community media is how not to become media. The crucial political problem that I explore is how working class communities can use and retain control of media as a part of community development rather than as a part of media. And while this may sound complex in that it is about knowledge about how we can produce different kinds of knowledge – it is also very liberating since we can operate outside the media enclosure and are not bound by its norms. Instead our work is located in an organic development of use of media tools for voice - and this within a whole range of alternative public spheres.

(v) This thesis has a PAR structure

CMN is an organisation with an activist base. We needed a methodology that engaged activists in the process as participants who controlled and owned the project – what we needed to build had to involve collective processes – both in terms of action and in terms of producing the knowledge we needed.

PAR typically has a structure that refers back to participants (who are also seen as researchers) and develops actions that are reviewed and changed in the course of the project. This is generally understood as a self-reflective spiraling path rather than a linear one (Dick, 2002), (Zuber-Skerrit & Fletcher, 2007). This makes it attractive to activists who need processes that are able to accommodate change and an evolution of ideas and action as they strive to realize their goals.

This structure of PAR means that the relationship of 'theory-methods-findings' is cross-referential rather than linear and also involves diverse ways of knowing that demand appropriate methodologies and range of methods. This makes it complex and problematic to re-present these processes in a written form. It is also difficult if academia demands a linear 'theory-methods-findings' trajectory in the written presentation.

Difficulties in writing a PAR thesis are now well documented, but this doesn't make the task any easier. A big issue for working class activists in engaging with any research is the pressure from demands on time and energy and this can become a serious obstacle to the project's completion - particularly in taking time out in reflexive activity (Mulholland, 2003). In this project I found that activists did not have time for long tracts of writing that were no longer connected to coal-face issues they had to deal with at that particular point in time. This was also true for written work that I produced as part of actions that they designed – by the time it was written they had moved onto another problem. No matter how much good will there was towards me and towards the research, this condition ruled. I have become accustomed, albeit grumpily, to not receiving immediate feedback even for years

after documents and materials have been produced. A number of manuals we produced have been used only at particular times when they are needed³.

While it is gratifying to get feedback that work has been useful it is clear that ***the value of research to the core group is in how it enables and supports action*** (Zuber-Skerrit & Fletcher, 2007). The problem for the researcher in approaching writing a PAR thesis is firstly that the researcher is often drawn away from the nature of the activity into a reflexive mode where others do not have the time or energy to be. Secondly the form and structure of the thesis will also have to reflect the struggle of the movement in its effort to accumulate and develop ‘really useful knowledge’.

(vi) Thesis Structure and Chapters:

The thesis is in two parts: Part 1 comprises four chapters concerned with CMN deciding to develop practical knowledge; Part 11 comprises another four chapters looking at what happened when we did.

The eight chapters cover theory, methodology, and empirical material developed through the PAR process and brought back to the community television drive. The thesis essentially maps a longitudinal case study constituting a primary knowledge source, producing findings from a range of research actions, clarifying what the community television entity has now

³ A training manual produced by CMN in 1999 was used in 2009 by Korean activists campaigning to establish media centres; another manual produced in 2007 is used sporadically. These are reference documents containing information on particular aspects of knowledge the movement needs to have. They are part of our effort to accumulate knowledge in the struggle to establish means of communication that are appropriate to and meet the needs of working class self-organisation. The materials the PAR project produced along the way resulted from participatory activities and informed the process, these are interviews, case studies, position papers, articles, training tools, useful handouts and links and are compiled in a second volume of appendices. They are also available on a number of websites as well as in hard copy.

become and mapping a way forward from an assessment of the fault lines and the possibilities identified within the research.

Part 1

Chapter 1 – "Knowledge, Access, and Power" – Taking back theoretical knowledge for the movement's own purposes.

The difficulty of developing and retaining knowledge within the context of self-organised working class activity often means the dislocation of theory from what we are actually doing. But to read Gramsci is to read theory as reflection on action - this is a PAR principle which reverses the theory-methods-findings as a linear process and puts it into a framework of critical questioning around concerns rooted in what is happening.

This chapter takes as a premise that people operate within their social, political and historically defined contexts and looks at some key theoretical issues for community development and community media. How do social movements find voice? What media do people's movements use and why? What's common about community media? How does ownership control meaning? What knowledge do we have and what do we need to produce?

What are our terms? How do we see our activity? What is the nature and conditions of practice of community media? How is this seen?

Community development and community media are explored as self-organised working class activity which in an organic process of knowledge production develops proletarian public spheres.

The chapter draws on a body of Humanist Marxist literature addressing knowledge production in self-organised working class activity - including Karl Marx, Antonio Gramsci, Raymond Williams, Stuart Hall, and Hilary Wainwright. This literature, in its central concern

with the empirical conditions of the working class, its mobilisation and formation of a class-for-itself, and its theoretical grounding in historical materialism, seems more suitable than others to the needs of a consideration of class and voice.

I also draw on community development, community media, and media reform literature to identify the range of response to the problem, the quarters that have the capacity to respond, and what "voice" this supports. This is in relation to the development of the central question –

"how can community organisations (that constitute working class self organization) access and benefit from community television?"

The central concern is how people gather and use knowledge, what and whose knowledge gets heard; the formation, purposes, and impact of public spheres; and how the community media movement develops. Within the self-organised activity of working-class people the need to 'get the message out' means using whatever means available - be it bin-lids, doggerel verse, puppetry, graffiti, street theatre, or taking over mainstream television studios; but with this comes the demand for access to contemporary media. The growing use of these media to support horizontal modes of communication has created the need for resources that are accessible to all and that are communally owned – for people's voice.

Chapter 2 - The Nature of Community Media

we have to discover the nature of a practice and then its conditions

(Williams, Culture and Materialism, 2005, p. 47)

This is a 'hinge' chapter focusing on the nature of community media as a prelude to an introduction to the kinds of activity already known and which form movement precedents. It is important to establish this broad typology of activity before entering into particular

conditions that constitute the case studies. The process of engaging with the nature of community media as an activity is what formed and refined the key research question for the CMN group.

Chapter 3 – "Movement Precedents" - a review of historical contexts of community media in Ireland.

Chapter 3 is concerned with what was already known, the pre-history, what we know about ourselves, how visible this kind of community activity is and how visible actors are to one another.

This is essentially an exploration of the background to historical examples of people's use of media to find an approach to the question 'what is community media', 'what is community television', and from this a means to explore the politics of its development in Ireland in the 21st century.

The chapter deals with historical and social contexts of 'media' traditions in particular the relationship between oral and written traditions in Ireland. This process uncovers some ingrained contradictions that exist in Irish society and impact on the content and availability of media forms used by people in struggle. A section of this chapter develops a chronology of relevant Irish community media since the 1960s as precursors to the current phase of development in which this research project has been operative. This includes the co-existence of illegal and legitimated voices in terms of pirates and licenses and the efforts to develop resources in an era dominated by a Public-Private Partnership (PPP) ethos. The chapter reviews the historical context of Community Media Network as the organisation became the main advocate and power-house for community television

Chapter 4: "Why at all and why thus?" – the CMN / DCTV learning in and developing of strategy;

Learning for development; Factors shaping and influencing choices; Researcher role; Factors in refining the research question.

Chapter 4 is concerned with appropriate methodologies for the project to develop community television. Methodologies that emphasized the participation of the researched were needed and direct us towards those developed for learning for development such as the popular education approaches and community development methodologies of Paulo Freire and Participatory Action Research (PAR) as in the work of William Foote-Whyte. Referring back to Gramsci's ideas on the forming of intellectuals in Chapter 1, the chapter also explores issues that the role of the 'engaged researcher' and 'reflective participant' posed in the context of the project.

The methodology was developed to support the consolidation of a network that would own, build for, and sustain CTV by encouraging actor's participation in the research. Its design allowed us make strategic choices in an attempt to enable participant's control of the process and to increase the possibilities for collaboration and building relationships within which information, skills, resources, and experience could be shared. The limitations of classical PAR formulations that tend to overlook society's structural inequalities were very evident from the start of this project and the methodology was therefore adapted and changed as situations demanded.

Methods used in gathering the research data were varied and include *case studies*, *documentary analysis drawn from workshops*, *focus groups*, and *seminars*. These were also

used as a means to form working groups to address particular aspects of structure development. When faced with the limitations of these methods in providing understanding and clarity around the issues affecting community organizers participation, we began to work through small scale *interviews* and *individual contact* to understand the issues that were happening on the ground as the project develops. This fragmentation of the research process on one level while the organization was being consolidated on another was a key tension driving the work.

While PAR did provide a framework to enable participants control the directions the research process took, this was not unproblematic. This chapter examines the difficulty for the sector in participating in the consultations, lobby actions, and the formation of the technical organisation that was needed to establish DCTV.

Action Research is often found in institutions – used a lot in health research - and can be ; Participatory Action Research is qualitatively different and places emphasis on the ownership of the research process by the participants themselves – it has been promoted by William Foote-Whyte (1991) in industrial settings and by the Cornell University PARNET programme as suitable for development programmes in rural and agricultural settings ⁴; and in social movements – and these tend to re-organise PAR models to support movement development.

In our project PAR was adapted it to ‘fit’ the political economy of community media in Ireland at the beginning of the new millennium. Our version of PAR was to enable participants engage horizontally; to engage vertically with authorities through the emerging structures; and to retain control of those structures within the project. For example, when

⁴ <http://www.cbrnet.org/CBRinAction/CampusbasedCBRCenters/CornellUniversityPartici.html>

we developed the Dublin Community Media Forum (DCMF), while it engaged institutionally with the City Community Forum and the Local Authority, it was also constituted by its members and operated to provide supports to the community media groupings in the city. Despite its internal limitations, it also provided a platform from which community media activists could lobby, state positions, and ultimately be heard. The fact that the movement impacts on, and is in turn impacted upon by wider fields is an aspect that is returned to in Part 11.

Part 11

Chapter 5: “Community media in the wider movement”

What’s going on around this? Where is the focus of the movement? The emerging community media movement in relation to the wider global struggle.

Chapter 5 looks at the impact and relationship of International activism to the local level and how voices from below can register at the global level. Material is drawn from a number of visits to CTV organizations abroad as well as from our ongoing engagement with EU networks. This Chapter also represents knowledge that we brought back in various ways to inform our local organizing and to build cohesion in the positions we took in confronting the neo-liberal agenda that opposes the kind of access we were working to enable.

This chapter also builds a chronology of significant international CM organizations such as AMARC, Videazimut, CRIS, OurMedia, PANOS, and WACC, in terms of the development of community media as a worldwide social movement.

Material on International activism is drawn from the reports and experiences of activists who staged a challenge to the 2003 World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) –

WESEIZE and some theoretical work which has been done on this, most notably Gabi Hadl’s 2006 unpublished PhD Thesis ⁵. The nature of their ‘strategic approach’ and the outcomes for activists who define themselves in a range of ways; the hierarchy of media within the movements frame; and the hegemonising activities within the movements are important foci of activist critique at the time.

The chapter then returns to the legislative and regulatory environment and the constraints in Ireland, the positioning of community media within the regulatory framework in Ireland; the range of broadcasting codes and the supports that exist (includes the BCI supports of the S&V scheme, and the T&D). This framework is then looked at in relation to the existing community sector - how the overall regulatory environment ‘fits’ the cultures and activity of a ‘third’ non-profit sector and the challenges this sector faced within a strongly neo-liberal political climate. Material in this section is also drawn from my experience as a community representative to local authority structures and in working to establish a platform for community media within Dublin City – which were integral parts of building for CTV and this research project.

Chapter 6: “Production in the community” - CMN practice as it has been. Movement knowledge produced through expanded case study.

Chapter 6 presents one core extended case study and findings from fieldwork. Case work in this project began with a number of community organisations making community media, and a brief synopsis of these are annexed (see Appendix 4).

⁵ See: *Our Media* (Media by, for and of People) in the Transnational Policy Context, 2006, Reiksmeyken University, Tokyo.
http://homepage.mac.com/ellenycx/.Public/GH_Thesis_Library_Version/Word%20for%20Mac/GHDissfinalTable%20of%20Contents.doc

The study presents CMN's experience of engagement with community groups whose practice is premised on participatory strategies that aim to 'bring people along with them'. The core case study constituted a longitudinal "project within the research project" which, as the research developed, provided more and more a framework for participatory strategies, action, and producing knowledge that could push the CTV project forward. The relationship of CMN and Community Response was historical and therefore is an example of tacit knowledge functioning within and contributing to the developing media project. This provides a constant foil for the other activities and strategies being developed for the DCTV project and at times used as a means to measure their impact. The difficulties encountered also exposed underlying weaknesses, both within CMN and DCTV that had to be faced.

The concentration is on a community's use of media as tools that serve their needs. It is in this practice that we find a very different ethos to mainstream media. It is my contention that it is through the creation of these "alternative" public or "proletarian" spheres that movement knowledge will impact on the facilitation of working class voice. The achievements, difficulties, and the conflicts that emerge within the case study presented here are aspects of the transformative work happening within communities. It is this work that presents key challenges to capitalist mode of production and in so doing also to mainstream capitalist media.

Chapter 7: "Learning process" CMN/DCTV/PAR learning process

Chapter 7 presents findings from the research process and draws on workshops, focus groups, and interviews. The focus is on the development of coalitions in the campaigning done around DCTV and the involvement and participation of community organizations and community media groups in the new channel.

In particular this chapter explores the space that became evident in the course of the research between community development organizations and community media organizations, looking at relationships, expectations, and demands on the two strands of organizations, roles they had to undertake, and their goals.

As the original powerhouse for the campaign, CMN initiated the strategic planning and development and sought to expand the coalition for community television. The organisations’ small community media project was dedicated to provide supports to the development of community television and CMN worked to raise funds for small though significant resources throughout the process, including this research project. It provided significant resources to DCTV up to 2009 and still provides resources to the new representative organisation the Community Television Association (CTA). The role of CMN as a catalyst is in the viewfinder at this point.

CHAPTER 8: “Where to now?” clarifying the self image that emerges and the possibilities community television holds for self-organised working class activity.

Chapter 8 reviews the core thesis – how do we understand our activity? What has community television become in Ireland – how is it emerging? How do we name it? How do community organizations manage to create media that supports their work rather than being (as often is the case) either extra burdens or unachievable goals in terms of time and skill demands; or a distant, remote, entity that is operated by film graduates rather than “by, for, and of the community”; or which ultimately produces films that are broadcast on a channel for ‘someone out there to pick up’. The relationship between the technical organization that provides ‘voice’ and those for whom it claims to provide that ‘voice’ must be rooted in their historical and social realities: this can contain conflict and contradiction.

CMN has developed its own strategy based on this experience and keep this strategy under review.

Is community media a 'unifying frame' for the struggle of the 'voiceless' to gain 'voice'?

What is the 'common' within community media? Where can it be located and can it serve all as a unifying frame?

We need to evaluate how beneficial is the effort to develop a 'unifying frame. This question is considered in reviewing the relationship of the CTA's role as a 'unifying' (consolidating) organisation for community television in Ireland. We need to be clear about the role we play in relation to the licensing process and the state. The interaction of the sector with authorities and elites is also the ground in which the movement tests its strength. The successes and difficulties of this new movement now need to be evaluated as indicative of the problems that line the road ahead. This in itself has implications for the development of community television in Ireland, as well as community media on a global level.

PART 1:

CHAPTER 1 – “Knowledge, access, and power” – Taking back theoretical knowledge for the movements own purpose

1.1 Introduction

1.2 Social Movements and Voice

1.2.1 social movements using media

1.2.2 Media, literacy and people’s movements

1.3 Access and community media

1.3.1 Free Media

1.3.2 What is common about community media?

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1.4.1 Control

1.4.2 The point about stories

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1.5 Developing community media

1.5.1 Dealing with the term

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1.5.4 Perceptions of community media

1.6 Community development (CD) and community media (CM)

1.6.1 Approaches to CD and CM

1.6.2 The problem of definition and preferment of terms

1.6.3 Community and development

1.6.4 How does CD happen and who does it?

1.6.5 Building voice and capacity – communications as a means of production

1.6.6 Civil Society

1.6.7 Community Development as a Social Partner

1.6.8 Community development media – community television

1.1 Introduction – Theorizing social movement and voice

The difficulty of developing and retaining knowledge within the context of self-organised working class activity often means the dislocation of theory from what we are doing. But to read Gramsci is to read theory as reflection on action; this is a principle of Participatory Action Research (PAR) and it not only reverses the theory-methods-findings approach as a linear process but also puts it into a framework of critical questioning around what is happening – where reality is brought to bear in order to question theoretical assumptions.

This chapter is concerned with a number of questions around how social movement and working class voice is theorized:

How do social movements find voice? What media do people’s movements use and why?

What’s common about community media? How does ownership control meaning? What knowledge do we have and what do we need to produce?

How do we see our activity and what are our terms - both to describe our activity and on which we engage with activity?

What is the nature and conditions of practice of community media? How is this seen?

The chapter is also concerned with the context of community development in Ireland which constitutes bottom-up working class activity and which CMN had identified as a key driver of community media. The principles on which this sector operates are therefore important indicators for how community television should organize in order to ensure it can facilitate working class voice.

From this exploration key aspects of community media are established in Chapter 2 and the key research question explored.

1.2 Social Movements and Voice

1.2.1 Social movements using media

1.2.2 Media, literacy and people’s movements

1.2.1. Social movements using media

All people’s movements use media - whether they print newsletters, use popular or community radio, or even simply postcards and posters. This is also well documented by social movement researchers and theorists – notably Sidney Tarrow (1998), Charles Tilly (2004) and Doug McAdam. Benedict Anderson (2006) in his study of nationalism also sees media as a lynch-pin in the creation of nations – in the formation of what he calls “Imagined communities”. From a different field, John Downing’s “Radical Media” (2001) gives a deal of attention to media used in a wide range of historical social movements and revolutionary periods, and Christopher Atton (2002) has examined media that poses ‘alternatives’ to mainstream both in form and content.

The importance of media to social movements is in a movement’s need to communicate horizontally and vertically but, just as communication is inextricable from the formation of a movement itself, the media that the movement utilizes must also be another element of its praxis. Part of our concern is how this operates for the movement.

The claim that community media is a social movement in itself (O’Siochru, 1997) needs to be looked at in terms of how community media establish or give access to ‘voice’ and what

‘voice’ means. Furthermore, if community development is a social movement in itself (Geoghegan, 2000), then we need to establish how the media it uses operates as another element of its praxis. If both community media and community development are social movements in themselves – what is the relationship of the two movements?

Social movements

Charles Tilly (2004) identifies three elements of social movements:

- A sustained, organized public effort making collective claims on target authorities (let us call it a *campaign*);
- Employment of combinations from among the following forms of political action: creation of special-purpose associations and coalitions, public meetings, solemn processions, vigils, rallies, demonstrations, petition drives, statements to and in public media, and pamphleteering (call the variable ensemble of performances the social movement repertoire); and
- Participants’ concerted public representations of WUNC: worthiness, unity, numbers, and commitment on the part of themselves and/ or their constituencies (call them WUNC displays) (pp. 3-4)

Sidney Tarrow put it slightly differently and defines social movements as:

collective challenges, based on common purposes and social solidarities, in sustained interaction with elites, opponents, and authorities. This definition has four empirical properties: collective challenge, common purpose, social solidarity, and sustained interaction. (Tarrow, 1998, pp. 4-5)

The emphasis on ‘claims’, visibility, and ‘sustained interaction’ demands ‘voice’ – the capacity to be heard - and this would lead one to expect that social movements would be at the forefront of the communication rights and community media movements, but this is not what has happened and many activists express frustration that these organisations don’t appear in the campaigns (Gangadharan, 2002). Is there a problem with how we are seeing it?

Alf Nilsen (2009) and Laurence Cox (1998) pose that Marxism is in itself a theory of social movements and found their definitions within the “product of collective and conflictual

human practices” (Cox, 1998, p. 3). Nilsen has posed the following based on the Marxist principle of praxis:

A social movement is the organisation of multiple forms of materially grounded and locally generated skilled activity around a rationality expressed and organised by (would be) hegemonic actors, and against the hegemonic projects articulated by other such actors to change or maintain a dominant structure of entrenched needs and capacities and the social formation in which it inheres, in part or in whole. (Nilsen A. G., 2009, p. 4)

This formulation, Nilsen and Cox argue, puts the generative source of social movements in the activity of *both* dominant and subaltern groups. This allows us see the development of community media as self-organised working class activity that not only operates to meet its own needs – i.e. generating communication within local and proletarian public spheres, *but also* as activity in response to pressures from above – i.e. in response to the activity of media regulation and of global media giants.

However, media activists – and even those who claim community media comprises a social movement - do not all come from the same base. Ó’Siochrú (O’Siochru, 1997) sees the reasons for the activity as people’s dissatisfaction with mainstream media so it would seem that people have an expectation of ‘the media’ in the first place. This concern, then, is about the power of media as a machine and how such a machine can be controlled and changed. Bob McChesney (1999), Hackett (2006), Napoli (2007), rally around a slogan of *media reform* to reclaim the media as ‘Public Interest’ and reinstate the democratic function of media in society (Napoli, 2007). This approach places their initiative in Tarrow’s definition and ‘in sustained interaction with elites’. Gabi Hadl (2007) has identified a number of approaches to media activism and provides a very comprehensive review of the history of media activism since the 1940’s, as she puts it:

The challenge is to get beyond both cold war rigidities and post-modern vagueness. The emerging solutions are in approaches and theories that are less fuzzy and more flexible, in mind-maps of interconnected concepts and approaches, and in collaborations based on recognition of differences in historical and cultural contexts. (p.21)

Hadl puts forward concepts of *MyMedia* and *OurMedia* as frames that contain the diverse kind of media usage on which this discourse focuses. She acknowledges the challenge is to integrate them into democratic theories of communication.

The problem with this approach is that usages of media by people in struggle *arise from* attempts to meet their needs, to assert democracy, and to be heard. It is to these issues and the fields of force they exist within that we must always return and where in fact theory should come from if it is to address the issue of voice. Similarly claims are made that media is being democratized by developing technology but this has yet to be shown to do more than simply individualise media and the limitations of technology in terms of universal access contradict the possibilities for democratization.

The problem with the media reform agenda is that it demands a strong position from which to launch what is in fact an attack on the undemocratic forces that control media. Such action demands power and clout. Noam Chomsky's (1994) analysis of how the media operate put the problem very clearly. His five filters describe the fortress that media is and how it protects the interests that own it:

- Size, ownership, and profit orientation of the mass media: The first filter.
- The advertising license to do business: the second filter
- Sourcing mass media news: the third filter
- Flak and the enforcers: the fourth filter
- Anticommunism as a control mechanism
(Chomsky, *Manufacturing Consent*, 1994)

The media reform movement must be able to address each of these filters. It is not very surprising therefore that this movement is comprised mainly of academics and consultants who already have 'voice' and will be heard by virtue of their position. I do not mean that academics, and 'experts' don't come under attack or experience blocks from within as well as outside their fields, they clearly do (Flicker, 2007) (Fotopoulos, 2008), (Best & McLaren, 2009), but that, by virtue of their knowledge and standing in their field, they can demand attention.

Chomsky’s filters are important because they constitute a set of arenas in which those who operate as ‘media’ operators must engage and these arenas or determinants: – size, ownership; advertising and business; whose news is told (whose knowledge is used to determine actions); who controls the agenda and what structures exist to maintain it; and a common enemy; these could also conceivably be used by ‘media activists’ or indeed community activists as a framework against which community (and other forms of) media are judged. They could be useful to community media activists when trying to self-assess how they tread the line between being a ‘media operator’ and meeting their community’s needs. But to fight in these arenas to reform the media is another matter. ***The need to have an already established position from which one can tackle these filters means this form of activism around dominant media is the province only of an elite.***

Social Movement Media and ‘Getting the message out’ – GTMO

Activists who believe strongly in the right of their cause will go to great lengths to get public attention – this can range from actual direct action aimed at achieving their goal to staging events to get media attention and influence public opinion. Social movements’ use of mainstream media to get their message out has been shown to be a difficult strategy to control and to a large extent a cause of their failures (Gitlin, 1980). The problem for movements in using mainstream media is a good reason for turning to DIY media, but this still leaves the movements with a dilemma – they do not control the means of production. Social movements do not simply want to distribute their information, they want to diffuse their message in society – they want it to spread as a new consciousness and bring about change. **GTMO seen in this way becomes a complex set of relationships between people, their message, and those who control access to the tools: activists; content; form; technology.**

A separation is often made between the need to ‘Get The Message Out’ (GTMO) and an interest in exploring media forms but in reality there can be a distinct correlation and connection between these two things⁶. Similarly there is a connection between committed political activists (who initiate) and enthusiasts (who sustain) a whole range of essential aspects of CM including professionals who engage with issue-based content (ICT Update, 2009). This will include commercial operators who volunteer skills and resources to movement ventures.

All sorts of means have been used by people to GTMO. The reprinting of already published material is something that the current Indymedia.ie collective don’t accept, but it has been done and shown to be effective for struggles⁷. This verifies John Downing’s assertion that that

What might abstractly seem a bland and low-key instance could, in a given context, be wielding a hammer blow at some orthodoxy” (Downing, 2001, p. x) .

Collage of existing material can also transform its meanings and expose societal relationships; political artists have created a tradition in this form, e.g. John Heartfield in the 1940’s; Valle Export, 1977; and Klaus Staeck in the 1980’s.

Satirical art is seen as the prerogative of the artist and the right to produce it is fiercely defended; particularly when attacked if it pillories the powerful. Satire, including

⁶ Recently (May 2009) in a programme made for DCTV, ‘The Sound’, people who had been part of a collective producing a political magazine in the 1970’s called “The Ripening of Time” asserted that they were at one and the same time doing the GTMO and experimenting with the form (<http://vimeo.com/4899546>).

⁷ An old Cumann na mBan member, Miriam James, once told me that access to easy reproduction techniques during the 1950’s IRA campaign allowed Cumann na mBan members to recreate “News” on broadsheets, using items cut out from mainstream newspapers and re-pasting them in order to focus people’s attention on the relationship of events. This resembles a device used by artist Valle Export in her 1977 film “Invisible Adversaries” where an actor uses items from newspapers repositioned and juxtaposed as a means of exposing the ‘uncanny’ connections between events, and as proof of the invasion of the world by an alien species – a metaphor for imperialism that can as well convey the interests of capital within media. The re-use of already formed material is a well known tactic when access to the means of media production is scarce.

scatological humour was prominent in the years immediately preceding the French Revolution when the Monarchy (and Marie Antoinette particularly) was depicted in street puppet shows as consorting indecently with the Finance Minister (Tarrow, 2003, Downing 2001). Mikhail Bakhtin’s understanding of Rabelaisian humour as

deep folk tradition of many, many centuries that addressed hierarchy, power, repression and fear, with mocking laughter” (Downing, 2001)

is something that provokes intense response and censorship – particularly during wartime. This happens at any time when elites are being criticized or falling short. Recently in Ireland satirical portraits of a naked Taoiseach were placed in the National Gallery and the Royal Irish Academy. The event was reported on the RTE evening news (on 23rd March 2010) drawing an outraged response from the Department of the Taoiseach. The heavy handed response came *only* when the incident was reported and the paintings shown on television, not when they were hung in the gallery.

It is the *public* impact of the action that elicits a response from above⁸. This is what has been important to social movements and directs their use of media.

⁸ As one blogger put it:

look at the original report in the Sunday Tribune:

<http://www.tribune.ie/news/home-news/article/2009/mar/22/cowen-hung-out-to-dry-in-national-gallery-hijack/>

“When the prank painting was spotted by security staff, they immediately took it down and brought it to the attention of gallery management. Gardaí from nearby Pearse Street station were called to the scene where they examined the portrait and CCTV footage.

Bemused officers told management, however, that it was unlikely the rogue artist had committed any type of criminal offence.

Ok - so when the thing was reported, the Gardaí said it was “unlikely” that the artist had committed any type of offence. That’s not a definitive statement, but it’s a hell of a long way from the list of charges that were quoted to Today FM, which included, if you recall, indecency and incitement to hatred.

So - where did those charges come from? It seems unlikely that the National Gallery would have thought the paintings indecent or an incitement to hatred. And who were these “powers that be” that the Garda spoke of?

Something doesn’t add up here.

(<http://www.mamanpoulet.com/tipping-point/> posted and accessed Sunday 29th March 2009)

New technologies and opportunities

The lack of regulation or licensing of something that has had no previous existence (and until a new technology is patented there is no copyright on its use or reproduction) mean that new technologies have often been seen to offer opportunities for expression of non-conformist or oppositional viewpoints. Gaps in legislation appear either through lack of information, unforeseen issues, or by knowing design. Such gaps may provide significant opportunities - such as the loopholes in the 18th century English copyright laws that allowed a reprinting industry to develop in Ireland; without this ‘freedom’ printing would have been illegal in Ireland and could have remained a protected English industry and a crucial learning tool would not have been available to support Irish Hedge Schools. The ‘loopholes’ in the Irish 1988 Wireless and Telegraphy Act allowed community radio to be developed as local independent broadcasters. This forged a path that allows better conditions for community broadcasting than in many other countries (later than others but more successful in the precedents it set).

When new technologies have not been fully commodified and controlled by the commercial market or the state they may be available as carriers of information by amateurs, enthusiasts, and people who otherwise would not necessarily have such access in particular those challenging the dominant culture. The radio transmission by the revolutionary forces in the GPO in 1916 is held by some to be in fact the first ever *radio broadcast* in that it was a message transmitted broadly to whoever picked it up on a

What adds up is that the paintings in the galleries didn’t worry the Gardai or officials in the Department of the Taoiseach, but putting the fact of it out on the more generally accessible ‘public media’ two weeks later certainly did - and they moved to suppress that. The problem with this kind of action is that while it may be a shot across the bows or have a blocking effect on censoriousness it doesn’t necessarily add up to much unless it is linked to a popular movement.

receiver (Horgan, 2001), (Mulryan, 1988). Tilly (2004, p. 94) cites the use of radio by a Parish Priest in the US, Father Charles Coughlin in the 1930’s as an example of how social movement organizers used media also demonstrating how a new medium in its early and more loosely regulated shape can be accessed. Tilly shows how this changes as regulation and the control of the media progresses to the point where Todd Gitlin (1980) observes the detrimental effect of interaction with the media on the politics of the Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) in the 1960s.

The history of regulation of technology as it is generally told is almost a record of the relationship of amateur enthusiast activity to business, to public service, and to state control⁹. All radio use is now licensed - even to qualify to use a simple radio transmitter one has to undertake a course and examination which in Ireland is coordinated and delivered by a voluntary organization: the Irish Radio Transmitters Society (IRTS)¹⁰. The traceability of mobile devices also means that sources of transmitted messages can be identified¹¹.

What this means is that it is not a simple matter to transmit content in a way that is undetected, and so unlicensed.

Social movements such as feminism, socialism, national struggles, have used all sorts of media - postcards, posters, film, as a means of disseminating alternative ideas or views. Sojourner Truth, a Black freed slave and civil rights activist, used small calling cards which carried her photograph dressed as a lady of social standing in the manner of portraits of the time. Nell Irvin Painter, Sojourners biographer, says –

⁹ The sinking of the Titanic and both World Wars were catalysts to government controls and ultimately to licensing. Amateur licenses and band access are restricted during wartime.

¹⁰ (see <http://www.irts.ie/cgi/index.cgi> , accessed Sunday 29th March 2009)

¹¹ As a case in point mobile phone traces were admitted as key evidence in a murder conviction in Ireland recently.

by circulating her photographs widely Truth claimed womanhood for a black woman who had been a slave, occupying a space normally off-limits to women like her. She refused to define herself by her enslavement. Seizing on a new technology, Truth established what few nineteenth-century black women were able to prove: that she was present in her time (p. vii; John Downing, *Radical Media*; 2001)

Truth challenged prevailing notions of who should be depicted in what way; in the same way working class women in Dublin by making their own video about the experience of living with Hep C, HIV and AIDs, and putting their images and voices on screen create a challenge to assumptions about who has the right to speak; who is the expert on the kinds of supports that are needed; who should be on screen; what women on screen should look like; and the purpose of media itself. Their purpose is to ‘Get The Message Out’ (GTMO), to draw people’s attention to their issue and to reach others dealing with the same issue. In so doing they also transform themselves from silent victims into active agents of change.

What is added to the content is that they are the producers of their own message – they now control the means of production.

What is clear is that people seek opportunities to use media in ways that they know will reach people and make the points they need to have understood. These ways of using media are often related to: what is currently available, to market innovations, and to where people’s attention is focused (or maybe not focused) on an issue. **Access to such opportunities are subject to controls imposed either by industry itself or by regulation and the need for voice means either reaching the bar or finding a way around it.**

1.2.2 Media, literacy and people’s movements

Early newspapers were instrumental in politicizing people by providing a forum for associations and movements to discuss local issues and the new wave of electronic media

provided increased opportunities for 20th century social movements. But activists did not maintain the early dominance in media content nor did they benefit from the so-called opportunities (Tarrow, 1998). Tilly (2004) also agrees with what most activists on the ground know:

By no means did twentieth century social movements establish dominant or even equal relations with mass media This built in asymmetry meant that activists could rarely count on media coverage, had little control over their portrayal in the media, and usually came away dissatisfied with the media treatment they received. (p.85)

So did dissatisfaction push activists to seek more control over media they used? Tarrow (1998) puts forward the view that literacy was not as important to the rise of social movements as access to and ownership of media in the form of cheap publications. Certainly the Irish Hedge School experience and its dependence on the cheaply produced and available chapbooks would bear this out as would the community media emphasis on community ownership and as does the current use of so-called ‘social media’. But the position that ownership supercedes literacy would also seem to deny the existence and experience of literacy initiatives and community development projects that work as intermediaries in generating the skill to access such media. The modern-day equivalent of cheap publications – the Personal Computer (PC) is still not available worldwide and presents severe challenges to people along with other technologies without which we are ‘illiterates’ in an information society. Top-down solutions to universal access to ITCs has stirred a hornets nest - the slowing down of the progress of the One Laptop Per Child (OLPC) has raised global market, geo-political, environmental, cultural, and regulatory issues. The approaches, technologies, and suitability of the project were critiqued on a world stage and with world market forces at the centre. It seems no accident that the decision to run the laptops with both Open Source and Microsoft operating systems caused

deep rifts in the organisation¹². This movement could not sustain or combine what were philosophically and politically opposed factions.

For Virginia Woolf the cheapness of pen and ink was also twinned with the fact that writing is a quiet “harmless” activity that does not disturb the rest of the family:

when I came to write, there were very few material obstacles in my way. Writing was a reputable and harmless occupation. The family peace was not broken by the scratching of a pen. No demand was made upon the family purse. For ten and sixpence one can buy paper enough to write all the plays of Shakespeare--if one has a mind that way. Pianos and models, Paris, Vienna and Berlin, masters and mistresses, are not needed by a writer. The cheapness of writing paper is, of course, the reason why women have succeeded as writers before they have succeeded in the other professions. Virginia Woolf. 1931. PROFESSIONS FOR WOMEN (A paper read to The Women's Service League. (<http://gutenberg.net.au/ebooks02/0200771.txt>)

But the issue of learning to read and/or to write (since both were not always taught together to the same people); what exactly literacy means; and who has access to education has been hugely contentious throughout history and is still a core issue for social movements. Many working class women will not relate to Woolf's statement let alone much of her writing; that women have often faced family disaffection when they reach out to learn is well documented in all cultures.

The difficulty with all this, as with Tarrow's statement, is that the skills of reading and writing are essential in order to participate in many movements, particularly in organizing, and also in many media (Williams, 2005) and these skills are still not widespread. In Ireland today functional illiteracy is very high. NALA in its review of literacy levels in Ireland in 2007 still quotes the OECD survey conducted in 1995:

¹² http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/One_Laptop_per_Child gives a good breakdown of the project; also see <https://lists.thing.net/pipermail/idc/2007-October/002895.html> for useful critique by Kimberly de Vries focussing on Negropontes neglect of research to deal with providing Internet access for all.

The International Adult Literacy Survey (IALS) (Morgan et al 1997), conducted in 1995, provided Ireland with its first, and to date only, profile of the literacy skills of adults aged 16–64. The survey found that about 25% of the population, or at least 500,000 adults, scored at the lowest level (level 1). That meant they performed, at best, tasks that required the reader to locate a simple piece of information in a text, with no distracting information, when the structure of the text assisted the task. A further 30% of the population was at level 2. Ireland thus had a total of 55% of those aged between 16 and 64 scoring at below the minimum desirable threshold for a Western industrialised nation, as defined by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD 1997). (Bailey I. , Upskilling Ireland: International Workforce Literacy Review: Ireland, 2007)

Add to these difficulties the language of technology and media, the jargon, the ‘alpha-numero’ names applied to cameras, computers, and various machinery¹³, and we have a use of a language within a language that sets the users apart; those who understand and those who do not. People facing the kind of disadvantage described in NALA’s report are very far removed from engaging with technology but so also are those who simply cannot access this language.

Low cost, ease of use, simpler technologies, and not least – popularity - are what make media accessible to poor people. The trend to use media like video as a tool for development in many countries around the world has been particularly driven by such developments (ICT Update, 2009). But uneven development and global inequalities mean that such technologies are still inaccessible to the majority (Panos, 2007). Additionally Industry contrives to separate the domestic from the professional user and create enclosures of workers who have privileged access to technologies that are themselves bounded by regulation and licensing.

¹³ Examples such as KY2000, and the acronyms that may have banal or obscure meanings - like NTSC which stands for ‘National Television Systems Committee’ which tells you nothing about the fact that it refers to a broadcasting technical standard, or PAL which stands for ‘Phase Alternating Line’ an acronym which unless you are privileged in understanding the technology will remain completely mysterious, or the equally obscure but totally fantastical MOTU – ‘Mark of the Unicorn’ as a brand name for audio and video software.

This is how media is classed and people can find themselves in very remote places in relation to these forms of knowledge production (Mitra, 2007) . What then is their relationship to the movement that uses these technologies? Who produces the movement knowledge? How then can we view something called community media?

1.3 Access and community media

1.3.1 Free media

1.3.2 What’s common about community media?

1.3.3 Bars and access - skills and technologies

1.3.1 Free Media

The press of this country is the press of precisely this country. There is nothing more to be said about it. At the same time, however, a free press transcends the limitations of a county’s particularism . . .” (Karl Marx, Rheinische Zeitung, No 128, Supplement. May 8, 1842)

Something called community media is also the media of a community and precisely that community, whether it be geographic or a community of interest.

But what is meant by a free press? In his series of articles on the freedom of the press Marx held that “The primary freedom of the press lies in not being a trade” (Rheinische Zeitung, No. 139 Supplement. May 19 1842). What does this mean?

In order to defend, and even to understand, the freedom of a particular sphere, I must proceed from its essential character and not its external relations. But is the press true to its character, does it act in accordance with the nobility of its nature, *is the press free* which degrades itself to the level of a trade? The writer, of course, must earn in order to be able to live and write, but he must by no means live and write to earn.

The writer does not at all look on his work as a means. *It is an end in itself*, it is so little a means for him himself and for others that, if needs be, he sacrifices *his* existence to *its* existence.

The press is the most generalised way by which individuals can communicate their intellectual being. It knows no respect for persons, but only respect for intelligence. Do you want ability for intellectual communication to be deemed officially by special external signs? What I cannot be for others, I am not and cannot be for myself. If I am not allowed to be a spiritual force for others, then I have no right to be a spiritual force for myself; and do you want to give certain individuals the privilege of being spiritual forces? Just as everyone learns to read and write, so everyone must *have the right* to read and write.

When media is not-for-profit it should be free media in the sense that Marx spoke of it, and in this way it can, to paraphrase - ‘transcend the limitations of its community’s particularism’.

It is the nature and activity of those who own media that renders them un-free. This is what lies at the basis of concerns about the purposes for which media can be used. The confusions that can exist in terms are often behind the need for community media activists to create charters establishing and reasserting principles upon which they see community media operating. An acute example of this going wrong was the use of the so-called ‘peoples radio’ in the 1994 Rwanda genocide (Kellow, 1998).

The development of organisations since the 1980’s such as AMARC, Videazimut, CRIS, The People’s Communication Charter (see Appendix No. 3), are all examples of this drive to create a consensus yet large differences remain precisely because this is where the ground is contested. Still the recent Declaration of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe on Community Media manages to incorporate the capacity of community media to fail to safeguard against oppressive uses of community media with a simple caveat

Aware that while community media can play a positive role for social cohesion and intercultural dialogue, they may also, in certain cases, contribute to social isolation or

intolerance; conscious that to avoid this risk, community media should always respect the essential journalistic values and ethics common to all media. (Declaration:¹⁴)

It is interesting that the antidote to negative aspects of community media should be to tie it to ‘essential journalistic ethics’. The question is who defines this practice? When the media we know and use is owned by commercial entities (and these also define the ethical practice) this clearly includes removing what are seen as ‘awkward’ or ‘embarrassing’ practices and journalists (Allen, 2007). While the overall recognition achieved in the EU is for the good of the development of CM there are some clear difficulties with this as there are with the Committee’s final statement that calls for funding support “while duly taking into account competition aspects”. This last is the justification that was used to block funds to community media in Ireland allowing the Regulator time to provide ample financial supports to the commercial sector¹⁵.

As public services are streamlined including public service broadcasting, we may well ask why the interest in CM and what role do neo-liberal legislators see it playing. Do we have to accept where the market places CM? This would certainly have bothered Karl Marx. We could well ask what the ‘competition aspects’ actually are that these legislators have been concerned about. But how do CM operators see their activity in relation to commercial operators?

Many community radio and television activists assert that their activity is not the same as commercial media; they are not in competition with them and their spheres do not cross (Interview10, Interview 18). Commercial journalists and newspaper editors have told me that they do not see community media as a threat if they are not competing in the same

¹⁴ See on EU website

<https://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?id=1409919&Site=CM&BackColorInternet=9999CC&BackColorIntranet=FFBB55&BackColorLogged=FFAC75>

¹⁵ From a back-dated pot of €24million, €11million had been allocated before any community TV channel could access the fund.

arenas (Kerry CM Research). Specifically they see it as: cheaper and/or free; not so entertaining; it has a closed or ‘niche’ focus; and specifically does not take commercial media’s lifeblood – advertisers. But this is very often contradicted by the way that commercial operators act when asked to support CM, which they will only do on their terms which involve how they see the support affecting their profit returns.

So what is the threat that means community media cannot be funded? Is it the very fact of its indefinable nature that means it can be anything to anybody? Is it the internal dynamic in community media that threatens the controllers of capitalist media? Is it that it may be a distraction from commercially driven media?

The relationship of producer to the owner of production and the relationship to ‘audience’ in community media differ fundamentally to mainstream media.

Commercial media regard advertising as their lifeblood; it sustains their operations, pays their wages, and builds profits. This is accepted fact. What this means is that the audience is the product: - a commercial approach to media sees the delivery of audiences to advertisers as their primary function. Advertising research examines the effect of time spent on adverts on audience size and the fact that longer advertising breaks between programmes reduces audience size has not only been a spur to ever more ‘interesting’ and creative advertising but also to the trend to seek product placement in programmes (Wilbur, 2008) - the Broadcasting Act 2009 in Ireland specifically legislates to allow product placement in programmes¹⁶. The advertiser needs content that people find interesting, and currently seek ‘niche’ marketing to reach particular groups rather than mass audiences; but

¹⁶ Broadcasting Act 2009: Page 41.—(1) A programme broadcast in a broadcasting service may include advertisements inserted in it.

community media does not need advertising to produce content that is of interest to groups of people.

Therefore the nature of interactivity and participation of audience with media is qualitatively different: – the interaction between producer and audience in commercial media is about money - barter; the relationship between the producer and owner of the means of production is also money – wages; the nature of the ‘audience’s participation is one-way - consumerist; the nature of the interaction between owner of the means of production and the producer is conditioned by their relationship as employer and employee.

Much of this is similar in relation to ‘public service broadcasting’ (PSB) except for the PSB relationship to audience that seeks to meet all tastes, to inform, and to be universally accessible. However in Ireland where the PSB – RTE - is a hybrid of commercial and PSB models there is a tension in its relationship to audience since RTE must also sell its audiences to advertisers in order to survive. **So the general understanding of how media operates in Ireland is very much within a commercial framework – there is no other available.** Many critics would say that there is no PSB at all in Ireland (Brown, 2006). The advance of de-regulation in the media sphere is particularly bolstered by the EU Television Without Frontiers (TWF) initiative and the neo-liberal privatization agenda of the strongest media union the TIU.

This intensifying of privatization of media means that governments now need to find other ways to meet the provision of universal service in communications. The streamlining of public service is now accompanied by proposed ‘localism’ where, in Ireland, public-private partnership is the solution to service delivery, as is the Public Interest Company (PIC) in the UK. In this context community broadcasting is being promoted as a form of local media.

1.3.2 What's common about community media?

The term community media (CM) covers diverse communicative activities and community broadcasting is now legislated for in some shape or form in many countries all over the world.

The Council of Europe (2009) statement demonstrates how the term has been subsumed as not only 'acceptable' but 'worthy':

"The Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe...,

Declares its support for community media, with a view to helping them play a positive role for social cohesion and intercultural dialogue, and in this connection:

...

ii. Draws attention to the desirability of allocating to community media, to the extent possible, a sufficient number of frequencies, both in analogue and digital environments, and ensuring that community broadcasting media are not disadvantaged after the transition to the digital environment;

iv. Stresses the desirability of:

a. recognising the social value of community media and examining the possibility of committing funds at national, regional and local level to support the sector, directly and indirectly, while duly taking into account competition aspects;

http://www.coe.int/t/dghl/standardsetting/media/news/CMDec_Community_media_110209_en.asp

The Austrian government this year also funded non-commercial broadcasting to the tune of one million euro per year¹⁷.

¹⁷ From an email sent by Otto Tremetzberger, May 2009: In rough translation: The fund is to promote the non-commercial broadcasting within the Austrian media landscape and its support in the provision of diverse and high-quality programs, which in particular contribute to the promotion of the Austrian Culture, the Austrian and European identity, the information and education of the Austrian population. . . . Non-commercial broadcasters are those that are not profit-oriented, whose program contains no advertising and who provide open access to the public.
http://www.parlament.gv.at/PG/DE/XXIV/I/I_00113/fname_156085.pdf .

All this is welcome, CM needs recognition and funds. This however identifies community media as broadcasting media – so how does this impact on the community media activity that we know?

We have already noted that AMARC has a network of “more than 4,000 community radios, Federations and community media stakeholders in more than 115 countries”

The Global Village CAT website (2003) “Access Television - International overview chart” (see Appendix No. 2) notes over 540 CTV channels in 20 countries. This chart has not been updated since; another page now simply gives links to over 700 community and public access television sites in different countries. Republic of Ireland’s three new CTVs in Cork, Dublin, and Navan, are not recorded on this chart, they can be found on the updated site¹⁸.

The difficulties for small and impoverished groups in using print media has placed the focus on the Internet and the World Wide Web as the current publishing medium for print, photography, and digital media. While this focus obscures the persistent usage of print and ‘small’ media in community communications (O’Donnell, 1997) (Atton, 2002) the growth in use of internet for non-commercial media is most evident in the Indymedia movement; Independent Media Centres (IMCs) number over 150 worldwide¹⁹. Although its base in activist media is wide and loose in its forms, content, and affiliations (Coleman, 2004) and this is similar to community media, Indymedia does not define itself as CM. The key difference is in Indymedia’s origins and the independent media activist’s role in the anti-capitalist actions around the WTO summits in Seattle, Washington in 1999. Indymedia’s base is in activist networks; and rather than having a local focus, it emphasises global networking from below.

¹⁸ <http://www.communitymedia.se/cat/> for updated lists go to <http://www.communitymedia.se/cat/links.htm#holland>

¹⁹ (<http://www.indymedia.org/en/index.shtml>).

Many now put hope in the global networking that the Internet and the Indymedia movement have made possible (Fox-Piven, 2007) (Kidd, 2002). Yet the problems with access to all broadcast media including Internet access are global in nature; access and infrastructure development is uneven so universal access to something like Indymedia is unattainable within the present system that depends on business to make it available.

The definitions of community media that do exist, such as those formulated by AMARC, for example, focus on what these media initiatives have in common rather than explore the differences that exist. The diversity of the many communities (geographical and of interest) and their needs, who create CM is itself a characteristic of CM (as also can be said of Indymedia). The incredibly varied answers to the question posed on AMARC’s website - “what makes a radio station a community radio station?” (see www.amarc.org) also bear witness to this diversity that defies categorisation.

The ‘commonality’ of CM that organisations such as AMARC, Videazimut, Open Channels, etc., emphasise is the benefit to communities in terms of skills, identity, and information. There is also a lot of evidence that the experience of creative involvement that happens in a social activity is a key element of its success²⁰ and is also the draw for so many people to the ‘social media’ sites such as YouTube, FaceBook, etc. This certainly appears to be the “the right to read and write”, but how did those using these sites learn?

²⁰ A participant in a 1996 study of community radio in Ireland said: “It was not just the services provided, but the manner in which they were provided – through direct creative community involvement – that was usually seen as the distinctive and valuable point.” (Evaluation of Community Radio in Ireland: Nexus research commissioned by the IRTC 1996) Some ten years later another participant in a community media research project conducted in Kerry (2005) said: “for community media to work it has to be local, involve lots of people, and be good craic” (Interview with Sharon Browne, community development worker, Tralee, Kerry Community Media Research Project Ó’Siochrú and Gillan, completed in 2006)

1.3.3 Bars and Access - skills and technologies

Tomaselli (1990) rightly pointed out that home video was not the same as community video because the expectations amongst community activists of the media they use, in terms of content, quality of production, and usefulness, are very high. However, the increase in accessible and available technologies and therefore increased media use *has* had a significant impact on community media. Changes in technology over the past few decades, making camera and production equipment cheaper to buy and easier to use, means these media can be used in a direct way by people in a non-professional environment. The increase in ownership of handy-cams, video produced on mobile phones, along with the immediacy of post-production capacity without resource to laboratories or high tech facilities has meant that the home-movie culture has expanded way beyond the popular super8 home-movies of the 60's.

An approach that is gaining ground amongst CM activists highlights “building community through media” (Koning, 2003) and while this can be read to mean that media is used to support the building of community it can also bring about the building of a new ‘media’ community – an identity building between people who are committed to the community media entity. This holds the possibility of building a solidarity network for the community media entity – and even perhaps between different community media entities. This then seems to fit well with the idea of a common terminology – and “community media” as a unifying frame. How then does this growth impact on the community itself?

We need to ask ourselves what is the role of this kind of entity. For example does the new ‘media’ community act as a facilitator or a buffer to the existing communities who seek a voice? Does this community train the existing communities to use the technology and to become familiar with it as they would a language, or is it a new hierarchy of skilled

technicians with which the communities must negotiate for access? Does this break down barriers to access to media or does it raise them? Reviews of CTV channels in the US suggest that common problems emerge precisely along these lines, and that the creation of managerial and producer classes in the local (funded) monopoly model that is the norm in the US has the potential to build privilege and cause rifts. Luckily groups dealing with these issues make their conclusions available - one report recommended that the channel ensure that training was being extended to community activists, that they develop increased use of digital and mobile media, and make more equipment available (Klein & Mollander, 2005).

While many practitioners (Hadl G. , 2007) (Rodriguez, 2001) point to differences between organised community media activity and people's interest in media – for example between sites (My Space, YouTube, Bebo) and the local community television channel – there is now a clear dynamic between CM and all these spaces as we have already noted between media enthusiasts and CM activity.

'Social media' websites particularly testify to the interest in communication amongst young people. These sites are therefore also very attractive to others who wish to GTMO or to outreach to and attract a younger generation including CM producers who also use these sites to publish content. CM groups also have an interest in recruiting those who have developed their media skills through their activity on the sites and are becoming enthusiasts. The involvement of such media enthusiasts in CM initiatives has also raised issues - including differences in intent and purpose. Many CM organisations struggle with these tensions; very often enthusiasts, while well intentioned, want to pursue their own interests and do not necessarily engage in dialogue on CM issues or provide training in a developmental context.

One of the problems with these websites is their commercial activity; as commercial media they turn participants into numbers in their market for advertisers. There is then a question of what exactly is the predominant exchange that is happening on these sites²¹. What is the context in which media messages operate? Commercial invasion of all available space is well documented (Klein N. , 2001) (Williamson, 1978), and its prevalence is one reason why the majority of community media does not carry advertising²².

The emerging interactions between ‘social media’ and community media may help to clarify what is in fact going on. The interaction that happens on these sites is subject to access to the Internet and so subject to access to the tools and the skills. People using these sites have widely divergent intents which may be very different to those developing and using CM initiatives. The interface that this offers may throw light on the reach or the limitations of CM as well as the impact of the individualization of media.

But in all of this apparent access there is a core problems. When the expectation of production quality is high, who has those skills and how do people learn them? A key question then for grassroots organisers is “how will the transference of skills be accomplished?”(Interview3). When ‘social media’ websites are owned by commercial interests – how do we ensure that open access is maintained?

²¹ It’s not new – a local advertiser (paper) in my area uses a patch- ranging from 3 to 4 inches square - for informative articles surrounded by a wallpaper of adverts. On 4 out of 8 pages in a current issue these ‘inserts’ contain pretty basic statements on elections, citizens information such as early childcare supplement, medical cards, and the 2009 social welfare bill.

²² Notably the capacity to carry advertising is regulated in Ireland – community media are allowed 6 minutes advertising per hour of broadcasting time as opposed to 10 minutes per hour for other broadcasters. This of course has also been augmented by the permitting of product placement, thus extending the advertising capacity beyond the 15%. Appendix No 11 BCI Television Policy.

1. 3.4 Common conditions

Communication needs drive people to adopt and use available media forms even if these mean learning new languages²³. Mainstream media are controlled by the dominant and most powerful groups in society, therefore establishing communally owned/held resources that provide access to media is symptomatic of some form of opposition to

“the general direction imposed on social life by the dominant fundamental group”

(Gramsci A. , *The Intellectuals*, 1998, p. 12).

Demands for resources are often unsustainable and similarly to social movements, the emphasis on organisation building can mean that people needing voice are abandoned, rather than the organisation bringing them along with it as it grows (Fox-Piven F. &, 1979).

Movements from above and movements from below use media – but movements from below cannot use media in the same way. Firstly because dominant media is tied to resource-heavy methods, techniques etc., that demand capital and so it is profit motivated and ultimately dependent on advertising. But more importantly, this is so because the methods, techniques etc, that a movement from below uses must be a means to meet the movements needs. This is the basis for current media practices such as participatory video (ICT Update, 2009).

The media reform movement (Napoli, 2007) operates from necessity within an academic/consultant base and while it constitutes a challenge to dominant capitalist control of media, it cannot meet the needs of poor people for voice.

²³ This has been evident historically and globally; an Irish instance is the work of Hedge Schools.

Community media entails, in fact is entrenched in particularisms, but it can attain universality through the freedom it allows through its particular quality of facilitating the making of connections between diverse peoples in their struggles. It also has the potential for those developing such a resource to engage with others developing similar resources in other places.

Up to the mid 1990's CM activity in Ireland whilst being a part of social organising and the activity of the subaltern group of the time was disconnected, sporadic, and in the main dependent on a skilled, specialist, or enthusiast core group²⁴. Developments in the mid 1990's, the formation of the Community Radio Forum (now CRAOL), the simultaneous development of CMN, and subsequently Indymedia.ie has supported the development of coalitions between a wider range of groups. This would seem to assert a profile of CM entities that is volunteer-led in its structures and its content. These examples are explored further in Chapter 3.

Community media as it has emerged has emphasised ownership and voluntarism as key elements in facilitating collective action to establish media initiatives that are produced 'in common' as part of working class self-organised activity.

²⁴ See Chapter 3 – Movement Precedents

1.4 Control and meaning

1.4.1 Control

1.4.2 The point about stories

1.4.3 Good sense and transforming experience

1.4.4 Form and content in CM

1.4.5 Looking at our problem in making community television

1.4.1 Control

In 1990 Kim Goldberg wrote in her book “The Barefoot Channel: community television as a tool for social change”:

Control. This is the very essence of community access television. And it is the one feature that sets this communications tool apart from all our other media. Community television is user-defined. Those who receive it can also create it. The concept is truly revolutionary. And yet, in spite of community televisions ubiquity and tonnage of programming, no revolution has occurred. In fact, just the opposite. The medium has, in most cases, slipped into that well-worn groove of “safe” programming carved out by commercial broadcast television. Campbell River aside, activists working for social change seldom use the community channel these days. Why? And if activists aren’t using the channel, who is? And in what way? (1990, p. p.3)

Goldberg’s view at that time was that despite what appears on the screen, direct citizen control of a popular communications system is one of the most radical challenges to society’s power structures. But the questions she asked in 1990 are still being asked today – as recently as 2006, Ellie Rennie in her book ‘Community Media: a Global Introduction’ noted the de-radicalisation of community media as an ongoing problem.

Usually the purpose of developing theory has to do with finding models that can be replicated or at least can be useful in other similar situations. The main difficulty with developing theory in community media is seen as the very diversity of the field, so the literature is rich with case studies but little theoretical development (Downing, 2001), (Jankowski n. &, 2002), (Rennie, 2006), (Rodriguez, 2001). The researchers and theorists who do engage with this area tend to do so within a media studies paradigm and complain that the discipline ignores ‘alternative’ media. Day (2003) points out that the most recent book on the history of media in Ireland ignores the existence of community radio. Yet I would contend that this is hardly surprising. **Viewed from a media perspective community media is a marginalized and fairly ineffectual off-shoot of mainstream media. From this perspective it is only made visible at all by virtue of it ‘looking like’ dominant media forms. The point and purpose of community media is totally out of sight.**

1.4.2 The point about stories

Jack Byrne, an Irish community radio activist since the 1970’s wrote a handbook for community media activists launched in 1997. A key concern for Byrne is how myths are made and how they determine and dominate our worldview –

their continued use ensures that they serve as guides of the individual and as stays of the social order” (Byrne, 2006, p. 25)

Similarly George Gerbner, a Professor of Communications, begins his argument seeking support for the People’s Communication Charter with:

Most of what we know, or think we know, we have never personally experienced. We live in a world erected by stories. Stories socialise us into roles of gender, age, class, vocation, and lifestyle, and offer models of conformity or targets for rebellion. They weave the seamless web of our cultural environment.” (Gerbner, 1999)

Gerbner identifies the function of stories as being threefold:

to reveal how things work, to describe what things are, and to tell us what to do about them. (1999, p. 130)

In particular Byrne and Gerbner wish to alert a sleeping public to the dangers that exist when the stories that “*erect our world*” only operate in the third aspect – to tell us what to do, which in terms of media is mainly to tell us to buy things - as advertising does. They point out that this has more far-reaching implications when placed in the context of an increased tendency towards monopolisation, homogenisation, and globalisation.

But the point about stories is ***why and how they are made in the context in which the humans who make and reproduce them act out their lives.*** Robbie Byrne, a community activist in the working class area of Dublin known as The Liberties sees the telling of stories as vitally important:

In a lot of poorer countries, I know people who would tell you that if people don't tell their own stories then they don't move on, whatever that story is (Interview3)

This is also about power – not only the power of stories themselves, but the power of those who *can* create, reproduce, and disseminate them as well as the power of those who ‘get the message’ and who can then act on it. As Byrne and Gerbner have shown stories tell us ‘who we are, where we have come from and where we are going’. But we need to place ourselves in all of this - who is the ‘we’ in question? This is only one of many questions - if the story told is the wrong one for ‘us’, how does that impact on ‘us’? If a different story needs to be told then how is it told? Where is it told, by whom, to whom?

Jack Byrne proposes that we make our own stories in CM and that we discriminate between fact and myth. How is this done? Those who produce the narrative tend to control the meanings and so define what is fact. For example those who established what they called “community television” under deflector licenses in Ireland have perpetrated a myth that community television is something that simply relays mainstream stations, that it

is owned by a for profit company that provides a service to a community at a cost. Here the media is understood as a “container” that supplies the “content”/ information/ data or even “knowledge”. The hi-jack of the term ‘community television’ in this way also meant that when we formed an association to represent community television in 2007 we were then unable to name our legal entity the Community Television Association²⁵.

Nevertheless, deflector pirates mobilized to build masts on top of mountains and bring a service to people on the same basis as it was delivered in the rest of the country and would see their effort as ‘community’ and oppositional, based on a perceived grievance and inequality. However the importance of content is that it is the communication that needs to happen - and this is what a community channel must carry.

If, as Robbie Byrne says, the story people need to tell is about the reality they deal with, then we all must begin with our experience and what we know.

1.4.3 Good sense and transforming experience

How we can take that “step outside of ourselves” in order to look at the process of our own formation as social beings and to begin to understand and then transform it? How do we develop the new story – or the knowledge – that helps us deal with our reality? Where do we find it? How do we begin to engage with our social reality? How do we create new conditions that do not replicate the problems of the old?

²⁵ We use the name, but legal advice suggested “Community Content Television Association” as the legal name since we could not represent the interests of the deflector companies who had already named themselves community television. This could conceivably been prevented had we been quick enough – resources again!

Karl Marx (1973) began his Grundrisse with a critique of the 18th century concept of individualism within 'civil society' that posed 'social connectedness' as external to the individual –

The human being is in the most literal sense a political animal, not merely a gregarious animal, but an animal which can individuate itself only in the midst of society. Production by an isolated individual outside society – a rare exception which may well occur when a civilized person in whom the social forces are already dynamically present is cast by accident into the wilderness – is as much of an absurdity as is the development of language without individuals living together and talking to each other." P.84 Grundrisse (Marx K. , 1973)

He goes on to say that:

Whenever we speak of production, then, what is meant is always production at a definite stage of social development – production by social individuals.P.85

This locates the person in relation to society; what we produce and how we produce it is defined by the development of our society and also by our interaction with others. But the dynamic within these relationships are *"always the direct relationship of the owners of the conditions of production to the direct producers"*.

Antonio Gramsci (1998) moved away from the positivistic and, as he identifies it, "fatalistic" notion that the economy and the internal contradictions of capitalism are the sole agents or forces that determine change. Gramsci further opened up ideas of agency underlining the importance of the process by which any collective consciousness can be developed:

every revolution has been preceded by a long process of intense critical activity, of new cultural insight and the spread of ideas through groups of men initially resistant to them, wrapped up in the process of solving their own, immediate economic and political problems, and lacking any bonds of solidarity." (Gramsci, 1916)

For Gramsci, it is people who grasp the opportunity for change and thus are the agency that force it; culture is that which people form and which in turn forms them in their interaction with one another:

And this true Marxist thought has always identified as the most important factor in history not crude, economic facts, but rather men themselves, and the societies they create, as they learn to live with one another and understand one another; as, out of these contacts (civilization) they forge a social, collective will; as they come to understand economic facts, and to assess them, and to control them with their will, until this collective will becomes the driving force of the economy, the force which shapes reality itself, so that objective reality becomes a living breathing force, like a current of molten lava, which can be channeled wherever and however the will directs." (Gramsci, 1917)

In "*the normal course of events*" within the historical process of capitalism people develop political consciousness in collective struggle against their exploitation. Gramsci was interested at the time in the 'galvanization' of the people's will in Russia, the imperative for the Bolsheviks revolution and the incentive for proletarian support. Gramsci emphasised the need to build understandings so that when these extraordinary moments occur people may be able to seize opportunities appearing in the crisis. **But for this to happen there must be not only the capacity to recognise and take on the opportunity, but also the building of solidarity between many groups of people who have been, as Gramsci put it in the quote above, initially resistant to the ideas of socialism and 'wrapped up' in their own issues and problems. In other words we have to bring people with us.**

Learning and Education

Gramsci's interest in how people take up particular ideas led him to a view of education as having an emancipatory function that gives people the

higher awareness through which we can come to understand our value and place within history, our proper function in life, our rights and duties" (Gramsci, 1916, p. 9)

He emphasized the importance of education for the working class and sought to establish means to encourage critical thinking. As did Marx, Gramsci saw control of the means of intellectual production essential to movement building, his involvement from the start with

the publication *L'Ordine Nuovo*²⁶ as a means of production of the ideology of the Factory Councils is an original community media activity. He tells why the review worked and its value to the Turin Factory workers:

The workers loved *L'Ordine Nuovo* (and we can assert this with heartfelt satisfaction). And why did the workers love *L'Ordine Nuovo*? Because in the articles of the paper they found something of themselves, the best part of themselves....Because the articles of *L'Ordine Nuovo* were not cold, intellectual artifacts, but something that sprang from our discussions with the best of workers; they built on the actual feelings, desires and passions of the Turin working class.” (Gramsci, *The Programme of L'Ordine Nuovo*, 1920, p. 181)

L'Ordine Nuovo was initially the paper of the Turin Communist Party but disgusted with the “absence of any concrete programme” or any central idea for the review, Gramsci together with his comrade Togliatti, staged a take-over in order to create the means for the factory worker’s voice.

The struggle for the control of the review in the workers interest is one that is close to many struggles for a community’s voice. Very often instead of the activists finding their voice, what happens is precisely what Gramsci and his colleagues fought off; his criticism is clear:

What did Comrade Tasca mean by ‘culture’ – what did he mean in real terms, I am saying, not in any abstract sense? This is what comrade Tasca meant by ‘culture’ he meant ‘reminding’ rather than ‘thinking’ – and reminding us of the tiredest, most threadbare debris of working-class thought. (1920, p. 180)

The purpose of the review for Gramsci was as a means for Turin Factory workers to engage with their lived realities. Gramsci’s thinking therefore occupies a central place in any theoretical framework that can be developed for community media activists. In *The Programme of L'Ordine Nuovo* it is clear that the paper is understood to be the voice of the Factory Councils, as a means for the factory workers in Turin who ‘participate as

²⁶ ‘the new order’

producers’. Now this had a very specific meaning for Gramsci since it involved a conception of the Factory Councils as controlling the industrial process and placing that control back into the workers hands²⁷. The Turin Fiat workers were a highly skilled and well paid sector of the working class in Turin, in the midst of a struggle where trade unions had become what Gramsci calls private organisations – where a person joined by signing a contract. The worker’s relation to the Factory Council was completely different, conceived as

the same way in which the citizen participates in the parliamentary democratic state
(p.182)

which Gramsci calls ‘public’. It is direct and unmediated democratic power. This is the power of the producer, and it is the sort of power that community media activists sought to establish in community media organisations – the slogan ‘media of the people, for the people and by the people’ echoes throughout the literature. So why and when does community media become de-radicalised? Did it start as radical or was the idea and the reality so disparate as to make it impossible? Is it the demands of organising, the need for resources (Fox-Piven F. &, 1979), or the differences between groups using it that are at the source of the problem?

One way of approaching this is by looking at who is doing the activity and what the activity is about. Gramsci’s understanding of the formation of the intellectual provides a way of identifying how the working class can control the means of intellectual production. This is probably the most important contribution to a theory of building a force that has the necessary skills and attributes to ensure the class has

homogeneity and an awareness of its own function not only in the economic but also in the social and political fields. (Gramsci A. , The Intellectuals, 1998, p. 5)

²⁷ It does bear relating to the current and disputes in Ireland of which TEAM Aer Lingus and Waterford Glass are just two examples.

Gramsci's idea of the organic intellectual as opposed to the traditional intellectual - mainly priests, teachers, men of letters (artists, philosophers, and journalists) - is key to this process. Organic intellectuals are involved

in active participation in practical life, as constructor, organizer, "permanent persuader" and not just a simple orator" (p.10).

The importance of this contribution is in how Gramsci then locates these intellectuals in a fluid and interactive social framework:

What we can do, for the moment, is to fix two major superstructural "levels": the one that can be called "civil society", that is the ensemble of organisms commonly called "private", and that of "political society" or "the State". These two levels correspond on the one hand to the function of "hegemony" which the dominant group exercises throughout society and on the other hand to that of "direct domination" or command exercised through the state and "jurisdictional" government. (p.12)

Gramsci identifies two functions of social hegemony firstly that of "spontaneous" consent of the masses to the general direction imposed by the dominant group and secondly the apparatus of state power that enforces discipline in the absence of such consent. Central to counter-hegemonic struggle is

the distinction between intellectuals as an organic category of every fundamental social group and intellectuals as a traditional category (p.15).

For Gramsci, the political party is the means to produce organic intellectuals. As such the party serves an important role for civil society since these intellectuals are directive (or 'dirigente') in the operation of counter-hegemony to the dominant group. Gramsci's idea of counter-hegemony is one that is counterposed to the hegemony of capitalism, it is itself hegemony and the work of the organic intellectuals is also the forming of that "spontaneous consent" within the party, factory workers unions etc.

While this fits well with the building of a class counter force to capitalist exploitation, it appears to sit uncomfortably with the celebration of individual creativity espoused by Tom Paine, the importance that Bakunin places in human diversity to the building of solidarity, and the diversity that is celebrated in community media. Gramsci tried to synthesise this

kind of contradiction particularly through the idea that intellectual activity must come from the heart of the working class experience. This meant the development of the organic intellectual and for this self development and education was a crucial element of the strategy.

Gramsci understood that the discovery of the self is fundamental to the ability of the working class to counter established hegemonies and it is key to his concept of the role of education:

to know oneself better through learning about others, and to know others by learning about oneself (Socialism and Culture; Pre-prison Writings; 1994, p.12)

Gramsci saw the party, which he accepted could be a small grouping, as the vehicle of emancipation for all workers and discipline and adherence to the party line from members was essential. Self-development though was necessary for all workers whether or not they were party members. He saw a disciplined basis as crucial to developing both the personality and the intellectual in the learner and this underpinned his ideas on education. But he was also adamantly opposed to any attitude that could be perceived as patronising towards learners. His passionate rejection of cold intellectualism, ‘encyclopaedic knowledge’ and the need to locate learning within people’s understanding of their own realities and aspirations – as did the articles of *L’Ordine Nuovo*, links his thinking to that of Paulo Freire and to community educators (Mayo P. , 1999).

The idea that the construction of individuals as totally determined by society may be disrupted by their own critical review of their experience is one that underpinned the new social movements of the 60’s and early 70’s which had a significant impact on the kind of thinking that was produced by later post-structuralists and post-modernists. The possibility of individuals constructing their own reality, turning things around and exploring the

possibility for the transformation of the conditions in which they live is a reversion of power structures – i.e. revolutionary. The understanding of the social construction of the self therefore is key to this reversal²⁸. Consciousness-raising is both a method and a methodology in which the emphasis is on the personal as political (Hanisch, 1970)²⁹ situating power to create change in the human being itself. Postmodernism’s significant contribution was to bring a critical questioning of the ‘realities’ defined by powerful authorities, hence exposing hegemonies; how power operates is interrogated by refuting and re-situating the basis of these suppositions and the authority of scientific positivistic knowledge.

Post modernist ideas have been hotly contested, but the extra impetus they gave to the capacity of individuals to initiate change has impacted on the understandings within the academy of peoples as agents; how we view our place in the world and our capacity to see ourselves as being in control of our lives. Postmodernists also formulated a view of reality that is forever fragmenting, mutating, and echoing self-referentialism. For poor people the latter could well be self annihilation if it reproduces and creates an image solely of the victimhood and despair of poverty, powerlessness, and couches all references within the self – poor people become responsible for their situation. But the ability to question the supposed basis of power in the structures in which we live is the difference that enables survival and the ability to propose (if not to effect) change.

People act together to challenge or defy the status quo only in infrequent and extraordinary moments (Fox-Piven F. &, 1979), (Cox, 1998), (Barker, 2002) but in these moments they often rely on some form of legitimation, which will be supplied by stories

²⁸ and in the extreme it is represented for example by Foucault’s intention to re-invent himself through writing.

²⁹ Hanisch, Carol, 1969 <http://scholar.alexanderstreet.com/pages/viewpage.action?pageId=2259> accessed April 15th 2009

(myths), prior rights that are being removed, and traditions (Thompson, 1993). If something like an ability to tell one’s story is so vital to how we can deal with our reality, then we need to look at how people are enabled to do this, and what part this plays in such movements.

To be able to re-organise our perceptions so that our personal relation to social structures becomes the primary lens through which we view the world has particular importance for those involved in struggle, but also in informal learning. I include in this those who need to learn something – and I mean anything - in order to deal with their social reality. If people cannot move forward, or if they even face suffering and deprivation as a consequence of not being able to do a certain thing then it assumes great importance. To be able to organize our view of the world in this way means that we have a clear position from which the ‘myths’ that maintain those in control of intellectual production can be de-constructed and challenged.

This is similar to Gramsci ‘good sense’ which he distinguishes from ‘common sense’ - or myths we have learned that may generally be understood to be true. Cox and Nilsen (2005) explored the meaning of the difference as it applies to the interaction of social movements both from above and from below and the intensification of

capitalism’s constant shaking-up and resettling of everyday routines and language³⁰.

This constant ‘resettling’ points to the necessity for a problem solving approach and a readiness to take on new and essential skills. If this learning is to be accessible to those whose interests and survival are ‘left outside’ society, then it must happen outside of mainstream and regulated situations which have already either excluded or failed them.

³⁰ (<http://eprints.nuim.ie/460/>).

"When old institutions fail; people invent" (Wainwright H. , 2003, p. 20);

The capacity to invent is key to survival and the need to know what enables peoples inventiveness - 'how' people manage to again address old problems that have been left unsolved - is what drives a lot of research. It is also behind a huge amount of community media research that seeks to discover theory through the empirical, through the rich array of case studies that populate the literature. But what practice, what experience, provides the theory? The difficulty community media practitioners report is that this diversity of practice defies efforts to find a theory for community media. To make matters worse, it is this very diversity that is understood to be one of its most core and most valuable characteristics so finding models, or blueprints, is next nigh impossible. Where do we look for help in this?

Wainwright goes back to Tom Paine's assertion of the essential contribution that human creativity makes to the struggle for social justice:

It appears to general observation, that revolutions create genius and talent; but those events do no more than bring them forward. There is existing in man, a mass of sense lying in a dormant state, and which unless something excites it to action, will descend with him, in that condition, to the grave. As it is to the advantage of society that the whole of its facilities should be employed, the construction of government ought to be such as to bring forward, by quiet and regular operation, all that capacity which never fails to appear in revolution. (2003, p. 1)

Colin Ward in his effort to assert that social organizing is an ongoing function of human beings, reminds us of Bakunin's vision of how society can be reconstructed by the

free federation of workers associations liberated from the yoke of the state (1988, p. 19)

It's worth noting here Bakunin's defense of diversity as a necessary asset of humankind:

This is a proverbial truth which will probably never cease to be true - that no tree ever brings forth two leaves that are exactly identical. How much more will this be true of men, men being much more complicated creatures than leaves. But such diversity, far from constituting an affliction is, as the German philosopher Feuerbach has forcefully noted, one of the assets of mankind. Thanks to it, the human race is a collective whole wherein each human being complements the rest and has need of them; so that this infinite variation in human beings is the very cause and chief basis of their solidarity - an important argument in

favour of equality. (Bakunin, 1869) (accessed on 30th March 2009 at <http://flag.blackened.net/daver/anarchism/bakunin/egalite2.html>)

If we embrace the diversity and variation as key to the communication that is necessary, we may find the basis for mutual dependency and solidarity that allows humans survive.

But how can we approach this?

CM activists have produced their own approach to this activity in charters and statements that describe common characteristics of their activity. Topping the list of characteristics in the AMARC charter is that community radio stations:

1. promote the right to communicate, assist the free flow of information and opinions, encourage creative expression and contribute to the democratic process and a pluralist society;” (AMARC Charter)³¹

We need to look at community media as *free media* that are part of the expression, as Karl Marx saw it, of the spirit of human creativity and resourcefulness. We also need to look at the need to find ‘models’ and ‘blueprints’ and understand what it is and why we are doing it. What is it that we need such models or blueprints for? Is a community media entity a ‘thing’ like a broadcasting station, a media centre - or a legal entity such as company, a business? Or is it a framework for a particular kind of activity, a way of organizing our communication? And what is our objective when we engage in this activity – what drives us?

When Wainwright asks

under what conditions does ‘the mass of sense’ which comes forward in moments of intense resistance, become the basis of lasting institutions?” (2003, p. 28)

I understand her to be approaching the question of the consciousness of the ‘class-for-itself’ in terms of ‘how’, not simply the ‘what’.

³¹ See Appendix No 6 Charters

What people know and what tacit knowledge they bring to new situations, the ‘stores of knowledge’ available to them are valuable resources because the knowledge and technology that people already have access to – no matter what it is – is usually the bedrock for what and how they invent. And this tacit knowledge will also direct very forcefully how they go about it. **‘Models’ and ‘Blueprints’ that are proposed need to ‘fit’ with a whole range of aspects of the ways people organize their lives and their society if they are to be of any use. Since we need to constantly deal with**

“capitalism’s constant shaking-up and resettling of everyday routines and language”

such attempts to establish models must particularly fit with how people learn and encompass dealing with change.

Learning Cultures

How people learn and what knowledge is valued differs greatly from one context to another; forms and styles of transfer of knowledge and skills are organised in our society according to specialisms and classed. Ways of transferring knowledge are usually acknowledged and approved so that in the mainstream if you get your credentials then you can move on into another class. Other ways of sharing knowledge are informal, though may still be classed - the self-taught may or may not progress in whatever field, in whatever class. The question is how do they learn and what is useful to them in their quest? While people may be engaged in similar learning pursuits they may be on quite dissimilar quests: wanting to get a job and better pay; wanting to know how to do things; wanting to understand the world they live in or to change it; and maybe interested in a number of these goals at the same time (Russo & Linkon, 2005).

Those facilitating education or learning that takes place outside mainstream institutions often rely on the fact that informal learning happens and that motivations are various. The possibilities are evident in the fact that parents teach children who play and then share with friends; exploration provides information and knowledge; practice develops skills; peers communicate through what they know; and people are driven to learn by necessity – or as Wainwright has put it ‘when old institutions fail’.

In 2000, Sugata Mitra published findings from research using a computer that observed New Delhi street children interacting with a computer placed in the wall. Mitra’s work is dedicated to convincing authorities to place educational resources in resource poor locations, focusing on alternatives to formal primary education, and tapping into ways of learning that operate outside classrooms³². BusinessWeek magazine immediately did an in-depth interview on-line, demonstrating the interest of capitalist industry in learning programmes that may address their labour needs (Judge, 2000). Business interests have also demonstrated their capacity to influence a range of sectors in their interest including education, (Klein N. , 2001) local government, (Fox-Piven F. , Challenging Authority: How Ordinary People Cange America, 2006), and health (Pollock, 2006).

Capitalism will use whatever anti-capitalist forces produce that is useful to them, it will appropriate the language of emancipation and commodify tools that were designed to be used freely for democratic purposes. In 2008 Indymedia groups blocked an IMC proposal for funding from a major corporate; one of the reasons given was precisely that the work of activists would be used by the corporate world:

³² I noted this on the basis of a report I read in 2000, the movie “Slumdog Millionaire” based on a book inspired by Mitra’s work, was released in January 2009 and won a golden globe award. Media channel carried a feature on the origins of the movie based on Sugata Mitra’s research. Media Channel’s article is notably uncritical of the process.

As one IMC volunteer put it, "in my humble opinion, the Knight Foundation competition is not just *a competition* by *a foundation*; it is a competition intentionally designed by one of the biggest DEpendent media companies in the USA with the main management goal of developing 'Manufacturing of Consent 2.0'." (Media Alliance, 2008)

How do people who 'needs must' invent ensure that they invent in their own interest and for their own liberation? That their development does not become appropriated to further entrap them in a spiraling problem from which they can't escape? These questions are also important for a theoretical framework for community media, and we need to address these in terms of how we organize.

Wainwright in 2003 was writing about how people across the world were inventing new forms of democratic organising that leave behind the 'old institutions' of mainstream left parties that failed to stem the growth of neo-liberalism and the dominance of corporate finance as a global power. She describes movements in five continents, including mass democratic actions such as the *orcamento partivipativo* (participatory budget) of Brazil's *Partido dos Trabalhadores* (Workers Party), and the activities of the Exodus movement in Luton, UK (Wainwright H. , 2003). All these movements were generating long-term strategies created by action based in a new form of democracy. Despite the difficulties that were all too evident even then - the pressures on Lula in Brazil; the power of the IMF to distort movements such as the ANC and force them to pull back and dis-empower the civics that had been the basis of the struggle and the new government - Wainwright sees a new impetus to take back control. Taking from the creative practice she encountered in her research she proposes:

- "new departures" - specifically "bargaining power" for democracy;
- "political follow through" that will allow people's power to challenge "out-of control elites" through participatory democracy; and

- a new form of political party that “nourishes the power and consciousness of independent movements and initiatives”.

This certainly moves things forward although the metaphor of jazz –

. . . an underlying structure with which everyone is familiar, and then improvisation whose character is impossible to predict or orchestrate. Such jazz also depends on strong personal bonds and a generosity of spirit. (p.200)

exposes the weaknesses in that hegemonising activities within social movements can and do distort and dis-empower the ‘underlying structure’ or even re-assert a structure that is all too familiar. This problem exposes the need for *ongoing struggle* to maintain the connection with those

changes that people are bringing about through organising and resisting in their own daily lives. (Wainwright, Reclaim the state: Experiments in Popular Democracy, 2003, p. p.199)

But power to change things is not located solely in individuals but in people acting collectively (Fox-Piven F. , 2007) – dominant modes are through institutions and organisations and therefore those who hold power are often those in charge of institutions where resources are concentrated. RM Theorists see the release of resources as key to movement success, but accessing and maintaining resources is often what causes movements to fail and is in fact what undermines the effectiveness of the movement and separates them from the base:

In effect, external resources became a substitute for a mass base
(Fox-Piven F. &. , 1979, p. 331)

So how do people gain power without depending on these resources? Theories of how people work together through networks have tended to overlook issues of class (Castells, 2000 (2nd ed)) and while Wainwright emphasizes “strong personal bonds and a generosity

of spirit” these must also be forged within the context of the structural inequalities in our society.

What is useful in Wainwright’s overall analysis is her focus on the power that people can gain through mobilising on the basis of their own knowledge **and** developing this knowledge through engagement in democratic processes within collective action. Her (1994) exploration of the contribution to the rise of the ‘free-market’ made by Frederick Hayek’s theories of knowledge that closely resembled many of the ideas of radical left and social movement activists exposes the importance of how knowledge is produced. It goes some way to answering Carol Hanisch’s 1969 challenge

we should figure out why many women don’t want to do action
(<http://scholar.alexanderstreet.com/pages/viewpage.action?pageId=2259>)

It is also a step towards facing up to how and why left politics failed people; how and why people turned to Thatcherite politics in the UK and right wing solutions in Eastern Europe despite the evidence that these policies could only wreak more havoc. Wainwright says:

In circumstances where professional politicians across the political spectrum failed, this dimension entrenches the importance of democratic civic organisations, in workplace, community and international affairs, as means through which practical knowledge is socialized, theoretical understanding is scrutinized and partially knowing, collective agents of change are forged. (Wainwright h. , 1994, p. 5)

The emphasis is here on the importance of the *democratic organization*, what it communally produces in terms of knowledge, and the power of this knowledge production as a process that brings about change.

Frances Fox-Piven (2007) in “An Expanded Theory of Power” argues that for every source of power there is also the issue of compliance of the subordinate which is a dynamic of social relations. An understanding of movement dynamics in this way underlines the importance of recognizing that social movements are also movements of the powerful and dominant forces, that there is movement from above as well as movement from below (Nilsen A. G.,

2009) (Cox, 1998). These forces also have their own internal contradictions – an ongoing dialectic which is further underpinned by hegemony theory as posited by Gramsci. The premise on which people act – i.e. what makes sense – is knowledge that is either propagated and received or gained through hard experience. Gramsci’s elaboration of Marx’s understanding of working class knowledge – common sense – asserts that getting to the ‘good sense’ at the kernel of the ‘common sense’ of people’s experience is the key to the necessary development. This also encompasses tacit knowledge the working class hold concerning their situation.

Packaging knowledge

Within capitalism, the working class must spend most of their time working; ways of learning that do not demand a lot of time are necessary and important, and no less to their bosses. Working class people have difficulty engaging not only with full time education beyond second and into third level, but also with any adult education courses that demand more than what is needed to get the paper that will increase their wages (Russo & Linkon, 2005)³³. The exclusive nature of the educational system, particularly in the poor provision of primary facilities has also been well documented from national to international levels (Bailey I. , 2007). The issue is propounded to such an extent that a project website produced by collaboration between the Netherlands and Nicaragua (2004) could state:

The World Development Report 2000/2001 indicates that the *biggest problem of poverty, besides the lack of food, is the lack of power directly related to a lack of knowledge*. Worldwide almost 1 billion people lack a basic skill to acquire knowledge: they are illiterate. They are illiterate because they have had no primary education or because the quality of their primary education was too low.³⁴ (emphasis my own)

Statistics of poverty in Ireland are also depressing; Trutz Haase’s (2005) work for the Combat Poverty Agency shows “virtually no differences in the distribution of relative

³³ John Russo’s Working Class studies website is an extremely useful resource
<http://workingclassstudies.wordpress.com/>

³⁴ <http://www.teachersfirst.nl/Teaching/TheImportanceofBasicEducation/tabid/235/Default.aspx>

deprivation 1991-2002” with the only difference being in Dublin’s Inner City and in this the same areas had the highest levels of deprivation³⁵.

When people cannot access a better lifestyle or quality of survival by progressing through mainstream education systems, how do they do it? While this may seem an unimaginable feat, impressive examples of informal learning³⁶ are evidence of people’s capacity to take on new things that questions the purpose of an education system that excludes so many.

Education systems are built so that only certain ways of learning and only certain kinds of learning, matter. The capacity of human beings to learn – *as members of human society and in their own right as human entities* – undermines top-down systems³⁷. This is also an important facet of social movement dynamics, as Cox puts it:

movements are learning processes. We could add: movements in revolutionary periods are exceptional learning processes. Movements in "ordinary periods" are still hamstrung by the subject-object dilemma: they tend to take much of the social world as given; activists often talk about "ordinary people" as being simply passive objects (of the media, their jobs, peer pressure etc.); and activists tend towards an abstract voluntarism which is missing out the

³⁵ http://www.cpa.ie/research/seminars/presentations/2005-05-11_TrutzHaase&JonathanPratschke.pdf

³⁶ I have quoted Mitra’s work before with street children in New Delhi. Irish Travellers who as a community are amongst the most excluded and disadvantaged in Irish society have a social economy based on trading and can develop a high level of numeracy without engaging in mainstream education. I heard two Traveller girls on a bus one day, one about 10 years old the other about 6 years old, they were singing to each other lightly in a sort of repartee made up of numbers – one would ‘sing’ a number ‘5’, the other would answer - ‘6’ – it was a number game. These children, who at the time could not have been at school and who may or may not be literate, were happily engaged in this activity, developing their facility with number. Traveller culture is now being documented, but only through the efforts of their own organizations that are finding ways to represent this way of seeing the world to others. See http://www.paveepoint.ie/fs_culture_a.html. As a young student in Northern Ireland in the mid 1970’s I witnessed people learning about media in a way that happened rapidly and without any formal educational structures. People living in a war zone who watched five news programmes a night did not need media literacy education to understand what was happening and how. This knowledge grew fast and clearly fed the nationalist ghetto resistance in a similar way to that which motivated the workers who engaged in Paulo Freire’s 1962 literacy programme during which rural workers in Angicos became literate in 45 days in order to gain the right to vote.

³⁷ Padraic Pearse who was a teacher as well as a leader in the 1916 Rising in Dublin – following the footsteps of his Hedge School Teachers – made the education system developed by the English in Ireland the subject of his book titled “The Murder Machine” - Text now also available at <http://www.ucc.ie/celt/published/E900007-001/index.html> accessed 22nd April 2009

people who do in fact reproduce - and are hence also capable of transforming - the structures they experience. (Cox, Globalisation From Below, 2001)³⁸

Colin Ward also puts to us the proposition that people are continually involved in organizing their lives and their world, their work, and leisure:

How would you feel if you discovered that the society in which you would really like to live was already here, apart from a few little, local difficulties like exploitation, war, dictatorship and starvation? . . . a society which organises itself without authority, is always in existence (p.14) (1988, p. p.14)

In this thesis I am concerned with people who are engaged with a process of transformation; who are the producers of knowledge that they need in their efforts to address their circumstances. Not all would say what they are doing is 'revolutionary' but many would say they *know* that they are developing in their own capacity to 'reproduce and hence transform the structures they experience' and that in that process they are also transforming themselves. One activist described his activity as a chance to develop, i.e. he personally could develop within the activity that was also about "making a difference" and "getting the message out" (Interview15, 2006)

The research tells us that education is out of reach for most working class people. This is reinforced by community media activists who tell us that media and communications courses generally teach students an approach to media that is counter-productive in a community media environment, tending to be theory and technically loaded, and occupying an 'expert' position.

But the question then for community activists is where do we get the *technical* knowledge that is so valued and guarded? When we want to make community television

³⁸ <http://www.iol.ie/~mazzoldi/toolsforchange/rev/interview.html>

and this involves people who have not gone through these classed systems - what knowledge do we need? What sort of skills must we have? How do we gain these skills?

1.4.4 Form and meaning:

One obstacle to engaging with community television for many is the problem of the visual medium – humans tend to see not just what is literally before us but a combination of that and what is in one’s head, and we tend to pick up cues from visuals in terms of what we know in our own lives. An example from another frame of enquiry into communication tools, the visual arts, may help here.

Michael Baxandall is an art historian who examined fifteenth century Italian painters (Baxandall, *Painting and Experience in Fifteenth Century Italy*, 1972) – painting at that time was probably the most powerful communications tool available, as powerful and as important in its period as television is now. His significant contribution was to address the complex way in which we ‘see’ things – emphasising that we do not see simply what is there in a painting, but also what we have been taught to see through our life experience and what value that has for us. 15th century painters working within very determined and prescriptive formulas under contract with church authorities who commissioned the paintings, managed to engage viewers in old stories by using elements in their paintings that those viewers could relate to from their own experience. An example of this is the use of puzzle geometric forms that would be recognizable by trades people from their own training. For example the use of certain geometric blocks in the painting allowed people who were ‘gaugers’ by trade - people who gauged the volume and capacity of things - to

respond to the picture in a certain way since they were used to these images and what they meant.³⁹

What is interesting is that Baxandall extends the focus of his attention to encompass not only art, i.e. paintings and sculpture, but also sermons, dance, and, for example, the use of mathematics in gauging volumes for barrels and quantities,

If we observe that Piero della Francesca tends to a gauged sort of painting, Fra Angelico to a preached sort of painting, and Botticelli to a danced sort of painting, we are observing something not only about them but about their society.” (Baxandall, 1972)

So Baxandall moves beyond dealing with the painting as purely a product of economic and social conditions but as something that is creating another set of interactions between people, developing a new language that relates to current experience and recognisable visual signs, and this is used to engage people with ideas.

If we need to deal with – as Gramsci put it –

the spread of ideas through groups of men initially resistant to them, wrapped up in the process of solving their own, immediate economic and political problems, and lacking any bonds of solidarity. (Gramsci, 1916) p.10

– then we need to look too at **how** the ‘spread of ideas’ has been successfully achieved in other situations and learn from it.

Baxandall is an art historian who asks of a painting ‘*why at all and why thus*’ (Baxandall, Patterns of Intention, 1985) rather than focusing on its internal meaning he is asking why did a painter paint this and why in this way. John Berger et al (1972) take another dimension of readings of pictures to that given by Baxandall and focus on the relationship of viewer to image/subject in terms of class perspectives and aspirations. They famously

³⁹ These innovations were a means to engage the viewer and used the visual vocabulary those people were familiar with to direct the eye to what was important in the painting. These are silent devices the importance of which was often missed. Baxandall used themes - “Conditions of Trade”, “The Period Eye”, and “Pictures and Categories” allowing him to examine the production of art not only in its economic and social context, but also in relation to other forms of culture

crossed swords with Sir Lawrence Gowing, an eminent art historian, on whether the subjects of a Gainsborough painting "Mr. and Mrs. Andrews" were presenting as proud landlords or whether they were as Gowing posited:

engaged in philosophic enjoyment of 'the great Principle . . . the genuine Light of uncorrupted and unperturbed *Nature*' (1972, p. 107).

For Gowing the Andrews' detached 'philosophical' occupation is preferable to the hard material reality of their class position and his response demonstrates the extent to which the interpretation of works of art as a part of our material, politically organized, social existence will be resisted by an order that is concerned to maintain privilege and differentials of privilege, particularly in classing 'culture' and asserting the 'great principle of uncorrupted nature'.

Any media that is a constructed visual and aural message is an interaction between the people who create it and those to whom it is sent or by whom it is received and this interaction is circumscribed by their social context. The polarized views of the same message reveal sociological values and import attached to media; **it is not only how messages are understood and constructed, but how the relationship of meaning to control operates. Whose meanings dominate and become accepted? Why? How does use of media come into the equation?**

Approaches to media -

Some areas of media analysis deserve mention if only to differentiate the approach that is being taken in this thesis and to understand where community media activists are coming from.

The concerns of the Frankfurt School in relation to ‘media effect’ are grounded in how media are constructed to promote a particular set of assumptions about how the world operates and privileges (or cuts off and denies) the particular reality of a people and a class. Theodor Adorno’s (1989) post war pessimism was based on the dominance of this new culture and the values he feared would stupefy people⁴⁰. This is also where advertisers hunt their markets; the audience who will buy the products they advertise. This position which denies the possibility of active and critical engagement (and even rejection of the message) on the part of the viewer was qualified by the work of, amongst others, Paul Lazarsfeld and Elihu Katz⁴¹ (Katz, 1974). Their concept of the ‘two-step flow’ communication⁴² relies upon the concepts of “gatekeepers” and “opinion leaders” who set values and norms within communities and therefore serve as mediators to media influence.

My emphasis however is really the other way around, rather than media ‘effects’ on people I am concerned with media as ‘voice’ of people. This could be approached by examining the ‘voice’ that dominates, as Adorno has done, or how groups create filters as did Lazarsfeld and Katz, but my concern is to explore the facilitation of the ‘voice’ that is marginalized, that struggles to be heard, and there are many.

Approaches to ‘audience’ as consumers has dominated much of media theory: McQuail (1983) and Katz (1974) see the audience as discriminating users of media according to their needs based on Maslow’s hierarchy but falling mainly into needs for entertainment, information and identification⁴³. McQuail (1969), one of the foremost media theorists,

⁴⁰ Known as the ‘effects’ or ‘hypodermic’ model

⁴¹ Also Herta Herzog and Robert Merton in the US, developed quantitative and positivist methodology for empirical audience research into the “Sociology of Mass Persuasion”

⁴² Rosemary Day (2003) quoted elsewhere in this thesis utilizes this theory in an examination of participation in community radio in Ireland.

⁴³ Generally known as ‘uses and gratification’ model of audience

supports the need for a sociological approach to media, but his view of media is of the ‘mass media’ industry.

None of these, including critics of uses and gratifications theories, engage with the kind of use that happens within the spheres we are talking about, i.e. where people produce their own media rather than consume mainstream options.

Marshall McLuhan’s (1964) slogan “the medium is the message”- an essentially postmodernist position - refutes regard for text and focuses on how media, particularly electronic media affect peoples sensory perception and alters consciousness. This theoretical position alters the balance between people and the tools they create; it imbues tools with the power to recreate people. To some extent they do, but this is an ongoing interaction and not something that is static. McLuhan’s position however sees not only text as irrelevant but also regards as incidental the very real issues that his theories present - that our reality doesn’t matter, that the speed of change makes details like our living conditions inconsequential. Tom Wolfe’s 1964 critique in the New York tribune cut to the core of the matter:

Even shopping will be done via TV. All those grinding work-a-daddy cars will disappear. The only cars left will be playthings, sports cars. They’ll be just like horses are today, a sport. Somebody over at General Motors is saying-What if he is right?

Whole cities, and especially New York, will end too just like cars, no longer vital to the nation but . . . just playthings. People will come to New York solely to amuse themselves, do things, not marvel at the magnitude of the city or its riches, but just eat in the restaurants, go to the discotheques, browse through the galleries-

And while some of the vision may fit some of the world, in what part of the world and who in that part of the world can live like this? **The daily struggle that working class and excluded people are *still experiencing* was not part of McLuhan’s vision.**

Williams (1974), Hoggart (1957), Hall (1980), Fiske (1978), and Willis (1990) pose a theoretical framework in which media can be understood as part of social relations, in

particular Hall's arguments around the power of negotiated vs. oppositional readings provide a less rigid approach to media. However these theorists give very little attention to community media; their concern is with the mainstream, how media is received and with the audience's relation to text. Williams is more concerned with how it is produced and gives a small, if optimistic, mention to community television in his work "Television". In one section actually pinpointing the central issue when he discusses the possibilities of cable systems:

For cable systems of a different kind genuinely run by and serving communities, with access to a full range of public programmes for which the necessary resources had been specifically provided, could indeed democratize broadcasting. . . . cable television is an extreme form of the earliest definition of broadcasting as simple *transmission* . . . we are already able to see from some publicly financed local experiments, that cable technology could alter the whole social and cultural process of televised communications. (1974, pp. 146, 147)

This is hopeful stuff, and again the idea of technology as value-free is tempting, a view supported by theorists such as Manuel Castells (2000 (2nd ed)) who claimed that social forces "imperfectly fit" with technological developments; or in the instrumental conception of technology as proposed by Mary Tiles and Hans Oberdiek (1995). But as Williams pointed out, the political problems remain and the future he saw:-

. . . under the cover of talk about choice and competition, a few para-national corporations, with their attendant states and agencies, could reach further into our lives, at every level from news to psycho-drama, until individual response to many different kinds of experience and problem become almost limited to choice between their programmed possibilities. (1974, p. 157)

is pretty much where things are currently at.

More recently an 'ethnographic approach' to audience focuses on context, yet still mainly sees people as 'audience' and receivers, and not as producers of information.

Community media needs to be theorized within a different framework or paradigm which is rooted in how this use of media supports knowledge production and creates a

challenge to the capitalist mode of production – why at all and thus – because this is free media, with all its problems.

What emerges within the media theoretical framework as the media landscape is the dominance of the 'mass media' industry underpinned by commercial ethos. This underpinning poses the greatest threat to the idea of media providing a public sphere that supports democratic engagement; that informs and educates. The dream audience for advertisers is the one that deeply depressed Adorno, one that would absorb the 'message' and buy the product. And while Hall et al proved that audiences are not so dumb, the answer that 'media analysts' have forged to this challenge is the concept of 'niche audiences', again connected to the commercial selling approach to *niche markets*⁴⁴.

⁴⁴ This approach is summed up in the following article:

Thursday, 10 August 2006

[Steve Mays](#) points out that Andrew Baron, who helped build a huge audience for Rocketboom, isn't hung up on audience numbers. Baron is [thinking of niche audiences](#) as a very good revenue opportunity:

As an example, he suggests a program to target "high-end tennis players." It would be natural for Wilson Sporting Goods to advertise tennis racquets and "Viewers might actually be interested in the commercials," Baron said. He believes that while only 10,000 people might watch, it's so cheap to do Internet video that such programming is economically feasible."

I've not been that impressed with Baron (nor am I crazy about Rocketboom), but he's right on this point. It's absolutely not about numbers, although numbers are nice to have. Your company or organization can really create a "Rocketboom" for your own niche. By that, I mean you can become the leading resource for information/education/entertainment in a particular, very small area of interest. The opportunity is there -- you just have to figure out what your most important audience wants, and how to get that content to them in an engaging way⁴⁴.

Interestingly 'niche' is a term that was used by the members of the BCI Sound and Vision Team when we met (as the newly formed Community Television Association (CTA)) to discuss how the scheme could support the development of programmes and audiences for community television. It is a term otherwise used almost entirely within commercial contexts. Commercial media is supported by advertising and the power of big business, advertiser groups are brought to the forefront of the media environment by neo-liberal policies that say the market will decide. This makes them a big player in the media landscape and they are quick to assert their power - the advertiser's representative at the BCI Biannual Conference in 2006 publicly told the Regulator to "completely deregulate the media environment now or we will go to where we can do it cheaper and put it out on satellite. There will be no Irish media, it will not survive."

Media theory is caught in a consideration of media as the media institution (McQuail D. , 1969) - and it would seem that for mainstream media theorists the concept of an organizing capacity within communities that produces media is untenable. There is a difficulty for these theoreticians in identifying the 'institution' of community media as constructed differently to the institution of mainstream media; ***yet just as social movements from below operate qualitatively differently to social movements from above*** (Nilsen A. G., 2009) ***so too does media when it is a voice from below.***

This is not to deny that the framework and organization of media operators is a core tension in the development of community television in Ireland and in many countries. It is clear that there is always the risk that the 'community media organisation' becomes an institution that is separate from and insensitive to the needs of the community. But the central issue is the 'nature' of the beast - what makes it different?

If we are to understand the character and relevance of CM we need to ask 'why at all and why thus?' Why do people make CM, why is it necessary and why does it happen in the way it does? The structures that it exists within, how it comes into being, the ways it is used are, to my mind, inextricably linked to how the content is constructed; and the mode of production is a part and a product of that whole context.

What may be useful for us here is to note what it is that allows people to communicate through any medium; in Baxandall's case he addressed art in the 15th Century, and in this case we are talking about television. Baxandall's analysis says that the communication is constructed in such a way as to make 'fits' with people's every day visual experience, which is defined by the period in which they exist⁴⁵. This premise recognises the importance of Marx's "social individuals", so people communicate with others in particular contexts and

⁴⁵ Baxandall's idea of the 'period eye'

develop language to enable that communication to happen. Baxandall says that those who created the language did so out of their own experience – it wasn’t simply found ‘out there’ in the audience they wished to reach – the makers came from the same culture as the audience.

Baxandall is posing that Piero della Francesca consciously spoke in a particular language, but that this was also a language in which he was more than fluent – it would constitute a first language in visual terms. Piero was educated as a middle-class boy primarily in a commercial type of mathematics that was adapted to the merchant, he also wrote a mathematical handbook for merchants. Baxandall points out that

the connection between gauging and painting Piero himself embodies is very real. On the one side, many of the painters, themselves business people, had gone through the mathematical secondary education of the lay schools; this was the geometry they knew and used. On the other side, the literate public had these same geometrical skills to look at pictures with: it was a medium in which they were equipped to make discriminations, and the painters knew this.”p.87

Added to this, it wasn’t simply that Piero decided that there were lots of rich builders in Florence, the new rising merchant class – the new power in society at the time (and he needed them to take notice of the paintings he was doing about the Madonna), and not alone that he was communicating with his own class in a language they held in common, but that he was in fact meeting one of his contractual obligations – the Church’s demand that

the painter should use the visual sense’s special quality of immediacy and force (P.87)

to enrich this audience’s appreciation of the subject matter.

So what is this diversion from community media all about? It is:

- firstly just to take a step outside the ‘media’ paradigm and point to the fact that tools of communication have been in use for a very long time, painting was the

most powerful form of communication in the fifteenth century as television would be today;

- secondly that the knowledge exists that all this communication is controlled and framed in very precise ways by those who pay for it in contract with those who produce it, and this leaves very narrow margins for innovation;
- thirdly the fact that people engage with signs and symbols that come from their experience of everyday life is not only established knowledge, but also a key factor in how all meaningful communications are constructed;
- fourth, media theory takes as a premise that media is made by specialists; content is filtered by audiences but not made by them; and so media theory in the main does not address issues in poor people’s access to media as knowledge producers
- finally that Marx’s understanding of the construction of the individual in a dynamic interaction with society is consistent with historical patterns of how communication is constructed.

Baxandall’s analysis also means that particular visual codes and languages can apply to particular groups, or classes of people. In 1976 when I was amongst a group of students in an Art history seminar in Belfast, it became apparent that the paintings we were looking at made more sense to the Catholics in the class and that the Protestants were to some extent excluded in that they had no understanding of the symbolic nature of the elements of the paintings. Similarly, street graffiti artists communicate in ways that most people cannot understand – a clear example of horizontal communication within a peer group.

In Dublin in 2004, Robbie Byrne (Interview3) of Community Response talked to me about the need to create “culturally acceptable materials” in order to get information about HIV/AIDS, and Hepatitis C to the families and friends of people involved in drug-use.

Community Response has used a range of media including posters, comics, booklets, radio, and video. Community video particularly is a strategy they know they can use in Dublin communities – it is a currently live media, people are accustomed to it, they are educated in how to read it as both an information source and for entertainment. People also watch television, so community television is on Community Response’ agenda. The question now is can people make television in their own idiom, within their cultural understandings and develop the necessary horizontal communication in a medium that incorporates a – *“special quality of immediacy and force”*.

Baxandall’s analysis makes clear that the people who are equipped to make the media that will engage the attention and enrich the understanding are those who have not simply an understanding of the relevant language, but also the life experience that allows them to understand, use, and innovate within the language. How do poor people do this?

1.4.5 Our problem in making community television:

A serious obstacle to the realisation of the dream that non-specialist people can use communication technologies is that a media culture exists in our society which is controlled by capitalism and structured to meet its needs, i.e. the making of profit. Not only do we need to step outside that and to look at what it is we need to do when we want to use communication tools to communicate, but we must recognise that when we speak of community media – ***we are outside capitalist media culture and yet inside it at the same time.***

In other words we experience media as a part of our lives, but we do not control the majority of it; the ways we can use it are limited by the industry and classed by levels of skill, education and cost. On the one hand the issue is simply the access to the resources,

skills, money and time. If you have these it's no problem – you go ahead and structure it in whatever way you want to, you communicate, you have the equipment, the skilled people, the trainers to train unskilled people, etc, etc. Without all this the question is different. And it is poor people who really need to communicate in order to change their circumstances, as do those who do not have 'voice'.

Many people are, very often, extremely inventive in finding ways to have their voice heard; the recent demonstrations by old age pensioners in Ireland at the withdrawal of the medical card in 2008 are a case in point as was the disability movement in Ireland's mobilisation nationally in 2001 to remove a journalist, Mary Ellen Synon from the Independent newspaper when her comments on the para-olympics caused outrage⁴⁶.

There are times when people dissenting with the dominant ideology do get on the media and force their agenda past Chomsky's five filters. But not everyone can take over the newsroom in a national TV studio as the Clause 28 activists did in the UK in 1988⁴⁷, or the more recent 2008 occupation of television newsrooms by youths in Greece to urge people to join anti-government protests⁴⁸. For most of the time people do not stage *any* protest at their conditions, and such demonstrations as these are rare (Fox-Piven F. &, 1979) (Fox-Piven F. , 2007).

Such events are interactions of social movements with 'the institution of the media'. What happens to the pensioners as time goes on and the recession bites deeper into other aspects of their lives, how people with disabilities deal with the daily ongoing exclusion in their interaction with society, and all the rest of it, means that one battle won by forcing a

⁴⁶ This campaign was an inspiring display of people power. However it was one that simply removed a journalist on grounds of offense and failed to push the political point further into for example the election of its champion into national political power, instead she was elected as MEP, a place that fell short of giving her political clout to change things on the ground.

⁴⁷ See <http://www.britishcouncil.org/timeline>

⁴⁸ See <http://www.foxnews.com/story/0,2933,467724,00.html>

newspaper to dismiss a journalist and “a day at the circus” for pensioners on television is only a tiny window into what needs to happen on an ongoing basis.

So now not only do we need to ask can the activity calling itself community media (CM) provide a means for people to be heard, to have voice -we also need to ask when do people need to have access to what kind of voice and what is it that community media activists see CM providing?

For community media activists who need theoretical frameworks there is a multi-faceted problem – about who makes the media; what language it uses, to whom it is addressed; with what purpose; and who pays for it. When it comes to how *new* forms of communication are constructed it is particularly important, if this form is to be of any use, that continuous access for users and producers is there from the beginning and *can go on*.

If organizing itself is the problem as Fox-Piven and Cloward suggest, how then can CM forms such as broadcasting that demand complex organizing be any use at all?

1.5 Developing community media

1.5.1 Dealing with the term

1.5.2 Doing ‘community media’

1.5.3 Nature and conditions of community media

1.5.4 Perceptions of community media

1.5.1 Dealing with the term

The concept of community media (CM) is very important but the term poses huge problems for media theorists, Downing (2001) says

terms such as *community media* or *grassroots media* may easily conceal more than they reveal. They are stronger in what they exclude – mainstream media – than in what they signify. (p. 40)

Yet what is called CM exists and as we have seen is in fact legislated for in many countries⁴⁹. As we have already seen, the fact of its recognition and the global movement behind it points to the wide practice that exists as CM whether or not that practice is futile.

It is really with television, I think, that some cracks noticeably appear in the comfort of the naming. Discomfort with media other than radio have been expressed in terms such as “television is too expensive”⁵⁰, “the visual detracts from the message” (Interview18)⁵¹, amongst others. Similarly there is a privileging of broadcast media over other forms such as newsletters and various print productions that enter the “grey literature” category. The latter are seldom given much attention despite their enormous value to community organizations particularly in rural areas or small towns where print media tend to be preferred (own research in Kerry)⁵².

⁴⁹ community radio has been broadcasting in Ireland for the last ten years, the world umbrella organisation AMARC⁴⁹ has existed as a world-wide movement for more than twenty-five years; entities calling themselves community television channels broadcast in the US and many other countries although their legal names may be slightly different⁴⁹. The developments in Europe since 2000 leading to the Council of Ministers declaration have copper-fastened the term and have given it weight.

⁵⁰ Dr Rosemary Day posited the notion of community television being too expensive when addressing a gathering to launch a “Media Cohort” in Croke Park in Dublin in 2006. The gathering was to mobilise activism to democratise media.

⁵¹ Ciaran Murray, General Manager of the Media Co-op, interview with author 2006

⁵² Navan CTV (now P5tv) is an exception to this preference for print media and the fact that the growth of community radio is slow, while steady, would indicate this preference is widespread. Community radio launched after a two year pilot scheme in 1996 with six stations, there are now 20 in existence 10 years later.

Our interest here is how media forms support effective human communication – the basic need. Williams (2005) emphasizes the centrality of human forms of communication and the interlinked nature of these with those produced by non-human means. In a useful typology Williams differentiates modes of communication media as: firstly those which depend on immediate human resources – physical speech and non-verbal communication - body language (these cannot be abstracted as ‘natural’ since they are learned); and secondly those which depended on the transformation, by labour, of non-human material.

Based on this we can create a typology laid out in **Table No 1** in order to identify what media do for human communication:

Type	Devices	Historical place	Skills involved	Access controls
Amplificatory	Megaphone	Amphitheatre –historic early electronic – recent	To speak, to hear,	Amphitheatre - Spatial Electronic - Small cost
	Live Radio	Recent	To speak, to hear, and to interpret	Transmission equipment, license, control by ‘codes of practice’, legal
	Live TV	Recent	To speak, to hear, to gesture, to observe, and to interpret	Transmission equipment, studio for production base, license, control by ‘codes of practice’, legal
Durative	sound recordings mean durative quality for speech,	Recent	To speak, to hear, and to interpret	Recording equipment and power; electric; clockwork (radio); dynamos;
	Painting, sculpture,	Late	To see and feel – touch	Materials; classed and ‘cultural’ controls such as education, ability to travel,
Alternative	Use of objects as signs; development of writing; graphics, and means of reproduction	Early	Reading, writing, observe, interpret	Socialisation; Education; industrial training

Table No. 1 drawn from Williams’s typology of media functions

People want to use media that meets their need but it is the controls that either allow or restrict usage. We know that people tend therefore to use whatever is available to them be that bin-lids, fires on hilltops, or more developed forms. Currently, websites, graffiti, photographs, comics, songs, verse, all form the *web of media* that people use for different purposes. To decide on what media they want to use, people will look to their needs at a particular time and in the conditions that prevail.

Difficulties people have had with defining CM, and the reasons why it seems to have slipped through the legislative barriers and become institutionalised in some countries, point to the need to *understand community media as a term that describes activity and a practice* - rather than products, institutions, and structures alone.

1.5.2 Doing ‘community media’

we have to discover the nature of a practice and then its conditions

(Williams, Culture and Materialism, 2005, p. 47)

How do we do this activity? AMARC’s charter identifies key characteristics and these concern ownership, not-for-profit status, and access policies that emphasise participatory organisational structures. The Irish Regulator⁵³ adopted (for the most part) the AMARC Charter in its definition of a community radio station and while defining it as not-for-profit, owned, controlled by and representative of its community; the definition omits the

⁵³ Broadcasting Commission of Ireland (BCI) formerly the Independent Radio and Television Commission (IRTC) and soon to become the Broadcasting Authority of Ireland (BAI)

AMARC stipulation that it should be democratic – avoiding a key aspect of the nature of the practice.

In community media the focus is on the communication that needs to happen rather than on the profit that can be made. Yet broadcast community media such as radio and television need to occupy space on the frequency spectrum: the most commercialized of communications technologies. **With community television, the fundamental issue is a claim of the people on the communications landscape for the purpose of having a voice. How do we negotiate this in a capitalist world?**

The rights for occupation of the territory will be fought for – as a CTV activist put it

The spectrum is seen as valuable and the government will want a price for it" (Interview2).

And there are all the questions of how CTV can be done in ways that do not demand four years of third level education or even the sort of technical training that is available in media companies and training institutions. It would be impossible to find the funds to pay media union's rates of pay or maintain their standards and classes of production so how can we make community television and avoid conflict with workers organising around their conditions through their trade unions?

Many community television (CTV) channels successfully operate in other countries and manage to produce not-for-profit community television based on volunteer programming, supported in all sorts of ways. The solutions they have found are particular in that they are local and have been the product of many years work and effort. So how does CM transcend its particularism and become universal in how it operates?

When new channels are forming there will be issues - just as when the Turin communists worked to establish *L'Ordine Nuovo*. Because of the diversity within CM these issues not

only have to be negotiated between different actors who often vie for dominance within the context of the new activity, but also as part of the business of keeping it alive as it continues.

We can call it dynamics or we can call it struggle but it is clear that tensions exist due to issues within the movement, struggle with external forces, and pressures from above.

If we place community media in a media paradigm these issues are problems; if we understand community media activity as a movement arising from communication needs and that the conditions are subject to those needs and defined by practice - then we are operating in a social framework that defines the form. These issues may form dialogue that is a crucial part of the activity.

1.5.3 The nature of community media and its conditions.

Community organisations that see themselves as working within a community development ethos have a defined approach that emphasises participatory and democratic processes (Community Workers Co-op, 2008); community media emphasise access and participation (Dagron 2001; Ó’Siochrú 2002; Day 2003; Rennie 2004; AMARC 1984). A proliferation of terms again emerges when trying to define both community development and community media. According to Rennie (2006):

Community media is distinguished by its aspirations and motivations as much as by its methods and structures.

But she clearly sees these (or wants to see them) within a media paradigm since she aims to:

explain these aspirations and where they fit into the intellectual history of media studies
(p.4)

Communitarianism, “Third Way” politics and the renewed interest in the idea of Civil Society are identified as the most significant theoretical developments over the past two

decades in terms of policy development that has ushered in community media. While this may well be so on the policy development front (given that Clinton/Blair/Bush amongst many other state leaders in the first world promote communitarianism and base their programmes on it) this perspective raises issues for Irish activists who see their activity as happening within the context of community development and/or community media but who see themselves as opposed to these government programmes for a whole variety of reasons. Rennie quite rightly locates community broadcasting as being

at the intersection of the administratively controlled broadcasting environment (having to comply to license conditions and regulation)" (p.25),

But her understanding of the "*configurations of the community sphere*" as "*more random, messy, and "natural"*" may not be so readily shared by those who operate within it, who see their activity as context defined yet ideologically driven (Geoghegan, 2000) (Powell, 2004).

In contrast to Rennie's view many activists who have participated in a number of studies have a noticeably clear, un-messy, and rationally constructed view of their activities (Geoghegan, 2000). CM activists engaged with broadcasting may also see themselves as pushing the boundaries rather than simply "having to comply to license conditions and regulations".

Rennie's work is important as she engages with social theory in an effort to explain the nature of community media, however, in my view this explanation is limited by what appears to be a reluctance to see the role of contention in forming CM or social movements as a key element of CM activity. While her examination of the struggles to establish community broadcasting licences is rich in its scope and illustrations, the most

significant statement in the book for me is when, in relation to her native Australian community media context, she says:

The marginalisation of community media is often attributed to its failure to live up to its (largely self-proclaimed) desire to change broader media patterns of ownership and control. The radical edge of community media has been lost." (p113)

She echos Kim Goldberg from another continent some fifteen years previously. Why? Will the same failure exist in another fifteen years time? What is it that puts community media on this path? How can this be changed? Is this de-radicalisation inevitable? ***But perhaps we are asking the wrong question.***

It's not that Rennie's, Goldberg's, or any media studies researchers contribution's are sociologically irrelevant, but it seems that what they aim to do is to locate community media within a media paradigm – for me this is one very important part of the problem. In my view taking this approach dislocates community media from its purpose and aligns it with a media industry that is constructed by and in the interests of those very capitalist forces that marginalise and aim to silence the very voices we aim to support. This dislocation does not simply rest within an abstract or purely theoretical arena – it has huge influence on our practice.

The other body of thought that sees itself as being a counter-hegemonic force to the power of the mainstream (or mass) media also presents problems. An approach that prioritises media reform does not provide us with a means of understanding why so many community media initiatives have in fact failed in this regard. A key frustration for this group is that human rights organisations haven't joined the call to assert media access as a human right (Gangadharan, 2002). These movements tend to be absent from the community broadcasting platform also. Why at all and why thus?

Another contradiction emerging from our practice is that there are clearly media operating within capitalism that are not specifically neo-liberal and these can and do provide opportunities to community media. They often providing support, cheap facilities, and sometimes even training to non-profit groups. As individuals these are often friends and ideological fellow-travellers to community media; many figured in CMN’s network activities throughout the 1990’s and are still active in supporting community media in Ireland.

Located at the small end of the business scale this, however, can be a fragile link. A case in point is the response of Gary Porter, CEO of Channel 9 in Derry⁵⁴, to a request from the new Dublin CTV group to visit the Derry station.

Gary had met with a group from CMN some three years previously and proudly toured us around the channel. When I asked to meet again since we had become a licensed channel he carefully explained that management had decided there was an intellectual copyright issue; they had developed a television station and also software to allow community organisations access a ‘box’ to put their activities on the channel and so Ch9 would not share their experience or knowledge of hardware/software with community channels. It sounds very close to Raymond Williams’ worries of 1974.

Porter proposed an alliance between commercial and community channels in the face of the threat of being subsumed by monopolies with the advent of digitalisation. Here we have echoes of Williams’ worries yet again - and it’s a real threat. His view of where community television fits in is in the daytime hours - between the end of morning (breakfast) shows and 5pm, the evening is, in his view, for commercial channels since this

⁵⁴ Formerly Derry Media Access, a group who were awarded the original transmission contract as a community television channel. Ch9 emerged after a hostile insider bid took over and continued as a commercial channel.

is when the audiences (markets) are there. In his view community television is there for "literacy and getting people back to work" and so should be relegated to afternoon shows.

An immediate question arose for me: if business goes to where it sees a market, once it became apparent that 'niche audiences' were gathering in the afternoons; using Gary's logic would there not also be a case for commercial television to take over that time slot as well? Where then for community television? (see Appendix No. 12, 12a)

1.5.4 Perceptions of community media

People see community media as different to other media and have very different expectations of it; this is clear in a number of studies (Rennie, 2006), (Jauert & Prehn, 2002), (Jankowski, Prehn, & Stappers, 1991), (Tomaselli K. &, 1990).

In Ireland Niamh Farren has recently completed her M.A. Thesis entitled "*An inquiry into Values: Towards a definition of quality in community radio*" (Farren, 2007) recommending support for networking and collaboration, training, developing a 'Culture of Quality', and additional resources. She stressed the importance of "parity of esteem" with mainstream media whilst supporting the community ethos and context which "*includes elements such as co-operation, trust, honesty and sincerity*". Farren's very welcome recommendations are generated within the framework of the Circuit of Culture developed by the cultural theorists and the media theorist McQuail's Media Performance Principles. While this approach looks at and identifies the constituent elements it does not identify where and why these elements *conflict* with the media paradigm, rather the intention is to show how they fit within it.

Both Rennie and Farren contribute to the fracturing of the media paradigm to make space for CM. This is conducted within the context of policy and government agendas that they

aim to, quite rightly in my view, turn in ways that will benefit and support CM. Rennie approaches this in terms of an argument for support for CM as a global movement for democracy and communitarianism; Farren more particularly addresses questions of quality that have emerged within the new Sound and Vision Funding Scheme in Ireland.

The problem is that these approaches remain within and are defined by the mainstream media paradigm. But is this where we need to focus?

Many find themselves in an uncomfortable relation to the existing theoretical frameworks and concepts of media and communications studies. Clemencia Rodriguez sees the problem this way:

Communication academics and media activists began looking at alternative media as a hopeful option to counterbalance the unequal distribution of communication resources that came with the growth of big media corporations. This origin has located the debate within rigid categories of power and binary conceptions of domination and subordination that elude the fluidity and complexity of alternative media as a social, political, and cultural phenomenon. It's like trying to capture the beauty of a dancers movements with one photograph." (Rodriguez, 2001, p. 3)

Yet, despite the welcome differentials in Rodriguez's analysis, her proposed framework of "Citizens Media" means that it is those who are already enabled to use media that can act in the way that Rodriguez describes. The co-option of individuals by commercial media in the current economic crisis as a way of (cheaply) providing content means that 'citizen journalists' are filling the pages for advertisers.

This poses problems on a number of fronts - the most glaring issues being firstly what happens to the journalistic ethos within mainstream media and secondly to whom the citizen journalist is, or sees themselves as being, accountable⁵⁵.

⁵⁵ This is also part of the problem identified by indymedia in relation to corporate funders which I have already noted

The first problem is one that belongs to a media paradigm and needs be addressed in terms of standards in public media but the second is one of organising and how ‘voice’ is achieved. Within the latter are the greatest difficulties for poor people: - for those without either access to or confidence in an education system and who ‘needs must invent’ to survive the problems they face. At the coal face end of struggle people need one another, they need solidarity, and they need social organisation. This is not to say that individuals cannot or do not make a difference – but when they do there *is usually some relation to organised activity* – whether that be as part of an anonymous crowd (Thompson, 1993), within networked activity (Wainwright, 2008), or formal organisations (Fox-Piven F. , 2007). Very often for poor people this happens within their own communities.

Rodriguez’s book, “Fissures in the Mediascape” (2001) gives much needed visibility to forms of CM, her own work with the Centro de Investigacion y Educacion Popular⁵⁶ examines the possibilities and difficulties within the practice of participatory video with women’s grassroots organisations in Columbia. It is important to note that all the work she was involved in and draws on is rooted in community struggles, development activities, and popular education movements. My difficulty with the framework of “citizen’s media” that she proposes is that it seems to be distanced from the roots of this work and is re-focused on the connection with mainstream media and the McQuail/Maslow type needs paradigm.

Citizens media emerge at the intersection of three elements: the citizen’s will to reappropriate the media to satisfy their own needs and to seek their own information and communication goals; a historical, social and cultural context that poses unique obstacles while also offering specific options for the implementation of citizens’ media; and citizens’ enactment of creative strategies to exploit to exhaustion every fissure in the dominant media system. Citizens’ media result from a complex interaction between people’s attempts to democratise the mediascape and their contextual circumstances. (Rodriguez, 2001, p. 164)

⁵⁶ Center for Research and Popular Education: CINEP, Columbia

And while this may well be true once “citizens’ media” are operating – many still have to get there. As the ‘mediascape’ fragments into multiple distribution platforms the terms of access will alter. It is this alteration that we are aware of when a new community media entity tries to establish itself, when it tries to claim the territory and use it for a different purpose than that for which it was designed. I wholeheartedly agree with Rodriguez’s questioning of tight definitions but an important reason why I return to community media as a framework is precisely because it is so hard to rigidly define. ***Also because while it does encompass the elements of organising, sharing, and solidarity that are so necessary in people’s struggle, it also forces us to ask the question – “whose interest is at work here?” And we need to constantly ask that question, if we don’t we are avoiding a fundamentally important reality about how the divisions in society operate.***

I propose to approach this by engaging with critiques of community development – taking a leaf from Baxandall’s book by defining community television as a “community development kind of television” that links to the most relevant activity concerning people in their communities. I go a step further and deal with community television as operating within a production system that bears little relation to the capitalist media paradigm. The media paradigm supports a culture of production and organisational structures that are designed to fit with neo-liberal ideas, organised and run by the huge media monopolies that play a key part in hegemonising activities, as well as being active contenders in the ownership of capital (Chomsky, 1994) (Thomas, 2004); (Hackett, 2006) (Allen, *The Corporate Takeover of Ireland*, 2007) (McChesney, 1999) (Bagdikian, 2004).

In a recent publication funded by the World Bank, Buckley, Duer, Mendel, and O’Siochru (2008), state:

And nothing is available to give us a direct insight into which media poor people actually consume; the value they attach to different broadcast content, including local and international news, entertainment, and educational and development material; the

motivations behind their choices; and the impact on their lives; even more difficult to discern is the impact of these individual experiences on broader communities and in society. P.243

Local grassroots community organisers know what media their poor consume. But is consumption where our focus should be? People assert their needs within not only what is available but also by trying things out - the proliferation of ‘home-made’ cable networks in villages throughout India, Nepal, and other countries underscore that ability (Interview8) (Mitra 2000).

The research patterns tend to follow the trajectory of the funding and while the spotlight is on delivery of services and this includes the production of profit, the communication and knowledge needs of poor people will remain outside the media research loop. When they are highlighted within it we can reasonably ask why. It’s unlikely they will be asked to research themselves or to define the questions, or indeed be supported in the process of so doing. The only way this has happened is through people’s self-organised activity – and this means we need to look to those places where people are organising themselves and how they best achieve their goals. This does not happen within a media paradigm and this is because the media paradigm that exists does not include free media for people to organise their communication as and when they need. But it is clear from the amount and variety of community media that exists that people organise around their needs without regulation all the time (Ward C., 1988). These activities say a lot about how people manage to deal with challenges, Sugata Mitra points out that:

There are 50 or 60 million cable-TV connections in India at this point in time. The guys who set up the meters, splice the coaxial cables, make the connection to the house, etc., are very similar to these kids. They don’t know what they’re doing. They only know that if you do these things, you’ll get the cable channel. (2000)

Once they can control the content on that cable then they may have a voice. But how can they do this? Why don’t they? What are the problems?

1.6 Community Development (CD) and Community Media (CM)

1.6.1 Approaches to CD applied to CM

1.6.2 The problem of definitions and preferment of terms

1.6.3 Community and development

1.6.4 How does CD happen and who does it?

1.6.5 Building voice and capacity – communication as a means of production

1.6.6 Civil Society

1.6.7 CD as a Social Partner

1.6.8 Community development media – community television

1.6.1 Approaches to CD applied to CM

Martin Geoghegan (2000) in a study of community development in Ireland poses the notion of the “axial activist” as a means of understanding the dynamics within community development. From his perspective it is the “self-understanding” of the activist which is necessary to develop this sort of investigation. He also underlines the usefulness of keeping open the idea that there are “consensus / conflict” aspects to community development groups in that:

groups have “hidden transcripts” i.e. they interact with powerful state institutions in a manner that suggests a consensual approach to social problems, whilst maintaining a more radical discourse within the social space of the group itself (p 41)

Such an approach allows us to explore what happens within groups that operate with “internal and external contestations”.

Similarly to Geoghegan (2000), Rosemary Day (2003) uses the activist’s understandings of their own activities and their priorities as a basis for the research to approach the task of “framing a communication theory for the sector as a whole” (p.1). She differs from Geoghegan however in that her intent is to explore what facilitates participation rather than to question what fissures appear.

Assessments of the literature say that ‘alternative’ media literature is biased towards that which is oppositional to dominant culture (Atton, 2002) (Downing, 2001) but the same is not true of the literature dealing with community development in Ireland (Geoghegan, 2000). While the current economic downturn might encourage more conflictual literature from the community development sector the fact is that consensuality has been the tendency during a period of growth in which we have seen a widening of the gap between the rich and poor. This poses a problem – if the literature emanating from the community development movement is ‘consensual’ does this mean the community media it produces will also be consensual? What does this mean for those who are excluded from society and are denied voice?

I agree with the approach that research into community development and community media is best based in the self-understandings of the activists involved and for this we can draw on Gramsci’s theory of the formation of intellectuals as a framework. Like Geoghegan, I think it important to begin to explore the contestations that exist within the area of community media particularly in order to get to grips with that critique of why community television has failed to fulfill its promise in so many cases and what this actually means.

Community radio activists did say at the early stages of the campaign for community television in Ireland that community television would need to learn from the difficulties that beset community radio in its early days. They also asserted that the perceptions would be set within the first six months; in that time it will have shown itself to be dealing with the political issues or not. In my conversations with community media activists when we began this research project in CMN, there was a clear perception that community radio was also de-radicalised.

1.6.2 The problem of definitions and preferment of terms

The term ‘community media’ is very much in question here, why do we use it, why is it contested? Downing states that it exists but it is messy, fuzzy, and in the main leaves it out; AMARC sets out operating principles which include a claim to “contribute to the democratic process”; Atton relies on the term ‘alternative’ to explore mainly counter culture ideas and yet ignores community media. Rodriguez proposes the concept of ‘citizen’s media’ as a unifying frame but this is an individualizing term and does not reflect concepts of organizing and self-organised working class activity.

Another difficulty is that the different terms used to describe media activity also reflect locational biases and have deep cultural resonances (Jauert & Prehn, 2002). In Ireland there is a tendency to accept the term community media where the term ‘citizen’ carries very different meaning to that which it has, for example, in France where the word ‘citoyens’ meant people who took power into their own hands and beheaded not just individuals but a class. In the US the notion of citizen carries connotations of Boston Tea-Parties and removal of imperial force as well as the long and painful struggle for civil rights by black people and the upsurge of social movements in the 1960s. Ireland’s legacy from it’s colonial past is far-reaching: Irish people were once ‘citizens’ of a British empire, ‘citizens’

of a neo-colonial ‘Free State’ torn by civil war, ‘citizens’ without a vote in a Northern Ireland State. The most used reference to the term these contexts is “second class citizen” – the understanding that citizenship is classed is clearly widespread and therefore the confidence in the term citizen is undermined.

The term ‘community’ however may be preferred because it allows people to gather, relate, or identify with one another not only on a local or geographical basis but also through interest. In terms of community media it also describes a common activity, a group, and of necessity, an organised activity. This of course is not without its own problems and contradictions. There is no reason to assume that the ‘community’ is a ‘safe’ place for everyone. While regulators, charities and institutions may worry about gateways for pirates and terrorists, people often face other less visible issues - it may depend on whether you pose a challenge to that which binds the community, whether you got pregnant outside marriage, are gay in a heterosexist environment, black in a place dominated by white people, etc., etc.; the dominant culture excludes what is unwelcome. There is always a need for the historical contextualising of the term, as there is for an understanding of what binds the community.

In the recent attempts to promote ‘active citizenship’ in the republic with the institution of the Task Force for Active Citizenship (TFAC) the focus on the potential for social change still remains on community development despite its problems (Lee, 2006). But TFAC can also be seen as an aggressive move on the part of the government to remove power from the community development sector leaving the concept of citizenship precariously balanced in the tussle between ‘bottom-up’ strategies and ‘top-down’ measures; imposing new demands and moving all the goal posts, structural supports, and disempowering systems of understood practice. In particular this can be understood to de-politicize community development and voice (Gaynor, 2009). Rodriguez’s proposition for a new framework does

not address the dynamics of what is happening in Ireland unlike some of her analysis and criticisms of theoretical paradigms which certainly do help us. So it is important to explore why certain frameworks actually work in different contexts.

CM in Ireland is connected at a number of levels with the social movement of community development which unlike the UK and imperialist models is rooted in a bottom-up organizing process (Geoghegan 2000). Within this movement ‘community of interest’ and people’s self development collectively produces a kind of CM that is not something static as it might be if understood solely in terms of say, a geographic community or an institution such as a community television or radio station - but emerges from peoples self-organising activity.

1.6.3 Community and development

The oft quoted ‘94 definitions of community’ proffered in the 1950’s testifies to the difficulties that surround the concept of community alone. For some the looseness of the term means that it is open to being treated as a ‘free space’ for a wide range of theorising and activity that arises from often extremely divergent positions and purposes. The concept of community development also has a longer history than the communitarianism project promoted by Etzioni.

Marjorie Mayo in a paper designed for the UN in 1974, documents the origins of ‘community development’ in the 1920’s British Empire as aids to a wide-ranging set of requirements for infrastructure building in the colonies ranging from

facilitating the export of primary products by road and bridge-building (with unpaid native labour), to adult education and the establishment of local institutions, as (somewhat ephemeral) bulwarks against future civil or military dictatorships” (Mayo, 1974, p. 6)

Mayo (1974) showed the UN 1955 definition of community development that centralised the “virtue of self-help” to be key to the rollout of policy not only in Britain but also in the US. She quotes a HMSO “Colonial handbook on Community Development” that emphasised the role of “education for ‘citizenship through participation to make local democracy work’”. What Mayo refutes is that all development is ‘good’ development and that the range of actors is vast. What is clear is that this ‘undefined’ area of activity is a significant site of struggle and this approach continues. In Ireland Gary McGann, CEO of Smurfits, described their activities in Columbia as ‘corporate social responsibility’ using community development practice and education grants to support village economic growth and thereby create disaffection from the indigenous FARC insurgents – a recent example of a commercial operation acting as social control in an old way.

Powell and Geoghegan (2004) differentiate between models of development that are

1. Market led
2. State-led
3. Community-led

What I need to look at is how actors work and develop strategies that will result in social transformation of the conditions of working class people. While this helps me differentiate models – I am faced with the ‘constant reshuffle’ and the shifting alliances mean that I have to be aware of the relationships between the community, the state, and the market that are inherent in models presented.

A number of researchers return to the idea of trends towards consensus and conflict as important in understanding how community development organisations operate (Curtin and Varley, 1991). It is clear however that organisations use a combination of tactics based in *both* consensus and conflict to achieve their goals (Mayo, 1974) and so develop ‘hidden

and public transcripts’ (Scott, 1990) . It is curious then, that the literature relating to Irish community development while it recognises the existence of consensus and conflictual collective actors gives significantly less attention to conflicts –who and what they are, where they are located, and how they operate (Geoghegan, 2000). This gap itself contributes to the indetermineability of community development.

This indetermineability on the one hand has left open a playing field for those, including politicians and theorists, who present it as the panacea for all social problems and use the principles of empowerment and participation as a just reason to tell people to ‘do it themselves’ (Mayo P. , 1999). Yet on the other hand it may be precisely the fact that community development is indetermineable that makes it a useful framework in which to examine the dynamics between working-class self-organised activity and the social structures that this activity pushes against, whether that push is deliberate or unintended.

1.6.4 How does CD happen and who does it?

Geoghegan proposes that “individuals acting in a collective manner *construct* community development” (Geoghegan, 2000, p. 15). He goes further to say that

the rubric of community development can actually contain collective actors with polar opposite aims: perhaps in some cases even best understood as opposed social movements” (Geoghegan, 2000, p. 29)

Varley’s (1991) assessment of the incapacity of pilot programmes to develop blueprints for replication ultimately pointing to community development being a ‘learning process’ type activity points to the function of community development *as a means to produce knowledge*. Geoghegan’s exposure of the role of ‘axial’ activists and the importance of raising questions around

the relationship between their cosmology and the technology of community development (Geoghegan, 2000, p. 237),

gives an idea of what kind of knowledge is being produced and how very key are the people engaging in the process. Approaching the concept of community development as something that is continuously being constructed and reproduced in a dynamic relationship of differing forces and interests makes sense in the context of multifarious types of activities with multifarious positions and purposes. But it means that the question we have to ask is where it is coming from, what has it produced, and where it is going to.

Two recent publications; “Two Paths, One Purpose” by Acheson, Harvey, Kearney and Williamson (2004) and Powell and Geoghegan’s (2004) “The Politics of Community Development” reflect the need community actors themselves have felt to ask these questions. Anna Lee, a former Chairperson of the Combat Poverty Agency, and Manager of the Tallaght Partnership, drew heavily on Powell and Geoghegan’s work in a pamphlet published in 2006 addressing the issues and challenges for community development. In a section titled “The fault line in current practice” she states that

“there is little evidence that community development has been able to rebalance existing policy-making structures” (p.12).

She notes the difficulty in involving “the media in highlighting poverty issues”; the need to address issues of power and asks the question

is the commitment to community development as a means of achieving positive social change being undermined even from within the sector itself?

Lee identifies six problems in current practice:

- a shift towards partnership and consensus-building,
- emphasis on the local level and ‘mistrust’ between the local and national levels,
- the delivery of services as opposed to work for social change;
- short term support – limited to two to three years;
- reliance on public funding; and
- a move towards ‘managerialism’.

She asserts that

The right of people, including those living in poverty, to participate in the formulation of public policy decisions is now generally uncontested. . . . proponents of community development view it fundamentally as enabling people who are marginalised to have a voice in the democratic process.

A question that then arises is where does the democratic process take place? How and where do we hear the voice?

Geoghegan (2000) questioned the gap in the theory where oppositional elements were not being investigated. The idea that there may be something missing in the literature appears to have been shelved. These are gaps, therefore, in the viewpoint of those who try to use it to address policy - even champions of the poor such as the CPA and Lee herself. This is a big miss and makes one ask where the drive for consensus within the sector literature comes from, and why. Lee points out that

the factors that give rise to poverty are generally neither created nor solved at a local level

and she further points out that some funding lines have come under threat because of:

differences between funders and activists in relation to the way resources have been used.

This included 'reluctance' to fund research and actions aimed at influencing wider public opinion, underpinned by the shift in focus to creating

opportunities for managers . . . and policy workers' is directing resources and attention away from generating and supporting activists whose interest is in "building voice and capacity". (Lee, 2006)

This seems to affirm the arguments of Fox-Piven and Cloward.

1.6.5 Building voice and capacity – communication as a means of production

If community development is the context that community television has been built within then clearly the tensions that are evident in the wider community development movement will also operate within the drive to establish community television.

Theorists tend to identify two traditions in community development theory - a democratic pluralist approach and a radical and socialist line (Popple, 1995). This can be roughly translated into a pluralism or pragmatism - seeing society as a set of institutions that operate within the structures of the state (or outside it); or an approach to theoretical issues that is ideologically informed (Powell, 2004).

The effort to find a 'third way' through civil society that dominated the late 1990's found explicit expression in theories of social capital (Putnam, 2000) and communitarianism (Etzioni, 1993) that were adopted by a range of first world governments including New Labour. Acheson and Harvey (2004), in their comparative analysis of community and voluntary activity in the two jurisdictions of the North of Ireland and the Republic, also highlight the importance of these theoretical developments as a basis for a possible convergence of these sectors on the two parts of the island.

However the contestations that exist within voluntary and community groups fractures the idea of unity at the base of communitarianism as do the diverging beliefs and allegiances of actors within civil society.

As a clear example of this kind of fracturing Geoghegan cites social movement activists such as those in the Muintir na Tire of 1940's Ireland who still represent one strand of influence in the Irish community development environment. He points out that while the activists he studied saw themselves as

defenders of the working class, Devereaux’s Muintir na Tire’s activists saw themselves as the neutralisers of class conflict (2000).

There is clear potential for conflict and hidden and control agendas in this scenario.

1.6.6 Civil Society

The depiction of society as falling into three sectors – the state, commercial activity, and civil society is commonly used in a way that avoids confronting a fundamental logic to social organisation under capitalism which ensures control of production in the hands of the owners of the means (Marx & Engels, *The Communist Manifesto*, 1996). The three sector approach often obscures the fact that for those without resources, this is not an equal playing field and struggle is inevitable⁵⁷. Placing movements within something called ‘civil society’ in this way seems to de-politicise them and the term is often evoked to somehow legitimize a movement as belonging to this sector.

Gramsci saw civil society as part of a general division between the public (or the state) and the private (or civil society which includes a range of actors); his concept of a ‘war of position’ was developed in an effort to explain the workings of hegemony. Civil society is the site of struggle to influence the ‘hearts and minds’ of people – where ideologies are contested. It is a fluid interface in which actors engage rather than a societal sector where they belong. Movements may see their activity as being directed to that interface – but this applies to movements from above as well as from below.

The diversity that lies at the heart of community media is shared by the community development movement in Ireland and also exists in Gramsci’s interpretation of civil

⁵⁷ the BCI used a Venn diagram in its original radio policy document to place community radio in relation to other forms of broadcasting – it also neatly shows these areas overlapping, putting ‘community’ or voluntary sector in the place of civil society

society. Rennie approached the issue for community media by giving prime place to its aspirations; this has also been the main thrust of campaigning groups and it proved to be part of the underlying difficulties in forming a unified frame for community media in the approach to the WSIS summit in 2003. Again in this context civil society being presented as ‘morally good’ was contested (Calabrese, 2005).

Statements on the nature of civil society are nowadays couched in fairly careful terms:

It is often assumed that civil society is a good thing, but this is not necessarily true. For example, civil society associations can help strengthen democracy and improve the well-being of deprived communities as can they undermine human rights and preach intolerance and violence (Carnegie UK, 2007, p. 5)⁵⁸

A caveat attached to the EU Council of Ministers (2009) approval of community media also recognizes a problem in assuming its moral positioning.

Civil society is not an entity – it is a social milieu defined only by how those who appear in it organize in respect of their goal; participation in civil society is circumscribed by the same inequalities that exist in society as a whole; activity from above works to regulate - or exclude - working class engagement in this site of struggle..

Gramsci (1998) provides a key concept for how working-class people can engage in this struggle within civil society when he proposes how a new intellectualism can be built.

One of the most important characteristics of any group that is developing towards dominance is its struggle to assimilate and to conquer “ideologically” the traditional intellectuals, but this assimilation is made quicker and more efficacious the more the group in question succeeds in simultaneously elaborating its own organic intellectuals. (Gramsci A. , 1998, p. 10)

The paper “L’Ordine Nuovo” had a key role in the effort of supporting the development of ‘organic intellectuals’ and fortifying the “struggle to conquer the traditional intellectuals”.

⁵⁸ “Aware that while community media can play a positive role for social cohesion and intercultural dialogue, they may also, in certain cases, contribute to social isolation or intolerance; conscious that to avoid this risk, community media should always respect the essential journalistic values and ethics common to all media” <https://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?id=1409919> see also Appendix No 31(d)

Both Gramsci and Paulo Freire shared an understanding of the importance of praxis as the basis of Marxist philosophy and the lived experience of people as the basis for their intellectual engagement with the world; both saw the development of critical and transformative education practice for the working-class as vital. Freire’s ideas found fertile ground in the political turmoil of 1960’s Brazil. The campaign to get peasants to participate in elections involved teaching people to read and write since only literates could qualify to vote. This had significant success – in the 1962 literacy programme rural workers in Angicos became literate in 45 days in order to gain the right to vote. This was education as part of a popular movement in which the people were deeply engaged, in which they could see the quality of their lives changing and an end to their exploitation (Mayo P. , 1999) (Heaney, 1995). Facundo (1984) highlighted this important element in her critique of Freire’s methodology as used with poor Hispanic communities in the US where there was no political programme that people could link their progression to, just as there were no economic prospects for them in terms of jobs etc. Facundo’s is a key critique that can be applied to community development generally – asking what the objective of the exercise is *for the people*.

Gramsci sees the political party as being the group that does the work of developing organic intellectuals and producing leaders from the ranks of the class, and he recognizes that this grouping is small. Therefore creating strategic alliances that allow people to negotiate positions and further their goals – in Freire’s terms ‘tactically inside and strategically outside’ - assumes a large place in how counter-hegemonic battles can be won. This is often the basis for positions taken by organisations representing poor people in trying to influence policy and bring benefits to their communities. It is also seen as the problem in that this is when co-option and corporatization tend to happen (Fox-Piven F. &, 1979).

Neither Gramsci nor Freire gave much attention to the possibilities in technology for social transformation (Mayo P. , 1999). But Gramsci's ideas of hegemony and the role of civil society formed an important theoretical keystone for academics wanting to address the pessimism of the Frankfurt School in relation to media and he therefore has an important place in Media Studies. ***But the part of both Gramsci and Freire's work that is very often omitted from this discourse and which is a crucial part of the contribution of both thinkers are the dialogical methods of critical pedagogy that free people to critically engage with the world in terms of their own lived experience; the basis for the development of organic intellectuals.***

In the current ideological struggles around media control the voices we hear are most often those of academics or those within the media who are critical of how it operates. The voices of poor people do not feature and the representation of their issues is left in the hands of others. It is this that community media activists seek to redress, and they seek to do this by building the capacity of people to articulate their experience. The potential for increased networking opportunity of the new technologies has been welcomed by many from all sides of the concerned community (Fox-Piven F. , 2007), (Wainwright, 2008), but the possibilities within CM as a means to link to grassroots community activity is pretty much ignored. Fox-Piven in particular has noted the main cause for this – the organizing that removes the activists from the base. So the question is can anything be done about this? How can activists retain the connection with the people who struggle with exploitation?

One answer has been delivered by adult educationalists and community development activists and that is to use popular and emancipatory education along Freire's and Gramsci's lines; and this has to be *an integral part* of the vision of how we build community media entities - not an add-on.

If we are to support the development of organic intellectuals then these methodologies are increasingly relevant to how we now deal with the promise and the problems of technology. ***This is what makes CM a part of community development and popular education organisations.***

The underlying issue is on whose behalf do we need to change media and in what way? Who is it that needs the access to voice that media gives and how is this to happen?

There are currently two strands of what is called community media activity which could conveniently fall into the advocacy/service provider split that is most often imposed by state agencies. This appears to force the separation of the functions of representation and addressing needs and also then creates the conditions that separate the organizers from the base.

Many critiques of both Gramsci and Freire point to the capacity for their ideas to be used as a politically useful way to gain influence. The French Nouvelle Droite movement called the struggle for cultural hegemony a 'Gramscism of the Right' and Freire's work is used by literacy programmes attached to development and corporate interests that tie workers to exploitative industrial and political programmes. From the left Gramsci has been the centre of debate about the political neutrality of hegemony (Van Craenenburg, 1999) and Blanco Facundo's (1984) impassioned critique of Freire triggered a reconsideration of the conditions and the motivations in working class education (Ohliger, 1995)⁵⁹ (Gibson R. , 1999). None of this however, refutes the ground principles of both thinkers based in Marx's philosophy of praxis that the lived experience of the working class is the foundation for whatever action is possible for their liberation from exploitation. This brings us back to

⁵⁹ <http://www.uow.edu.au/~bmartin/dissent/documents/Facundo/Ohliger2.html>

the ‘point about stories’ and to Fox-Piven and Clowards' analysis of the options available to poor people.

The core problem here is how do poor people develop the capacity to create their own stories, develop useful knowledge, and to access media to diffuse them *and also* avoid co-option and corporatisation? Is this where the *kind of stories that are diffused* become most relevant? And how do those stories get produced? Examples abound of films made by independent film-makers such as Ken Loach, Michael Moore, and numerous individuals committed to exposing exploitation and to exploring issues for the left. But the fact remains that they develop their story-telling skills within specialist education practice that is class defined and are tied to the media institution by the funding which defines the work practices, divisions of labour, and standards. This means that independent film-makers operate within an enclosure, another part of the media map/territory that has been defined by the dominant group and it is clearly hard for them to leave this practice and operate in different ways.

Collective film-making practices – in production and editing - are the focus of experimentation for Indymedia based activists and this may forge new pathways to produce content. However this has been done before – much of done by graduates fits comfortably with film-making trends thus ensuring those students remain within that ideological enclosure. Even DADA became institutionalized. The obvious route if we want to diffuse these methods of producing content is to make them part of popular education programmes – linked to active movement objectives.

If a Gramscian understanding of the formation of organic intellectuals is important to this process then his ideas on education, which lead us directly to those of Paulo Freire, should also be part of this effort. That means there must be a dialogical mode of educational practice that works around how people understand how they are in the world and that

optimizes their access to and use of media. Today media skills are considered an essential part of life and media literacy programmes are being developed across the world with reports generated on a national and regional level (OFCOM, 2006) (Barnes, 2007) (Barcelona, 2007) (O'Neill & Barnes, 2008). The difficulty is that much of this work focuses on an assumed 'public sphere'; seeing people as accessing media as audiences rather than producers; and places the activity within mainstream education. In particular the Irish study focuses on the introduction of media literacy to mainstream second level education (Barnes, 2007). ***These strategies will not reach poor people. As Freire's methods amply demonstrated in Angicos, poor people will engage and develop what skills they know are necessary – if and when the facilities are available and accessible to them in their own communities and if the objective is clear.***

1.6.7 CD as a Social Partner

The framework of social partnership launched in 1987 by the Irish government was widely accepted to be due to a crisis within the political elites (Allen, 2007) (Larragy, 2006). The groups were trade unions, the employers and the farmers. This configuration is understood to be unusual and became even more so when the community and voluntary sector was invited to join as one of the 'social partners' in 1996 (Larragy, 2006). However, given the analysis of very similar processes in the US that demonstrate the difficulties of co-optation and de-politicisation (Fox-Piven F. &., 1979), it's not surprising that entering, leaving, and returning to the social partnership process was a difficult, draining business for the community and voluntary groups involved. The unclear nature of the representative status of groups; the process of their inclusion in the community pillar (invited by the Taoiseach); and the poor communication infrastructure to link back to the mass base meant that

considerable confusion reigned amongst those they represented (Harvey, 2004) (Larragy, 2006) (Keenan, 2008).

Some critics of the process claim it cannot be seen as simply a neo-liberal 'slash and burn' economics on the part of the government (Larragy, 2006) and cite the inclusion of civil society – in particular the farmers and the 'Community Pillar' - as marking the Government's interest in social rather than purely economic issues. However the economic boom *did* see a rise in neo-liberalism, championed by the Progressive Democrats who, despite the small size of the party became powerbrokers throughout the Celtic Tiger years, their reign ending dramatically with the economic crash of 2007/8. The promotion of public-private partnerships throughout the Celtic Tiger period was the underpinning of this formulation. Others have understood the process as being fundamentally flawed:

The irony of the Celtic Tiger was that while the elite talked of a social partnership with the unions, they had already torn up this implicit social contract (Allen, 2000, p. 3)

A number of community organisations had attempted to form a specific community representative grouping, but whilst invited to the process as the Community Platform, were only recognized as one member of the Community Pillar. The strategy to enter into negotiations had given the Community Platform some leverage in the 2000 agreements, but this did not continue into the subsequent years and when they refused to sign off on the 2006 agreement the Community Platform had to leave the process. Despite major reviews of the process amongst a wide range of community groups (Harvey, 2004), this position did not yield any dividends and they have since returned into partnership on the basis that it's better to be in than out. Meade (2005) locates the issues between redistribution of wealth and recognition, describing a process that distorted the self-image of community groups; a removal from any semblance of democratic process; a

marginalized place within social partnership to negotiate structural change to address social disadvantage; and she called for the construction of alternative political forums, embracing the concept of the WSF and developing national and local Fora as anti-capitalist voice .

The general assessment is a depressing one:

In other words, the battle for ideas has been won hands down by those with a vested interest in ensuring the state takes an extreme market-friendly approach to public policy and in seeking to avoid debates about redistributive taxation, adequate social spending and provision, and more active state policies to generate more successful domestic productive sectors. (Kirby & Murphy, 2008, p. 10)

In the midst of a booming economy that is going bust, it is frightening. Yet we have emerged from a history of poverty and there exists a consciousness within a broadly working class community development movement of emancipatory processes and methodologies. A large grassroots community development movement has been well explored by many researchers (Geoghegan, 2000) (Powell, 2004), (Donoghue F. , 2007) (2006) , (Daly, 2007) including the workings of the Community Workers Co-operative over some decades. So surely we know what needs to happen now? But will all our strategies for dealing with those years prove in any way useful to deal with what is coming?

The roll out of community television in Ireland has happened on the cusp of the biggest crisis in capitalism in living memory; community radio came on stream on the cusp of the Celtic Tiger; will these contexts make a difference to how we now develop? Will community broadcasting prove to be a tool for progressive change or will it confirm the dismal judgment of failing to meet its own goals?

I have drawn in this thesis on Antonio Gramsci’s theories that aimed to understand the reasons why fascism took hold in Italy. These provide a deeper understanding of the workings of society that allow certain ideas to become dominant and – from a Marxist

viewpoint - why things go wrong and what we need to understand in order to find a way to turn them round. His work on the formation of the intellectual provides a framework to look at activists' practice and his theory of 'war of position' and hegemony – both in society's hegemonising and in the formation of counter-hegemonic movements are key to understanding some of the movement directions within community media.

Theories that inform the community development (CD) movement are equally important as influences on the practice of many of the participants in this PAR project. The contribution of grassroots activists to the development of CD theory - whose initial enthusiasm has been tempered by tough disappointment is also important - provides a critique and a balance to what may be seen as idealistic and unrealistic goals but that have also been a driving force behind the community development movement (Facundo, 1984), (Ohliger, 1995).

I have been led to Gramsci and Freire as the providers of key theories relevant to the research project through the nature of the participant's concerns and priorities. I draw also on work that seeks to develop strategies based on both Gramsci's and Freire's ideas: Augusto Boal, who developed forms of drama that drew heavily of Freire's work, is a key influence on the main case study of community organisation involvement in media in this research; Peter Mayo's synthesis of Gramsci and Freire's ideas to develop "Possibilities for Transformative Action" provides a critique of the hegemonising nature of neo-liberal ideology that gained dominance "on either side of the traditional political spectrum in Western democracies" in the 1980's, the problem of misappropriation of language, and of postmodern totalising. Mayo focuses on these two theorists' contribution to understanding of the role of education as an emancipatory tool specifically in terms of 'social relations, sites of practice and content'. At the core of his inquiry is the idea of education as:

the means by which men and women deal critically and creatively with reality and discover how to participate in the transformation of the world" (Jane Thompson cited in Mayo, 1999, p.5).

It's not surprising then that Adult and community education providers and activists have often been involved in both thinking for, and initiatives around, media - the most notable probably being Raymond Williams. ***A basic tenet here is that it is human beings who use opportunities to change the structures of society they experience*** (Cox & Nilsen, 2005).

In an era marked by the intensifying globalisation of inequality the response from below is also seen in the growth and spread of the Indymedia movement which opens up a direct channel for 'voice'. The rise to prominence of the Irish Indymedia site came about through grassroots activists using the site to expose the use of Shannon by US military in rendition operations. It is not only a significant example of how such a direct channel can have significant impact but also how a 'media' entity can be created when media enthusiasts are attracted to the site⁶⁰.

Taking a very different approach community activists are using as a model the participative drama of Augusto Boal (Theatre of the Oppressed), and the work of Anne Hope and Sally Trimmel (Training for Transformation) both of which use Freirean constructs and adult education as a basis for a developmental model for empowerment. This way of working revolves around the communication needed to develop collective knowledge and people involved in these processes often use media to support that communication. At the core of this developmental way of working is what Freire called 'naming the world' becoming able to name one's reality and identify clearly the forces by which it is controlled and shaped.

⁶⁰ The huge amount of work involved in the moderation of the site, enormous voluntary commitment to keep the site going as a functioning democratic channel, provides scope for many volunteers, although it is hard to know just how many are active at one time.

1.6.8 Community development media - community television.

The development of self-consciousness through the telling of one’s story is core to the sort of activity that typifies community development; this is linked to practices from many movements including consciousness-raising as used in feminist practice. It would seem on the face of it that community radio is the medium that has the most potential for amplifying the telling of stories. The technology is relatively easy to use and it would seem to be more directly accessible than a medium like television that has more complex production demands. But the drive for community television is very strong: the popularity of television as a medium, the capacity to create images as well as using speech, makes it an important medium for movement actors to access.

Those who worked to develop community television in Ireland were all driven by a similar vision. But while cheaper and ‘easy to use’ technology brings it nearer; platform fragmentation and cost have meant its reach is restricted. So there are still substantial barriers to accessing television for those without resources.

Inequalities in the world we live in mean that media like all other resources in the world are used to “*consolidate positions of power and privilege*” (Hammelink, 2006). If we are to change our conditions of existence it is not only essential to employ media, but we must find ways to use these media that will not replicate a media model that is **designed** to consolidate power and privilege. The difficulty for us is that broadcast media as we know them have been constructed in ways that are designed to control access and allow “voice” only to those who can pay for it ensuring that only certain voices are heard. Mainstream media production practice tends to be organised in hierarchical ways that emphasise individual authorship and prohibit collective ways of working. The conventions that determine how media should be used, the codifications within media text also create barriers. Because of its powerful place in defining how we are in society this aspect of

media (especially film and television) has been paid particular attention by cultural theorists. Television is the focus of intense government attention and regulation, its importance is acknowledged in recent reports such as that issued by OFCOM, the UK Regulator –

Television is still the main source of information for most people (OFCOM, 2006).

In negotiating this territory we begin to understand that claiming media is no small challenge for those without a voice but the challenge this activity poses to how the world is organised is also significant. Those who take media into their own hands are in a position to change the text, the sub-text, and the context.

Doing this means:

- Situating community television firmly as a form of community media – a communications tool for communities, both geographic communities and communities of interest.
- Identifying the need for community television – who needs it and why, exploring the expectations of the benefits, and how it will work.
- Mapping the constraints – the forces that need to be moved in order to make it happen.
- Finding ways to maintain the struggle both to continue the communication and to access the tools.
- Clarity around the choices that are made, have to be made, or are enforced, and how they are then managed.

Only then can we identify our real questions and usefully interrogate our activity, because what it is *not* about is a consideration of the media element of community television as a

specialist, expert activity - something separate from the human agency that devises it and its social context.

1.7 Summary Chapter 1

In order to understand the nature of community media activity and the forces by which it is formed and determined we need to employ concepts of class, community, State and voice, which inform analyses embracing the presence of working class self-organised activity; where working class knowledge is produced from below in interaction with the interests of those in power who need to place constraints on such knowledge production. Some categories we have brought to the analysis pre-exist - such as class and state; some categories we find in the process – exclusion, social identity, consciousness, and struggle.

It is also necessary to address tensions between ways of working such as community development and community media, product versus process, technical skills versus critical knowledge - since these form essential components of the dynamics that drive community media. Negotiating these areas demands a methodology that creates a framework in which these tensions can be worked out through time and in dialogic engagement between people and groups, some of whom may occupy very different positions and hold diverging understandings. A PAR methodology sets in motion a cycle of action and reflection within which difference and change may be negotiated as part of a process of knowledge production; the extended case study allows us to map the direction of activity to develop community media and test the knowledge production base and who and what it supports.

Because of the way that working class knowledge is produced it is sporadic, it does not pass seamlessly from generation to generation and needs to be reproduced in the face of struggle. The effort needed to maintain knowledge production is huge and the experience

of defeat is often overwhelming. To resist this devastation, not only does new knowledge need to be produced in the form of new stories, but tacit knowledge must be tapped and, most importantly, the self-knowledge that produces the awareness of how we either reproduce or change the existing social order must be developed. Community media is production of knowledge about working class life and needs; it is also the technical knowledge of production - the means of intellectual production that provides processes needed to make tacit knowledge more explicit, coherent, and political. How is the knowledge that is produced from experience worked on and processed to filter the key arguments? Community media has the potential to support horizontal connections and collaborations. How do activists work to realise this? What collaborations, alliances, and social relationships can be built on the basis of this knowledge?

There is a difficulty that the diversity and individual creativity that is characteristic of community media works counter to the development of collective knowledge production and therefore a 'collective will'. This problem is partly the reason for the imbalance between the wealth of case studies and dearth of theoretical development as practitioners strive to show the potential of their initiative. However community media is dealing with - and is produced by - the complexity of social relations; in this sense it constitutes an important site of knowledge production. In reference to this context particularly, both Gramsci and Friere showed how important diverse experience and needs are to how we learn to work with others to make something happen; diversity is necessary for, and individual creativity becomes a key to, generating knowledge production in working class self-organised activity. Good practice in community media is to fulfill a role as a key instigator of the dialogic processes that turn social engagement into useful knowledge production.

Fault-lines in community media activity run parallel to those in community development; co-option, corporatisation, and de-politicisation. In particular the co-option of community media initiatives into mainstream media structures and modes of operation are a serious and viral undermining of its purpose and potential. We need to ask are we making media about working class existence in a voice that is acceptable to the status quo, or are we involved in processes of knowledge production to release a voice that can: describe and define its own reality; understand and analyse its situation in relation to the structures of society; pose solutions to the issues it faces; and act with this knowledge?

Developing theory poses problems, not least is who has the time, energy, and resources to put into thinking about our activities and purpose. Facundo's questioning of how Freirean methodology is used in different contexts becomes even more critical if we do not allow ourselves reflexivity in our practice. She identifies the key question as:

who are we, where do we come from, what are we looking for, how sound is our approach based both in the writings of Freire and in the concrete context in which we work.
(Facundo, 1981)

That 'we' must, in the case of community media, be at one with working class self-organised activity if it is to enable diverse voices contribute to the formation of the 'collective will' of the working class in the Gramscian sense. Is this our practice? How do we ensure it is?

CHAPTER 2 The nature of community media

2.1 What CM involves – key aspects

2.2 Key research question

2.1 What CM involves – key aspects

In the previous sections a number of key aspects of community media emerge that are of concern to this thesis in respect of community development organisations and their operations:

Communication: is the basic driver of community media and the predominant cause of any interest in it on the part of community organisations. This means that community media are not static entities and also that:

- Community organisations want to “get the message out” – GTMO - and see community media as providing a channel for interactivity with the community or target group whereby their message can be diffused throughout society and bring about change;
- communication is a function of community and community media are channels for this communication;
- combinations and interlinking of media is also a likely outcome of communication initiatives and various forms of media may be interlinked to provide the most suitable means of communication; it is as likely an outcome for a medium to be dropped altogether once it becomes no longer useful as it is for a form of community media to become a long-term initiative.
- A “web of strategies” is needed to allow access to communications technologies and ‘a voice’ in the full sense of ‘a presence’ will only be achieved through access to

multiple content outlets. It is the capacity to create open channels of ‘information flow’ between free media that will create the spaces whereby people without power have a voice.

Communally owned resource: cost issues and the need for people, skills, and teamwork are amongst the core reasons for shared ownership and this is highly pertinent with as complex an entity as community television, however other reasons are just as important:

- ownership invested in the community ensures that the needs of the community and not those of an external interest, are paramount in the workings of the community media operator; a community media operator is not-for-profit because its concern is solely to develop the community media service so its primary intention is not to create surplus value in monetary terms (also a clause in section 39 of the 2001 Broadcasting Act⁶¹); ownership is invested in the community to ensure it is not *sold* for profit to commercial concerns.
- Community ownership is also vital to create those spaces in which individuals can have a right to participate by virtue of being part of the community. In this way community ownership of media operators encourages a diversity of voices, whether they be geographical communities or communities of interest. This diversity is also understood to be how community television militates against the growing homogenisation of television content; it is also one way in which it contributes to participatory democracy.

⁶¹ this clause could be re-examined because it in fact requires the entity to not make any profit, rather than be not-for-profit, which are in fact two different things – a not-for-profit entity can make profit but puts the surplus back into the venture; an entity that should not make profit at all is another thing. It is also interesting because while this may be tricky on one level, it does mean that the Companies Act cannot apply in this regard, which is how the legality has been constructed.

Self-organised activity: Community media is self-organised activity of groups needing to communicate, and as such the manner in which the communication is conducted is particular to how those groups operate, the contexts in which they operate, and the pressures they experience. The objective of the communicative activity is of primary importance to the group and this activity is not likely to happen in contexts where the objective cannot be, in part or whole, recognized and met.

Building of alternative public spheres and democratic process: Community media and the communication activity it supports are inextricably part of the construction of public spheres that have intrinsic benefit to their communities.

- These can carry on self-sufficiently without necessarily interacting with larger bourgeois public spheres or any dominant authority.
- These are marked by the democratic and developmental approaches to communicative activity.
- This activity becomes oppositional only when the alternative sphere it has built pushes against and impacts on the dominant culture, this is disruption which the dominant culture will either accept or not and this can mean conflict.

Addressing internalisation of dominant culture: Since CM is a means of communication for those without money or power, community media activists can - and must - engage with dominant culture *in the forms that people have internalised it*.

- Mainstream media carries the voice of dominant cultural codes and 'normalises' them, media is one of the social mechanisms whereby people internalise oppression. So community media meets mainstream media firstly as an internalising force of dominant culture.

- As the voice of the dominant group, capitalist media is a force that impacts on community media – but particularly in this way.
- Community development principles and methodologies are important tools in supporting people in addressing their internalised oppression and therefore form a core part of the media operator’s ethos.
- The potential of community media to be a liberating force, and the part it can play in the development of conscientization, is in how successful it is in supporting people in their efforts to transform their realities from oppression to freedom.

Transferral of skills: if a community media operator is to enable the voice of the community then *knowledge about the production* process must:

- *be transformed* from something which is invested in and the sole property of professionals from whom one must then buy services to something that is shared and is invested in common ownership - this knowledge must be alive in the community;
- *be kept alive* if it is to play a part in the formation of a class-for-itself. How this is done in terms of community television is the concern of many community organisers – community media workers as far apart as Marseille and Dublin report similar difficulties⁶².
- *be used to build capacity*. Groups that worked to build media capacity within low-income / disadvantaged communities all reported problems with developing the capacity in individuals to work within the media production environment as on screen participants and as technical production crew. All report that they have

⁶² Meeting of FreeTV’s, Marseille Conference 2005; Community Response, Dublin; Ballymun Communications, Dublin.

been doing it for a long time and have difficulty maintaining the numbers to develop productions. This is proving to be a long process. Many groups have worked using drama, equally influenced by Freire and Boal, while successful transferral of skills has happened within this framework; this has not yet readily translated into the media project.

Intent: that which most distinguishes community media from capitalist media, and identifies it as ‘free media’ is its purpose and intent which is to:

- become a channel for the voice of those without the money or power that allows people to claim media for themselves.
- Ensure that the labour needed to produce it is not sold for profit;
- the value it accumulates is only harvested from the dynamic of it’s relation to the social organizing that is happening, a living element of the social relations of the actors.

For all the examples of community media we find – whether perfect or not - the communications tools people use in whatever way are an inseparable part of the development of movements and the cohesion of struggles. These struggles were about people’s efforts to change the conditions in which they live. Their need to communicate is essential. CM arise out of peoples need for communication tools to address issues, be they pressing problems, exchange of information, building networks, or validating achievements; as such community media provide a means for the process of class self-consciousness and a process in which people may engage with others in society to bring about change.

To fulfill this community television initiatives need to:

- **Involve a cross section of communities in a collective drive**
- **Interface with the state and tap resources to meet licensing requirements**
- **Need to develop a sustainability plan based on their inherent dynamic that involves the community actors and their organising**
- **Need to apply the same principles to develop innovative technological solutions to meet the needs of community actors**
- **Need to actively work to enable the transfer of skills from the professionals / independent film-makers;**
- **keep a low technical and cost bar to enable this transfer; and**
- **minimize the time and labour intensive elements of the medium.**

2.2 Key research question:

Since the research question changed from an early formulation of

“what do we need to do to make community television happen?”

to

“How can community and grassroots organisations in Ireland engage with and benefit from community television?”

I want to outline here some of the issues raised by the process of defining the question and the terrain we have to cross.

Aspects of the question:

- ***What is community television?*** Since community television is situated within the broader community media movement this means that “***what is community media?***” is a fundamental question here. Is it a social movement in itself or is it a

tool in the hands of social movement activists, and intellectual elites? Even more important is the question: **“what does community media and community television mean to activists?”** – particularly since the meanings are contested by the researchers.

- **Who is making community media?** Who is developing community television? Is it the **community activists** who make use media? Who are the **community media activists** developing community television? How is their activity organised? What have they achieved?
- **What is the situation of grassroots activists and community organisations?** – where are they at – their base, their purpose, their operations? What are their needs of community television? What is their capacity to engage with community television?
- **How are community interests being incorporated into the development of community television?** – e.g. how is this being tackled in relation to DCTV? What place do they take in the priorities of those in control of the process of establishing community television? What are the opportunities and constraints? What is the capacity and what are the needs now to ensure community needs are met.
- How can we map the likely **future path of community television?** Where is this all going to?

CHAPTER 3: “Movement precedents”

A Review of historical contexts of community media in Ireland

3.1 Introduction- Historicity, self consciousness, and activism in Ireland

- 3.1.1 ‘Voice and the State’ – the meaning of media control
- 3.1.2 Communication channels – containment and change
- 3.1.3 What are the media we use and how?

3.2 ‘Voice’ and media in Ireland

- 3.2.1 ‘proto-historical’ media -opportunities for ‘voice’ in transition periods
- 3.2.2 Dead and live media – producing and maintaining knowledge in the Annals and Hedge Schools

3.3 Community broadcasting in Ireland

- 3.3.1 Activity around needs – movement foundations
- 3.3.2 Community Radio – pirates and licenses
- 3.3.3 Community Television - pirates and licenses

3.4 Community media organising – (CVN-CMN-CTVN)

- 3.4.1 CVN – CMN (1993-1996)
- 3.4.2 CMN 1996-2000
- 3.4.3 The funding deficit and the fallout
- 3.4.4 Partnership and the community sector

3.5 Summary Chapter 3

3.1 Introduction – Historicity, self consciousness, and activism in Ireland

Chapter 3 introduces community media in Ireland, what was already known: the pre-history, the historical background, and the development of the community media sector in the current period. The emerging theoretical issues are checked against theoretical frameworks and current positions of main trends. This is to locate the quest for ‘voice’ within the nature of community media practice, and to understand the conditions we operate within.

Just as the development of working class consciousness is not a linear advancing progression but a start-stop advance –retreat kind of action, there is little evidence of a linear historical progression for that which facilitates the voice of self-organised working class activity: – what we know is often limited to sporadic bursts of organised activity around voice. This in turn means that our consciousness of our own history as community media is limited.

Activists tend to be embedded in their communities, often invisible to outsiders, and when they look outside for like-minded folk they may or may not see one another. I have a metaphor of ‘community moles’ for activists who burrow away within their communities and come up occasionally to a place where they will see other ‘moles’ - and this depends on whether other moles are out that night. Forging links between activists working in their own spheres is a crucial part of building coalitions and solidarity in working class struggle, especially in times of crisis. The value of the histories we can garner is to grasp and make visible the role that the use of media plays for movements in particular circumstances and to increase our understanding of its potential for coalition building and its pitfalls.

3.1.1 “Voice and the State” – the meaning of media control.

In Ireland the relationship of the state to business, and in particular to media, was exposed to scrutiny in a series of Tribunals beginning in 1997; a number are still ongoing. The Second Interim Report (2002) of what became known as the Flood Tribunal (see Appendix No 5⁶³) found that Ray Burke, as Minister holding portfolios for *both* Justice and Communications, had accepted bribes and manipulated legislation in relation to both land rezoning and broadcast media. Burke’s direct involvement with corporate interests had a number of consequences including: abolishment of the state’s 50 percent stake in commercial projects around natural gas resources and tax concessions around exploration and development back dated for 25 years (Allen, 2007, p. xviii); curbing the state broadcaster’s advertising to create privileged terms for commercial broadcasters and in so doing increasing the amount of advertising on broadcast media. In particular he secured financial benefits for a new commercial radio station, Century Radio, based on forcing the state broadcaster (RTE) to provide a range of services to the new station at costs fixed by the Minister and amounting to one third of the price assessed by RTE (Flood, 2002). Burke spearheaded the attack on public service broadcasting (which the Fianna Fail party saw as undermining its position in government) and tied media control to commercial interests – this was an essential part of a strategy on the part of an elite to appropriate the wealth in the country.

⁶³ The Second Interim Report of the Tribunal of Inquiry into Certain Planning Matters and Payments; p139-140

A circular relationship between the world of media corporations, legislation, and access to wealth is evident in the following statement by Tony O’Reilly as he explained his acquisition of gas field blocks for exploration

“Since I own 35% of the newspapers in Ireland, I have close contact with the politicians. I got the block he (the geologist) wanted” (Connolly F. , 2006)

Media is the modern network used by elites to put pressure on the state to operate in their interest and to legitimate the concessions they win (Allen, 2007). Ownership of such a weapon is power, and how this operates is analysed most notably in the ‘five filters’ identified by Herman and Chomsky (1994). Concerns about ‘freedom of the press’ are increasingly voiced as the media corporations become powerful global institutions.

John Horgan’s (2001) history of Irish media since the inception of the state in 1922 shows that the five years up to 2000 were pivotal in the process of globalisation of the Irish media.

He concluded that:

Control over the gateways and relay mechanisms through which these channels are distributed to the Irish population is already, as in other small countries, a matter of considerable concern, and the cultural and political questions raised by these developments will become even more pressing in the years ahead (p. 188).

In the last decade of the 20th century the relationship between the ownership of the means of material production and the means of intellectual production is particularly stark when it comes to the social construct of media⁶⁴. But while the media may change hands because those who are the powerful may change, it is always the powerful who are in control of communications, and how they then manage that control is the measure of the level of freedom and “voice” that individuals have in that society. This, of course, is the concern of

⁶⁴ Silvio Berlusconi in Italy and George Bush in the US demonstrate the concern of governments and powerful political figures to control media. In Venezuela the continued use of television in the battle between capitalist business interests and the popular government of Hugo Chavez underlines the key role of media in political struggles.

all censorship, all awarding of licenses, all devising of contracts, and all codes of practice. It is the control of ‘voice’ by the dominant group in society; but it is also the concern of all those who find they have no voice.

The underlying dynamics of this control of media is not particularly new; nor is the fact that subaltern groups simultaneously operate another process to access media from below as they are pressed to provide more profit for private coffers. People around the world and throughout time have found ways to use old and new media that are available to them; in using media to support their own independent activities they also build their capacity to engage with powerful interests that control their lives. This use of media happens within the spheres where people engage with one another in their common interest; it is a response from below that contains the capacity to disrupt the operations of capital.

3.1.2 Communication channels – containment and change

It’s tempting to view media channels as kind of ‘containers’ and given how mainstream media presents itself – as the neutral, objective, presenter of facts - one could be forgiven believing that ‘knowledge’ is ‘stuff’ that is simply being transferred into new ‘containers’ as they are discovered or invented. The only issues then are the commercial and ideological controls and gateways being established that will restrict access to both the ‘containers’ and the ‘stuff’. This is how legislators and regulators tend to present them - as is clear in the quote from Horgan above. The problem of course with this formulation is that it is people who control what knowledge goes into what containers and how it is extracted from them. It is impossible to remove people who operate in their class interest as agents from the equation - as producers and users of knowledge, the makers of technology, and social organizers. The presentation of media as a neutral form for communication poses a theoretical difficulty because of the integral part that communication plays in the way that

society operates (Williams, 2005) and how it organises and re-produces itself – what Karl Marx called a society’s ‘mode of production’.

The changes to patterns of communication and information transmission that technological developments of the late 20th century have brought about have also generated ideological constructs such as the ‘knowledge economy’ (Drucker, 1999) in which technological changes are seen to have profound social effects. While capital controls the tools of communication, communications systems will operate as an internal function of the present capitalist mode of production. These technologies may have changed how capitalism operates, particularly in terms of globalisation, but they still exist within and often serve to exacerbate, existing societal inequalities (Harvey 1989), (Hammelink, 2006).

Were there *universal access* to these tools and channels then we may have cause to reconsider what is happening to the dominant societal mode of production but research has amply demonstrated that large sections of populations are utterly excluded from any access at all to an ‘information society’ and those who do have access to it exist within a hierarchy of power with widely varying degrees of capacity to create, send, and receive information (O'Donnell, 2001), (Panos, 2007). It is in fact communication channels that are contained and state regulation serves to transform these into enclosures that buttress and control access to a single public sphere of influence.

3.1.3 What are the media we use and how?

The term ‘media’ is often used to refer to radio, film and television, print and Internet – generally the media industry that has been developed in the 20th Century. This not only limits our vision to the media controlled by the dominant social group but is also misleading. People use widely varied forms to carry the content that they need to

disseminate. When people place their message into a form, that form is a medium, the term ‘media’ refers to many forms (O’Connor, 2009).

Throughout history all forms, aural and visual– from the human voice and memory or fires on hill-tops to graffiti – have been used whenever they meet people’s communication need. The oral traditions of pre-literary societies, including song, verse, and story-telling continue to form core elements of forms of electronic media that are available today. John Downing (2001) in the revised version of his book, “Radical Media”, acknowledged that songs, poems and doggerel verse also deserved to be included in his trawl for examples. It is in fact the use of the medium that is important, the purpose and the function it serves and how effectively it can do that, which distinguishes it for people who need a voice (Williams, 1980).

It is evident that people have found ways, throughout history, to use **available** media to serve needs that are counter to, or are simply unseen by, the dominant culture. People, at times, also move beyond what is easily available and seize media they need to use when they want to be more effective - a strategy often used by social movements.

The sections that follow are in no way a complete or detailed historical study - what it attempts to do is put some important historical themes in communicative practices available to Irish people. It is followed by a chronology of Irish community media initiatives – precedents to the current period which is the subject of this research project.

3.2 ‘Voice’ and ‘Media’ in Ireland

3.2.1 ‘Proto-historical’ media - opportunities in ‘transition’ periods

Early transitions between modes of transmission in Ireland posed both problems and opportunities for voice. It is important to say here that the very idea of ‘transition’ from oral to literary modes of transmission is problematic since the arrival and even the privileging of one mode does not mean the total eradication of the other (Nagy, 1986). The persistence of oral traditions and the Irish language, Gaeilge, testify to this - despite attempts to eradicate them over eight hundred years of colonial and imperial domination (Berresford Ellis, 1985).

Early Irish society supported highly developed oral traditions that demanded long years of memory learning to produce professional elites such as Brehon Lawyers and Druids; their ‘Brehon Code’ was a system of laws produced through arbitration; i.e. the medium was oral and the methodology was debate amongst social actors. By the 4th and 5th centuries monks had arrived with a literary mode of transmission of the Christian message requiring skills of reading and writing as well as resources for book production and protection. While this mode of knowledge production was different – the priest interpreting the book occupying a central position rather than the Brehon as intermediary between social actors – the control of knowledge production was still in the hands of those in power. Druid and Monk clashed in a struggle for dominance and this was reflected in the ways different classes in early Irish society related to oral and written forms (Nagy, 1988), (Berresford Ellis, 1985).

The impact of the new media was amplified by its baggage – the monks brought with them the world of classical and Christian literature and began to merge these stories with fictions from an Irish traditional background. Artisans seeking to prove their ability in the new medium took on forms of expression and traditions that took them further away from the

indigenous clan base where such media were unknown; projecting themselves into a world of sophistry (Carney, 1955),(Nagy, 1988), (Ginnell 1894), (Joyce 1906)⁶⁵.

The literary mode won dominance but privileged skills of reading and writing remained in the monks' scriptoria and the royal courts. With their defeat, the Druids and Brehons, relegated to a lower status, took their oral skills – an array of 'media' - songs, poetry, story-telling and their attendant skills in expression, improvisation, mnemonics, and kenning – into the social milieu of the indigenous and 'illiterate' Irish.

Throughout subsequent centuries of English conquests these oral traditions were identified with the struggle to survive the extremely violent and harsh living conditions and were the only means by which the language, suppressed by law, survived (Dowling 1932). Oral tradition also maintained a range of Brehon social customs - communal agricultural and fishing practices which survived well into the nineteenth century (Berresford Ellis, 1985)⁶⁶.

However groups maintaining these customs survived in small, isolated, locations, very much on the margins of larger society. The value of introducing a new mode of knowledge transmission for the Christian and English intrusions into early Irish society was that it proved a key strategic weapon in displacing indigenous cultural traditions and achieving and maintaining dominance for a new order.

⁶⁵ Documents available online at:

<http://www.libraryireland.com/SocialHistoryAncientIreland/Contents.php> accessed 10.10.2008

www.draeconin.com/database/brehon1.htm accessed 10.10.2008

<http://www.libraryireland.com/Brehon-Laws/Ancient-Law-2.php> accessed 10.10.2008

⁶⁶ "As late as 1847, says Skene, there were still places in the Outer Hebrides where the land was tilled sowed and reaped in common, and the produce divided among the workers in accordance with the old Celtic ways. The feast of *Nábadach* was still held there where men drew their pieces of land by lot. The produce of certain lots were set apart for the poor, and fines went to a common fund to buy fresh stock." Engels also wrote on a visit to Ireland that: "Professors of political economy and jurists complain of the impossibility of importing the idea of modern private property to the Irish farmers. Property that has only rights and no duties is absolutely beyond the ken of the Irishman." (quoted in Berresford Ellis, 1985, p.15/16)

3.2.2 Dead and live media

Examples of producing and maintaining knowledge in the Annals of the Four

Masters and Hedge Schools

The threat posed by the English conquests drew differing responses from the elite and the lower classes of Irish society. The Four Masters were members of 16th century Irish elite who compiled existing written records to preserve the legacy of a culture facing extinction under the Penal Laws⁶⁷. The effort to preserve the past in a form that bore little relevance to current reality, or that defied inevitable change, is a supreme example of banking knowledge as Freire identified it – in this case stored and removed from society. Possession of these manuscripts was outlawed under the Penal Codes with severe penalties.

Combined with the legacy of the Brehons struggle that had produced unintelligible texts, this assigned them a talismanic, even fetishistic, allure and status (Berresford Ellis, 1985) (Nagy, 1988).

Hedge Schools⁶⁸ were a quite different response to the intensifying English campaign under Cromwell; they lasted for over 130 years finally collapsing under pressure from the rival and re-habilitated Catholic hierarchy. Hedge School Masters, understood to be the direct descendants of the Bards and Brehons were travelling intellectuals, poets or story-tellers, who eked a living from teaching children in exchange for food and shelter (Dowling P. J., 1932) (McManus, 2004). This was a popular education system, independent of church and state, supported by indigenous Irish parents including both the poor and the more well-

67 The project was in fact promoted and sponsored by a fifth master – a member of a Flemish Catholic community engaged in efforts to preserve the church in the face of the onslaught of the Reformation in Europe.
68 Called such since classes were at one time held outdoors under a hedge to avoid detection by militia.

heeled descendants of chieftains. The Schools Masters were at the centre of social organising and often found at the forefront of resistance – a number executed for their part in the 1798 rebellion. Whether from necessity or from conviction they were innovative in their teaching methods and engaged parents and children in learning together through the use of cheap and popular chap-books. These methods produced high literacy levels⁶⁹ and had broad support from the mass of Irish people (McManus, 2004). This constituted a people's movement, despite being largely responsible for the erosion of the Gaelic language⁷⁰.

This engagement with popular culture is seen again in revolutionary 1960's Brazil where Freire's popular education methodologies helped workers become literate in three months in order to qualify to vote; an achievement making him a guru for adult educationalists around the world (Ohliger, 1995), (Heaney, 1995), (Facundo, 1984). Paul Willis, whose study, *Learning to Labour* (1977) found that working class youth were failed by an education system that excluded their culture from the curriculum, also found that young people's engagement in popular cultural activities was where their capacity for development was greatest (Willis, 1990).

Hedge Schools, Willis's findings, and Freire's methodologies successfully harnessed the role popular culture plays in supporting learning and self-development for people who were excluded from society. Such patterns repeat; to paraphrase Thompson (1984), not simply in many parts of one country but in many countries at many different times, and the essential features do not appear to vary enormously.

69 By the 18th century literacy levels were high in Ireland, just under 50% of Catholics in the 1790s were literate, a number that had risen by only 5% in 1861 (McManus). Literacy has remained low despite 'free education'; in 1997 an OECD report identified one in four Irish people who had difficulties with everyday literacy and numeracy tasks.

70 The Schools operated for over 130 years and played a key role in shaping Irish society; their activity paradoxically both supported resistance and helped the erosion of the Gaelic language by teaching English. In the 19th century the rehabilitated catholic hierarchy won control of education which they saw as a strategic power base and the Hedge Schools movement collapsed.

Whatever communications media happen to be popular and accessible in any given time have been used to support the production of useful and necessary knowledge in working class self-organised activity.

3.3 Community broadcasting in Ireland -

3.3.1 Activity around needs – movement foundations

What are the forces that pushed and pulled the development of community broadcasting in Ireland? What did they leave as a legacy?

Historically, the 1960's and 1970's saw a drive in Ireland for community radio (Community radio) and community television (CTV); Community radio was the first to emerge from these efforts as a legal community broadcaster in the early 1990's. The campaigns for community access to broadcasting came from a mixture of grassroots organisers and pirates, but heavy pressure for the licensing of local and independent radio also came from commercial operators. These latter supported by power-brokers such as Ray Burke wanted to establish an independent media market – to make money from advertising. The Regulator (then the IRTC⁷¹) also had an input into matters by setting terms and conditions for licenses that pushed a number of the early community radio pirates to become commercial radio stations (Day, Community Radio in Ireland, : Building Community, Participaion, and Multiflow Communication, 2003). Until very recently accounts of the radio pirates tend to gloss over the driving forces from below as did Horgan (2001), or neglect these forces as did Mulryan (1988). A new generation of community media researchers is now emerging; some practicing community media activists, many based in

⁷¹ The Independent Radio and Television Commission (IRTC)

community radio, but others seeing their base within a broader community media context. Hopefully this will bring new approaches to the nature and focus of CM research⁷².

In 1960's and 1970's Ireland the drive for community television broadcasting came initially from the civil rights movement, from the wave of people's self organizing that was evident in the Bogside in Derry and in the street committees of Ballyfermot. Communication initiatives at this time arose from the organising needs of communities but the pushes and pulls that shaped these broadcasting initiatives also involved commercial and political interests. The CTV initiative in Ballyfermot came about through these movements meeting up with the proponents of new technologies – relay companies - who wanted a foothold in the developing cable and broadcasting market.

The tables on the next page, divided into decades for ease, set out a rough timeline in terms of milestones and initiatives since the 1950's – this is only indicative as, similarly to radio, the numbers and groups are hard to find and determine⁷³. It is clear that this is an unfinished timeline with big gaps, what is clearly needed is more research that locates how *needs from below are expressed through the use of media and how that function of media actually operated to meet those community's needs.*

⁷² Notable work has been produced by Byrne (2006), Day (2003), and Hourigan (2001) see also <http://www.iren-info.org/index.php?id=1> for new radio research network with database. Hourigan in particular examines the social movement aspect of access to television.

⁷³ Sources: (Int10, 2005) (Connolly D. , 2001) (Horgan, 2001), (Mulryan 1988), <http://www.irish-tv.com/405.asp>, <http://www.wikipedia.org>

CTV in Ireland overview of milestones 1922-1970

Year	Pirate	pre-licence broadcasts	Licences issued	Interest Groups	Mainstream / on air
1923		Marconi experiments			
1926					2RN First transmission
1951		Holme Moss Broadcasts UK; PYE 405 broadcast at RDS			
1955		BBC transmit from Belfast			
1961					First RTE television Broadcasts
1964	Radio Caroline				
1967	Radio Caroline off air				
1969					RTE first colour transmissions

CTV in Ireland overview of milestones 1970s

Year	Pirate	pre-licence broadcasts	Licences issued	Interest Groups	Mainstream on air
1970	pirate radio Saor Raidio Chonamara: 28th March 1970				
1972	Raidio na Gaeltachta Radio Caroline reappears				
1973	RnaG interlinked broadcasts from Donegal, Munster and Meath Gaeltacht TV pirate Ballyfermot community association/ Phoenix Relays			Donaghmede	
1975					RTE do mobile studio Dublin - Radio liberties
1976					RTE does small broadcasts from rural areas and in Cork
1978					Radio 2 goes on air

CTV in Ireland overview of milestones 1980s

Year	Pirate	pre-licence broadcasts	Licences issued	Interest Groups	Mainstream / on air
1980	Radio Sunshine and Radio Nova				
1981	Channel D TV				
1982	Pirate TV Capital Television, Ch 23				
1983	over seventy radio pirates operating, total number unknown; Pirate Nova TV transmits on Ch 55 and 59 from Rathfarnham, Dublin				
1984	Ballyfermot CTV group run another six months broadcast under permit				
1985	Southcoast and Pirate TV deflector satellites				Interim Radio Commission set up
1987	Women's Scéal radio: Free the Airwaves: Free women - Galway Pirate radio				Ray Burke gets two bills passed; Broadcasting and Wireless Telegraphy Bill; and the Sound Broadcasting Bill
1988	NACB publish booklet vis-à-vis community versus pirate				
1989			commercial radios/ Century Radio established		

CTV in Ireland overview of milestones 1990s

Year	Pirate	pre-licence broadcasts	Licences issued	Interest Groups	Mainstream on air
1990					Windmill Lane (TV3)Licensed
1992			Navan community television gets ministerial order and continues to run service until 2006	Open Channel	
1994		Community radio pilot programme		ACM	
1995			Channel 9, Derry		
1996		community radio licences			Telefis na Gaeilge
1998					TV3

CTV in Ireland overview of milestones 2000+

Year	Pirate	pre-licence broadcasts	Licences issued	Interest Groups	Mainstream /on air	
2002	Black Tuesday – ComReg crackdown on pirate radio stations			Galway; Cork; Donegal; Navan; Dublin		
2003						
2004					NvTv (NI, UK license) Channel 6;	City Channel;
2005		Pilot week for Cork community Television				
2006					DCTV; P5TV;	City Channel Galway; Channel 6;
2007						Channel South
2008						
2009					Cork Community Television	City 7

Community Broadcasting in Ireland – early initiatives

The 1960's saw the arrival of television in Ireland; civil rights protests from the USA to Northern Ireland alongside anti-Vietnam war demonstrations were transmitted into homes across the country. In 1968 and 1969 events in the Bogside and Burntollet were broadcast across the world and Northern Ireland, a little known partitioned corner of Ireland, became a household word. The severe State response and the repression of the civil rights movement in Northern Ireland resulted in a swift escalation into a war lasting 30 years accompanied by State censorship of media and self-censorship.

The upturn in the Irish economy in the 1970s also brought further changes particularly in newspaper ownership and the beginnings of the Independent Group media giant with Anthony O'Reilly at its helm. UK tabloids began to seek a share of the Irish market and alongside all this was the growth of pirate radio (Horgan, 2001),

The ground conditions in Ireland in which community broadcasting emerged were the war in the North; the poverty and lack of infrastructure in the neglected satellite urban developments in the South, particularly Dublin; the rise of a new media business class; and corruption in Government directly connected with media legislation (Flood, 2002). The various initiatives however had different focus points: for example the Irish language movement in the case of the Gaeltacht (Hourigan, 2001); the urban civil rights and community streets committees like the Ballyfermot Community Association Television (BCATV) based on the Chinese cultural revolution as was the organizing in Derry at the time (Connolly, personal communication 2009). It would seem that some catalysts were very local issues - like the struggle with supermarket interests when local people tried to establish infrastructure such as a Food-Co-op in Coolock and were forced out by the big

supermarkets (personal communication Jack Byrne 1998). Concern about food access and food prices was also the basis of a regular consumers programme “The Shopping Basket” presented on BCATV by local woman Anne McStay who checked and compared prices in foodmarkets and reported on them each week on air (McGovern, 2008). This was a use of television to ‘set prices’ which while having the same aims as ‘food rioters’ in Thompson’s accounts of 19th century food ‘riots’ (1993), demanded different levels and types of organizing skill.

All these need further research that could maybe identify the social movement allegiances of originating drivers – or what were their motivating forces. It would also be of interest to know where activists moved on to and whether they continued their media activism. I am now aware of activists involved in the Gaeltacht pirate television action who moved into community radio, others who became involved in local community structures, and some who moved into social policy arenas.

3.3.2 Community Radio – pirates and licenses

The 1980s brought a new economic downturn and the worst level of emigration seen since the Famine years of the 19th century - in this context radio was an inexpensive and popular medium. This brought a diverse range of radio pirates on air, but being completely unregulated meant that bigger stations inevitably dominated the airwaves and swamped smaller initiatives. Day’s (2003) account links the formation of AMARC⁷⁴ with the formation of the National Association of Community Broadcasters (NACB) – both established in 1983. She points out that the people who worked together to produce the NACB Charter proved later to have ideological differences but what these differences may have been is not

⁷⁴ World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters

explored. Day’s account clearly puts international networking as a key element in keeping this group together:

The degree of consensus can be explained by the contacts built up by leading members of the NACB with community radio activists globally in AMARC-International, in particular, the major part played by the chairperson of the NACB and of Concorde (later NEAR) in drafting the AMARC-Europe Charter. (p.26)

It is also clear that radio was very popular in Ireland; support for the ‘pirates’ when they were raided by the Gardai had been expressed in demonstrations and marches in 1978.

This support simply grew throughout the 1980’s (Day 2003), (Pine, 2002) yet people did not ‘en masse’ get involved in community radio, and the growth of this sector, while steady, is still slow.

Community radio emerged amidst the radio ‘pirates’ and the early development of the media industry in its growth into the global market with the media giants we know today.

Since they were all seen as pirates to start with the NACB (1987) with support from the Church published a brief pamphlet differentiating community broadcasting from the profiteering pirates. This separation was important to the community broadcasters as they lobbied for their licenses⁷⁵.

⁷⁵ Confusion reigned about ‘good pirates and bad pirates’ which unfortunately allowed the objection to radio pirates to carry on without any clarification of what their interests were. There are people who turn to radio ‘pirating’ because the demands of the licensing process are onerous, the costs prohibitive, and state ‘authorisation’ tends to reinforce inequalities. There are also those who become radio pirates purely for profit, they are commercial unlicensed operators. Community media activists are now using the terms ‘clandestines’ or ‘unlicensed’ in preference to ‘pirates’ and to try to clarify the ethos of the initiatives. In Ireland the decision for radio activists was to go with a licensing process, or not. In 1996/7 some community radio stations had problems when commercial pirates blocked their signal, a serious threat to their existence that needed to be properly addressed, and they then began to lobby to ostracise all pirates from any association with community media organisations. But this was not the worst of the problems that beset media operators - being forced to shut down by parties objecting to the content broadcast, thereby leaving the field open to commercial operators to take over has been shown to happen with a number of media operators. Horgan (2001) recounts a number of cases in relation to the press, and during the time it was owned by the state broadcaster Cablelink took a decision to *not* engage with live programming after a libel case cost them £60,000. It is the costs here that curtail the operations or introduce self-censorship. If you’ve got lots of money this is no issue – although the level of litigation against media

The new legislation in 1988 was intended to bring in other voices to offset the monopoly of RTE, an agenda that had the support of the dominant political party - Fianna Fail. The then newly established Regulator, the IRTC⁷⁶, focused on a commercial interpretation of the Act. Day (2003) sees this as giving the head-start to the commercial stations in

"gaining the ears, hearts and pockets of the listeners" (p.27).

While the commercial broadcasters certainly moved quicker (having more money and political clout than the community radio/CTV groups) it is clear that the regulator - and various generations of regulators - were keen to promote, protect, and see commercial operators established first. Day is clear that the Regulator deliberately held back the community radios in order to give the commercial stations a head-start and community radio activists saw this as unjust. The same pattern was evident in the development of CTV some ten years later.

Day sees the issue for community media as the competition with commercial radios for take up of audiences but the nature of community broadcasting is not one that relies on large audiences in the same way as mainstream media. Many of the community broadcasters with whom I have spoken in the course of this research did not see the activities of commercial stations as having a huge effect on the development of community radio or CTV. I was interested in their experience because the same thing was happening for CTV in 2004/5/6, and a similar sense of injustice was emerging. But both community

by politicians in Ireland kept solicitors firms very busy, two Taoisigh in particular, Charles Haughey and Albert Reynolds, were both known to regularly threaten press with legal action.

⁷⁶ Independent Radio and Television Commission

radio and CTV activists were unwilling to take up this issue and avoided calling the Regulator to task over its bias towards commercial interests. Since community radio stations had been treated similarly to commercial radio in terms of grant aid, community radio activists did not complain about this unfairness⁷⁷. The BCI appeared to be quite different in their approach to community television, and were adamant that they would not fund set-up or operating costs⁷⁸.

Between 1988-1994 some early community radio licensees dropped out or turned commercial (Day, Community Radio in Ireland, Building Community, Participation, and Multiflow Communication, 2003) and the Regulator then began to work with the community radio stations. In 1994 the first community radio pilot scheme was launched by the IRTC, and the first broadcasts of the new-style community radio channels went on air two years later. The community radio sector has grown steadily since then. Currently there are about twenty community radio stations broadcasting in the Republic of Ireland with a well developed umbrella organisation named CRAOL⁷⁹ and another five operating under UK RSL's across the border in Northern Ireland which has established a Community Media Council to represent the radio stations in the six counties⁸⁰.

Bars within the licensing process

Despite the political recognition of community broadcasting that is afforded by the legislation and policy the licensing process itself is demanding. Community radio activists

⁷⁷ In 2002 the BCI gave capital grants to radio stations towards transmission costs, community radio were included in the fund.

⁷⁸ The BCI consistently claimed they did not support start-up costs, however this was disingenuous, many stations including community radio stations have received grant-aid to meet start-up needs. I made a phone call to the BCI to enquire specifically about what start-up support would be available to CTV and what had been made available to community radio, the response was “how long is a piece of string”, and was quoted the installation of a lift as well as the building of a road for different radio stations.

⁷⁹ <http://www.craol.ie>

⁸⁰ <http://www.communitymediacouncil.org/>

work hard to keep the entry bars to community broadcasting low but there is still a learning process for activists trying to establish community channels. Bekken (2000) gives a horrifying account of the bureaucracy and the time taken up through the radio application procedure in the US, quoting one effort that took ten years and stating that if all the paperwork was piled up it would come to a height taller than the person who wrote it. This tendency is exacerbated by the professionalisation of community organisations which encourages hierarchical organisational forms and whose managers run the operation within frameworks that are designed to attract the funders (Bekken, 2000). This is also an issue arising in CTV (Klein & Mollander, 2005) and Indymedia (Coleman, 2004). For community organisations the danger that the funder’s agenda can send the organisation on a very different direction to its original aims is always close. Horgan’s (2001) account also shows this as an underlying tension in the early Gaeltacht TV campaign (p180), and it emerged again in the early days of the new community television channels in 2005.

The community radio activists were radio pirates of the 1970’s and 1980’s who ‘came in from the cold’. Community radio came into being through a loop-hole in the 1988 Wireless and Telegraphy Act that first legislated for independent/local radio, operating under independent local radio (ILRs) licenses. In 1988 the new Independent Radio and Television Commission (IRTC) worked with the equally new community stations to develop policy as did the BCI in 2001 with the CTV activists - processes that took time and created pressure for activists operating with few resources. The Community Radio Policy Document (CRPD)⁸¹, given Day’s account, is a particularly noteworthy achievement of the NACB and their international networks. The Irish CRPD recognizes the AMARC-Europe community radio charter and delivers very good conditions for community radio broadcasting in comparison to other countries.

⁸¹ http://www.bci.ie/documents/comm_radio_policy.pdf

A danger all community operators acknowledge is that they themselves may become more concerned with operating within the terms of the licenses that are set by the State and in times of need this may mean that people won't have the access they want or the content may be controlled purely in line with state interests – precisely the kind of problem identified by Piven and Cloward (1979) in relation to social movement organising. Some of the early 'community pirates' were in effect 'turned' commercial by the demands of the license⁸² their 'freedom' was then seriously compromised.

3.3.3 Community Television - Pirates and Licenses

As well as pirate radio, pirate television initiatives were broadcast in the 1960's and 1970's. Some of these arose from the Gaeltacht civil rights movements and the community organising that evolved from urban resettlement strategies such as Ballymun and Ballyfermot. The rest were commercial pirates pushing for an independent media market.

There have been a number of organised drives since the 1960's that involved coalitions of activists engaging with the issues around people's access to television. The main drives were:

- The community television broadcasters of Ballyfermot in 1972, named Ballyfermot Community Association TV (BCATV)
- The Gaeltacht civil rights movement, radio and television pirates of the same time, and the struggle for Irish Language television (Hourigan, 2001)
- The MMDS and satellite pirate broadcasters of the 1980's (operating commercially and licensed in 1998-2000) (O'Sullivan, 2001)

⁸² Licensing constraints placed on French free radios who cannot broadcast any content that is not local is also worth noting in the context of how broadcasters are controlled.

- A short burst in the mid 1980s, some of the same people who were involved in the Ballyfermot initiative got a ministerial order allowing them broadcast for two months in Phibsboro, Dublin (Interview10), and there were a small number of reported pirate transmissions in Dublin (Horgan, 2001).
- The Open Channel (OC) group 1990-2000
<http://homepage.eircom.net/~openchannel/>
- Navan Community Television authorised by Ministerial order 1992 (Interview10 2005)
- The Community Video Network (CVN) in 1992 (of which OC was a founding member) which became Community Media Network in 1996 and headed the campaign for CTV from 1999 onwards.

The forces behind the pirate television initiatives before 1980 were the social movements seeking a voice and the strongest of the movements that emerged from the 1960s in relation to community broadcasting in Ireland (which produced BCATV) appears to have been the civil rights movement.

However, it is notable that the development of the women's movement, the environmentalists, and other social movements did not seem to have impacted on or become very involved with the drive for community broadcasting. This was despite drives to gain some element of control over the means of production evident in the setting up of publishing houses like Attic Press, and the production of a whole range of left magazines such as "The Rekindling of Time", Z Magazine, etc. The social movements' approach to media seemed to turn more towards the mainstream rather than put their weight behind the new community radio initiatives or indeed pirate stations. Small and print media were probably the most accessible for these groups and they tended to depend on independent

journalists within mainstream media as representative voices – for example Nuala O’Faolain and Nell McCafferty as ‘voices’ for the women’s movement. During a time of censorship and bitter struggles the difficulty for activists in using broadcast media cannot be understated, but this then leaves one wondering why they declined to use community broadcasting. The idea that mainstream media was a means to reach a mass audience and influence the dominant discourse held great sway within movements.

Ballyfermot Community Association Television (BCATV)

The longest running of the CTV initiatives in the 1970s was in Ballyfermot, BCATV, which ran for three years from 1974. Ballyfermot was one of a number of 1948 post-war satellite developments in Dublin. Telefis Eireann went on air in 1961, but many people in the north and east of the country had television sets and had been receiving British signals from the Holme Moss transmitter and also from the transmitters around Belfast, Cave Hill and Black Mountain. These were the signals picked up by people who had televisions and aerials. Aerials were big items then, some reaching up to 60 feet in height with stabilising wires attached, people had these on their roofs and in their gardens⁸³. While RTE was the only station licensed to broadcast in the State and only from 1961, the government could do nothing to prevent people receiving the free to air signals from across the Irish Sea or over the border. The Ballyfermot initiative grew from the fact that the area was being ignored by the market.

No one was interested in Ballyfermot, it was hard to get signals to it, it wasn’t very high, even with a 200 foot aerial in Ballyfermot you could have difficulty getting a signal.” (Jim Barry, Phoenix Relays; documentary 2007).

⁸³ For details of television reception in the RoI see <http://www.irish-tv.com/405>

Very little attention has been given to this initiative other than CMN’s Magazine Tracking which solicited an article from an original participant, David Connolly, now CEO of the Dublin Inner City Partnership (Connolly, 2001), and Bernard McGovern’s (2009) research⁸⁴. This initiative needs more attention as does the history of community media initiatives in general. BCATV is important, not simply because it was a success at the time but because it was a development of a people’s movement – the ‘streets committees - which literally ran the whole area. It is one example that confirms that community media is successful when it is connected to and part of the current social organizing.

The BCATV initiative was also significant in the development of television in Ireland in 1974. During the BCATV initiative, John Sweeney who co-ordinated the BCATV Sub Committee said that when they had done with all their “royal rows”, court cases, and lobbying with the Minister, there were only two broadcasting licenses in the country – the state broadcaster RTE and BCATV (McGovern, 2008).

Phoenix Relays, the network providers, were one of a number of ‘relay’ companies that began to operate with the development of television⁸⁵. Jim Barry, Phoenix CEO, understood they were “putting something back into the community” (McGovern, 2008). The service, free to the community, was subsidized by a contract to relay UTV advertising into the South. The initiative ended with the expansion of cable networks, Phoenix Relays itself ran to ground and the company dissolved in 1991 –

It proved almost impossible to obtain steady advertising revenue that was needed to sustain the TV channel (Connolly, D. 2001).

While it floundered due to dependence on advertising and an unresponsive government, the initiative itself was born from a unique relationship between the commercial enterprise

⁸⁴ Documentary made as part of his course in Ballyfermot College and subsequently as subject for his MA in NUI Maynooth

⁸⁵ PYE television which ran the first experiments from the RDS was also a relay company.

and the various actors in the community during the period of the transmission. It was one of those periods before the technology became completely industrialised, before the parameters were set, and where people involved in an experiment made a collective effort to make it happen.

The channel was run from one studio in Ballyfermot Senior College, the intention being that the college would provide the training for the station. The college changed direction and developed courses aimed at the media industry with an emphasis on animation. A successful community radio station West Dublin Community Radio (WDCR) operated in collaboration with the college.

Other initiatives in Ireland during the 1980's were short experiments that, while they had broadcasts, were less to do with social movement activity than with enthusiasts experimenting with the technology or the possibility of community, locally produced, television as a form of community expression. A number of transmissions happened during the 1970's and 1980's (see timelines) but these were of short duration, a week, a day. The public DCTV Needs Assessment process in 2006 brought some people who had been active in these groups in contact with me. While they were curious about the new venture they did not develop a connection with DCTV. One group from Donaghmede had visited BACTV at the time with the intention of setting up another similar operation, but the licensing and the costs became a barrier. There are many people still around who have experience of these initiatives, they went back to their varied walks of life and moved on, we clearly need their stories.

Gaeltacht Civil rights and people's media

Niamh Hourigan (2001) has documented the development of Radio na Gaeltachta (RnG) and Telefis na Gaeilge (TnaG later to become TG4) in Connemara and traced the issues that turned this campaign from one of access and right to communicate into the establishment

of a semi-state broadcaster. According to Hourigan the struggle for an Irish language radio station was a struggle for a local channel that would allow a poverty-stricken area to organise itself in the face of being laid bare by multi-national activity and exploitation. Hourigan situates these developments in the context of language movements throughout Europe in the 1960s and uses Resource Mobilisation Theory (RMT), which she feels best explains the motivations of actors and accounts for the movement, whilst acknowledging:

At the same time, Resource Mobilization advocates need to embrace the work of other social movement theorists in order to address adequately the ideology, identity and social movements of the marginalized. (2001, p. p.98)

She does not consider Piven and Clowards’ critique of RMT, which is an omission considering that the de-radicalising of the Irish language radio project was evident early on when Radio na Gaeltachta was established and the pirate phase was over. The early proposal of a low-tech, low-cost studio base was dismissed by the language movement activists in favour of getting onto mainstream media (Horgan, 2001, p. 180). Importantly, none of the original activists were employed by the new station despite applying for the jobs. The story of TnG is one of a community initiative that was ultimately taken over by the state broadcaster, then subjected to pressure to become ‘sustainable’. In a similar fashion to the early community radio stations and within a neo-liberal push for privatization, it was forced to take up a commercial model. Hourigan’s critique looks at the Gaeltacht media initiative as a protest movement and comes close to recognizing the relations of movements from above and movements from below, but is constrained by the RMT framework. Hourigan’s concern around media, language and protest, is based in a study of language movements across Europe and their efforts to gain ‘voice’ or visibility through and in mainstream media. This is why she remains within the RM framework – since accessing resources is key to that effort. Piven and Cloward’s critique of RM however

explains how this orientation distances activists from their base and in this case from the peoples’ political struggle to maintain their way of life – of which language was an integral part.

Some of this story bears an uncanny resemblance to the Hedge Schools issues – RnG and TnG both becoming vehicles for introducing new modes and ways that were ultimately destructive to the existing society. Looking at this as a struggle for ‘voice’ and how the hegemonising activities of the dominant class impacted on that struggle would tell us a lot more about how and why RnG and TnG were deflected into language movement politics and turned into mainstream media entities rather than meeting the communication needs of their community. Was the defining feature of peoples’ protest the threat to a language or to their livelihood – their impoverishment? How did the struggle around the language become separated from the struggle around livelihood? What hopes did they place in broadcast media and were any of these realized in any shape or form?

Satellite and MMDS Pirates 1980's

The operators that emerged in the south and west coasts in the 1980s were relay satellite and MMDS operators, pirates in that they were not licensed, and generally known as ‘deflectors’. In 1999 forty-two operators responded to a national survey, they had fought a hard battle to get licenses and it was never their intent to operate outside of regulation. Their motivation was the unequal nature of broadcasting across the country – the East and North had access to the UK broadcasts giving them a significantly greater range of information than that available on RTE 1 and Network 2 – the state broadcaster. The social changes that had taken place throughout the 1970’s also meant that people were no longer willing to accept a single source of information. Given that people in one part of the country now had access to UTV, BBC1,2, Ch4 and a number of English local/regional

channels to boot whilst other had just the two state channels, the issue also became one of the East Coast versus the West – tapping an old sense of injustice in those ‘beyond the pale’. A widespread sense of disadvantage stemmed from the fact that in many rural areas even reception of RTE was very poor and, as had been the case with the introduction of radio, there was genuine grievance and exclusion. There are still parts of the west coast counties that do not receive mobile signals and are very poorly cabled for communications infrastructure (own research Kerry).

This in fact was similar to what had driven the Ballyfermot initiative in that it was impossible to receive a signal in Ballyfermot. However that was where the similarity with BCATV ended. The street committees made and controlled the programmes on BCATV; Phoenix Relays provided the technical infrastructure for free, creating a subsidy by soliciting advertising from UTV. Southcoast/Carrigaline Community Television (SCTV) (see Appendix No. 7) and the other relay groups made no effort to engage with production but built the technical infrastructure with their own hands. In this they are a clear example of the divergence of understanding of community media. All these deflector licensees provide a service to their communities, but at a cost; all are profit-making companies, none engage in production, and the content they relay is simply that of mainstream media giants. These were purely commercial ventures run by local traders, who took subscribers fees, albeit low at first, made profits on advertising revenue, relaying mainstream channels to areas that were not served by the commercial cable companies and who only received the three main free-to-air stations. A chain of small relay outfits were set up as a network around the coast from the South to the North West, serving areas who found reception difficult. They

provided services to a lot of people – in 1998 subscribers numbered between 100,000 – 150,000 (ODTR, 1999)⁸⁶ .

SCTV is now the largest remaining group; many others have died off losing subscribers to the Sky Digital and FTA satellite competition. According to SCTV the network was able to raise a quarter million pounds to conduct an extensive feasibility study on developing its services in anticipation of digitalization (Frameworks Films, 2002) . SCTV have since developed a high-tech digital service now in its phase-two roll-out to provide services across Munster. SCTV in its period of operation from 1985-2009, unlike Phoenix Relays in 1972, has shown no interest in providing a free service to the community. The need for the service arose due to the disinterest of the cable providers (NTL and Chorus) in putting up the money to cable difficult to reach or sparsely populated areas and the lack of political will on the part of the Government to address the issue.

Community access television – Open Channel

Open Channel (OC) was a Dublin based organisation that took its political ethos from the European Open Channels groups and Article 10 of the European Convention on Human rights, which had been signed by the Irish Government and was understood to place a duty on countries to “ensure plurality in control of broadcasting” (Open Channel, 1993).

After an attempt to set up a Community TV station for Dun Laoghaire, Open Channel (OC) was incorporated and began a consultation process with a wide range of groups across Dublin, held a series of public meetings and developed a set of proposals which were discussed at a national conference in 1993 named “*A Thousand Views*”. Key activists in OC were independent film-makers and people who had been trained within the television

⁸⁶ <http://www.comreg.ie/fileupload/publications/odtr9955.pdf>

industry. Disappointed by the pathway taken by the Irish language channels (both radio and television) this group made the first effort to promote community or access television in the context of new legislation being prepared by Michael D Higgins, a Labour TD and Minister for Arts and Culture in the rainbow government of the mid 1990’s⁸⁷. Their document “*Community Television: the way ahead*” was a four year plan for the development of community television in Ireland and was supported by CVN⁸⁸. It was a full feasibility study and it has a lot in common with the subsequent study prepared by Ó Siochrú for the Dublin City Development Board (DCDB) in 2002. (Both OC and Ó Siochrú were founder members of CVN). OCs view was that access was about production:

Open Channel’s consultations and conferences decided we should use the term Community Access TV rather than Community Television as this definition shows that there must be clear access for people to make programmes (correspondence with CMN, 1996)

This initiative failed – firstly in being able to influence Higgins’ proposals and also because Labour went out of Government before the new legislation was finalised.

Open Channel lost its premises in 2001; the difficulties with funding post 2000 and the financial legacy that underfunded projects had left behind were clear factors in the organisations difficulties. The demand that voluntary organisations find matching funds for EU programmes put strains on what were essentially not-for-profit *and unprofitable* activities, operating with groups unable to raise capital – i.e. amongst disadvantaged communities. An example of one unfunded project was the “Place” project, a contract agreed with TG4. The contentious nature of this contract caused serious rifts in the Open Channel group; TG4 under the Director Cathal Goan, refused to give any resources at all

⁸⁷ For a critique of the Clear Focus proposals from CM viewpoint see Ó’Siochrú and Byrne, 1997

⁸⁸ Community Video Network

towards the series⁸⁹. The upshot for Open Channel was the closure of its offices and the collapse of its organising group. CMN, in solidarity, provided an interim support for the Open Channel project in an effort to keep it open and took over the production of the ‘Place’ series, but CMN itself was to fall prey to similar pressures three years later. One more ‘Place’ series was completed but only the first was ever broadcast.

Navan Community Television – Province 5 TV

Navan Community Television (NCTV) started cable-casting in 1991 under a ministerial order on a small Chorus local network that served Navan town and its surrounds⁹⁰. To my knowledge this was the only not-for-profit community television channel on air in Ireland throughout the 1990’s.

NCTV was built by a small group of enthusiasts, mainly supported by Kevin MacNamidhe who provided the training for the original group of volunteers through the Centre for Adult Education and Community Education in St Patrick’s College Maynooth. The training was then continued in NCTV itself at regular intervals throughout the year, and all production was supported by MacNamidhe’s production company Sirius Broadcasting. Now P5TV has a sizeable pool of long-term volunteers involved on all levels from programming to management, when I spoke with them in 2005 they had 30 volunteers on their list.

The involvement of the MacNamidhe family in amateur and community broadcasting goes back a generation. Kevin’s father built his own television in the 1950’s and the MacNamidhe boys clearly followed in this tradition and also provided key supports for the development of NCTV. NCTV built their own mobile broadcasting unit converting a lorry

⁸⁹ Goan is now Director of RTE with whom the Community Television Association (CTA) negotiates.

⁹⁰ Navan is a large town in Irish terms; population 25,000; 45mins from Dublin.

and installing a mast for live transmission. Local events and sports are broadcast regularly via this means, as is mass from the local church. P5TV describes itself as a “community access television station”; its enthusiast base has sustained a community channel for almost twenty years.

The channel broadcast as NCTV until it applied for a community content license under the new Act in 2006 and changed its name to P5TV in 2006. P5TV was required to go off air from the time they submitted their License application 2005 until the license was approved and contract signed in 2006. This gap in the channel’s broadcast was a sore point and very nearly caused the disbanding of the core organising group (Interview10). P5TV was relaunched in November 2006 by the Communications Minister of the time, Noel Dempsey.

The new BCI Television Licensing Policy drafted in consultation with the emerging CTV groups set new guidelines for the constitution and operations of CTV channels, P5tv underwent an organisational shift from being built on an enthusiast base to developing an organisational form that could be recognized by the Regulator – one that would be community rather than enthusiast driven (Gibbons, 2007a).

Given that this CTV channel developed from the relationship between enthusiasts and communities it remains to be seen how new structures imposed from above will affect the channel’s operations.

3.4 Community media organising (CVN-CMN-CTVN)

This section contextualises the development of CMN, the core group within the PAR project, and its path towards engagement with the drive to establish community channels under the 2001 Broadcasting Act. This introduces the emerging voice of this research project; the history is subjective to the group and the process of developing the research involved the researcher in a number of roles. In telling this story I am also telling of events and processes in which I was personally involved and so the manner of telling also changes from what has gone before.

1.4.1 CVN – CMN (1993-1996)

1.4.2 CMN (1996-2000)

3.4.1 CVN- CMN (1993-1996)

The Community Video Network (CVN) group first met in the winter of 1992 and within the space of two years had established a Community Employment Project (CEP)(see Appendix No 8). The catalyst for the group was the success of community radio activists with establishing licenses and the expectation that new broadcasting legislation would be proposed by a new coalition government. As noted above Open Channel was also part of this group and was focused on developing proposals for CTV.

The CVN group published a review – the first issue of “Tracking” and organised a successful Alternative Video Festival – “Altered Visions” held in Cork in 1995. The low status that community activity held at the time is evident in the fact that the organizers had to change the name of the festival from a ‘community’ video festival to an ‘alternative’ video festival -

due to the difficulty in finding sponsorship for anything to do with community activity. Such projects were made possible by the poor employment situation which meant that CVN’s CEP⁹¹ could employ well educated but unemployed media graduates and activists. The organization nearly collapsed in 1996 after internal tension arose between the workers and the Steering Group. When I joined the organization CVN in July 1996, having lived in London for the previous 14 years, I found a tiny organization that had nonetheless made its mark. I began work almost six months after the previous Co-coordinator had left, by which time many of the other activists had also moved on. CEP participant contracts were limited to one year only and this in itself was a pressure on the project, allowing little continuity for participants.

Many of the community organizations that I spoke with at that time about the desirability and virtues of community media held the view that what they really needed was media exposure, to get on RTE, or to get front-page coverage on regional and national newspapers. My approach was

if you make your own media, you are more likely to eventually get on RTE with more control over your issue. If you are waiting for RTE or any mainstream media you’ll be banging on their doors for years

this was generally met with an indulgent smile but little attention. Community activists understood the media as the public sphere and if they wanted to address and change the ‘dominant’ discourse then they had to be able to intervene in and be ‘seen and heard’ in that sphere.

The other side of the truth was that no-one had the skills or the resources to make their own media and when they did they needed to ensure that the product was of a high quality that would meet the funder’s expectations and definitions of quality. This meant they went

⁹¹ Community Employment Project

to independent producers and either started a working relationship whereby they educated the film-makers about how they needed things done or they had a bad experience and never tried again. All talk about community media at the time revolved around the perceived needs – training, facilities, and resources. Some activists understood that they needed to find and accumulate these themselves; those who prevailed have built resources, bought equipment, and train people within their communities and groups. In contrast to those early days by the time I was interviewing activists in late 2006 the main issues they saw in developing community television were – “enough people and enough time” (Interview17).

3.4.2 CMN 1996 -2000

In 1996, just as I joined the group, CVN changed its name to Community Media Network (CMN). For some members this was necessary because of the small numbers involved in community media, for others it was part of a wider agenda, of finding a common umbrella under which the many small but disparate CMN interest groups could unite. The collapse of Michael D. Higgins’ Broadcasting Bill in 1996 meant there was also no clear route to establishing community television channels in the foreseeable future, so the group sought to engage with communities to “exploit the synergies between the different media” (see Appendix No. 9 CMN new strategy 1998).

We knew through our projects and activities (mainly those organised between 1996-2000) that there had been an upsurge in interest in Ireland in the use of various forms of media as a tool for groups and organisations in their efforts to transform their conditions. This was also linked to (though for electronic media not the same as) the development in community arts in the country. We also knew that participatory approaches to developing media initiatives within community organisations were appropriate; they fitted with the community development organisations’ ethos, and with many of the educational initiatives

that operated within the sector. The pages of the CMN magazine “Tracking” had carried the accounts of these sometimes small, sometimes one-off, more rarely long-term, projects, their popularity and the benefits for the people who participated in them (see <http://www.cmn.ie>). Community media, including video, photography, print, radio, and use of the internet, was generally seen to be ‘good stuff’.

1996-2000 was also a period of increased employment generally which took activists away from these low-paid and short-term projects into the labour market. The real impact of this was to take some time to register with CMN. During this period CMN managed to tap into funding from the EU Employment Strand, the Year Against Racism, and The Information Society Activity Centre (see Appendix No. 10). This injection of funds meant that we could attract people with skills into interesting projects and the kind of activity we were then able to engage with gave us a heightened visibility within the community and voluntary sectors. Having funding to provide quality training run by a solid core co-coordinating group meant that the idea of making media was being presented in a different way to community organisations. The projects also provided opportunities for activists to meet and this, what was only just becoming known at the time as ‘networking’, was a key element in the success of the project. A number of conferences were held throughout this period and these constituted the basis for our working patterns within the research project later.

This period of additional funding meant that the CMN CEP level of funding (which was designed only to be an ‘add-on’ to larger organizations) now had added resources, the pool of people involved and employed in the project widened the mix of skills and experience in the organization. The CEP participants who came from the labour pool of long-term unemployed with a range of vulnerabilities including educational disadvantage, disability, were in recovery, or had a number of issues that disqualified them from full-time work, were now working on our project alongside skilled and highly educated workers.

This demanded some careful management, while it was mainly healthy - making for more security on the project for those who needed it and allowing us the capacity to extend CEP participant contracts - the possibilities for skill sharing and democratizing of the knowledge base of participants in the organization was more difficult. This issue is reflected in this thesis in the concern about the transfer of skills from professional workers and skilled technicians to activists in the community and deserves more detailed research and attention. While the added funds may have allowed us employ more skilled project workers, it did not necessarily allow for the kind of training that would be needed to enable the transfer of skills within the CEP. The training that went on in the wider projects however engaged people who were voluntary members of community organizations and for this reason there are active media initiatives still operating that originally began on CMN's projects.

Parallel to all this there had also been efforts to set up initiatives that had survived for a certain period and then failed. The closure of CMN's sister organisation, the Dublin based community video / TV organisation Open Channel (OC), in 2000 demonstrated the difficulties of keeping community media ventures going at the time⁹² and the difficulties

⁹² CMN shared its resources to try to keep OC afloat but these were not sufficient to maintain the work of the group and OC closed down its C.E. project due to lack of funds and rising rents, the same issue that closed CMN's CE project three years later. The Dublin inner City Partnership had also engaged with DCU in an "Information and Communications Technology (ICT) Project which exposed the difficulties and the advantages for community organisations in the use of ICTs, and proposed a further stage – an Information Technology Support Unit. This also did not materialise. The Department of Community and Family Affairs advertised a Tender in 2000 to establish a Technical Support Unit for the Community Development Projects funded under the departments' programme. This scheme was never launched despite considerable tenders being submitted including tenders from Community Technical Aid, CMN, and a number of others. The CAIT programme was another initiative that promised some support to communications initiatives in communities, but this in fact survived only one round, the programme was pulled despite the fact that applicants had been told to reapply in the second round, CMN's proposal – a collaboration with Age Action Ireland – never got seen by a selection panel.

that CMN itself faced during the period of the project, were reflected across the community sector as a whole. The reality was that community media projects occupied a small and marginal position in relation to the community development and voluntary sectors generally – not simply the media sector. Some activists saw it as a funding issue – if we could get the funds we could get going with resources, facilities and training, others saw the funding as being the problem, did we need it at all? But there is no doubt that the funding injection CMN received in 1997-2000 served to do a number of things –

- Gave visibility to CMN and community media generally,
- Supported networking between CMN activists and interest groups
- Established a small but significant media resource and media centre.

3.4.3 The funding deficit and the fallout

Community media projects emerged during a general economic low in the 1980's and many community organisations undertook CEPs as a means to develop their projects and enable activist's involvement. During the late 1990's and the turn of the millennium in the midst of Celtic Tiger Ireland the neo-liberal and free-market agenda tried to cut loose all state supports; CM projects struggled with this along with community development projects. The consistent failure of applications from CMN to government programmes, in particular those applications for community television, became marked from 2000 onwards. The funding stonewall was propelled forward by the government's privatisation agenda; CM being perceived as marginal to the CDPs activities was also caught in a 'process versus product' conflict which was, and continues to be a core issue within the funding arena⁹³. The need for core funding is one felt keenly by community organizations dealing with poverty, social exclusion and disadvantage. CMN had a clearly defined mission to develop the capacity of

⁹³ It was an issue with the funding streams from the Arts Council and a similar problem emerged later with the Sound and Vision Scheme established under the 2003 Broadcasting (Funding) Act.

this sector to use media to have a voice, and as such sought to facilitate that by providing training and resources. One function of CMN was therefore to source funds for this kind of activity. While we had questions about the value of state funding, the question for CMN was not only where the money came from, but how we could get money for what we were trying to do – enabling a voice that addressed social exclusion. In this we had no difficulty in regarding the monies in the exchequer raised from people’s taxes as being suitable to provide the necessary equipment and resources to facilitate people’s voice. And while we found more success on the European level in raising this money we still had difficulty in getting more than one-off projects funded.

The new rounds of EU funding after 2000 called for partnerships that would be untenable for small and badly-resourced organisations such as CMN. As CMN faced into what was clearly to be a difficult time, the organisation began the process of reviewing the futures and available options. Research was always a part of CMN activities, and the core projects – “Tracking”, the Website, the CMN Directory – were seen as mechanisms to facilitate the gathering of information on existing projects, eliciting reflections on what possibilities could be drawn from the practice, and strengthening the connections between activists. The content for these areas of CMN activity had also been totally voluntarily contributions, the sole costs being in the initial setting up and ongoing maintenance. CMN’s CEP and EU funding had provided not only a base for these activities, but also training and media facilities for small projects within community organizations – in short the ‘training, recourses and facilities’ that were the perceived needs.

As things unfolded it was clear that when CMN was in trouble those who had participated in the projects who recognised and wanted the benefits were also unable to maintain CMN as well as cope with their own pressing issues. In 1998 CMN’s mission was to establish a community media centre and this we did but the issue was how to keep it going. The core

issue for CM generally is if such entities are to exist how can they survive? And they have to be able to survive without creating a huge demand on organizations already struggling with their community's issues. This became a core concern: our understanding of CM was that it could support and help these groups do their work and give them a voice rather than an extra project they had to use their energies and scanty resources to maintain. Community development organizations would, and did, make their decisions based on their needs. This issue of 'who was available to support what' became very apparent in the course of the research project. Of course the answer from above is 'earn some money' but the sector CMN supports is resource poor. The alternative posed by government officials and politicians, i.e. doing commercial work, meant entering competitive arenas, demanded seed capital, and a pool of skills and contingency resources that very simply are not available to any CM entity.

When CMN decided to engage with building for community television, we still had our small media resource, our premises, and our CEP. As with the other groups like Open Channel in 2000 we were forced to downsize, our CEP lasted three more years to 2003 by providing training programmes and small projects – an achievement in itself. By 2003 CMN could no longer pay the rent and the premises closed. We survived by taking a caretaker contract on a short-life premises but by the end of 2004 the organization was homeless and dependant on its members. Although difficult, this forced the organization closer to its base, and with a new smaller Social Economy Project⁹⁴ a new era of activity began with a closer focus on building the alliances needed for community television. By this stage the PAR project had also faced a series of difficulties due to CMN's problems but we then found we could develop the project as a tool to draw the different community television interest groups in the campaign closer together and to garner new supports for aspirant channels.

⁹⁴ launched to replace the CEP in 2003

Early in the process of enactment, it was clear that the 2001 Broadcasting Act would provide the right but not the means to establish community television; this meant that the interest groups needed to develop proposals, lobby, and campaign for support. While the first conference called was attended by over seventy people despite extraordinary weather – torrential rain and flooding, the group that carried on the work was small. This group was also tenuous – relationships were fragile and this fragility continued. The key organizing group in this was CMN.

With the 2001 Act the drive to establish a community television channel had gathered speed and given its position as a capital city that holds a third of the country’s population, we saw Dublin as a clear contender for a channel. Dublin is significant in that it is a huge centre for community and voluntary activity in the country - the majority of national organizations are based in the city and there is a high level of community and voluntary organizing. The decision on the part of CMN to get involved in organising within Dublin local frameworks reflects the local and small nature of CM; the difficulty that the community sector was facing in the wider national context; and that in Ireland the phrase ‘all roads lead to Dublin’ is a reality.

CMN was in the same position as the rest of the community sector but added to that we were also marginal to the sector. As a national organisation we fell outside of the local support structures, many of the national organisations based in the capital city did not engage on a local level. In 2000 CMN became involved in new developments at a local level as part of the geographic community in which we were based. The Community Fora that were being established around the country as part of the new national Development Plan were a gesture to participatory forms of democracy required by the EU. They were also seen as a means of securing consent to the governments ‘Social Partnership’ agenda.

CMN sought by its participation in the Dublin City Community Forum to raise visibility for CM and to urge the community sector to see their own media as an essential part of their operations, their own voice. Within this framework CMN promoted and worked with other CM operators (community radio, and other media operators supporting community production) to establish the Dublin Community Media Forum (DCMF) as a platform for community media within the city, and particularly with the aim of working to establish community television (CTV).

It looked likely that a Dublin CTV channel could be supported by not only the community sector and large NGO's, but also by local authorities and the commercial sector. Dublin was a strategically important place to establish a community channel to promote CM in Ireland.

But the first support that is necessary to do such a thing comes from engagement with the community that is organizing itself and this sector was very active.

3.4.4 Partnership and the community sector

The Government's White Paper "Supporting Voluntary Activity" (2000) was credited with being the longest development of a White Paper ever - having taken twenty years to reach publication. The paper gave particular attention to the need for national representative structures for the community and voluntary sectors and whilst acknowledging that decisions on its representation would be an issue for the sector itself the report specifically mentions one organization, The Wheel, as one that "aims to act as a catalyst behind many voices within the sector" (2000, p. 64). This created a neat side-step for the government in dealing with the opposition of the community sector in relation to the national "Social Partnership" negotiations on which the Programmes for Government had been based since 1987. The difficulties for the sector in being part of these talks was strongly stated when

the Community Platform walked out of the negotiations for “Sustaining Progress” in 2003, three years after the White Paper was published.

A key national organization within the Community Platform, the Community Workers Co-op (CWC), was heavily penalized and lost its core funding due to its critical position on the partnership negotiations. Subsequent to the walkout, organizations that had not signed up to the Sustaining Progress agreement were excluded from key partnership and consultative Fora. The CWC reported

as a result a number of critical voices are now missing at national policy level including women, gay and lesbian organizations, Travelers, and other ethnic minorities. (<http://www.cwc.ie/work/cp.html>).

In 2003 CMN’s efforts to become recognized as a national federation within the funding programmes established by the White Paper failed – despite our significant work as a national organization. But this failure was not so strange given the difficulties experienced across the sector particularly in relation to the Partnership process. We could add to this given that funding policy was

directing resources and attention away from generating and supporting activists whose interest is in building voice and capacity. (Lee, 2006)

the message was clear - any organization building a national network from the grassroots would be at best marginalized and at worst totally excluded. The Wheel’s position continues to be supported by Government but the tensions surrounding its operations within the community sector also continue⁹⁵. With the advent of a new programme for government in 2006, the CWC reviewed its position, and since the new programme was to

⁹⁵ Most recently the CTA had to write officially to the Wheel to object to the way in which they had organised media training for community groups that had totally bypassed and ignored the existence of the existing and developing community media sector.

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be in place for ten years felt this was too long a time to be excluded from key consultations.

A need for a voice for the sector was still being acutely felt.

3.5 Summary Chapter 3

All the historical initiatives that strove to claim the medium of television for people’s voice saw their activity in different ways and the forms that they relied on also reflected their differing approaches. It is hard to find common defining features in what they produce because very often they do not share the same particular aims. It is true however to say that they are struggling to open that ‘public sphere’ where the dominant group control the content and which carries mainly the voice of the powerful. Internally they often contain contradictions and issues that can also be identified as common. There are for example recurring issues regarding the relations between actors such as:

[community activist – community media activist - enthusiast – independent producer]

This dynamic is essentially between a specific set of actors including: voluntary activists, skilled technicians, and commercial traders. This has been on-going and visible in the movements and positioning of both elites in early Irish society as well as the Hedge School teachers as they fought for their ground against powerful forces of church and crown. The dynamic is not new.

There is an additional struggle for resources and therefore the owners of these resources have either been able to sustain the initiative or they do not see it in their interest to do so. Ownership was a key factor in whether these initiatives survived or not. Clearly groups such as Open Channel and CMN were affected by changes in policy and community support structures on which they were dependent.

All the historical waves of groups attempting to establish community media were responses from below as they sought to engage in discourse with movements from above.

This includes the ‘deflector pirates’ who addressed issues of infrastructure development but not issues of content. Their focus on the right to access mainstream broadcasting raises questions about what ‘access’ and voice really mean. Their displacement by satellite technology relegates them to history; had they been a means to a voice would they still be functioning?

The efforts to claim television as a medium for voice appear to be particularly polarized and sporadic. We therefore have something to learn from exploring this struggle, what interests are actively involved, at what point, and with what purpose.

This research project began with CMN’s involvement in supporting community organisations developing their own media; its focus is on how those groups can access, use, and benefit from community television as we developed it in the new millennium. The context for the development of community television is one in which community organizing is being severely repressed and there are, therefore, concerns about the role CTV will, or can, play which we need see addressed.

CHAPTER 4: “Why at all and why thus?” CMN/DCTV: strategy and thesis.

4.1 Introduction- learning for development

4A.1 Factors shaping and influencing choices

4B.1 The PAR process and the researcher’s role

4C.1 Classical PAR and PAR type knowledge

4.1 Introduction – learning for development

In 2000 when this research project was first being considered issues surrounding the development of community media (CM) in the country had been evident to CMN members and well voiced. Much of this was a perceived need for resources - funding, training, and facilities which would place CM in the “Resource Mobilisation Theory” of social movements. But a number of questions proved difficult – not only was it difficult to find out how these resources were to be accessed, provided, or managed; or how much was needed; but the question of who would make the plans for CTV and how these were to fit with the social organising happening in communities also needed to be addressed. Community organizing aimed at addressing poverty, exclusion, and disadvantage often faces opposition and its voice is often obstructed. So whose organizing will be reflected in the voice that emerges from CTV?

Since CM can encompass as many views as exist within communities there will also be conflict and opposed interests. The failure of CMN to maintain its CM Centre (CMC) after 2003 raised questions for us about the role that community organisations could play in CTV. For example it would be understandable that organisations would avoid involvement with CMCs if these centres presented problems that organisations already dealt with internally, compounding their difficulties. The emergence of Indymedia in 1999 also posed another set of possibilities that community groups were eager to explore. The potential of Internet more than any other media suggested that groups could produce material on their own ground and bypass the problems posed by CMCs of pooling/sharing of the very scarce resources available and putting control of their content in ‘others hands’. This may particularly be the case when the communities themselves were at risk.

When we first began to talk about community television it seemed to allow us to take a step aside from the difficulties we had with CM and establishing CMCs. Perhaps a fresh start with a medium that could operate differently; which could mean that the production capacity would be based within communities perhaps as small units or by development of production capacity within organizations themselves. Issues arose in the course of the research that fundamentally affected the research project methodology because they influenced who participated in the research and in what way they would agree to participate.

The research

The main aim of the research was to support the generation of the knowledge base needed for the development of community television and to establish community channels in Ireland. In this sense the research project was complete when DCTV in particular was established in 2004 and this perception was further bolstered when a project to link

channel interest groups and assess their needs⁹⁶ emerged in 2006. But the way these formations came about and the directions taken by them were not always predictable. In particular the engagement of community sector organisations was not a given at any stage. The conditions of engagement with CTV for community groups were the focus of the research so our job was to map these developments. This quest did not always lead us to where we expected.

We faced into the unknown at every juncture and worked from a very insecure position – firstly because we were marginal in relation to the key grouping of the community organizations and secondly because our CTV ventures were financially insecure.

Therefore there was a continuous incentive to undertake activities that would be effective for the ongoing development of CTV and to ensure that findings could be used to address the issues activists were facing. This need stretched the form of the research project and pushed us to keep a number of different foci in view. These demands directed the methodology and forced innovation. In the following sections my concern is methodology and how it was shaped and refined in the process of the project. The way in which we did things constantly threw up problems that forced us to re-consider what we were doing and why.

Chapter structure

This chapter reviews the methodology and the methods used in the Research project.

Part A traces the development of the process further into CMN, the formation of DCTV, and how the research has fed into that process from the point of view of the movement.

⁹⁶ The Community Television Training Network was funded by the Wheel to create a member-led training programme. This group subsequently became the Community Television Association (CTA)

Part B considers the research from the researchers point of view and what the PAR process means in this context, the reasons for the suitability of the PAR methodology to CMN itself; the 'fits' and the 'misfits' of the methodology with the community television project; and the limitations.

Part C presents a classic example of PAR and at some projects that show the kinds of knowledge that can be produced through PAR.

4. Part A: Factors shaping and influencing choices

This section deals with the development of the process further into CMN, the formation of DCTV, and how the research has fed into that process from the point of view of the movement.

4. A.1 CMN deciding to undertake the research

4. A.2 Seeking a methodology

4. A.3 The project aim

4. A.4 Parameters of the research – the unknown

4. A.5 Differing visions of CM

4. A. 6 Participatory approaches

4. A.7 Developing the research plan

4. A.8 Refining the research question

4. A.1 CMN deciding to undertake the research

The decision to commit resources to a research project began some time after I took up a research study programme in Maynooth in 2000. I put a proposal to the CMN Steering Committee that this could be a viable way forward should we see it as part of the CMN brief and develop the research as a CMN project. The CMN SC discussed this from a number of angles.

Community television was agreed as the research area for a number of reasons. CMN saw itself as promoting community use of media – in its mission these were defined as community video, radio, internet, print, and photography. Community radio had already been established before CMN formed and had its own umbrella representative organization, the Community Radio Forum (now CRAOL). Indymedia networks were growing globally and Indymedia Ireland was up and running. The cost of print pushed “Tracking” into an online format but it seemed pointless to pursue this while Indymedia.ie was developing as a publishing website; there were a lot of photography outlets and this area tended to be subsumed into print and Internet.

CMN despite its origins as CVN was by no means totally focused on community television before 2001 because there was considerable doubt that legislation would be enacted. The emphasis had remained on community video, photography, and the synergies between the different community media. The ongoing effort to engage with the community radio sector on a broad community media front remained a tense affair since community radio was licensed and community media network was understood to be a broader network⁹⁷. This issue of a broad-based membership continues to be a difficult area; again this is part of the need to keep within the boundaries set by the funders in particular the Regulator, the BAI, who awards the licenses. While community broadcasting serves a sector and it would appear reasonable that a range of diverse groupings are represented; certain schemes funded by the BAI, specifically the Training and Development Fund (T&D) will only support licensed operators. This is one reason why the Community Radio Forum (CRF)⁹⁸ would have limited its membership to licensed stations only – it did not want to be seen to be putting

⁹⁷ The issue of CMN having radio pirates as members was raised a number of times as a difficulty for the community radio sector.

⁹⁸ community radio stations umbrella group, now CRAOL currently has a membership category for aspirant groups

funds at the disposal of unlicensed operators. This position brought with it a lot of baggage – including questions about who can make the media. The CMN position was and still is that it is those who need the voice who must be involved in production at all stages from planning through to distribution. This means that the relationship between the community media operator or distribution outlet and the producers is a key issue and one that raises issues of power and control if voices within the community cannot be included.

At the end of the 1990’s community television was still the missing link in the community electronic communications area in Ireland. The proposed Broadcasting Bill in 1999 encouraged an expectation that legislation for community channels would soon be enacted so there was also the lure – it just might be possible. At that point CMN began to discuss community television again.

CVN/CMN had early on been linked to the international movement to develop community television and to the international network Videazimut⁹⁹; had subscribed to a number of Charters that called for access to communications media as a right¹⁰⁰; and the pages of “Tracking” had promoted and supported these efforts (CMN, 1997).

In 2000 after some discussion the CMN SC agreed to a core research programme for CMN. Since community television had been an original aim of the organisation and it was considered to be likely to happen under the new act, it was decided that the research would focus on CTV. I developed a research proposal based on a PAR strategy and so this project was launched. A year later the Broadcasting Act 2001 was passed through the Dáil and at the same time the research project was awarded three years funding by the Royal

⁹⁹ see <http://www.comminit.com/en/node/114470/36>

¹⁰⁰ See <http://www.mediachannel.org/manifesto/> for comprehensive list of charters; also Appendix No 6

Irish Academy’s Third Sector Research Programme. At that stage what we had in place was a research proposal, a core promoting organisation, and three years’ funds towards a PhD.

4. A.2 Seeking a Methodology

Identifying the methodology for the research project was formed and influenced by a range of factors including:

- **CMN ethos:** CMN aimed to promote an ethos that emphasised the sharing of knowledge, participatory approaches to developing knowledge, support for open source technology, and de-mystifying media processes. It was important that this ethos be reflected within the methodology.
- **the nature of community television** – the activity to be researched - this caused some difficulties since we did not have community television channels to look at in Ireland, we had an idea of what it could be, but everybody’s ideas were different! Part of this research approach would be to explore examples of practice from other contexts, which included practice from abroad.
- **the relationship of the researcher to the researched:** as the employed co-coordinator of the CMN, I was a participant / researcher. My relationship to the group was both as a facilitator of the CMN wider project and the researcher of those actions. This meant also that I would need to operate a degree of reflexivity in relation to my role which increased as my role became more complex.

- **CMN’s capacities including time, money, and connections.** CMN had few resources; it was facing into an extremely difficult time with little or no guarantee of continued funding¹⁰¹. The way we approached this research needed to be very low-cost, or seek to establish funding mechanisms for any actions that could be costly and seemed unlikely. The project would need to establish coalitions to address these resource issues.
- **CMN’s standing in the community:** CMN had achieved some standing due to the projects it had run since 1997 and its activities, centering on the website, gave it some visibility nationally. However it was a relative newcomer to the community development environment¹⁰². Greater visibility was required in terms of CMN’s engagement with community development and the research project was to look at strategies for this.

¹⁰¹ The government using the justification of the Celtic Tiger economy began to pull back from social economy commitments and programme areas such as community employment faced savage cutbacks. The squeeze on the mainstay of community development project supports put pressure on CMN from a number of angles. Firstly like many other community organisations, CMN’s main source of funding was the C.E. project; its brief was to promote and support media activity within the community sector which meant that CMN’s small but well equipped media centre was designated for use by the sector – which in turn meant that the sector had to pay for it. Although subsidised, these projects still needed extra funds. While the rates for work were agreed with organisations many projects were still completed without payment since people had no money. The project managed to survive and stay in its North Inner City premises for three years without substantial additional funding. In 2003 CMN could no longer pay the rent so the media centre that had been working since 1998 closed its doors, the CE project was no longer viable without the centre and premises. Calls for support got no response from a sector that was facing the same squeeze in small organisations.

¹⁰² CMN had started as a CE project in 1994 and notched up some achievements, but this did not give it any status or deep connectedness on its own terms six years later. The connections that existed were there through the people who had started it and the ongoing activities it could undertake, these connections and activities were varied and widespread across the country and internationally. These connections often determined what could and could not happen. The fact that CMN was seen to be associated with Nexus research – a co-operative of research consultants with a long history of research activity around the community sector and social policy, also affected how CMN’s activity were perceived “oh so you’re with that lot!” The amount of activity that was possible was constrained by financial resources and the small number of people involved.

4. A.3 The project aim

The CMN project was broadly to develop support for community television and to bring a community channel into being. CMN designated its resources which included the research project to this effort and the brief to the Co-coordinator was to progress this aim. A primary objective was to build a community coalition for community media and in this there were a range of needs that we intended to meet in how we went about the research.

The needs were to:

1. Develop the community television project
2. Draw community sector organisations into the sphere of the community television project
3. Gather experience from existing channels abroad
4. Keep the role of the researcher in view – and review
5. Work within the resources available
6. Achieve a greater visibility for the community television project
7. Gain political and institutional support for the community television project

The philosophical basis for these activities was understood to be within a community development ethos and included the following premises:-

1. engagement in dialogue with stakeholders,
2. democratic and participatory process,
3. control of the process of intellectual production, and
4. increasing the sphere of influence of the group.

(See Appendix No. 14 – CWC principles of community development)

These also are the keystones of a PAR project.

4. A.4 Parameters of the research – the unknown

There were initial concerns about, and differing perceptions in relation to, how ‘community television’ is organised. What we needed first was to identify the underlying problems, to open up the issues around community and grassroots capacity to participate in, own, and control a community television channel.

The research project needed a methodology that would allow an open exploratory process that would enable us address a lot of things **but we did not know what those things might be**. For instance it quickly became clear that we all had different ideas about who should run community television channels and absolutely no indication as to who would do it – a memorable discussion with a colleague went like this:

Me: “Well, we’ll talk with the community groups we work with and see how they see it and what they intend to do”.

Colleague: “But they won’t be running community television!”

Me: “Why not? Surely their involvement is key to this?”

Colleague: “they’ve too much to do, they won’t have the time or the inclination”

Me: “then who is going to do it? How does the community own it”

Considerable concern was expressed about the approach that the community development and voluntary groups should be steering the community television project; although their involvement was clearly desirable there was a lot of doubt as to their capability to do so.

The question then was how and in what way these organisations could get involved. The difficulty at the kernel was that if these organisations were the organised face of the community, i.e. the self-organised activity of the working class, surely they had a significant part to play? But right at the start there were clearly differing views within our own group about how this sector should, would, or could be involved. The issue is still and even more

vibrantly alive, and as the research progressed widely differing views of what community media was or could be, and what the community media network was or could be, surfaced within a whole range of participating individuals and groups.

4. A.5 Differing visions of CM

I refer here to contributions from interviewees that occurred late in the project, simply because they highlight the kind of different views that abounded regarding CMN and how it could operate.

One interviewee saw the CMN as a function of the community involving groups in relationships around media production –

I’m thinking not of the pyramid, but more the spider’s web – the community media network is in the community” (Interview 13, 2005)

This was initially a challenging view – asserting that control of community media should be in the community groups environments and not with the CM organisation.

Widely varying views of what *community television* actually was, also emerged – another interviewee saw community television as using the medium within their organisation and did not relate it to actual broadcasting on air at all (Interview12, 2005). This is an interesting vision and interpretation and in the context of a well established and large community organization that has local community and local authority support, one could see that this formulation would provide them with an internal communications infrastructure that could also be the basis for organizing their external communications using that medium. It also correlates to what community media activists call their version

of ‘narrow-casting’ – meaning that community television does not aim to broadcast to a wide audience but targets specific audiences (Koning, 2003)¹⁰³.

Concerns – in relation to research process

Such differing perceptions were also very much to the fore when the research project was discussed and so the approaches within the CMN group to the research project were often divergent. These presented ongoing difficulties and exposed the problems with using PAR in small and voluntary organisations. Kitty Van Vuuren (2003) describes her work with radio stations and assigns the major difficulty with a PAR approach being the obstacles she met due to her outsider status. In my project I met with a whole range of blockages ranging from skepticism, non-response, to downright refusal; I also had support, engagement, and a lot of reciprocal activity arising from my research activities. Van Vuuren’s concern was that PAR approaches can not only expose but also cause problems:

when things go wrong, this approach can also reveal conflicts within an organisation, as well as give rise to tension resulting from the divergent needs of the researcher and those of the researched (Van Vuuren, 2003)

Views are divided about what to do when such difficulties arise. With participatory approaches in *media production* groups tend to suggest that the production stops until the problems within the group are dealt with (ICT Update, 2009). With research the situation is different – the research needs to address the issues particularly since in PAR the researcher is a participant and participants are encouraged to take responsibilities in the research process.

¹⁰³ The technical meaning of narrowcasting is that it is cablecast and spatially contained, but community media activists tend to use it to refer to the target audiences or communities; a useful example is a new immigrant community using a mother tongue – this could mean transmitting programming that aims to support a community that could be as small as twenty families.

For CMN there were some evident difficulties with orthodox research methods which clashed with the ethos of the organisation to support collaborative and egalitarian ways of working both in organising and in media making. My idea was to take an approach to knowledge production that was participative and dialogic in the Freirean sense. While this all seemed fine and subscribed to in theory there were in fact some quite different understandings of what this meant and widely varying views of participatory approaches within the group. These differences had surfaced during the phase of the EU funded projects from 1997-2000, causing a series of tensions, rifts and ultimately splits within CMN. The substance of the differences was a combination of differing approaches to community media and organisational cultures in terms of training methodologies and ideas about media production. At core were people’s different understanding of the nature of ‘participation’ and in what ways and with what supports those engaging with the project could participate in a video-making process. The PAR process does not always provide a framework where all differences can be resolved. At the same time PAR approaches are valuable in that they challenge participants to enter a process together and to deal with the issues that rise as a result of their involvement. These issues may prove to be more important to those participants than the subject of the research taken on its own and may provide a new basis from which to approach the subject.

While the earlier CMN projects moved forward and were completed with reasonable success despite the splits, the underlying difficulties reflected deeper issues and problems that re-emerge again and again exposing philosophical and political differences between key actors. Some very substantial problems arise about not only how different actors perceive community media but also what media in fact constitutes community media; this was generally unstated but emerged more clearly later in wider contexts.

The fact that organisations participating in the community television project were poorly resourced meant that the cost of participation could seem to them to be very high in all sorts of ways. These kinds of problems have been well described by Marie Mulholland in relation to participation in a transnational research project (Mulholland, 2003) and also by Ní Dhiomasaigh in relation to community and voluntary sector participation in the Dublin City Development Board process (Ní Dhiomasaigh, 2001). While some participants in the community television actions that we devised did try to maintain involvement beyond the specific actions, there were levels of withdrawal by participants at various times. These were matters of concern because in a small team working on a production the loss of participants can lead to abandonment of the project.

Transfer of skills

Also at issue was the problem of the transfer of skills and how we approach making community media; this involved attitudes to learning and training. The problem was not ours alone - working in the US, jessikah maria ross¹⁰⁴ put the problem this way:

I have found that most CTV centres focus on quickly teaching the greatest number of people how to operate equipment to make television shows. To me this indicates an emphasis on producing programmes to fill access channels rather than on how to use media as a means to engage the public in processes of individual and community betterment. Yet if the access mission is to use media as a means to facilitate empowerment, social change, or community development, then the focus of training programmes should not be on technology, but rather on how people learn to work together to use technology to identify and communicate issues important to them, build critical thinking skills, and forge community coalitions in the process (Ross, 1999)

Niamh Farren's M.A. Thesis also finds that the tendency in Ireland is for community radio station's training to focus on traditional studio skills "at the expense of innovative

¹⁰⁴ jessikah's use of the lowercase in spelling her name is a political stance, similar to that taken by bell hooks.

programming” (Farren, 2007). Some of this is a product of the organisations’ cultures, some due to the demands made by funders and sometimes these factors converge.

Many state-funded training programmes in Ireland targeted ‘long-term unemployed’ people with a view to enable their re-entering the labour market - specifically Community Employment (CEP) and Community Services Projects (CSP). These typically measured outputs by the skills that people acquired, the numbers returning to jobs, and emphasized accreditation. The FETAC accreditation system - used a lot by community radio stations has been found to be burdensome in terms of the paperwork and the quality of learning indicators involved, which has been an element in a recent industrial dispute amongst adult education tutors in Ireland¹⁰⁵. This kind of environment that is outcome and product orientated works in direct opposition to the kind of processes that jessikah is talking about and which community activists appear to seek.

One member of a Traveller’s organisation put it this way:

Community television would offer us the opportunity to engage in media production for Travellers which the mainstream med, for good and bad reasons would never offer. . . But also the second area would be that process of skills - up-skilling Travellers and capacity building where its not just about the finished programmes but where Travellers themselves will get to build up the critical analyses of community as well as the skills in terms of media production. At the moment for Travellers the media is some kind of big thing that says bad things about them. If you put a camera into their hands and send them off with it you reap big rewards (Interview 4, 2004)

Community media activists also feel responsible to ensure that the technical skills of production are transferred to the community and are aware of the difficulty that the lack of

¹⁰⁵ FETAC stands for the Further Education and Training Awards Council, the national awarding body for further education and training in Ireland. Providers of programmes can be in colleges, training centres, or the workplace and are registered by agreement with FETAC; the system used is the National Framework of Qualifications which consists of awards from Levels 1 to 6. See www.fetac.ie FETAC systems for reporting on the Quality of Learning Indicators were the focus of an industrial dispute in 2007 surrounding the implementation of the Qualifications (Education and Training) Act 1999 (TUI, 2007, p. 10)

such skills can mean in terms of imbalance of power and control over the production process. The tension has always been between technological skills and development process, something which doesn't go away but can be hidden in a whole range of ways. As one interviewee who did a lot of community media training in community environments clearly felt the tension still existed:

we wouldn't all agree on training methodologies here . . . but I don't think it's just about teaching people how to press buttons (Interview 7, 2005)

In a sense this mirrors the quantitative / qualitative argument and similarly with the process v product issue and often a tension arises around the need for resources, training and facilities. What was also clear from interviewees was that these differences were not often talked about; people's *practice* in CM was not explored.

It is significant that there is a considerable amount of crossover of process and product when people need to learn and sometimes the different types of learning have happened of necessity in very different contexts. I was a member of a women's video group in the late 1970's faced with the problem of how we were going to learn to use high quality cameras without possessing one. Technical expertise was only available at high cost which we could not afford. Our solution was to pretend that we were a young company about to purchase the very expensive high-quality cameras and get an in-depth technical demonstration.

It's not strange now for women to seek demonstrations of equipment they want to buy, but it was then (1980). As women we were oddities in technical areas; as young (early to mid-twenties) women wanting to put our hands on the gear we were no less than alien. Needless to say it would have been impossible for one of us to do it alone. But the fact was that we only managed to glean so much from this strategy and our self-help sessions were

significantly more productive. At the same time as a post-graduate student I resorted to approaching the tutor in the pub after college hours to get technical instruction on video editing because the class of undergraduate lads made it impossible for me to see or hear what was going on in the studio. Essentially I taught myself until I found the women’s group and since then I have continued to learn to use technology often with the aid of manuals alone.

I do not think my experience unique, I do think it exemplifies the kind of tacit knowledge that exists about how ‘protected knowledge’ is accessed and that people are extremely resourceful in forging strategies to access knowledge they need (Ward C. , 1988) (Mitra, 2007). It also convinced me that people find ‘voice’ when they work collectively in a process of articulating needs.

What some of the case studies and interviews in this study clearly show is that unless the developmental and technical aspects of training converge then the biases, inequalities and outcomes of training do not change. It is mainly young males who emerge as the technical operators in community video and television, and very often in the CM projects that have become established, these young males are college educated. If CM is to empower the excluded, and enable the voice of the voiceless rather than maintain hierarchies of access and privilege, this tendency needs to change. The question is how will those who have had the privilege of learning these skills transfer them to others not so privileged – will this happen? How?

This is a methodological issue because community media activists have to answer to a demand to ‘do with’ instead of ‘doing for’ community groups - and to share skills in the process. It involves engaging in dialogical processes that recognize the participants as co-researchers; it should build capacity and nurture those participating so they can take over the process. Facilitating this take-over is a classic role for the Action Researcher (O'Brien,

1998); for the *Participatory* Action Researcher there is a greater emphasis on the knowledge base that exists within the participant group (Foote-Whyte W. , 1991).

Tensions regularly erupt around this transfer of knowledge when professional technicians and commercial producers come into the community environment – a clash of cultures can often occur where the ‘expert’ position ignores or undermines the group’s internal modes of operation and indeed their knowledge.

Power and video production

Video production is mostly team work, but this can vary in nature and composition. NTV use a system of a two-person team: while one operates camera, the other manages the microphone and takes charge of the interviews. Job demarcations within the mainstream video and film production industry are multifarious and hierarchical which is generally where the concept comes from that video production cannot be democratic. The idea of the role of Director is often understood in this way – as a controlling and decision-making role. But it is possible to approach production in a very different manner and to view the teamwork from a different perspective, i.e. that there are jobs to be done in any production and those are what we create a team around. The decision-making role of a ‘Director’ is one that does not fit easily with community development practice where a ‘Facilitator’ normally helps participants fulfill their roles; co-coordinators also play a part in ensuring that what is needed goes into place – this would very often be seen as the ‘Producer’ role in mainstream media.

Mainstream Video Production Crew	Community Video Team
Director	Co-coordinator
Producer	Facilitator
Cameraman	Camera operator

Soundman	Sound / interviewer
Mainstream media use a whole range of different personnel including lighting, make-up, (see Appendix No. 15 ¹⁰⁶)	

One of the purposes of the mainstream media roles is to ensure that creative decision-making is allocated to particular people. The issue for community development workers and participants is that this system has to be reversed; the purpose of development work is to ensure that people- i.e. the participants - own the decisions. These are the kinds of conflicts that will inevitably happen when the approach taken is a ‘media’ orientated approach¹⁰⁷. Tomaselli finds differences between the values of CM producers and independent/commercial media (see Appendix No 16 Table of Differences)¹⁰⁸. One way of reading Tomaselli’s differences is that professional and conventional video ethos revolves around the technocratic aspects of production and actors roles, whereas community video is concerned with the relationships of actors and the sharing of the knowledge they produce – and particularly the new knowledge they produce as a group.

The implications of these differences as we experienced them are explored in more detail in Chapter 5 and 6. Here it is important to note that it is possible to take a different approach to community production than that used in mainstream media production methods. This means that the issue of who is in control of the process of production is very much in question; this is a long-standing and core issue for community groups dealing with independent production companies.

¹⁰⁶ Appendix No 15: Roles and job demarcations of mainstream television industry

¹⁰⁷ See “Production in the Community” in Documents Included in Volume 2

¹⁰⁸ These differences operate in the following areas; Communication; Knowledge; Questions of Democracy; Coding; Production, Distribution, Exhibition; and Power, Empowerment.

Quantitative methodologies:

As we have noted in chapters 1 and 2 the diverse nature of community media does not lend itself to model building, and the particularity of community media initiatives to their local context or community of interest mean that the social, geographical, and historical conditions in which they emerge very often determine their forms and their practices. The difficulty with quantitative approaches is that it is hard to count like with like. Positivist methodology is therefore problematic, even though in some ways it seemed that what was needed was for the whole community sector to say in a loud voice “we need community media” – for them to ‘stand up and be counted’ - implying that a quantitative approach would be appropriate. However the problems with the changing demography of community and grassroots organisations and their life-spans also render quantitative and positivist approaches extremely difficult to justify from even a cost perspective.

It is significant that renewed efforts to quantify community and voluntary sector activity with mapping projects appearing over the past five years (O'Donoghue, 2006) (Acheson, Harvey, Kearney, & Williamson, 2004) coincide with the state's renewed interest in civil society (as expressed in the Government White Paper); its need for quantitative profiling and to push communities into corporatizing practices.

There is a view that quantitative and positivist methodologies are grounded in science and provide measures of ‘objective truth’ however the evidence of the diversity of the type of community media that exists, the changing profiles of organisations and the problems that many community media pose in terms of their aims, creates a challenge to achieving such a grounded objectivity.

Useful methodological approaches to CM

Ethnographic and action research approaches that encourage reflexivity in addressing power relations within video and television production have been found to be more productive in community contexts generally. This poses another compelling reason to move from the ‘objective’ truth position to one that is dialogic, Freirean, and that questions perceptions of ‘realities’ both within the ‘subject-community’ and the video makers or crew. Tomaselli working in the South African University of Natal and concerned with the use of media in the resistance to apartheid emphasised the importance of reflexivity within production and pointed out that power structures of society are reflected in every aspect of production:

If the Navajo subject-generated films facilitated by Sol Worth [in the 1970s] indeed say more about the state of American anthropology at the time than they do about the Navajo, then the crew-content relationship must be critically examined. (Tomaselli, 1990)

While ethnographic film production with indigenous peoples (e.g. Worth in the US, Michaels in New Zealand) has had some critical review this tends to remain within the media field and the political and social import gets lost. Core to these considerations was the relationship between the film-maker (as expert) and the filmed (as subject) – and an accompanying and ongoing struggle for control of the production. The innovative use of media by the Zapatistas in the 1990s broke out of this enclosure by placing the camera and the skills to use it in the hands of their people. Their strategy of two approaches – “talking with” which was use of video for communication amongst themselves; and “talking to”, which was when they faced the world’s media ,was conducted as an event that they themselves controlled, is an important methodological development.

Critical examinations of community media production practice has not been that common due to the demand on resources, activists time, and the pressure to get on to the next

problem. The proliferation of case studies reported in research is clearly an effort to address this and to generate important knowledge about practice in CM. CM researchers Jo Tacchi, Don Slater, and Peter Lewis, in an effort to address the gaps in methodologies around evaluation of ICT projects for development, point out that:

Whilst the number of communication initiatives is increasing, especially those that address the convergence of new and old communications technologies, few steps have been taken to address or define evaluation methodologies, let alone methodologies that look beyond the narrowness of media and messages towards a more socially contextualised approach to media use.

They say that without such methodological development,

debates still rage about the usefulness of funding ICT projects with plenty of skepticism about the role of ICTs in poverty reduction. (Tacchi, 2003)

This certainly corresponds with the experience of community based video and television in Ireland and the experience of CMN’s research project. Tacchi’s approach is interesting because of the effort to merge research with project development and placing users and producers at the centre of the research process; this attempts to address questions of how the use of technologies impact on their lives in a myriad of ways. However this sort of project is large, taking place in nine localities across India, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Nepal, and Bhutan. Funded by UNESCO it supports action researchers in all these localities and links with NGO’s software and hardware developers. Given the difficulty with developing single models for local communication initiatives (the researchers acknowledge this is demonstrated by their previous ethnographic research) they turned to looking at evaluation methodologies and were engaged in creating a ‘toolbox’ of methods that could

be used for different purposes - although they acknowledge that they didn't know whether it could have a universal application¹⁰⁹.

Within our CTV project there was a view that some quantitative *methods* may prove useful and a survey was initiated as one method within this research project aiming to establish the interest in and capacity for engagement in CTV amongst community groups. In all, including this action, three efforts to organise and implement surveys were attempted by CMN since 1994 including survey and questionnaire approaches, Open Channel had also previously initiated actions in this vein. The questionnaires were very similar and asked questions about organisation's awareness of and interest in CTV, history of media-making, amount of equipment they owned, videos they had produced etc¹¹⁰. All these efforts were problematic to bring to conclusions and achieved little result. It is interesting that on a global scale there is far more scope to use quantitative methods given the size of organisations such as AMARC, the conferences such as *OURMEDIA* held in Brazil and Australia, the Alliance for Community Media (ACM) in the US, the Open Channels in Europe, amongst a whole range of other associative meetings and gatherings around community media¹¹¹.

In general in the community media research that has been conducted in Ireland a sampling approach is used along with analysis of interviews and data gathered from the field¹¹² (Gibbons, 2007a), (Gibbons, 2007), (O'Siochru & Mulcahy, A Needs Assessment of Community Television in Cork, 2008). Problems encountered by the participants within and

¹⁰⁹ I have recently produced a pack of resources on self assessment for Community Television Association member groups in Ireland as part of the CTA development programme.

¹¹⁰ See Appendix No 17 Questionnaires on CM

¹¹¹ (see Appendix No. 11 List of Global CM activity)

¹¹² This was the method used for the Feasibility Study for Dublin Community Television (Nexus Research, 2002), and also in the Section 40 Needs Assessment Studies commissioned by the BCI on behalf of Dublin, Navan, and Cork communities who were establishing community channels during 2006-2009.

after these particular studies point to the need to pay more attention to a number of issues including: how people perceive their practice; people’s expectations of what community television involves; how challenges to existing structures can be constructively framed (Interview10, Interview14). In one case the CTV needed to assert that the CTV channel was itself a part of the community that had needs and given the lack of financial supports they demanded that their needs be particularly noted in the report.

Problems encountered using quantitative methods

Problems with taking a positivistic approach and using quantitative methods became clear very early on in the PAR project. Firstly, it became apparent that to engage in quantitative methods such as a survey, organisations themselves needed both greater resources and more long-term capacity than were available to CMN or indeed had been available to Open Channel before them. Secondly, the community sector themselves did not have the time or the resources to respond to surveys or questionnaires either. Thirdly, the nature of community media projects meant they were either totally voluntary or dependent on CE which meant there was fast turn-over of personnel. This instable nature of many community media projects meant they often didn’t survive long enough to be counted.

One clear example was provided by a centrepiece in an edition of “Tracking” listing community print projects, newsletters and magazines – within two years the majority of these projects had folded (CMN Bulletin 12, 1999). Powell and Geoghegan (2004) also comment on the limitations of survey-based approaches in the community context including low returns rates which tend to over-represent the best funded projects.

A better approach would be to ethnographically map the movement of activists from one media project to another and some research in this area would be useful. During the

course of this research I uncovered connections between activists that they themselves did not know about, as well as a movement of activists from one CM initiative to another¹¹³.

Mapping and scoping exercises on community and voluntary group activity were conducted by other organisations and CMN did engage with these – such as those conducted by the DICP, the Dublin City Community Forum, and international comparative research on CM legislation globally. In 2004 a longitudinal project was initiated by TCD which reported in 2006 (McLaren, Clayton, & Brunell, 2007). The increased tendency to engage with quantitative research into the community sector is propelled by the need to define and quantify within the context of Social Partnership which places the community sector amongst the ‘pillars’. However this does not recognise the instability of the sector and takes what exists in a slice of time with little regard to changing circumstances and historical context.

In CMN’s experience the mapping exercises were not useful as a base on which to plan operations since the profiles changed completely within a few years. The usefulness of this data is for sampling and as evidence of the existence and nature of organisations within the sector *at a particular point in time*. In the most significant quantitative survey of the sector half of the corresponding organisations had been founded since 1986 – within the era of

¹¹³ One community video that points to the possibilities in this is Betty Puleston’s video “Race or Reason” that documents how early political activity can echo through people’s lives. Betty supported students at a local school who staged an occupation in protest at racist incidents and encouraged them to record on video all their democratic meetings. Almost twenty years after the event, she sought them out, those whom she found were able to view the tapes recording their teenage activity and reflect on how those events had shaped their lives. A number had gone on to be involved in community organizing. This kind of video is a rare occurrence – it is unusual for political activism to be recorded in this way and for the efforts of young people to assert democracy and equality *against the grain and in opposition to the dominant culture* to be taken this seriously. Furthermore it is unusual to see attention paid to the capacity of these events to be formative in late teenagers lives, and to trace their continuing involvement in political and community activity.

Social Partnership (Donoghue F. P., 2006). The survey also showed a sharp increase in the growth of incorporation of nonprofit organisations in that time (Keenan, 2008).

Reasons for Non- Response

A significant issue was that the activities CMN undertook outside of its projects were often of a developmental long-term nature to support ongoing CM work and that built relationships. This mode of operating did not fit with using a quantitative approach unless this was to be a very long-term development of databases that could be reviewed retrospectively. Deploying badly needed resources to this sort of activity was not an option.

Another area of difficulty is in follow-up to actions to verify findings when dealing with people working in voluntary capacities. In addition to the changing personnel, sometimes activists are unwilling to engage with fact-finding missions that may be seen as gathering information about their activities for use by authorities. Without their own capacity to produce information activists choose not to respond – reflecting a lack of faith, trust, or outright opposition to the specific authority whether it be academic, local authority, or governmental. At other times there is simply a problem with getting meeting time with very busy people – a problem also shared by those operating within qualitative methodologies.

The CMN Committee were keen not to disregard the value of quantitative methods, but when used within this context these in fact served to highlight the difficulties involved and the main outcome was negative. This is not to say that given adequate resources and personnel that these methods would not produce some useful results but in this context and given CMN’s circumstances they were inappropriate, which was also reflected in the wider sector. This has been a consistent finding throughout the eight years this research project has been active; DCTV surveyed its members in early 2008 - of approximately 150 members, 11 responded to the questionnaire; one CTA project also used a questionnaire

format in 2008 but used it as a basis to develop the work with a small group of correspondents and the questionnaire was followed up with phone, email, and face-to-face contact.

The period in which the CMN questionnaire was undertaken was also one where the profile of community media and CMN was being raised both locally and nationally, the conditions were optimum in terms of awareness of community television within the sector as a whole, so the lack of response to the survey was not because the issue was obscure, or because community organisations did not want community media – they were engaging in media production all the time.

So what is the non-response about if it is not total disinterest, irrelevance, and cost? What the refusal to respond to such actions reflects is something else which has to be addressed time and time again at various points and in relation to a range of actions and methods.

Questions need answers - for example why ‘the community’ did not appear at the community television conference organised for them in 2003; why community organisations used independent production companies instead of CMN or other community media organisations; and most importantly why ‘the community’ did not take control of DCTV.

What is also important then is to be able to identify when the community activists **do** engage with community television **and why**. What are the reasons, for instance, why these same activists who did not go to the workshop and who used other production outfits are nevertheless very happy to engage and participate in this research project. This is particularly pertinent given the extensive and in-depth ways they have worked with CMN to develop media capacity as well as the general support they have given to the development of the Dublin community television channel. What is notable about their

choice is that ***they operate on their terms and in ways that they can control, and that this PAR project went to them rather than asking them to come to the project.***

The prevalence of communications activity and media production including print, photography, video, radio, and Internet, within the sector leads me to understand that this non-response to the CMN survey or to CM events is not about ambivalence about the value of community media amongst the community sector but about underlying difficulties, issues and contradictions that are deeply embedded in the groups themselves either historically, because of the nature of their activity, or the perceived nature of the community television project. Most community activists in discussion will say of community television like Ghandi said when asked about British democracy – "it would be a good idea". In fact that is what the first Feasibility Study for community television reported: the community and voluntary organisations approached and interviewed thought community television would be a good idea. What they understood by this was not investigated and it was clear that they could envisage content but the aspect of control and how it would operate was not something the study focused on. Maybe they were not asked explicitly to comment on issues of control. From the notes submitted by the consultant it is clear that a large proportion of those interviewed said they would be involved in the channel in some way. So why did they not get involved?

There is continuous production of media and engagement in communications tools by community organisations; there are continued efforts to gain mainstream media space for their issues; and there are repeated examples of success. Yet there is also acknowledgment by organisations that they have no guaranteed or regular access to media outlets; that these successes and efforts are due to sustained relationships with media people; and that extraordinary actions are required for impact (O'Siochru, 2006).

So what do community organisations want of community television? How do these groups and organisations figure in the plans that are being made for community television? If they aren't present then who is? Again we echo Kim Goldberg's questions of two decades ago. Barbara Popovic gave an account of the CAN TV moment of self-questioning “we need at some point to look around and ask ‘who isn't here?’”.

Our task was to find out what the issues were. One thing was clear – we would get nowhere by trying to tick boxes or by amassing numbers. A positivistic methodology relying on certainties and concrete realities did not allow us to explore the things that move people to use media and develop community media. Nor did they allow us to examine the relationships that may explain how and why certain groups choose particular communications tools; why or how these community media initiatives emerge; who controls such community media initiatives; and ultimately how to establish community television channels that work for their communities.

4. A.6 Participatory approaches:

Given the CMN ethos and the nature of our first discussion, I proposed that we look at the idea of engaging in a participatory process with community development organisations. I was keen to see a PAR approach taken because of the suitability of this approach where there is a need to deal with real change. There were difficulties with establishing a PAR approach and we had to review the work a number of times before we began to move forward.

The typical Freirean approach to PAR emphasises the bringing ‘stakeholders’ together and tying the development of the initiative to institutions. I saw the development of community television in the city as involving a number of sectors and felt that a PAR approach should

tie these into the project. It seemed to be one means of ensuring that the necessary resources would be released or contributed. My group was more cautious about this and sought an approach that would put out feelers first. This proved quite correct considering that there was a large difference between what we were doing and the established PAR approaches that are used in management or education institutions. These operate in well established settings and it is often very clear who the 'stakeholders' are and that they will be affected by the outcomes of the research. These factors were not so clear in CMN's case, the 'stakeholders' were propositions rather than being in situ and community organizations' involvement was of a voluntary nature. This did not mean that the participatory nature of the project was dismissed, but it did make it fuzzier.

PAR is understood to be helpful when there is need to engage with change (CASL Guide, 2000). When we began this project I had in my mind the fact that the community organisations would face changes within their organisations' structures and operations if they were to begin to engage with community television. What I would regularly put to groups and activists that I met:

'community organisations wanting to get involved may have to develop a media wing within their organisation; they would have to look at how they could 'mediate' their activities. However, another important consideration is that community television should not create new and unsustainable burdens on organisations but that they should be able to continue doing the work they needed to do but which could be enhanced through using the community channel.'

We began to address the issues in ways that were built around these perceptions. As part of my role I was to write position papers to address the deficit in political recognition and institutional support, visit CTV channels, and report back with presentations so we could discuss what community television was about and how people went about doing it.

The gathering of this kind of data was very useful and some of these are included as appendices in this thesis. Examples were used to feed the much needed discussions and provided a focus for many meetings but much of it left us back where we had started

because what was needed was to develop community television in the here and now in the context of Ireland – in Dublin, Navan, Cork, and with the groups that wanted to access a community television channel.

When I was looking at the exciting programmes developed by Grand Rapids Community Media Centre in Michigan and CANTV in Chicago it made sense to ask “how can we do that?” But both Grand Rapids and CAN TV went through a long process to get to their formulations. Grand Rapids had just celebrated twenty-five years of functioning as a media centre. In the case of CANTV it was five years before they conducted the community needs assessment that helped them arrive at the formulations of community television that now serve their communities so well. CANTV works well because they referred back to the needs of their community and its organisations and engaged in a participatory process to formulate the sort of programming they could develop together.

A participatory process that is predicated on need and capacity is pretty well the only way to arrive at something in which everyone involved has ownership. So referring to these initiatives sometimes seemed questionable when we couldn’t treat them as models for our start-up needs.

Its not that these presentations with examples of community channels and how they operated were useless but that there was something that had to happen first in Ireland and that was to proactively establish the channel. Trying to ‘work backwards’ by looking at what community channels had developed while it could give us ideas, wasn’t going to help us identify the issues we had to deal with in developing the most important thing which was a community coalition to establish community television. It was when we could sit down with people from these channels and discussed the difficulties they had dealt with in their own starting up phases, identifying those continuing problems that had to be addressed on an ongoing basis that we began to get a vision of what we should do. **The**

process as it progressed drew us more into discussions with small groups and key individuals; this in fact constituted a change in approach with emphasis on sharing information through personal interaction.

4. A.7 Developing the Research Plan

The CMN group was at first ambivalent about what Participatory Action Research (PAR) would mean. The questions that had to be addressed in order to look at PAR were about who would participate and how this would take place. The methodology that evolved was not a pure form of participatory Action Research as described by Foote-Whyte or Freire but an adaptation that allowed the group to move forward within the constraints in which it operated. The group found it hard to conceive of a plan or design in relation to the research project; it wasn't until we started to look at the issues we faced that some action / planning became feasible.

Some members of the group were concerned about the power issues associated with research so the need to construct the research as an open project that was accountable to the grouping was important. I proposed that the work I undertook as the CMN Co-coordinator with the core CMN group in the effort to develop community television would constitute the research.

This proposal was arrived at rather than planned and it demanded trust from the group. That my roles were open to scrutiny so making my work part of the research did not make any of it easier. At times I suspect that the complexity of roles that evolved within the strategies we devised was seen to be a consolidation of power in the researcher/CMN co-coordinator and this contributed to difficulties at various junctures. At the same time the fact that I undertook such roles opened up opportunities that otherwise would not have

presented. If there were other ways we did not find them. The design of the research project then was the activity of CMN and this was coordinated from my position as an activist-researcher.

3. A.8 Refining the research question

The first concern was how we could set up a community television channel but as discussion evolved it became clear that this was not simply a matter of how we could get hold of space and technology. The main concern was how to ensure that what we did set up was a *community* television channel and this meant to us that the community sector had to be part and parcel of designing it. The real nature of the research question actually began to become apparent in 2002. How can the community sector establish a community television channel? If a community coalition can't do it how will groups access it? What are the real issues here?

What was the main issue?

The question asked from all sides was where was the money coming from? From this perspective the needs were to look at:

- Funding strategies and possible partners
- Engagement of the community sector in the design and structure-building of the community television channel.

Approaching these issues meant looking at how we ourselves worked and what was available to us. But it also brought a string of other questions along with it.

- How do community organisations work? Are there generalizations that can be made? CWC principles of community development (CD) attempt to set out norms for community development practice, do these work all the time?

- Can CD work with a community television channel? The difficulty here is with making generalisations from existing projects since all community media projects are locally based this renders community media – until it in fact exists - a theory that has to be tested locally (within a geographic community) or contextually (within a community of interest). How can CWC principles be transposed to CTV?
- If community organisations cannot establish the channel themselves, i.e. they cannot commit the resources (the people, the time) then who is going to do it?
- If a community television organisation is not a grassroots community organisation or a coalition of these; how is it connected to the community? How do community television channels work? What do we need to set it up/ what do we need to do in order to get what we need? Who does this work?

The research strategy had to evolve as a response to these questions and their various aspects as we encountered them. The important thing was to keep connecting with those involved and become visible as an active part of the community – this localised our activities in relation to Dublin.

By 2002 CMN was engaged in a number of processes that were happening parallel to and partly instigated by the research project. These were supported particularly by my activities as the researcher:

- Developing a group that would establish a community channel in Dublin
- Engagement with the Dublin City Community Forum (DCCF)
- Developing and encouraging community organisation’s participation in the channel

All these processes brought up issues of inequalities, knowledge, and power. Underlying all of this were the roles these processes demanded of me that at times created difficult conflicts and pressures but which essentially emanated from my position as an activist.

The demand on the researcher to take up various roles is common to a number of methodological paradigms but the nature of these roles can be quite different depending on the ideological framework the researcher operates within. For example a view of the roles researchers may take up in action research would be:

Planner leader
catalyzer facilitator
teacher designer
listener observer
(O'Brien, 1998, p. 9)

Within PAR roles can become significantly different since it also treats participants as researchers and as having a part in directing the research design and question (Dick, 2002) (Foote-Whyte W. &, 1991). This can lead to researchers being allocated roles by the other participants that diverge widely from the idea of a detached objective analyser from an 'etic', fly-on-the-wall position. Consider the following roles allocated to a researcher by a participant family:

The helper (homework, technology)
The guest
The science and / or technology expert
One of the family
The parent's friend
The child's friend

Such new and additional roles also contribute to the dynamic of the research process.

4. Part B – The PAR process and the researcher’s role

This section considers the research from the researchers point of view and what the PAR process means in this context, the reasons for the suitability of the PAR methodology to CMN itself; the ‘fits’ and the ‘misfits’ of the methodology with the community television project; and the limitations.

4. B.1 Researcher’s role

4. B.2 Possibilities within PAR

4. B.3 Changes in the wider environment

4. B.4 CMN – and a research strategy

4. B.1 Researcher’s role

Personal involvement

My role as the researcher was at once the gatherer of data and the mainstay of relationships. From the beginning of this project the researcher was seen as the person who would provide information and in consultation with the groups support the development of propositions or plans on the basis of that information.

My personal involvement in the research project was multi-faceted; it involved my work as an activist and also institutional roles that I undertook springing from that, it also supported information flow. My position as an activist was the connecting role in all of these; I would not have been operating in any of these roles unless I was operating as an activist first. The roles were:

- Role as researcher
- Role as CMN Co-coordinator
- Role in development of the Community Media Forum
- My position as a Member of the City Development Board

I also engaged in activity that demonstrated the need for a support role to the wider CTV project which included:

- Engagement in lobby efforts – on local and national levels
- Writing position papers – feeding community knowledge into to Planning process
- Lobbying and engaging in consultations
- Fund-raising
- Supporting the Interim Steering Group for Dublin Community Television: - doing the work – organising meetings, keeping information flow going, doing the secretary role – minutes, etc. This became formalised when DCTV became a Co-op in 2004 and I was elected Secretary – a position I held until June 2007.
- Supporting the development of networks – these resulted in actions that are collectively owned, most recent being the Community Television Training Network and the formation of the Community Television Association.
- Developing community television knowledge to feed into focus groups: - exploring ways of producing community television that would look at how people could use the medium and engage with community television in their everyday lives.

Identifying the participating groups was a core task for the researcher; the project interacted with the wider community via the researcher’s *activist* role, without this element of activism there would have been no feedback or connection with the wider community; a PAR strategy would have failed completely.

My own interests and expectations of the research process:

When I embarked on the research I wanted it to be a participatory process, firstly because our whole ethos was one of participation and empowerment using media. CMN was all about collaboratively building media outlets to support communication needs within communities. Since we had the goal of establishing a community television channel we were involved in bringing about substantial change. I didn't understand how we could conduct a research project without it being done in a participatory way – this had to be a purposeful conversation between interest groups. As well as develop the knowledge base available to us I also had an activist organising role and needed to be able to continue it.

As I have said, participatory methodology was at first questioned by the CMN group.

Different views of the purpose of the research project ranged from, on the positive side, “it will help you do your job better” and “it will give us the information we need”; to suspicion and negativity – “all researchers are in a position of power and control the research process”, “what will the participatory process demand of us?” “I mean, it sounds good, but what do we mean by participation?”

The fact that it involved an academic qualification was also an issue and some tensions that arose with members may have been based in a perception that I was doing it in my own interest. Ultimately it was my proposal and although there was general support, people on the CMN SC did not have a lot of time to give to extensive meetings, reading long documents, and taking part in extensive evaluations. It was important that the time constraints on members be respected and that the general support that was in fact given to the research project should be acknowledged and understood - despite the reservations that people had.

My proposal that my work i.e. the organising role I had in developing community television was the basis for the research was also something that wasn't immediately acceptable. I put it to the SC that I was willing to continue to work for CMN so long as this work would produce useful knowledge results and that the research direction would follow what we felt was necessary at any given time. If that meant that I should engage in a range of different activities to elicit responses to the proposal of a community television channel then that would be where it should go. This evolved slowly; some just carried on seeing the research as “Margaret's project” but others worked with me to direct and support activities. The most important aspect of this was that the research was the organising I was doing and the findings would be the results. This position meant that the group had access to the work I was involved with on an ongoing basis, I was answerable to them, my proposed actions were discussed, and reporting on actions was maintained.

Things I found difficult:

- Dealing with a group member when he said “where's the plan?” – my response was, “we have to develop it together”
- Dealing with another group member when he rubbished a review I had done, then he said if it was only a review then it was ok.
- I found it hard to be clear about the project, the research, and my role within it. I think the best answer I gave to anyone was, “the research project keeps me in place to do the work around this.” Deciding what the work was to be was the concern of the group and this was the position at all times; the CMN group directed the work, feedback from groups we helped to organise also directed the work. Very often the work was facilitation of groups; supporting their needs; finding the resources needed for actions be they funds, skills, recording, or facilitating feedback.

- A number of times I took part in other research actions on the understanding that I was participating in my role as activist-researcher for CMN/CTV. On two occasions I found there was a real lack of clarity around this which raised issues about whether I had the right to use the work I had done for this project. While the responsibility for the lack of clarity issue was seen as my responsibility, at times I felt this was the more the result of a difficulty the consultant researchers had with the collaborative nature of this project and that this did not fit with their own methodology – a mismatch. They didn’t want to say ‘no’ but they hadn’t fully said ‘yes’. The problem emerged after the work was done. In one of these cases the consultant had said “It’d be a good case study for your thesis” which of course it would have been – but when I went to clarify how I should reference the work it emerged that the participants hadn’t been told that this would feed into the CMN research project and the PhD. On the other occasion another consultant decided not to share results with me but we agreed that where I declared the PhD status of my research to the people I interviewed I had right to use the material once people were ok with that. When I did this I found people had no problems with the project – all interviewees signed consent forms.
- Refusals – a key community radio activist refused to grant me an interview for the research – a refusal which I found very difficult to deal with. An excuse was given to avoid meeting and I was referred to others in the radio station. I don’t know the reason why this happened. It was clear that this person did not want to be associated with the project and this remains an issue for me.

4. B.2 Possibilities within PAR

Participatory Action Research is a method used to support change, and in particular where working with political and development structures is needed to bring about that change.

William Foote-Whyte describes it as an evolution of three areas:

- social research methodology
- participation in decision-making by low-ranking people in organisations and communities, and
- socio-technical systems thinking regarding organisational behaviour
(Foote-Whyte, 1991, p. 7)

PAR however also has roots in radical activist traditions developed in Latin America by organisers and thinkers such as Freire whose work was based on the belief that people suffering oppression are those who know best what they need to alleviate it. This corresponds with Foote-Whyte’s requirement for participation by “low-ranking people” within organisations. Foote-Whyte’s approach also allows for identification of key informants and the development of their role within the project; this also creates pathways for transference of ownership of the project and spaces for development of skill base.

However there are tensions between versions of PAR that are conducted in formal settings, such as workplaces within established organizations (where Foote Whyte’s work was mainly based) and forms of PAR that are used to support the development of new networks where they didn’t exist before or in informal groupings operating without established organizational forms and legal entities (such as co-ops or companies). This would be more associated with popular education and Freire’s methodologies and was used for example by Ana Lopes in a PAR project that aimed to help sex workers establish their own union – the International Union of sex Workers (IUSW www.iusw.org).

PAR is a process that elicits responses to situations and needs. It is most useful in a local situation where there is a need to affect changes in relationships and

bring real visible organisational structures, effective local advocacy, and a durable change in power relations with the center (CASL Guide, 2000)

Cornell's PAR guide also states that PAR works best where the

"external agency is aware of the potential for damage, both to themselves and, more importantly, to the disempowered in the community . . . and the external agency has a clear status and relationship with the community and can command resources for a long-term commitment" (see <http://www.iisd.org/caslCASLGuide/PAR.html>)¹¹⁴

CMN's need to engage with local development and political structures appeared to suggest that a PAR approach would be useful, but this would demand that those institutions be tied into the project in a way in which they yet were not. While we managed to develop a relationship with the local authority and other bodies by taking a role and putting forward the community television proposal there was no formal relationship or partnership. This would be very difficult for the CMN group to establish on its own and would have required a stronger organizational and network base. Building on and adapting Freire's position however allows for a type of partnership that could work to address the issues without bringing the project into alliances with authorities that were unacceptable at the time (for both CMN and the other groups involved). Building a group to collaborate on the research project from amongst the community organisations and the community media organisations would address the core question of access and ownership that the research was about.

¹¹⁴ The first section quoted was accessed in 2002, on reference to the guide in August 2009 I find the language has changed – it now reads: "As with all methods, its merits vary with the research situation and the practitioner. At its best, the process can be liberating, empowering and educative, a collegial relationship that brings local communities into the policy debate, validating their knowledge. At its worst, it can degenerate into a process of co-option of local communities into an external agenda, or an exploitative series of empty rituals imposing fresh burdens on the community's time and energy and serving primarily to legitimize the credentials of the implementing agency as "grassroots oriented". While participation must be integral to the research process, it must be understood and practiced as a genuine process"
<http://www.iisd.org/casl/CASLGuide/ParticipatoryApproach.htm>

Limitations

PAR is not always a comfortable means to manage such a process. The CASL Guide warns –

“PAR can empower a community, entrench a local elite, right a wrong or totally mess things up. It depends on the extent of awareness and political savoir faire of the supporting outside organisation.” (Participatory Approach to Research) (<http://www.iisd.org/casl/CASLGuide/PAR.htm>).

Many researchers take a cautionary approach and this position would be supported particularly by supporting organisations that do not want their operations questioned and try to contain the research process (Protz, 2006) (Van Vuuren, 2003).

However while Flicker et al assert the problem that PAR can work to bring power relationships to the fore rather than as a means to change them, they propose

One way of challenging these pervasive hierarchies is to explicitly name them, address them head-on and ensure that the benefits of the partnership are equitably distributed. (Flicker, 2007).

While Flicker refers to academic institutions as the holders of power (particularly power in terms of defining the kind of knowledge that is acceptable) **the issue of challenging emerging hierarchies still holds in terms of the actors within any given situation. If the researcher is to take this route s/he needs to ensure they have support for this stance.**

Insider/outsider – problems for researchers

Van Vuuren's (2003) problems associated with the PAR undertaken with community radio stations were located in the problems existing in the stations themselves and the fact that the stations did not own the research. Given that she was an outsider this was not totally surprising. But is the position of the insider-researcher so very different? Other have found that the position of the insider is also beset with tensions and difficulties and while the advantages of being an insider researcher can deliver more access to information other constraints can emerge which need to be kept in mind when analysing data (Plowys, 1998).

While I had historical relationships with organisations - background knowledge, friendship networks, and access already established - there were still a range of problems with interviewing colleagues, the approaches to and perspectives on the research from others, and the level of trust on which I could depend. Research can create the sense for people that they are being observed when maybe they find do not want to be observed or are uncomfortable about it even though they have agreed to engage with it; and this is a problem. While people want to be helpful particularly when they are acquaintances, I sometimes found sudden nervousness, or a problem, surfacing unexpectedly. There can be various reasons for this for example: people not expecting that I might ask them about their own histories, or that they suddenly worry that aspects of their histories or the history of their organisations may become an issue. Guarantees of confidentiality are essential since activists know that whatever they say may find its way out which makes them guarded. The majority of those who took part in this research project were extremely helpful and the project would have floundered without their trust.

While quantitative methods may be problematic for many people it can often seem preferable to have the focus on the outcomes rather than on *how* they came about and particularly when that involves their activities and their own personal worldviews. The importance of confidentiality in these situations further complicates the research.

Long-term issues: change and delays:

The community television project faced a particular problem in terms of time – the process of developing a community channel and the licensing process was itself tied to the process of change for the statutory structures – i.e. the IRTC becoming the BCI, now the BAI. The project therefore went through a number of phases related to and sometimes determined by delays in the whole process. These delays changed the timescale from pilot to

evaluation from 2003-2009 to 2007-2017 (I noted this in a report to the RIA in 2006, see Appendix No 18).

After the Bill was passed in 2001 we expected things to change rapidly, but they didn't. The BCI was not established until 2002; the licensing process itself was delayed in 2005 due to the BCI not having personnel in place to deal with community applications; on the home front CMN 's position was very unstable and after a move in 2003, and again in 2004, it finally became homeless early in 2005. Bekken documented the difficulties that long-term processes - such as the licensing process for community radio in the US - present for community organisations:

KKFI, a community radio station in Kansas city, found that it took more than ten years from conception to going on-air. Lorenzo Milan, who helped establish five community radio stations, provides harrowing detail; on the difficulties of navigating the bureaucratic processes to obtain a broadcasting license. . . . Few community-base institutions have the bureaucratic savvy or staying power to see this process through years of delay, or to handle the paperwork" (Bekken, 2000)

Certainly CMN had to adapt to new circumstances continuously after 2000 within its own situation and this intensified after 2003. While this created problems, the delays for the community television project brought about by the slow-moving bureaucracy of the state created additional difficulty. The capacity to be responsive to new situations be they delays or demands – was a feature of the research project and is noted in all relevant literature as a key quality in PAR (Dick, 2002) (Foote-Whyte W. &, 1991) (O'Brien, 1998).

An important concern highlighted in the literature by PAR promoters, e.g. PARnet, CASL, etc., are deep inequalities that the process cannot address and long-term limitations on the part of the promoting organisation. This in itself is a 'safe' way of putting the awkward issue that while PAR is promoted as developmental the successful examples have happened within well established and well-resourced contexts. This could do with more attention; we need to know where the pitfalls are, when the issues surface, and what

happens when people try to deal with them. In fact we need to know more about what happens in *resource-poor* PAR projects.

Inequalities:

These exist in internal and external arenas.

CMN was keenly aware of the difficulty of engagement with local authorities and local institutions and was reluctant to engage with these institutions formally in the research project. This was a reasonable position to take since the changes and dynamics within the wider community and the maneuvering within local authorities, the local partnerships, etc, (in short the turmoil in the community) meant that it would be difficult to engage with these institutions. The project then was composed of groups who agreed to participate in research activities, to share research, and who had a commitment to the establishment of community television.

Within CMN itself there were differences that were quietly self-controlled in the interest of the common good. But while we may have stepped back from direct engagement with the state and other institutional agents as partners in a PAR process on the other hand we couldn't get away from our own issues and inequalities. The fact was that CMN had no command of resources for a long-term commitment. This limitation caused difficulties at a late stage in the project when the new organisations brought into being through the work of the PAR project, particularly DCTV and the CTA undermined the viability of the older organisation CMN by draining its resources without replenishing them.

The term partnership has a particular association with the Social Partnership process set up by government in Ireland; it also has a 'business' type connotation so in this thesis I use the term 'coalition' to describe the relationships that we developed throughout the research

project. There is more and more use of the term ‘multi-stakeholder’ and now a body of work is building on the processes used in public participation in areas such as health, housing, etc. What is clear is that these consultation processes have meant huge difficulties for the communities who are involved. The Comm-Org email list¹¹⁵ discussions provide a useful set of references for how to go about defining relationships between organisations, and some of these especially Amanda Tattersall’s coalition features which she applies to union-community coalitions in Australia - allow the nature of the relationships and their capacity to change to become more explicit (<http://www.communityunionism.org>) (Tattersall, 2006). Tattersall’s work – while interesting because it is an attempt to see coalitions in frameworks that cater for different levels of intergroup coalitions and create possibilities for movement building – is concerned with Trade Unions (well-resourced) engaging with local communities. Joan M. Robert’s (2005) work around developing multi-stakeholder partnerships in New York focuses on the development of infrastructural systems – “Trans-organisational System (TS)” which is a way of describing relationships between organizations (usually well resourced) and “societal systems”.

A recent report from the Centre for Urban and Regional Studies, Trinity College Dublin, noted the difficulties within the new entrepreneurial ethos “in promoting and facilitating effective and meaningful community participation”. In its conclusion it recommended that

In the process of managing urban change, planners and urban managers should ensure that already deprived communities are not also obliged to bear disproportionately the additional burdens arising from change. *It is highly unlikely that, under the guise of ‘community participation’, the treatment extended to some of the deprived urban communities examined in the research would have been contemplated for middle-class areas where expertise, knowledge, political linkages and economic power are far greater. It certainly would not have been tolerated by them.* (McLaren, Clayton, & Brunell, 2007, p. 235) (Emphasis my own)

¹¹⁵ See <http://comm-org.wisc.edu/news.php>

There was also a 'breaking point' in my position in the development of DCTV at a later stage when 'partnership' became the dominant term used within the DCTV group. My suggestion that we use another term was dismissed and justified by an opposed view on the Committee that 'partnership' was a term that community organisations were happy to use. This use of language occurred at a time when the profile, approaches, and intentions of the participants in the DCTV project was changing. This change was a move from a situation where a significant number of community development organisations were involved at a decision making level to where the group was dominated by independent filmmakers and large NGOs. This change was a process catalysed by the funding agenda, and in particular the dominant ethos within the BCI's Sound and Vision Scheme which preferred standards taken from independent / arthouse film-making practice. **There was a clear direct link between the change of language, the change of Committee members, and the change of politics of the organisation. 'Partnerships' were essentially about accessing funding.**

CMN as the project promoter:

The CMN core group was the active interest group in 1999/2000, the network extended into community projects around the country and into the community development movement. CMN's projects had activated this network and the last conference of the Building Community Media in Ireland Project in 1999 focused on digitalisation and the proposed new Broadcasting Bill. CMN was the only actor with the resources and the opportunity to prioritise community television at that time. By the time the research project began, the activity from these projects had subsided and although there was a network, it was not active. The CTV research project hoped to revitalize the network. This proved more difficult than at first thought. In order to understand the evolution of the strategies we adopted it is important to look at the context in which we were operating.

4. B.3 Changes in wider environment;

Funding environment: national and EU prior and up to 2000.

It is important to recognize that community and voluntary groups operate within a wider environment that impacts on how they work. In particular the interface between groups and the funding environment is a site of struggle. While the work of these groups is in their communities and addressing issues in that context, the conditions attached to funding can have major implications for how they can do their work. This affects the implementation of methodological processes, and it is not unknown that the impact of funding on a voluntary group can change it utterly¹¹⁶. In Ireland the dimensions were both national and international.

Formational funding - National:

Community employment: On the national level, CMN as with other community or voluntary organisations availed of the Community Employment Project (CEP) known as CE schemes – this was a return to work initiative aimed at integrating the long-term unemployed back onto the workforce. CMN ran a CEP from 1994 to 2003. The schemes had been introduced in the midst of 1980’s rocketing unemployment; in 1987 emigration to the nearest state, Britain, reached the highest level since the Great Famine in 1845, an embarrassing figure for the state. At the statutory level there was a realisation that without intervention the pockets of serious deprivation would stagnate; at this stage there was a sharp rise in drugs and organised criminal activity in these areas, no-go areas in Dublin meant that not only non-locals, but Gardai and buses along with other services simply did

¹¹⁶ CWC is protesting the current proposed changes (December 2009) in the contracts for Community Development Projects (CDPs) in Ireland as they will make it impossible for them to do their work.

not enter there. The high level of unemployment meant that the pool from which participants were drawn included many who had high levels of education and skills, which meant that many activists in voluntary organizations were also in the pool and therefore qualified to become participants on the CEPs. These schemes were premised on individual training and re-introduction to industry so there were also problems in this for voluntary organisations. Being turned into training grounds for industry rather than developing the voluntary involvement of the community meant difficulties in delivery of their service to their community and the building of their movement. But by 1996, when I joined CMN, these schemes were a resource that community organisations were using as the mainstay of funds for their activities. The economic and political changes of the 1990's Celtic Tiger driven by neo-liberal and free-market ideology, the government's privatisation agenda, and a drive to lower wages, saw a crack-down on the CEPs that were now seen as keeping people from re-entering a low-wage labour force.

Influences of EU and trans-national networks:

Tarrow (1998) cites a fairly strong body of recent research that shows a significant increase in transnational social movement activity due to electronic media. However he reminds us that the fluidity of ideas and the diffusion of social movements across national boundaries was prevalent in a number of movements including religion; he cites the Spanish colonisation of Latin America, the spread of political ideas emanating from the American Revolution, the Dutch Patriot movement, and the French Revolution in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Tilly (2004) quotes the impact of the International Workingmen's Association during the 1830's and 1870's and more informal networks, and also notes the influence of Irish 19th century nationalist movements (Tilly, 2004, p. 64)

Tilly also stresses the value of external validation to social movements and predicted that the twentieth century story will no longer concentrate on Western Europe and North

America – a prediction that is speedily becoming a reality. Tarrow puts a caveat that is pertinent to our own story here:

History teaches us that transnational contention is nothing new under the sun; it shows that it takes a number of forms and integrates differently within domestic societies; and that it requires special conjunctures of incentives and opportunities to be mounted and transmit new norms and identities. Before concluding that the world is fast becoming a global civil society, we should examine these forms and levels of integration and ask where they are leading and which ones are likely to produce new norms and identities. (Tarrow, 1998, p. 184).

Community media being of its nature small and often fragile needs a number of supports to emerge as a movement. The existence of the international organizations such as AMARC etc. has oft been quoted as the proof of their collective strength and this certainly seems to be the case. But in the case of small countries the development of community media can be very much determined by the local particularisms.

Community media activists in Ireland had transnational links that were often seen by the activists themselves as being as strong as (if not stronger than) domestic networks. In the 1980's and 1990's the community sector still had not fully embraced the idea of community media – the country had emerged from a period of censorship that affected all approaches to using media as well as self-censorship in the media themselves. A peace process brought expectations that this would change but the patterns were strong and the media are very much under the control of the dominant group.

CMN had looked to EU funds, given the lack of recognition on the domestic level. In 1996 we made a number of successful applications to EU programmes. One of CMN's strengths in applying to these programmes was its transnational links since all the EU programmes demanded a transnational element and these were readily available through the international organisations. The following years to 2000 saw the network build significantly through these projects. After 2000 the possibilities in the funding environment shrank noticeably as the EU began to push partnership approaches that were weighted by

inherent inequalities making it difficult for small voluntary organisations to avail of the funds. Previous transnational partnerships had themselves exposed problems for the smaller organisations with few resources such as CMN causing an internal division in the project ¹¹⁷ (see Appendix No. 10 for list of transnational partners in CMN’s Integra project). This experience certainly coloured how we viewed the next round – EQUAL – in which the demand for engagement with institutions and public sector partners weighted the projects to the benefit of the bigger organizations¹¹⁸. Such projects had built in assumptions about resources and organisational capacity that small groups could not meet. This amounted to exclusion by ignoring the inherent inequalities. These sorts of issues were a cause of concern to those of us engaged with community television who understood that at some point we would have to deal with larger corporations in some way – with the cable provider NTL for instance; with institutions such as the Regulator, the BCI; with government departments; with local authorities.

The projects in 1997-2000 produced coalitions that sought to protect community media interests and the transnational work was manageable being a smaller component than the national aspect of the projects. Given this experience the difficulties posed by partnerships with highly resourced corporate institutions, universities, local authorities, and commercial interests was clearly something we would have to think about very carefully.

¹¹⁷ The transnational partnership split due to members from larger organisations focus on mainstream media - for example training members of ethnic groups to work within mainstream media, a focus on Trade Unions in the media industries, and a disinterest in the issues that were priorities for community media organizations – in short a culture clash

¹¹⁸ The emphasis in EQUAL was on public/private type partnerships, a requirement being that there must be an institutional member.

Changes in 2000:

Structures for participatory democracy:

The National Development Plan and the Community forum: 2000 was also the year that the new National Development Plan was rolled out. With its emphasis on developing participatory democracy, the new structures of Community Fora within the City and County Development Boards drew the community sector to the table. Community organisations knew they had to participate if they wanted to gain influence on policy. For many their main concern was access to the funding – but there were some who wanted to see a community sector being given a visible place and developing an organising capacity.

This was a shift in the community environment; CMN was part of the affected sector and I attended the initial consultations in Dublin. Given the situation we needed to engage with this process and this meant a shift of focus for CMN. CMN is an all-island organisation and like other (albeit larger) national community of interest groups and NGOs it was difficult to know how to place ourselves in this new initiative. Our involvement became committed very quickly and propelled CMN into a new engagement with both community organisations *and* community media organisations in Dublin.

4. B.4 CMN – developing a research strategy

In 2000 when CMN had to review its position, the funding possibilities were low. CMN had faced a number of funding refusals in particular from the Department of Community and Family Affairs; firstly to develop IT services for the community sector and also to become a specialist support project for the CDP programme. It seemed to us that the Government departments were a closed door when it came to CMN and the provision of community media services. The project ticked over with small inputs of funds from Agencies such as

the Combat Poverty Agency, the City Council, and the Community Forum. These funds would be dedicated for particular outputs, where the Agencies would be fairly well assured of the content of the outcome and covering little more than actual costs. At the same time the pressure to reform organisational structures and operations to more corporate forms was intensifying from all sides, meaning that every funding body demanded the organisation conform to their model. These were big pressures on small organisations.

Richard Boyle (2002) examined the increased demands for accountability about community sector use of public funds focusing on the predominance of contracts between voluntary and community organisations. Problems he identified with this arrangement were the ‘creaming’ of services, i.e. the selecting of participants who were most likely to be successful in delivering outcomes to the detriment of those in need and the privileging of quantitative indicators. This also supports the perceptions of increased trends towards the professionalisation of organisations (Bekken, 2000), the tendency towards managerialism (Lee, 2006), and the dropping of activity that engaged with the excluded (Lee 2006), (McLaren, Clayton, & Brunell, 2007). Outcomes ranged from paper policies to products that looked good but left no real change or development and deepened the divide between those that had and those that had not; whether in terms of skills, quality of life, or financial resources.

This is not purely an Irish problem: of 75% of community organisations responding to one survey in the US in 2000 over half reported over-loading of their paper work; community organisations using FETAC accreditation systems¹¹⁹ in Ireland reported similar problems. FETAC systems for reporting on the Quality of Learning Indicators were the focus of an industrial dispute in 2007 surrounding the implementation of the Qualifications (Education

¹¹⁹ FETAC was designed to support adult learners and recognize prior learning experience.

and Training) Act 1999 (TUI, 2007, p. 10) . While the squeeze was being felt in further education institutions the TUI¹²⁰ pressed the government to provide resources to smaller centres to meet the demands. These included amongst others: prison education services; Youthreach; and Traveller Education Centres. In comparison to the difficulties that even these small centres mentioned were having, community media organizations had even greater difficulties¹²¹.

CMN’s capacity to continue in 2000 was in some part due to a merger with its sister organisation Open Channel who was unable to pay rent and maintain its CE project. However embargos on participant replacement and an inability to find funds from other sources eventually put CMN in the same situation in 2003¹²².

In 2000 while the community sector voiced appreciation of CMN’s work (indeed many asked why we were not already a support service funded by the department) we were unable to turn this voiced support into concrete strategy. The community sector was not in a position to respond to our appeals to keep the media resource open. The whole sector faced massive cutbacks on all fronts driven by the view that since the economy was in

¹²⁰ Teachers Union of Ireland

¹²¹ The burden on poorly resourced organisations to ‘answer up’ to corporate standards was no where more apparent to us than when the CMN Community Services Project (CSP)¹²¹ Assessment (conducted by Grant Thornton) was required in 2007 to produce paperwork in triplicate – i.e. not carbon copies, but in three different formats in three different types of records, and this when the CSP maintained only two workers (paid minimum wage) and a manager (paid not a huge amount more).

¹²² Open Channel’s CE faced closure for the same reasons as others dependent on CEP’s, lack of funds to pay Celtic Tiger rents. CMN took on the open Channel community Employment Scheme, thereby expanding its own CEP. This meant an extra 15 workers and therefore provided an Assistant Supervisor, a full-time, though low-paid, worker. The important difference this made was that in having an assistant supervisor, despite the fact that the numbers of participants on the scheme doubled, the CMN Co-coordinator now had more support and time could now be spent in other activities.

boom supports made available to the community and voluntary sector in times of economic hardship were no longer needed. Community Employment was a target area for cuts since it was premised on a return to work for long-term unemployed – seen as no longer necessary in the booming economy. The cuts in these projects were a significant loss of resources to the sector and this scenario persists.

In 2000 CMN formulated its way forward with a view to keeping the demand for resources low and achieving a higher impact – i.e. recognition of the difficult funding situation and focusing our activities on what was possible. A research approach seemed less demanding on resources than the provision of services to a sector that was under attack, losing funding, and with little time to engage in training to use media or to step outside their regular activities to develop media projects. Therefore the synthesis of CMN’s work into a reflexive practice within the framework of a research project made good sense. What this in reality meant was a process of persuasion – the CMN SC had to be convinced that this could be done. While the core position of the research project was eventually accepted there remained a legacy of skepticism which I tried to ignore for some time because it was simply an obstacle to moving forward. There are still aspects of this that need to be expressed.

Develop the knowledge base

What aspect of community television did we need to know about? What did we know already? Did we even know what we knew? What would be useful?

How to start

We had to do a number of things –

- Develop the knowledge base, for this we needed
 - a system for knowledge production

- Identify the knowledge needs
- Build relationship with the state agencies,
 - Engage with the statutory bodies: the Regulator; the Department responsible for communications, the Department responsible for community
- Seek support from the different sectors
 - Community sector
 - Local authorities
 - Local Partnerships
 - Education sector
 - Training Agencies such as FAS
- Build a new organisation to take community television forward – who would be involved?

The PAR strategy had to negotiate the tensions within this agenda and the issues that it posed in addressing our question concerning the participation of community organisations needing voice.

4. B.5 Developing knowledge of the knowledge we had in CMN:

What knowledge existed in the CMN group about community television was uneven: some people had participated in trips to other countries; others had simply read about it, others had no experience of CTV but wanted to see a television channel that was controlled by the people. Many had been involved in making community video and were frustrated by the problem of distribution. The specific areas of knowledge available within the CMN group came from members experience in the wider and trans-national CM networks, and on the ground grassroots activity within communities.

In the wider CMN network the knowledge base was different again to that within the core group; out in the ‘wilds of the un-mediated community and grassroots world’ it was simply unknown what people thought about community television or what their experience was¹²³. Irish patterns of emigration however meant that many people had experienced community television abroad, and this experience was also within the community sector.

Trying to tap into knowledge that existed from previous attempts to establish community television was not easy since there was little documentation. Finding the few pieces of literature that did exist was a matter of luck and if we were to make a concentrated effort to establish community television in this new opportunity then we didn’t have the time to go rooting in history. We could only hope that history would come to us in some way and since we would have to ground ourselves in the present we could only hope that if history did find us that it would have something useful to contribute! People who had been involved in prior efforts to establish community television in Ireland were still around and while many had moved on, some into community radio, a few made contact and lent support to the new initiative. During my time as a Community Rep to the Dublin City Development Board, David Connolly, then CEO of the Dublin Inner City Partnership (DICP) told me of his involvement in the original Ballyfermot Community Association Television. I persuaded him to write an article for CMN’s magazine “Tracking” about the Ballyfermot experience¹²⁴. This was the first of that experience to come to light¹²⁵.

¹²³ I remember some of our group talking about conversations each of us had with taxi-drivers, these conversations were also interesting because the taxi-drivers, even if they’d never heard of community media before, often understood what we were trying to do, and some would have had experience of community television in the US. Trouble was I couldn’t do much by talking to taxi-drivers because CMN certainly couldn’t afford them and I didn’t take taxis very often, except getting to the airport on holidays, when I joined CMN in 1996 we walked to deliver letters around the city to save on postage costs!

¹²⁴ see http://www.cmn.ie/cmnsitenew/trackark/tol_html/paa.html “Tracking” went on-line in 2000.

Knowledge from previous projects and network development

CMN projects had allowed us develop links with a wide range of groups around the country which was a fount of knowledge in relation to the sorts of issues experienced by community organisations in getting involved with media. At the time radio was the only broadcast media in the CMN projects so we could not glean any experiential knowledge about CTV per se from the projects. The community radio project that emerged in the CMN project “Building Community Media in Ireland” (BCMI)¹²⁶ successfully broadcast under a short term license but failed to establish any on-going initiatives. The reasons for this were mainly to do with the people involved; all save one left the area to work elsewhere, some went abroad. In general the groups that continued activities beyond the life of the BCMI projects were run by people who had long-term life commitment to the geographical area or to the community of interest group. Some of these groups worked on serious disadvantage issues, such as Travellers' rights, men's groups in rural areas, health issues such as HIV/AIDs, or local disadvantaged communities.

The knowledge we began to develop through further CMN activities

During 2000-2003 despite difficulties with funding CMN managed to:

- Maintain the website and produce three issues of “Tracking” on line
- Provide support to community projects using media in the CMN media resource centre
- Have a significant involvement in the City Community Forum and the City Development Board.

¹²⁵ I was amused later when people, unaware that I had a part in the publication of Tracking, presented me with the article as interesting information.

¹²⁶ funded under the Integra Strand of the EU Employment Programme

These were strategies to develop knowledge and information flow; to engage with the needs of the community sector in producing media; to create relationships and linkages that would energise that knowledge turning it into a tool to bring the whole project on towards its goal. The last – that of becoming a significant actor within the local community organising for access to centres of power was an extremely important position for CMN. This we could envisage as an interface between our organising and the state. This cost the organisation dearly in that it took my energies away from our CEP but it allowed us a structure within which to form networks of solidarity, a platform from which to lobby, and a means to create visibility for the CTV project and CM generally.

4. B.6 Community control and the community television proposal

Organising structures, creating institutions, gaining recognition

A core problem that community organizing faces is the lack of structures in which people can operate in a way that caters for their needs (Fox-Piven F. &, 1979). Activist firstly must create a framework in which we can operate; we build structures to allow us address particular issues *as we go*. **There is a direct relationship between the nature of our activity and the structures we build.**

This aspect of the community television strategy was a key element and while the PAR strategy revolved around it none of the relationships we developed with state agencies through our efforts to develop institutional linkages caused any state or institutional agencies to become partners in the PAR project in the classical sense. What the PAR idea did was to allow me see the research activity as developing relationships and also gave me a perspective from which I could review them. Given the kinds of issues that beset the

sector noted above (CMN included) any partnering with institutions would be difficult and coalition building within the community sector also presented difficulties.

In 2000 the new City and County Development Boards were established with a brief to develop Community Fora. Some on the CMN SC felt this initiative could be strategically important to developing community television. I became directly involved in the Dublin City Community Forum (DCCF) and this pushed my role as activist researcher into more complex realms; it was also a pivotal point for the community television project.

Community media representing the community

Rounds of meetings run by the Department of Community and Enterprise (DCE) throughout 2000 aimed to get community and voluntary sector groups to register with the new DCCF. In the capital city this was a big challenge and all political ‘stakeholders’ were in some way connected to the development. The establishment of the DCCF was seen by many city activists as an effort to exert controls over community and voluntary organisations on a local level just as the Community Pillar did with the Community Platform at the national level in Social Partnership. It was also seen as an attempt to sideline existing structures such as the community networks and the local Partnerships, in this it fed on existing divisions within the sector. Despite initial widescale resistance to its establishment many objectors eventually joined the DCCF. While this did not change the political profile of the community sector in Dublin City nor did it provide (as loudly promoted) a voice for the community sector or succeed in bringing all dissenters under its wing; the DCCF remains an institution that provides important supports to community organisations and in particular a means to access funds.

This perception also became evident in a number of State Agencies’ efforts to streamline governance and organisational forms within the sector as a condition of grant-aid. The formation at this time of a new organisation, the Wheel, augured a struggle within the sector itself. The Wheel announced itself to be a voice for the community and voluntary sector but was explicitly pro-partnership and related strongly to the private sector. The challenge the Wheel presented to the existing ‘voice’ for the sector in the form of the Community Workers Co-op (CWC) has not so far succeeded however and despite the withdrawal of the Community Platform (including the CWC) from Partnership in 2003 the two organisations still co-exist since there is no mandate for representational status *from the community sector* for any single organisation.

Organisation of the Dublin City Community Forum (DCCF)

At the initial sessions organised by the DCE where we understood we were being asked about our needs as community organisations it was clear that the facilitators had been told to instruct us in what the new structures would be and how we were expected to fall in line with them. At one point my group caucused and then told the facilitator that she should drop her agenda, we wanted to use the workshop to hear what needs actually existed. These kinds of confrontations continued into the autumn workshops where community representatives were elected.

The DCCF itself was a site of intense internal struggle and the 2003 Conference was a battlefield; the meeting was adjourned and a committee established to oversee its reconvening two months later. At issue was the failure of the existing executive to declare a constitution and convene an AGM, instead deciding to hold a conference and collect recommendations from workshops rather than call an AGM and accept motions for adoption. This format was roundly rejected and seen as an attempt to depoliticise and control the Forum. A section of the executive stood down and a new order began -

although enough of the ‘old order’ remained to ensure that the ‘split’ was not a clean break. While tensions remained between different factions the DCCF was now also a space where these interests could begin to work out their issues.

The DCCF’s difficulties were compounded by its organisational structures; the Autumn workshops divided the groupings into “Social”, “Economic” and “Cultural” clusters; elections were then called for three Community Representative’s positions on the Dublin City Development Board (DCDB)¹²⁷. This form was imposed despite being contested at the time; the three cluster form was an artificial divide and groups could not locate themselves as either purely economic, social, or cultural. Restructuring was inevitable and eventually a system of Focus Groups was adopted. This brought its own problems since ten organisations had to sign up to be recognized as a Focus Group¹²⁸. All the other tensions that originated in historical and political differences between groupings within the city were still very much part of the DCCFs problems.

My first input as a community representative to the Dublin City Development Board (DCDB) was to submit a Position Paper (see Appendix No. 19) to the DCDB committee considering communications for the strategic planning process. The recommendations were the catalyst to setting up a Community Media Forum; allowed me raise the profile of community media as engaged at a fundamental level with community issues; and persuaded the Dublin City Community Forum (DCCF) that community media within the City

¹²⁷ It is interesting that at a later date the Department of Community and Enterprise (DCE) denied that the representatives had been elected from these clusters insisting they were elected from a ‘broad church’. However to stand as Community Representative you had to be a Cluster Representative to the Forum and so the process tended to put clusters in competition for a strong position to represent their issues.

¹²⁸ The idea that a Focus Group might be able to declare itself rather than be approved did not come into the question. The DCCF had to approve the application so that it could hold its constitution in place.

was their concern. This Position Paper was also important as it privileged community media within the strategy for the city over and above commercial media; it successfully warded off the establishment of a ‘media forum’ that was intended to involve the state broadcaster and the commercial operators in a media strategy for the city with community media in a multi-stake-holder forum. This was a mirror image of the kinds of public-private-partnership that left community organisations in a pitiful place and which we were keen to avoid. Ultimately this meant that we succeeded in establishing strategic objectives for CM within the City’s Strategic Plan¹²⁹. The privileging of community media in the strategy was extremely important in terms of the kinds of support community media could draw on thereafter.

Having a community rep to the City Development Board yielded results for the community television project even though the DCCF at times felt like very difficult ground to negotiate. It gave us a visibility that served to back up whatever action we took and was indeed a place at the table. But it could only last for as long as we had the capacity to give this time and energy - and this meant my energy¹³⁰. Being a Rep was demanding, the role was to act on behalf of the DCCF as an entity and not simply on our own sectoral interests. I participated in a number of Strategic Policy Groups and consultative processes and reported to many interest groups within the city.

The AGCM and the Community Media Forum

In 2000 CMN proposed that an Advisory Group on Community Media (AGCM) to the DCCF be convened to look at the issue of developing community media in the city. This group

¹²⁹ See Appendix No 32 “Community Media within the Dublin City Development Plan”

¹³⁰ The period I spent on the CDB as a community rep was an exhausting round of meetings and obligations which I couldn’t possibly have met without extra support in CMN, our Assistant Supervisor, Bill McConnell, whom CMN had been able to employ as a direct result of the merger with Open Channel was a welcome addition to the team and took a key role in relation to the CMF and in developing community media activities and initiatives. When Bill moved to Kerry and the CEP closed it proved too difficult to maintain.

met in early 2001, the invitation was successful in drawing together the representatives from various agencies: - the BCI, DCU (and ex-Head of RTE), FAS, DICP, the DCDB¹³¹, and a number of the community media organisations from around the city¹³². Some community activists wanted to see this group become the community media forum since they saw the involvement of institutions as key to the realisation of community media resources such as a community television channel, internet facilities, etc. Instead the AGCM decided to advise the Community Forum that a workshop be called to establish what support a community media forum would have and then the AGCM disbanded. We were to go back again to the community for validation and to seek a mandate to move forward.

In taking this position the AGCM was insisting on processes that some saw as unnecessary given the DCCF had agreed the establishment of the Advisory Group and awaited its recommendations. Calling the workshop was seen by some members of the DCCF as a way to side-step responsibility and involvement in community media initiatives in the City on the part of institutions. While hard to pin down, there were a number of agendas at work on the part of AGCM participants from all sectors. The main issue was tentatively understood to be who would provide the resources and funds needed to address the problems – those contained in the Position Paper. Those present while seeming to represent different groups (and holding high status within them) were not necessarily mandated to give commitments in this regard – a problem that besetted the CDDB itself. Besides this CM activists had issues when dealing with any institution including educational institutions or state agency. While Peter Finnegan, the DCE Director at the time, was very

¹³¹ BCI -Broadcasting Commission of Ireland; DCU-Dublin City University; FAS Training Agency, DICP - Dublin Inner City Partnership; DCDB –Dublin City Development Board

¹³² see Appendix No 20 for first meeting and list of attendees.

supportive of CM he also had a vision of an e-city in which CM would have its place¹³³. This again raised specters for us of unequal partnerships, impossible demands, and marginalisation¹³⁴. The workshop itself while letting everyone off the hook in respect of commitment to CM in the City also provided a chance for interested parties from a wider grouping than was usual to consider CM and in this alone it was an important event.

The interest shown in the workshop held in June 2001 (see Appendix No 21 for Report and list of attendees) was part and parcel of interest in the development of the DCDB’s Strategic Planning process. The draw for many organisations was to see what sort of structures would be established that were designed to enable the much quoted principle of participatory democracy within the NDP. There was a deal of questioning at this workshop about what community media would be but there was also a welcome for the initiative and the establishment of a community media forum to develop CM strategies for the city.

The workshop established the Community Media Forum (CMF). This was an important outcome - it meant that the CMF could be an independent organization since the mandate did not tie the CMF to the DCDB or the DCE. However the subsequent activity of the CMF was to keep a close relationship to the DCCF which allowed it access to funding and a position of influence in relation to the DCDB. The CMF was initially, and remained for a while, a platform from which to lobby and engage with authorities around things like the Broadcasting Bill 2001 and the Forum on Broadcasting in 2002. Its initial achievements

¹³³ “If someone was to give me €100,000 in the morning and say use that, the two things I’d use it for are **communication** and **training** . . .” Peter Finnegan, Director of Community and enterprise, Interview, November 2000. (Ni Dhiomasaigh, 2001)

¹³⁴ However it has to be said that the Director was willing to listen to the CM position, provided supports to the CMF that were crucial to its operation, and lent support to the community television drive. One of his Policy managers, Kelly O’Sullivan was allocated time to provide support to the CM groupings. Much of our success in garnering good will and avoiding major conflicts during this period was due to Kelly’s careful handling of meetings and issues.

were to win political recognition for CM in the legislation; support from the Forum on Broadcasting; and an important and visible place for CM in the City’s strategic plan.

The CMF was launched in September 2001 by a community activist with a global reach, Tom Hyland, the Dublin bus driver who had made East Timor a household name in Ireland. Community media activists spoke about the benefits of their CM to their communities. There were no Ministers here, no establishment dignitaries, and the President was not considered a candidate. It was a lively affair and a crowd danced in the Atrium of the Civic Offices to the sounds of an African drum band which had travelled from Galway for the occasion; this celebrated a real coming together of CM organisations in Dublin. It was a big moment – CM had a new forum in the capital city and on our own terms.

This first two years of my involvement with the DCDB and the DCCF saw significant steps for CM organising in the city. This was due to - on the one hand the place that community media had in the vision of the Director of Community and Enterprise - the executive arm of the CDB; and on the other and more importantly to the willingness of the community media organisations across the city to work together within the CMF.

The strategic plan “Dublin: a City of Possibilities 2002-2012” published in 2002 included community media in almost every aspect but specifically named CM as one of its strategic objectives¹³⁵. But while inclusion in the plans is an achievement – it is in implementation of plans where serious difficulties arise.

Organisation of the CMF

The CMF was organised into three Working Groups (WGs): community television, community radio, and community use of the internet. A fourth group – print and photography despite a number of efforts and a keen interest in community photography,

¹³⁵ See CM in the DCDB Strategic Plan in Appendix No 32

didn't materialize. In the first year the three groups established a number of actions, all of which demonstrated the interest within the community in CM (see Appendix No 22).

Community television WG actions:

- Feasibility study for CTV 2001-2002
- Workshop with the new regulator BCI 2002
- A Lord Mayor's breakfast inviting key stakeholders from state agencies, private enterprise, and media.
- Production of a promotional pack for DCTV

Community Radio WG actions:

- Research to look at the possibility of networking community radio stations in Dublin

Community use of Internet:

- Workshop to look at strategy for IT in the City

The Working Groups also ostensibly gave us a forum to work collectively. But there were regular difficulties between actors due often to other commitments but also to the fact that differences were not resolved.

An Action plan for a Dublin community television channel

The Community Television Working Group (CTVWG) called for a Feasibility Study for a community channel for the City. Firstly support was sought from the DCCF who agreed it was necessary but would not fund the larger part of it, this was then passed on to the Director of Community and Enterprise (DCE) who gained support from the DCDB. The

report was completed in two phases: Part One looking at Lessons from International Experience; Part Two was a full blown report on the study for the city’s channel. The complete anomaly was that the DCCF funded the international aspect of the work and the DCDB funded what should have been the property of the DCCF – An Action Plan for a Dublin Community Television Channel – and in which DCCF should have had more decisive input. The distance the DCCF initially kept from the CTV project was part of an underlying problem - evident in the persistent issue for CM activists that community organisations in the city would engage with independent producers rather than CM organisations¹³⁶. The Feasibility Study was an important piece of work and while there were difficulties and tensions throughout the process it still formed the basis for much of the action up to the formation of the channel.

I took part in the planning meetings with the contracted consultants from Nexus research; the main consultant was Sean O’Siochrú, CMN’s Chairperson, so in this sense I was closely connected to the project. The proposed approach was to engage a range of organisations in interviews and focus group meetings; I provided the consultants with information and support particularly in relation to organizations that had contacted and were active in CMN. The main set of groups chosen for the study involved: State agencies including BCI;

¹³⁶ A particular issue for me was the decision on the part of a major Inner city organisation to give funds dedicated for provision of an editing suite to an independent film-maker who had worked with them rather than to CMN which was struggling to maintain a media centre for the community. The fact that I was informed about this by one of their officers, albeit quietly, was a message. The involvement of Inner city activists in the special interest radio station Anna Livia and the lack of support for community radio was also an indicator of where preferences lay. One prominent community activist told me after there had been trouble on Parnell Street involving an African owned shop “those guys will be talking to each other in a year or two, because they’ll be doing business with one another, it’s not a race issue”. There was a lot of faith in business being a leveller and superseding difference.

Dublin City Council, DCDB, ODTR¹³⁷; two Inner City networks; eleven NGO's; five CDPs¹³⁸; three community arts organizations; and three CM organizations.

The only focus group that took place during the Feasibility Study was organised by the Co-coordinator of Ballymun Communications¹³⁹ and myself to bring together the groups who had just moved into the new Axis Arts Centre in Ballymun. In this focus group participating organisations were asked to explore how they could use community television; the session encouraged them to listen to each others ideas and to identify what they might be able to achieve through belonging to a geographical centre. This however was seen by the consultants as a different addition to the project; the event was added to the bottom of the list as a separate entity from the main list of participants¹⁴⁰. While this was a surprise to some of us at the time particularly since the consultant was a CMN member and Chairperson, it clearly indicated that there *were* different positions within the CMN group and members held diverging views about how information should be gathered, what kind of information was relevant, and whose knowledge mattered.

With each project I have been involved with I repeatedly assert the importance of the involvement of grassroots community organisations. There were two main groupings identified in our discussions within the CMN research project:

- those who belonged to community media organisations, and
- those who belonged to community organizations.

This typology very quickly became a part of how we saw things– this was not unproblematic and it later became evident to me that it was difficult for those who had

¹³⁷ Office of the Director of Telecommunications Regulation

¹³⁸ Community Development Projects funded under the Government Department of Community, Rural and Family affairs community development programme

¹³⁹ Oliver McGlinchey

¹⁴⁰ See Appendix No 23 list of Interviewees for Feasibility Study

questions about this sort of division to articulate them. For example there were community activists who saw community media as being situated within their organizations and activities; community media activists who saw their activity as an integral part of community development activities; and community media activists who were focused on the media entity and had little to do with community organisations. The focus of the PAR research project was on the capacity of community organizations to engage with community television and their relationship to those who had formed themselves into CM organisations in order to bring CTV into being. The Feasibility Study on the other hand was concerned with identifying what support the DCTV project could garner from the larger NGO’s.

Despite the problems of stating and emphasizing the two camps it was evident that there were two levels of activity and it became clear quite quickly that people had different levels of interest in different aspects of the CTV project. The gaps in the statement “community television will be owned and controlled by the community” began to appear. What exactly did this mean – who is the community and how is the ownership established?

Composition of controlling groups and committees

As the working groups within the CMF formed it became clear that those who were involved in community media organisations were dominant and generally to the exclusion of those who belonged to community organizations; for example the Community Television Working Group (CTVWG) and the community radio working group (CRWG) were both composed solely of community media organisations – Groups in the CTVWG were CMN, the Media Co-op, and Ballymun Communications; in the CRWG – NEARfm, Anna Livia, Tallaghtfm.

DCTV was promoted and established by the CTVWG; this group oversaw the DCTV Feasibility Study process; when the CMF moved away from the DCE I coordinated the working of the group as a function of this research process. I eventually became a key actor in the work of the CMF as a whole since I was also the CMF’s representative on the DCCF. I was therefore working on all levels of the Community forum from the bottom to the top: in the CTVWG, representing the CMF to the CCF; and as Community Representative from the Community Forum to the Dublin City Development Board. I found it an exhausting round of responsibilities and duties which involved a minimum of five meetings per week. Without extra support within CMN it would have been impossible.

Pressures on voluntary members of DCTV

The DCTV Interim Steering Committee (ISC) and the subsequent DCTV Committee of Management show significant changes in the profile of its membership as it developed. The DCTV ISC was established by the CTVWG in order to form DCTV in 2002 and the first inaugural meeting was in fact composed of a mixture of people from the sectoral groupings shown in the table below. The pattern of change in the controlling group of DCTV is important not just to show what interests are controlling the organization but to expose the pressures that make participation difficult for some groups, when they become active or inactive, and what interests influence strategy decisions.

DCTV Interim Steering Group Members by sector: January 2003				
CM organisation	Community organisation	NGO	State agency (incl DCE)	CCF
8	9	6	5	1

This first group proved too large and cumbersome and by mid year the DCTV ISC had members who represented a range of organisations around the city. These were groups

that had signed up to the initiative and inevitably there was some drop-out. Those from the City Council had little time and didn't get to subsequent meeting. By mid 2003 the Interim Steering group was agreed and the distribution across the sectors was as follows:¹⁴¹

DCTV Interim Steering Group: mid 2003			
CM organisation	Community organisations	NGO	State agency (including Education -DIT)
3	10	3	3

The DCE representation changed when Kelly O'Sullivan, left the DCE in late 2003 and a key support was lost¹⁴²; DCCF representatives chose to give their meeting time to the CMF rather than to DCTV; and the DCTV group tended to meet away from the civic offices basing their meetings in community centres and member's premises as a way of maintaining engagement with the base.

By 2004 DCTV incorporated as a Co-op¹⁴³; the profile of the Committee of Management (CoM) changed again – now including another interest group – independent film makers. Up to this point in the process there had been very few independent filmmakers in and around the community television project. Independent film-makers tended to be around community organisations when there was video work to be done; they also worked on CMN's projects at times if and when their skills were needed¹⁴⁴. Media work with community organisations was not always well paid so it only attracted people who had a deeper interest in CM. This typology continued without much change until the DCTV Co-op was formed and the work on the License Application began in earnest. The Broadcasting (Funding) Act 2003 had been passed in December and the BCI opened consultations on

¹⁴¹ See Appendix No 24 for the list of DCTV ISC members

¹⁴² Kelly kept the issue of communications as an important strategy for the community sector, and indeed as something that could be the main project of the DCCF.

¹⁴³ registered with CRO in January 2004

¹⁴⁴ CMN had a specific policy around this and the Independents who worked on CMN projects were those who had a history of working with community organisations.

developing what was to become the “Sound and Vision” Broadcasting Funding Scheme (S&V). In this period, from mid 2003 through to early 2005 when the License Application was finally submitted, things changed significantly. The composition of the DCTV Committee of Management (CoM) in 2004 now included:

DCTV Committee of Management (CoM) 2004				
CM organisation	Community org	NGO	State agency	Independent Film-makers
5	4	4	0	4

At this point there was also an effort to enlist ‘cultural’ and arts-based organisations two of which did become members and had representation on the CoM This represents a shift away from the grassroots organizations taking control of the communication process and towards NGO’s that provide professional services.

Table No 2: Pattern of change in CoM membership:

	CMG	CG	NGO	State agency	Independent film-maker
DCTV ISC 2002					
Members	7	7	4	2	0
Of which active	7	7	1	1	0
DCTV ISC 2003					
Members	4	9	3	3	0
Of which were active	4	8	2	1	0
DCTV CoM 2004					
Members	5	6	3	1	4
Of which were active	4	3	2	0	4
DCTV CoM 2005					
Members	6	6	2	0	4
Of which were active	4	2	2		2
DCTV CoM 2006					
Members	5	1	3	0	3
Of which were active	4	0	1	0	2
DCTV CoM 2007					
Members	4	0	4	0	3
Of which were active	3	0	4	0	3
DCTV CoM 2008					
Members	4	0	4	0	3
Of which were active	3	0	4	0	3

A difference is made here between members who were active and those who were not; inactive members are defined as those who attended no more than two meetings and did not engage with any of the DCTV activities or the CoM Working group activities. While it is important to note that the active members of the Committee were all committed to the idea of community television there was a similar level of difference in understanding of what that might be as there had been in the CMN core group.

The shifts in the profile of the managing group are significant and reflect the change in the status of the organisation as it came into being – from an ad hoc grouping to a licensed legal entity. It also reflects the diminishing power of the community sector representatives and the handing over of the direction of the DCTV entity to media groupings that were becoming under more and more pressure from regulatory authorities to fit a ‘professional’ mould. The notion of professionalism is highly contested within community media where volunteers are generally considered to be the main producers. Professionalization is a continuing source of tension in all CM activity (Tomaselli K. G., 1990) (Bekken, 2000) (Aufderheide, 2008). But the pressure to find funding to support activities and the progression of the engagement with the state - particularly in the lobby around the Broadcasting (Funding) Act 2003 and the Sound and Vision (S&V) Scheme - pushed many activists and CM organizations into an independent ‘arthouse’ production mode.

The tensions between professionals who control knowledge and those who are in fact the producers and rightful owners of that knowledge are often the butt of jokes in community circles. A conference organised by the Ballymun Disability Action Group (BDIG) (2007) used a dramatic framework around which their discussions were conducted. The video they produced is a wry comment on knowledge, language and power at the centre of which is the ‘consultant’ employed to ‘tell the story’ in acceptable “professional” language to authorities. But there is also at the heart a contradiction between the desire to do things

well and voluntary and 'amateur' production. Political activists and community activists have high expectations of their work which do not correspond with 'home-video' (Tomaselli K. &, 1990) (Interviews 2, 7, 8,10); however it must be remembered that 'amateur' does not necessarily equate with 'low quality'.

The issue around professionalism is often obscured by this need to do things well. Van Vuuren defined professionalism thus:

Professionalism can be understood both as a desire to achieve competence in radio production, as well as in community development. In either case certain tasks require qualified and experienced personnel. (Van Vuuren, 2003)

But this is inherently contested by the positions voiced particularly by community radio activists over many decades now - in fact nearly a half century. In a paper examining the role of regulator and government funding in the professionalisation of community radio Bekken (2000) points out that community radio stations in the US have only achieved more sophisticated and more professional broadcasting at the expense of grassroots communications. Theodore Roszak (1968) argued for the central importance of two factors in grassroots communication:

The first is independence. Pacifica is ultimately responsible to no one but its own listeners – to no sponsor, to no institution, to no creature of the state Secondly, Pacifica has always been characterised by an inveterate amateurishness, which at last, is the stations finest quality There would quite simply be no Pacifica if programme participants were not willing to contribute their words and works If members of the community were not willing to help out continually at everything from remodeling the studios to editing the news each day. (Roszak 1968, 327-28)" (Bekken, 2000).

It seems reasonable to say that the term 'amateur' could be revitalised as meaningful in this context – meaning 'done for the love of' as opposed to 'professional' which is practice bounded by various standards, unionised working practices, ethos, and is paid work. These bounds also set the rate for the job and therefore militate against voluntary, free associations.

Given the very frank expression of distrust of professionals in the BDIG video , Bekken’s findings, and Fox-Piven and Clowards analysis, it would seem then reasonable to say that there is a connection between the professionalisation of community media organisations (which takes them away from their base in the community and their purpose of enabling “voice” towards organising on the basis of professional services) and the change in politics that is evident in the language used to describe those relationships: – ‘partnerships’; dealing with ‘clients’; and providing professional services run as businesses; that ‘speak about’ communities; provide ‘authored’ professional reports; and act as intermediaries between dominant and subaltern groups. **This opposes an approach that sees relationships as collaborating actors building coalitions that facilitate participation, enable “voice” and that ultimately support action.**

This means that the provision of ‘expert’ supports must be framed within a methodology that emphasises transformative processes, prioritises the transfer of skills, and aims to shift the centre of power. Methodologies have significant consequences for groups seeking voice.

4.B.7 Specific data collection methods

A range of data-collection methods were used

- workshops and conferences at different points: 2001, 2003, 2004, 2005,
- focus groups and ‘content group’ development: groups were initially convened under the headings - adult education; youth, health, environment, local /global.
- seminars in conjunction with conferences
- discussion sessions with organisations and small groups
- one-to-one interviews

- ongoing contact with key activists for reviews, consultations, etc.
- coalitions with community organisations to tackle the development of video and television production within their organisations
- use of literature, reports, email and web-based libraries, archives, and other resources. This includes referencing to and dissemination of a range of literature including the projects own products.

As researcher I also produced a range of ‘knowledge products’ and resources that were used for different purposes, including:

- submissions to consultation processes and production of position papers
- lobby activity, meetings with Ministers, presentations to local authority committees etc
- reports on specific areas – e.g. organisational issues – co-operative v ltd company; charitable status; other regulators – e.g.: UK, Ofcom; media literacy; community television methodologies – case studies; Programme formats; creative commons and open source, copyleft;
- products from direct action – e.g. our gatecrashing the Forum on Broadcasting produced a submission paper; a meeting with the Panel; and eventually a recommendation from the Forum in their report to the Minister (See Appendix No 25).

To put these in order of the most productive methods it is probably important to classify them in terms of the way they supported, or not, certain relationships and our aims as we outlined in the beginning:

The needs were to:

- Develop the community television project
- Draw community sector organisations into the sphere of the community television project
- Gather experience from existing channels abroad
- Keep the role of the researcher in view – and review
- Work within the resources available
- Achieve a greater visibility for the community television project
- Gain political and institutional support for the community television project

The philosophical basis for these activities was understood to be within a community development ethos and included the following premises:-

- engagement in dialogue with stakeholders,
- democratic and participatory process,
- control of the process of intellectual production, and
- increasing the sphere of influence of the group.

Table No. 3 Needs and Methods relates our aims / philosophical basis for activity to specific methods and identifies the best strategy in terms of impact in both how they supported the needs and how they reflected the ethos.

Workshops

Working with this perception of the two camps – i.e. a) the content providers and b) the institutional groups, we organised events to attract participant to both areas. We found an inherent difficulty in some of this: community organisations need to be involved in the organisation but they don't have the time to get involved and many wouldn't know where to begin. At various times there were calls to address the need for skilled technical help for individuals who wanted to get involved in CTV but were excluded by not having the skills.

There was an understanding that community organisations needed to have a ‘way in’ to involvement with the channel but what was unknown was what this ‘way in’ could be or how it could be done. Our group saw focus groups and workshops as the preferred method to explore needs and this was done in a number of ways and I, as the researcher, worked with others on a number of different fronts.

- **2001 June in Mercers Hotel** – community television workshop – community at large. This was organised as part of the brief of the Advisory Group on Community Media.
- **2001 Lord Mayor’s Breakfast** – although not specifically a ‘workshop’ or a ‘focus group’ in strict terms the meeting was organised to explore the response to community television from the ‘stakeholders’ – this was organised with the involvement of the Director of Community and Enterprise and the Lord Mayor and invited a range of sectors including commercial and industry, state departments and agencies. The outcome was ambivalent; a commitment statement devised by the DCE Policy Manager was ignored by most participants (see Appendix No. 25).
- **2002 – “A Day for Community Television”** took place after the Broadcasting Act became law, also had first session with “Content Groups” – people came to hear the BCI – they packed the room! Then it filtered out over lunch and the usual suspects remained to get down to the nitty-gritty of how we could develop content, what people’s expectations and ideas were, and to form a lobby group to take things forward. There were problems going forward with both the content and institutional aspects of the DCTV project after this workshop¹⁴⁵. The impetus fell away and the reason appeared to be because the groups had no way to

¹⁴⁵ Organised into content groups ala the Action Plan.

proceed, there was no community television in existence to work with, all we had was a vision. Developing content for community television did not seem to make any sense when it wasn't there and no-one could see how it could work. But we struggled to find ways we could raise interest from the sector in this venture. I met a lot of skepticism which I was always fighting off - mainly this was expressed in the question “How is CTV going to be any different?”

- **2003 – “Developing Content for Community Television”** This conference drew very few participants from the community sector and while this was disappointing the range of activities that we had organised around our visiting speaker, Dirk Koning from Grand Rapids Community Media Centre in the US proved very useful. This event made us more circumspect about our expectations of the community organizations.
- **2004 – Collaboration in Independent media Centre:** a large event that was collaboration with Indymedia to run an Independent Media Centre around the Mayday celebrations.
- **Activity around other external conferences:** I did a range of meetings and seminars making presentations at gatherings, such as ‘Cultivate’, forming panels for discussions, screening community videos, and doing vox-pop productions with participants.

Table No 4 analyses the sectoral profiles of the workshops and rates the participation / attendance of community groups from low to high.

Table No 4 Sectoral profiles of Workshops

	Community focus	State Agency focus	Other e.g. independent filmmakers/ CTV interest groups	Participation levels
Workshop 1	50%	50%	0	High
Workshop 2	40%	40%	20%	High
Workshop 3	100%	0	0	Low

Focus groups

In the effort to organize around the findings of the 2001 Feasibility Study and the ‘two camps’ framework of the Institutional Group and the Content Group, we encouraged organizations to form ‘Thematic Content Groups’ (TCGs) to look at how they needed to engage with community television. For some of the CTVWG this formation was simply to produce and organize content as distinct from building the technical organization. But the content groups were to engage with a range of activity that did not fall simply into this formulation and those who sustained activity were those whose activities could be supported by CMN and this project. So there was a diverse level of activity that arose from the TCGs.

The four focus groups that were organised under this PAR project were composed of

1. Five local groups operating from the same Centre
2. Groups with an interest in CTV for Adult Education
3. Participants with an interest in CTV for environmental/ local global issues
4. Groups working with Youth as trainers or social workers

(see **Table No. 5**)

The first focus group was with a number of organizations working within the same geographical area that had recently been housed in a new arts centre as part of the redevelopment / regeneration project in Ballymun, these groups are still connected to the CTV project through Ballymun Communications which is their own CM group. The group focused on questions designed to find out how they saw community television (see **Table No.6**). Participant’s interests included:

- Welfare rights
- Housing associations
- Community Action project (Community development)
- Local Arts Centre

A focus group for which I was rapporteur during the initial consultations around the City Strategic planning organised by the DCDB as a series of workshops in 2000 (see **Table No.7**) is an example that exposes problematic methodology whilst ostensibly facilitating consultation.

This was a Focus group to identify issues for DCDB consultation process - composition of participants in session:

- 4 school students
- 5 from various residents associations
- 2 from Disability Forum
- 1 from Inner City Organisations Network

Each delegate had three votes, issues were raised in a brainstorming session and then delegates dropped some as they prioritised their three votes. Issues were then discussed in relation to one another and grouped under Environment and Planning. The focus group reported back to the plenary. However there is no way to know how this material or sets of priorities actually filtered through to the Strategic Plan and people felt very distanced from the process.

The emphasis on voting and ultimately a quantitative process caused difficulty for the group's participants. I appended observations to my report about the participation of certain groups (particularly the school-children) and the qualifying statements of many people on the selection of issues and how their own focus seemed lost. Since the

methodology was quantitative and outcome focused it is also highly unlikely that my observations got anywhere past that filter.

Formal interviews

Formal Interviews were conducted late in the project – between 2004-2006 (see Appendix No. 26). ***This was a critical juncture in the research process. It was really with the problems exposed by the focus groups and the poor workshop participation in 2003 that we needed to go back to groups and individuals to test out what we understood the situation to be and where the interest lay.***

We were faced with contradictory responses that had to be explored - when groups would engage on certain levels but not on others; in trying to identify the kinds of supports that were actually needed to participate in the development of the channel and what understanding existed about the needs of a community channel. It seemed hard to know how to get this information other than through focus groups, workshops and conferences; so the only other option was simply to get out there and start asking. That meant conducting in-depth interviews. This was a significant change in how the research process was conducted.

Some of the interviews provided detailed and useful information that I could formulate into reports and feed back - to the interviewees themselves, to the DCTV group, to CMN. Some of this fell on stony ground – the DCTV institutional group appeared to be uninterested at that point in what the community activists thought, needed, or wanted. Those working to build the channel were focused on finding funds. That was the priority and there was little time given then to organisational ethos or the expectations of the community.

What the interview process provided was a means of reconnecting with those activists who had sustained interest in the community television project. The nature of the interviews was not a distanced process but an exchange that produced project actions. Some interviews were in fact part of the process of engagement with particular groups such as Community Response and as such were important means to check the efficacy of actions and explore new ways of moving forward. **In this way the interviews were one of the methods (the first of a number) used to support changing relationships between coalition members.**

Within the effort to build coalitions with community organisations the interviews served a purpose – the groups saw it as a way to bring their perspective to the community television development process; a way to explore their needs and to get whatever help I could give them. **So there was a clear understanding that there would be an exchange and a reciprocal relationship inherent at all times.**

Because I was from the community media organisation – an insider and a participant- and because some of my colleagues saw the research as a process that looked outwards at the needs of communities; interviews with these CM colleagues could be awkward. Some that were planned didn't happen – most likely avoided due to unspoken differences. It could also get awkward with community activists when I wanted to question them about why they weren't working so well with community media organisations. It's all right when we're talking about what one needs of the other but it's harder when confronted with a question that asks 'where were you when community organisations should have been there?', or 'where were you when community media organisations should be there?' . It's difficult to look at the failures and easier to move forward with the successes but when we do this we have to acknowledge what and who we leave behind and that can be difficult for people to face. **But this project is precisely about that issue – how the community media group**

moves forward to establish resources; who goes with it; and how the community development sector is engaged with that process.

So the problems that underlay why community organizations didn't engage with community media initiatives are very important and they also comprise tacit knowledge which is not that easy to get people to talk about. Being able to talk with different people from the same organisation exposed tensions within organizations themselves where particular actors are sympathetic to and see the value of CM and others see it as either amateur and bad quality or a burdensome and risky activity (Interviews 20, 21). Community organizations, particularly those working with stressful issues within the community will try to minimize negative experiences within their organization. If community television is envisaged as demanding too much with too little return and includes disappointment they will walk away from it. **The worst thing that can happen is a bad experience which will destroy any possibility of that groups' involvement for years.**

This is central to the issue of how the technical organisation is built and how community needs are integrated into that process, or whether they form any part of it. There are some who think that the organisation has to be built separately from any perceptions of the community's need other than the technical shell. However there is a lot that is determined in the building of organisations: for example how access routes are established; what gateways exist and who controls them; how high or low is the bar to participation; what and whose training needs are anticipated. This is part of a process of building an organisation's culture - these issues bedevil all efforts to establish technical resources.

In all 22 interviews were conducted between November 2004 and October 2006, in autumn 2005 I had also undertaken research activity in Kerry which supplemented the information gathered. This provided not only significant data but because they were conducted as a meeting of interested parties, involved exchange of products and work

practices, and were a means to explore possibilities for working together, these interviews proved fertile ground for networking and for a number of efforts to establish new initiatives. The value of this process far outweighed others used in the research.

Specific topic reports:

These were seen as useful and are a step along the way to forming a 'toolbox' of resources that can be used by groups needing to learn more about issues they may face when engaging with community television. These are a direct product of this research project.

- Reports from meetings and conferences; TV Nova¹⁴⁶, seminar on developing EU networks for community video and television production; Marseille Meeting of Free TV's; Youth Empowerment Through Media conference Turin
- Visits to channels abroad and in the UK; reports on aspects of community television and relationships with other media sectors¹⁴⁷; media literacy,
- Technical aspects of production in a community setting: DVD and report¹⁴⁸
- Developing Programme Formats for community television: DVD's and Manual¹⁴⁹

4. B.8 Summary to Part B

Part B is concerned with showing how CMN's commitment to the development of DCTV led to a combined PAR process plus involvement with the DCDB. The specific kinds of data generated during this process tend to bear each other out and are tested against each other - the chapters to follow (5, 6, 7, and 8) are based on this research process.

¹⁴⁶ See Appendix No. 27

¹⁴⁷ See Appendix No. 28

¹⁴⁸ See Appendix No. 29

¹⁴⁹ See Appendix No. 30

The involvement with the DCDB and the Dublin City Community Forum (DCCF) was a significant step on CMN's part into a wider sphere of influence, this very much altered the profile of CM in the City and also how activists were operating - an area expanded in Chapter 5. The pathways of community knowledge production are followed in Chapter 6 which explores how previously existing knowledge emerges in the project work with a Dublin community development organisation - Community Response. The strategies that were evolved either exposed or camouflaged underlying faultlines in the community media environment which is in fact the community environment – e.g. the focus groups tell us why the workshops/conferences were well or poorly attended; the sectoral interest in the workshops tells us who is responding to that call. **But we needed the interviews to find out why: to understand the nature of the composition of smaller groups such as focus groups and committees and what it was that propelled the direction they took.** These are explored further in Chapter 7 which re-presents the knowledge about needs that was generated in the process of the research and construction of DCTV; and lastly Chapter 8 takes from this body of findings to posit the problems, tensions, and issues for the future.

4 Part C Classical PAR and types of PAR knowledge

This section presents classic examples of PAR and the kinds of knowledge that can be produced through PAR.

4. C.1. Classic characteristics of PAR

PAR is classically a process that engages with change and sometimes bringing a new organisation into being on the basis of existing needs - this is an important strand to the methodology. PAR is based on the need for two things:

- action to bring about change and
- research to increase understanding – which can be developed for the researcher, the group, or the wider community.

It involves intention and planning before action, review and critique after, often what are called action cycles of this process, and broadened action cycles that widen the scope of the participation and seek to involve a wider community (see Diagram of Research Cycles)

A classic PAR strategy uses multiple information sources that can in turn be used to cross reference and test data; also referred to as ‘plural ways of knowing’ these can also refer to different kinds of knowledge that a movement needs – legal, technical, ethnographic (Zuber-Skerrit & Fletcher, 2007) . These are used in a “spiral” process, revisiting information and data and questioning it from a new position (Dick, 2002) . This spiral process is not one that is limited to the researcher and the data, but one that constantly refers back to the participants with the findings at the time. It is in this dialogue that the research question is defined, clarified, and answered. The research question usually begins by being loosely

defined and then through this cyclical process becomes further developed and clarified. This allows room for participants to engage with defining the question and to bring their needs and aspirations to the research process. It is a process of refinement of the questions and the methods used. It is essentially a methodology that demands responsiveness – and so it is necessary to determine at the same time

an understanding of the social system and the best opportunities for change (Dick B. , 2002. p.9).

Therefore when there is a need for this understanding of the social system and we are working to bring about either change or a new form of organization a qualitative methodology is most often the most appropriate. This methodology also allows researchers to invent and be creative in response to the needs.

Participation of the subject/community is necessary for ownership of and commitment to the changes that have been brought about. PAR approach engages ‘low-ranking people in organisations and communities’ in both information gathering and consultation around the interpretation of data, informants become active participant in the data (Foote-Whyte, 1991). This active participation which is evident from the design to the completion of the research project is one of the defining aspects of PAR. In this approach, participants thus have a direct input and influence on the outcomes of the research; they can control the kind of data that is included or excluded and the reasons for doing so.

4. C.2 Examples of PAR:

PAR is often said to be found in agricultural settings, but a lot of this is really more PNA (participatory needs assessment) which are more oriented to gathering information on needs - knowledge which is used by NGOs or the state who will then use it to the benefit of

participants, but it does not often involve much organization-building by participants and the latter is of key importance to this project.

Case studies are fundamental to certain forms of PAR constituting the main primary source of data and they are particularly used in studies of social issues (Susman, 1978). Eldin and Levin (1991) said that PAR research has produced three main categories of theoretical knowledge. While the use of PAR since they conducted their review in 1981 has been well extended, their categories still hold value:

First, it empowers because of the specific insights, new understandings, and new possibilities that the participants discover in creating better explanations about their social world. Second, participants learn how to learn Third, PAR can be liberating . . . [in the sense of] participative research when participants learn how to create new possibilities for action. (Elden, 1991, p. 131)

It is the possibility for action that is the real key value of PAR for any movement that aims to help people challenge exploitation – and action means voice. In this sense PAR as a methodology facilitates voice.

Mondragon:

Mondragon is

an extraordinarily successful set of interrelated industrial worker cooperatives, a consumer-worker cooperative with outlets throughout the Basque Provinces, a cooperative bank, a cooperative research and development organisation, and other supporting and linked structures. (Foote-Whyte W. &, 1991, p. 31)

What made Mondragon world-famous were its sustained growth patterns, and the PAR project that helped it develop strategies to deal with recession. The experiment undertaken in the co-operatives of Mondragon is often quoted as a classic example of PAR, this is where in 1983 William Foote-Whyte collaborated with the FAGOR group and the Cornell Center for International studies on a project to assist the cooperatives deal with the reorganisation they were undergoing as a result of Spain’s very deep recession.

This project involved large scale funding from International agencies, and the cooperatives themselves poured huge resources into it, but it also brought into play an enormous amount of creativity and imaginative approaches as well as a commitment from the cooperatives to try new ideas and ways to address the issues they faced. The project claims an approach that opposed the tendency to uniformity within large-scale democratic projects and based strategy on the diversity within the organization in the hope they could initiate a process whereby the ‘organisational culture’ would be actively owned and controlled by the membership.

The project began with a review of what the members and academic researchers had written about the cooperatives. This presented a range of conflicting views, and elicited critical and concerned responses from the cooperative members. The product from this research project was immense from the start – in July 1985 a 115 page monograph was produced by a group of 15 cooperative members; this reviewed Whyte’s book on the Mondragon development from its origins; the only strike in its history in 1974 was the subject of another section of the monograph and a third part was concerned with response of the original cooperative, Ulgor, to the 1980’s recession. This review of Mondragon’s history, dissenting voices, and strategies in response to global forces also took on important theoretical issues dealing with problems for cooperatives within capitalist systems. This prompted an expansion of the research work into looking at the successful areas of the Mondragon system. During the July project, those involved in roundtable sessions began to take control of the research agenda, rebutting the suggestions from the researchers. The sessions were recorded and provided a means to gain insights into how members perceived the cooperative ideals and realities in ways that were not initially to the fore. This began a process that strengthened connectivity and common purpose amongst the members and also deepened a commitment to the PAR process.

The extraordinary achievement in Mondragon was their ability to get through a deep recession with hardly any unemployment; surely the equivalent of Freire's achievement in helping workers become literate in 45 days! While these types of achievement are not unknown (the collectivization that enabled towns in Ireland to remain untouched by the famine that halved the population are a case in point (Pittsville) as is the Owenite success in Co Clare that addressed the issue that had given rise to secret societies and violence); they do focus our attention on the methodologies that were applied to the issues they faced. While they have their critics the achievements cannot be denied and whether they can be reproduced in other situations or hardly diminishes their capacity to inspire.

Mondragon provides a training ground for many social projects: in 2006 eighteen activists of the Brazilian Landless Peoples movement went there to learn how to start and manage cooperatives and these opportunities continue with the help of institutions from developing countries such as Venezuela. The underlying principles of the Mondragon cooperative system are claimed by Catholics and socialists alike, the commitment and work of a Catholic priest to developing the cooperative spirit in Mondragon is flagged as the starting point. This is another tacit connection with the work of Paulo Freire who was also driven by theological arguments. Interest in Mondragon is found in all religious and development organisations, including the worldwide PROUT organization¹⁵⁰.

Foote Whyte stresses the importance to PAR of the understanding that an organization is a living organism: it is made up of people who influence and live with one another. It is in the diversity of this organism that Foote-Whyte finds the basis for PAR and in PAR the means to tap the creativity that this diversity can produce. This is one good reason why PAR is so

¹⁵⁰ <http://www.prou.org/>

important to the development of an organization such as DCTV, and to CMN, in which a very diverse range of perspectives and activities are operating all the time, and indeed to CM generally.

4. C.3 Kinds of knowledge that can be produced in this way.

Elden and Levin (1991) claim that in their model of PAR theory does not remain local; this is based on the assumption that the paradigm must define the

relevant theory, research methods, and ethics; a specified mode of operation in doing research; and a common language. (Kuhn, 1962)” (Elden, 1991, p. 139).

This is an important claim as it addresses the issue of whether the research provides generalisms or if the knowledge is purely context bound. Context is of prime importance to the Irish community television project; however the ability to share with others has also been a feature of the development of this project. Activists from other contexts have maybe not been able to share their product specifically but certainly the engagement in discussions with Irish activists has produced significant knowledge development. The people involved in PAR are described as co-learners involved in:

situations where we attempt to create new knowledge in active collaboration with the people who live in that situation. They are not “subjects” or “clients” or data sources”, they are “colearners” (Elden, 1991, p. 128).

Their contribution is important because it is grounded in developing “concepts that clarify PAR and its praxis and not to prove a position through empirical evidence”. PAR for them is a learning strategy for empowering participants in creating better explanations about their social world.

The three ways in which PAR empowers:

- providing new insights into peoples social world
- participants learn how to learn
- creates new possibilities for action (Elden, 1991, p131)

means that fundamental to this process is that participants in the project function as equals, this is in fact built on the different power and knowledge bases of the participants.

Eldin and Levin further identify three categories of theory production that is produced through PAR:

1. in metascientific problems regarding the PAR process and in developing a taxonomy of PAR;
2. in generating new knowledge in the process of dealing with specific social problems;
3. academic orientated theory production as in Levin's theory of fundamentals for Trade unions in the introduction of new technology (Elden, 1991, p. 140).

The most important aspect of PAR is that it places users/producers at the centre of the process of knowledge production. This forces emphasis on the role of the researcher as a facilitator and is a challenge to the central role of the researcher in more conventional research approaches where the tendency is for the researcher to control the process, what they call the experts 'model monopoly' in defining what is possible for others.

William Foote-Whyte describes the research process in the Mondragon project as beginning with the problems that faced the people and only after moving some way on diagnosing these problems would they then turn to relevant literature. This bases PAR in people's lived experience and creates the opportunity for the Freirean approach of dialogic communication to support the transfer of control of the means of production of knowledge to the participants and away from the researcher.

The process in Mondragon was, like Taachi's (2003) project, again well funded by an international body and Cornell University. The scope and amount of expertise brought to the project was therefore formidable. In the PAR approach used,

the consultant / facilitator acts less as a disciplinary expert and more as a coach in team building and in seeing to it that as much of the relevant expertise as possible from all over the organisation is mobilised. The consultant / facilitator can also help bring in expertise from outside the organisation." (Foote-Whyte W. &, 1991, p. 40).

This capacity of the PAR researcher to operate *as a non-expert* in this sense is also understood to be democratising since it is unlike the conventional position where the researcher is the expert; it creates spaces where the researcher also becomes a learner along with other participants. It allows for strategies to draw other funds into the process and to establish actions that can engage different groupings to a central research question.

In Mondragon they asked “what is the relationship between worker participation and *organisational performance*” finding this a more realistic way to look at productivity issues within an organisation; this holistic approach enabled them to understand how workers involvement impacted on management, the work flow, technology etc.

The importance of the place of the researcher within the process is in the role as participant observer-activist, which gives access to the information and the knowledge held by people involved from a Board level to the factory floor. But it is important to stress the activist side of this role that supports the process of knowledge production and therefore provides development opportunities and encourages participation (Cole, 1991) (Plowys, 1998). There must be a working relationship with the place, the people and the activity, and it is the development of this relationship, focusing on the question, that is the PAR.

Within the CTV project, my hope was that an understanding of the value of PAR could offer another way to look at the issue of why and how community organisations would engage with community television in the local context. I also hoped that it could bring us further along the way to understanding why and how community television channels become de-radicalised. I found useful:

- the PAR formulation of the role of the researcher as one whose work constitutes the research;

- the use of a range of methods to provide rigour and checking mechanisms in a process that returned to the question from a number of positions;
- the focus on responsiveness to needs in a process of change and preparedness to take some risks – i.e. putting your resources where it seems they are needed rather than where they had been planned to be.
- The ongoing discussion of the importance of relinquishing the “unilateral control” of the conventional professional researcher was also extremely important as it encourages the examination of unexpected or difficult outcomes as results that also contribute and can redirect the research process. However I stress that caution is necessary in that the power to direct and redirect the course of the project must always be operated within the context of the question that is being asked. In small organisations the capacity to shift the focus of the research is often within the power of fewer individuals. The capacity within PAR to engage a range of groupings in the research process in a variety of ways did allow our project to keep that question in our sights, although tensions continued throughout.

According to Foote Whyte PAR has the capacity to help identify problems in:

- Blockages
- Turf issues
- Immobilization
- Loss of sense of control and ownership

Of course these very issues can be hugely problematical for groups to engage with and many choose to avoid issues rather than confront them. I would say that it is the

democratising elements of PAR that give some power to shift these problems. There must then be a willingness to listen, an openness to engage with views that are not usually heard and to be willing to look at issues by “changing the shape of the box” – allowing other information, material, and considerations to be brought into the process.

People work at this kind of process all the time- Wainwright’s discussion of how the WSF can

provide an organised space through which organizations worldwide can connect and exchange ideas” (Wainwright, *Reclaim the state: Experiments in Popular Democracy*, 2003, p. 201)

may be possible and the kind of action she engaged with in bringing activists from UNISON and the East Manchester Community Forum to Brazil is very hopeful. But such action must be supported on the ground: activists will assess the value of engaging with big transnational meetings in the light of the serious issues ‘on their own turf’ and unless the benefits to their issues and their communities are clear they will not engage. The importance of a PAR approach and generating horizontal communication systems is that through participatory approaches activists may be able to review these issues with *less* demand on their resources and achieve greater impact within their activities.

The CMN research project had to be unafraid to ‘break the mould’ of accepted practice and to engage with organizations in ways that addressed their needs and recognized their boundaries. Indeed this is what events in 2003 and 2004 put to us – we ourselves were faced with the very same difficulties. However a lot is possible with a little money and after 2003 CMN began to work in close association with groups and organizations, avoiding demands for large gatherings unless these were very clearly going to serve a purpose, and seeking ways to deliver resources, skills and training to organizations in ways that they found acceptable and useful. Significantly community organizations that have been in communication with this project (and this communication is also historical and engages

with other forms of networks too) have been over these years building their own resources in terms of equipment; what they now look to my organizations for are skills and support. My role in relation to these groupings has been to examine how my work could support their initiatives and work out with them the best ways their interests can be represented within the growing DCTV organization. There would appear to be a need for an organizing and support role that is operative nationally amongst the community television channels and CTV producers. This is evident in the other new organisation that has been established - the Community Television Association (CTA). While this kind of activity is generally referred to as an ‘outreach’ role, understandings of what this is can be as widely different as ‘engaging with people’ is to ‘promoting ourselves’.

A crucial aspect of PAR is critical awareness of one’s own role and encouraging questioning in participants. This is not a comfortable process. One of the difficulties within the role I played was the perception that I had too much power – whilst in reality I had very little. My position as a Community Representative to the DCDB, my role within the DCCF and CMF, and my role within the community media sector were all circumscribed, put me under a spotlight, and at the same time under a huge pressure to deliver more resources for community media; my organisation on its own did not possess the resources to enable me mobilise the opportunities. The CMF should have been the means to spread this load (and it still can play that role) but there needed to be more interconnectedness on the ground between the community media groups and the community organizers who knew their needs. Getting this kind of engagement is not easy; for us it demanded using a range of different ways of working, and a capacity to operate on a wide range of fronts.

A core issue and contradiction in PAR is that of handing over control of the research process; it is a core position defended by PAR theorists but also a tension in PAR. While the contradictions exist what is clear that they must be worked out *continually* and not be lost

sight of in the process. If they are glossed over or hidden, the PAR project loses its potential to resolve them.

What was being generated using the strategies we developed is much more like what Esteves (2007) describes in her study investigating the organizing of people engaged in what is called the ‘informal economy’ in the Brazilian Forum of Solidarity Economy (FBES)¹⁵¹. The FBES is another example of what people can do when they collectivise their effort using forms of political association that expand the representation of popular and informal economic activity. She refers to “associative networks” (p.2) as a concept closer to describing the structures of representation that are being established by collaborations between producers within the informal economy. Whilst the FBES has its problems particularly in relation to their dependence on international funding, the lessons of FBES methodology and achievements are highly pertinent to the kind of issues facing community organizations needing to develop communication and media strategies in Ireland. In relation to CTV the potential is for a platform for representation that is a direct and open forum that allows both horizontal and vertical lines of communication, ‘voice’, and therefore action, whilst not restricting the nature of the groups and their activities.

There is a lot you can do with very little money but some things demand resources and it is significant that ‘people and time’ were the most serious issues for activists who worked on the ground in Dublin with community television in 2006. The motivations of people and the pressures on their time are therefore key elements that must be considered in developing methodologies.

If the aim is to enable people in community organizations (or in any organizations within communities) make programmes for radio or television one clear need is for the skills to do

¹⁵¹ FBES – Forum Brasileiro de Economia Solidaria

that; which is why so many community radio stations focus on technical skills training, and see 'how-to' knowledge as very important. But other aspects of becoming articulate and enabling people to become social actors are dealing with blocks to learning that exist on a range of experiential and structural/economic levels. These are what community development principles and the methodologies of popular education address; these are also critical for any movement that proposes to engage with people as social actors. This is the methodological issue for community media and many answers are found in case studies – which is why they are constantly being produced.

What we seek are examples of methodologies that combine the two disciplines of community development and community media. Community activists need to be able to recognize their own practice in CM.

CLASS, VOICE, AND STATE:

Knowledge production in self-organised working class activity and the politics
of developing community television in Ireland using PAR strategies

Volume One (of Four)

Part 11

PART 11: Introduction

This part of the thesis presents what happened when CMN began to operate its strategy to develop community television.

Chapter 5 – “The wider community media movement” presents the experience of looking for other experience to support our mission. The exploration of CTV activity abroad brought up questions about CM as an international movement, its concerns and the kind of relations that exist between this and local drives for communication initiatives for working class voice. The chapter returns to the factors shaping coalition building in Ireland in the course of this Project and the issues facing community broadcasting.

Chapter 6 - “Production in the community” is an extended case study that examines the issues that arose in CMN’s engagement with community organisations in Dublin. This was an organic growth of activity driven by the organisations’ needs and an effort to utilize resources available. The study throws up a number of problems generic to community production and poses challenges to both community media and community development organisations. This work brought the community organisations into closer interaction with CMN and an involvement in developing further strategy.

Chapter 7 - “Movement in PAR” presents what we learned in the development of DCTV: the general findings; the coalitions; the relationships within DCTV and between DCTV and other groups; and CMN’s concerns as we revised strategy.

Chapter 8 - “Where to now?” concludes the work and crystalises the self image of community television as it has emerged to date; identifies the possibilities it holds for self-organised working class activity; and presents the strategy developed by CMN to support community groups’ capacity to engage with community media.

CHAPTER 5 – The wider community media movement

5.1 Introduction – learning from others

5. Part A Global interactions

- 5. A.1 Origins of 'communication rights' movement
- 5. A.2 What is the moral economy of communication?
- 5. A.3 Who communicates with whom?
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- 5. B.1 Engagement with the policy context in Ireland
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- 5. B.7 DCTV as part of global community media, as television
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5.1 Introduction – learning from others

The first thing people do when faced with a new challenge is to look for other examples – some model that will show us how to go about the task. The purpose of this chapter is to review the value of the ‘looking abroad’ we did to support the development of community television in Ireland. Rather than follow a ‘comparative study’ route instead the chapter explores what we can learn from different initiatives in other places. One clear problem for projects with few resources is that while we are busy looking abroad; the ground around us is shifting. This is a dilemma – we need the support of those with experience but we know the scope may be limited. A considerable amount of research has been done both by this project and in collaboration with others and we need to ask what this kind of information can tell us about the initiatives we are establishing¹⁵².

An important aspect of this is the value that international networking can have for the local level and how the local interacted with the global in terms of this PAR project. This chapter explores what is known within the wider community media movement about community television and how that awareness impacted on CMN and the CTV project.

The chapter is in 2 parts:-

5. A Global interactions

5. B Activity below – revisiting the Irish context

¹⁵² The Appendix No 31 “Conditions Abroad” supports this chapter as additional and background information; it supplies a number of reports on CTV Globally; Appendix 31a reports on recent developments in EU and Australia

5 Part A. Global interactions

5. A.1 Origins of ‘communication rights’ movement

Since the early 1960s it has been generally acknowledged that the so-called ‘free-flow’ of information and news was in fact unequal around the world; that satellites were dominated by military operations and that the global south suffered lack of representation and input¹⁵³. The Non Aligned Movement (NAM) of UN countries challenged the ‘free-flow’ doctrine and fronted the movement that became known as the NWICO - New World Information and Communication Order. The term NWICO was then made commonplace by the UNESCO established commission headed by Seán MacBride¹⁵⁴ and named the *International Commission for the Study of Communication Problems*. This body was established to avoid the problems that were becoming apparent due to the huge political gulf between the NAM and the western bloc countries. Many now locate the beginnings of the development of a global community media movement in the 1970’s with the process that led to the MacBride report “*Many voices, one World*” presented to the 1980’s General Assembly. This was understood to expand Article 19 of the UN Charter to develop a framework and unifying philosophical concept within which the NWICO could develop (Ambrosi, Peugeot, & Pimienta, 2005)¹⁵⁵. Complicated by Cold war politics the NWICO

¹⁵³ Mainly explored by Wilbur Schramm (1964), also Herbert Schillar (1969), in 1969 Jean D’Arcy, Director of Radio and Visual services in the UN Office of Public Information made the case for ‘the right to communicate’.

¹⁵⁴ Seán MacBride was an ex-Commander of the Irish Republican Army in the 1920’s, an Irish parliamentarian, and a Human Rights activist, he is best known for his development of the MacBride Principles which were aimed at ending religious discrimination in Northern Ireland, he was also President of the Council of Europe that drafted the European Convention on Human Rights in 1950, and was a founder member of Amnesty.

¹⁵⁵ Alegre and Ó’Siochrú give a comprehensive account of the process in “Word Matters”, a creative commons publication (Ambrosi, Peugeot, & Pimienta, 2005)

floundered and subsequent initiatives such as the MacBride Round Table were unable to act effectively against the neo-liberal backlash.

At the same time other activists were working (many through totally unrelated pathways) to develop yet more formations visible through the presence of organisations - as we have already seen – such as AMARC, Videazimut, the Tactical Media Labs, CRIS, sustained events such as Our Media, etc. **Table No. 8** is an example of the kind of growth we are talking about – this is indicative and not exhaustive.

CM activity in Ireland was also aligned to this growth so not only international but regional and national networks were developing in an interlinked manner¹⁵⁶. While the links between these organisations existed they were not always overt nor were their actors visible. The networks tended to become clearly visible only at certain points in time through the activities, registrations of events, and discussions that occurred. The NAM claims and the subsequent activities were formed around perceived needs and a moral sense of rights in communication.

In this section I review information available about current global CM activity; the events at the WSIS 2003 and the coalition that formed to bring the ‘right to communicate’ issue to the summit; and what these can tell us about the relations of local organizing to international activism.

¹⁵⁶ The formation of the NACB by community radio activists was linked to AMARC and CVN formed in Dublin in 1992 as a national network to promote community television was also related to organisations such as Videazimut.

5. A.2 What is the moral economy of communication?

Andrew Calabrese (2004) evokes the term “moral economy” as used by Thompson to contextualise the growth of a global movement seeking to confront the globalisation and commercialisation of media with a greater concentration of ownership than ever before with the stated aim of establishing communications rights. A ‘moral economy’ as Thompson used it was an alternative economic model (as represented by the ‘just price’ during the food ‘riots’ of the 18th century) opposed to what people understood as the development of unjust and exploitative practice under capitalism.

Where is the moral economy that Calabrese refers to coming from? What is the sense of a ‘norm’ that people feel has been taken from them? According to Calabrese this is embedded in what communications tools are used for:

On the one hand, the institutions, technologies and policies that make up what we call ‘the media’ are tools in the aid of cultural commodification, excessive consumption, market censorship, political surveillance and the invasion of privacy. On the other hand, those same tools are means by which actors engaged in struggles for social justice are able to organize, coordinate and mobilise, as well as to bring to public shame the perpetrators of injustice. Consequently and not surprisingly the relationship between social movements and the means of communication is one of ambivalence over the intertwined repressive and emancipatory end to which media development and use are put . . . communication is at the heart of the social liberalization of investment, production and trade. And struggles over communication rights are of necessity foundational, as both means and as ends in themselves, in any attempt to articulate the meaning of global justice. (2005, pp. 302-303)

He points out that the WSF in 2005 gave a deal of space to communication as an important issue and that this is symptomatic of a growing concern that involves a wide range of actors including: “intellectuals, NGOs and multilateral governance organizations”. While this may appear well and good; from the perspective of activists trying to support the need for voice of many community organisations operating often in unresponsive regulatory contexts (Jimenez & Scifo, 2009) , this may seem quite a *narrow* range of interest groups. For some

time now, questions have been raised about who the actors are and what interests are being represented in international Fora.

The experience of CM organisation building on the ground is usually hard, demanding lots of voluntary time and effort. The added effort demanded from community grassroots actors to engage with wider media issues is an obstacle to participation for many. Engaging with policy also demands skills and some have expressed the view that community organisations should leave this work to the larger organisations that have the capacity to engage. The evolution of hierarchies and hegemonies is inevitable in this scenario and the risk of separation from the base is high.

When skills and specialisms are criteria for engagement then exclusion is also inevitable. However there have been many attempts to democratise structures to enable participation that could be utilised including:

- the many forms of participatory methodologies developed using Freirean models,
- the principles of community development in training programmes, and organisational structures
- a needs based approach to the issues.

Any initiative that demands specialist skills without addressing the structural inequalities that exist in our society will create more inequality; this regularly emerges in the community television development process as debates about production, power, control, and capacity. Marilyn Hyndman of NvTv expresses a deep concern about quality of representation when she says

these organisations don't have the time or energy to make their own programmes they need others to make them for them and it's our job to help them do it well . . .

It is important that a person is represented in as best a way as possible particularly if - and because - she faces discrimination in society at large” (Interview 2)

Tomaselli (1990) and others point to the problems inherent in the use of media without the accompaniment of skilled and media educated personnel along with a clear analysis of media construction both in text, content, and organisational forms – all of which demands time and conceptual capacity.

Taking an opposite viewpoint, Barbara Popovic of CAN TV (CMN, 2006), asserts that the most successful strategies for production have been developed by the CTV working *with* their community organisations to develop appropriate formulations which are suitable for use by these groups as producers and beneficiaries¹⁵⁷. She is critical of a process that she says

may result in beautifully made programmes, but does it generate the capacity of those dealing with exclusion to use television for their concerns? (Popovic at “Taking the Air”, 2006)

These arguments about skill, capacity, and control (both of representation and the means of production) are core issues for all community development and were reflected in a range of interviews both in the core group and by those from the wider grouping.

However statements on quality need to be critically viewed within the interviewees own context and their wider conceptualization of the issue. For example an interviewee who worked for a government support agency for Overseas Development (and so did not constitute a voice from the core group for this project) held the view that

The general perception is that the [quality] bar is lower [in CM] (Interview 21).

His perception of media intervention, which he saw as necessary, was that there was:

No real media, no independent media, to bring diversity . . . media don't give the space or time to explain what is happening in developing countries.

But his concept of how this would be addressed did not include community media:

¹⁵⁷ See document Programme Formats Module; pages 7, 8, 10

He sees the effectiveness of community radio as being *due to the lack of any other media* in those [developing] countries and *useful because literacy rates are very low* . . . it is useful where there is no other way of disseminating information.

He had little interest in increased capacity for media production within communities and had a problem with community voice. The following extract from interview notes is notable:

He also had a problem with community media being a mouthpiece for the community. He gave the example of the documentary – "What in the World" on Ecuador and oil exploration which he said failed to give different views or explore differences "all they talked about was the local community so you never knew what the government thought, or any other involved in the dispute" . . . He is distrustful of community view and thinks people must develop a broader outlook .

His question about community television (radio also) was "will it take into consideration national issues? – Is it a mouthpiece for the community or is it a forum for the community to engage with issues?" (Interview 21)

Other interviewees from a community organisation held that quality was an issue to be dealt with in terms of impact:

A challenge is to get people to watch it - community has the label of poor quality, people are very sophisticated now in their media watching and they're not going to watch it for the sake of it . . .

But the same interviewees understood impact of community media activity as more specific in terms of the 'audience' or group involved, and more general in the kind of results than the previous interviewee.

There would be quality of life and health outcomes for those women who were involved in the NearFM project that would be important for us as we're part of the older network that is funded by the department of health. So there's an economically good outcome for the state and for government and for government spending. Those women were absolutely thrilled with themselves, have formed a group, are very busy, very involved, and that means better health, better quality of life . . .

There were over a 100 women [at event organised by the older network] and that tiny group - I don't know was it a dozen or was it under that, were there making, doing recordings, but the impact that they were having on that group! They were going around interviewing people and people were saying 'My God@ the usual of course. Now these were older people saying this – 'aren't you great, how could you be doing that' and other people saying 'could we? Is it possible that we could do that if they could do it?' and they were from all over the country. And that's not just health, that's another kind of impact – what would you call that – like ripples – where those people at that meeting were being influenced by the women . . . the health and quality of life [of the women involved in the project] improved but it was having the ripple effect on these women who go back to their

communities, you never know what might happen. They were hugely impressed that their peers were going around with the technology. (Interview 19)

Thompson put the basic issue of skill clearly whilst considering the challenges facing people engaging with movements in the “Making of the English Working Class”

the ability to read was only the elementary technique. The ability to handle abstract and consecutive argument was by no means inborn; it had to be discovered against almost overwhelming difficulties – the lack of leisure, the cost of candles (or of spectacles), as well as educational deprivation. (Thompson, 1963, p. 783)

Thompson may have been speaking of 18th century England but the level of poverty and disadvantage faced by many groups today entrenches their marginalisation through very similar issues - particularly lack of leisure and educational deprivation. WACC¹⁵⁸ and its publication PANOS currently present these issues in terms of communications.

For CTV activists different conceptions of what is needed for community television and different approaches to practice underlie these issues. Users as opposed to audiences; what ‘quality’ in CM actually is; the need to be able to ‘stand up’ and compete in a media environment; leadership and responsibility; democracy and ownership; sustainability; are only a few of the areas constantly under review. Dagrón’s (2001) three categories of process, product, and distribution, as the areas that denote different approaches may appear to be fundamental in a media paradigm but they are also minimalising and distorting of CM practice which will always encompass all three and much more.

Within the consideration of a moral economy of communications the core issues that need to be clarified are who has access to what means and how do people acquire the necessary skills to use them efficiently. From this foundation emerges a nexus of concerns for users as both receivers and producers participating in a communications environment. Community

¹⁵⁸ World association of Christian Communicators

broadcasting is at core a set of relationships in which this need is facilitated either well or poorly. This is not necessarily aligned to wealth or access to resources - some ‘Third World’ or ‘developing’ countries have strong CM activity and despite its boom years Irelands ruling class did not yield resources to community broadcasting but followed the pattern of restraint on spending in all public services, wages, and community development that marked the neo-liberalism of the Celtic Tiger years.

5. A.3 Who communicates with whom?

The question of who is communicating is a problem exacerbated firstly by the lack of ‘universal access’ to communication tools and secondly by a market-driven, self-regulating or de-regulated environment. When CM is tied to commercial cable-carriers its reach and the access it can provide is limited by those operators and not by its internal logic (Rushton, 2009). When the structural inequalities in society also add to the limitations on who can communicate we have to look at who it is that has a voice even within those movements that fight for the right to a voice. We have to ask who is speaking for whom.

A number of very important and fundamental aspects of what ‘voice’ actually is still remain inaccessible to most people. Although the exciting developments since Seattle can be seen to be the unleashing of ‘a million voices’ we are still dealing with communications systems that are very circumscribed in terms of access. While some solutions may end up being particular/localized they are often extremely important to those people – like the wired networks built in New Delhi (Sarai 2000), the neighbourhood television networks built in villages in Nepal (Interview 8), and indeed the ‘community’ television networks built by the Irish pirates of the 1980’s. All these systems were and still are vital communications channels for the people who subscribe to them – but they are limited.

The autonomist argument that capitalism needs and exploits ordinary people's creativity can clearly be applied to many of these solutions – small enterprises spring from these initiatives and bigger operators then move in and take over once the 'market' has been developed as happened with the deflector pirates and Channel 9. This capacity to appropriate can be seen even in the way the Mondragon PAR projects have been used and adapted; the way that market research is termed 'consultation'; and the way in which commercial research firms 'attach' their market research to social research – for example on health - in an effort to entrap people into providing their 'sampling'.

All this happens within a dynamic – the transformations that produce Web 2.0 and the 'citizen journalism' of BILD Zeitung are part of an exploitative set of relationships that engage individuals in trading media products with commercial media sellers, as well as being a thin kind of confidence trick since they do not change the underlying operation in any way (Lanningham, 2006). It was suggested that the term citizen journalism should be replaced with the term 'citizen paparazzi' which would best describe this kind of exploitative and gratuitive trading in people and 'stories' - indeed the term is increasingly trumpeted as a sort of 'we are here' display.

It is nothing new that commercial operators exploit people as content producers; the key development in the current 'social media' and 'citizen journalism' is that the owners create 'user interfaces' to supply content without employing journalists. Ultimately they are looking for cheap content that draws people to their media outlets to click up the numbers of their audience market to sell to advertisers. This is the media industry in its raw form.

While big anti-global capitalism events have difficulty enough in ensuring participation from the grassroots¹⁵⁹ (Farrer, 2003) , (Sen, Arnand, Escobar, & Waterman, 2003), in terms of community media events it is mainly cadres who meet up trans-nationally (Cogburn, Johnsen, & Bhattacharyya, 2008) (Esteves, 2007). The purpose of many of their meetings will be to form partnerships for funded projects to enable the network and academics/consultants tend to dominate the organisations. These meetings therefore will be directed by the interests of cadres from movements and will revolve around the interests of research funders. The connection between local and global that these meetings facilitate is therefore mediated.

Castells, who has concentrated on the development of networks, conceded that participation in these networks is limited to those who can afford, and have the freedom and permissions, to travel. He acknowledges this constitutes a serious undermining of some of his theory. It also means that the engagement of people from grassroots organisations in the decision-making and agenda setting of transnational networks needs to be supported so that tendencies to form hierarchies within movements that reflect social inequalities are counterbalanced by democratic actions and structures. To make such possibility fact we have to look at what is actually happening and how it needs to be changed.

Use of media in trans-national networking

More than anything else activists need support networks as they struggle against very powerful forces that drives the forming and re-forming of networks and the developments of global networks (see **Table No 8**) show that these happen in a whole range of ways. But

¹⁵⁹entry charges in Kenya in 2004 were protested by local grassroots organizers, let alone the difficulties for people travelling from afar.

can we do this without the expense, the need to travel, the difficulties of re-arranging our lives?

The potential in CM to facilitate transnational networking is enormous so it is also tempting to allocate to CM the potential to democratise such networking and to assume that accountability and transparency are operating throughout the processes. Surely what the IMC’s did for the anti-globalisation movement can be done in a whole range of ways around the different attempts to bring grassroots needs to global relevance? But can CM do this?

Some examples exist of actions that very successfully used media to support global networking around workers fighting for rights:

When Liverpool Dockers refused to cross a picket line on 29th September 1995 and were immediately dismissed by Mersey Docks and Harbour Company, no-one could imagine the full consequences. Port after port joined the fight against casual labour and deregulation as dockworkers around the world recognised that they confront the same issues in a global industry” (Bailey, <http://www.labournet.net/docks2/> , 1995)

LabourNet was the website quickly set up by that November to support the action by one of the Dockers, Chris Baily, with online aid from media activists based in other countries. Baily wrote for CMN’s “Tracking” to explain the value of using the Internet in this instance and the difference it made to the reach the Dockers managed to achieve and the solidarity it developed. Puerto Rican longshoremen in Newark, New Jersey USA refused to pass a picket put up by three Liverpool Dockers on a Liverpool ship as part of drawing attention to their fight.

This act of international labour solidarity might have passed unnoticed. There was hardly any reporting of it in the traditional media. However news of this solidarity action was quickly spread around the world using the Internet. A few weeks before the Newark action the LabourNet site had been set up to assist the Liverpool Dockers in their fight; using the slogan “the world is our picket line”. (Baily, 2001)

The importance of video and Internet access to workers actions has been well-documented:

On 10th April 2001, several hundred workers of Daewoo who struggled against mass layoff two months ago gathered together in front of the factory gate to enter the union office located inside the factory. They got a warrant from the court that they have the right to use the union office space and they march peacefully. Suddenly, the riot police attacked the workers and violently beat the workers. On this spot, there was one camera person who was a member of Daewoo workers video collective and he shot every detail of this terrible incident (see <http://dwtubon.nodong.net/>). If this had happened two or three years ago, it would have been very difficult for the workers to spread this news out to the public. But on that day, workers could successfully upload the video clips to the Internet site of JinboNet. (see <http://www.jinbo.net> a Korean progressive network which hosts more than 500 NGOs and unions in Korea)" (Kim, 2001)

These represent collaborations between those with media skills and workers who needed communications strategies; the on-line support that independent media activists gave Chris Baily to build his website was crucial; the kind of networking that this enabled was also important to extending their reach to other networks such as environmentalists in GreenNet. Such collaborations are not new¹⁶⁰ however the speed of the Internet makes a huge difference to how the medium may be used and to the effect it can have on enabling the swift growth of solidarity action.

Articles in CMN's Tracking are written by those who understand the importance of media access for such struggles and how important it is to keep this knowledge alive. How people get control of the means of production and how they understand 'the direct relationship of the owners of the conditions of production to the direct producers' in relation to 'communication' and 'communications' is not something that happens by accident but with sustained effort.

¹⁶⁰ This was notably in counter-media during 1968 a range of countries and in the underground newspapers of the European resistance and later samizdat. I have also been told that the film-makers committee of the French Resistance produced material on the liberation of Paris involving hundreds of cameras.

Labour News Production (LNP) in South Korea train workers to use video as a part of their working lives and to form collectives to produce material that could be useful in all sorts of ways. Had there been no presence of the video collective in the trade union it would not have been possible to film what happened that day. Many other video activists who have been close to such action have reported that their footage was vital in establishing what actually happened, and instrumental in ensuring that people were not wrongfully convicted and sent to jail.

The importance of the Daewoo workers video is that the video collective was based in the Union and taught the workers to use the medium. The Liverpool Dockers were supported online in their own bases. This situating of the media activity arises time and again as an important aspect of applying media tools *usefully*.

Williams (2005) categorizing of media as amplificatory, durative and alternative can be usefully applied here¹⁶¹ - the LabourNet example is **amplificatory** use of media – it acts as a loudspeaker and increases the reach; this is broadcasting. It also has elements of what he calls ‘**alternative**’ in that another language must be learned and used in order to make it work – it demands some skills other than those of voice and speech and ‘ordinary communication’. Williams also asserts that what is called ordinary is in fact constructed and that, as Thompson also pointed out in the quote above, the communication of ideas demands skills.

The importance of The Internet Archive Project and its Wayback machine are that these projects mean that something like LabourNet also has **durative** qualities. Without this capacity to archive and search, such media are ephemeral, suitable only for transient

¹⁶¹ Table No 1 Based on Williams Typology

purposes, and leaving little trace of an activity that has had impressive impact. This is an open publishing mechanism that supports voice.

Access to the Internet is not simply about the infrastructure; as with any media it is also about the level of development in a whole range of skills that people need to have before they can use that media in any effective way and in particular to use it as producers rather than consumers. For this we need the kind of interaction between media activists (and we mean skilled media activists) and people in struggle that was evident in the Dockers and the Daewoo workers actions.

5. A.4 Geneva03 - the Summit seen from below

The "**World Summit for the Information Society**" (WSIS) was an important focus point for media activists. This summit aimed to address communication policy in the light of what was seen as the new digital 'revolution'. Unlike the previous NWICO and UNDHR, it did not limit its remit to states and governments but also invited businesses and their associations and NGO's to participate in what was, significantly, named the Civil Society Caucus and within that there was the 'Media Forum'.

Marc Raboy (2004) points out that the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) was not only another development but "WSIS promised to be different" (2004), emerging as a response to technological convergence and globalisation and addressing issues of communication policy and governance. The key position of the International Telecommunications Union (ITU) in the co-ordination of WSIS was an indication of the kinds of battles involved. The TUI is pro-actively neo-liberal and pro de-regulation in its policies.

The elaborate structures of this Summit, the modalities, criteria, and general bureaucracy surrounding it put a spotlight on the fact that participation was restricted and conformed to a top-down hierarchical model. This was hardly surprising, but the very rigid nature of the summit in this regard shows what an achievement the events organised by a wide-ranging consortium of media activists represented- in creating a space for voices from below despite the harsh reaction by the authorities and police and in contesting the construct of civil society presented by the WSIS.

PrepComs

This strange word '**PrepComs**' was used to describe the series of initial proceedings and consultations which began in 2001. At the same time a parallel mobilisation of community media and Indymedia activists, NGO's, and umbrella organizations was also taking place spearheaded by activists who gathered under the Communication Rights in the Information Society (CRIS) campaign. CRIS was a new coalition of longstanding activists, academics, NGO's and community media umbrella organizations formed to meet the challenge presented by the WSIS. The CRIS campaign succeeded in getting funds from the Ford Foundation and established a secretariat to co-ordinate the engagement of community, grassroots, NGO, and umbrella organizations with the WSIS¹⁶². While this funding allowed co-ordination, it was also a source of tension giving rise to questions about the transparency of the project and the benefits to the coalition.

Short review of strategies for Geneva03:

Defining civil Society - The WSIS defined civil society members as NGOs; however who and what constituted an NGO was fluid. In the period just before the summit a whole range of media activists formed a coalition - Communication Rights in the Information Society (CRIS)

¹⁶² <http://web.archive.org/web/20031121114927/http://www.geneva03.org/>

- to identify the issues and create a challenge to the ne-liberal agenda of actors within WSIS. The first difficulty this coalition had was the definition of civil society; Calabrese (2004) summarized the difficulties with the philosophical basis of the term in an article based on discussions held at a colloquium in Italy in 2003 in anticipation of the summit. Specifically Calabrese drew attention to the critiques by Gayatri Spivak and David Harvey that emphasise the fact that

movements of opposition . . . do not fight under circumstances of their own choosing. (2004, p. 321)

In the preparations for the WSIS, those representing the ‘voice from below’ were presented with the problem of sharing a forum with ‘social partners’ that were completely unsuitable, unequal, and oppositional. CRIS members paid a deal of attention to the idea of the ‘multi-stakeholder approach’ to policy-making in the context of the WSIS (Cogburn, Johnsen, & Bhattacharyya, 2008), (Padovani C. , 2005). In an analysis of the developments of the WSIS into its further phases, Lisa McLaughlin and Victor Pickard (2005) maintained that

the summit’s multi-stakeholder modalities represent a supranational version of neo-corporatism” (McLaughlin, 2005, p. 364).

This was precisely what community media activists had struggled to avert in the development of the CMF in Dublin in 2001 and it is no surprise that this would be manifesting at a global level. In the context of WSIS the modalities could not be controlled by the coalition led by CRIS however it was noted that the groups presented a united front as a version of civil society that excludes big business interests. While holding that:

The presence of civil society groups in Geneva clearly represented a call for social justice, but more specifically it was a reflection of and inspiration for global struggles over the right to communicate. (Calabrese, 2004, p. 324)

Calabrese in 2005 goes so far as to say that the presentation of civil society by the campaign was “rooted in moral idealism” in the way that it seems to have also excluded the nastier side of society - the exploiting, racist, sexist, and cruel aspects that exist in civil society actors too. But he makes clear that this is not to deny or dismiss the very real achievement of the coalition and the *WESIEZE* counter summit:

the range of participants . . . in a significant global media governance forum was expanded well beyond vested corporate interests and governmental participants to include a wide range of voices calling for social justice” (p302).

The approach to civil society is as a base in which actors place themselves – yet the WSIS also had a place in the civil society milieu as actors from above. This position was exploited by Tunisian delegates who used disruptive tactics to counter proposals for human rights being put by the coalition.

Strategically inside and tactically outside – the splitting into two factions, allowing for participation whilst taking a critical position outside the Summit also exposed inequalities within the groups. Some activists expressed the view that they had not come to join the WSIS event, but to register their opposition to what it represented. The strategy then resulted in the larger NGOs within the coalition being ‘inside’ in the ‘Community Media Forum Working Group’ (CMFWG (cs)) which had a place to participate in the WSIS Civil Society Caucus and who made presentations to the summit. These were then cast as ‘consensual’ and the smaller groups who staged a protest event outside – named *WESEIZE*, being cast as ‘conflictual’ and on the hard end of things, like police raids, etc. These groups were not totally separate in that it was a decision taken and agreed by all and a significant effort was made by a number of the delegates in the CMFWGcs to pass back and forth between the two fronts and keep information flowing between them but there was clearly a sense of distance. This effort was itself undermined by the different foci of the members of the CMFWG(cs) who were not in the same meetings at the same time. This created a

difficulty in terms of the kind of feedback and accountability that could occur and meant that it simply depended on those who made the effort.

Framing as ‘community media’ – while this frame seemed to encompass all positions it fell into trouble – mainly to do with the structures that had been established and particularly because of the dominance of AMARC within the CMFWG(cs). Due to AMARC’s position what emerged was a privileging of community radio in terms of the community media represented. The approach and concerns of AMARC (one of the largest and most powerful of the NGOs in the campaign) was therefore reflected within the Summit to the exclusion of other media. One of the concerns that participants voiced was about the framing of the case for communications rights in terms of addressing poverty in a way that would appeal to funders. Within this the concerns of AMARC to gain political recognition for community radio seemed paramount as was the aim to use the Summit to establish a community media fund.

Problems getting back to the grassroots:

Preparations for this event were in place for almost two years beforehand. The happenings at the summit in Geneva 2003 have been the subject of much examination, review and evaluations since. The difficulty of organising for these actions cannot be underestimated, but for some of us who could not get there it seemed that a very exciting thing was happening but there was no way of knowing what was going on.¹⁶³ Problems with even

¹⁶³ Seán Ó Siochrú was centrally involved in the organisation and workings of the CRIS campaign. He coordinated the campaign from the CRIS side as part of the Ford Foundation Granted project and represented it group Geneva03 at the summit was also the Chairperson of CMN as well as the Chairperson of the newly formed DCTV. I thought at the time that given his connection with CMN

communicating the outcomes of the Geneva03 event were expressed in email correspondence on the CRIS lists as early as the April of 2004 (Creech, 2004), stressing that everything was too complex to explain at a grassroots level - the references to a host of anachronyms, the structures of the WSIS and what it was about, the strategies developed; were all seen to be extremely complex and needed to be simplified. Another correspondent suggested that

CRIS Global only address global issues/events/Fora and that CRIS Regional or CRIS National organisations address Fora at their respective levels. (Naylor, 2004)

In Dublin in December 2003 I was not aware of many of the concerns until they filtered through at a later date¹⁶⁴. These were:

- a deep disquiet with the workings of the campaign, which, whether due to resources or how they were structured, failed to relay information or to create opportunities for inclusion in decision-making processes.
- the fact that large organisations dominated in the Community Media Working Group and were perceived to be pursuing their own agenda – i.e. more radio licenses and funding
- the framing of the case for communication rights that was to be put to the WSIS on behalf of the Civil society groups used a media for development / anti poverty

that I might be more aware than others but as time went on it became clear that the difficulties of communication around and after the event together with constraints in terms of voluntary time, meant that very little had filtered through.

¹⁶⁴ I became aware of the extent of the difficulties people had with the event in Geneva03 only when I began to research this. Much of the discussions and debates were on Internet and listserv correspondence which is difficult to cite because so much of it can be erased, lost, and cannot be retrieved or it may be simply unfair to cite. While such open discussion lists are public material to some extent, the intentions of some of the correspondents may not necessarily be to issue very public statements but to engage in a conversation and to cite them may take this out of context. So some care is needed here. Gabi Hadl made the activities of the Geneva03 and We-Seize event a central case study in her PhD thesis, “Theory for Civil Society media: Lessons from the World Summit on the Information society (WSIS)” (Hadl, 2006) which is a very helpful document..

frame taken mainly from community radio – as a cheap and accessible medium that particularly addressed funders interests.

- community media was presented as mainly community radio which meant community radio was privileged both as a medium and as a defining term within the framework of the campaign.

All these issues must have worked against any real sense of unity although the achievement of the campaign actors in staging a cohesive campaign at the summit despite these internal problems was enormous and represented the commitment of many who wanted to see a clear voice of opposition emerge at the summit. The *WE-SEIZE* input was a clear counter-balance to the possibilities for co-option that were the danger of engaging with the summit.

Hadl confirms these issues in her findings yet also affirms the need for a unified front and a common frame emphasising that:

the field is still emerging, and is beset with discontinuities and schisms. It suffers from poor interconnectedness and cross-member awareness, as well as from lack of institutional allies, coherent vision, appropriate tools and funding. P.179

She locates the problem in there being no common discourse for groups within the broad coalition and the ‘community media’ concept, the most widely used, was

not an effective tool. It has proven useful in some spaces for policy lobbying, but has been degraded by a lack of theoretical development and overuse in policy arenas. REF

She advocates the term ‘*civil society media*’ as one which

though saddled with some ideological baggage of its own, holds promise for addressing the marginalisation and dispersion of *our media*.

Hadl’s approach to the democratic deficit is to propose a system of framing – using frames within the meta frame of ‘Democratic Communication’ or as she names it DemCom

the purpose of this frame within a frame system is to gain focus without de-contextualising the work, and to prevent means (e.g. getting broadcast licenses) from becoming goals.

While it is not the task of civil society media theory to address this latter set of connections, it is necessary to point them out and be aware of them.” P.185

These proposals and Hadl’s direct analysis of the situation are certainly a big step along the way however it is not clear that changing the frame or expanding the framework will necessarily change the practice. The ways in which organisations have developed, the decisions that have been taken at early stages and the paths they have gone down are not easily turned around.

As long as the focus of those involved in the use of media as a communications tool, whether they be activists, academics, interested professionals, or workers in community based organisations, remains turned on ‘the media’ as the problem and not on the forces that control it; as long as funding is a goal; as long as expansion of particular forms of media in preference to others is top of the agenda; and as long as the needs of people are relegated to the back-burner – there will be no movement for media for social justice or, indeed, a movement that uses media as a tool to support the development of the consciousness of the class that is so vital to our hauling ourselves out of this pit.

There will be a movement but will it be any more than what has happened up to now? Is it inevitable that it will result in de-radicalised media producing content that satisfies funders, keeps the project alive and pays salaries? Will anyone doing anything other be included in the action plans? It may not be easy to get the ‘access’ that we have fought so long and hard to establish.

In Hadl’s account one of the schisms evident throughout the WSIS action was the different foci of groups. In her analyses the *WE-SEIZE* contingent was marked by a techno-centric focus on new media, smaller and looser associations with broad agendas, this left the Community Media Forum dominated by the larger, more longstanding organisations such

as AMARC. This was also reflected in the age profile of participants with the *WE-SEIZE* participants’ largely young white, male, professional class (Hadl 2006).

Another difficulty in developing strategies for something like the WSIS summit is that such an event also represents a rare opportunity for those coming from countries around the world to lobby on behalf of their regional or national issues. That these issues were pressing and the opportunity extraordinary cannot be dismissed lightly either by outsiders or by the activists themselves. So the energies of those in the Community Media Forum were dissipated because many of the actors who gained access to the Summit attended different meetings and so could not strategise in any way to support each others actions.

The intricate set of meetings that comprised the summit clearly worked to absorb the energies of the activists who got there, and to a large extent weakened their capacity to make any impact from within.

The ‘Civil Society Declaration’ that emerged has been noted as an achievement by many particularly due to its emphasis on human rights and communication and that the wealthy of the world must pay (Raboy, 2004)¹⁶⁵. Padovani has dedicated a deal of writing to the WSIS and the Summit events and believes what happened was:

not a just a trans-national coalition but a global dynamic of social movement was in action at and around WSIS (Padovani & Tuzzi, 2004)

¹⁶⁵ “Reading the official government declaration and the civil society declaration side by side is instructive. Both mobilize a generous rhetoric, but the official declaration masks the important cleavages that marked the intergovernmental process while the civil society document provides a vision, makes choices and suggests some difficult steps that need to be taken. The official declaration sloughs over the chasm on human rights, for example, where civil society places human rights at the centre of its program. The government declaration, like so many before it, deplores the widening “digital divide” where civil society actually names a solution: the rich must pay. Both are consensus driven documents, but the first reflects the agreement to simply remain silent, and therefore immobile, on contradictory issues where the second is the result of negotiation and compromise in the quest to move forward”. (Raboy, 2004)

She asserts that this constituted a challenge to a movement from above from a movement from below¹⁶⁶.

Yet very little of this was filtered back to the grassroots and even Padovani's efforts remain within an academic sphere. What does it mean to develop a global movement for the activists? What is the access that people need from the ground and local levels that means they will put their resources into facilitating participation at these levels? What level of feedback and accountability do they want? Can a real and live communication channel that keeps activists connected for these types of actions be put in place and made to work?

The difficulties around the WSIS 2 event planned for Tunisia in 2005 exposed the problem even further as the Tunisian faction split into those wanting to hold the summit in Tunis to put pressure on the government and those who wanted a boycott and a protest due to Tunisia's appalling human rights record. This necessitated the establishment of a special investigatory group to report on the issue. In the end the forum split; the impetus that had produced the *WESEIZE* action fragmented.

It is clear that the 'OurMedia/ NuestrosMedios' (OM) transnational network and conferences established in 2001 continues to try to work to address these issues. Conscious that it has a high academic profile which nevertheless incorporates a strand of activist-academics, it has taken a position that the conference wherever it is held will engage with local media initiatives. This is certainly again a step in the right direction but how then is the horizontal transnational communication function fulfilled? Although the use of Internet

¹⁶⁶the history of relations between the organization of the United Nations⁷ and non-state actors, mainly non governmental organizations (NGOs), that stemmed from a top-down perspective and has certainly gained strength in the last decade; an approach which is now being challenged by the other, which we refer to as a "globalization from below" approach, considering its prevailing spontaneous character, its networking mode of operation and its "bottom-up" implications (Padovani & Tuzzi, 2004).

sites has provided a fast and censorship-free route to cross border transmission there is still a need to use the media that exist in the majority of people’s homes and this requires a cross-media approach. There is clearly a role for community radio and television channels in this.

While the organising group of OM is widely representative the question that occupies this research project still resounds even within the community-based-media sector. Where are the civil-rights and people’s movements at the level where decisions are taken about the conference’s focus and the topics and concerns it will address? There is an inbuilt assumption that these organisations are represented, but are they? How do we know?

Use of electronic communications

The relatively low technical bar of email and the Internet as a communications tool¹⁶⁷ has turned the attention of the international coalition to Internet Governance in the latest round of International Fora - once again with the ITU at the core. At the heart of the struggle is the fight against neo-liberalism and the approach that the ‘market will regulate itself’.

Hadl speaks of the weakness of the community media within the ‘media paradigm’ in the context of a neo-liberal polity.

In the Media Caucus, they were marginalised by pro-business lobbies that had established themselves as ‘the media’ in the civil society space, casting community media as

¹⁶⁷ Most groups use email lists for communications, these will also be set up as closed – for particular working groups, or open for general distribution of information, bulletins etc, and some will maintain an open list that people can use as a contact point or to propose discussions, etc. These, what are called ‘small media’ by Susan O’Donnell et al, are used by many local community organisations and networks as well as trans-national networks. O’Donnell has exposed the exclusion of many (the usual) social groups in terms of Internet access which raises issues around dependence on these communication tools (O’Donnell, 2001). Despite this fact, Internet use is wide-spread and worked extremely well for the Liverpool Dockers, but this was due to other interventions and these were situated within the Docker’s family circles. The use of the sites exposed inter-generational activity, where Docker’s children managed the technology for those Dockers who were unfamiliar with the Internet (Baily, 2001).

insignificant . . . using a ‘community radio for development frame’ the Community Media Working Group offered inadequate platforms for the diversity of participants, and wider issues concerning our media. The Community Media Working Group acceded to the neoliberal discourse and its commercial version of ‘freedom of speech’ and allowed commercial media to pretend they were the ‘voice of civil society’ (Hadl G. , 2006) REF.

This was the ‘multi-stakeholder’ issue, along with the grouping of organisations into ‘families’ – some members of which were mutually antagonistic like commercial media and community media. The problem was really very clear and the difficulty is in agreeing to enter a space where the activities and intentions of the other parties are to crowd you out.

The two pronged, inside-outside strategy formulated by the coalition was inspired and probably gave the best result in the context of being inside the belly of the beast and next to the lions den. But it is important to note from this experience that while Trans-national Social Movement literature asserts that movement goals need to be framed to ensure their success there is clearly a problem *in the act of framing* of losing sight of our original goals.

The problem here is that what we leave behind are the very people, communities, issues that activists embarked from with their mission. As one WSIS ‘survivor’ put it:

. . . most of us are trying to make a difference in the places where we reside or perhaps in other places that are outside of and away from the UN/WSIS. My feeling is that too many of us, at one time or another, myself included, have become overly obsessed with the WSIS when it is not the primary place in which social change will occur. And it’s not the best place for progressive dialogue . . . for the latter, I do whatever I can to expose the role of IT companies in the corporatization of development, and work with others in struggling against the authorities . . . who are trying to wipe out poor black neighbourhoods and replace them with gentrified homes for upper-income white people and . . . cops who seem to want to shoot every other black male they see. Too much obsession with the WSIS can take valuable time away from all of our more grassroots activities, along with our “global” activities that are far more progressive than anything that’s happening at the UN.

There are times that I think that, at the end of WSIS: The Sequel, many members of CS will need therapy to wean themselves away from the “traumatic event” (L, 2005)

How do we deal with this? How do we create a meaningful link between the needs at grassroots level and the decisions taken and what happens in international network activity

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that addresses forces such as WSIS? More importantly - how can we use this knowledge that arose on the international level to reflect on and inform ourselves about what we are doing at a local level?

5 Part B. Activity below – revisiting the Irish context

This section revisits the context in which activists struggled to establish community television in Ireland, seeking to understand how the underlying issues that were apparent in the *WE-SEIZE-Geneva03-WSIS* events were also part of our local issues and impacted on the formation and activities of the Irish CTV campaign. Horizontal communication has been vital to develop solidarity and identify common needs – whether we take them to local/international policy summits or not. Building solidarity demands developmental and dialogical processes that allow a diversity of voices to register their experience of the conditions they need to change. The question of who is networking with whom and for what purpose is a key issue on the organisational level and impacts on the choice of strategies of engagement with authorities.

5. B.1 Engagement with the policy context in Ireland

In all countries where community television exists the State’s regulations condition how it can operate and also determine the funding strategies open to it. We have already seen that the aim to establish community broadcasting media brings activists into a very close encounter with the State and this is at the core of a struggle around how the parameters of those conditions are drawn and what aspirations of community television activists are eventually realised.

The two levels on which this operates are very different – (1) the nature of CM asserting itself in ongoing communication activity and (2) in activity directly in relation to the state as

in demands made either through or about CM. But they can also meet in very particular circumstances.

(1) The nature of community media asserting itself

This ongoing activity of people making media and building capacity for media making is also 'the building of the house' since community media does not fit into existing structures - a gap already identified in the history and literature sections in Chapters 1 and 2 and also in the methodology section in Chapter 3. This material gap also reflects the absence of theories that address the kind of problems that activists deal with as identified by Nielson and Cox (2005) who posit a reading of Marxism as a social movement theory in itself.

In general the direction of this activity is towards community capacity building, the self-organisation of people, and can be closely linked to popular adult education.

(2) Activity directly in relation to the state

In terms of community media, and community broadcasting it is the licensing process that brings activists into a relationship with the state and the terms of the license are the parameters around which the community television channel can operate. How does this affect its capacity to operate as the community media which is, as described above, capacity building, self-organised, and a training provider?

Lobby activity is sporadic and a means for activists to grasp opportunities to strengthen their struggle; due to the generally poor conditions of community media it tends to be ongoing. In Ireland there also exists a clientelist culture into which lobby activities often appear to slip; attention is directed towards local powerbrokers and government ministers and activity tends to focus on legislation or regulatory issues. It acts as a catalyst to bring activists together from a number of different situations – academic, community, political

parties, councilors; happens mainly on national and transnational levels; and mainly behind closed doors.

One question here is when does community media activity that asserts itself as (1) an empowering agent also act as (2) directly in relation to the state? Clearly if the state responds with severe repression then community media may need to combine these two capacities. But do these two things only really meet when there is severe repressive response from the state? Do these two levels not meet in the transnational activities of AMARC and OurMedia? Are they meeting again in the emergence of CMFE? The CMFE has recently (2009) called for action on a national level in relation to European lobby work and the CTA¹⁶⁸ in Ireland has made an initial response. While activists ask themselves how they can deal with these demands, can they use the channels of communication they are establishing to open up a broader discussion?

What does local level activity – for instance in Dublin – contribute to what we can do and how we can create mechanisms for participation on a regional level?

The problems identified by activists who participated in the Geneva03 counter-summit, the issues of dealing with multi-stakeholder frameworks and the need for channels of communication back to constituencies are issues that have been identified as common to the local and the international. The difficulties therefore are embedded in the way we work; in our activity which is part of the dynamic of our own particular circumstances but also something we produce by our interaction with society and how we try to change the conditions in which we live. So how do we begin to understand this?

¹⁶⁸ Community Television Association

Marx’s theory of the mode of production understands that society re-produces itself in a constant dynamic or dialectic within which forces struggle to shape conditions and to push in particular directions.

Nilsen and Cox put social movement activity into this context:

Our understanding of social movements, drawing in particular on Western Marxist theory, revolves around a view of history and the making and unmaking of social structures as the product of human practice – and more importantly, the outcome of collective human practice, articulated in and through conflicts which encompass the totality constituted by a given social organization of human practice, and in turn define that totality. We consider these conflicts as not only being grounded in the material activity of human beings, but also as revolving around how that activity and its social organization are to develop: as Touraine (1981) puts it, these are conflicts over historicity, over the ways in which societies produce themselves. (2005, p. 2)

In this dynamic community media can operate as a means of knowledge production and it is here also that the *conditions of the practice of community media are formed and it is this that determines its nature.*

5. B.2 State reaction

When a community media activity draws a response from the state the issues revolve around whether that response provides opportunities or creates constraints.

If it is an opportunity then the value needs be assessed: where does it lead to? What does the state seek in return? How can we best take advantage of the opportunity?

If it creates constraints the options are to: give in; negotiate directly; get someone to negotiate on your behalf; have a row; have a public row; go into battle.

Depending on the severity of the response activists may need to seek support to withstand the pressure in the first place and even to form a coalition to deal with the problem. Letting them know it hurts – “excuse me, will you please get off my toe” might be successful, but if they have stamped and just missed getting the whole body then it’s not much good - they

will do it again when you're not looking. Then we must ascertain just how close it is healthy to be.

Range of state response

CM activity will meet with a range of responses from the state amongst which will be:-

- **indifference** – when the activity draws no attention and makes little demand; can be totally unfunded so in not looking for support don't get noticed; can involve small publications attached to other projects like bulletins, newsletter, zines, and small video and radio works. It can also be like the Kerry Disability Networks video¹⁶⁹ which is so useful *within* a certain sphere that it is never used to push against others or never approaches the boundaries. There are many works sitting on shelves that get very little exposure; these had been useful and effective in the small sphere in which they were generated but do not have a wider or cross-network distribution so do not meet up with other spheres. For broadcasts to elicit an 'indifference' response do they have to be the 'de-radicalised' type that Kim Goldberg and Ellie Rennie speak of - both in terms of the ownership and the content? Is it the license itself that does the de-radicalising?
- **tempered support** – for example when it fits with state aims – such as:
 - **grant aid:** - projects fitting with the states need for supports to address disadvantage e.g. victim support, literacy programmes¹⁷⁰; or with the states need to be seen to provide for 'integration' programmes for migrant communities¹⁷¹.

¹⁶⁹ Video "Fitness For All" made with and for people with disabilities, now used by hospitals all over the country and particularly with people with learning disabilities.

¹⁷⁰ e.g. NALA's "Read, Write, Now" National Adult Literacy Association (NALA) produced a television series funded by RTE, the state broadcaster, as an independent production

¹⁷¹ Metro Eireann is a newsheet produced by immigrants focussing on needs of new communities

- **Inclusion In consultation processes:** - being seen to support a democratic voice – for community media in Ireland participation in this consultation is voluntary and unsupported. This is whilst state resources are being put into the private sector in a whole range of ways, for example any consultation with the private sector usually involves payback like the setting up of state supports for the sector¹⁷².
- **co-option and subjourment:** - when the bourgeois hegemonic forces gain control is when community media go commercial and when they leave their grassroots constituency behind. This happened in the early days of community radio with about five stations going a commercial route. Kerry Radio is another example though this is ‘qualified’ since they have and hold a community brief within their License and so prevent the emergence of a real community radio station. Kerry Radio was built on the foundation of a community radio co-operative which now has simply a share in the station and is seen to be the community representation on the Board. In some ways this is similar to the hostile take-over that took place in Channel 9, also originally a community licensed entity.
- **closed door – no support,** an attempt to starve you out and make it look like it’s the groups own fault. As CMN has experienced it, according to their responses to our funding applications we don’t ‘make the case’ or ‘define the needs clearly enough’ so we deserve to die. “Voluntary groups have a natural lifetime” in the words of John Fitzgerald, Dublin City Manager when he refused to recognise the claim of the Local Agenda 21 Group and set up an Agenda 21 department within

¹⁷² e.g. Skillsnet, – Central government and the Regulator funds networks provision of ongoing training needs for the private sector, e.g. Learning Waves is a training network for commercial radio; another buy-out was the payments by the state to independent / commercial radio to enable them make the changeover of equipment from analogue to digital.

the Council to take over their role. The Irish Catholic Hierarchy’s interpretation of subsidiarity is that to intervene by giving support is contravening the notion of ‘god’s will’; the Irish government’s interpretation is neo-liberal – the market will decide.

- **repression** – when the grassroots voice becomes a threat – censorship, ransacking of the facilities and resources, imprisonment and worse.

Meeting the state response

Solidarity:

Any initiative that has to engage with powerful forces will need to develop solidarity support in order to protect/defend it from a number of threats including co-option, starvation, and/or repression. This means those in solidarity must:

- actively work against co-option
- find means to ‘feed’ the initiative – resources, housing, materials
- or take control of the initiative to prevent co-option

Solidarity building in the face of state responses is a core and vital function for community based initiatives and it happens all the time; groups look for their natural allies and form networks according to their interests.

Responding to opportunities and constraints:

Social movements respond differently to pressures; they do not necessarily neatly fall into consensual or conflictual behavioural patterns in relation to the State, and community organisations have demonstrated they are likely to utilise both strategies depending on their situation or need (Geoghegan, 2000) (Mayo M. , 1974). In Geneva03 it was clear that both approaches were in operation simultaneously although according to Hadl (2006)

grassroots and network activists chose a ‘radical’ approach that opposes elite policy processes through pressure from outside and protest; and a ‘reformist’ approach was taken by the larger NGO’s as proffered by Ó’Siochrú in his work on “Finding a Frame” which was specifically directed at the strategy for the Summit (Ó’Siochrú, 2004). This can also be conceptualized using Scott’s (1990) propositions of ‘negotiated demands’ and could help focus on how the struggle as carried forward within the negotiated space either becomes the property of the subaltern or not and if not - what happens to it? What is the effect of the negotiated demands on those who are disadvantaged?

While Padovani et al have examined the WSIS process through their own personal involvement their main methodology is through the examination of documents which they call a ‘lexicon-textual analysis’ (Padovani & Tuzzi, 2004). This dependence on the written documents does not lead back to what is happening at the grassroots and activists must again make other interventions to have an impact on such negotiations.

In community media activity in Ireland both ‘conflict’ and ‘consensual’ approaches have also been brought into play in the struggle to establish community television. What has been interesting is the extent to which and how quickly the authorities have been prepared to ‘enter into talks’ when there has been protest. This was the case with our action in relation to the Forum on Broadcasting (2002) who almost instantly opened the door, gave us a special hearing, and accepted a late submission. The outcome of this was probably the most important and least resource demanding of any action we had undertaken. The panel reviewed their remit to include community media, making a specific recommendation to the Minister that CM Broadcasting should be supported:

Recommendation of Forum: Community broadcasting

The promotion of community broadcasting should be a stated policy objective of both the Department of Communications, Marine and Natural Resources and, pending the establishment of the BAI, the BCI.

Responses to Forum Report

RTÉ point out that the Forum’s recommendation that the station not become involved in local or regional broadcasting is of concern to them and runs contrary to the 2001 Broadcasting Act.

Community Media Network (CMN) asks that the Minister consider that measures be taken to foster Community television in the Dublin region and seek approximately €250,000 from the Department as Initial Seed Funding in the short term. Their longer-term requests include access to a percentage of the licence fee garnered from the Dublin region alone.

Analysis

The Broadcasting Act 2001 provides for the licensing by the BCI of three pillars of broadcasting: national, local, and community. . The Government’s commitment to the concept of community broadcasting is evidenced by the provisions contained in the Broadcasting Act 2001. Under the 2001 Act the BCI has the power to licence community broadcasting services including both radio and television.

Action Proposed

Accordingly, the role of the single content regulator in the development of community broadcasting services will be considered in the context of the legislative proposals that will be brought forward in 2003.

The Minister is supportive of the development of community broadcasting as he believes that it can help greater community participation and the fostering of a strong local and community ethos.

(Forum on Broadcasting , 2002)

This was and still is worth gold to community broadcasting sector. It was achieved by protesting our exclusion, gaining access without an invite, and calling the Forum to task in a televised public forum. We had managed to break through into the enclosure - disruption/protest mode. We won firstly an invitation to meet with and present to the Forum panel and secondly to make a more detailed written submission.

But in fact it was from within the community broadcasting sector itself, from the CM activists, that a resistance to protest as a mode was most keenly expressed¹⁷³. WSIS

¹⁷³ From that moment I was dogged in all my representative functions by fellow community media activists who appeared to need to take over in case I might just ‘protest too much’. In an informal meeting I was roundly ticked off by an academic for ‘giving out’ at the public meeting. Tensions continued and did not dissipate around these issues and when discussions got heated with the BCI one activist expressed “unhappiness at this way of dealing with the Regulator” (contemporaneous meeting notes).

activists noted similar problems in discussions during the PrepComs for the 2nd part of

WSIS, in discussions about the role of protest and resistance 'L' had this to say:

. . . civil society is supposed to be oppositional. Therefore I don't understand how protest and resistance becomes a problem for civil society (unless we look at the protest and resistance of the embedded Tunis detractors). Sometimes, exclusion whether self-imposed or imposed on us, can help to create an oppositional civil society. In my view, one of the problems that have plagued WSIS over the past few years is that many of the leaders have been too acquiescent. *(you should have seen the first draft of the CS "alternative declaration" written by about half a dozen of us, which had a clear critical edge compared to the watered down one that finally came to represent "us", refusing to mention the word "neoliberalism", etc.)*

Under these circumstances, I'm thinking that the notion of working on our own agenda should involve maintaining an oppositional stance – that is until the other two "stakeholders" stop trying to instrumentalise CS for the purpose of neoliberalism (the latter being the working definition of multi-stakeholderism at the moment) (L, 2005) (emphasis my own)

This activist is pointing out that the change in language also reflected a change in position – the dropping of an oppositional approach - representing a defining moment for the movement from below.

When existing groups are drawn together around a perceived opportunity, then the dynamics of the relations are not only with the state but also with other actors involved. In Geneva03 the differences within a broad based coalition forged two separate actions. The group that entered the WSIS summit had to deal with their own marginalisation within the 'Media Caucus' where business interests established themselves as 'the media' (and therefore 'the voice of civil society') thus ensuring that community media was even further marginalised within the broader Civil Society Caucus. Dealing with exclusion and marginalisation calls for recognition of the political pressure to conform and the dangers of co-option when we enter the space of the 'other' or dominant actor. What has been exposed in the evaluations and dissections of the Geneva03 events is that the possibilities

for co-option existed in both camps: it was not a simple radical/reformist split and difficulties were not simply associated with one approach or another; rather it was the **entrenched** positions that failed both camps and polarized them – the longstanding frame used by AMARC of community radio for development and anti-poverty that failed the recognition of the broader possibilities of community media; the ‘Global North centred’, white and professional composition of the *WE-SEIZE* contingent which failed to link with the issues needing recognition within the Global south and other social movements (Hadl 2006).

Differences will arise – but the problem is whether we resolve them, agree to differ, or find them irreconcilable. How much do they matter? Our interests determine whether the will to resolve the difference exists; whether or not we reflect and act on them.

The difficulties that arose around the Mayday 2004 Independent Media Centre in Dublin were also multi-faceted and provide a case in point.

5. B.3 Developing the coalition for DCTV

The efforts to build a community coalition for community television in Dublin spanned a number of years between 1999 and 2007 and the nature of the coalition changed a number of times over the period. These changes reflected the responses of different sectors not only to the proposal for a channel but also to the circumstances and opportunities at different times. The power blocs within DCTV therefore also shifted with these changing factors. In Dublin coalitions formed around a number of opportunities between:

- The Broadcasting Bill 1999; groupings that gathered around this time were a wide range of community media activists, community organisations, NGO’s and intergovernmental agencies. It was also nationwide and crossed the border. This

was supported by the CMN Integra Project – Building Community Media in Ireland which provided a focus point for the discussions, and dissemination of information around the Bill, producing an information pack, using the magazine Tracking to disseminate ideas and lobbying. The Project also supported the involvement of some US and EU based community media activists who delivered training and subsequently continued to maintain contact with CMN for many years, some of which is ongoing.

- The new structures in local government 2000: this was a departure for CMN – having run the media training projects we were faced with a funding deficit - a malaise that affected the whole community sector. I went on the instructions of my Steering Group to participate in workshops on the formation of the Dublin City Development Board and the establishment of a new City Community Forum (CCF) as a part of the national development Plan. These moves to establish a new community forum were regarded with suspicion by a large part of the organised community sector in the City as an effort to break down existing networks and as part of a power struggle between the Partnerships and the Council. This was an uneasy business and the groups that came to the workshops were hungry, they had already been starved of funds.

On the basis of my work with CMN I was put forward as a Community Representative to the Dublin City Development Board (DCDB). We found the new director of community and enterprise interested in media and with an ambition to develop Dublin as one of the new e-cities. He was therefore very supportive of community media. I began to lobby for recognition of community media within the 10 year Strategic Plan, write position papers,

participated in strategic planning groups to promote the idea of community media centres in new developments, and worked on strategies with the community forum. This began three years of very long working hours for me but it also gave us an extraordinary opportunity to establish a Community Media Forum and raise the profile of community media in the City immediately. This gave community media organisations in the city:

- a platform from which to lobby,
- visibility within the community, and
- access to funds through the Community Forum.

The success of this engaged activity for community media in itself brought other benefits – we could lobby from within the Community Forum and with the Development Board to highlight the importance of CM as a tool for community building and get significant recognition within the City’s Strategic Development Plan. A recognition that not only served CM well in Dublin but it was also an important recognition that other CM groups around the country could use in their lobby efforts.

CMF Coalition successes:

- ***avoiding the multi-stakeholder ‘family’*** – the forum was established as a community media forum and avoided the inclusion of commercial and State broadcasters. We were fortunate to win a crucial battle swiftly – we were quick to establish the place of community media over and above commercial and public service media in the City Development’ agenda. Philosophically and politically we asserted the primacy of community media in the developmental ethos of the City’s Development Board. However the CMF itself was a coalition and this was to experience its own problems.
- The CMF held together well for the first two years; the first year saw the Media Workshop that mandated the Community Media Forum and asserted the need for

a community television channel for the city and a very successful community launch that avoided Ministers, Presidents and suchlike but instead had the Dubliner East Timor Activist Tom Hyland to Launch the CMF;

- The CMF achieved the following:
 - ***Funding and publication of the feasibility study for DCTV***, with a budget of 35K.
 - ***Funding to research the networking of community radio stations in the city.***
 - ***Funding to support community television development workshops***
 - ***Established an enduring institutional support*** connected to the city council and the Dublin City development Board – still functioning.

CMF Coalition failures:

- Unacknowledged differences: tensions within the community media coalition were underground and remained so.
- Lack of personal engagement: it was a lonely job to co-ordinate it and lonely for anyone who took it up after me. It would be easy for the person doing it to lose heart or just work to the agenda of those who were closest. The interest in the CMF on the part of CM activists in the city was in its capacity to provide funds. The idea of the CMF as a space for media activism only held for the first two years when we worked to get CM included in the DCDB Strategic plan. But it is also significant that this was a successful process (see Appendix No 32 for CM within the DCDB Plan).

- Structures: the Working Groups tended to go off and not come back! Working groups were made up of people who were extremely busy at what they were already doing and did not act to bring new people in.
- Communications: the need was for a more structured communications system but the evolving structures were, as one community forum activist put it, 'baroque' – the difficulties for community activists in explaining these structures to people in their communities was not dissimilar to the issues felt by activists within the Geneva03 campaign.
- Dwindling member numbers: after the first two years activists participating in the CMF began to fall off. When I requested the work be taken by someone else, the person replacing me was too busy to fulfill the role and so work only just ticked over and dwindled for some time. Subsequent representatives from the DCTV were poorly informed and this resulted in problems between the Community Forum and DCTV.

Costs:

- Time and energy - this took all my time, which eventually could not be sustained. CMN suffered as a result; FAS cuts, embargos on staff replacements, and ultimately the refusal to replace the Assistant Supervisor when he left ran the organisation down steadily. The capitation grant to the organisation which paid the rent dwindled and we had to close. We had survived the cuts for three years sustained by small jobs and projects.
- Political dumbing down – While I was still a DCCF Council Member I put a motion on the imprisoned Bin Charge Protesters to the 2003 AGM (which they passed) to register the concern of the DCCF at the treatment of protesters. The subsequent letter to the City Manager caused a 'royal row' - the DCCF 'Officers' disassociating

themselves from the letter. While members of the DCCF Council rallied to support me, I had a phone call from the Chairperson to tell me that this action would ‘damage the community television initiative’. Conversely, the letter was acknowledged to have been useful to the campaigners, it also drew some positions out into the open, exposed the deeply clientele nature of many of the actors in the Forum - whether the clientelism was to the partnership or the local TD or the City Manager is beside the point. Certainly the DCCF itself had no political teeth it chose to use even on behalf of Dublin citizens. I found the DCCF frustrating; when we were losing our premises and my CE workers were losing their jobs the DCCF Council discussed nothing but money for projects and dribbled out bits and pieces to as many as possible. I was frustrated by their inability to prioritise, strategise, or to make any impact. After a session where I became very upset and told the forum that whether something cost €200 or €200,000 did not matter, that we should be concerned about what we wanted to achieve; I asked the CMN group to elect a new representative for the CMF.

The Broadcasting Bill 2001 Lobby – this was carried on from the base of the loose coalition that had gathered within the CMN Integra project. Changes in the coalition occurred in 2000 when the Integra project ended; when Open Channel lost its premises; and when there was a lull in the process of the Bill.

Consultations around the new BCI Television Policy: When it came to the consultation around the new BCI Television Policy in 2002-2003 community radio groups became involved again as they had in the Forum on Broadcasting’s hearing and in the CMF. This coalition worked reasonably well since it included community television groups that were well aware of the difficulties community television would face. Representatives from Cork, Navan, Galway, and Kerry groups took part in these meetings. When the groups were

asked to make presentations to the Board DCTV shared its platform with a representative from Pavee Point in order to assert its community base¹⁷⁴

The lobby for legislation for funding for community television and the Broadcasting (Funding) Act 2003 This coalition had lots of difficulties – the first effort to build a lobby group was shot down before it ever got on its feet – the Irish Community Television Action Group (ICTAG) was set up in the afternoon session of a conference organised by CMN where the BCI addressed the CTV activist community in the Teachers Club in November 2001. A paper was drawn up with a draft set of lobby actions/points and about 15 people signed up to it(see Appendix No 45); they were keen to get moving on lobby for changes to the legislation to fund community broadcasting. A long-standing activist, unable to attend the session, objected to the ad hoc manner in which the group was established, and refused to be a part of it. The group could never move on as ICTAG. This dismayed the 15 people who had signed up on the day and it was difficult for people to understand the stalemate afterwards. This problem demonstrates the depth of longstanding distrusts and while they may be hard to understand, in Ireland with a small community media sector they can certainly be decisive.

Efforts to build coalitions with community media and Overseas Development organisations failed. Despite a seemingly productive round of meetings and discussions the Development umbrella group Dochas decided to lobby for its own amendment to the Bill and to not join forces with the community media lobby group. The reason given on their part at the time was that their strategy was in relation to mainstream media interventions and allying with

¹⁷⁴ Pavee Point had been an active DCTV founder member, and corresponded with this research project

CM groups would put them in a different place – I’d suggest that for ‘different’ read ‘marginalised’. This was disappointing.

2004: The Sound and Vision Scheme (S&V) The Sound and Vision Scheme was set up under the Broadcasting (Funding) Act 2003 that allocated 5% of the TV License fee to the production of ‘community content’. The problem for community media was that this meant an open competition and despite extensive lobby efforts funds for community media were not ring-fenced. ***The sum was back dated so when the scheme was established there was circa €24 million available. The community television license applications were delayed by the fact that the BCI had no-one in place to deal with community television and as we waited over nine months we also watched €11million disappear from the pot into the hands of independents. In the meantime four commercial channels were licensed by the BCI and this also had effects on CTV activities.***

The S&V Scheme has worked to support independent production to the detriment of community television and community radio. As a result it would seem that the profile of community media is undergoing a profound change from one that was totally volunteer led to one that now supports independent producers. While this may bring money and the production quality that is worried about to community media, it is at a cost; community based volunteers no longer hold the place they once did and the bar for acceptable quality of production has moved away from amateur or community values and closer to those of independent production. For community television specifically the story is even worse. Before DCTV went on air (in fact as it was planning its launch) a meeting held before the AGM in the Teachers club in December 2006 was filled with new faces; these were the independent producers who had arrived to find out how DCTV was going to facilitate access to the S&V Funds. **The Sound and Vision Fund was so flawed that there could be no**

talk at the meeting of how these producers were going to provide training in the community.

The DCTV license 2006 – this was clearly understood to be a landmark, the license was awarded in January 2006 and the contract signed in April 2006. This brought more changes to the DCTV Committee as were noted in Chapter 3.

The Community Television Training Network (CTVTrN): this was an opportunity for funding that activists saw would help community channels look at their needs and support a network to drive training and skills upgrading. Funding of €50,000 was awarded by the Wheel’s Training Links Project. This was the first real funding to the community television sector - a positive action that drew a range of actors together from Dublin, Cork, Navan, Leitrim, Dundalk, and Belfast, and prepared the ground for the formation of the Community Television Association (CTA). The groups involved were CTV interest groups and the three incipient channels aiming to get channels up and running.

The broad base was important to members who wanted to engage with the CTV drive but were unable to form CTV channels in their area either due to capacity or to local infrastructure deficits. For example a group in Leitrim would not get CTV because no cable supplier was providing the infrastructure. They had been involved for many years, had sustained a community video initiative, and wanted distribution mechanisms of which CTV was one. This broad base was also seen as a means to keep a connection alive between the channels and those who produced video within communities. It was therefore a way to keep links between the grassroots and the developing technical organisations – the CTV channels.

The Community Television Association 2006 (CTA): This coalition was brought into being, some would say ‘forced’ into being because the authorities, the BCI and RTE, did not want

to negotiate with individual channels but an umbrella body. But the fact that the authorities wanted to see it formed does not mean that it was not happening in any case. The agendas of the authorities and the CTV groups may be different but the need for a coalition was evident – and had already been in place in the CTVTrN. In fact the reverse is true- this broad coalition has been tolerated by the authorities because there are only three community channels (Cork CTV being the last to sign their contract in April 2009) and they needed the organisation in place. The community channels needed the diversity of the base to move forward.

The CTA is not an easy mechanism for the groups; the difficulties the channels found in working together did not appear to arise from obvious ideological or political differences per se but more from the different and unequal stages of development of each. The same kinds of differences emerged as elsewhere but what the existence of the CTA means is that there is a forum in which these differences can be addressed.

DCTV – the changing profile of the Committee. The opportunities listed above brought different groupings of actors together, and while there was a solid a core at the centre of DCTV, the profile of the groups changed significantly (as I have already outlined in Chapter 3) and we can see that this controls the direction that any CTV could take. Significant changes occurred around key moments: when the Co-op was established in 2004 CM groups began to become dominant and community organisations fell away; the phase after the license was awarded in 2005 was the moment when community organisations no longer held a place on the CoM and there was an increase in the presence of professionals including people from management level in organizations and independent film-makers; the most difficult change in DCTV took place after the license had been awarded in 2006

and a power struggle began within DCTV itself as new people arrived and the older actors sought to reposition themselves.

5. B.4 Coalitions and a unified approach

The need for a unified approach became very clear in trying to build for community television. The coalition needed to develop a fairly complex license application and then bring it from vision to a reality which was a community television channel broadcasting programmes on an ongoing basis.

We do not arrive into a vacuum and while the conditions for community television are new it still belongs to the community broadcast media sector; community radio is the ‘natural’ ally and coalition partner. However underlying inequalities caused problems; community radio which was already established had forged its relationship with state departments and the regulator and was in a very different position to its early beginnings.

As with all changes it is likely that the strategies needed for the newcomer may not fit the pattern the older actor is accustomed to. Underlying tensions can come to the fore and there is increased possibility for opponents to divide and rule. The work being carried out around the issues experienced in Geneva03 by committed researchers may help throw light on these areas but it will not be academic researchers alone, however committed or engaged, that will open up or resolve these issues. It will take the collaboration of activists on the ground to address the realities that we have lived through and this means the will to do it must be there. It also means recognising that coalition building cannot just move forward leaving all who fall off the wagon behind. Is the will there?

5. B.5 Mayday04

Marginal in Dublin: Central for EU Mobilisation.

This section reviews the issues surrounding the Mayday04 events in Dublin and the effort to establish an Independent Media Centre (IMC) in which CMN had a key part. It was a remarkable event and established a whole range of new possibilities; it also left deep rifts that still need healing. There is a key deficit within the activist groupings involved in terms of evaluating such events and forging a way forward – a gap that Indymedia UK activists made strenuous efforts to address (see Appendix No 32). This was a vital contribution at the time and also in terms of the legacy that was left behind. However until we - as activists - take responsibility for the conditions we create and try to explain as best we can why we address issues in the way we do, there will be ongoing conflicts without resolution.

This review makes no claims to impartiality; what it tries to do is to outline the key important elements in the venture as experienced by CMN in terms of expectations, problems, and outcomes. This is an honest effort to face difficulties in coalitions that still exist within CM groups that struggle to form coalitions for community broadcasting in Ireland.

Expectations: CMN's situation

In July 2003 CMN had to leave its premises. We had a small media centre, equipment, a library, but no longer had money to pay the rent. The closure was traumatic; the 15 CE participants, all of whom were vulnerable people and very dependent on the scheme, needed help to find other placements, and some understandably did not want to go to another CE scheme where they would inevitably have to face the same scenario all over again. These were serious practical considerations. Our call to the rest of the community sector for support to keep the centre open drew no response. Everybody was feeling the government cuts attacking the ‘nanny state’ and ‘handouts’. These cuts were biting deeper

into the community sector that provided essential supports to the most vulnerable. CMN had to move.

CMN and the space

At the last minute we were offered a caretaking place in a small disused factory in the North Inner City which came through contacts generated during the time I spent as a community representative to the DCDB. The premises would eventually be demolished but we had been told it was likely to be two years before the work would begin. It was in the heart of a very deprived area: across the road were flatlands, next door a re-habilitation centre for disabled people, and further down the road the major Traveller’s centre Pavee Point – as far as I was concerned we were close to friends. CMN also had no choice but to accept this offer or to close; it was a stop-gap measure but we had a space and we wanted to be able to use the opportunity it presented.

There were two CMN staff, one administration worker, and one technical worker, I was Co-coordinator. There was no heating and the small warehouse was barely secure but there were some useable offices on the top (first) floor. We used these for meetings, our video production equipment and editing facility, and our computer network. In this space we worked through a number of projects that are noted elsewhere in this thesis, in particular with the Family’s Support Network and the Adult Education Content Group.

Coalition for an Independent Media Centre (IMC)

The space drew attention. In early 2004 members of the Indymedia Ireland collective approached me to discuss the possibility of using it for an IMC for the Mayday04 events being organised by the Dublin Grassroots Network (DGN).

In CMN we saw the coalition with Indymedia and DGN as forging another link with activists working to create media access; the Indymedia group said they needed to put their feet on the ground and to establish connections with community which they saw CMN providing; DGN wanted to see coverage for the Mayday04 events. It seemed a compatible – and necessary – coalition. But there were blind spots: from early in the discussions it was difficult to achieve clarity on how we were going to organize this event, and who was going to take responsibility for what.

The other groups involved in organising Mayday04 – in particular DGN, were as far as we were concerned a step removed from the IMC proposal but what was not at first apparent, and in hindsight what we should have known, was that some people were involved in both the DGN organization of the Mayday04 events and the IMC. As usual the work was carried by a very small number of individuals so crossover was inevitable. This in itself would not have been too difficult had there been clear lines of communication and had mutual trust been sustained. What ensued involved the crossing of different group’s agendas and by the time the event was happening it became clear that very different understandings existed of what the role played by the centre. By the end of the week it was clear that there had also been very different intentions from the start.

Problems: Capacity

The eventual programme of events and meetings was exciting but we had serious obstacles to face. The worst in my view being that Eircom¹⁷⁵ would not bring internet access to the building since we were not on their main supply lines for broadband and while efforts were made to set up various systems, nothing worked. This meant that while we could base a

¹⁷⁵ Ireland’s main telecommunications provider

range of activities in the building we could not develop a properly functioning IMC¹⁷⁶.

Another small hub was set up in the premises of an NGO in the city centre. Not having connectivity at the IMC was a huge disappointment and a core problem that led to many activists dismissing the validity of the space as an IMC. This left openings for subsequent abuses of the space.

Co-ordination and communication

Organisation of the space and some operational rules had been agreed at our initial meetings but came to nothing as the Indymedia organizing groups were stretched with the tasks on hand and were not on site. I found my expectations would not be met.

The focus of the Indymedia organizing group was on creating a media event around Mayday and DGN wanted a space to network - that would have been fine but the communication rifts became deeper as the Indymedia group moved on their own agenda and could not get to organizational meetings. I worked with CMN related groups to bring community media to the event, exhibitions, video screenings, seminars, youth media workers, to name a few.

There were a number of people from the Indymedia group who were in the venue daily but meetings to arrange such things as a rota to steward the door or clean up rarely happened. Without the support and help of a small grouping of volunteers from the DGN the venue would have been closed down simply because it was becoming inoperable. There were particularly two aspects that needed to be treated with care: the hosts - CMNs venue, the locality, and local people; the Mayday activity, the IMC, and the activists' needs.

¹⁷⁶ The state of telecommunications and activists access at this time were common problems – the Geneva03 action also faced similar problems and activists were highly critical of the failure to establish connections.

The hosts

CMN was a small organisation with few resources. The Mayday04 event was the first such international gathering in Dublin and so CMN lent its support. CMN's ethos was to make resources available to disadvantaged groups either without charge or on a subsidised basis, and therefore had little surplus with which to protect itself.

The Venue

CMN had found a home – albeit temporary – and so managed to continue its work. As mentioned above, the building was situated in a north inner city location, close to a known disadvantaged community in Summerhill, a rehab centre for disabled, and a Traveller's Centre. The building site was for redevelopment as mixed social housing and this was a factor in the way that activists viewed the building – “It's going to be demolished anyway” (Mayday04 participant). CMN moved in September 2003 and expected to stay for up to two years. The early part of our tenancy was uneventful but this changed when we opened the doors of the Independent Media Centre (IMC) for a ten-day stretch in the last week of April running up to Mayday in 2004. Immediately after the event CMN was given three weeks notice to vacate.

The locality and local people

Local children were curious and often gathered at the door; they were particularly interested when they observed large amounts of people entering the building. Indymedia members from the organizing group thought it ok to allow local children into the premises; CMN's position is that we work with groups - children, youth, or others - through their organisations and their group leaders. Thanks are due to the local activist who walked in to find out what was going on and gave clear and certain advice that children should not be allowed in without their parents. We had unequivocal proof of the wisdom of this when one Mayday04 participant started what he thought was a playful banter with a number of

children most of whom were under the age of 13. When this became raucous more children were attracted to the fracas and wanted to get inside the building. What ensued was a three-hour siege. They nearly took the door down, scaled the walls, and were on the roof. While we knew this would end, a serious worry was that there would be an accident involving a child.

A second issue arose when after a critical mass demonstration DGN brought everyone back to the IMC for an impromptu meeting and a hundred or so bicycles were locked up to the railings outside. This brought another wave of attention and when I was told that **teenagers carrying toolboxes** were on their way from the flats it was clear that the critical mass activists had to bring their bikes inside. This was a misfortunate sequence of errors propelled along by poor communication and a lack of foresight on all our parts. But more significant was the lack of awareness amongst activists that they may be bringing unwelcome attention to a locality and to communities to which they themselves did not belong. It was a credit to the activists from the communities surrounding us that they sought to ward off these kinds of difficulties – something that was missing from the evaluations later. Other mishaps pointed to deeper problems amongst the Mayday04 groups.

Unguarded information

The CMN group and I were clear that we were willing to collaborate on the project - and *collaborate* is what we were prepared to do. When I found that a statement on the Indymedia.ie site said we had ‘donated the space’ I hurriedly tried to put it right but the damage was done. This wasn’t helped by a lack of clarity on the part of the DGN in their website postings that firstly did not make clear that squatting is illegal in Ireland and squats would be busted; secondly that named the CMN premises as the first port of call for people arriving in Dublin. The evaluation by Indymedia UK placed the problem with DGN *not*

placing a desk in the space where people could go to get help but in the circumstances that evolved this would have made no difference. The closure of a squat by the Gardai and the fact of the CMN building being identified as a convergence venue by the DGN picked it out as a place to go and people were looking for somewhere to sleep.

No developmental process

What was missing was any developmental process planned in advance and implemented throughout that allowed those involved to understand the motivations and ways of working of the other parties. While I wanted to believe we had a coalition it is clear in retrospect that at no time was there a collaborative process going on that included or recognised CMN as an *equal* partner¹⁷⁷.

Outcomes:

Damage to CMN

CMN was evicted at short notice. The organization was willing to defend its connection with the whole Mayday04 event and supported the movement but the movement had not respected the IMC and abusive actions in relation to media journalists on the premises left serious problems in public perception. CMN as an organization has never recovered.

¹⁷⁷ This was epitomised in a publicity action taken by one of the organisers who arranged a pre-event photo-shoot of himself at the venue with the Indymedia signs in the background and made no reference to CMN anywhere in the article. This would have been fine if it were accidental but it was clearly deliberate - he stood for the photo in a corridor where CMN's slogan of '*media, by, for, and of the people*' – all in foot high letters faced the Indymedia logo on the opposite wall. Despite the small area the photo managed to present the building and the event as totally an Indymedia space. CMN was not mentioned once in a half-page article and (notoriety aside because CMN did not seek it) this was unnecessary insult.

Personal damage

Personally I felt ignored and my contribution dismissed; despite the fact that I was at the building at 6.30am each day; was the last to leave; cleaned up every day, including the beer cans and organic rubbish. I was the person who alone had to deal with the Special Branch visit afterwards and had to move CMN once again three weeks after the event. As a result I suffered a dislocated sacro-iliac joint.

My view at the end was that a lot of very sincere and well-intentioned people who either came to the centre or volunteered their work had been let down and left damaged by a small number of individuals who were focused on their own aims and completely unaware of the needs of people participating in the IMC. ***While there was an expressed desire to engage with communities and to work in coalition (which I know was a sincere intent) they did not engage with the kind of processes that would make this feasible.***

Evaluations

Efforts to understand the problems and learn the lessons were understood to be important by a few members of the organising group. Those who engaged in discussions afterwards identified a number of issues revolving around the problems that were internal to the event: – the newness of EU Mobilizations in Ireland; the differences between groupings involved; the conflicting information; the lack of co-ordination; the violence dealt to two journalists.

Some difficulties clearly pre-existed but only came to the fore during the event. Not least was the gender specific approaches that, being unacknowledged, operated covertly: women were left to ‘look after’ areas such as the door; cleaning up; etc., I had to tolerate the bored looks and groans of organisers when I requested meetings and accountability; decisions were clearly made by self-selected groups in private discussions with little room for questions around the organising.

Some Indymedia organizers took the approach that CMN was going to ‘deliver’ community to Indymedia demonstrating a clear lack of awareness of community development process and of CMN’s own ethos and processes. While I didn’t expect people who did not come from a community development ethos to suddenly start behaving as though they had, I did expect a willingness to work together and to agree how we could achieve our goals. All this could have been dealt with had there been a developmental process to the building of the IMC.

The resistance to such a process may be at the heart of the difficulty some of the activists had in engaging with community organisations. These are organizations operating on behalf of marginalized groups and that CMN would regard as having some representative status in relation to their communities.

While we can allocate problems to differences in organizational cultures and between individuals there were issues not only of trust, honesty, and respect that needed to be addressed, but also of democratic process. Until these are addressed the legacy of Mayday 2004 will not be resolved.

Indymedia UK has developed a range of documents around IMC building and their evaluation of the Dublin Mayday04 was published as part of those resources¹⁷⁸. This work is invaluable in guiding groups in the future, but will this be noticed if the extent of the damage remains hidden? The subsequent relationship of Indymedia activists to DCTV, while welcome, also underscores the need for the histories and core issues to be addressed.

Appendix No 31 includes a set of documents from the development of the IMC for Mayday04.

¹⁷⁸ <https://www1.indymedia.org.uk/en/2004/05/291226.html>

5. B.6 Where is DCTV in relation to other groups in Ireland?

Capital city: DCTV’s position in the capital city gives it an importance in the order of things, not only because of its access to major NGO’s and government agencies but because one third of the population of Ireland live in Dublin. It was seen by the Executive officer of the City Development Board as having the greatest chance of success due to the high volume of voluntary and community organisations in the City. DCTV is a child of the city in the new millennium and so has a powerful symbolic focus for the city mandarins. However the difficulties and tensions that are emerging within the new channel need to be addressed.

Local dominant groups: Members of committees in the community and voluntary sector need to come from the area of expertise *and* the locality (or the interest group); the composition of the DCTV Committee in 2006 reflected a big change from the original composition of the committees and also reflected the channel’s need to draw in funds: eight out of 11 members were involved in S& V funded projects. What it also meant was that the energies of the channel were being put into independent production which had little to do with developing community television, access, or giving the community ‘voice’.

DCTV grew, not alone, but was produced by a range of support structures:

- incubated by CMN providing a secretariat and driving force,
- input of community organisations into the committee and its structures;
- the support of the City Development Board who made resources available to the community television working group and the Interim Steering Group;
- the Community Media Forum which provided another base of support from other CM activists in the city and a route to funds;

- the contributions made by independent film-makers who were the beneficiaries of funds from the Sound and Vision scheme.

Groups outside Dublin: Through CMN, DCTV has been inextricably linked to the wider network of community media activists around the country. It has been linked to other community television interest groups through the consultation processes, lobby actions, and development actions;

Groups abroad: DCTV has been supported by activists from abroad who supported lobby actions, travelled to deliver training and information (see Appendix No 33);

Programme donations: DCTV has had a particular form of support in the provision of programmes to support it through its early phase when it had no production base.

Permissions are needed for programmes a CTV wants to broadcast and DCTV depended on the networks of producers and community organisations that had developed programmes. These particularly included access to CMN’s video library, Development Media Workshop films, NvTv programmes, Cork CTV Pilot and Frameworks Films, and Navan CTVs as well as from a wide range of overseas organisations including, Real News, Deep Dish, and these are but a few.

The goodwill towards DCTV was widespread but the main source this support came from was not reflected on the Board in 2006/7. For those on the Board in 2006 the priority was getting the funding; solidarity and participation took a back seat. The difficulties with forming DCTV programming policy reflected this; the working group that was convened in 2005 could not agree and in particular its members floundered when engaging with the policies from the wider community of community televisions.

5. B.7 DCTV as part of global community media, as television

The world of community media is changing; all over the world CTV's are developing new ways to make affordable and effective programming that empower communities – be they geographical communities or communities of interest.

The advent of community television in Ireland is symbolic but for those to whom it is meant to give a voice it is more than a symbol of a new modern Dublin; it is a symbol of a new form of power for 'ordinary people' and herein lies its value. It is symbolic of the 'seizing' of that 'public space' by self-organised working class activity; it is symbolic of the assertion of community media as a voice that can bring grassroots agendas to global events; it is therefore a means by which proletarian public spheres may push against and transform the dominant discourse.

The attacks from the cable companies and the political right on the community channels of the US have a very profound meaning; the existence of DCTV also means something very profound. Media, and television, is not an empty container; it is like land, things grow in it and live on it, it is a space where people can be nourished because it facilitates communication. What the arrival of CTV (and DCTV) means is not that we are taking back 'the media' - it means people can make their own.

Technology is changing and unless the energy crisis bites so deep that we cannot charge the batteries, these changes will bring benefit. Ellie Rennie (2006) at a BCI conference expressed doubts that such technologies will be accessible for marginalised communities, but it is precisely these technologies - handycams, mobile phones, MPEG 3 players that are being used in places in Dublin like Ballymun, Blanchardstown, and O'Connell Street, - that mean the making of media is more affordable and familiar than ever before. The technocentrism of the *WE SEIZE* groups is a reflection of these developments *and* they showed they were able to use it. Indymedia activists who witnessed the O'Connell St Riots in Dublin

in February 2006 – particularly using video on mobile phones – were able to refute the police and media analysis of the disturbance which focused on dissident republicans. Instead the footage clearly showed local Dublin youths who had spotted an opportunity to ‘get back at’ the police and local community leaders having seen the videos came on public media to verify that this was the case.

The use of technologies to bear witness is part of the community television project and this medium contains the promise of global horizontal communication to bring heightened understanding out of what is often inevitable conflict.

5. B.8 Hegemonising activity in community broadcasting.

This chapter has been concerned with coalition building and makes no apology for the focus on problems. Within a resource poor sector and when people are in struggle it is easy to be defensive and sensitive to criticism; it’s difficult for activists to ensure their activities are democratic and to reflect on how they are operating when they are short of time and things need to be done quickly. But at some point we have to ask what it is that we are doing, where we are going, and what we are leaving behind. If we exist by virtue of holding certain principles we need to practice them. My experience in Dublin met with no mechanism to deal with the short-comings and the differences: rather I found the effort was to leave things behind and ‘move on’. There is a strong sense that we are papering over the cracks and these run deep.

The effort to bring sectors together to create a CM coalition through the CMN projects initiated in 1996 exposed tensions between different CM groupings. This coalition (the first I was part of in my capacity as CMN Co-coordinator) was also funding driven. At the point I joined, CMN made a successful bid for three EU projects and the funding came on

stream in autumn 2007. The coalition was to generate video, radio, and photography initiatives with community organisations, involving training, production and a range of associated conferences and seminars¹⁷⁹.

These projects worked well to build the CM network despite the funding agenda and internal differences. The largest project, BCMI, certainly brought people together; coincided with the drive to lobby around the proposed new Broadcasting Bill; and developed the foundations for a coalition for community television.

There were ideological and methodological differences amongst all the groups involved in steering this project and in particular a flare broke out between a community radio group and others providing training on the project. The Chairperson¹⁸⁰ of the BCMI project's SC kept activities moving at a steady pace but the project required a lot of supports and interventions and the divisions were apparent. These divisions had histories - for example the issue of how to deal with radio pirates that were blocking community radio signal in 1996 meant that the CMN criteria for membership were seen by some community radio activists as a gateway for unlicensed broadcasters. Community radio stations who had suffered by being put off air by pirate activity¹⁸¹ had taken a stand against 'pirates' and

¹⁷⁹ The idea was to use the project as a platform from which to build a movement, create a wide network of interest groups, and move the idea of community media forward. Seán Ó Siochrú was central to this drive taking a 'CM as a unified frame' position that was again foremost in the Geneva03 events, and worked hard to bring the radio sector on board. The effort to bring Internet and community print activists into this drive eventually failed, but the connections made with activists working in these areas has continued over the years and actions such as the formation of the Community Media Forum in Dublin also had 'Community Use of Internet' and 'Community Print' Working Groups as well as the Community Radio and Community Television WGs.

¹⁸⁰ Seamus McGrenery of Open Channel

¹⁸¹ A number of issues became aware apparent to me after attending a Community Radio Forum (CRF) Gathering in Letterfrack in Connemara in 1997. I was invited to this gathering to discuss a proposal that CMN provide administrative support to the CRF. One issue discussed was the problem some stations were experiencing with radio pirates, and they sought unequivocal support in trying to deal with the problem. There is no doubt that the problem was a bad one, the pirates were obstructing their broadcasts and the stations wanted solidarity action. Since a lot of the stations founders had been pirates in the pre-license days there must have been some discomfort about a

therefore had a dilemma in relating to CMN; relations between community radio activists and members of CMN were at times strained, although radio stations continued to work within the coalition and still do.

CTV as a new arrival in Irish community broadcasting

It was inevitable that the arrival of community television would disrupt the landscape for community radio in Ireland to some extent. The question was whether activists would forge links or work in opposition. This depended on the understanding activists had of community media. The events in Geneva03 exposed the different understandings that exist and that our difficulties were not simply a local issue.

In Dublin the lack of communication and the underlying tensions between groups in the CMN forged coalitions can be traced to their differences including:

- attitudes to unlicensed activity;
- what constitutes participation;
- how skills are transferred or not;
- the distribution of resources and funding;
- and ultimately what media forms constituted community media.

All of which meant there was suspicion and distrust between coalition members and while this crossed a range of actors it reached a sectoral level between the two community broadcast media – radio and television. With some notable exceptions it was difficult to persuade community radio activists’ organisations to enter into discussion with CMN either

call to have nothing to do with Pirates. This didn’t stop at asking licensed radios to shun the pirates, but also questioned any association with any organisation that may have something to do with pirates. Of course this meant that CMN with its open door policy to anyone who agreed with its aims was also a suspect organisation. This also meant that a well respected radio pirate, Margaretta D’Arcy, who used a pirate transmitter in her home in Galway to run broadcasts addressing a range of issues, was experiencing some alienation from the CRF.

at the local or the national level. Understandably activists have time constraints and need to focus on their own concerns but given that community television was going to happen because the legislation existed - people needed to get together. It was the expressed wish of CMN (and DCTV in its early days) to work in coalition with community radio stations and that they came on board the CTV coalition. We had made a number of proposals over the years to open a forum between CTV groups and CRAOL but the uneven development of the two sectors created difficulties both in operational agendas and perceptions; the ‘histories’ didn’t help matters.

The coalition and lobby activity around the 2003 Broadcasting (Funding) Act failed to achieve ring-fencing of the fund for CM. What this meant was that community radio and community television groups would be in competition for funds rather than being able to work out a sensible proportioning in coalition. The building of a common united frame was rendered even more difficult than before. The way the Sound and Vision (S&V) Scheme was administered was to prop up independent producers and ‘comfort’ the state broadcaster for the loss of the 5%. It also meant that community broadcasters (both radio and television) now seemed to be supporting independent producers rather than the volunteers that had been their qualifying characteristic.

The funding environment created by S&V in Ireland was destructive and nurtured competitive and protectionist cultures in organisations rather than the openness and solidarity that was needed. The operation of this fund at a time when community television was forming created divisions between community media activists and also impacted on those existing between community television and community radio activists; it also created divisions amongst activists within the community radio sector itself since the competitive and protectionist ethos it encouraged also operated between radio stations. Under the S&V scheme larger and better resourced stations were better able to access the

funds and compete within the independent production framework of the Scheme’s criteria and structures. In the analysis of the divisions that emerged in Geneva03 it was the framing of an approach that would appeal to funders and the privileging of community radio that was at the base of the problem –it was also the large organisations that engaged in this way and benefitted within the WSIS structures.

It is also important to note that it was committed researchers who have tried to document and explore the issues and find ways forward. Our experience in Ireland is similar to everywhere else - that those who were present at the WSIS/*WE-SEIZE* Summit in Geneva03 did not or could not bring this information back to the coalitions that were operating on the ground and who were directly affected by the same undercurrents. Addressing these divisions demands some committed and serious action and it is significant that while OURMEDIA researchers have tried to address the issues much of this remains unpublished and its reach remains within academic and select activist enclosures.

The efforts on the part of the Indymedia UK to address issues in the Mayday04 (IMC04) and to establish an ongoing evaluation process in relation to mass anti-globalisation mobilizations is an example that must be followed. Their evaluation of the IMC04 is an important building block in allowing the groups involved to move forward (see Appendix No 31). The issues that are at the core of all these problems still need to be teased out because they are embedded in our understanding of what CM is.

Key activists involved in Geneva03 have written articles focusing on the disappointments and failures of the campaign in relation to the WSIS but surely that failure in itself points to the value in maintaining a ‘frame’ that includes rather than excludes. While the value of a frame may be that it brings desired results, it is clear that the foundations for the frame-building in the case of Geneva03 and in the case of the S&V strategy in Dublin were seriously flawed.

Many activists corresponding with this project had problems with the CM term, as they have with community development but for most it is hard to find an alternative – one activist said participatory video was the closest she could get.

I don't know – the word community is so bedraggled and mutilated, because everybody sticks it on when they're looking for some money or they're looking to make an impression on somebody, and maybe the word 'participatory video' is less used, so its maybe a purer term or something . . .

I see loads of people talking about community media or community art or whatever it is and just treat it in a very superficial way I think most people do to be quite honest with you, a lot of people do as a way of earning a few bob while they survive, without really getting into the politics of it or committing to it - it's a stepping stone. . . so it's a stepping stone into the commercial media or it's a handy few bob, and I'm interested in people or blah-de-blah and that doesn't mean anything - and they're not doing good work to a certain extent as well. But it's a stepping stone, whilst for me it has a whole political depth to it or an edge to it and I see it as an end in itself as well. (Interview 7)

But I contend that the frame 'community media' is not the core problem and it is the activities of those using the name that degrades the term. Using it as something which is objectified and static is counter-productive; it is more useful to understand CM as activity and activity that is 'in movement' – because it can and very often does take different forms.

It seems to me that our problem is more a need to ask and stick with the awkward questions that have to be explored; to recognize the mistakes and identify the lessons. Calls are now renewed for community radio and television activists to work together in relation to the S&V Scheme and to renew the political and cultural integrity of, and solidarity between, community media. Will this be too much to ask? Can the pattern be changed at this point?

How much do community radio activists feel they are set to lose if they give up a position as 'the' community media and work in an honest coalition to develop community media as

a force? Will we engage with the regulator and challenge the inappropriate use of values and standards taken from the media industry as a norm for all CM practice?

Will CTV activists seriously ask questions about their own practice and what they are bringing to the communities they work with? Until we do this together we are stuck in a quagmire of 'histories'.

CHAPTER 6: “Production in the community”

- 6.1. Introduction: expanded case study
- 6.2 Processes – development and participation
- 6.3 The Family support network and the Service for Commemoration and Hope
- 6.4 CMN/CR production support project
- 6.5 Review of contributing factors
- 6.6 A Bigger Problem?
- 6.7 Outcomes
- 6.8 Wider implications

6.1 Introduction: expanded case study

This chapter presents CMN practice as it has been. This is movement knowledge produced through an expanded case study of a production initiative undertaken as part of this research project.

The approach taken here is to follow a particular engagement with a group over a number of years to identify the kinds of issues that emerge and what kinds of processes are emerging. At times in this process we were confronted with not only unexpected but also undesired outcomes. This seems increasingly important to face as these situations re-occur and unless clear strategy is undertaken to develop an alternative we will continue to be controlled by the most powerful and dominant forces in society. As problems emerged in this initiative our main concern was to identify ways to remain part of the dynamic in order to be able to affect its course. These formed the basis for developing appropriate strategies that rest on the principles of community development.

I am grateful to Laurence Cox and to Alf Nilsen for drawing my attention to the work of Michael Burawoy (1998) and in particular his 'extended case method' which I found the best examination of a methodology that seems closest to what I am trying to do here. My difficulties, and my interest, as I stated in Chapter 2 are very much about 'how we take that step outside of ourselves' to be able to see the conditions that we ourselves are an expression of – Burawoy puts the problem for researchers thus:

As social scientists we are thrown off balance by our presence in the world we study, by absorption in the society we observe, by dwelling alongside those we make "other". Beyond individual involvement is the broader ethnographic predicament – producing theories, concepts, and facts that destabilize the world we seek to comprehend. So we desperately need methodology to keep us erect, while we navigate a terrain that moves and shifts even as we attempt to traverse it. (1998, p. 4)

Burawoy separates qualitative and quantitative methodologies and stresses that the techniques of one cannot be used to judge the other. In his paper (The Extended Case Method, 1998) he makes the case for a method to:

apply reflexive science to ethnography in order to extract the general from the unique, to move from the "micro" to the "macro" and to connect the present to the past in anticipation of the future (p.5)

Based in Gramsci's theory of hegemony, Fanon's theory of post colonialism and a number of theories on class structure and work organisation, Burawoy's intent is to develop theories that allow connections over time and space that will link the

mundane to the grand historical themes of the late twentieth century (p.5).

The approach also provides a useful way to present the kind of work in which I engaged with this case study. Alf Nilsen puts it this way:

a methodological approach which seeks to link 'the space-time rhythms of the site to the geographical and historical context of the field' (Burawoy, 2000: 28). This follows from the insistence that the place-specific practices that will be subjected to study – the

ethnographic *case* and/or *site* – are not to be posited as merely local, particular, concrete and bounded, but as simultaneously constituted by and constitutive of multiple trajectories of socio-spatial change unfolding on a multiplicity of scales. Thus, the hallmark of the extended case method can be briefly summarized as the ambition to study the macro world in terms of how it ‘shapes and in turn is shaped and conditioned by the micro world, the everyday world of face-to-face interaction’ (Burawoy, 1991: 6). Moreover, it is a methodological approach which is located within the realm of reflexive science – i.e. within a research tradition which embraces and enjoins that which its opposite – positive science – seeks to evade and separate: ‘participant and observer, knowledge and social situation, situation and fields of location, folk theory and academic theory’ (ibid.: 4-5; see also Hammersley and Atkinson, 1983: 14-23

Here I am concerned with what people are doing; with how I interact with them and what we can learn from this interaction. This study describes the interaction between CMN and a community based health project, Community Response (CR), over a period of five years. In particular it tells the story of an initiative undertaken by CMN to provide production support facilities to CR. This initiative was an experiment run without sufficient funds and while it inevitably ran into difficulties still provided a range of supports in respect of video production for two legislative drama projects. Developing media strategies and enabling the transfer of skills from arts/media workers to members of the community demands resources, however this initiative demonstrated that trust and solidarity is as crucial a basis for such activities as are resources and know-how.

The Production in the Community initiative was underpinned by:

- CMN’s need to house and deploy its resources within the community
- The need for community organisations to develop production within their community contexts
- The research project’s brief to develop coalitions with organisations working within a participatory ethos.

The impetus for the initiative came from two sources: the historical relationship between the two organisations and the experience of the video documenting of the Service for Commemoration and Hope with the Family’s Support Network (FSN).

CR’s historical interest in CMN was due to their long-standing involvement in media production as a support tool. The collaboration has provided a case study encompassing a number of themes within this research project: a central concern of the study being how a community organisation could engage in production and use community television.

Questions such as who makes it, how it is financed, and who controls what, permeate on a range of levels throughout this case.

I look here at the issues that arose through a number of actions that took place over a period of five years. It is a story about the desire to build trust and solidarity and a keen interest in CTV - seen to promise a wonderful resource for communities struggling to deal with their issues. Interlinked with those aspirations and promises are the strains and pressures in a resource poor environment – and life has a habit of getting in the way.

Not all went as we wanted and some of our key strategies in fact failed. But while there was disappointment and sometimes anger there was also a determination to see things through and to test this promise. The experiment with Community Response exposed the weaknesses of the initiative which directly relate to planning for and realising community television; it also underscored the enormous possibilities, indicating what resources may be necessary, how we need to deploy them, and the essential part that trusting relationships and solidarity building play in the process.

6.2 Community groups participatory approaches

6.2.1 CR’s participatory approaches and use of media

6.2.2 CR involvement with CMN – list of actions.

6.2.1 CR’s participatory approaches and use of media

Family members working through creative, participative process developed a wide knowledge of drugs/HIV-related issues. In a group context they found individual ways to dis-engage from the dynamic that is created for themselves when there are heroin/HIV issues in the family. A cyclical process developed, enabling them to engage more in their own and the group’s creative work” (Community Response a case study, published by CAFÉ 1997)

Since starting up, CR has produced a range of media: booklets, radio programmes and video work as well as powerful dramas produced by their Family Drama Group and performed around the country¹⁸². They have worked with the legislative drama form as a means to engage the community with issues that are hard to face and that need exploration. This form of drama, developed by Brazilian activist, Augusto Boal, based on the theories of Paulo Freire, is used to bring grassroots voices to the fore and build solutions based on peoples lived experience. The aim is to bring these solutions to policy makers and influence policy decisions in ways that will address the real needs of communities. The cyclical process - while empowering people to deal with their own situation - reaches beyond the individual and the local to engage with other more public spheres and constantly returns its findings to the base.

¹⁸² See Appendix No 35 for CR origins and historical relationship with CMN

This places CR in a group of community organisations that use participative arts strategies to achieve their goals, and makes their use of media primarily a community use of media – as a tool – rather than an end in itself.

6.2.2 CR involvement with CMN – list of actions.

CR has been involved in a number of actions with CMN; these are listed below and are referred to throughout this section.

- “Building Community Media in Ireland” (BCMI) Integra Project, 1997-2000. As a participant group on this project CR engaged in video production with the aim to establish production in their organisation. After this project CR invested in some equipment of their own – essentially a camera and some audio recording equipment.
- The Advisory Group on Community Media (AGCM) and the Community Media Forum (CMF), 2001: CR’s representative Robbie Byrne participated in the CMAG and also in the CMF’s CTV Content Group. This action developed networking amongst community groups interested in community media in Dublin.
- Production for the Families Support Network (FSN) and the Service for Commemoration and Hope (SC&H) 2003/2004: this entailed the documentation of the service and a subsequent edited commemorative 20 minute video.
- Production Support initiative 2005-2007: CMN video production resource and Technical Worker placement at CR. The work supported the production of two DVD resource packs for “Hidden” and “Men At Work”.
- “Men At Work” production for broadcast in a community context recorded in June 2007; edited in 2008: recording of a performance and audience participation session in a parish hall undertaken particularly to focus on audio recording issues.

6.3 Reasons for engagement: first actions and issues arising

6.3.1 The Families Support Network and the Service for Commemoration and Hope

- Initial approach

6.3.2 Issues for the SC&H Project

6.3.1 The Families Support Network and the Service for

Commemoration and Hope - Initial Approach:

In 2003 CMN was approached by members of the Family’s Support Network (FSN) an unfunded voluntary network supported by Community Response and Citywide that links local groups responding to drugs issues in their families. This approach was an important development since it came from groups who were discussing ideas about media that came to them via their own activity rather than from community media organisations.

The FSN members talked about documenting the yearly service they ran for families who had lost members to drugs. Named the **“Service for Commemoration and Hope”** (SC&H), this event had grown in importance to the groups around the country and serves to highlight the suffering of communities. This was an effective strategy as both the march and the service happen in the constituency of the Taoiseach (who was then Bertie Ahern) and had the potential to draw a lot of attention. The group needed to document the event and also wanted to explore how they could use video. Media attention was something they sought regularly and with difficulty so they were interested to investigate what community media could offer. I entered into a number of conversations with the groups.

I undertook to facilitate this project as the CMN researcher, and CMN’s resources, small as they were, were made available. FSN had not engaged with production before this, it was an unfunded voluntary network and as we began to talk issues arose immediately.

6.3.2 Issues for the SC&H project

These were: cost; CMN’s internal brief and capacity; expectations; confusion around roles; and the need for a developmental approach to programme-making.

Cost: Firstly the budget – whilst IR£6,000 was low-budget for any production, this figure was too much for the groups involved, they could not deal with that amount of money being spent on producing a video. Neither could they justify it in the face of the enormous need and deprivation that existed within their own network.

The solution agreed was that the production would be managed by CMN. Then a schedule of meetings and a list of needs for the production were developed.

CMN sought the funds for the production and the project was eventually supported by the Dublin City Community Forum (DCCF) who while they could not fund it themselves, supported applications to a number of City Council departments.

CMN provided its equipment, assistance, and facilities free of charge.

What also became clear was that the unfunded, voluntary organisation was unable to take on production, preparation, and development issues, in short their concern and their expertise was in the realising of their event, not the video production.

It became clear that including any training element for members of the organisations in the project was not possible due to small numbers and the demands of the event. At one point we discussed whether those participants on recovery programmes could become involved

as trainees, but this was also not possible at the time. All the participants were fully engaged in the event and the value of that engagement outweighed the value of the media training that could be supplied within this project. In subsequent discussion with related organisations it became clear that training programmes in media for this group could be very successful but needed a more long term plan and training period – and this has cost implications.

All of this underscored the group’s need for an organisation that would take on the burden of funding and co-ordination of production.

CMN’s internal brief and capacity: As a network CMN’s brief was to support its members as production units so CMN works to link with producer/directors/ videomakers from community media organisations and some who worked with us on a free-lance basis; the one prerequisite was that these producers worked within the community sector and were familiar with the needs of community organisations. This meant that CMN had no capacity in itself to provide workers with technical production skills as part of its service at the time and skills had to be bought in on a temporary contractual basis. Despite the flexibility and commitment of the independent producer the SC&H project demanded more support time than was available. This can be seen as a budgetary constraint but it is also due to the fact that the SC&H would have to fit into the producer’s schedule. As a low budget project the SC&H was therefore at a disadvantage. Larger projects would always take precedence in an independent producer’s schedule.

CMN also suffered from the small size of the pool of producers who worked within the community sector.

Expectations: Learning curves for the community organisation were steep, there were expectations that could not be met, and there was some disappointment in the end result

which was a document and a record of the event rather than a programme about it.

Tensions developed due to misunderstandings and it became clear that some of these were seen to have been built during the initial discussions with the researcher about the possibilities of using video. At times both the producer and members of the community organisation felt aggrieved and at one point I was told there was a lot of anger about the project due to a feeling of being misled in terms of what the group could expect as a product.

Liaison, Producer, or Intermediary? The issue of roles needed to be confronted and confusion around these created operational problems. I saw myself as simply linking the FSN with the media producer but this role had already been expanded by the fact that I raised the funds. What the FSN needed was that I continue in a facilitator role but in accordance with CMN’s brief I was required to hand over the project to the independent producer who was the CMN member. What resulted exposed the difficulty for community groups with this way of working. My experience since then has been that such divisions of labour are undesirable and a more holistic approach is called for.

In the course of working with the FSN I found that I could offer to step in and facilitate discussions when issues arose; it was clear that this role for the project had been totally underestimated at the start. Community activists need an interface with media producers – this is what the community media organisation (CMG) should be able to provide. But to do this a CMG needs to have either a working crew and to be able to do developmental work with the group or at least have a clear role that is understood and accepted by the independent producer. This is where the CMN structure fell down.

I found there were difficulties when our independent producers saw my work as finished when they arrived; they did not integrate into a CMN project but took it over. Now, I had accepted this since it was the CMN brief but people who are involved in the beginning as a

liaison with community organisations need to stay involved. Trust can be severely damaged if this doesn't happen. So the structure of a community media crew has to be very different to that of independent producers working in the mode of the industry and relationship building is key to its success. It is also not a simple matter to “hand over these relationships” to the CTV channel when it is established. Groups will stay with media workers with whom they develop a relationship.

Developmental approaches to programme-making. Documenting an event and making a programme are often seen by CTV practitioners as different processes, but in fact this reflects different *approaches* to community production. The SC&H project was run in 2003/4; in 2006 very similar difficulties arose around the purposes and possibilities for the documentation of community television workshops run by CMN. The problem was exactly the same but became clearer since participants in the workshops held divergent views on the matter.

Practitioners who worked in the tradition of independent producers preferred to see the making of a programme from an event and documenting an event as very distinct processes that did not mix. Those who were community television practitioners approached the event with a view to the possibility of making a programme whilst also making documentation. The speakers from CTV channels at the workshop, particularly Arcoiris TV from Italy, showed programmes that had in fact been made from such documentary material.

The difference is in how it is approached and how the outcomes are perceived. It is clear that events, conferences and seminars in particular lend themselves to programme-making but require a strategy to cater for the requirements of programme-making. This is an important source of community content and developing strategies for creating programmes from documentation must therefore be a core function of CTV. The key

difference is whether one is interested in making a programme or in enabling communication between creators of content and viewers. If we see the function of the community channel as enabling control of the means of production, then strategies must be developed that form a continuum and are designed to facilitate interaction between communicators in the community.

A related issue is the protection of opportunity for community activists to receive training in production and how the CTV channel can open up the production process to create these opportunities. Other channels developed training methods such as allowing trainees to 'shadow' more skilled volunteers on productions where they can learn the ropes in real contexts (Interview2, Interview 11). The pressures of getting the channel up and running can too easily inhibit the consideration of the development of a training strategy within the channel if it's not prioritised. Since training and capacity building is a requirement for community organisations wanting to engage with CTV a lack in this area is particularly destructive to the relationship between the CTV channel and those community organisations within its catchment area.

Such strategies need to target all members of the organisation: - volunteers, staff, committee members - and their different learning needs. Training strategy also needs to be developed in consultation with community members/organisations that run training themselves. The CMG has a clear pedagogical role which needs a developmental methodological framework.

6.4 CMN / CR production support project

6.4.1 The proposal – solidarity and sharing;

6.4.2 Perceived benefits - to transfer skills;

6.4.3 The vision

6.4.4 Reviews of the initiative;

6.4.5 Successes;

6.4.6 Difficulties noted;

6.4.7 The reality;

6.4.8 Raising the bar – a stand alone product;

6.4.9 Overall impact

6.4.1 The proposal – solidarity and sharing:

By November 2004 CMN was homeless and faced a dilemma: the equipment was designated to develop community capacity in relation to production and had to be housed.

A positive outcome of the “Service for Commemoration and Hope” (SC&H) documentation project was that whilst the groups involved viewed the problems as serious, they had not dimmed their vision of ‘what could be’ so their interest had not waned. This is to their credit – the experience of the project had been difficult and although there was a product, the balancing of aspirations, expectations, and budgets was problematic. Because the work with Community Response (CR) had yielded results - however hard to deal with - I was keen to see if we could develop strategies despite and even particularly because of the problems CMN was facing.

CMN and CR agreed a contract that would provide CR with the support of the CMN Technical Worker and the editing facility on site to assist production within CR’s premises. This collaboration had some measure of success as well as significant pitfalls. More importantly it provides some useful lessons for community production and particularly in relation to community production for community television.

6.4.2 Perceived benefits - to transfer skills

A core intention of this initiative was to move away from the one-off production/project which tended to dominate the interaction of CMGs with community organisations particularly in video production; the aim was to develop a more integrated ongoing involvement to support the organisation in a holistic way enabling the transfer of skills to members and participants.

The benefits to CR:

- Ongoing access to the equipment and technical support to facilitate recording at rehearsal and at performance venues and post production on-site.
- Ongoing support in production and technical aspects such as camera operation for CR volunteers.
- Post production on-site would mean on-going access to editing training for CR volunteers that would fit with their own structures and timeframes.

The benefit to CMN:

- To place the equipment purposefully with an organisation actively producing media;
- To see how a community organisation could develop its production skills-base and what supports were necessary for the transfer of skills from media worker to community members;

- To find out whom in the organisation would/could become involved in the media work over a long-term period and in what way.

It was an experiment – we didn’t know how it would work out. The initiative was undertaken in a spirit of solidarity and sought a mutually beneficial situation; the main purpose to enable the transfer of video production skills to their volunteers and into the community.

CR had years of experience in transferring drama production skills and had developed a strong network of people within the community who have the capacity to work in with new CR projects. They wanted to know whether they could transfer this experience to video production and also to explore what opportunities community television could provide for their work. CMN wanted to see how such a group would engage with community television production and what the process would present.

6.4.3 The vision:

Ease of engagement: - Firstly with an onsite facility and technical worker it would be easier for participants and volunteers in the CR project to engage with the production and post-production process.

Visible production process: - the visibility of a communication worker would enable familiarisation amongst participants and volunteers and help de-mystify the production process.

Particular skills development: - To develop editing skills within the organisation. Camera and production skills were already being developed and CR had acquired equipment, some participants were capable of using the camera and did so for production work. CMN’s Technical Worker supported this learning. A particular ambition for this arrangement was that participants could drop in and be involved in the editing process for, say, a two hour

session on arrangement with the CMN worker. In this way they could become familiar with the editing process in relation to their production. A process for review of the project was agreed.

6.4.4 Reviews of the initiative:

CMN’s equipment was moved to CR in January 2005; our technical worker began to organise the area and installed the equipment in CR’s open plan first floor office. From that point he worked with the community development workers in CR. I maintained contact with him on a regular but non-intrusive basis. Progress was evaluated firstly at six months in June 2005 and then in July 2006. In the meantime I maintained contact with CR and the CMN worker. My own contact with CR was through their community development worker, with whom I did a series of interviews for the purposes of this research project. The contents of reviews are incorporated into this report.

6.4.5 Successes:

The first stage of this collaboration was very successful. CR’s performances of “Hidden” - a play based on lived experiences of Hepatitis C – were recorded and the experience over the first six months was really very positive and useful to CR as their report states:

“The initial fears that the video recording may in some way interfere with the genuine open audience participation were emphatically disproved. It was agreed that the video effectively captured the interaction and debate of the consultation process, the powerful audience animation and the rewards Boal’s techniques can achieve. It verified the audience’s thoughts and grievances, the consistencies of misinformation within the current medical service, and the discrepancies between the family support available and the support required. Significantly it also clearly demonstrated the role of Community Response and the drama group as facilitators to discussion and not as the directive protagonists.

The informal filming approach used was also an important aspect to the projects success. Cameras were often left running at all times in a static location, intrusive camera close ups were avoided and the pace of discussion was never interrupted to facilitate camera or microphone movement. The intrinsic benefits of this casual approach certainly improved the openness of audience participation. It did however make camerawork difficult at times . . .” (Report on production of “Hidden”)

6.4.6 Difficulties noted:

The value of CMN’s technical worker being present in CR was clearly helpful in getting past technical glitches such as difficulties in matching equipment coming from different sources but difficulty with aspects of camerawork, audience, and sound quality – as always – posed a number of problems.

“Familiarity with the video equipment by the group was not a fundamental concern. During the early stages of filming however better camera preparation and shot execution would have improved the results; i.e. less camera panning and zooming from audience to respondent, better choice of camera location and better knowledge of camera sound settings. With respect all of these aspects improved as the project developed. A simple setting discrepancy on the video camera to long play recording mode, although somewhat insignificant from a recording point of view, did make life in the editing room a little more difficult. Without accurate time code in the long play setting, individual tapes in some cases had to be captured manually through Final Cut Pro. This became very time-consuming as oppose to the bulk capture facility usually available. The recording heads on the lead camera also caused problems. The heads once misaligned, continued to record three separate performances of the play before the error was discovered. This led to picture and sound loss on all three performances to such a point that they were unusable. It was agreed that in future projects the material would be reviewed to identify technical problems or glitches before another show.” (Report on production of “Hidden”)¹⁸³

The editing process – as could be expected – was more difficult and as with a lot of community based video work some of the issues and problems only became apparent in the post-production phase. It’s important to take into account the time period involved and the number of recording events involved. The “Hidden” performances were spread over a nine-month period leading to a build up of recorded material that ultimately has to be viewed and re-viewed in a selection process. This is hugely time-consuming and can be exhausting.

¹⁸³ See also Appendix No 29 Report on ‘Hidden’ video collaboration

6.4.7 The reality:

The early stages of the initiative were focused on the planning and filming of events and the first review addressed this period. However a key element of the resource was the CMN edit suite and the technical worker who had been trained in the use of the software Final Cut Pro. CR provided a desk and small area for the editing equipment in an open plan workspace which housed another employee’s work station and was also used for meeting and discussions. It was a large area surrounded by a number of offices with half glass walls.

While this arrangement was seen to make the production process visible I wondered if it might disturb either the CR workers or the CMN worker and those involved in the editing. While the answer to this was invariably “no” I had doubts. It transpired that most of the editing work was done at times that did not conflict with other activities – meetings, group sessions, etc. so the editing process did not impinge on others in any way. Other problems meant that editing was at times done off-site – which undermined the main intention.

Workspace

In my experience it is important to be able to cut-off the editing area – with glass dividers there is visibility but without separation the work can be distracting, intrusive and noisy for others trying to have a discussion for example; it’s also difficult for people to work together on editing if there is another activity going on in the same area. So I did not completely believe the responses I was getting and I was conscious that the vision was not unfolding as expected. However the experiment was producing good results for CR and since they seemed to want autonomy in the management of the situation I needed to leave decisions in their hands. This is common in all the arrangements that CMN has had (which are numerous and historical) but this was the first time CMN had committed its equipment in this way. It’s a resource CMN needs to be assured is operating usefully. So there was some

tension in my asking for evaluation points and reviews when CR really wanted to be able to just get on with it.

Media worker

The editing process depended on CMN’s worker being available at times that suited the CR volunteers, which included evenings and weekend work. He was happy with the placement and keenly involved in the ethos and aims of CR so this aspect of the arrangement worked well. While he was a paid CMN worker his input could be seen as a volunteer capacity in that his involvement worked alongside volunteers and out of normal working hours.

Problems emerged when he found he could not live on the CMN wage of €296 per week and had to take on a second job.

Availability of worker time and effects on the transfer of skills:

The idea that volunteers and participants could access training in production and editing techniques at times that suited them was one of the desirable aspects of the process we had envisioned. Our worker was now balancing the demands of two jobs and this ate into the time available to. Our worker could work well with pre-arranged times for pre-production and production needs such as recording rehearsals, performances, and interviews. But the post-production process posed other difficulties.

It slowly became clear to me that the editing process was happening on the worker’s own edit suite in his home and the CMN system in the CR premises was being used mainly for planning and reviewing production work with the CR workers. The reason for this was not the open-plan situation and it was clear that this had never really been tested. The CR participants looked at me blankly when I asked if the editing disturbed them was because it really *didn’t* disturb them. The response “*I don’t notice it at all*” meant that it wasn’t there to be noticed. This isn’t to say that it wasn’t operating at all but that it wasn’t operating to a degree that people noticed it or that it interfered with them. The edit suite was being

used later in the day when other workers and participants weren't there and the main reason for the worker using another system was his lack of access to the equipment in the CR premises after working hours.

Editing is an intensive process demanding uninterrupted sessions and should be completed in a block of time to maintain the impetus and connection with the material. The footage also has to be kept on the same system and software – this became the system at home and a lot of work was done in evenings and weekends when he could get a good stretch of time. While the solution arrived at was deemed ok by those working on the project - none of this became apparent to me until another mishap occurred and I was forced to ask very direct questions and confront what I had not known.

Ultimately what this situation meant was that the transfer of skills in the editing process could not happen in the way it had been planned. In this sense a core objective of the initiative was not achieved and despite the production of media end-products and a general sense that the initiative had good effects, the desired process had only partly taken place. What we *did* have was a process that was closer to volunteer input and the commitment of a worker who gave a huge amount of out-of-working-hours time to the project. This in itself is valuable data.

6.4.8 Raising the Bar – a stand alone product:

In 2006 CR asked me to help them with making a totally stand alone video production of “Hidden”. They had been working with a local health centre and on the basis of the work that had been done with CMN's technical worker, the Health centre proposed making a DVD that could be used in the patient's waiting rooms. This raised the bar somewhat in terms of the quality that was seen to be necessary. It was moving away from the documentation of a live performance that worked within the circle of the participants and the live audience and took a step towards a media product that could be left 'out there' to

stand alone on the screen in the waiting room at the health centre. Since our worker did not have the experience and now also the time to do this, I organised experienced video-makers from CMN’s network to do the production.

This arrangement seemed a good one; our worker would work with the producer on the project where he could be part of the work and learn how to approach such a production but without total responsibility. So there was a shift - our worker had become a learner within a different framework the object being to produce a stand alone production within a timeframe. A Budget was drawn up and agreed and I went on holiday having set everything up, happy that all was in good hands. But a series of mishaps exposed more problems.

No safety net

The CMN member became ill and he passed the assignment on to a colleague; I was not around to help. The problem that arises here is that someone brought in at the last minute does not have the working relationship with the organisation and this can be too difficult for the community group to handle. In this instance it led to CR withdrawing from the CMN arrangement and engaging another independent production company recommended to them that they felt they could work with - albeit at a greater cost. This was a shock and a big disappointment to CMN when we learned what had happened; we had to question how we were working when the groups we were supporting were ultimately happier with commercial media companies rather than with community media groups. CMN’s member organisations were also clearly not well networked enough to deal with this situation and to contact each other for support if such a situation arose.

Differing perceptions and inherent contradictions:

CR’s responsibility was to make decisions in the best interest of their project, but there seemed to CMN an inherent contradiction in the situation. CR could not raise the additional funds to ensure that CMN’s technical worker did not have to take on a second job (so

enabling the transfer of skills that they wished to see happen) but they could raise the money to pay a commercial group at a cost of €12,000, €5,000 more than CMN’s quotation. CMN felt that the €12,000 spent on a commercial organisation could have ensured a reasonable salary for the CMN full-time worker and also enable the transfer of skills within the organisation. One could envisage then that with the support from CMN’s member organisations the video would be produced in a different manner involving more of their volunteers.

From CR’s viewpoint CMN could not deliver and they made their decision in good faith. As we discussed the issue it became clear that CR was dealing with different sets of needs – one was to create an environment in which the transfer of skills could take place, and another – to them a totally different need - was to produce the video in a certain timeframe which had been organised with their drama volunteers. CMN saw these two needs as being part and parcel of the learning curve for CR in developing its capacity to engage with production. CR was ready to enter production but not yet to begin to receive the media skills to do it themselves. Another issue was the nature of the proposed production and the skills and resources it demanded; this also brought into play a consideration of quality of output that in their view affected the ability of the product to “Get The Message Out”.

While this was a disappointing outcome for CMN, CR did not view the experience as downgrading the value of the collaboration with CMN but they did see the ongoing video work and production as occupying different spaces: one being internal to their own communications; the other external. In short ‘talking with’ and ‘talking to’. Underlying this was the nature of available funding and the constraints it placed on activities – CR were not free to use their funds to supplement the worker’s wages and so allow for a different approach to the project.

Core Issues

- Need on the part of community organisations to have video/media workers to work with projects on site on an ongoing basis to enable the transfer of skills to organisation members/participants.
- Inability of CMN/CR to access further funding to supplement wages and organisational infrastructure / funding limitations that prevented CR supplementing wages but allowed for contractual work with private companies.
- Lack of personnel in CMN to cover while I was away and deal with the problem posed by the illness of the CMN member.
- Lack of networking and support strategies between CMN member organisations and lack of communication with CMN Co-coordinator.
- Privilege of private sector – i.e. independent companies with a culture of competition, independent production practice, and an ethos that makes independent producers in the main inappropriate partners in community media initiatives.
- Differences between the community media organisation (CMN) and the community organisation (CR) in terms of how they viewed the processes of the CM versus independent producer sector. CR saw the independent production group providing a service that satisfied their need to make the stand alone production; CMN had a very different perception on production which encompassed an opportunity for capacity building and transfer of skills.
- CR participants had in the past developed a comfort in the presence of technology through CR's media work. More recently this had been supported by the presence of the CMN support worker recording rehearsals, performances, and conducting individual interviews on video with group members.

- There was a lack of participants within CR who were available or interested in taking up the technical skills - something which is slowly beginning to change. CMN provided training to CR participants in 2009, and has developed further work with a number of associated groups (see CMN Strategy 2008).

6.4.9 Overall impact:

Despite the problems CR saw the collaboration as being hugely beneficial to the organisation. In 2005 the CR group’s first report concluded:

In conclusion the video recording of Hidden achieved more than what was probably expected of it, in that the final film provides an active animated support to the true sense of feeling among those who have been affected or touched by Hepatitis C in Ireland. Like those who took part in the performances the videos function is undoubtedly met, to simply to tell their truth, the community’s, as it really is. (CR Report on Hidden)

Along with the experience our needs and expectations grew. While the video work affirmed the benefit of using video, the process had many pitfalls and the first “Hidden” product had quality issues. CR continued its video production work but now with greater ambitions – and once the bar was raised we encountered increasing difficulties.

However the collaboration continued and we worked through another video documentation of the drama production “Men At Work” in 2006. An authored DVD was produced including interviews with the participants. This DVD showcased CR’s legislative drama work and brought together material from a number of community performances allowing a diversity of voices on the issues. Recording in community performance venues presents a number of problems and a second video was made of “Men At Work” in 2007 in an effort to get a better sound track to make it suitable for broadcasting and to review the difficulties of recording in a community venue.

6.5 Review of factors contributing to problems

- 6.5.1 Resources, human kindness, and secrets;
- 6.5.2 CMN's resources;
- 6.5.3 CR's resources;
- 6.5.4 Level of skill and experience

6.5.1 Resources, human kindness, and secrets:

My feeling was that there were tensions inside the organisation regarding the video production, the presence of the equipment in the area, and the agreement with CMN.

These were never openly expressed, have never been confirmed, and only occurred to me at a much later stage.

No one wants to say when things are going wrong! CMN runs a Community Services Project (CSP), to say that the funding is inadequate is to tell a lie - it is totally inadequate. It is so inadequate that we cannot keep workers despite the fact that we offer really exciting opportunities and will provide quality certified training for workers where at all possible. The money simply wasn't enough to support people trying to survive in the Celtic Tiger economy. Everybody was sympathetic to this fact so when our worker started working from home at night using their own equipment, while it's a bit disconcerting that CMN's edit suite sat unused, everyone stayed mum. No one wants to create a problem and particularly if the person is so committed to the project, well-liked, gentle, helpful and available on weekends or in the evenings to do the shoot

6.5.2 CMN’s Resources:

The financial resources available to CMN meant that the technical worker needed a second job to supplement his CMN wages in order to pay rent. He continued to support the project on the basis of the time needed for CR’s drama activities much of which happened outside of normal working hours to facilitate volunteers. Because he was integral to the project and working well with CR, neither CMN nor CR considered replacing him as an option.

6.5.3 CR’s Resources:

CR could resource the project by housing the equipment and facilitating CMN’s worker but because of the structure of their funding they could not supplement the CMN salary to ensure he was properly paid.

6.5.4 Level of skill and experience V expectations:

Another ongoing difficulty CMN faced was that the wages did not attract people with experience so while those we engaged often had education and training they lacked a wide range of experience and had not developed technical or training skills. They had no problem while working with CMN’s equipment and in areas in which they had been trained but when presented with a different piece of equipment, different circumstances, or different needs, they could face difficulties. It was unfair to expect that they would be able to meet expectations that demanded experience they didn’t have; few for example would be trained as trainers.

It also became clear that the rate of growth in expectation amongst community organisations once they engaged with media could exceed the capacity of a worker to develop the skills to meet this expectation. In this case the CR progressed from engagement with video as a vehicle for their work to making a stand alone programme;

bringing a range of other needs and expectations into the process such as those of the Health Centre, which would have been a step removed from the CR project context.

This confirmed – as with the SC&H project - the importance of talking through what’s involved when groups want to engage with video production. It is important that the organisation’s members at all levels are encouraged to reveal their expectations of this involvement and that this conversation is an ongoing process - not simply a one-off input at the beginning and a review at the end.

Many community media workers have emphasised difficulties in talking about community media; some are skeptical:

My feeling is that the mainstream media is very pervasive, you know, and it’s very clear that, it’s very very difficult to say that what you’re doing is something different to that or that it doesn’t actually belong to that at all. So I think that if you get an opportunity to do a workshop and you say “this is community media, this is what we’re doing, it’s quite different, it’s coming from a different angle and there, it’s about what you use the media for”, people will say, “that’s quite interesting” and they’ll get agreeing with you and go away. Talk to them a few weeks later and they’ll have been bombarded with mainstream television, newspapers and radio too and they’ll forget entirely that that’s what you said. And there’s a lot [of media] that pretend to [be open communication], there’s the Pat Kenny Show, or the Gay Byrne Show, or it’s the personality bit – it’s not really content, and trying to get away from that is quite difficult. I think to a certain degree one of the things that we’re saying when we talk about community media is the need for a whole re-education process. I used to say a re-education as a re-educating people in how to understand the media but I realise that Mao-Tse-Tung – he used to send people away for re-education – that’s what he called it so I stopped using that phrase. I mean, this is not, I would have shared this with lots of people, . . . [mentions another person at the station] feels that the only way to go is to present modules at second level so that teachers can teach this kind of thing about, that will help you read the media, help people understand what’s on the media. (Interview18, 2006)

So CM workers feel that they are ‘up against’ the dominance of mainstream culture all the time which affects how they work and if people come back a week later and the work you have done has not impacted, then there is a problem. So does this mean there is no point?

The solutions that are currently posed to the problems of people’s understanding of media by media researchers, academics, and policy makers focus on encouraging media literacy as

did the colleague mentioned in the quote above. These proposals tend to rely heavily on mainstream structures and in particular secondary school and transition year (O'Neill & Barnes, 2008) (Barnes, 2007). The problem with this is that it is precisely these mainstream structures have failed the communities that development projects are set up to support. Given that those at the grassroots of community activism are dealing with exclusion, it is hard to see how this focus on media literacy **within mainstream structures** can actually achieve what is needed. It is now well accepted that problems in literacy and numeracy are established in the early learning years and can be very hard to turn around at a later stage, this is credited with high drop-out rates from school amongst working class youth. So media literacy initiatives that address only secondary level, and that are really aimed at Transition Year (TY) after Junior certificate at age 15 (another bar where drop-out and disaffection levels are significantly increased) will simply reinforce the inequalities and disadvantage that already exists. ***If this is where community media organisations find themselves in relation to the people who attend their workshops, maybe we should also re-examine these strategies and methodologies.***

This is part of the issue that Goldberg identified in her opening chapter; it has emerged repeatedly in every conference or workshop that I have attended since 2000. It seems important to find a way past this but it won't be dealt with in a week and if Goldberg is correct ***it won't be dealt with unless the structures in which community television exists are viewed very differently. That includes how the community media group is situated in relation to the community context.***

6.6 Roles, tensions, and ownership of knowledge.

6.6.1 Hidden work;

6.6.2 Tensions around roles;

6.6.3 Isolated ‘experts’;

6.6.4 Issues of knowledge, ownership of knowledge, and accountability

6.6.1 Hidden work:

Lack of appropriate funding and resources was a big problem for both organisations, but particularly for CMN. While the production work was happening and the partnership continued, an underlying issue was that the idea of equity in the partnership suffered. To CMN it seemed that CR did not realise the value of the resource they were offered; and there must have been the perception amongst those in CR who did not witness the work that CMN was simply storing its equipment in CR’s premises. So a situation develops where ‘silences’ grow between people in groups who at base are mutually supportive. In CR there may have been a range of perceptions about the function or dysfunction of the initiative. The work wasn’t seen – even though it *was* happening. This undermines both the work and the groups involved and as well as constituting serious blocks to developing these kinds of initiatives it also allows misperceptions of what is actually taking place to grow. Hidden work creates another dimension to the barriers to communication and reasons for ‘silences’ that we need to understand. It is a fundamental reason for including this collaboration in this thesis.

6.6.2 Tensions around roles:

My role in relation to the groups was as a project facilitator which is not quite the same as a producer in terms of the video although I would be required often to meet the same needs. It was significant that no-one contacted me when the problem arose with the “Hidden” production. I am the person responsible in CMN if problems arise so I’m well used to being available to people whilst on holiday if advice is needed or were an issue to arise, and I encourage people to contact me. This wasn’t an isolated case, no-one *wanted* to consult me and this wasn’t simply about me being on holiday. It was apparent that once I engaged someone to do a job then they felt I should have no more to do with it. Whatever confusions existed in people’s minds around my role, despite some probing on my part, these were never voiced. Expectations could shift – on the one hand some CMN members saw me as simply an agent and on the other there was an expectation from some people in community organisations that I was really the producer with responsibility for the delivery of the project in its entirety. In some ways I was both, but what this really means is that the role I undertook could not be clarified in advance because *I often didn’t know what I would need or be asked to do*. It is really in hindsight that what I did became clear. In reality I did what had to be done, what I was able to do, sourced skills that I could not provide, and tried to deal with a series of expectations and unforeseen difficulties that accosted us all.

6.6.3 Isolated ‘experts’:

The tendency of ‘independent producers’ to work in isolation also appears to be at the root cause of the lack of networking. It is partly an issue of people competing within the small pool that constitutes CM work in this country and the funding pool is also small. Working in a poorly resourced sector, people can become understandably self-protective about their activity which they often feel is not as they would like it to be. The ways in which people share their knowledge become cultural norms of exchange. The involvement of

professional workers, i.e. independent video producers who see themselves as professional, ‘expert’, and as part of a sector of workers belonging to an industry, has no small part in creating blocks to the exchange of communication skills. The needs of community organisations are not addressed by this industry and those whose training methodologies are designed to fit the standards set by the industry cannot meet the knowledge needs of the community groups. Unless the technical skills are operating within a community defined context ***they will continue to operate within the norms of the industry*** and these run counter to the CM ethos as Tomaselli’s *chart makes clear*. This issue was also noted in a communication from a community television channel operating in another country when discussing strategies for production –

independent producers will find it hard to leave their normal mode of production
(personal communication)

Voluntary input ensured that the performance of “Men At Work” was recorded in a community venue with a live audience and that the audio problems were addressed to produce a broadcast standard recording. While this was provided by independent producers on a voluntary basis control was in the hands of the community group. Other independent producers contributing to this research also stressed that the community groups involved needed to have control of the process to ensure a satisfactory outcome (Interview14, Frameworks).

6.6.4 Knowledge, ownership of knowledge, and accountability:

Tensions evident in previous CMN activities surfaced repeatedly. In the CMN Integra project (BCMI) it became apparent that trainers were resistant to writing up their sessions and to sharing their methodologies and resources. At an early point one participant in the

BCMI planning group proposed that trainers be paid for their resources and handouts. This came as a shock to the project organisers since the development of a manual was one of the objectives of the project and understood to be an included action. Despite the collaborative nature of the CMN project (and community media in general) these were clearly perceived by some as intellectual property. This is somewhat of a contradiction as many trainers come by their resources through sharing with other trainers. It may be that this is perceived as an exchange system between trainers supporting one another and exclusive to their exchange and so is a private, not a public exchange. As a trainer in the 1970/80's I had shared materials and resources and within the political culture in which I operated this was the norm and a part of the culture to exchange such information. It was also normal practice that these handouts and resources were given to the participants/trainees/students so trying to hold onto them as currency was clearly pointless. To me this was like the Irish music tradition of “I got this song from . . .”, but it was also the fact that teaching adults was part of a political culture of enabling, passing things on and encouraging participatory ways of doing things – contra the mainstream school system and very much thanks to people like Williams, Freire, and Hope et al. The value of the materials and the resources was to be able to disseminate them and in so doing I expected more to come back to me. This was the culture of self-help workshops that I had been part of in the late seventies; in our struggle as women to acquire technical knowledge - and particularly in media. Within this cross of self-teaching, tutoring, and group work material, it was accepted practice that learning aids and handouts were passed around and became common property. Once funding arrives and jobs are to be had from this activity - then things change.

It wasn't until the mid-nineties that I met with the issue of copyright and commons in relation to teaching materials and it was clearly evident in the early CMN projects. This is not common to all community media – as the wealth of websites that publish resources,

toolkits, and how-to manuals testifies (see Appendix No. 34). However the processes involved in the compiling and publishing of these resources has rarely been exposed and the contractual detail of transfer of knowledge remains hidden in most cases. In particular the financing behind the publication of these resources is rarely transparent, and by this I mean not simply that a project is funded, but that who gets paid for what is invariably hidden.

In a growing neo-liberal culture trainers may begin to see the resources and materials they use as assets that have a monetary value and form part of their tradable portfolio. This may even be understandable when neo-liberal policies introduce cut-backs in areas such as adult education and non-mainstream learning and training opportunities where these independents and free-lancers earn their living. However when learning resources are turned into commodities then the political basis of the trainer’s involvement in adult education is no longer one that is founded on participatory and emancipatory practices.

A Freirean, or participatory, learning process means that learning is founded in the person themselves, their environment and social context. The centrality of the person to the development process and the object of the exercise (which is the learning that occurs) raises questions about the ownership of materials and resources – what value do they have outside the learning/development process? The conscientization process that forms the core of Freirean methodology can produce process oriented training materials and resources such as those developed by Hope and Timmel (Hope & Trimmell, 1995). While the books can be bought and sold the material only provides a framework, much of which must be adapted by people for use in their own contexts. The contribution of participants to the learning process – and therefore the knowledge produced – raises questions about ownership of product and the value of materials.

The transfer of skills in community television is similar – there must firstly be the willingness to facilitate the learning and development of others and to provide a context where that learning can take place. How this is done is what this research project is about. Throughout the development of community television initiatives the issue of where and how the core operation is to be situated resounds. In DCTV it is still unresolved – in whose hands are the skills, the resources, and the means of production? How can this be placed in the control of the community? What does ownership of community television mean? Does it have to mean being able to pay someone to do it for you? Does the content separate from the technical resource as ‘a matter of course’ or are they in fact inextricably connected? This is an attempt to understand a complex relationship of form and content.

6.7 Outcomes:

The main outcome for the two organisations was that CR had developed its capacity for production to the extent that they now had produced a number of DVDs with CMN’s support:-

- “Hidden”; video work in process, used as an aid to groups and containing a map of questions and answers for facilitated group work. This was a pre-cursor to the stand alone version produced with an independent production company.
- “Men at Work” Version 1, with full interviews etc, used as accompaniment to CR’s ongoing work with FSN groups.
- “Men at Work” Version 2, with treated audio track for broadcast purposes.

These served different purposes for the organisation, and meant that they had also looked more closely at the problems of community television production in a community setting rather than in purpose built studios.

For each organisation the lessons learned will pre-condition any new involvement in other initiatives. By the time the initiative closed CR still needed independent production houses to meet a standard of production for their project. The final action of this collaboration still contained all the issues and problems that emerged throughout these years of effort, despite the attempt to approach it in different ways.

What is clear is that tensions were not simply about inadequate resources but how the wider environment impacted on our efforts to facilitate a voice from below. High rent costs in Celtic Tiger Ireland were a primary factor in CMN losing its premises and also in CMN’s worker’s need for a second job. Inappropriate funding and lack of control over how it could be deployed also meant that commercial companies were favoured over community media groups. The essential voluntary input from a number of fronts that ensured the project’s outcomes came in response to the need for which there were no, or insufficient, resources in the first place. The beginning and the end of this project was voluntary self-organised activity – in the middle was the engagement of CMN with CR as groups facilitating that activity.

The study shows the CM group was needed and called for by the community organisations. The experience also shows that the role of the CM group is to facilitate the community group’s engagement with media tools and to meet the group’s needs in building this capacity. Constitutive tensions such as those that arose will change as the wider environment changes. The conditions of funding are politically controlled and instead of meeting needs on the ground and building self-sufficiency invariably create another set of dependencies such as the need for professionals.

6.8 Wider implications

Overall the case study affirmed findings from CMN’s other activities, all of which were action research. This constitutes an underlying pool of tacit knowledge which it is important to bring to the surface in relation to any consideration of CDP’s engagement in CM and CTV. CMN’s projects showed the following:

- ***Interest in community media/CTV is high and widespread*** amongst the community and voluntary sectors.
- The participation of community organisations in CM projects was high, but the outcome of ***established CM initiatives*** from the BCMI project was low in comparison with the initial intake. The number of projects that sustained the initiatives beyond the BCMI project period was lower than half. This was in direct relationship to those projects where committed activists were involved in the project in some way rather than paid staff or trainees.
- Projects that were built on a ***coalition of community development organisations*** in the community media project that met their needs, whether run by CMN or other organisations, were successful in supporting their community people to participate fully in the project.
- Very often the involvement in community media within an organisation is due to the presence of ***a key person*** who has developed an interest and knowledge in the area. If this person leaves, the ***interest will wane unless there has been transfer of knowledge within the group.***
- ***Short term projects*** that provided training and experience with end products and a popular theme tended to be successful in their own terms. They also generated other related activity and had the capacity to draw in more people. However they ***need to be attached to long term initiatives – such as coalitions - that can respond to the interest***

generated by the project after its lifetime. Without this basis they simply contribute to the problem created by the ad-hoc nature of capacity building in this area, otherwise described as ‘the circus coming to town’ often leaving a trail of ‘debris’ in its wake.

- **Structural inequalities** exist in all groups, in both local communities and communities of interest, a **community development approach is essential to negotiate these differences** when they become evident in a project, and it should be assumed that it will be necessary.
- Some of the organisations who engaged with the BCMI project and who sustained initiatives afterwards did not necessarily finish their productions and the value the project was seen to be in the ongoing engagement rather than in the finished product. Those organisations would already have what we call “media savvy” to some degree – they were already very conscious of the importance of media to their activity or they were active in some way in developing media consciousness and literacy within their organisation. Organisations like Community Response, Dublin Adult Learning Centre, and the Leitrim Men’s Group, were all media savvy and, excepting the Leitrim Men’s Group, had engaged in media production in some form before. **The BCMI Project therefore was seen by these groups to be a means to support and develop work that was already happening.** In the case of the Leitrim Men’s Group, the CMN project gave them their first step into media activity, and from that initial step, this group has been instigatory in developing the Community Media Training Centre in Manorhamilton.
- Some organisations wanted training for their own staff or participants and the presence of their activists on these projects was low. Where participants were staff of organisations there was evidence in some cases that the project was seen as ‘good for the CV’ and shortly after the project finished the person moved on taking the skills with them. However even some of these left something behind that emerged later. The Manorhamilton project “Radio Lunasa” based in the arts centre was a lively project

highly visible in the community and the surrounding region. It ran a very successful broadcast on a short term radio license in the summer months (Lyle, 2000). Key participants who were staff in a number of organisations left the area within a year or two after the supported project phase was completed and the radio project quickly collapsed. However local people who took part in those projects have over the seven years since, been involved in a number of media projects initiated by the key trainer to the BCMI project in the area. She reports that the Integra ***project was significant in developing community media in the area and the long-term impact could not be known at the time.*** What is clear about the development in Leitrim is that the key people involved were people who were part of the community and who had an involvement in the organisations (Interview7, Gibbons).

- Some organisations saw CM as a way to ***augment their training programmes*** that would look good on paper - particularly for their own books - but not to really engage with the idea of building a media aspect to their work. While these organisations were attracted to the idea of a media initiative it was not to the extent that they would commit time or core people to engage with it. They wanted a once-off product, a video, newsletter, photography, or radio project that would be useful in either outreach or as an aid to their work, and the process would give them a measure of the benefits to weigh against putting their resources into a media initiative.
- Creating media products demands skills and expertise that are not easily transferred for a number of reasons: community groups tend to do their developmental work behind closed doors - creating media means “going public” and this must be handled carefully:

Because we deal with the drugs issue we have to be very careful in how we respond to any given issue because we’re looking for a positive response to the drugs issue as against the biggest story that the newspapers can kick off with (Interview 13).

Therefore a community development approach was considered a pre-requisite to developing confidence in dealing with media and managing media tools.

6.9 Summary Chapter 6

The use of the extended case study allows “reflection that extracts the general from the unique”. In this case it allowed us to identify problems as constitutive - such as difficulties between communities development practices and technical workers/independent producers; or as problems that are constructed by policy environments governing how funding is used; and problems that are part of the economy of a particular social movement that will decide to relate to CMN as a facilitative agent but will employ a commercial group to get the result they need.

Reviewing activity in this way also allows a deeper exploration of what happens between actors and in the interfaces between groups so that the relationship between researcher and the researched may become more transparent. In this case what is happening at any given time is not always apparent and while the benefits that are being felt in the interim usually keep things ticking over, the underlying problem will eventually be felt. Uncovering the hidden work and exploring the tensions around roles took time; further to this it was important to ensure that doing this exploration would produce benefit for both CMN and CR in their aim of facilitating voices from below.

The issues faced by CR are not dissimilar to those for which the Zapatistas devised their ‘talking to’ and ‘talking with’ media strategies. The inherent difficulties for community development activists and participants in ‘going public’ means that careful consideration is needed in developing an approach to how media tools are used and to how the capacity to use them is developed within the group. The study provides an example of how a CM group

may have to fashion its working relationship with community groups and finds that the process has a value that is not often acknowledged – i.e. the building of trust and solidarity. This also involves risk-taking, a long-term strategy, and commitment from individuals to the process.

CHAPTER 7 “Learning process”

The CMN/DCTV/ PAR learning process

7.1 Introduction

7.2 General findings from the research process

7.2.1 Formations of coalitions in the CTV Campaign 1996-2007

7.2.2 General overview of findings

7.2.3 How relationships within the DCTV process developed

7.2.4 The relationship of different kinds of groups to CTV

7.3. Basis of PAR activity and perceptions of CTV:

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7.4 Levels of research participation and participants needs

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7.5 The Fields of force that DCTV exists within

7.5.1 What forces direct the development of community television?

7.5.2 (A) Activity around needs

7.5.3 (B) Building the technical organisation:

7.5.4 (C) The lobby activity – responding to pressures from above

7.6 Conclusion to Chapter 6

7.1.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews data collected and analyses findings from a range of actions fueling the drive for community television. Some of these actions were initiated by the research project and some were collective actions where the researcher played a significant role.

This was a longitudinal project and therefore there are tensions in presenting the horizontal activity of networks and the vertical progression through time. The chapter is organised to explore these as a movement of forces impacting on each other through time.

Firstly, I will briefly review some *key findings from CMN's work* that constitute prior knowledge in terms of coalition experience and CM project outcomes that proved important to this study; *the context in Ireland* for community production and community broadcasting; and how these affected the social relationships of the research in terms of the role of the researcher and what people thought it was about at the start of the process.

Secondly, I want to show how the *process* evolved through *time* and the *changes* that occurred - which is to look at how the PAR process worked in a developing movement network. My concern is to map the forces that pushed and pulled the development of community television in its formative stage and along the vertical progression of the community media movement through time, and the impact of the horizontal activity of networks. This of necessity brings up findings on methodological approaches since *how* activists tackled the project was subject to these pushes and pulls.

Finally, I want to *review the findings as they expose the effect of these influences on actors*, their thinking, and positioning in relation to the development of community television in Ireland.

Findings from interviews, focus groups, and workshops are cross referenced within this chapter; however they have already served another purpose within the PAR process. As individual reports and investigations they have also been, and continue to be, circulated within the community of actors taking part in the research to be used not only for direct knowledge sharing but also to stimulate discussion and debate around where we were going at different times. In this way they have served as supports for the horizontal networking of groups and to maintain a focus on the needs of grassroots organisations in the process of building community television channels.

7.2 General findings from the research processes:

7.2.1 Formations of coalitions in the CTV Campaign 1996-2007

7.2.2 General overview of findings

Overview of findings

Mismatches, obstacles, and blocks

7.2.3 How relationships within the DCTV process developed:

Factors attracting activists to workshops

Strategic workshops organised by CTV groups

7.2.4 The relationship of different kinds of groups to CTV

Groups participating in the PAR

7.2.1 Formations of coalitions in the CTV Campaign 1996-2007

The first thing to be said about the process of building community television that we have been through is that we see a very small number of groups and activists involved in the core CM organisations. The area of expertise is particular to CM activity and the pool for this skill-base is small despite the fact that CM activity is widely dispersed in the community. This reflects not only the poor resources/funding available to this kind of activity but also the difficulties that community organisations have had with independent and mainstream producers. It is clear from the research that community organisations either stay away from commercial media operators because few will adapt their working practices to meet the needs of community groups; or they develop longstanding relationships with particular and sympathetic independents.

Those CM activists who engaged with community organisations are small in number mainly due to needs that place emphasis on process rather than product and on training that uses

participatory development methodologies. This makes the activity quite specialist. Many CM activists who were involved in the groupings that I sketch below did not come from a media background but through their involvement in community activities where the value of media tools was apparent. Also in this pool are CM activists who are media practitioners in some form or other but not involved in the mainstream broadcasting industry. Producers who come from a mainstream broadcasting background may adapt to the CM broadcasting group but with rare exceptions that do not stay long. This profile is changing as recession deprives independent media producers of their livelihood and they turn to community television to access S&V funds and/or to keep their skills and practice alive. This poses difficulties for CTV particularly.

Motivating or driving factors that produce long-standing activists deserve more research. What was evident in the pool of activists contributing to this research was the understanding of their activity as providing opportunities for transformative development to both communities and individuals. Activist's motivation was often challenged in its effort to meet the particular needs; for example the need for ongoing activity drew criticism of the one-off project; the need for this activity to take place within the context of community development and be directed by its principles is difficult to achieve; the need for a commitment to participatory methodologies and engagement with social justice.

A key finding from this project is the need to further develop coalitions and networks with the purpose of drawing the skillbase together to form a pool that can provide support mentoring and training in production to community organisations. The preferred approach is to develop the capacities within community organisations to the point where they can be the main source for this pool. This is now under consideration within revised CMN Strategy (see Appendix No 36).

Because the pool is small the groups can at times seem incestuous – the same people appear in different groupings and this also causes difficulties and tensions. However it has to be understood that the recurring presence of an individual usually means they are supporting the ethos of CM activity in that context; they contribute an expertise and experience that is hard to find. The people then engaging with CM productions and activity on the ground often involve a wide variety of different groupings. Examples of the full diversity of the groups that may be involved in generating CM can be seen in the centerpiece of the Spring 1999 issue of Tracking which profiled the three CMN projects from 1997-2000¹⁸⁴.

In the most recent phase of CTV development in Ireland (1996 -2007) a number of groups cluster, inter-relate, and form strategic alliances as I show diagrammatically below. Here the recurring presence of organisations and individuals in the different groupings are very evident.

1993 Community Video Network (CVN) – the early network

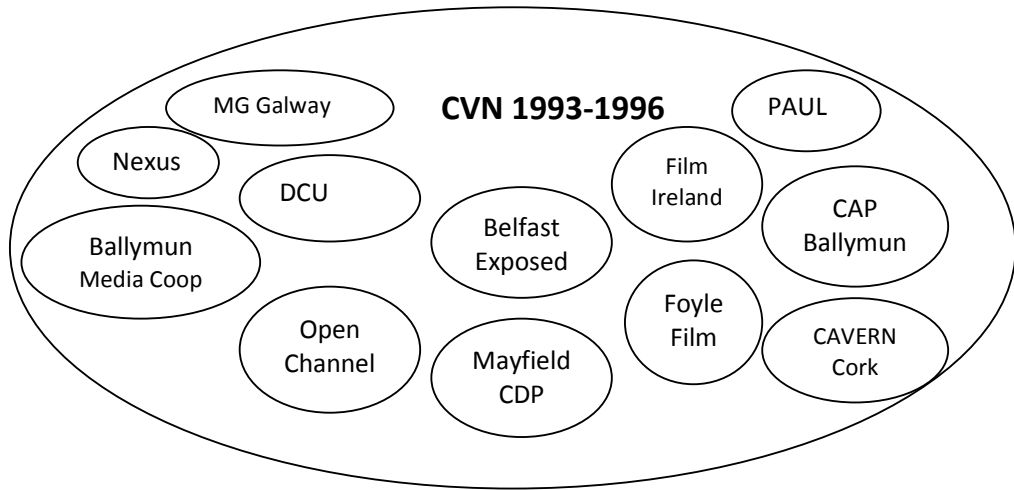
The first grouping agreed to form a network under the name Community Video Network in 1993 at a meeting in Kinlay House, Dublin¹⁸⁵.

¹⁸⁴ (see Documents Included in Volume 2)

¹⁸⁵ Those signing were noted as follows:

Brian Dillon, Sean Ó Siochrú, Dave Redmond, Dave Slater, Eoin Collins, Orla O’Neill. **NEXUS**;
Andrew Melia, Denis Kennedy, Oliver McGlinchey, **Ballymun Media Co-op**;
Anne Cilly, Gerard Gilvary, William Tuke, **DCU**;
Maria Gibbons, **Galway**;
Tom Clancy, **PAUL**;
Joan Byrne, **CAP Ballymun**
Danny Burke **Belfast Exposed**;
Jimmy Lynch, **Mayfield Community Devt Project**;
Jim Curran, **Foyle Film Projects**;
Patrick Hodgkins, **Film Ireland**;
Seamus McGrenery, Brendan Culleton, **Open Channel**

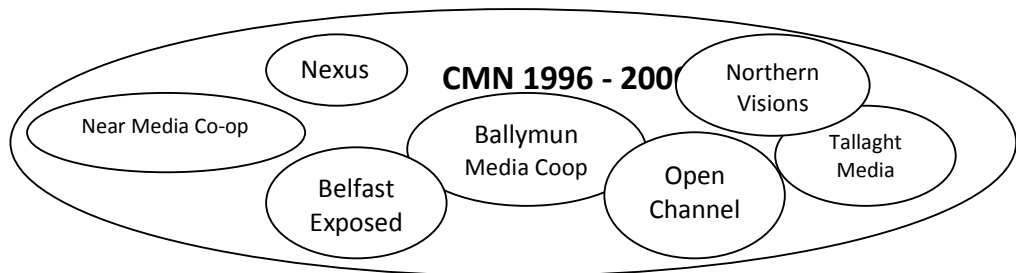
The group expanded to include Marilyn and Dave Hyndman from Northern Visions (NV), Belfast; Michael Collins from Waterford Access media (WAM); and Chris Hurley from CAVERN, Cork. At one point this meant a total of 14 organisations and a wider group of individuals.



This group set up a C.E. project and while the majority of the seven participants were based in Dublin, one was based with PAUL in Limerick and another with CAVERN, Cork.

1996 Community Media Network

After the failure of Michael D. Higgins to introduce a new Broadcasting Bill including community television CVN re-grouped in 1996 and changed its name to Community Media Network (CMN). Significantly all these were community media organisations with the exception of NEXUS. The community organisations, i.e. PAUL and Mayfield had fallen away from the group, and the C.E. participants that had been based with those groups had also left. The C.E. Project rolled over with a complete change of participants.

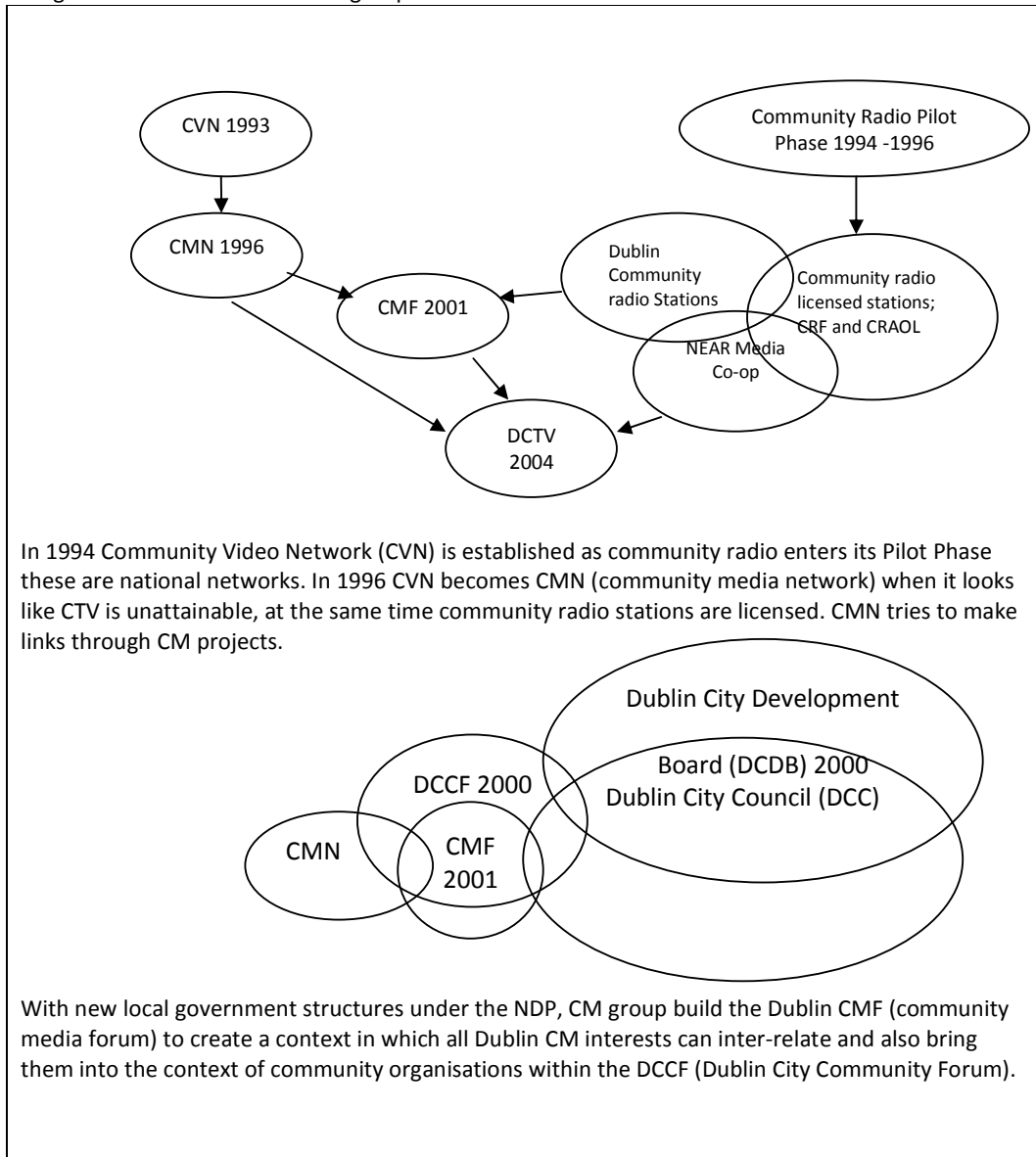


This group initiated and coordinated the CMN EU funded projects operating between 1997-2000. They also lobbied around CM issues and worked to develop a campaign for community television.

2000-2007 coalitions for community television

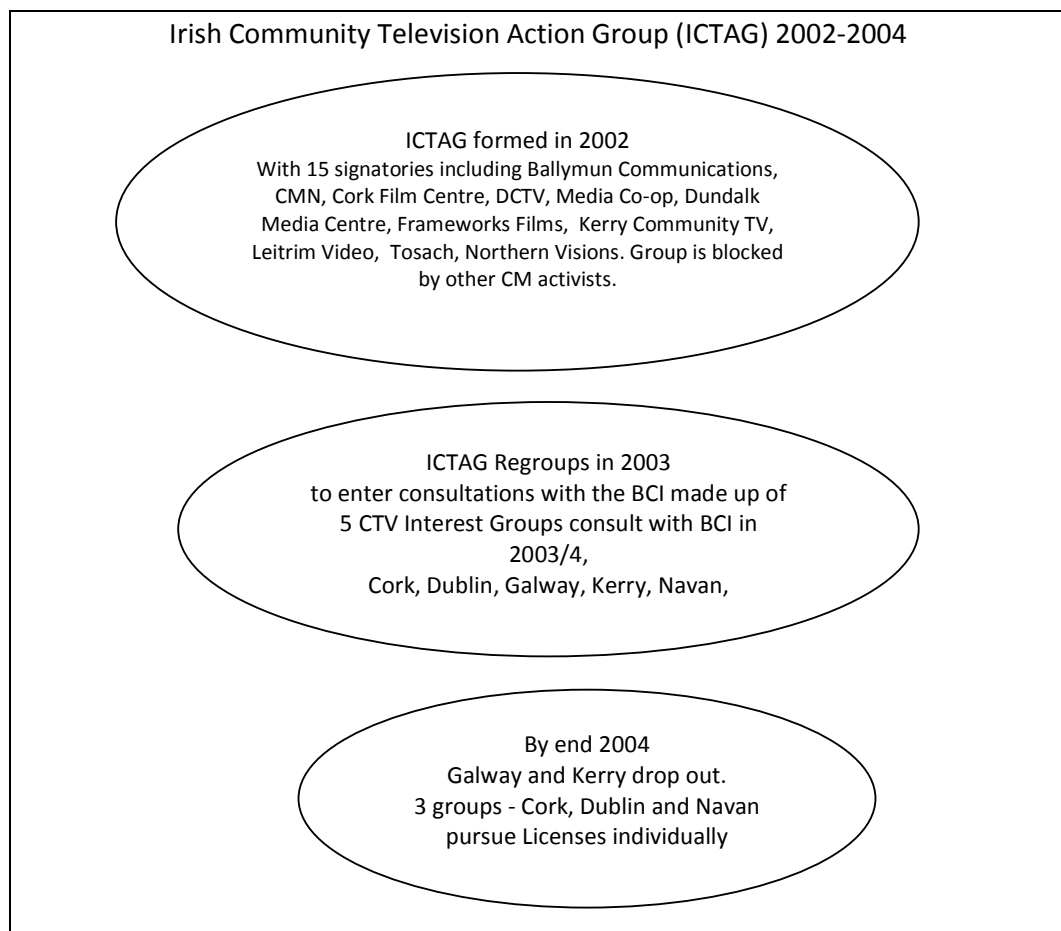
The Broadcasting Bill 2000 gave rise to another set of coalitions who sought to affect the conditions for community television within the Bill and formed the core groups for community television channels. After 2000 and on another level altogether CM groups were related on a local level through the structures that were developing within the DCDB process.

Diagram of inter-relations of CM groups



In 2002 CTV groups gathered under the name Irish Community Television Action Group (ICTAG)¹⁸⁶ which at first floundered but reconvened in 2003 to approach the consultation with the BCI on the new television policy. This group better reflected the original national grouping within CMN but this time was specifically made up of groups with a community media interest rather than the wider base that included community and social inclusion groups that were part of the original CMN grouping.

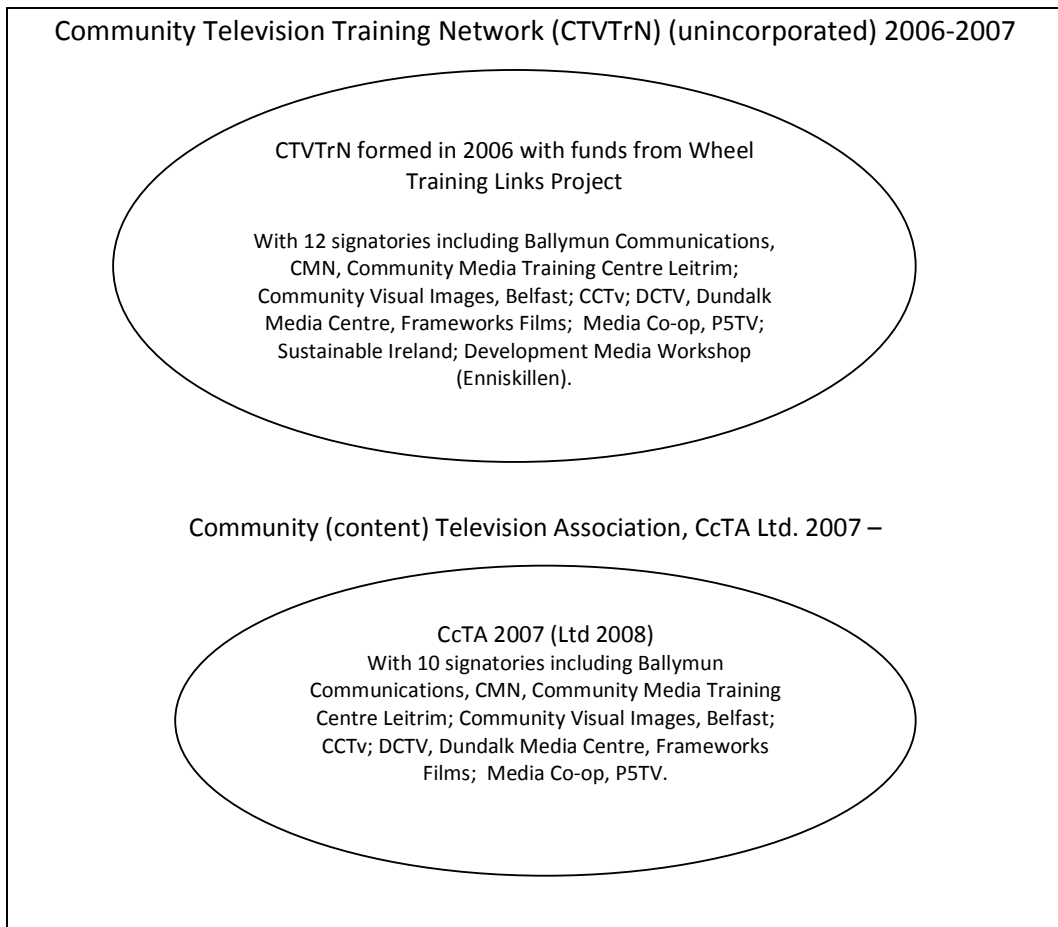
National Organising 2002-2004



¹⁸⁶ See Appendix No 47

In 2006 CTV Interest Groups successfully apply for funds under the Wheel’s Training links Programme and form the Community TV Training Network (CTVTrN). This is significantly the first nationally sourced funding for community television. CMN had unsuccessfully applied for funding under the White Paper as a National Federation in 2004; the CTV groups had again unsuccessfully applied for funding as a National Federation in 2006. This time the grouping is again made up of community media groups together with the only three CTV channel groups – DCTV in Dublin, CCTv in Cork, and P5tv in Navan. This group forms the Community Television Association in 2007. The group is now seen to have a broad membership base involving CM producer groups and CTV channels.

2002-2004 Coalitions for CTV national organising



What we can see is the development of a sector – the growth of organisations defining themselves as community media and then forming groupings that operate as a platform to lobby and advocate on behalf of their interest. While this is what appears to have happened with community radio that over 10 years developed a representative body CRAOL¹⁸⁷ - that history has not been written yet, and the confluence and dispersal of coalitions is not accessible.

The changing profile of the groups reflects the differences between them and/or the stable/unstable nature of the internal relationships. The original CVN constituent group members fall into a number of areas:

Community organisations (PAUL, CAP Ballymun, Mayfield CDP)

Community media organisations:
(Ballymun Media Co-op, Belfast Exposed, CAVERN, Open Channel)

Independent media/arts Groups:
(Foyle Film Projects; Film Ireland; Northern Visions)

Media Education/Academic: (DCU)

Sociologists/consultant group/ individuals: (NEXUS, Maria Gibbons)

This typology remains consistent over the years. The coalition for the development for CM in the DCDB strategic planning process (formed as the Advisory Group on Community Media (AGCM) to the DCCF in 2001) included all these groups with the addition of local government actors plus the Regulator (then the IRTC) albeit their presence in these initiatives was brief.

What is significant is the need on the part of CM activists to regularly form broad-based coalitions, identifying a wide range of interest groups and so creating an interface between

¹⁸⁷ www.craol.ie

the base of community organizing and a number of sectors. These efforts appear to have limited life - either limiting their own coalition timeframes as did the AGCM, or in their development seeing groups fall away as did the community groups from the early CMN coalition and the later DCTV coalition.

Were these coalitions stable and engaged then this project could have taken a much more regular PAR strategy. Because of the instability in the groupings - their continuous flux of engagement and dispersal - this research focused on community organisations needs in order to find indications as to how CM, and particularly CTV, must organize to ensure these groups can use CTV to have a voice.

7.2.2 General overview of findings in relation to CTV

Overview of findings

Mismatches, obstacles, and blocks

Overview of findings

The research explored the interest amongst community groups, their awareness of CTV and concepts such as media literacy, community ownership, appropriate content; with CM activists the research collected examples of successful productions and explored CM activists' difficulties in getting projects off the ground and sustaining activity; the community television channel activists contributed a wealth of experience: ideas on production, scheduling, funding, and training. Some of this material has been produced in other formats and used either as material for seminar/discussions or distribution.

Interest in community television amongst community organisations: This was high but tempered by skepticism (from all quarters not simply CDPs): -

- viability – where will the money come from? Some groups had suggestions about sustainability;
- reach – who will see it? Distribution remains an issue due to transmission issues;
- representative integrity - who will control it? This concern was echoed from all quarters, although mainly from those who were concerned about political parties staging a take-over. The issue of commercial control was not voiced as much - except by CM activists.

Awareness of community television: There was a significant amount of knowledge about how community television worked *in other countries* and this contributed to expectations. However this was based in the experience of individuals who had travelled and while widespread was not necessarily 'out there' within organisations' cultures;

Media literacy was a known concept amongst the community organisations

corresponding with the research project. This in itself is not surprising since some of these organisations had a strong awareness of media and many of these organisations were in contact with CMN historically or were put in touch with CMN by those who had contact with CMN.

- Media Literacy was understood to bring value to the work of community sector and voluntary organisations; there was also clear understanding amongst interviewees about *what media literacy meant to them* and what part it played in organisations’ work. However there was no common understanding or definition across the groups.
- All community media organisations, CTVs or CM operators, also felt they were *delivering* media literacy; some of these groups also emphasised the importance of the community media interpretation of media literacy, i.e. that this meant being able to handle and produce media as well as understand how mainstream media works .

Ideas for CTV content: There was no dearth of ideas for content and programming; these have been recorded from a range of CMN activities and from other group’s activities preceding the start of this research project. Community video projects in Cork, Leitrim, Belfast, Enniskillen, Navan, all reported a wide range of ideas coming from community and voluntary organisations.

- Whenever workshops have given space to this (and workshops were held on average once per year) participant groups demonstrated their capability to generate good, interesting and feasible ideas for community television programmes. This was evident in the community television workshops held in

Dublin in 2005, and in the brain-storming sessions from the Dublin Section 40 Needs Assessment Programme Development Workshops (PDW’s) in 2006.

- Brainstorming programme ideas and content needs is was enjoyed and seen as useful by participating groups and the continuous flow of these ideas from workshops from year to year demonstrates the needs felt by organisations (many are detailed below). However community activists contributing to this research repeatedly voiced concern that this brainstorming is useless and a waste of time without follow-up in terms of facilitating production with those groups in ways that are appropriate to their organising cultures and engaging in formulating distribution strategies to engage their target groups.

Ownership: All those who contributed to this research project emphasised that community ownership was a key component of the CTV project; some particularly spoke of a coalition (Interviews 4, 13, 17, 21), the community media network (Interview 13), and the importance of ownership clauses in all contracts (Interview17). Ownership is a clear concern that emanates from all workshop reports and there is an attendant concern and worry that it is the community ownership that is the weak and threatened area. The earliest workshop in June 2001 recorded:

“a lot of concern in the group about the operational structures involved in engaging with community media . . . a lot of concern about the hi-jacking of community media” . . . “people feel that they do not have a stake in the station” . . . “we agreed to the proposed outline of operational structures but stressed that a lot of work needs to be done to capacity build them [community] to participate and who resources this?”

(Report from Workshop on Community Media, Mercers Hotel, June 2001, Facilitator’s Notes)

These concerns echoed across the timeframe of the project and were consistently linked with capacity building, training, and community development approaches. Clearly owning something you are unable to use is a non-runner.

From other investigations, focus groups, and interviews came the following:

- People, time, and space are the main problems perceived in the community sector around CTV, with ‘people and time’ paramount
- Training and the developmental nature of training, as opposed to purely technical training is vital.
- The process of the transfer of skills – how is this to happen?

There were a number of needs and issues raised particularly by those with experience of media production, and those who were running community media or community television projects:

Going live - The research found that the ***community television channel groups in Ireland preferred not to go live and were happier with pre-recorded programming.*** Reasons for this included: the threat of a station being shut down by legal action¹⁸⁸; the demand on time; and having enough people to service live broadcasting.

- Problematic content and language, defamation and libel were all seen as issues that essentially made demands on CTV’s in terms of both technical and human capacity that were outside the scope of many projects/stations to deal with. It was interesting that the two stations that have been actively broadcasting, P5TV and NvTv, had never in fact experienced any issue in this regard; however community radio stations had some experience of threatened legal action, particularly when dealing with politicians.

¹⁸⁸ as indeed did happen to an early venture in Galway which never got off the ground. After the first voice-box where a woman went on air to talk about women’s refuges, her husband immediately took legal action on the grounds that it could be construed from her connection with the programme that he was a wife-beater.

- Live programming is cheaper to produce as well as being one of the very attractive features of television - some see it as being the essence of television since it treats the medium as direct distribution that places relating to viewers at a higher priority than programme-making would (Rushton, 2009), (Popovic, CAN TV USA, 2006). However it demands personnel and time. Solutions that provide a reasonable way to meet this challenge include treating programmes as ‘almost live’, e.g. live mixing of events recorded to tape – sport events, music, drama, staged speeches, presentations, live mixing of discussion programmes. This means working to deadlines and puts more pressure on the production line. It also requires a working core television channel organisation with at least some staff to move the process along and ensure continuity doesn’t break down. It cannot be managed by community organisations working in totally voluntary and under resourced situations.

Training – approaches to training showed different needs of community organisations and CM groups:

- CM groups engaging with the research emphasized that their training was based in ‘why we do what we do’ rather than in teaching technicalities alone (this is true for many community radio stations also). However contradictions emerge from other research that shows radio stations tend to focus on technical training for programme-making (Farren, 2007) (Ross, 1999) and also in the need for technical training described by those interviewed (Interviews 2,3,6,7,11,13,15,16,18)
- Existing CTV groups understand their training should be linked to production not only for the sake of the channel which needs programmes, but because training is more effective when linked to an output – so this is seen as training for community television, i.e. to make programmes to fit into schedules, rather than purely video

production; community radio stations also report that linking training to programmes that have to go out at particular times is an important aspect of the learning involved. Some community groups also ascribe to this but it is seen within a different process and time-frame.

- CTV Channels particularly see a need to avoid becoming involved in training for training’s sake (e.g. running training courses in specific skills) as it simply took their energy away from production, which is their primary function, and because they see training as supporting continuity in the channel (latter is the same for all CM)
- Training linked to production is one way to address the transfer of skills issue that is raised by many community organisations but community organisations asserted that this demands a developmental engagement with their organisations on the part of CTVs;
- Community organisations need to ensure that training is organised in ways that suit volunteers and participants within community organisations and many suggest that combining a range of methods rather than formal sessions is more helpful.

In relation to all these contributions on training the research found that it is important for CTV channels to frame a training strategy which seeks *opportunities for learning* that people can access at various stages of learning. Such a strategy needs to incorporate a range of methods e.g. shadowing skilled operators on productions; specific skills sessions addressing production issues *based in a groups own centre*; ongoing mentoring for groups’ projects.

Transmission: All existing channels have difficulty with the transmission systems they have access to:

- P5TV finds Ntl is resistant to letting them have space on their digital service;
- DCTV was forced onto NTL’s digital system and refused access to the analogue;

- NvTv transmits from a mast but finds that many people cannot access the signal because of the direction of the antennae;
- CH9/DMA had a problem with the power allocated by the Regulator.

So in terms of their reach, quality of transmission, and future security, all channels have experienced difficulties in achieving anything near the universal access they aspire to through transmission platforms. CTV groups also see these problems as located with the cable carriers and the Regulator’s approach to CTV. It is also clearly a problem of industry regulation in a neo-liberal political climate where the regulator and legislators allow the market to decide who has access to media services generally. This problem of platforms poses a danger of further focusing activist attention towards technocratic solutions and the end user becomes abstracted in this scenario as a ‘mass media audience’ and customer. The importance of finding local solutions to platform issues and focusing on small networks related to specific needs has been emphasized by many, from Raymond Williams’ earlier assessment of the potential of cable, to more recent and more urgent calls from those concerned about the monopolization and globalizing of media. The latter has proved to be a factor that creates favoured populations and consolidates the generation of neglected and disadvantaged groups – these being both geographic and interest communities (Jankowski, Prehn, & Stappers, 1991), (Rushton, Community television 'Key Texts': Volume Two , 2008).

Costs and resources: this proved a difficult area to explore because there were so many variables – it very much depends on what people need. Some community organisations know that it is impossible to put a cost on some of the work they do or to find a funder for it so there was no problem for them in treating the issue as a brain teaser. However many did proffer suggestions (Interview13, 17). While some of these did not reject advertising as

a source of revenue they did see it as advertising that related to local services (this is akin to the model developed by NEARfm).

Mismatches, obstacles and blocks:

The research identified some core problem areas in the interaction of community organisations with media production that will demand time and effort to address:

Need amongst community groups to make promotional material rather like corporate promotional videos.

There is usually a need to have more than a sound bite or an advertisement, also noted by CANTV’s survey, which causes problems in terms of people’s expectations and the results they see. There is a tendency for people to think that what they need is ‘technical support’ but this can mean various things and when a group is experiencing a problem in a production the cause may be in their initial approach. Groups need to understand the process of production and to find ways in which they can begin to engage comfortably with that process. The research found that some quite extensive efforts did *not* appear to make a lot of impact on this but at the same time the reasons for low impact on the problem were very clearly part of the problems of unwieldy and inappropriate funding mechanisms and lack of necessary supports at strategic times rather than constitutive issues within the projects themselves. The outcome from the DCTV PDW training sessions was that the majority of community groups fell away from the process.

Reasons for this were:

- no supports in place to provide follow through other than the Sound and Vision Funding Scheme (S&V)
- S&V process was inappropriate in that it was competitive and groups could not commit resources to a process where the outcome was so unsure;

- S&V operated on independent media production criteria which were inapplicable to community organisations’ cultures
- S&V placed too much emphasis on product over process; only accepting applications for ready-to-go production.
- S&V disallowed training as part of the project.

The DCTV initial dependence on the S&V scheme for funding from 2006-2009 meant that it was the larger NGO’s who already had media production capacity that went on to access S&V funds and make programmes for DCTV. This was destructive as it alienated many community organisations and consolidated inequalities.

CMN’s extended work with community groups also found problems. As in our case study the resources available were well used, albeit in unusual ways. The process of engagement with the community groups was constructive and produced results. But the organisations still did not have the capacity or skill needed to achieve the quality of product required for their purposes and had to access professional support. CMN responded to CR’s call to tender for “Hidden3” in 2009 with a proposal for a developmental production model encompassing capacity building and training as a part of production (see Appendix No. 38). Nevertheless CR engaged the same independent group they had worked with on the other two productions. This is true to the pattern the research found that community groups will work in relationship with sympathetic independent producers rather than with CM groups. However if CM groups can develop those relationships with community organisations then the outcomes could be very different.

Need amongst community groups to get support to produce media but also the need to

control what is being done: In this scenario the groups CMN worked with often requested technical support but did not want our involvement in the content or the process of producing the media. This is problematic because it’s difficult to provide technical support

when you have not been part of making the creative decisions that produce the material that now needs to be shaped into the media product. Solutions posed by CM groups do not always match the community group’s expectations. CMN activated an engaged process preferred by the groups with the aim of building a relationship, a mutual understanding, and an appreciation of the conditions of the work. In this scenario the crew becomes an integral part of the project as the LNP had done with the Korean workers Unions.

Problem-solving approach needed: Many CM operators have met with the expectations from community organisations noted above as have commercial media operators who voluntarily provided supports to community organisations. The solutions to these issues are only found in an ongoing relationship where the community groups and the CM groups can work out suitable processes together. Many groups described such relationships with commercial media operators and reported that CM operators did not work with the group on their terms. The following quote from an interviewee who describes the organisation’s relationship with a professional PR company is indicative:

It’s worked out marvelously because as I say there’s rarely a month goes by that you don’t have something in the media. . . . But she’s also working on the website content, she’s going through everything that we put together and she’s putting that into the same language so that each of the pages are going to read the same as the others which is something that I wouldn’t have had time to do. She’s worked with us on developing our “corporate image” as she likes to call it so we now have a new logo and more up-to-date things. She worked with us on identifying our needs around promotional material so we have all that material now. The other thing is that she is the link between us and the website builders so it means I do not have to have costly meetings and dealings with them. It cuts down on things, you know, somebody can go upstairs with a whole load of stuff and she’ll know that you can’t go through all that stuff. She’ll focus on the part that’s relevant. It’s saving me a lot of time as well so it means that I can get more work done without having to put in a huge amount of hours and because she knows the media she has her own contacts and all that. A lot of these things can take me hours to do, this creates a shortcut, so I don’t have to go ringing around, I make one phone call and the rest is done for us. Because she has her own contacts she knows straight away who she’s going to ring, so that time factor for her is cut down as well. So it’s working out very well.

Margaret: Would she have an understanding of what you do and a bit of a commitment to the work of the project as well?

Interviewee: She didn’t - until we educated her, she actually wants to do some further education and learn more now. But no, at the time when we went to her first she had no knowledge whatsoever. Now she’s more tuned into the issue so I can say “well this is

happening and that’s happening” and straight away she’s onto it, she might come back with a draft press release and say “well what do you think of that?”. . . . She’s very good and has an understanding of community now. Again we have worked with her around that so she would know, for example, that this is an issue we have to be sensible about, we can get all the publicity we want if we want to sensationalise the issue, but we have to be sensible about getting the point out . . . if she hears something that’s relevant to us, she’ll pass it on, so it’s a good way of working with her, it really is a good way of working. (Interview13)

What this account shows is that community groups who want to ‘Get The Message Out’ have high expectations of the quality and standard of the media they use – i.e. community media is not “home movies” (Tomaselli K. &, 1990) . But these group’s interaction with professionals mean that they either must pay fees that they can’t afford and/or develop relationships that are based on a mutual interest. **In this relationship the community group must educate the professional.**

The community group’s expectation then is that CM groups should be different but they will also compare CM groups to commercial operators with whom they have developed relationships. Community activists are strongly motivated and will seek to establish relationships that support their needs so the difficulties that CM organisations face do not necessarily figure in their considerations.

In our experience the building of relationships that enable community organisations to use community media involves a lot of learning and means a long time commitment from all involved. The issue in building CM organisations as far as community organisations are concerned is developing appropriate methodologies within CM organisations that match community development ethos, support volunteers, and facilitate the engagement of more vulnerable groups. The latter often means that frameworks that are tied to funding deadlines are unsuitable. Our research found that meeting funding deadlines was a serious obstacle to many of these projects, and this is underpinned by the competitive basis of such funding. The benefit for CR of the arrangement with CMN was that there were no

deadlines that had to be met for the video production and the production undertaken followed the schedules of the volunteers.

7.2.4 How relationships within the DCTV process developed

Coalition building
Factors attracting activists to workshops
Strategic workshops organised by CTV groups

Coalition building

We wanted groups to form a coalition and wanted this to happen in a public and transparent way. The Action Plan produced by the Feasibility Study had proposed a two tier organisational structure with an Institutional group and a content Group. The Content Group was seen as the means by which the community groups would engage with the DCTV project and particularly since they would not have time to get involved in the organisation building. While this appeared to align with our view that community organisations would form the backbone of the CTV drive what it did in fact was to separate those groups from decision-making as the organisation was being developed.

In CMN we envisaged that methods such as workshops and focus groups would support the kind of networking between community groups needed to form this backbone; produce the kind of information the CTVs needed; and would also be the most appropriate conduit through which we could ensure that groups would receive information and learn about what expertise was required. We also saw this as the way to initiate training.

Date	Method/ Type of process	Target groups
2001	Workshop	Multi-stakeholder: Community development/ local government/education etc
2002	Workshop	Community media and CTV interest groups/ Regulator

	Focus groups	Community groups interested in CTV: Youth groups; environmental Groups; adult/community education groups.
2003	Workshop	Community groups interested in developing content for CTV

The initial tendency for the research to rely on workshops and focus groups was part of our need for an open and transparent process *and* to build the organisation for DCTV, develop the License Application, and the membership network for DCTV - all in parallel. The reliance on workshops and focus groups however proved to have some underlying flaws.

Factors attracting groups to workshops

Workshops were intended to bring together interest groups and stakeholders in community television and attempted to place a set of questions into context. These were organised in collaboration with other groupings; there was an early but significant phase where the workshops were co-organised with the DCE (DCDB executive) and were therefore placed within the context of the city’s strategic plan.

Workshops are meant to get people together to do actual work and to produce a result – but high profile workshops have a number of purposes – these may be:

- to demonstrate the level of support for the project;
- to provide a forum for debate of an issue – and demonstrate its importance;
- to get heads down to tackle problems, to establish some positions and a consensus if that be possible where one is called for.

The status of the workshop was usually signified by who would attend it, open it, and/or participate in developing the positions/consensus. This proved significant.

Strategic workshops organised by the CTV groups

The first workshop held in June 2001 was designed to open up discussion of the issue of community media within the city. It specifically sought the participation by community representatives and from them a mandate to further a community media strategy for the city; in particular to develop community television. This workshop happened in the midst of a range of consultations taking place in the City around the DCDB’s development strategy, and fed directly into the planning process.

A second workshop with a more national focus was held in November 2002 after three significant events: the publication of the DCDB’s strategic plan “Dublin, a city of neighbourhoods” in June 2002; the Forum on Broadcasting’s Report to the Minister; and the publication of the “Feasibility Study and Action Plan for a Dublin Community Television Channel” (O’Siochru S. , 2002). These provided a framework of political recognition for community media and a statement of intent (on the part of the CTV group in Dublin). These together were justification to press the Regulator to commit and to move forward on the issue of community television, which they seemed very slow to do.

Both workshops aimed to contextualise community media within current developments and to bring practical work forward.

The report from the first meeting emphasized that a model of a community media operator had been adopted and a mandate for the formation of the Community Media Forum established. While this was achieved, the flip-charts also record diverse issues and concerns that reflect a less unified grouping. Because of this the flipcharts contents were appended to the report.

The second workshop, as well as hosting the national forum in the morning, provided in the afternoon a space for developing content and action plans for the groups involved in the

Dublin community channel. These groups did make headway on that day, but the difficulty was in maintaining the momentum afterwards. The action group formed – ICTAG – (Irish Community Television Action Group) quickly met with opposition from within the community media activists grouping and despite a second attempt to re-group a year later never really became a working entity as ICTAG.

Efforts to bring community organisations together in workshops designed to explore CTV alone failed to produce results in the immediate term. While these would be seen as important by the CM sector for the development of the channel they were not seen within the community sector as high-profile or productive events. This meant they did not draw the conference attending personnel from organisations – i.e. the cadres who would have normally attended events to put their movement’s position on the matter, or to network and pursue their own agendas.

Workshops that were tied to new strategic developments such as the City Development Board, the Community Forum, the Broadcasting Act, the Broadcasting Funding Scheme, were well attended - a totally opposite result to those events that focused on community networking for CTV alone. While there was huge enthusiasm for the idea expressed [in all our communication with community organisations] CTV was still seen as aspirational. Since there was no clear immediate benefit, investing time and energy in these workshops did not come high on the agenda of community groups. Even organisations that had expressed interest could not commit resources, including time, to CTV workshops addressing content at the Needs Assessment stage in 2006.

The difficulties of getting people involved in community media and also maintaining the volunteer force were then explored further in interviews with CM groups. The shape of workshops then seemed to be mainly in demonstrating the support available or establishing the current issue. They turned out to be a staged event with speakers that

made a statement on where things were at – more like a meeting or conference, but which didn’t necessarily produce anything new or actively get work done to develop the channels. This continued as a feature of workshops through to the end of 2007 and prompted a review of this strategy within CMN. In 2007 we refocused attention onto what supports were actually needed on the ground and within groups, in 2008 reformed our coalition, and in 2009 began an ongoing strategy review process. This is an effort to keep a spotlight on the need for on the ground engagement with community organisations production needs and the promotion of community development principles and participatory processes.

7.2.4 The relationships of different kinds of groups to CTV

Groups participating in the PAR

My role in the PAR project was to help people make connections, feeding information when it was requested, generating, and supporting necessary discussions. Groups we identified to engage in the research connected to CMN and related to CTV activity in the following ways:

- A. CTVs - Were already making community television:
 - Province 5TV, Northern Visions in Belfast and groups from other countries with whom I networked at international meetings.
- B. Aspirant CTVs - wanted to start a channel
 - in this grouping were DCTV, and Cork Community Television, other groups dropped away from the CTV process very quickly although Kerry and Galway submitted expressions of interest. (Kerry due to unavailability of cable carriers to the region; Galway due to lack of support on the

ground; and the Donegal group did not re-appear after the 2002 workshop and did not follow up with an Expression of Interest)

- C. CMs were making community video:
 - e.g. Community Response (CR), Leitrim video Group (LVG), Pavee Point (PP), Development Media Workshop (DMW).
- D. CGs had expressed interest in community television and had some experience of media production within the organisation
 - e.g. Dublin Adult Learning Centre (DALC), Greater Blanchardstown Response to Drugs (GBRD)

This list really represents a continuum – and can be prioritised in reverse if we consider them as belonging to a set of relationships – e.g.

- those interested in community television and have had some experience of community media within the organisation will be relating to those who can facilitate that interest either as CTV channels or as groups making community video;
- those making community video are relating to those operating the channel as a distributor, and also to those with an interest as GBRD would be linked to CR.

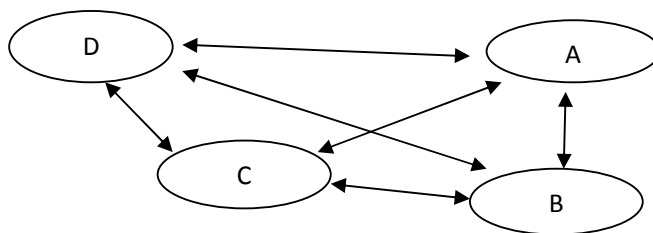


Diagram 5.1.4 - The arrows represent *potential* for CM activity. Obviously groups prioritise their own activities and this affects their level of involvement with other groups. How much

of this interaction actually happens varies and is determined often by local relationships as well as bars set from above.

Some consideration in such model building should be given to the fact that groups *develop* their capacity for production or engaging with CTV and so their relationships to CM operators change. They may become more independent and less in need of training for example but still wish to engage in terms of other supports: project development, new technologies, studio use, and, particularly in the case of broadcasting, developing their connection with their target audiences through serial programmes, information strategies, etc.

It is clear that CTV channels need to develop a range of supports to groups that engage with their needs and their level of experience. This research considered some of these issues in relation to planning for production support within DCTV and a schematic paper was prepared (see Appendix No. 39) that categorized groups in terms of their current capacity and identified types of production that may suit groups at different levels of development in CTV production. This was based on the outcomes of the PDWs¹⁸⁹ and attempted to establish an approach to production supports that could also tap into the S&V Scheme funds. These proposals floundered because S&V excluded support for training. Since DCTV looked to S&V for funding opportunities they made coalitions with independent film-makers whose practice fitted the operation and criteria of the scheme. The schema developed therefore did not fit with the activities that DCTV undertook at the time. It was difficult then to know how to go about devising ways to support community groups' needs when these were not being considered by DCTV core group.

¹⁸⁹ Programme Development Workshops conducted as part of the S40 Needs Assessment project funded by the BCI under the terms of Section 40 of the Broadcasting Act 2001

7.3 Basis of the PAR activity and perceptions of CTV

7.3.1 Activities, roles, and positions

7.3.2 The role of community development organisations in CM

7.3.3 National and outside Dublin

7.3.1 Activities, roles, and positions

This research was based on a number of areas of activity:

- The lobby for community television during the process of the Broadcasting Bill enacted in 2001 and afterwards
- Participation by CMN in local structures – e.g. Community Forum and Dublin City Development Board
- Engagement with community sector in discussions and capacity building actions
- Building the basis for community television, awareness, engagement and commitment.

These areas overlapped, what tied them together was the role of the researcher – and the roles the researcher undertook as the action developed. This is important because the issue of people’s ongoing involvement in activity – i.e. activists’ roles – means they are in a position to gather and develop knowledge, this places them in a position of privilege, one of the main causes for distrust and this can happen on a whole number of levels – within the activist community itself, in external relations with other movements, with external agencies.

Being in control of knowledge is a form of power, and being in a position to say what knowledge is the basis for action and organising is a key part of that power. Being able to

develop and promote your own knowledge is also a vitally important aspect of movement development - the knowledge with which to build the movement and expand the knowledge around the issue. The problem for us was how to ensure that the knowledge that was tapped came from expressions of community needs and how to then use and disseminate these forms of knowledge and keep them live as the drive for community television moved on.

So what knowledge was identified as important? Initially in 2000, the group wanted information about how CTV's were organised, funded and resourced in other countries. We also needed to investigate how to start our process here - how to go about things? Who would take this forward? When and where? Chapter 4 followed the direction we first took to get answers – looking abroad and at other examples of CTV. This provided us with ideas and other experience to compare with our own even though it was not matching like with like. What it told us was that we had to build within our own context in engagement with our communities. The more we heard about how other CTVs emerged and survived elsewhere the more we understood that we would have to be as creative as they had been in their own contexts – all of this brought us back to the work we were doing on the ground. The important thing about the connections and links with other CTVs was the support, solidarity and understanding of the effort that goes into this struggle; this also provides essential benefits from networking such as sharing of organisational and technical tools and supports, as well as the possibilities of sharing programming. There were also surprising elements in what people actually did that challenged our ideas of what should or could be, e.g. how a channel in Italy managed to engage with commercial channels to transmit their programmes (Nardi, 1996).

In 2001 CMN's need was to mobilise the community sector to establish community television since it was now legally allowable and some of us (clearly not all) saw the

community sector as having a moral right to ownership. The legislation was finally in place, albeit without any funding, and while this had come about for a number of reasons, there existed a whole array of interest groups that had issues around access to media and had engaged at different stages in a struggle over media access.

As the history reviewed in earlier chapters shows, since the late 1960’s different movement activists in Ireland had pushed for access to the airwaves from a whole range of perspectives, from pirates to those seeking licenses, Sinn Fein fighting Section 31, women seeking reproductive rights, gay activists seeking decriminalisation, environmentalists, anti-war activists, etc - the history of censorship and limits to media access in the country affected many movements.

All the early CTV initiatives were rooted in different movements responding to pressures ‘from above’, and that fact has implications for us now as different understandings again come to the fore¹⁹⁰. What is this current movement responding to and who are the actors that can lead it? If our understanding that community development groups would be the main actors was incorrect, who then are the actors leading this drive?

This needs to be explored if CTVs are to be able to build solidarity and if community media is to succeed as a social movement. If, as Marx, Bakunin, and many others, thought, diversity is crucial to survival, then diversity amongst groups forming community media initiatives is also a vital resource. But given that people have particular understandings about where they come from and see their activity as stemming from their lifeworld and cosmology (Geoghegan, 2000), how do they build connections across these? CMN’s own

¹⁹⁰ The differences between the early Gaeltacht based television pirates, the satellite pirates that became the licensed MMDS distributors, the Ballyfermot Community Association TV, the nascent group in Donabate, the Ballyfermot 1980s initiative, Navan community Television in the early 1990’s, and those involved in the current movement should be researched in more depth than can be done here.

vision is important here, since this is the group that drove the current phase of community television. What we need then to look at is how the interaction with other groups and actors directed the DCTV initiative.

7.3.2 The role of community development organisations in CM

CMN’s statement on community television, which I made at the workshop held in November 2002, was that CTV would be “firmly rooted in the community development sector and working from community development principles”.¹⁹¹ So the emphasis within the CMN PAR was to galvanise the support for community television within the community sector – a support that had existed to date as a passive approval and transform this into an active engagement in building for the channels by the community development sector. In taking this approach the PAR was clearly intent on engaging with what we saw as the most active form of social organization that was happening in the country (Geoghegan, 2000), (Cox, 1999).

Our intention of establishing legal community broadcasting meant we had to engage with the state. The effort that CMN made in this regard was considerable - participation in local community structures; efforts to build a united group to engage with the institutions; lobby actions around state initiatives such as the Broadcasting Bills, the Forum on Broadcasting, as well as various issues around consultations - access to broadcasting platforms, new broadcasting codes, media mergers, to name a few (see Appendix No. 41).

¹⁹¹ This position had been adopted since the mid nineties and was promoted via a series of EU funded projects that provided community media training for community organisations, and one project in particular that aimed to support community media initiatives - CMN’s “Building Community Media in Ireland” funded under the Integra Strand of the EU Employment programme

Movement 'from above'				
New Broadcasting Bill discussed; NDP and City and County Development Boards being established;	Broadcasting Bill debated	Broadcasting Act 2001; Forum on Broadcasting set up	New Regulator body BCI established	BCI begins consultation on new Television Policy; Broadcasting (Funding) Bill passed in December 2003
1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
CMN BCMI Project holds final conference with a focus on the Broadcasting Bill	CMN joins the new DCCF; CMN PAR project begins; Advisory Group on CM to DCCF formed	Media Workshop June 2001; DTV ISC formed; CMF launched;	CMN 'gatecrash' Forum on Broadcasting; A Day for Community Television Workshop; ICTAG CTV action group proposed	Developing Content for Community Television Workshop; ICTAG re-groups at BCI conference;
CM Movement 'from below'				

Timeline: movements from above and below in CTV development 1999-2003

Alongside this we were working with community organisations on the ground to explore what community television meant for them and what they needed to have in place in order to reap the benefit. The feedback that we got through workshops was broad and ambitious - the following is what participant's said when asked "what community media meant to you in two words" at a workshop in 2007¹⁹²:

- Community media is about community participation but it also involves challenge
- It's about people being able to express themselves through media, rich fact cats control the media and we hear their voice all the time.
- Giving people a voice, and creating a forum for young people to develop in and interact with a broad range of communities
- Communication – people like to know what's going on and community media should be fast and quick– if people get some of that excitement and passion it gives them power to change things – and to have fun;
- To help develop new vision of community, sharing information about new communities, breaking down ignorance.
- Enabling people who have never had a voice and giving them enough time to say it, people discovering their own voice.

¹⁹² "Taking The Air Again" – November 2007, Workshop organised by CTA, Dublin

- Belonging and empowerment
- Innovation and development of new ideas
- Community media should be a free voice, an uncensored voice for marginalised communities – on a global level, not just on this island
- Communities work to develop stories that they have control over, community television will give access to that voice and it means to work with community not as subject matter, but in partnership and to create solidarity.
- Authenticity, and alternative - to mainstream voices and mainstream media industry
- Community media is a counter-cultural platform to the Anglo-American global media we seem to drown in- so it's a kind of revolutionary force for change.
- Community media is a way for organisations whose ideas are not necessarily mainstream to get those ideas out there, to make people aware that there is always an alternative voice to every message that you hear. So it's to challenge that tendency to see mainstream as doctrine.
- Equality – whether in terms of sub cultures or ethnic minorities in a fast changing Ireland – giving an equal voice.
- Creating a public space and a way from the private experience to collective understanding – it's something that is missing in our current society.
- Community television provides access to the tools, the camera, a cameraperson; it provides access to the community to television.
- Enabling all sectors of a community to participate in the progression of the community as a whole.
- Community media is part of a larger movement globally. Media occupy an important intermediary role and tell us who and what we are, what to say and what to think. Community media is extremely local and allows us to define who we are and to say what we think and so-on. It has a revolutionary potential in terms of people identity and where they see themselves going.
(Community Television Association, 2007)

As they reached the last contributor and stood back to look at the charts, the facilitator said “wow!” “that’s a lot of stuff to deal with!”

A lot of stuff or not – the list set out the aspirations and expectations of community media that existed within those interested enough to attend the workshop. It also indicates the different places those people came from – community development; broadly democratic communication, community media; independent film-makers; NGO’s. In this group there was no-one no representing state agencies; political parties; local authorities; or institutions; despite the fact that the event was funded by the BCI and the CCF. Yet remarks from workshop leaders from 1997 onwards often expressed concern: ‘were those attending the workshop the right people?’

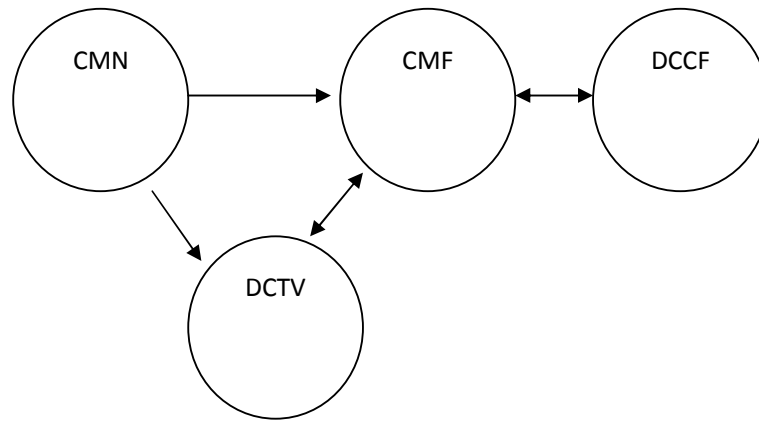
The period of activism for community television, from initial stages in 2000 to the launch of the channels in 2007-2009 is marked by repeated statements from workshops that contain the same aspirations and expectations. The flipcharts contain the same worries and awareness of the problems of co-option, possibilities for take-over, pressures to commercialise the channel, and poor accessibility for the community. They are also marked by poor attendance from community development organisations as noted in **Table No.9**. The concern of workshop leaders was that they did not get the sense that all the people attending the workshops were activists engaged with a particular community, evident in the fact that they did not arrive at the workshop with questions that sought to solve issues for a group with their own concerns.

We had to address this kind of ‘broad agenda’. We took what we thought to be a broad and ‘public’ approach- seeking visibility for community media, and demonstrating openness in our activity. As we worked to build support for the channel in community, statutory, and other arenas, we did not have to worry about running the channel – it didn’t yet exist. But at the time we also ascribed the non-appearance of the community groups at workshops essentially designed for them to the fact that the channel did not yet exist. However this had little bearing on whether groups attended workshops. Many structures don’t exist but groups still form coalitions, work and meet due to the need to see it happen. If the communication needs of community groups demanded community television, they would have been at the workshop looking at ways to achieve the goal – or at least complaining bitterly about it. Community groups were prepared to get actively involved but not through these workshops.

We tried to build platforms that would allow us promote the idea of CTV and build relationships such as the Dublin Community Media Forum (CMF), develop structures that would support the DCTV channel – the DCTV Co-op, the committee and its working groups,

the License, build solidarity amongst the CM interest groups and the network of the CTV interest groups that would consult with the authorities.

Diagram 5.2.1a



The conception of the Community Media Forum as composed of three grouping of community broadcast media - television, radio and Internet – gave the group the logo of the spiral triskele.



the logo gives an idea of the three broadcast CM groups converging – as these media are now generally developing¹⁹³.

In the first three years of this work, what we thought we could do, even if we couldn't have a 'model' of a community media operator, was to build a 'model' of a process that others could 'copy' or that could be replicated elsewhere. The first three years proved the basis

¹⁹³ Design by Johnny Corcoran (CMN CE Participant) with the CMF group,

for this to be flawed – there can be no one ‘model’ in a process where organisations have to be built within contexts that are ultimately very different, whereas it is possible to work on agreed common principles that informed our activity and processes.

7.3.3 ‘National’ and outside Dublin

Some of the groups that communicated with CMN and this PAR project were working in their own areas – rural areas, towns and cities. Their circumstances were very different to Dublin and although some tried to establish similar structures – for example a Community Media Forum was set up in Cork. None of these worked in the same way or produced the same results. The focus of the CMN effort on Dublin was because it was groups there seemed the most ready to form the necessary coalitions, it was the capital city and so had large resources particularly in terms of numbers of people involved, the community forum was stronger than in other counties, and the high level of community and voluntary activity in the city was understood to be the key factor in ensuring its success. But all this also brought with it conflicts, tensions, and ultimately engaging with the power structures and the power issues in each community.

Another issue was that while the Broadcasting Act 2001 certainly ushered in a new era, this did not mean starting with a clean slate. Just as with the new structures in local government and the community and voluntary groups, there was a problem for the authorities in forcing those active on the ground into the ‘new shoes’. There was a sense of this in how we went about things as well to some extent – our first statement was usually that community television was a new and exciting development in Ireland. Of course it wasn’t quite like that; the legislation was new, as was the License, so the political recognition was new. But things like this had happened before, and there existed histories and knowledge of it. The question is how, in any given period when the opportunity arises,

any medium then becomes something of value to the processes in which grassroots community development activists are involved. This PAR project and the CMN perspective was an effort to develop a process that would allow community organizations to engage with CTV – this is its importance.

What was difficult to do was to explore for example - the conditions under which BCATV flourished and what happened afterwards; or how a community television channel had operated under ministerial order in Navan for ten years and what lessons this had for a new initiative. In the case of the BCATV, it was the Ballyfermot Community Association that took on the community channel and operated the studio provided by the Ballyfermot Senior College. Their programmes were simply transmitted by Phoenix Relays for whom BCATV was a national level experiment. Navan was also particular in that it broadcast within a small cable network and didn't impact outside of those areas. Navan CTV's engagement with other CM groups was minimal until the new Broadcasting Act 2001 was passed and the consultation process began around the new policy; the channel at that point began to play a very active part in the coalition that emerged¹⁹⁴.

It is often noted by community groups that they are not always aware of the activities of other groups that could be related to them by geography or interest – a fact that has been cited as demonstrating the need for horizontal communication (own research in Kerry).

However the reasons why people don't meet can be many and various. As CMN experienced it, it was the conditions in which the community and voluntary sector groups

¹⁹⁴ Kevin MacNamidhe opened the doors of NCTV to the other groups to share what he knew and provide supports to the other emerging channels. This is always an aspect of working in community media that surprises; we could talk about 'community moles' when describing how CM activists operate. We are burrowing away within our communities and it's only when we come out of the tunnels that we might, or might not, encounter neighbouring moles. Certainly CMN's activities have regularly been the occasion for long time CM activists to 'meet the neighbours' often for the first time. While these CTV groups met when we emerged to engage in a consultation process with the state, this is not the only context in which such meetings happen, but it is not regular.

operated that had most relevance to the current effort to build for CTV. These conditions were extremely pressurized.

7.4 Levels of participation and participant’s needs

7.4.1 Responses to research and implications for the ‘question’

7.4.2 Reviewing the question and the strategies

7.4.3 Meeting the broader field of force

This section explores findings concerning the participation of groups, their responses to the actions of the research project, and the pitfalls and problems encountered.

7.4.1 Responses to research and implications for the ‘question’

The nature of the consultations

Value in the relationship of technical production to social analysis

Measuring the interest from the community sector

DCTV Feasibility Study and the Community Media Forum

Disruption and CTV strategies to get heard

Steering DCTV

Developing coalitions within DCTV

Dealing with failure and recognizing blocks

Cross referencing creates the opportunity to test findings which may seem to be contradictory (as for instance in swinging levels of attendance at workshops) or overly personal interpretations on the part of the researcher (Dick, 2002).

Regular methods, such as surveys and questionnaires, workshops, focus groups, and seminars were used at first in an effort to enable the community sector to engage in CTV and in production and to establish their capacity to do so - a community media audit. But as noted in Chapter 3 these were found to be of limited value in terms of building the organization, or as would have been hoped, in terms of developing agreed mechanisms for

building the organization. In terms of clarification of mandates that some workshops were intended to produce it was clear that more substantial activity was needed to explore issues before any real progress could be made.

Questionnaires in particular proved worthless unless done in the context of an interview and even when used in this way do not leave much room for development of issues, these are closed methods and proved unsuitable because of the developmental nature of our query¹⁹⁵.

One of the real values we found in using questionnaires was that *their failure* made us re-examine our own questions and what sort of information we in fact wanted and needed. Very often it wasn't the questions that were wrong and we did want the answers to those questions but answers were not given; and while the questions were right for us, they appeared to be the wrong questions for the community groups.

Establishing the reasons for this is difficult. One way of understanding it is in the light of the pressures to which groups must respond. These were and continue to be heavy and oppressive leaving people little time to deal with anything other than immediate demands. Such a questionnaire was unlikely to be a priority either because it involved too much time and the effort or the questions were not appropriate - or because it was not immediately recognisable as relevant to their issues.

¹⁹⁵ As I noted in Chapter 2, despite the early efforts to get clear quantitative results:

- CMN had nil response to three efforts to use questionnaires;
- a number of other attempts within a circumscribed grouping, the DCTV membership, produced very unreliable and poor results – in 2006 there was a response of 11 from a membership of over 150;
- questionnaires have been used within Community Television Association (CTA) work throughout 2008-2009 but have been found useful only alongside telephone and face-to-face contact; and
- a recent proposal in 2009 to use a questionnaire by DCTV with community groups was rejected outright by the community groups themselves (see list of questionnaires and surveys in Appendix No 17).

The reasons for non-response are more important than any data that could be collected in this way as is the fact that questionnaires favour larger organizations (Powell, 2004). The persistent non-response to questionnaires would therefore imply that we are focusing on small organizations with low levels of resources. This is true for a large amount of the groups we targeted but there were quite sizeable organizations within the pool who also did not respond.

An important question “who would control production?” was left hanging. Our questionnaires asked the sector “are you ready to produce CTV?” “what do you need in order to produce content for CTV”, “What do you have on your shelves, in your skillbase, etc that would contribute” - the sector remained silent.

At first this was puzzling – the purpose of the Questionnaires was to establish the needs of the sector, their interest in and capacity to produce CTV, what equipment, skills, and resources were available or needed. We knew that community groups were very happy to collaborate with CMN, engage with our projects, seek our help, so this was not a simple rejection of CMN on the basis of power, control, hidden agendas, or to expose ‘hidden transcripts’. ***The real problem was the specific process being used and the context and direction of the CTV initiative.***

An important way to understand this problem is that in this environment the media is not ‘the end’ it is *part of a process of development* (CRF) (Day, Community Radio in Ireland, Building Community, Participation, and Multiflow Communication, 2003), (Farren, 2007), (Gibbons, 2007a). However it is hard to see the implications for community groups if we still frame this activity within a media paradigm. ***Community media emerges from the communication strategies of communities, and particularly those in struggle with forces and pressures from above.*** It’s worth remembering some of our historical examples here. The BCATV example is clear enough – the CTV was a vehicle for the community to pursue

its development objectives and worked extremely well for the two years it was able to operate. P5TV gives a range of information services: Community news and information; ‘What’s On’, Weather reports, Church Services, Tourist Information, Local Authority information, regular meetings etc.¹⁹⁶. Some of the services transmitted by P5TV such as the Mass, and bus times are services that are also provided by community radio stations such as NEARfm.

But when we asked community activists about their CM processes we will find other examples and very clear and revealing statements on what they understood themselves to be about – the makers of a video about a fire in York St, Dublin had this to say:

There never was a plan to make a film. The day after the fire, Dublin Corporation moved in to seal up the flat in which the blaze had started. Several of us who live in the street felt that once the flat was sealed, the evidence of what had happened would be out of our reach. Luckily we had a decent camera available to us and we got into the flat just as the Corporation workmen set to work (Dowling B. , 2003)¹⁹⁷.

Within a week of the fire this video was made and on the desks of Councillors, TDs, and Local Authority officials, drawing an immediate response. The visual documentation of locked fire doors, inaccessible ladders, stairwells that were total fire-traps, and no external fire escapes, made the case required little verbal description. The voice-over addressed the issue that conditions in inner city flats, at a time of unprecedented wealth in the country, were in a state of total neglect and highly dangerous (see Appendix No 40). What would access to community television have meant to those people in this situation? And this question is complex because people need to see results that address the issues. Community television faces communities with the challenge of ‘talking to’ and going public.

¹⁹⁶ <http://www.p5tv.com/tvguide.php>

¹⁹⁷ See Appendix No 40

The concern of activists in these situations is finding ways to do this that will not draw more severe repression on people already suffering serious problems.

The York St Fire video needs to be located in the context of activities of people who were long-term activists in that community and who continued to work to develop mechanisms and structures that would allow that community express its needs and have them met. The activists needed to be able to respond to a situation with media tools, and to be totally in control of how the product was used. ***The existence of an intermediary organization that may control access to the tools and also how the content is used can pose problems for community organisations.***

This means that the engagement of CM operators with communities cannot be based on the mode of operation of mainstream media – where the crew arrives, takes content away, and remakes the story. In this mode control of how the story is put together is taken away from the community and their representatives. It is then edited and re-presented by people who are answerable to another authority and who do a job according to a set of criteria and values that are set by those who control the conditions and the practices they operate within and whose interests’ workers will have to protect¹⁹⁸.

The issue of who controls production is key to how community media operates, but also key is the process by which the community interacts with something like a CTV channel. When all parties are operating under pressure difficulties will arise in this process. The York St Fire video is an example of an engagement between the community and the state forces without mediating producers. Activists were directly seeking suitable consultation mechanisms that involved local educational institutions, the local authorities and a range of

¹⁹⁸ As I write the mainstream media are talking about how Irish media is gagged in relation to planning corruption –Marian Funucane Sunday Show, Radio 1, 31st May 2009.

other actors. Similarly the Daewoo video and the LabourNet site also had clear objectives.

This means that all the CM work we are engaged in and the organizing that we do is part of a broader field of force and can only be understood in these contexts. It is these contexts in which grassroots activists need to remain in control; they do not wish to cede power. The mode of production of community media has direct and important consequences for their activity, as has the knowledge that is produced and validated.

The nature of the consultations

The attempt to use workshops to draw people to engage in the process of establishing community television met with only partial success. The workshops were attempts to bring different groupings together in a Tourainean sense: the regulator with the CTV Interest groups and the community organisations, for example. But there were difficulties in getting these groupings to use this process to explore their own needs and their conflicting agendas tended to either dominate or disperse events.

Organising ‘workshops’ was an effort to create an open space where the problems could be explored but agendas were also avoided. During the meetings and workshops held to establish DCTV many issues were not openly explored; perhaps because activists did not see the possibility of arriving at any resolution and were being careful whilst still seeking opportunities to press for CM without facing the conflict. An example was the Director of Community and Enterprise’s agenda to establish an e-city. This was seen by CM activists to be another multi-stakeholder arrangement in which CM would be buried. The 2001 workshop allowed community media activists to put the need for a ‘special position’ for community media and avoid conflict over the place that DCTV might hold in the e-city agenda.

On the community side the call from Caoimhe McCabe of Pavee Point for groups to have someone within their organization designated to hold a role/responsibility for developing communications/media work was also silently ignored by the CM activists. This call posed the essential question of how CM operates, how groups benefit from engaging in production, and what relationship the CM operator has to this activity. Do the CM operators see the making of communities’ media as their role? And if so are they not also removing the control of production from organizations? A clear result of this approach will be to place the skills, resources, and the control of the benefits in the CM operator’s hands rather than with the groups themselves; inevitably creating conflict.

Value in the relationship of technical production and social analysis

It is important to identify *how* these skills, resources and benefits come to be in shared ownership: - how much of the function of the CM operator can be production? How much should it be limited to distribution? When does access to funding come into the relationship? Or is it the articulation of these activities within a set of relationships that achieves the goal of common ownership of the means of intellectual production that is community’s use of media?

In CMN’s experience it is clear that the groups see the CM operator as bringing the skills and the resources but they always pull back if they feel that CMN technical people are attempting to take control of the content and the production process away from them; media-focused approaches are not trusted and they worry about a reproduction within CM of the mainstream media circus that is the cause of a lot of problems. Therefore there is an emphasis on ***the inclusion of people in the technical process of production***. One interviewee saw the dynamic like this:

Margaret: So the power is in being able to tell the stories in the first place, then record then, then distribute them?

Interviewee: Yea, I think that if people are engaged in addressing the power imbalance between who have control over the media and the technology, if people gain a sense of strength or solidarity through firstly the expression of it and the recording of it and the performance of their story. But then they're involved in seeing how that story might look on screen, and how its edited and how do you edit, you know, and an opportunity to say if they want to use community television how would they use it. I know that locally people would say that Prime Time can come in and do a programme on poverty and they come and go and they have their airspace filled with the stories of the people they leave behind and in the wake of it they leave literally pain and hurt and embarrassment and shame that people have to deal with and it can be a terrible knock to the community and to the development work as well when that happens and they don't have any way of addressing it.

Margaret: Is it just that nothing's done, it's been on telly, everybody's seen it and where does it go to..?

Interviewee: Yes, and where does it go to and people would like to have the opportunity to respond to that and if they had access to community television, I think people would be screaming to have a programme and to bring people back from Prime Time and ask them why and how and who do they think they are . .

Margaret: This is to respond to be able to use it as a response . . .?

Interviewee: very much so, and with newspaper coverage as well. Because the level of internalised oppression is quite extraordinary and I think we all have it in one way or another, but when your area is constantly branded by the media, when all the young people in your area are constantly branded, as having no value.... they're areas to be frightened of, they're people to be frightened of. When that's continually thrown up in your face, day after day throughout your life . . . it has a deep, deep, rooted effect which is very bad. And I suppose its like - to use the community TV it's almost like a form of celebration of a social analysis of peoples lives that . . . by their ability to claim that . . . by telling their stories and sharing it. (Interview3, 2004)

Measuring the interest from the community in DCTV

In the initial period of activity to build a community channel in Dublin, 2000-2002, we found a good deal of interest from community organisations. This interest was also due to the fact that the workshop was an initiative of the newly formed Dublin City Community Forum (DCCF) and the Dublin City Development Board (DCDB). The drive for community television in Dublin thus drew attention because it was an innovative proposal at the beginning of a new initiative in local government. The interest shown by community organizers in this workshop was *involuntary* in that their activities were being disrupted as government rearranged the structures that they worked around and within. So the reality

was that they were *pressed* into attendance by the need to find out what was going on.

These workshops were also venues for meeting with officials so the presence of powerful agencies posed opportunities for different groups to pursue their own agendas.

Notwithstanding that community organizers had fought for change and new structures in the twenty-year lobby that resulted in the White Paper “Supporting Voluntary Activity”, the neo-liberal agenda of public-private partnerships was changing the landscape. Seen as a ‘long march through the institutions’ the failure of the Community Platform to steer the implementation of the White Paper was a clear symptom of the dis-ease that partnership generated (Allen, 2000). The government agenda to disrupt existing community alliances was evident in the privileging of The Wheel in the terms of the White Paper, in the alienation of the Community Platform from the national negotiations, and later on in the cutback of the Community Workers Co-op (CWC) core funding. Many community activists were therefore wary of the new Dublin City Community Forum. They had already established their own networks in various parts of the city – ICON, ICRG, NWICCN, SWICCN, etc.¹⁹⁹ so their question was why, and in whose interest was another structure necessary?

David Connolly, the CEO of the Dublin Inner City Partnership (DICP) had early in the process called on the DCDB and the Director of the DCE to recognize and build on the existing networks in the city. It was generally felt that this call had been ignored, and that the DCE agenda was to destabilize existing networks and relationships (contemporaneous meeting notes).

The emergence from this context of one of the strongest movements to date to establish community television did not inspire community activists in Dublin with confidence. But this context was the fissure that provided an opportunity for CTV to emerge – just as the

¹⁹⁹ Established community network organisations in Dublin Inner City. See List of Acronyms

1988 Act provided an opportunity for community radio to emerge from a framework for the development of local broadcasting.

Interest amongst community groups in community television was varied. Grassroots community organisers were interested in whether it would provide opportunities to be heard; some were understandably skeptical about the independence of the proposed new channel if the state, local government, or commercial agencies had the controlling influence; others saw the development of community media in this way as presenting challenges to their established relationships with commercial operators in the city.

DCTV Feasibility Study and the Community Media Forum

The 2001 Media Workshop established the Community Media Forum (CMF) to promote community media for the City and to develop plans for community television. This process had the support of the Dublin City Development Board (DCDB) who together with the Community Forum commissioned a Feasibility Study in 2001²⁰⁰. The workshop represented a need on the part of the DCDB to show that the community had been consulted; the interest of the community was to understand what the parameters of this would be; the format of the workshop and the agenda was written by the Advisory Group on Community Media (AGCM) to the City Community Forum. The report was written by Sean Ó’Siochrú of NEXUS Research, who was also the Chairperson of CMN and subsequently the Chairperson of both the CMF and DCTV. The report is brief but the flipcharts from the discussion groups demonstrate the same kinds of divisions, different understandings of community media, and concerns about control, as appear elsewhere and in subsequent workshops. It is also clear that much of what community representatives and others contributed to the

²⁰⁰ Reported in 2002 available at <http://www.activelink.ie/cmfdocs.html>

proceedings was guarded; the report focused on the main item and side-stepped dealing with the worries expressed.

The CMF’s first task was proposed by the CTV Working Group – a Feasibility Study (FS) for a Dublin community television channel started in 2001 and reporting in June 2002. The CTVWG sought funds firstly from the DCCF who refused to fund it in total, providing £5,000 for the international research element; the rest of the £38,000 was secured through the DCE and the DCDB. The Consultant awarded the tender was also O’Siochrú²⁰¹. The Feasibility Study drew a marker between marginal activism and respectability – we now had a glossy plan, but that didn’t guarantee any further movement towards realizing the project.

Disruption and CTV strategies to get heard

While we could understand the marginal position that CTV had up to the time the Broadcasting Act had been passed, remaining in such a position was untenable once we had recognition in the Act no matter how limited. We were also doing well in getting CM recognized within the DCDB planning process and given this our interaction with the Forum on Broadcasting was predictable.

In June 2002 on my way to work my car radio announced that the Forum on Broadcasting was having its public hearing in the Royal Hospital, Kilmainham, that day. Those who had submitted to the Forum had been ‘invited’ to the ‘public’ hearing. Despite the fact that CMN and the CMF had written to the Forum on the position of CM in the Broadcasting Act 2001, we had not received an invitation. After some phone calls it was clear that CM

²⁰¹ Because I was closely connected to one of the consultants responding to the call to tender I could not participate in the CTVWG panel that deliberated on submissions.

activists were not going to do anything about it – some CM activists declared they were boycotting it - but they hadn't an invitation in the first place. Later on that day, my colleague Bill McConnell and I went to Kilmainham and insisted on our right to attend – politely but firmly we gate-crashed. We both spoke at the plenary session, objecting to the lack of an invitation and to the exclusion of community broadcast media from the discussions. What we gained by this disruptive strategy has been noted in Chapter 3, as was the criticism from CM colleagues who made it known that they were unhappy with disruption as a means to do business with the authorities. Do we then have to ask the same questions of CM as Anna Lee did of community development – is the radical promise of CM being undermined from within?

Generally in the CM workshops people expressed concerns about the functions of CTV as defined by the 2001 Act but there was little contention or vociferous debate. Concerns expressed in the November 2002 workshop with the Regulator were:

- the situation of CTV given that the Act had made no provision for funding;
- the concern that communities of interest be recognized;
- and the IDS²⁰² concern about access and sub-titles.

The CM activists in these workshops were careful in how they spoke to the Regulator and contentious issues were not followed up or debated extensively, while questions were put there was no confrontation. The attempt to launch the national action group, ICTAG, at the conference failed and actors continued their lobby activities separately and privately.

While we felt we were facing huge difficulties getting the recognition necessary to promote community media it did appear from the outcomes of our negotiations with the Regulator that our concerns were being heard. This was the case with the lobby work we did during

²⁰² Irish Deaf society who conducted a significant lobby on access issues relating to broadcast media.

the Broadcasting Bill 2000(see Appendix No. 42), and then again with the Forum on Broadcasting 2001. The question that was forming for me at the time was: if we were going to get this level of success why were we not asking for more? In fact why not follow up on our demand for €250,000 in core funding for CTV channels that had been mentioned in the Forum’s Report? The state refused to fund CTV on competition grounds and deflected the funding issue into S&V; both in the DCCF and within the CTV campaign itself competing interests prevented any concerted action to achieve this objective.

By 2003 the government’s neo-liberal agenda was clearly to complete the privatization project accompanied by intensified attacks on social welfare dependency – this specifically meant the community employment projects (CE)²⁰³. CMN shared these circumstances with the groups who had gathered under the umbrella of the DCCF in 2000 in an effort to weather the storm gathering. But the DCCF did not pose any threat to the authorities, nor did it use the power it could have wielded – for that it would have needed a voice.

In many ways the DCCF drew its own teeth: the refusal of the Chairperson, Secretary and Treasurer to honour the motion passed at the 2003 AGM on the treatment of the bin-charge protesters was one example; more curious was the DCCF’s inability to do anything about the Government’s renegeing on the promise of community representative seats on

²⁰³ Our own CE project collapsed that year; we were unable to pay the rent and were forced to leave our premises. Many projects, like ourselves, took up the alternative – Social Economy Projects (SEPs)- which while still drawing employees from the same pool (long term unemployed) demanded full-time employment. Only projects that supported lone parents and recovering drug addicts were ring-fenced in the ruthless culling of the CEPs. The conditions of the SEPs ruled out lone parents and disabled people seeking terms of work that allowed them time to cope with their issues. CSPs paid the minimum wage, awarded a poorer level of overheads grant-aid, and demanded that the project find ways to earn money and become ‘sustainable’ within three years. Four years later the new manager of the schemes, a government agency Pobal, renamed the SEPs as Community Services Projects (CSPs), and informed the projects that they were now not-for-profit; in May 2009, the Minister told the CSPs they were now required – again – to make some money. The policy clearly swings in the economic wind!

Strategic Policy Committees (SPCs) – this was seen initially as the real political opportunity for communities to gain representation and some say in local government which was totally controlled by political parties. These are only two examples of ways in which the DCCF remained a silent and silencing body, concerned more with slicing up the funding cake of €100,000 that came through the DCE. When I got upset at a DCCF Council meetings in 2004 where people were arguing over small amounts of money rather than value, my SC in CMN felt it was time for me to take a break. The problem, friends told me was ‘community politics’, the problem I saw was the DCCF members’ refusal to take on political issues, particularist and hidden agendas, no solidarity, and a lack of real ‘voice’. One colleague expressed his disappointment at the lack of interest in the DCTV project in the DCCF saying “they don’t see that DCTV is for everyone” – but it was more that they saw DCTV as a threat to the funds – and they would have been right – the DCTV project could have used the whole budget and the quick access to funds for the Feasibility Study in 2001 was seen as unfair – media was sexy and community development was suffering. This was a minefield and no less within the DCTV project.

Establishing the technical group for DCTV

Establishing technical organizing structures is a difficult issue for social movements and the path of the DCTV organisation-building was no exception. Some tensions could have been predicted but the extent of the problem only became apparent with time. The Feasibility Study included an Action Plan for the CTV Group to establish a Dublin CTV channel; it also established a structure for the Interim Steering Committee (ISC) which had its first official meeting in June 2002. The ISC had the task of forming the organization; the Minutes record the splitting of the organizing group into two parts - the Institutional Group and the Content Group - as the Action Plan had recommended.

The initial Content Group Representatives to the ISC were four members noted in the minutes; the first ‘Content Group’ on the ISG comprised a representative from a residents association, a community adult education centre, the City Council, and another from an Inner City Network. The wider ‘Content Group’ members had constituted groups with convenors under the following Themes.

DCTV proposed Thematic Content Groups (TCGs)

Adult Education
Local Governance
Local / Community Development
Irish Deaf Society
Travellers
Environment
Drugs Response
Immigration / Refugees
Education & Training Group
Gay / Lesbian Groups
Women’s Group
Age & Opportunity

(Minutes 1st Meeting DCTV ISC, 14/19th June 2002)

Co-ordination of this work was to prove a problem. The allocation of a Strategic Policy Manager from the DCE could support the work only up to a point and there was concern about a possible perception that this was a City Council initiative. Such a perception was undesirable both for the community (who would not engage with an entity controlled by the Council’s agenda) and for the council (who did not want the financial responsibility of the initiative and also proposed that DCTV develop PPP arrangements). The representative from the City Council therefore fell away from the ISC and the representative from the Inner City Organisations Network also fell away at the same time. This gave weight to the perception that these Development Board structures were understood by community activists to be a site of political engagement. The ISC then began to hold their meetings in community venues, this step both raised their profile as an active group within the community and drew the DCTV project away from the City Council and

the DCDB. While this independence was important it also raised issues for DCTV activists about where the support for the project was to be found.

Internal issues also played their part - a proposal to set up a company to co-ordinate the interim work was rejected by the ISC; the group then set about establishing a Co-op, Dublin Community Television Society Ltd., intending to use this organisational form as a base from which to build the channel. The lack of an organisational vehicle *until* the Co-op was self-sufficient and could support the project was addressed when CMN offered to provide a secretariat in 2003 - which was accepted as an interim solution. The supports also provided by the DCE to the formation of DCTV from 2001-3 were significant in bridging this gap.

The work of the ISC was the Co-op incorporation process; strategy and work plan development for DCTV; organisation of publicity, etc. Through the CMF the CTV Working Group sought financial support from the DCCF. But the DCCF itself was a site of struggle in which various factions within the city's community sector vied for control and so the DCTV initiative got little space. The DCCF AGM in 2001 broke up in disarray amongst protests that the procedure was wrong and denied the members the right to make recommendations that the DCCF Council would be required to implement. The meeting was reconvened three months later and, amongst other groups, the CMF felt the need to get re-affirmation of its place within the DCCF. The Recommendations passed at the reconvened meeting included recognition from the CMF²⁰⁴. But when in October 2002, the CTV WG submitted a proposal to the Community Forum seeking €22,000 in funding for the start-up phase of the DCTV project the DCCF turned down the application (see Appendix No. 43); they saw the

²⁰⁴ Recommendation worded as follows: That the Dublin City Community Forum recognise the new Community Media Forum (CMF) as a voice for the community media sector in the city; that it undertake to establish a relationship with CMF; and brings forward its recommendations and concerns to the City Development Board and the Strategic Planning process. ***This has since been done.*** (Recommendations of the Reconvened AGM, 2001)

proposal as asking the DCCF to provide funding to one group. The DCCF Council did not accept that the establishment of DCTV was the establishment of a facility *for all*, clearly the concept of CTV did not make sense within the Community Forum at the time – and the priorities for activists within the DCCF were very far removed from establishing a community ‘voice’ *via community media*. This again was part of the broader field of force that the DCTV initiative was to push against.

The DCCF’s early period was difficult and in the first two years had serious problems with access to funds, processes, and recognitions. This was part of a tussle for control of the DCCF’s activities between DCCF members and the Director of Community and Enterprise (DCE). At the heart of this were problems presented by the new structures for local governance in the form of the City and County Development Boards for the community activists organizing on the ground and the community organisers strategised to maintain control of their operations. The issue of the independence of the DCCF was at the core of a series of difficult meetings between the DCCF Council and the Director, as a community representative I was inevitably caught in this interface.

So too, the DCTV initiative was caught in this problem; the perception of the initiative as too closely fitting the agenda of the Director of DCE and the DCDB; the support given to the DCTV project by the Director of the DCE was seen as contentious by many activists within the DCCF and these blocks would not be easily removed. This meant that key community activists within the DCCF appeared to maintain a distance from the DCTV project. However by the time I began conducting interviews amongst these activists, relations were very different and I met with a warmer interest for the project. At no time did I experience outright hostility for the DCTV project within the DCCF, but I did meet with cynicism and disbelief that the project would have much impact – in short much the same response as when CMN sought support to maintain a CMC in the City.

The main support to the DCTV initiative was supplied by CMN (under whose name most of the funding and operations were officially conducted since DCTV had no legal entity until 2004), this PAR project, and up to 2003 the DCE. During 2003 the groupings within DCTV began to change.

The process of forming the DCTV Co-op and developing the Rules was long-winded and difficult and throughout 2003-2004 numbers on the DCTV ISG diminished. This dropout during the building of the organisation appeared to give credence to the proposed structure of Institutional and Content groupings. By mid 2003 there was concern that the initiative was drifting away from its community base. Relegating the community groups to the Content Group with no support structures meant that the power to direct the DCTV development lay in the institutional Group which was dominated by the CM groups. ***This splitting was to have consequences – the worst of which was that the issues that community groups experienced in working with CM and relating to CTV were rarely heard at the committee table where decisions were made and strategy formed.***

Had the Content Group been maintained as a core part of the ISG and the structure adhered to, things might have been different; but the technocratic approach taken by the Institutional Group meant there was little interest in ensuring that this happened. The composition of the DCTV Committee of Management as then emerged over the years 2004-2008 was almost inevitable. It was in this period that the PAR project was most important and also when the effort to bring the knowledge that it was gathering to the DCTV process became most difficult.

Developing coalitions within DCTV

The core CTV activists tried to use the small resources available to support both the national activity and the building of DCTV on a local level. The 2002 Workshop provided an arena for those interested in establishing community television under the new Act to meet with the Regulator, and also ran workshops in the second half of the day that explored the Thematic Content Groups’ that had been proposed by the DCTV Action Plan and the ISC. The workshop was crowded despite appalling weather that stopped many public services (see Appendix No 44 “A Day for Community Television”, Report November 2002). These well attended workshops are examples of people gathering to observe the development of new structures. As we saw, the idea of the DCDB supporting a community media initiative in 2001 was highly curious to the communities who had done battle with the City Council for many years. The interest was high because many would like to see such a thing in place, however whether they had the faith in the process to deliver it was another matter and they had expressed their doubts at the 2001 event.

Present at the 2002 event were those who intended submitting “Expressions of interest” in community television licenses; they needed to know what the new regulator would do and how it would organize its work. This event provided the BCI with a platform to present their schedules for the rolling out of licenses and the opportunity to explain what sort of process they would put in place to consult with the interest groups.

The morning was given to presentations including: Opening words from Farrell Corcoran, Head of Communications of DCU, and ex Chairperson of RTE; Celine Craig of BCI; presentations with short video screenings about CM by the Irish Deaf Society and by Pavee Point; followed by a Question and Answer session. After a tea break a panel of CTV activists presented their concerns and the floor was open to discussion.

The afternoon sessions addressed two themes: 1. Funding/licensing issues and 2. Content development. The latter was to allow content groups explore possibilities and develop plans. The ideas that generated from that session are still valid despite having been formed seven years ago and I expect they will emerge again at some point in the future. Their significance to this PAR project is the kind of process they adopted, the issues they raised, and the reasons why they dropped out of the DCTV process²⁰⁵. The issues for what we called Thematic Content Groups (TCGs) were multifarious. It is now clear that there was **and *clearly is no problem for activists in developing content except that it takes time, and this time cannot be invested without an appropriate process to bring that content to a channel for transmission, and which meets group's aims within the distribution process.***

Recognition of the developmental process is crucial to enabling participation of community and grassroots activists. The process with which the TCGs engaged that afternoon in 2002, the media awareness training developed by the Adult Education Working group (AEWG), and what is currently being worked on by the Drugs Response groups within DCTV at the present time (May 2009) are examples of developmental principles at work. The lull in participation after the 2002 workshop was also a matter of concern for the CM groups who need to question why the content groups failed to move forward and why their needs in doing so were not met. One clear and key point at this stage is that **the separation of the technocratic ‘institutional group’ from ‘content’ groups’ particularly at this time was destructive for the development of the channel in that it was the first step in the separation of the technical group from its base and the separation of key producers from the means of production. This meant the loss of the community groups’ and the TCGs voice on the ISG.**

²⁰⁵ See Appendix No. 45, 46, 47 – Thematic Content Groups

Dealing with failure and recognising blocks.

By the start of 2003 the impetus in the CTV campaign had dropped. The DCCF had failed to give the back-up that was within its power; at that time it seemed to be a group without an agreed set of principles or a view of its purpose in the life of the city. Nothing had happened to establish the channels at a national level and it wasn't clear how the BCI would approach the issue. Members of DCTV urged that we needed to 'get the community back on board' that we needed some way to address and meet real community issues around the building of CTV. Since mid 2002 the CTV groups had concentrated on the consultation process with the BCI. We reassessed the work we had done and felt that we had focused on the agenda from above more than on the community need – so we decided that a workshop should be organised purely for the community and should look at the issue of generating content and how we should go about it – a follow-on from the afternoon TCG sessions of the previous year.

I woke on the day of the “Developing Content for Community Television” workshop in October 2003 to news of widespread flooding, disruption of services, power cuts, all verified by the sound of the torrential rain and thunderstorm raging outside! But the fact of the huge turnout the previous year in identical weather conditions meant we couldn't really blame the weather. This workshop in 2003 was organised to support the involvement of community organisations and so particularly focused on developing content production and the formation of Thematic Content Groups (TCGs). A handful of people turned up, mostly community media activists. Where was the community?

The apparent answer was that community organisations were under pressure experiencing withdrawal of key funding such as community employment schemes and community development funds and had little time to engage with the CTV actions such as workshops

and focus groups. When asked “what about community television?” many would have responded in the same way Ghandi did to the question about British democracy – “it would be a good idea” and our community activists would add “but it’s aspirational”. Delays were a feature of the whole CTV process; the new authority (BCI) was slow to organize itself and the consultation process around the new policy did not begin until late in 2003. Sustaining activity aimed at developing community capacity for production in what was in reality a vacuum was near impossible, yet that is what we were trying to do. The community activists who were still around the DCTV initiative were urging the group to again get the community engaged in the project because they felt it slipping away. Dublin communities had not engaged in the DCTV project and it was difficult to gauge how communities in other parts of the country were responding; activists in each area continued to work with those with whom they had developed CTV groups.

In 2003 I had made concerted efforts as the CMF representative to get the DCCF to see the CMF as a means to have a voice and to get projects funded that would demonstrate what voice meant. The video documentation of the FSN’s ²⁰⁶Service for Commemoration and Hope in 2003 was one project fought hard for, as were the Media Awareness Training modules organised by the DCTV Adult Education Working Group in 2003/2004. These did have some measure of success in that they drew the DCCF activists’ attention to the DCTV issue. CMN’s role in this, as already discussed in Chapter 3 and 5, was to co-ordinate activities, source the expertise needed, and manage the funds – in short administrate for the projects. This underlines the community groups need for an agent to deal with media concerns whether it is internal to the organisation in the form of worker assignation to a CM role; or whether it is external - a CM operator such as a channel, or a facilitating network such as CMN. There were of course some within the DCCF who understood the

²⁰⁶ Family Support Network

issues and were engaged themselves in CM activity but some were focused on the problems with the DCE and the Director. In short this was a community engaged in a battle with the local authority, with factions working against one another and containing actively competing agendas.

The 2003 Workshop had been financed by the CMF pushing for funds from the DCCF; it was also supported by the City Arts Inquiry which provided the funds to bring a speaker from a key US CMC. Alongside the workshop we also brought his exceptional expertise to the attention of Local Authority figures and other significant projects that had not been exposed to this type of activity²⁰⁷. While this demonstration of faith ‘from above’ was poorly repaid in the 2003 workshop attendance, the other work we had scheduled with our visitor over the few days was useful to CTV groups and this in itself provided insight into how we should move forward.

A clear message to the project was the value from smaller activities that focused on different types of work rather than big events *focusing on the idea* of how communities could produce content. Then the PAR project began to take note of ways to produce information and deepen our understanding of the attitudes, the blocks, and the possibilities. At the same time we were disappointed and very conscious that we could also be decoyed back into the old clientele avenues – we were very aware that our whole lobby effort was and still is underwritten by seeking private meetings with ministers, civil servants, councilors, and power-brokers.

²⁰⁷ Dirk Koning, the Director of Grand Rapids Community Media Centre, Michigan, US. Dirk helped us in the same way George Stoney had done with the lobby around the Broadcasting Bill. those who did attend the workshop still acknowledge years later how inspiring Dirk’s contribution was that day, the contribution of a series of such speakers has sustained the CM project, to such an extent that we now try to use video documentation of such talks to help the dissemination of information afterwards and cope with the difficulties people have in attending events.

The only avenue when all fails is to look at the reasons for unexpected outcomes. Because of this fracturing of the community sector into different interests and somehow not ‘answering up’ to the expectation that they would welcome and engage with CTV; because the reasons for this did not remain static and had no single cause; we had to think again.

Burawoy’s (1998) account of how his extended case study on the failure of the Zambianization project to eradicate the colour bar policy in Zambia was used by those who opposed the governing elite’s interest is helpful in dealing with this fracturing of the research and its objectives. He found that his work was taken up in unexpected quarters and the use of the research actually upset his own theoretical basis:

This refutation, like any other, is not cause for theoretical dejection but an opportunity for theoretical expansion. The forces revealed in my publication efforts corroborated the view of the mining companies as flexibly adapting to government initiatives. Yet they also showed that the government did not always turn a blind eye to the continuation of the colour bar, that the interests of the postcolonial state were not as homogenous as I presented them, and that social forces are the contingent outcomes of social processes. . . .

In the positive mode, social science stands back and observes the world it studies, whereas in the reflexive mode social theory intervenes in the world it seeks to grasp, destabilizing its own analysis. (p.22)

From this viewpoint our assumptions were ‘destabilised’ when what we saw as the ‘collective’ rather than ‘individual’ mode of conducting our research didn’t work because the community didn’t ‘collectively show up’. Then we did revisit the fundamental questions. Burawoy’s analysis also corresponds with our experience of the campaign around the Broadcasting Bill. When the Bill was enacted in 2001 we found that most of our amendments had been incorporated. “Great” we thought; we also thought “but isn’t it odd - we thought they were stonewalling us – what’s going on?”

While it was clear that CTV had been included in an Act that was designed to dismantle and privatise the operations of the State Broadcaster and that we could be pawns in that agenda, the legislation faced us with an opportunity we had to grasp. It was as awkward a

situation to find ourselves in as when the community groups failed to turn up to form Thematic Content Groups like birds build nests.

Table No. 9 shows the profile of participation in workshops: when the state sector is represented or funding is a focus the attendance is high; when the focus is on the community groups it falls, particularly when groups are under pressure with funding cuts; attendance rises when the DCTV is about to receive its license (in Jan 2006) and there is once more the attraction of funds in the S&V scheme. Workshops are opportunities for networking, but attendance falls again in 2007 when funding is not the focus of the workshops, there is little direction and key people are absent. **What we are looking at are interest groups responding to the opportunity afforded by the movement of the dominant social group.**

7.4.2 Reviewing research question and strategies:

Breaking down the question

What are the community's media needs?

Community groups within DCTV – the AEWG

Owning the means of production and controlling decision-making

Breaking down the question

The lack of participation in the workshops in 2003 and the clear difficulty for Thematic Content Groups or as we now prefer to call them - CTV practitioners - to continue to operate without having some form of facilitative support to work with, demonstrated the importance of re-examining and developing the research question. Initially the research question had been very broad – what do we need to do to establish a channel? This began to break down and the question emerging was how could community groups access the channel? How could they become the producers? How could they make programmes? Do

they need to make programmes in order to control the content? How is ownership defined? How does it work? What does community ownership actually mean?

What *appeared* to be happening and the assumption that was made by some activists was that community groups could not prioritise participating in developing programmes of work towards a community television channel which did not in fact exist at the time. There was also no clear vision for these groups of how the CTV channel would support their production processes. **The assumption was also made that this would all be clear when the channel came into existence. The problem with this assumption is that it very much depends *how* the channel comes in to existence, what is its organisational form, and whether at that point there is an entry route for communities to access it. How communities can use community television depends on how all this is structured and on what premises those structures are built.**

It seemed that we had reached a cul-de-sac in mid 2003 and I was really dismayed. It was clear that maintaining a dialogue was important, but with whom? What form should it take? We had tried to develop a public and transparent process to establish community ownership and engagement in a community channel but it hadn't happened. So who was going to be part of this? At a time when it looked like a community channel could happen the community didn't show up. **This emphasized the need for the research process as the only process that would allow us reflect on where we had been and where we were going to; something that would help us ensure that our question would be a part of the development of the channel. But this view was not shared by everyone in the DCTV project.**

What are the community's media needs?

Within the PAR process we turned to working with smaller focus groups and interviews to gain a better understanding of what was going on for those groups and activists whom we knew were interested in DCTV.

One interviewee put the issue of dealing with media from the community organisation's viewpoint this way:

Interviewee: Now I subscribe to a number of channels like BBC for any reports launched over in Britain on the drugs issue. So if I'm able to see on the email if it's relevant to the project. So in that way we're trying to get a media watch. But to do the same thing with media here would cost a fortune because you have to pay for it. Even to get onto unions and into the websites it costs money, and you have to weight that. You need value for money and a lot of times its not here, and you have the like of the BBC who are doing that. A lot of what you would get from the BBC wouldn't be relevant but you can decide . . . It also gives you the follow on in that they'll talk about the news story but they'll also give the links to whoever's launching the report. So you go and follow the links down the line. And I think that that's something that's needed here in terms of media, because some of the projects out there are just too busy and yet there's a lot of research that would be relevant to them.

Margaret: Some groups have information officers. That seems to be their brief to bring to the organisation, that sort of stuff, but these can be massive organizations . . .

Interviewee: Exactly, so that they can allocate somebody like that and there's a need for them to allocate somebody to that. Now, you know in a project like this, we couldn't justify that expenditure. Maybe if all the projects in the area came together we could put a thousand euro a year to that, then maybe we could employ somebody to do that type of work. Or maybe even to look at what people can afford around media and then see what is available out there for whatever budget you have, I'm sure you'd get something, some sort of service. (Interview 13, 2005)

This is clearly stating a need for a coalition that supports each area of concern and these needs can be particular. This is where the idea of the CM operator could work – an entity that can meet the needs of groups operating in a given area, whether that be geographic or one of interest.

So a process is needed whereby groups can form either the CM operator they want or/and on an ongoing basis the relationship they need with existing CM operators. Such a process was often mentioned in conversations and interviews. One group had a long history of

engaging with local and commercial media. They understood this as a relationship they worked hard to build and wanted to develop these kinds of relationships with national media. But this interviewee also had a vision of how it could work with community television; this is the conversation we had:

Margaret: . . . need to have the opportunity to make considered programmes that convey what you need. You want to control them, to get the message out. The problem is that that could take a lot of time, energy . . . work. There may be other things that could possibly be done as well that would be easier for people, less taxing on their time and on their resources. While they'd like to do the long documentaries you might not have the resources to actually take that on board, they may need a range of other options too. So these are issues that groups would have to face once they see themselves taking on the whole thing of community television, how is that going to work out, do you think?

Interviewee: I think that groups will take responsibility for this, for example, if I wanted to put a programme on community television, we'll get in contact, and if I want an issue on [the channel] the point is that I should at least have my half of the work done before I approach community television. Do you know what I mean? So I should know what the programme is about, who would be expected to speak. I should have most of that worked out, and if not, have the background work done. We know with documentaries you don't want talking heads on the television all the time, we know this, so why can't we have our own camera and record what is relevant to the issue that we're trying to raise?

. . . I know too that if I want to get this message across somebody's not going to, say "I'll do that, you've done your bit" - I know if I want to get a programme on community television, I need to be doing the work.

And I think that the carrot/stick sort of situation - that if you put the work into it you've a greater chance of getting your stuff on community television - they're not going to do it for you. And the stick could be "well, ok we have a time limit; you have to have that back into us for a date". So what you could do then, I could come into you with two hours of video and whatever and interviews and stuff like that and what you do then is you can edit that down to your half hour, but that we would say, "oh that's not getting the message across, we feel this bit needs to be to be in it" so there would be an element, so most of the work will be done.

It's the editing that we need your skills for. We've done the interviews, these are the messages we want to get across, and maybe that we would have to you come in the first place and say "look we need to get this message across, what do we need to do?". So you may have a template, there may be a template already there, you may say, "ok for a programme we need this, we need background, we need history, we need interviews we need comments maybe even recommendations". So we could go away and do all that. When we come back, "now that's everything you asked for, where do we go now" so you edit it down to maybe a twenty minute programme and you say, "well there's what we've edited down", we say "no, you're missing the point - this was one of the connecting things and its been missed".

It's just a way of working that both sides can be comfortable with, but the other thing too, and lots more communities are doing it, is using drama as part of it, so that maybe, out of a twenty minute programme, there may be five minutes of that is a drama piece, highlighting the issue. It could be built on, that way (Interview13)

This is one vision and what this points to is a need for a process of creative engagement, it shares with the makers of the York Street Fire video the need to use media tools to gather and present evidence and to address what needs to be done.

Community groups have a lot to offer at all stages in developing a community channel, it means agreeing appropriate processes in which they can engage. If we don't do this we are missing out on creative solutions that are formed out of the tacit knowledge base that exists within the community; this is what the BCATV was built on; this is what this PAR attempted to bring to CTV development. It is also really important that the assumptions that are built into such visions are teased out – for example that the resources, skills, and the structures to facilitate the process he outlines, are in fact there. This is what DCTV needed to look at.

During the course of doing interviews it became clear that this dialogue was very necessary to understand the needs and to bring out peoples understanding of the conditions that would determine the practice of CM for them. This was the importance of the interviews as part of the research process – these ideas did not emerge through other methods.

Community groups within DCTV: the AEWG

Internal DCTV activities, how groups formed and how they found coalitions to develop CTV work, provided important lessons within the context of the research and the kinds of pressures they came under is a microcosm of other wider issues. Even within the context of DCTV such groups presented contradictions within their own coalitions and also, once they began activities, brushed up against broader fields and felt pressure from external forces - 'from above'.

The group that originally formed to develop DCTV included a number of community organisations²⁰⁸, some of which had common ground. The Adult Education Working Group (AEWG) was active for two years; with CMN’s support they developed and ran two Media Awareness Training Modules which they intended would be seen as a pilot, and also contributed to the ongoing development of plans for the channel²⁰⁹.

A substantial issue raised by this group about DCTV was that the Feasibility Study had proposed a structure for programming divided into three blocks: the community programme segment; the educational segment; and the local governance segment. The AEWG challenged this approach:

Comments from DALC

DCTV Education Segment:

The educational programming on the Community Television station should follow the model of existing adult and community education, which aims to provide education which responds to learner needs. The DCTV proposal document says about the education segment that “like most pre-planned educational material its form is relatively top-down and pedagogical”. In adult education the approach is bottom-up and material is pre-planned in consultation with learners. Community television can embrace this approach through a variety of means, for example focus groups with adult learners in order to plan a selection of courses, and direct phone or email contact with individual learners throughout a televised course. From its experience with adult learners, DALC could suggest some educational programme types which may be of interest:

- reading, writing and spelling
- social studies (the European Union, citizenship, voting)
- parenting skills (reading with children, school liaison)
- local history
- first aid

Learner interaction should be built into the programmes at the planning stage, and could be through telephone, email or learner video diaries.

(Response from DALC to DCTV)

²⁰⁸ Community groups who took part in the early years of DCTV were Community Response, DALC, IDS, Pavee Point, Rathdown Residents Association, St Vincent’s Trust, Tar Isteach. Pavee Point was prominent in giving support to the DCTV initiative, and shared a platform with CMN representing DCTV in the consultations with the BCI in 2003/4 to emphasise the place of community organisations in our process.

²⁰⁹ See Appendix No. 46

Their insistence that all educational programming should be community based if it was to be community television posed a problem for some DCTV ISC members who had concerns about firstly achieving a full schedule and how that was to happen; and secondly in terms of the variety and quality of the programmes they would air. The AEWG’s position was that mainstream education had no place in community television as it was top-down and its failures were the very reason why community and popular education had come into being.

This exposed differences between the Feasibility Study Consultant (who had devised the plan) and the AEWG. This tension between top-down and bottom-up approaches allowed other divisions – this time between differing bottom-up approaches – to come into play. One of these was around the control of the training modules and their content which was questioned by a CM Representative from the ISC who came into the AEWG at a late stage in its activities and after the training modules had taken place.

This was not a simple isolated issue but represents larger concerns about how the CM operator and the community organisations relate and how they see their relevant roles, rights and responsibilities. In this instance community education groups felt they had the right to determine the content of a DCTV Pilot Project without any reference to CM organisations who were facilitating CM training on an ongoing basis. They had misgivings about the approach taken to educational programming on the part of the DCTV organizing group, seeing this as a fundamental difference.

Provision of training and control of production were key elements of community media for both CM and community groups. NvTv was adamant that CTV training should be part of production and that the development of skills should be linked to providing programming

for the channel (Interview 2)²¹⁰. Otherwise the channel risks being diverted into providing disconnected type training that bears no relation to the work of the channel.

But the production in which the training happens must be within a community’s context if their groups are to benefit from it. Community groups need to build their capacity to engage with production which means ongoing training programmes but the scarcity of resources means that few engage with production in a way that makes a contribution to the building of skill within their communities. The difficulties have been dealt with in depth in Chapter 5 (see also Appendix No. 38: Tender to CR for engaged production).

Because of this need for the community base of production there is an inherent problem in the development of community radio stations and CTV studios which mean that these functions are often taken away from the community context into a different sphere – essentially into a ‘media paradigm’. **This then is a danger for the development of a CM operator - that it can be deflected from its real purpose; away from prioritising and meeting the community’s needs and an integral part of the social organizing that is happening – a clear fault-line that can derail the CM operator as a facilitator of its community’s communication needs.**

These problems are common to all CM operators no matter what media they prefer; the response of many has been to develop mobile units that can go to the communities.

Solutions developed in Grand Rapids CMC were of great interest to the Irish CM activists some of whom visited Grand Rapids as part of the Feasibility Study for DCTV; Dirk Koning gave details of their strategies and mobile units at the 2003 sessions in Dublin. Whitefriars and Aungier St Community Council (WAC) have focused on mobile resources; NEARfm has a

²¹⁰ also see NvTv Report in Appendix No 28

mobile broadcasting unit; and P5tv²¹¹ is currently examining the possibilities of mobile broadcasting strategies based on laptops and mobile phones.

Owning the means of production and controlling decision-making

While technical solutions are important we found that the problem is more a question of who controls the technologies. One community group made this issue a core plank of their structures:

Margaret: what’s always an issue is culture clashes – like with independent film-makers and people with media backgrounds, coming into communities and wanting to, or thinking they can make programmes about them – have you had experience of that how did you find it and were there ways around it?

Interviewee: Stepping outside the media specific, that’s a start - there are always problems. The latest incarnation of it is in all our community structures, now unapologetically we have 50% plus 1 on every committee of community members. That’s in our constitution and that means there’s always a majority of community, the community can never be outvoted, and so whereas before that was a quiet approach its now enshrined in our articles of association of any companies we create and we just go with that to all the agencies – that’s the deal, if you don’t want to play that game there’s no way. . . . That’s the core mission statement that we’re very, very clear about, that the agencies are in to facilitate communities, not the other way around. The community isn’t there to fulfill the HSE brief; the HSE is there to support the community brief. And envisaging a clash of interest, or in the case of a clash of interest the community will always dominate or whatever. . . .

The difficulty is that it’s the same pattern in the paying versus voluntary scenario, the person who is the enthusiast or the expert, whichever, is in there more, they’re present more, so ...ownership almost slips to them by default, unless there’s a mechanism, they almost evolve ...until an alarm bell goes off and there’s . . .again things . . .

If people would understand it’s the ownership clauses [in contracts] so if there’s an ownership on a piece of work that’s jointly done, that is straight to where the ownership lies. I can assure you the media people will have read that, the community people mightn’t have read it, but the people who are in there know to read the contract and then they can make a very conscious decision whether to go on, they know the reasons, so all those things are nipped in the bud.

(Interview 17)

²¹¹ One of Navan CTV’s projects was to build their own OBU, which they use for local sports and events.

This was part of the problem that lay behind the issue the ISC CM representative had with the AEWG – the AEWG controlled the training, the training content, and the funding, the role of the CM operator was not clear. These difficulties could not be addressed within the timeframe of that particular set of actions, but they need to be addressed because they are at the core of differences between those organizing around CM and those organizing around community.

The conflict was destructive and despite efforts to keep it together the group began to fall apart. The issue for the AEWG was that they *did* want to control the training; they asked CMN to co-ordinate the funding and source the trainers. We did this as a research action expecting that the activity would provide the DCTV initiative with the basis for a working group that could continue and develop the Community Education aspect of the channel.

The position taken by the DCTV ISC member that training should happen under the auspices of a CM channel was a problem for the AEWG. They were happy for the training to take place in one of the AEWG group’s premises and it is not a given that were a DCTV studio available at the time that they would have chosen to use it instead. CMN had little difficulty with that aspect but we did have a problem when the group decided to take the editing to a local third level college. Editing facilities were made available by one of the lecturers involved in DCTV at the time and also took part in the AEWG. Since CMN had participated on the grounds that this was CM training, taking it into a third level institution seemed to miss the point. For the adult education community groups it was great to see participants walking into a third level institution and they were very happy with what they saw as progression. This however poses a problem for those CM groups who find the influence of media studies destructive to community media and who want to see trainees staying in the community and contributing to enabling voices in that context rather than ‘moving on and up’.

This problem re-occurs regularly – the most recent example being within a group whose young participant became interested in being involved in their media work. Having spent six months on a FAS course he returned wanting to work within media industry modes and processes that do not fit with the community development processes operating within the group and through which they had already successfully made video productions.

These very same issues also appeared in 2006 when one of the main participating groups in the AEWG entered the Programme Development Workshops (PDWs) for DCTV’s Section 40 Needs Assessment. These participants were supported through a series of workshops that took place through the autumn and were designed to introduce groups to production and to help them approach the issue of funding if needed. This group found the media processes daunting, the demands and nature of the S&V Funding Scheme prohibitive, and they withdrew from the process registering their disappointment - as did a significant number of community groups.

The interests within the AEWG were divergent:

- participants progressing into mainstream education is one of the targets for the labour type funding programmes such as CE and CSP that the community education programmes depended on;
- The local college were interested in demonstrating community interaction with their facilities;
- CMN wanted to operate as a media centre rather than an agency doing event management in terms of training.
- CM groups saw provision of CM training as their area of expertise.

These kinds of conflicts recur and so the terms of how the projects are run need to be sorted out with these in view. The problem is that when there are control agendas and

people are operating within time and funding constraints the openness that is needed for the coalition is not always there.

The conflicting aims of the participating groups in the AEWG – i.e., CMN, the CM ISG member, the adult education groups, and the College, are symptomatic of the difficulty the DCTV project faced, and this underlies the tendency to need to build the technical organisation – almost as a refuge from these issues. But because the community needs to have training and production within the spaces where they are dealing with issues, this problem won't go away and will re-appear as it did in the PDW process. Groups felt let-down by the lack of support after the PDW process but there were also different aims amongst actors within groups and these needed to be clarified. Groups needed to decide what sort of supports they needed to fulfill their project aims and where these should/could fit in to their operations. At various stages it was clear that groups floundered when their own members did not take responsibility for their involvement in CTV.

7.4.3 Meeting the broader field of force. . .

Stresses on participating organisations
Collaborating with the educational institutions
Who fits in a coalition?
Experience of vertical collaborations
The Community Media Forum (CMF) as a coalition

Stresses on participating organisations

Once the AEWG group formed and began operating, it also became a focus for other areas of activity. This is symptomatic of how the organisation is part of a broader field of force and shows how we had to respond to both pressures and opportunities from above. The

AEWG was emerging as a defined group starting to operate projects, and which had articulated a preferred approach to the DCTV’s plan for educational programming. I looked to them to articulate these positions and when there was a call for submissions to a Select Committee on Education and Science I went directly to them with the job of drafting the submission and responding to the invitation to present to the Committee. While AEWG happily participated in and proofed the submission it was in fact the CM activists who ended up drafting the document - Niamh Farren of NEARfm/ Media Co-op and me. Eventually it was Jack Byrne of Near FM who presented to the Select Committee on behalf of DCTV because both Niamh and I were out of the country.

Again this situation was an expression of the need for an agent to act as facilitator and advocate with specific CM expertise. Reasons for this were partly that the demands of the advocacy role on behalf of CM proved too much for the members from the community organisations to deal with; but more pertinently **there was a conflict – not so much of interest but of representation. A number of the group members were themselves making submissions and presenting to the Select Committee on Education and Science on behalf of their own organisations and therefore could not present on behalf of the DCTV AEWG.**

This was an important moment to achieve visibility for CTV and to make the case for the role CM plays but what the situation exposed was that while some of the groups were actively using CTV and developing their work around it, it did not feature in their submissions. They were not ready to take CM forward as an integral part of their agenda. This is something that might change but the situation highlighted yet another problem for the interest groups. Whose interest would come first? The ‘double mandate’ that was emerging for community organisations was proving hard to manage – at one and the same time they wanted CM to be based within the community, needed to be in control of the

agenda, and yet could not hold either the funding, the co-ordination, or the advocacy necessary.

NALA is a case in point – this large NGO, the National Adult Literacy Association, had worked hard to establish a television programme running on the state broadcaster channel.

The response NALA gets to this series in terms of adults seeking literacy support is more than they ever got from any other strategy and therefore media is a valued tool for them.

NALA was a founder member of DCTV but their status and activity as a major NGO meant that **although they continued a media strategy within their organisation they could not extend themselves to work around CM or DCTV, either in terms of developing the AEWG or the content.** NALA has always supported CM and they negotiated with RTE to allow all the CTV channels broadcast their series of programmes “Read Write Now” but they had severe difficulties in giving time or resources to developing CTV other than this (very valuable and much appreciated, it must be said) donation of content.

What this does is to push the CM operator into a separate place from the community organizers and this means it runs the risk of replicating the relationship of mainstream media to an indiscriminated ‘mass audience’ - the media paradigm that exists within capitalism. This is where the efforts of community organisations to engage with the CM operators are of primary importance for a number of reasons, of which two stand out:

- The social organizing that exists in communities is the self-organising of the working class and so indicates the appropriate context for CM activity.
- The knowledge that is generated in the self organizing of the working class is CM ‘content’.

The experience of the AEWG makes clear that coalitions of organisations (whether geographical or interest groups) probably works well and brings benefits to smaller groups.

The success of the AEWG was due to the fact that the groups:

- operated within a local area in the Inner city,
- had an interest in developing links with one another,
- all had a community adult education programme,
- the people who were involved in the AEWG were trainers from the organisation

The difficulties for the AEWG were;

- Seeing DCTV as a CM operator and recognizing the role of the CM operator,
- Managing funding directly for production and media training
- Co-coordinating the needs of media activity in terms of expertise and resources.

The experience of the AEWG was that their vision of CTV was not the same as the core DCTV ISC – but some of this was because their aims at that point were divergent. What the DCTV ISC saw as a priority was to get hours of programming ready for broadcasting; the AEWG wanted to use innovative methods in adult education programmes with various aims of empowerment, building people’s capacity for participation in democracy, and improving the quality of life of their participants.

The focus within the DCTV Committee on building the technical organization, the license application process, and proving that they could find the funds and fill the schedules in the ‘business plan’, was alienating for these groups and was the main reason why they began to drift away.

It is at this point that it also became clear that the PAR project was the only initiative that saw its purpose as facilitating the participation of community organizations in the DCTV building process. When I was incapacitated by serious family problems in late 2005, there

was no-one to take my place and ensure these groups were kept in the loop. The small numbers involved in the DCTV initiative and this dependence on a key person was a problem for the PAR but it also reflects the difficulties in maintaining coalitions that are trying to develop new structures rather than operate in pre-existing ones.

It was clear to us in CMN that groups were very happy to engage on a whole range of levels with CM initiatives and with video production, so what was going wrong with the process of building DCTV? Why were the community groups not engaging? The assumption we made in 2003/4 was that their lack of participation was because the community channel was not there for them to use, that we were asking them to devise programme ideas and schedules for a channel that did not exist – this was only partly true. ***What was now apparent however was that the attention of core CTV activists was on finding the funding for the channel, and this meant that there was nothing in place to support a process that would maintain the involvement of the community groups and, besides this PAR project, there was no will to do so.*** Some of this may have been due to small numbers, but it was also part of the decisions that were being made. There were gaps in providing what was necessary to maintain the input of those organizations on the ground. It was of course in those gaps that something else happened - other interests either closed the gaps or took over control of those areas.

Collaborating with the education institutions:

For many CM organisations working with educational institutions is difficult and it is no less so for the academics. Channel 7 in the UK is an example of a CTV channel that signed up to a partnership with a local educational institution and found themselves making teaching programmes for the institute; after a painful period they had to buy the channel out of the partnership, which in turn forced them into commercial work to pay for it (CH7, communication).

Even when intentions are the best there are major problems. As part of the DCTV Needs Assessment and for this PhD project I interviewed a lecturer who had been previously involved in CTV and was very supportive. He was unable to give any commitment to co-operation or identify possible areas for co-operation between DCTV and the institution except for speculative ideas. There appeared to be no meeting ground for DCTV and the institution in DCTV's start-up phase (Interview 22).

The difficulties for educational institutions engaging with community production initiatives are substantial unless they fall in line with the institution's programme. This doesn't always dovetail with the needs on the ground for community television or for that matter for community organizations:

Lecturer: I think DCTV would be very good, I think again people don't know much about it, so there's no real broader awareness of it within the institution and it could be potentially a good reciprocal arrangement in terms of our engaging with community and also contributing to DCTV and in turn DCTV providing a higher profile for us.

MG and in what way do you see DCTV providing an opportunity for the school to engage with community? (Pause) In what sort of way would you envisage that happening?

Lecturer: simply by first of all us giving content to DCTV- so in that way that's a direct contribution for a start, the other thing is that a lot of our research would be around issues like social exclusion, digital divides, migration and so on and so forth and that a number of those issues could then be covered in television programmes or documentaries or whatever the case may be that could be aired on DCTV.

As with Channel7 this means the CTV provides a broadcast channel for the institute. The difficulties for the college are clear in this view:

lecturer: its literally about time, students come first basically so it's education is what we're looking for, so education has to come first, if there's time and resources outside of that to contribute to something like DCTV then of course that'd be desirable but to be honest most of the questions you've just asked me are just pure conjecture, talking about stuff that's down the line, I can't answer them they're purely speculative.

When we spoke there was clearly a divergence between the kinds of ideas that DCTV was exploring such as a one or three person studio like those used by CAN TV and MNN and the kinds of facilities the institution would support:

MG: you would see something like a three-person studio as having no educational role altogether?

Lecturer: no it wouldn't do, it wouldn't in terms of the level we operate on because we do multi-camera studio, studio lighting, documentary, narrative documentary, docu-drama and a three-person studio is just – it's static, it doesn't play a role.

MG: Ok. That's very important for us to be able to understand where the dividers are, because in terms of how you perceive your work and what your facilities are being used for and what you see as necessary for what you do – it's very important to have these conversations.

Lecturer: a small studio is used for straight pieces to camera which people will learn nothing from in terms of training people for industry, in terms of training people creating critical theory and the creation of narratives or documentaries or whatever, you need far more flexible facilities.

This view did not include the creative potential of MNN's one person studio where one person could utilize a number of inputs to create a programme with a whole range of different materials such as still photos, graphics, video and audio tape, as well as 'person to camera'. This may well point to a difference between approaches of institutions in different fields such as secondary schools, art colleges, and media schools, where secondary schools and arts courses put more emphasis on individual creative products as opposed to media industry specialisms and job demarcations.

There were also clear differences in approaches to planning:

Lecturer: there is a view to having as much community engagement as possible, one building will actually be a...not a community outreach centre as such, but getting people in from the local area running short courses and so on and so forth, so it is very much part of the broader strategic vision.

MG: one of our members who is part of the local residents association was talking about the possibility of setting up some studio . . .

Lecturer: We would obviously have to have a television studio comparable with the one we currently have whether it's possible to somehow share time in that studio, you know that's an unanswerable question. We just don't know because we've problems with – we need to increase student numbers, we need to optimise the use of space and so on and we don't know and I don't know how the studio would be timetabled next year. It would be just wasting your time to make some speculation about how it would be used by the time we get into the new development.

The difficulty here is that while the institution would not be able to discuss how their studio could be used, communities and their organizations need to work in a developmental way to ensure that the resource will fit with their needs – so without some engagement in the

planning discussion there is little that DCTV could gain. Yet the interviewee put a high value on interaction with the community:

Lecturer: but also there is the possibility now, again massive conjecture all round but there's the possibility for interaction . . . between our students and people from outside from community groups and so on and . . . in terms of media literacy , media literacy production training, short courses, where you could have the type of facilities that we use , you know, medium size studios, multi-camera studios and so-on and students, either post-graduate or undergraduate working with people from community groups in joint training roles, so that's definitely something that could be explored, but there isn't any great advantage, it misses out on a lot off potential if you simply have people coming in from outside using a space and going away again, and well, and not integrating . . .

This obviously offers some ground for interaction but it did not meet any of DCTV's needs at the time. While the institution saw itself in a relationship with the community, this was understood as members of the community entering the institution and participating in its education programme. This might support community's use of media and feed into DCTV but if the community use of media is totally different then can this be useful? Generally CM organizations such as community radio found that approaches to media used in third level colleges are geared towards independent production or mainstream media methodologies and do not fit with community development practice - a position that was put by Jack Byrne at the Dublin Independent Media Centre Press Conference in 2004.

I see no change in this situation since I was a student 30 years ago, again in 1996, and in 2001 when we approached other institutions such as DCU and NCAD about use of their editing facilities and provision of training for community television initiatives. Both had sympathetic people who were well-placed in their academic hierarchies; DCU in particular also houses a campus radio station so it is not unfamiliar with community media²¹². While educational institutes may appear to be natural allies for community media when CM seeks supports for training it emerges that the more ingrained problems consistently reassert

²¹² Dublin Weekend radio lost its community broadcasting license in 2006 but is due to go back on air as DCU FM this year (2009). Campus radio stations are also established in Cork, Limerick and Galway. See Vol.2 doc Title

themselves: colleges serve those who can afford education both financially and culturally. To ask them to engage with developing CM pushes them beyond what they understand their brief to be. Educational Institutions are not likely to provide supports to community media in the early and difficult setting up days, whatever about later on when the channel is up and running and a viable platform for content distribution that will bolster the college’s education programmes and their students profiles.

Who fits in a coalition?

The issue of what groupings would make an alliance for community media had been a source of disagreement amongst the CTV activists – during the Feasibility Study commissioned by the DCCF and DCE in 2001 the consultants showed a preference for large NGOs²¹³. These groups had the capacity to produce community television, in short they had funding, and it was assumed that they also had problems with mainstream media access. This was part of the same need to make alliances with institutions in an effort to answer the question “where is the money to come from?” Some feel the problems with these strategies are that large NGOs are driven by funding agendas rather than facilitating ‘grassroots voice’; that some organizations form ‘industries’ rather than movements; and that institutions’ priorities are clearly defined in their own interests.

The experience of coalition building in the CTV project bears some of this out. Dochas is the largest development NGO umbrella group. Despite the interest of key organisers in allying with CTV, Dochas pulled back at the last minute from sharing a lobby strategy with CTV around the BFB²¹⁴ in 2003 without giving a clear explanation. Educational establishments seek opportunities for their students, their resources are designated to raise revenue in out-of-term time and they see their community brief as facilitating local people to enter

²¹³ See Feasibility Study, List of Interviewees in Appendix No 23

²¹⁴ Broadcasting (Funding) Bill 2003

their courses. The last is no bad thing in itself - but it begs the question why it is not happening in the first place and why unusual or extraordinary strategies have to be devised in order that local people can attend courses in the college around the corner. Given that this is the case it is not surprising that the strategies for engagement with the community are then determined by the interests of the institution and not those of the community.

While it would seem feasible that coalitions could be established that met the needs of communities, NGO's, educational institutions, etc., and also met CTV needs, the reality is that this takes time – it is in fact another developmental process. The experience of community radio shows that it was the longer established stations that could develop such relationships (Unique Perspectives, 2003).

Experience of vertical collaborations

The Community Radio Forum (2003) research identified two areas of collaborative work amongst the stations:

- between community-based and other local bodies
- Between these local bodies, community radio and state sector bodies.

I would re-define these as horizontal coalitions with peer organisations and those ‘from below’ and vertical collaborations with power structures ‘from above’ which changes the formulation somewhat. The CRF research found that their second type was only functioning within the longer established stations. The research suggested there was a lot of potential in this kind of collaboration but it stops there.

The approach also appears to look at collaboration in a limited sense and therefore cannot engage with the very real difficulties experienced in building coalitions within the sector itself.

A serious difficulty for those trying to develop coalitions within the community sector and particularly within a very small CM sector is when you bump up against the other groups who are also trying to ‘get connected’ on the doorstep of the funders -/Councillors/TD’s/ Civic office/ Department of Community, or Communications – all seeking funds from the same pool. To avoid ‘bumping into’ other CM activists in this way is difficult – but it is clearly managed all the time and constitutes more ‘hidden transcripts’ to be negotiated.

As part of its development strategy DCTV attempted to develop coalitions across a number of sectors - state agencies and authorities, educational institutions, and ‘community and voluntary sector’. All initial approaches to institutions met with cool responses, and while there was interest there was little commitment. This became evident in a number of actions carried out over the period 2001-2005: a “Lord Mayor’s Breakfast” that sought to attract seed funding for DCTV but produced no substantial links, relationship or funds²¹⁵; the year-long set of presentations made by the DCTV Committee Members to all the Local Area Committees in the four Dublin Counties²¹⁶ throughout 2005/6 was an exhaustive effort but came to little. The proposal developed by DCTV to submit to the Protocol Committee was defeated by not only the complexities of the estimates process but also by internal divisions and conflicts of interest within DCTV.

Councillors showed an enthusiasm for the DCTV initiative which was cross-party; the same went for the Area Managers. One Area Manager saw DCTV as a key support in reaching lone parents in his area – a group he wanted to see linked to the services and supports he was organizing. His enthusiasm was such that with this sort of backing it seemed very conceivable that we could get funding from the local authority. A Brazil CTV had provided a

²¹⁵ See Appendix No. 25 Lord Mayor’s Breakfast report

²¹⁶ Fingal, Rathdown, South County Dublin, and City of Dublin

working model for such a coalition that deserved examining²¹⁷. So it is surprising that this year-long work yielded no results. This failure had long-term consequences for the new channel – and as a result other CTV channels in the country.

Internal conflicts in DCTV about the strategy to approach the councils contributed to the failure. A short time after the first failure to get our proposal through the estimates the relationship with the local authority was re-developed along very much reduced lines in terms of the amount of support sought. The initial proposal was for €200,000 for start-up activities and when this was presented to the Protocol Committee of the City Council, which would be responsible for presenting proposals to the estimates process –one of the three Councilors on the Protocol Committee said “Well, this seems to fit into our budgets”. So given all that positivity, why did this particular initiative go wrong?

The problem was within DCTV itself and on almost every front there were difficulties in agreeing an approach to authorities – whether it was the approach to the platform provider Ntl, with the local authority, or with the BCI. The problem was also not new; it had its roots in both the competition for resources and funding and the self-perceptions of the community media organizations involved. What was becoming evident was that there was a fragile relationship between the CM groups in the City despite the efforts to build solidarity in the CMF and within DCTV itself.

The Community Media Forum (CMF) as a Coalition

Despite the fact that groups who came together to form the CMF appeared to broadly share the same philosophical approach there were a whole range of difficulties. There were initially four working groups within the CMF – community television, community radio, community use of the internet, and community print and photography. These followed the

²¹⁷ I brought this information back from an international seminar in 2001 (Report on TV Nova Seminar to DCTV).

CM typologies that CMN had established in its prior project work and CMN was the leading group establishing the CMF.

What becomes evident in the CMF process are the difficulties for groups whose primary purpose is to survive to generate CM within the framework of their community be it geographic or one of interest. For CMN because one of our primary purposes was to encourage and create alliances we were not stepping outside of our organisational culture as were other groups for whom this kind of activity was not only alien but posed very awkward issues almost immediately. It was easier when we sat as a broad-based group looking at the DCDB’s Strategic plan and addressed the question of how community media should be supported and encouraged within the plan – that wasn’t too bad - we had something to work to.

But to sign up to and engage with a programme of activities generated by the working groups was harder; for a whole range of groups participating in the DCCF this demanded they step outside of (or at least adapt) their own organizational culture. The groups that could cope were those who could put forward long-standing and experienced activists to represent them within the CMF. Problems arose when these representatives needed to hand over to newer activists who lacked know-how and experience.

Of the four CMF groups established in 2002:

- ***the Print and Photography Working Group (PPWG)*** never completed a plan, despite the efforts of the Printwell Co-op who bravely carried the flag. This was an indication of the scattered nature of the media despite their very widespread and popular use. This says a lot about the way CM happens and is probably more than anything else akin to the issues felt by the AEWG – *where the media use is so integrated into the organisation that they don’t see it as CM themselves*. What

disappear here are the kind of supports, and the frequency of their provision that Co-ops like Printwell and other community friendly organisations actually provide.

- ***the Community use of the Internet Working Group (CIWG)*** was divided early on by the approach taken by members from the Wheel who charged the community entrance fees for a major event they organised as part of the CMF. CMF members objected to this but it had been allowed by the DCE who, in the agenda for an e-city perhaps identified community ISPs as (at best) competition. One key ISP in the city who had provided supports to the community sector for many years refused to pay at the door and was not allowed into the event. These kinds of divisions were too deep to paper over and still carry on.
- ***The Community Radio Working Group (CRWG)*** kept a low profile for the first year but began to work to develop networking between Dublin’s community radio stations. The key organisation from the community radio sector in this whole initiative was NEARfm. Jack Byrne, NEARfm’s founder and Chairperson, was also very supportive of the community television initiative and as a community broadcaster was also a member of the CTV Group. In the initial stages the community radio and CTV WGs collaborated to develop the CTV agenda.
- ***The Community Television Working Group (CTVWG)*** this was the driving force and the most active; it drove the Feasibility Study for DCTV and was intent on setting up the channel. Once the channel was established of course those activists who had been central mainstays to the CMF moved on into DCTV and their energies were consumed there. CMN’s crisis was also a problem since our organisation had been the main promoter behind the CMF.

CMF representation to DCCF: When the co-ordination of the CMF and its representation to the DCCF was handed over the new representative being a worker in a busy community radio station could not put the same amount of time and energy into the initiative. The cross media alliance that we tried to establish (and what CMN had been used to) was also not easy for the community radio group to maintain within the CMF. The voluntary CMF representative whose expertise was within one CM field (radio) did not feel happy about being asked to represent other media at the DCCF. The difficulty of finding a suitable representative for DCTV was complicated by the influx of independent film-makers who had little involvement in community activity. Subsequent poor choice of representatives to the DCCF proved embarrassing for DCTV.

Getting involved in a new push for financial support for DCTV presented difficulties for organizations already in receipt of funding from these authorities. Managing conflicts of interest around DCTV's funding agenda and strategy was difficult and this was ultimately to steer the direction the organization took and its dependency on the S&V fund in the formational years 2006-2008. Clearly organizations that were already in receipt of funding from authorities – and in particular from Dublin City Council and the VEC - would be concerned about and affected by DCTV's approach to these institutions. These interests being active both within the CMF and the DCTV were destructive and meant serious delays in achieving support for the new channel and progressing the developmental work.

7.5 The fields of force that DCTV exists within

7.5.1 What forces direct the development of community television?

7.5.2 (A) Activity around needs

7.5.3 (B) Building the technical organisation:

7.5.4 (C) The lobby activity – responding to pressures from above

7.5.1 What forces direct the development of community television?

I want to show here how the *process* evolved through *time* and the *changes* that occurred - which is to look at how the PAR process worked in a developing movement network. I map the forces that pushed and pulled the development of community television in its formative stage and along the vertical progression of the community media movement through time, and the impact of the horizontal activity of networks. In this continuum three levels of activity interact:

- A: Activity around needs: coming from the needs of grassroots organisations, essentially pressure from below;
- B: Building the technical organisation that will run the community television channel;
- C: The lobby activity that is necessary to construct the conditions for community television and the pressure from above as the legislators, regulators, and institutional stake-holders create boundaries, apply limits, and standards, raising the bar and controlling access.

Both A and C are forces whose pushes and pulls impact on the formation and development of B. Here I look at the points where shifts occurred, how these forces push the initiative from one point to another and the motivations behind these.

The PAR is particularly aligned to the grassroots organisations and their perceptions in recognition of the formative power of pressure from above and the purpose of the research project was to bring the needs of grassroots organisations to influence the development of the core organisation.

7.5.2 (A) Activity around needs

The recent history of community television (CTV) development in Ireland is part of a wider movement striving to establish a range of community media to support community communication and development needs. As we have seen Ireland is a long way behind other countries - even if the community media initiatives in those countries are having their own troubles. It is important however to note the general trend to see CM as necessary, as in the recent Austrian Government decision to award funding of one million per year to community media. However the struggle that has taken place to establish CTV in all these countries is a clear expression of ‘needs from below’ even if these present problems such as those described in this thesis and particularly those in Chapter 5.

One of the purposes of the PAR project was to clarify what community organisations needed and wanted and to see if there was a fit between that and their capacity to produce CTV. The process we went through with the questionnaires and the difficulty with trying to conduct an audit of resources with the sector confronted us with the need to ensure our knowledge production was developed as a part of our developing coalition with community organizations. The effort to build solidarity was complicated by the conflicts of interest the process of building DCTV brought up and the gaps it exposed between existing CM organizations and the community groups. In the research process I found coalitions that worked well; some in DCTV worked for a while - the AEWG and the Local/Global Group (see Appendix No. 45) were enthusiastic and productive until they found they were blocked

by either lack of resources or incompatibility with what was happening in DCTV. Some coalitions were for once-off projects; others were sustained by committed individuals who were drivers in those projects. Most CM operators have this kind of input from activists (Unique Perspectives, 2003), (Dichter, 2005). Many of the activists involved in these initiatives collaborated with this research project, they have fed into the knowledge production this PAR represents and are very much part of the network of activists concerned to build solidarity in the community media movement – specifically within the Community Television Association (CTA) (see Appendix No. 48). In particular there is the participation of CM groups in Leitrim, Cork, Navan, Dundalk and Belfast, as well as the Dublin Groups²¹⁸.

The funding that is available does not recognize developmental aspects of this work but it is only where the community development interest is equally present with the community media operator that we see the kind of interaction that supports a community’s use of media to address its needs²¹⁹.

²¹⁸ a number of case studies of these organisations are included in Appendices

²¹⁹ Community radio stations pioneered a qualitative survey methodology, approved by the BCI in 2000, which engages the community in evaluations of the station and forms an ongoing process for needs assessment. DCTV completed a successful training scheme for community organizations in 2009 and has developed a studio that can be operated by one person with a floor manager. They are also beginning a facilitated process with Drugs Response community groups and developing policy to address the need for entry points to the channel for community groups. Under the BCI’s Broadcasting Support Scheme (CBSS) DCTV conducted an outreach and evaluation project in 2009.

7.5.3. (B) Building the technical Organisation

Demands on CTV activists
How long will it take?
Who does the work?
Capacity and money

Demands on the CTV activists

What consistently dogged efforts to establish CTV was the demand to prove its viability before its existence, before any trials. Along with this came demands on activists to engage in a range of activities to prove their competencies:-

- production – to create programmes to prove competence²²⁰
- planning - to devise management structures and prove funding commitments for particular models of a community television channel²²¹.
- Advocacy and lobbying: engagement in the policy debates and arenas to promote the community television agenda²²².

These demands involved a diverse range of skills and capacities, not all found in each activist or even groups of activists; there are compatibility issues between the different sorts of activity – creating tensions between actors who are used to thinking and acting in different ways because of their practice albeit they had the same end.

²²⁰ See Open Channel website: <http://homepage.eircom.net/~openchannel/> ; CMN website www.cmn.ie ; Tracking 1996-2000

²²¹, see The Way Forward, Open Channel 1995; Building Community Through Television : An Action Plan for a Dublin Community Channel; 2002,

²²² See in Appendices: “Community Television – where does it fit in” Ó Siochru and Gillan 2001; Community Media Forum (CMF), various position papers to Dublin City Development Board 2001; (CMF) submission to the New forum on Broadcasting 2002; and actions of the CMF, the incipient CTA, etc throughout the consultation process with the Regulator IRTC and BCI.

How long will it take?

The difficulties for community organizations in engaging with CM has been noted by all community broadcasters: CANTV conducted a needs assessment five years after it began broadcasting and this process supported a range of innovations that increased the participation of community organizations in the channel (CMN, 2006). In Ireland the Community Radio Forum (CRF/CRAOL) commissioned research in 2003 to explore how their stations activities related to the community development sector. The research concludes:

. . . there are three overarching factors that serve to distinguish stations in terms of community development: first, their length of time as community radio stations, second, their origins in terms of the principles and ethos adopted – which is also based on the persons and groups who played a part in the establishment of stations – and third, whether they are based in a rural or urban environment (Unique Perspectives, 2003, p. 38)

These factors contain a multiple of variables and while acknowledging the importance of the activists this formulation does not allow exploration of how they developed the initiative, or deal with the struggles that took place to establish stations.

The timeframe for engagement with community organizations corresponds with CANTV’s experience and would suggest that the groupings involved in establishing such channels did not themselves come from the community development sector; or were a step removed from the organizations operating on the ground; or were CM as opposed to community development activists. Their origins suggest that the groups and people involved had a strong kinship with the CD sector’s principles but that their focus was on the building of the technical organisation. This points to a key issue for all social movements – whether the establishment of a technical organization is prioritized over the needs of the movement (Fox-Piven F. &., 1979).

How long will it take, what will it demand of the community in terms of time and energy, and will the technical organization be there to serve a function at the right time? What is

the community’s investment in this entity? Our communities will need to be well convinced that the time and effort they are asked to put into community television has valuable outcomes for their community. These issues are held in common by all CM activists and operators.

DCTV launched in 2008 after one year of test transmissions; in May 2009 community activists organizing around drug use were the first to call for a meeting to discuss an appropriate process of engagement with the channel. This may represent a quicker response by the community organizations than has been noted by either CRAOL or CANTV²²³. That these groups were participants in this PAR project meant there was an underlying activity that promoted and supported their involvement.

Who does the work?

The motivating forces for drivers of CTV initiatives are often obscured by their media activity. Geoghegan’s (2000) concept of the axial activist whose understanding of their own cosmology is key to their involvement is a useful framework to understand community development activists; individuals also play an important role in developing and maintaining CM.

NavanCTV²²⁴ operated very well for many years; at the core was a family who had been reared in the ham radio tradition by a father who himself had constructed his own television set in the 1950s with parts obtained from depots in the North. These are enthusiasts and independent film-makers (Interview10).

²²³ As already stated CAN TV did not conduct its survey until five years after launching

²²⁴ Now P5tv

In Cork the drive for CTV was led by individuals who had emerged from communities that faced extreme difficulty and who had developed their media skills in tandem with their community activity. These activists were independent film-makers who developed video production work with community organisations in the area (Interview 1, 14).

NvTv was developed by a group of independent film makers who had developed a community arts space in Belfast in the midst of a war. Again these were enthusiasts and independent film-makers struggling to make a community space in a divided city (Interview2).

The people who want to give their time and energy to a community project are a key part of what pushes community television into being as with other forms of community organizing; the 'champions' are there, easily found, at the start of every project. This often constitutes a problem in the development of coalitions and movements in that issues of power and control are often slid over and dutifully ignored from within (Dichter, 2005) (Gibbons, 2007), (O'Siochru & Mulcahy, A Needs Assessment of Community Television in Cork, 2008). But there is no doubt that these initiatives would not exist without the ongoing commitment of these individuals. While friendship or family groups may be the core organisers in small towns such as Navan, the kind of coalitions developed in cities such as Dublin and Cork also have longstanding issues of power and identification in the networks. This became very clear during the early days of conflict within the DCCF. Issues around centralisation and power hierarchies arise regularly and when the activist group is small these become highlighted.

When a community radio activist at a CMF meeting in 2002 stated that "there is a perception about that CMN is an elite" I was upset because I understand the term 'elite' to mean there is an effort to take control and there is also an implication of strivings for personal power. At that stage I was giving a huge amount of overtime to the Community

Forum (DCCF) and had been elected to a community representative role; the term ‘elite’ clearly undermined the integrity of my position. The precarious position of CMN as a poor organisation also certainly left me feeling powerless; the fact that CMN’s situation was well known and there was little others could do about it added to that sense. I felt the stab was unfair and was wounded; I defensively pointed out that people seemed happy for CMN and a few core people to do the necessary work. The public perception of CMN belied the reality. But these positions do carry power and therefore we take it seriously when it is seen to be a problem; but it is also a part of the problem that power is handed over since results are expected and so responsibility is also avoided.

Although well established with the protection of the Regulator who had a developed and positive community broadcasting policy, community radio did not have full legal recognition. It was to take another Bill to address that issue and it would take another seven years. What I was probably not so aware of since I was focused on community television issues, was the sense of displacement that community radio activists were beginning to feel and the sense of threat within the whole digitalisation process that was being ushered in by the very Broadcasting Act that provided legitimacy for community television. Community radio activists may have seen me as insensitive to this and their organisational cultures that privileged community radio as a CM (operating within the AMARC ethos) would have bolstered this perception. New community broadcasting structures could divert people, resources, and content away from community radio. Certainly by the time the event “A Media Cohort” was held in Croke Park in 2006, the message delivered from the podium was that community radio is community media, that “television is too expensive for community groups” (Day, Conference address, 2005).

This tension that existed around CMN was destructive and the coalitions were difficult. This was the core organisation driving the community television campaign on the lobby front and also provided the support for the new DCTV channel to develop independently.

Aliza Dichter noted in one case that the failure of one initiative to maintain coalitions was a “predetermined agenda”, whereas another successful effort was maintained by a small core group of 4-6 people but

It was clear that the role of this core, and particularly on the part of the staff member who co-ordinates the network from the host organisation has been to catalyze, encourage, and at some points directly request leadership and participation from others. (Dichter, 2005).

The possibility to work in this way very much depends on the nature of the organisation and its purpose. In a coalition such as the CMF, it was difficult to maintain a balance between keeping people on board and avoiding burdening them; if such a coalition requires people to step outside of their own organisational culture, this complicates matters more.

The building of DCTV was premised on the strength of the community development sector in the City. These organisations fell away from the DCTV Interim Steering Committee (ISC) and the Co-op Management Committee partly because they thought they had set up the organising group and that it was in capable hands. But they hadn’t finished the job, and there was no structure within the new organization to ensure their needs were heard.

The two processes where we saw community organisation drop-out were in the developments of the Co-op rules (organisational structure) and the license application (Business Plan).

ISC Members became worn out by the amount of meeting time spent on developing the Co-op Rules which took more than nine months. I even felt that some activists were at times filibustering with the Co-op Rules to slow down the development of the organisation.

A number felt they could no longer contribute as the process of building the License Application became highly technical; whereas they were quite au fait, if bored, with the development of the Co-op. If the process of agreeing an organisation’s Rules and developing the core working document of the project are the root cause of dropout of a certain grouping then there is clearly another process at work. The technocratic focus of the group began to become apparent at this point.

Other reasons community activists fell away was due to the attack on community infrastructure in the funding cuts and the neo-liberal agenda that was undermining any political or advocacy role for community organisations. As one activist put it:

If the community has to worry about water, then it’s not going to be building community television (Interview3)

The difficulties experienced by CMN in holding the community coalition were to provide an opportunity for the exacerbation of the problem that had always existed – the role played by independent media makers.

Capacity and money.

Two processes stand out in terms of the engagement with the State – the S40 Needs Assessments (capacity) and the Broadcasting Funding Scheme (money). The pressures exerted via these mechanisms were considerable and resulted in splits in the groupings that had brought the CTV initiatives to this point.

The Section 40 (S40) Needs Assessment project showed the first cracks. While the S40 raised problems for all three channels, it is only within my scope to report on the problems experienced by DCTV. In this again, as with the Tender WG on the Feasibility Study, I was removed from the group that formed the Steering Committee with the BCI. For DCTV it was not so much in the report itself that problems were evident but in the fact that many of the community organisations that showed interest and participated in the Programme

Development Workshops (PDWs) also fell away when the workshops were over. While the S40 PDWs introduced them to the processes of production and the report specifically called for follow-up actions, there was no support put in place to carry this forward and nurture the incipient community television producers. The process that began was also linked to the only source of funding available - the Sound and Vision scheme (S&V); the S&V application process sent most groups back into their organisations with little intention of approaching community television production again. Exeunt the last few CDPs that had been involved.

By the time DCTV was awarded its license there was an influx of independent film-makers attracted by the promise of funds through S&V. They stepped into the breach.

The issues that emerged from the building of the technical organisation are common to all coalition building. However it is not that often that the whole thing gets derailed in such an obvious manner.

7.5.4 (C) The lobby activity – responding to pressures from above

Concessions and sticking points
Avoiding the multi-stake-holder forum
Lobby coalitions – Broadcasting Bill 2001 and the funding deficit
Chasing funds – Broadcasting (Funding) Bill 2003 and the S&V Scheme
The funding agenda – attraction and conflict
Approaching the Councils

Concessions and sticking points

Lobby activity was needed on a number of fronts and while much of it was concerned with getting the political recognition necessary to secure the funding. The first issue for this activity was to resist the attempts to co-opt community television into multi-stakeholder Fora within which it faced the threat of marginalization.

All the results of our lobby activity seemed to demonstrate that the authorities were working with us – up to a point. Our proposed amendments to the 2001 Broadcasting Bill achieved three changes in the 2001 Act: the provision of needs assessment and recognition of training needs in Section 40; protection for the principle of community participation; and protection of the not-for-profit principle. The issues that remained are still the basis of lobby activity – universal access to broadcasting platforms, recognition of cultural importance of CM, and funding mechanisms. Recognition of communities of interest was later included in the 2009 Broadcasting Act. The new Television policy finalized in 2004 followed the Community Radio Policy Document which references the AMARC Charter which was a positive development. As always the sticking point is around the money. Our proposal of 5% of the license fee was taken up within the Broadcasting (Funding) Act 2003

but this made the funds available only for production of community programmes – not to support community broadcasting – this was to prove the most destructive influence on the development of CTV.

The consultation process in 2003-2004 on the new Television policy allowed five CTV Interest Groups to present agreed points to the BCI and produced a definition of CTV as follows:

Community Television is a tool for community development. A Community Television channel is characterised by its ownership and programming, and by its interaction with the community it is licensed to serve. It is owned and controlled by a not-for profit organisation whose structure provides for membership, management, operation and programming primarily by members of the community at large. It should be based on community access and should address the special interests and needs of those it is licensed to serve. (Community Television Interest Groups, 2004).

The Regulator however did not respond to our requests for rights to analogue and to live transmission. What then appeared in the policy document in July 2004 was a reference to community development rather than an inclusion in the definition (BCI, 2004, p. 19). Weak points appear in the CTV groups agreed positions such as in relation to ‘ownership and control’ that CTV operators:

Should strive, during the time span of the pilot phase, for democratic ownership and control by the community to be served (Community Television Interest Groups, 2004) (emphasis my own)

But the Regulator’s main issue with CTV was where we were going to get the money and they made clear that they would not entertain provision of core funding for CTV. The phrase “we are creatures of statute” was used to avoid responsibility for interpreting the statute. Our answer was that community television had no money and since CTV could not function as a commercial entity it would not have access to substantial capital. This became a sticking point for all the new channels when they were seeking a license from the BCI. It wasn’t good enough to cite expected grant aid sources, or as the Cork activists asserted

We’ve been doing it without very much money for a long time now, so we’ll probably continue to do it in the same way! (Interview 14)

The Broadcasting (Funding) Act passed in December 2003 proved to be full of holes for CTV, and the subsequent Broadcasting Funding Scheme (S&V) was to distort the path of CTV for its first few years. But before S&V was launched DCTV’s strategy turned towards the City Council and then approached all four councils in the Dublin area²²⁵. With the incorporation of DCTV in Jan 2004 and the focus now turning on the License Application an internal power struggle developed within DCTV; before this people had left representative functions to the Chairperson, Seán Ó’Siochrú and to me as Secretary.

Avoiding the multi-stake-holder forum

This was an early pressure that came from the DCDB strategic Planning process in 2000. It was clear that the Director wanted to develop a Media Forum for the City which would include RTE and the independents/commercials - a situation that community broadcasters wanted to avoid. Similarly we had avoided becoming involved in EQUAL programmes that would have placed CM in unequal partnerships with corporates and public sector agencies - the kind of context that was such a disaster for CM at the Geneva03 summit.

The Director of the DCE was away when we got the agreement of the DCCF to establish the CMF. Not all members of the DCCF were altogether convinced by this CM strategy either, many had more expectations of what could be achieved and maybe still think an opportunity was missed by excluding mainstream and institutional actors. The strategy was

²²⁵ This was where information from the Brazilian TV Maxabomba would have been really very useful. In fact it was a big miss that we didn’t try to get the DCDB or the Community Media Forum to fund a visitor from that station.

reasonably successful in that once established the Community Media Forum (CMF) retained the independence of CM from the other media sectors and the City Council and delivered CM objectives within the DCDB strategic plan (see Appendix No. 32). It appeared that city community activists understood the issues of non-profit CM in the context of the Dublin City Development Board (DCDB) but the concern of these activists was that the agenda of the DCDB was understood to be to take control of *community activity*. Their issue would be whether or not DCTV would help them in that - rather than could they help the DCTV development issue. At one point the Director suggested that community television would carry the e-city into every home. This was problematic for the DCTV coalition; not only did DCTV wanted to carry local authority content such as information on services, council meetings etc, but DCTV wanted to be able to control how that content was delivered and also how it took up the community airtime and schedule.

While some activists saw the connection with the City Council as a good thing, it was also a worry that DCTV might not be funded within the DCDB process unless it was part of the e-city plans. We therefore felt we had to convince the Councils that an independent and active CTV in the Dublin area would have huge benefits. This was the focus of our presentations to the Area Committees and their response was good.

Lobby coalitions -Broadcasting Bill 2001 and the funding deficit

The issue of funding had been avoided in The Broadcasting Act 2001 and drove further divides into the coalition that had existed in the initial stages. As we developed proposals for new legislation that would enable funding, specifically 5% of the license fee, the splits began to appear. The opposition to the formation of ICTAG is indicative; this was so effective that the group never got off the ground again. Despite being reformed at a CTV meeting held at the BCI conference in 2003 the name was only used once to convene a

meeting to prepare for the consultations with the Regulator. Lobby activities continued however and the same people carried the work forward and put proposals as they must - but without being sanctioned by a specific coalition; rather proposals were signed by different organisations independently. While the objection to the group may have been justified on the grounds that there were too many burgeoning groupings which would lead to confusion and a lack of transparency about who was involved – the problem with the way this was done was that people could not re-group in different ways to meet different challenges. This forming and re-forming is evidently part of the process of movement building – engaging a range of actors who work to expand the movement. So the effort to disallow it is also an effort to stem the growth of the movement and to control its direction.

At the time there seemed to be a need to create a new organisation that people could subscribe to without falling into the old disagreements and problems. This was also a national grouping bringing in actors from Kerry, Donegal and other areas outside Dublin. It is likely that, as with the earlier issue for community radio around pirates, these activists were seen to bring unwelcome issues to the agenda. The Kerry group had a particular problem with platform and carriage issues since the commercial cable providers refused to develop the infrastructure in Kerry and the Government lacked the political will to address the issue. The problem for those operating in well-cabled areas such as Dublin was that they would be drawn into an agenda that addressed wider issues. While it is understandable that the community radio activists wanted to build on what they had, the tendency to move forward and silently leave others legitimate access agendas behind meant not only a falling away of support, but also a consolidation of uneven development creating pools of disadvantage and inequality. There may also have been concerns about the interests of actors in other parts of the country. The Regulator’s awarding of a community radio license to Newcastle West in 2005 was understood by other CM operators to be too large an area for a community radio license and verging on empire

building. The closeness of individuals, institutions, and the community television groups in Kerry to those involved in Newcastle West could have been enough to prompt a blocking action on the formation of a national organisation that would include these groups.

But while CTV activists had no option but to form identifiable groups such as ICTAG these efforts were not supported by community radio activists. CMN’s efforts to develop a common advocacy coalition and platform for CM through its projects and in its work in Dublin were hamstrung by these difficulties. The difficulties that community radio activists experienced around the development of CTV should have been dealt with openly by activists. The formation of CMN in 1996 was an effort to create a context where these issues could be worked through, as was the formation of the CMF. CM activists did not avail of these opportunities. Similarly to the underlying problems in Geneva03, it was funding opportunities that appeared to drive coalition work between the different strands of CM in Ireland.

Chasing funds - Broadcasting (Funding) Act 2003 and the S&V Scheme:

The lobby actions that took place around funding for community television was partly successful in that the proposal was picked up by the authorities and the regulator and new legislation was brought forward²²⁶. The difficulty was that they refused to allocate the fund to community media or even to ring-fence funds within the pool for CM. The only boundary was that programmes made with the funds had to be broadcast on free-to-air, i.e. the state broadcaster - or community channels. This opened the door to another funding motivated circus where competition for funds again began to distort the coalitions both on local and national levels. In the development of DCTV this sparked an extraordinary period beginning with the appearance of community groups seeking funding at workshops organised by the

²²⁶ See Broadcasting (Funding) Act 2003

CMF in late 2005, developing with the Section 40 Needs Assessment process where these groups participated in Programme Development Workshops and culminating in the first DCTV AGM in December 2006 where the majority in attendance were independent film-makers and the community groups were absent again.

The conflict at the heart echoed problems often voiced before: large organisations with media-making capacity could benefit from S&V but smaller groups who needed a voice could not access the fund - again echoing concerns expressed by the participants at the Geneva03 event. The impact of the S&V scheme on a funds-starved new channel effectively turned the direction of DCTV away from directly engaging with community organisations as it had done, and towards a mode of production designed for independent – i.e. commercial film-making. This was a far reaching impact; it coincided with the awarding of the license to DCTV and dominated its struggle to get up and running in its first two years.

The funding agenda and conflict

CMF workshops in 2005 were held to inform community groups about the plans to launch DCTV and at the same time to review the new Sound and Vision (Funding) Scheme which had just been launched. At this session some organisers were clear that the scheme presented an opportunity to attract funds into their own organizations so they raised the issue of who would control the funds and what position the community channels would take. The idea that media products are fund raisers in themselves also raised issues of ownership; would products belong to DCTV operators or to the groups? Copyright and royalties also feature in this discussion. This position arises most with larger NGOs whose structures tend to be corporate, hierarchical, and ‘about’ (rather than ‘by’) people and their issues. **Since the groups will most likely re-direct profits into their organizational aims this does not mean that such groups won’t have an affinity with the not-for-profit premise of the AMARC Charter, or for that matter the BCI Community Radio Policy or its Community**

Television Policy. What it does mean is that they are seeing use of media as a means to raise funds rather than to gain ‘voice’, so the place of media within their activity is very different to one that prioritises communication; it works within the ‘media’ paradigm of media as product rather than as process and is therefore a misfit with CM.

What also became clear in lobby activities when we tried to establish coalitions with large NGOs was that despite their anti-poverty or equality agendas, they did not place community media high on their list as a means of providing them with a ‘voice’. This was borne out by our interaction with the media wing of the Development Organizations umbrella group Dochas - ‘Connect’²²⁷. These groups had engaged with the Feasibility Study in 2001 and formed a part of the ‘large NGO’ sector that the consultant recommended be part of DCTV - an effort that failed when Connect pulled back from the coalition at the last minute and pursued an independent lobby strategy around the Bill.

Much was lost in this division – at core was the refusal of the NGO’s to recognize community media as a key strategy for them, a recognition that CM activists felt they needed from the Voluntary Sector and the NGO’s and a recognition that we sought within the Bill. The refusal of such a strategically important grouping to form a coalition with community media ultimately meant that the emphasis of the 2003 Bill swung towards the funding of independent producers and mainstream media – ostensibly to produce ‘community content’. The effort to build a broad consciousness around the nature of CM that would be registered at a legislative level was lost in this case and the ‘media’ paradigm once more swung into place, closing the door for CM to make any inroads on the core funding issue for years to come. This exposed the fact that CM was not the concern of

²²⁷ Not to be confused with the organisation “Connect” that supports half-way measures for prisoners or Connect Ireland the ISP.

these large NGOs and forced us in this Par project to review where CM should be focused and who it is really there to engage with.

The main - and serious - difficulty for CM with the S&V scheme was the pressure on CTV producers to conform to independent production standards and production values. In the first round in 2005 no community television programmes were funded since the channels had not yet been awarded license and could not apply. In the second round in 2006 only two independent groups succeeded and one CM DCTV member was invited to resubmit. This response from the S&V Team was seen as divisive and continued to be so resulting in most community organisations that had been involved in the initial work to form DCTV as well as those who had taken part in the S40 PDWs now disaffected and alienated from DCTV. Only one of the proposals developed through the PDWs was presented as an application to S&V.

The S&V scheme also represented to CTV activists the bitter pill they had to swallow after their own initiative – the proposal for the 5% of the license fee to be levied for CM was re-directed in the 2003 Broadcasting Act to Independents (commercials) and RTE. To add to the injury CTV's had to wait until the media industry had absorbed most of the funds in the pot before the BCI saw to it that they had the necessary personnel to deal with the CTV license applications. Until the channels had the licenses they could not access the fund.

We were also aware that the filtering of the applications within the S&V adjudication process was bypassing the advice of the community media expert panel that had been brought in to make recommendations. One ex-panel member disclosed to me that the panel members left their work assuming that €1million was being directed to support CTV. In that particular round only two independent producers who had letters of commitment to broadcast from DCTV were awarded funding: less than €70,000 in total.

CMN’s proposal in 2006 that DCTV ask Independent film-makers seeking letters of commitment to broadcast to enter a coalition and submit to the S&V fund as part of a DCTV umbrella application was voted down by a DCTV committee that was now dominated by independent film-makers and CM organisations. Significantly it was a dominant CM group that claimed the proposal was undemocratic. Over the next two years the BCI S&V Team began to voice concerns that applications reflected a lack of involvement with community organisations. The proposal that independents apply under a DCTV umbrella was resuscitated and approved by the new DCTV Committee of Management formed after the AGM in November 2008. This was after over two years of negotiation with S&V, in the meantime community organisations were indeed out in the cold.

Approaching the Councils:

A huge amount of energy went into lobbying the Councils to allocate funds in the estimates. We had already contacted Area Managers and knew that they had a keen interest in the possibilities of community television for their activities; one Manager said to us

I want to get people connected to services, there is a huge amount we could do if we could connect with our target groups. I have a significant amount of lone parents in our area and they’d benefit. But I can’t write a cheque!” (meeting notes; Area Managers 2004)

It was on this basis that we lobbied the Councils Area Committees whose support we would need to be allocated funding in the estimates. It was during this process that the underlying tensions once more appeared and there was clearly competition around who was presenting to and liaising with the Councils. At one point these seemed to be personal issues but as the building for DCTV progressed it became clear that there was a struggle to control approaches to funding bodies which ultimately steered the direction the channel

took. A proposal was drawn up in 2004 and DCTV submitted this to the Area Committees with a budget for €200,000 across the four Councils. I was a member of a two-person delegation to the Protocol Committee who proved receptive to this proposal. My colleague arrived late and proceeded to undermine the proposal. While I felt personally undermined and publicly humiliated by this action I was concerned that agreed approaches could be undermined in this way. My subsequent complaint about this to the DCTV CoM was dismissed²²⁸.

Throughout 2006 as DCTV prepared for broadcast it was clear that a struggle for control was intensifying on a number of levels. Members of the Finance Working Group (FWG) wanted a mandate that their Business Plan would be approved in advance i.e. before it had been seen by the CoM. Despite the disquiet about this on the CoM the proposal to the Council was systematically undermined by the FWG within DCTV itself and costs requested drawn back to €50,000.

A Labour Councillor, a well-known grassroots organizer, respected in the community development environment and amongst the city community networks, was prepared to work with us to bring the proposals through the estimates process – it is a convoluted and difficult affair and support from Councillors is necessary. This support was rejected and an alternate proposal adopted to work through individual lobbying of a Fine Gael Councillor. Liaison with the Council was assigned to a FWG member who personally knew the Councillor convening the Protocol Committee.

²²⁸ I found myself being systematically undermined by this particular DCTV CoM member. This was extremely difficult to handle and when I tried to raise it with an eminent CoM member I was simply told that I was ‘snookered’.

The strategic work with the Council then ceased and was not renewed until 2008 when DCTV was in receipt of S&V funds. Lobbying landed €13,000 from the Corporate Services Department of the City Council. This money was handed over without any apparent terms or conditions and as Secretary at the time I had simply seen a notice of an electronic transfer of funds. The opportunity to have DCTV recognised by any of the relevant local authority departments had been washed away for now anyway. After the collapse of the approach to the Council there was distrust amongst DCTV CoM members many of whom were engaged in furthering their own agendas and these now controlled and steered DCTV's direction.

The loss of the impetus and the connection with the Councils was a disaster – the goodwill on the part of all Councillors across parties had been palpable. If DCTV's access to support from the Council was seen to be against another interest it had been successfully blocked – at least for some time.

7.6 Summary

This project found that not only is there enormous goodwill towards the CTV initiative from all parts of a community but that many groups in the community are already active in producing media and able to deal with a large amount of challenges.

There are skills within the community to deal with the challenges of building CTV, but these will only be tapped when and if the CTV initiative is perceived to be open and accessible.

CM initiatives require coalitions, and these coalitions need to be part of the social organizing that is happening in the community. This is what makes CM particular, localized and also a vehicle for voice.

The coalitions that are built for CTV are defining; if the CTV venture is to fulfill its promise to the community then it must engage in processes that are accessible to the community.

Strategies that are connected to or drawn from a media paradigm will not support this engagement.

Content of all CM is the not only the knowledge that already exists within the community, but the knowledge that is drawn from the introduction of other influences, the releasing of voices that are hidden and facilitating the communication of those voices with the dominant group.

The technical organisation has to be built to accommodate the needs of the movement, this means facilitating communities to participate in ways in which they are already able and to which they are accustomed.

Developmental processes are fundamental to bringing people along new paths and their learning needs must be facilitated otherwise they will be left behind. This is vital to the healthy development of the CTV channel; to ensuring it retains its connection with its base; and to fulfill its remit and promise.

CHAPTER 8: Where to now?

Clarifying the self-image that emerges and the possibilities CTV holds for self-organised working class activity

8.1 Introduction

We asked how community organisations could access and benefit from community television. I have sought to expose the nature of the activity as it happened in this project and the problems facing activists in realising their vision of a CTV entity. I have argued that community television needs to be seen as a ‘community development kind of media’ in order to be a means of knowledge production for self organised working class activity. This can only happen through engagement with community organisations in a live and ongoing interaction the nature of which generates the conditions and informs the practice of CTV activity.

Firstly I want to return to review the knowledge base that was the impetus for this research project i.e. the lessons from CMN’s activities which form **prior knowledge** that directed the decisions taken within the research process - linking to the knowledge generated in Chapters 4 and 5.

Secondly I want to review the PAR research process and how it enabled building coalitions to address the following areas of activity:

- production in the community
- developing needs of community media (DCTV and CTV generally) in Ireland

This is important because we had to take our understandings of how things were and *allow them to be interrogated by what happened in the research process*. In this process we developed new knowledge and brought this back to the process of building CTV – this was discussed in Chapter 6.

Thirdly, I want to bring this knowledge to bear on the areas of lobby and solidarity building which are core and ongoing functions that the sector cannot do without and the implications these have for developing a unified frame. These activities must be informed by knowledge that we generate in our coalitions and that is rooted in the needs of the community. Difference itself is the source and substance of the conversations and the dialogical process that is CM; the work of Marx, Bakunin, and Freire speak strongly to us in this regard and provide a basis for understanding the needs we aim to meet. The conflicts and the disagreements that emerge are generated by these needs and people seeking to look after their interest - we need to question and understand these interests if CTV is to move forward.

8.2 Class and Prior Knowledge

8.2.1 Knowledge base

The experience of engaging with groups and contexts both abroad and on our own ground developed new knowledge not only of specific topics and technicalities but also of our own activity. As the PAR process develops the self-image becomes clearer.

Chapter 4 showed international coalitions of CM activists raising issues that reflect back on our own activity; WSIS in 2003 pressured activists into new alliances and new understandings of CM interest groups emerged just as old worries were re-affirmed. The

exclusion of the working class from accessing a means of knowledge production is buttressed by the media enclosure, defended by its technical and professional bars, its ranks of technicians, costs, and standards. Like the Geneva03 activists we rage at this exclusion. But we still need to develop communication channels to release the voice of self-organised working class activity and support the accumulation and development of working class knowledge: channels that are to be held in common where there are rights of access. Our purpose as community media activists is to develop horizontal as well as vertical communication streams that facilitate the democratization of our activism and ultimately increase the capacity of voices from below to intervene in and transform the conditions in which we live – an extension of the ‘talking with’ and ‘talking to’ of the Zapatista media strategy.

Our PAR strategy formed coalitions to establish community television. The tacit knowledge held by members of any coalition brought together in a PAR process is an important resource and a key factor in holding or splitting the coalition. The coalition depends on how members deal with their differences and the trust that can be established between actors. Breakdown of trust creates an opportunity for re-forming and re-grouping and provides opportunities for power blocs to direct or redirect the movement; lack of trust means that the ground will always be contested. It is this kind of fissure that creates opportunities to disrupt the arrangements of the dominant grouping. CM coalition members also need voice and recognition of their needs and interests so that the aims of CM are not diverted. In this way the common interest of CM activism is generated.

The decision of the CMN PAR project to avoid multi-stakeholder partnerships and Fora and ensuring the equality of members proved correct. The accuracy of this judgment was reflected not only in terms of a project the grouping had control over but also in the problems that arose on a local level (DCCF/ CMF/DCTV), on a national level (CTA / CRAOL

and CMA / ACTO) and on a global level in the findings from the WSIS / Geneva03 / WE-SEIZE summit. Other coalitions show their strengths and weaknesses in their activities - the Media Reform Movement whilst avoiding the multi-stakeholder problem in the range of its formulation has a strong academic base which means it has difficulty generating a critique of power within its own environment. Similarly the OurMedia global meetings may be dominated by concerns that fit within an academic framework where the concerns of people needing voice are remote. This is where we need to return to the issue of how the CM operator is facilitating the 'voice' of those in struggle within and around the community. If that voice is released – can it travel to OurMedia and back again? Can academics turn around the constraints of the academy and answer to the needs of communities in struggle? With CM streaming channels it is conceivable that communications academics could facilitate 'voice' but they will need to turn away from the media paradigm in order to achieve this.

We made an incorrect assumption in the initial stages of developing DCTV that the organisational structures of the new channels had to be built before community organisations could participate in any meaningful way. At the time participation seemed to depend on a number of factors particular to the community television drive and we could not be sure at the time that this was the same or different to what we had learned from the CMN community media projects. But the lessons from CMN's activities prove to be significant in terms of community organisations capacity to engage and the nature of their contribution. Once we allowed what we were finding within the PAR to interrogate the knowledge we had, we could use this information to form the basis for the decisions we took to progress this research and explore our question. Some of this knowledge provides important, if difficult, lessons for the development of community television.

8.2.2. Releasing lessons from CMN’s activities

CMN engaged in a range of activities that aimed to support the linking of community organisations engaged in media production - to support the development of alternative public spheres. The magazine, website, festival, training projects to support actual community media initiatives, all brought participants activity to bear on developing the network. The provision of subsidised facilities for production on a small but good quality scale was a strategy designed to support the growth of media initiatives within the sector and this had only moderate success.

Lessons have been drawn by watching the outcomes of the BCMI project in the long term aftermath but the essential concerns had existed early in the project’s *participant selection process* where these issues were in fact evident. The problems facing community organisations in committing to media projects was in fact tacit knowledge within community media activists’ groupings. CMN’s early project successes overshadowed some of this more important knowledge; the reasons for the successes also needed to be re-interrogated from the perspective of our new challenge. Apparent failures produced important findings: the loss of CMN’s premises together with community groups ‘voting with their feet’ and not forming TCGs forced us to change the PAR mode of engagement, meeting groups on their own turf, pushing our production supports back into the community, and asserting the PAR methodology.

Key requirements for a community media project to be successful were put neatly by Sharon Brown of Tralee CDP: *“if community media is going to work it needs to be local, involve lots of people and it has to be good craic”*. While this is very apt, the word “local” should be replaced with the word “engaged” i.e. to be part of a group with a strong common interest. As one CMN member put it “it has to be a burning issue”. **It is the engagement in their issue of those who need ‘voice’ that turns them into communicators**

and ensures that CM meets their need. Community Response participants had this burning issue; our collaboration tested the value of **“Production in the Community”**; reaffirmed the need for ongoing reflexive process that re-engages participants; and provided the experience needed to move forward with new strategies to engage with CTV: CMN in a new strategy with community groups, and CR in ongoing activity within DCTV.

8.2.3. The implications of key findings from CMN projects

The effort to provide facilities via the Community Media Resource while it survived well from 2000-2003 essentially failed to support new activity within community groups that impacted on community involvement in DCTV. This underpinned the decision to work in more depth with community organisations on their own terms. The PAR process enabled us to move on and in this way we produced important knowledge for our CM work within the community sector. We can state the following from this process:

- The interest in CM is widespread amongst the community sector but the number of community organisations that have the independent capacity to engage meaningfully with CM, both financially and in terms of knowledge resources, is small.
- The involvement of core and committed activists from the community organisation is key to developing CM as knowledge production within the community.
- Community groups need to develop internal mechanisms to use media for their knowledge production. This means adoption of community media work as a strategic part of their plans and developing resources.
- Capacity building for the sector needs to be organised and networked rather than as it is on an ad hoc and individual organisational development basis: it’s not that DCTV’s TCGs were a bad idea – but they were starved out.

- Community organisations, including those with capacity to produce media, need external support mechanisms such as mentoring and liaison to engage with community media and in particular broadcast media. This indicates a need for support organisations that can provide specialised support on the ground, develop support networks, and link community organisations to the community broadcasting access that exists.
- A developmental approach to media production within organisations is a CM approach, other approaches are product based, leave nothing but the product in their wake, and run the risk of doing more harm than good.
- Without a properly engaged developmental approach – one that releases tacit knowledge and facilitates the voice that needs to shout about burning issues - CM will be occupied with mundanities, disconnected from its base, and operating in the shadow of a media paradigm that stifles dissent to the dominant group rather than allowing it expression and exploration.

8.3 Voice: PAR as strategic action for community television

This section reviews the PAR research process and how a PAR strategy worked as part of a project to bring about change in terms of the following:

1. production in the community
2. building the technical organisation for DCTV
3. lobby and solidarity building

8.3.1 Approach and strategy

The above areas were approached using a range of strategies that built on the prior knowledge of the PAR group including:

1. *Production in the community* –

This was supported successfully by:

- a. the ***development of production within the community organisation’s home base*** and by the placement of resources within the community organisation itself. This was operated in the CMN / CR collaboration as described in Chapter 4
- b. ***expanding the scope of production support when necessary*** – developing networks of people with skills and networks of resources that relate to the project on a basis of interest and solidarity who would then respond to a call for extra help as in the “Men At work” producing for community television action.
- c. ***maintaining an evaluation / research / reflexive process with the organisation to move from a level of product fixation to process comprehension.*** This was the function of this PAR project which allowed the researcher to approach an issue and return to it again using different methods/strategies to question the findings – e.g. workshop – focus group / seminar – report - interview. This is a PAR strategy.

- d. ***Linking the community organisations to community television – access:*** as in supporting community organisations to develop suitable material for Broadcast; providing learning tools such as the Programme Formats Training Pack; maintaining action to ensure access routes to the channel exist – i.e. engaging in struggle within the channel itself.

While these levels of engagement will work to support and secure access, the involvement of independent companies creates problems on all the three levels. Community organisations had struggled to develop their own capacity precisely because working with independent companies removed control of content from the base; the professionals controlled the process, did not engage with training and so did not transfer skills or leave any development behind. One community television operator from another country who corresponded around issues with the Sound and Vision Scheme put it thus:

When it comes to relating to independent companies this is where it has become complicated. Overcoming the traditional work patterns in a film maker’s mind will be difficult and community television will never have the resources to support this way of working. If S&V do it will only result in a few hours of ‘beautifully’ made programming.... but not what is really needed. . . .I think DCTV will have to distance/disengage itself from the film makers / production companies to avoid conflicts and policy making if DCTV is to succeed”

The CMA in the UK tried to engage with local commercial television broadcasters in a coalition to approach digitalisation; this didn’t work and CTV activists established their own organisation ACTO. Part of the difficulty was that CMA is pre-dominantly a community radio oriented organisation and therefore other community media become sidelined in the bid for funding. This imbalance underpinned the agenda they took to Geneva in 2003.

2. Building the Technical Organisation for DCTV:

This was best supported by:

- a. **developing the coalitions to build an organisational structure that is representative of all the community interests *and maintaining it*.** The latter is the difficult bit. We did not find strategies that could withstand attacks on those structures and processes that community organisations trusted. The need was that community organisations would roll in to back up and defend their champions when necessary but it didn’t happen when CMN was in difficulty. This weakness meant that community interests were then sidelined and marginalised within an organisation that was built on the principle of their empowerment. Attention needs to be re-focused on re-building these coalitions within the broad CM movement.
 - b. **democratising organisational structures** by defining the co-coordinating function as aiming to “catalyse, encourage and request leadership and participation from others” (Dichter, 2005) The possibility of democratising management structures has been demonstrated by the PAR projects in Mondragon (Foote-Whyte W. &, 1991) and the development of solidarity networks within the informal economy in the Brazil Favelas (Esteves, 2007). The DCTV process shows that without retaining the connection with community organisations and community development ways of organizing, the organisational forms revert to rigid hierarchical and - particularly in relation to media organisations - patriarchal, white, Global North centric forms. This has been reflected on the local (DCTV) and the global (Geneva03) levels. Different agendas and interests need to be opened up for discussion in a way that builds the energy of participation to drive the channels development as an actor that addresses disadvantage in the interests of equality.
3. Lobby and solidarity building was:

- a. **Catalysed and supported by direct action** as in the confrontation with the Forum on Broadcasting (reflected also in the very necessary WE SEIZE action in the Geneva03 coalition). This is understood to be 'regular social movement activity' yet it meets with disapproval and negative responses from within the coalitions – both with the DCCF and the DCTV coalitions. This may be due to the consensual 'frame' that community organisations prefer to present to authorities, including local authorities, agencies, national governments, and global power blocs. However it is also clear that corporatism (within DCTV) and buying into the state's privatization agenda (DCCF) are also strong influencing factors.
- b. **Supported by building consensus** as in the work on the ground with community organisations through knowledge sharing and building network co-operation; coalitions around consultations with the BCI – e.g. on community television policy. It should be noted that consensus can only be built when the basis for participation is clear and unambiguous.
- c. Having a **clear analysis of the relationship of the coalition to any other agency** is a core element of maintaining a coalition - the opposite means a mess. Diverging interests often means conflict, creating ambiguity around the aims and demands in others eyes and can flounder the project (Roberts J. , 2005) as clearly happened within the DCTV effort to lobby the Dublin Councils. Some messes are deliberate acts of sabotage. As one member of the Dublin City Community Forum put it –

if we don't want you to be able to make something happen and we have no power to stop you, then what we do know is that at the very least we can get in there and make it damn difficult for you (Statement at meeting of the DCCF)

A PAR strategy has been proven to be able to engage with fragmentation. As developed by Freire (1970, 1996) PAR was designed to engage workers with governmental agencies

particularly around literacy and adult education; Foote-Whyte and Lazes (1991) developed a system of research production that placed the researcher as facilitator in order to generate collective ownership of the issue and that depended on a process of diagnosis and problem solution; Esteves (2007) shows the importance of horizontal processes and the use of tacit knowledge in the development of a solidarity economy. While we made adaptations in that we avoided the multi-stakeholder forum and did not engage with more powerful agencies, there was enough fragmentation within the community media coalitions we worked with to provide grounds for a PAR strategy. Unlike Van Vuuren (2003) I cannot blame the PAR strategy for the conflicts that emerged – these were embedded within the interests of those in the coalition and the relations that have been forged within PAR in fact gave us a means to deal with it and to use the knowledge to form a new strategy.

The position of the researcher however is one that can easily be undermined from within if other actors perceive their own interests to be more important than the project and if their primary reason for being in the coalition is to safeguard these interests. It is in the power of actors to make shifts by applying pressure in terms of distracting actions, taking control of other strategic actions, and using the fragmentation of the base of the coalition to push through actions in their own interest. The difficulty for the researcher is in holding to the core purpose of the coalition and defending it. The danger is that the research process, and therefore the activity that it is supporting and the knowledge base that it is generating, are sidelined, de-activated and shelved. The commitment of a core organisation is absolutely necessary to safeguard against this and also to ensure that the purpose of the project does not get de-railed either from attacks from external sources or from misdirection or errors of judgment from within.

The PAR project employed by CMN placed the researcher in a role of facilitator. When community activists lost their hold on the DCTV Committee those who filled the breach

bore no relation to this kind of activity and tried to de-rail this position when it was perceived to be against the interests of actors in DCTV. The role of a facilitator is to support the group to explore the issues they face and the implications; this would open up the interests involved and inevitably uncover undemocratic strategies and behaviour that divert from the agreed targets of the organisation. This is what ultimately moved DCTV into operating within the ethos of independent media companies and corporate organisations rather than the ethos of community television.

Shortly before he died, Pierre Bordieu called for an engaged research ethic. A big issue for working class activists in engaging with research is time and energy. In this research project I found that fellow activists and those participating in groups, despite their support for the project could not give the hours to reading and discussing large tracts of material that (although dealing with the movement) were not particularly connected to coal-face issues they had to deal with at that particular point in time. This was also true for written work that I produced as part of actions that they designed – by the time it was written they had moved to another problem²²⁹.

The problem for activist researchers is the time needed to address research issues and to ensure the participation is reflected right through the research process. The problem in approaching a thesis is firstly that the researcher is often drawn away from the nature of the activity into a reflexive mode where others do not have the time or energy to place

²²⁹ Two examples – CM Training Manual produced in 1999 and Programme Formats produced in 2007 are only used at particular times when they are needed – the 10 year old Training Manual was used by Korean activists earlier this year when they were mounting a campaign to get funds for community media centres, and the Programme Formats is only used occasionally to my knowledge. These are reference documents containing information that people need when they are about to do a particular job and they go looking for information. They are part of our effort to accumulate knowledge in the struggle to establish means of communication that are appropriate to and meet the needs of working class self-organisation.

themselves. Secondly the form of the thesis will also have to reflect the struggle of the movement in its effort to accumulate and develop ‘really useful knowledge’. In this those of us who undertake research have to find appropriate ways of disseminating the research findings. This Thesis is not that - but the PAR project it maps has supported and defended the role of community development organisations in CTV and the knowledge produced in the process has been directed to sustain their involvement.

The CMN PAR project survived attacks because it was independent, accepted a small base, and saw itself as sharing an ethos with the Irish community development movement. The strategies evolved demanded the researcher took on roles such as Community Representative to the Dublin City Development Board that extended the reach of the project; responded to the pressure from the broader field of force; and enabled the building of coalitions and infrastructure that could support CM development *within the organisational cultures of community organisations*. This base is active and strengthened despite the activity of more powerful actors.

8.4 Interacting with the State – shaping the practice and conditions of CTV

Lobby activity and solidarity building are core and ongoing activities that the sector cannot do without if it is to withstand pressure from above and maintain the space for community media to function as it should. This space is where those who are marginalised and oppressed by the activity of capitalism and neo-liberal interests need and have the right to have a voice. Allowing agendas from above – i.e. pressures to assume corporate and hierarchical organisational forms and to buy into the privatization agenda - to invade this space means disabling the capacity to develop solidarity at the base. Building coalitions

therefore cannot exclude the knowledge that is generated in the process of developing ‘voice’ from below. **Supporting production within the community sector therefore is of paramount importance to this coalition building.**

I have tried to show that the base of community media, and therefore community television, is in the organisations that are struggling to address issues of ‘voice’ and disadvantage. Where this ‘voice’ is active it is dialogic - in conversation and building communicative action; this happens in a whole range of ways and in its diversity it builds numerous proletarian public spheres such as those developed by an organisation like Community Response. **Horizontal communication between these organisations is vitally necessary to support the working class activity that is its consciousness.**

The decision of the *OURMEDIA* umbrella to engage with community media on the ground in the places they hold their conferences is a laudable step on the part of an organisation largely composed of academics, be they engaged or not. However it also runs the risk of being seen as an opportunity for funding by small, poor, and needy organisations. This could of course work to support media initiatives – but what happens when *OURMEDIA* leaves town? The underwriting of initiatives with funds that come from another source and which the community does not control in terms of the agenda is a fundamental weakness. The same can be said of ‘attention’ from an outside source; solidarity campaigns have limitations which if they begin to make connections outside of the bounded issue often cause major conflicts with the cause they espouse²³⁰. The danger is that this can result in a ‘mess’ with little left at the base but the memory of the event and no capability to apply

²³⁰ The Troops Out Movement in the UK experienced a major split when activists within the movement began to horizontally link with UK issues such as the Poll Tax. Sinn Fein’s response meant that activists were disaffected and pushed out of the movement. While a certain connection with the Broadwater Farm campaign was tolerable, anything raising socialist issues around class and right wing government interfered with the frame SF had adopted; one of nationalist ethnicity that excluded socialism.

lessons that support the development of voice and communication. **Where events such as OURMEDIA can make a difference is by linking community initiatives horizontally on a global level – meaning the engaged activist/researchers that attend these conferences prepare the link with their community base, rather than purely theoretical papers, and the facilitation of these horizontal communications should be the agenda of the conference. This is what community broadcast media is for; the role of the activist / researcher is to work then with the product of this activity and feed this back into the working class activity.**

There may be further discussions on what terms provide a 'unified frame' however this will not replace unity in action, nor will it support the development on the ground of that unity in action that is working class consciousness. The question that needs be addressed is who needs the 'frame' and what concerns this frame is constructed to address. If it is media and an effort to reclaim it then the danger of becoming lost in frames within frames - thus losing the connection with the base and disabling the essential horizontal activity - is more than a serious risk, it is inevitable. This was exemplified in the objections to the developing of more and more 'baroque structures' of ever emerging new organisations in the Irish campaign; the problems faced by groups forming in response to movements from above; and the difficulties that ensued for the CRIS activists in relating CRIS activities back to the grassroots organisations.

The difficulty for activists is that we don't choose the ground we fight on; the meta problem is how self-organised working class activity can be supported. A core element of that problem is meeting the communication needs where and how they arise – which is in the community and within those organisations that struggle to define their realities in an effort to transform the conditions in which they live. The coalition we form to enable this

need to be driven by a participatory and reflexive process informed by egalitarian and inclusive principles.

And this raises an old question that these organisations are in fact dealing with everyday – how do we look at our problem? How do we step outside ourselves to look at the process of our formation as social beings engaged in activity? Using communication strategies that rest on the creative capacities of people in relation to their pressing issues and needs has proved to be effective in supporting transformative action – from Freire’s literacy programme in Agicos to Mondragon’s collectives; from the Zapatista democratic front to the Favelas of Brazil. The capacity of community media to enable even greater amplificatory, alternative, and durative qualities to voice – as described by Williams – and to the knowledge generated in these processes is a capacity that is the difference between community media and ‘the media’ as created by the capitalist world.

There are two ‘medias’, just as there are two classes. One that belongs to, is structured by, and articulates, the needs of capitalism; the other is that which enables voices from below, supports horizontal communication, and is a force within working class activity.

Community media is organised, educational, and agitational use of media in horizontal communication activity, it is formed in proletarian public spheres and this voice has the capacity to push against the pressure from larger spheres controlled by powerful agencies.

Where counter-hegemonic strategies are developed to support the build of community media production these can perform a vital function in the facilitation of class consciousness. However the hegemonising activities of actors and interests within coalitions that have funding and control agendas can only work to inhibit and suppress those very initiatives and the creativity that they profess to support. So where to with all that now?

Struggle does not happen in a vacuum; it kicks against something although we can be unaware of the impact of this for a while. In struggles people don't just disappear and lessons are retained forming the tacit knowledge that will underpin the next engagement.

While particular interests may take over an initiative – very often they are unable to wholly take it over. Similarly within CMN and DCTV there is ongoing movement and activity that is necessary to produce the community channel despite all its difficulties. DCTV's struggles to find funding may change; the independent producers if they stay with the initiative might also change as others have done (and particularly as the effects of the Sound and Vision scheme become apparent); ongoing negotiation and lobby activity might shift the parameters of funding to afford recognition such as has happened in Austria recently. But if these things don't happen . . . what then?

If CTV wants to establish the core operations necessary to become a means of knowledge production and voice it needs to engage with the social organizing that is happening in its community. If it is to be an actor for transformation in the context of equality then community organisations who represent self-organised working class activity are an integral part of that agenda. CTV will have a key role in developing horizontal communications if it facilitates not simply discussions on screen but includes the experience and needs of activists in the structures it builds. This will produce the knowledge to build a workable framework – the on-line content is produced by off-line activity.

CMN has developed its strategy - building on the gaps that have been uncovered in the CTV building process: this is appended in the form of the Plan adopted by the CMN Steering Committee in 2008 and which is maintained in review as groups provide feedback on their experience of the strategy. The plan focuses on addressing the gap in CTV strategies to support the engagement of community organisations and proposes to do this by:

- Building alliances with community groups to address production issues
- Supporting small scale production based in community group’s contexts.
- Building alliances with other CTVs and CM groups through CTA to agitate for access to distribution platforms

This research project has attempted to uncover the blocks to building solidarity and the necessary coalitions for CTV and CM that enable voices from below to address the condition they live within. We found conflicts amongst coalition members that prevented solidarity and engagement of the DCTV project with community organisations and other CTV groups; GTMO approaches of community organisations also tended to promote understanding of media as devices that send out messages rather than communications tools that are shaped as they are used; this in turn supported a short-termism that dismisses the possibilities for their organisation in engaging with CM and chooses to work with commercial companies.

The way forward is through developing a range of strategies developed through PAR activity: strategies to develop accessible production methods that provide direct access for community organisations - CANTV has done this in the US; strategies that keep the ‘tech’ and ‘cost’ bars low - such as the Gaeltacht CTV campaign wanted to establish in the 1970s (those activists that John Horgan called ‘the radicals’); strategies that encourage skill and knowledge sharing practices; and training methodologies rooted in popular education and community development.

A key issue now is the need for a community broadcasters’ coalition to campaign for community access to distribution platforms – this will demand intensive solidarity building and serious thinking on the parts of CRAOL and the CTA. The present recession is

compounded by Irish financial scandal and the government swiftly dropped its 'the market will decide' mantra as it made deep cuts into public services and the community sector's meager resources in an effort to ride the tide. Commercial operators will see spectrum as lucrative; small commercial broadcasters who worry about being swallowed up by the big monopolies will again try to corral and control community territory as the independent companies did; and none of them will want to waste a good recession. In the meantime the working class has to organize to defend itself and needs voice.

Horizontal communication channels driven by the energy of participation are key to generating and distributing the really useful knowledge that helps us transform the conditions in which we live. CTV must therefore be part of the social organising that is happening if it is to operate as a means to amplify the voice of the self-organised working class. In Ireland this means forming coalitions with community development organisations that resist neo-liberal policies threatening their communities. This is how the nature of community media may assert itself and then the appropriate conditions for the practice of community television can emerge.

Acronyms

AEWG	Adult Education Working Group
AGCM	Advisory Group on Community Media
AMARC	World Association of community radio broadcasters (Association Mondiale des Radiodiffuseurs Communautaires)
APC	Association of Progressive Communicators
BCA	Ballyfermot Community Association
BCATV	Ballyfermot Community Association Television
BCI	Broadcasting Commission of Ireland
BAI	Broadcasting Authority of Ireland
BB 2001	Broadcasting Bill 2001
BB 2003 of BFB 2003	Broadcasting (Funding) Bill 2003
BCMI	Building Community Media in Ireland
BFS	Broadcasting Funding Scheme
CAN TV	Chicago Access Network TV
CAT	Community Access Television
CCTv	Cork Community Television
CD	Community Development
CDP	Community Development Project
CE	Community Employment
Cg	Community group
CIWG	Community use of Internet Working Group
CM	Community Media
CMC	Community Media Centre
CMF	Community Media Forum
CMFE	Community Media Forum Europe
CMFWG(cs)	Community Media Forum Working Group (civil society)
CMAG	Community Media Advisory Group
CMG	Community Media Group
CMN	Community Media Network, (Ireland)
CRIS	Communication Rights in the Information Society
CR	Community Response
CR WG	Community Radio Working Group
CSP	Community Services Project
CTA (also CcTA)	Community Television Association (Community content Television Association)
CTV	Community television
CTVTrN	Community TV Training Network
CTV WG	Community TV Working group
CVN	Community Video Network
CWC	Community Workers Coop
DALC	Dublin Adult Learning Centre

DCENR	Department of Communications, Energy, and Natural resources
DCMNR	Department of Communications, Marine, and Natural Resources
DCC	Dublin City Council
DCCF	Dublin City Community Forum
DCE	Department of Community and enterprise (of DCC)
DCMF	Dublin Community Media Forum
DCTV	Dublin Community Television
DGN	Dublin Grassroots Network
DICP	Dublin Inner City Partnership
DTT	Digital Terrestrial Television
GTMO	Getting The Message Out
ESF	European Social Forum
FAS	(Government Training Agency)
FSN	Family Support Network
FWG	Finance Working Group
IALS	International Adult Literacy Survey
ICON	Inner City organisations Network
ICRG	Inner City Renewal Group
ICTAG	Irish Community Television Action group
IDS	Irish Deaf Society
ILR	Independent Local Radio (Regulator’s definition)
IMC	Independent Media Centre
IRTC	Independent Radio and Television Commission
IRTS	Irish Radio Transmitters Society
ISC	Interim Steering Committee
ITCs	Information Technology Communications
NACB	National Association of Community Broadcasters
NAM	Non Aligned Movement
NALA	National Adult Literacy Association
NDP	National Development Plan
NEAR	North East Access Radio
NGO	Non Governmental Organisation
NV	Northern Visions
NvTv	Northern Visions Television
NUI	National University of Ireland
NWICCN	North West Inner City Community Network
NWICO	New World Information and Communications Order
OLPC	One Laptop per Child
OM	OurMedia
PAR	Participatory Action Research
PARNET	Participatory Action Research website of Cornell University
P5TV	Province5TV Navan
PCC	People's Communication Charter

PDWs	Programme Development Workshops (part of Dublin S40 needs assessment process)
PEG	Public, Educational, Government
PPP	Public Private Partnership
PPWG	Print and Photography Working Group
RnaG	Raido na Gaeltachta
RSLs	Restricted Services Licenses
RTE	Radio Telifis Eireann
S40	Section 40 of Broadcasting Act 2001
SCTV	Southcoast TV
SC&H	Service for Commemoration and Hope
SDS	Students fro a Democratic Society
SEP	Social Economy Project
S&V	Sound and Vision
SWICCN	South West Inner City Community Network
TCGs	Thematic Content Groups
TG4	Tele Gael 4
T&D	Training and Development
TnaG	Telifis na Gaeltachta
VEC	Vocational Education Committee
WAC	Whitefriaras and Aungier St Community Council
WACC	World Association of Christian Communicators
WSF	World Social Forum
WUNC	Worthiness, Unity, Numbers, and Commitment

Appendices

All Appendices are included in the attached CD and can also be found on the CMN website:

at <http://www.cmn.ie/research2000-2010/>

A list is included here.

Introduction to Appendices, Tables and Supporting Documents

The Two Volumes of Appendices, tables, and documents have been compiled to support the main body of the Thesis. The documents are evidence of the processes and work undertaken over the course of this study.

Material drawn from the field consists of a range of documents comprising group process; correspondence; position papers; documents from participating groups and from relevant sources. Appendices also include sections of relevant legislation and regulatory policy.

Tables have been compiled to illustrate processes and patterns referred to in the text.

A number of documents are also appended (also on CD and Website) as examples of knowledge production directly resulting from this PAR project. These include DVD's comprising clips which are approximately 4 mins long and I suggest that a small number of these clips should be viewed as they are the product of key strategies in community television production and are referred to in the text.

Recommended clips are:

1.1. Templates and Bulletin Boards:

1.1.1. CAN TV interactive bulletin board - watch out on this clip for the callers logging in to the bulletin board – one call is to number 028 for information on tenants rights and eviction, followed by information on low-cost dental services and an annual Pow-Wow.

1.2. Picture Stories.

1.2.1. CAN TV – Barbara Popovic talks about their services with clips from Childserv and Harmony House picture stories.

1.2.2. CAN TV user groups - CAN TV gets user groups to talk about how the channel works for them

2. Studio-based Programmes ;

2.1. Call-in Programmes using a “Hotline Studio”

2.1.1. CAN TV : “Countdown” Clip – Maths programme for children. Followed by the presenter talking about how they used the programme .

2.1.2. CAN TV: AIDS call-in Clip from DVD Help-line programmes are popular with the community groups such as health organisations promoting safe-sex, domestic violence help-line, and education organisations.

5.5 Drama

5.5.1 Community Response – “Hidden Voices” see Note 7 - this clip shows a facilitated question session after a performance. This group uses drama to make information on HIV available in an accessible form.

5.5.2 “In our own voices” Again from Community Response this is one of a series of advert type formats designed in a drama workshop exploring realities of drugs in the community.

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Selected Appendices

Three of the Appendices are included here as essential to reading the text.

No. 26a List of Interviews

No. 16 Tomaselli's comparison of independent and community production values

No. 47 Zuber-Skerritt's diagram of PAR process.

Appendix 26a: List of Interviews

Class and Voice:		Tape Transcripts			
No	tape no	interviewee		date	length (rough)
Int1		Frameworks	Cmg (Community media group)	Nov-04	ongoing
Int2		Marilyn Hyndman	Cmg (Community media group)	Jan-04	days
Int3	12	Robbie Byrne	Cg (Community group)	17.11.04	ongoing
Int4	13-14	Brendan O'Caolain 1& 2	Cg (Community group)	23.11.04	2 hrs
Int5	15 – 17	John and Mark Boyle	Cmg (Community media group)	24.1.05	half day
Int6	21	Danny Burke	Cmg (Community media group)		ongoing
Int7	22	Maria Gibbons	Cmg (Community media group)	12.4.05	ongoing
Int8	23	Mike Brown	Cmg (Community media group)	13.4.05	01:16
Int9	24-25	Dave Spence	Cg (Community group)	13.4.05	27mins
Int10		Kevin McNamidhe	Cmg (Community media group)	20.4.05	3 hrs ongoing
Int11		Zalea TVMichel Fiszbin Pamela Denton	Cmg (Community media group)	19.5.05	02:05
Int12	35	Sue Esterson	Cg (Community group)	15.6.05	50:40:00
Int13	36 – 37	Phillip Keegan	Cg (Community group)		ongoing
Int14	38-39	Cork community Television Eddie / Emma	Cmg (Community media group)	2006	ongoing
Int15	40	Derek Jennings CR	Cg (Community group)	Jun-06	45 mins
Int16	41	Sandra CR	Cg (Community group)	Jun-06	45 mins
Int17		Brendan Dowling, Whitefriars	Cg		1 hr
Int18		Near FM / Media co-opCiaran Murray,	Cmg		2 hrs
Int19	S40	Age and Opportunity	Cg (Community group)	Autumn 06	
Int20		Gael Linn	NGO		
Int21		Irish Aid	statutory		
Int22		DIT	education		
Other research involvement		Kerry CM Project	Cg (Community group)	Autumn 05	

Appendix No. 16 Tomaselli's Table of difference

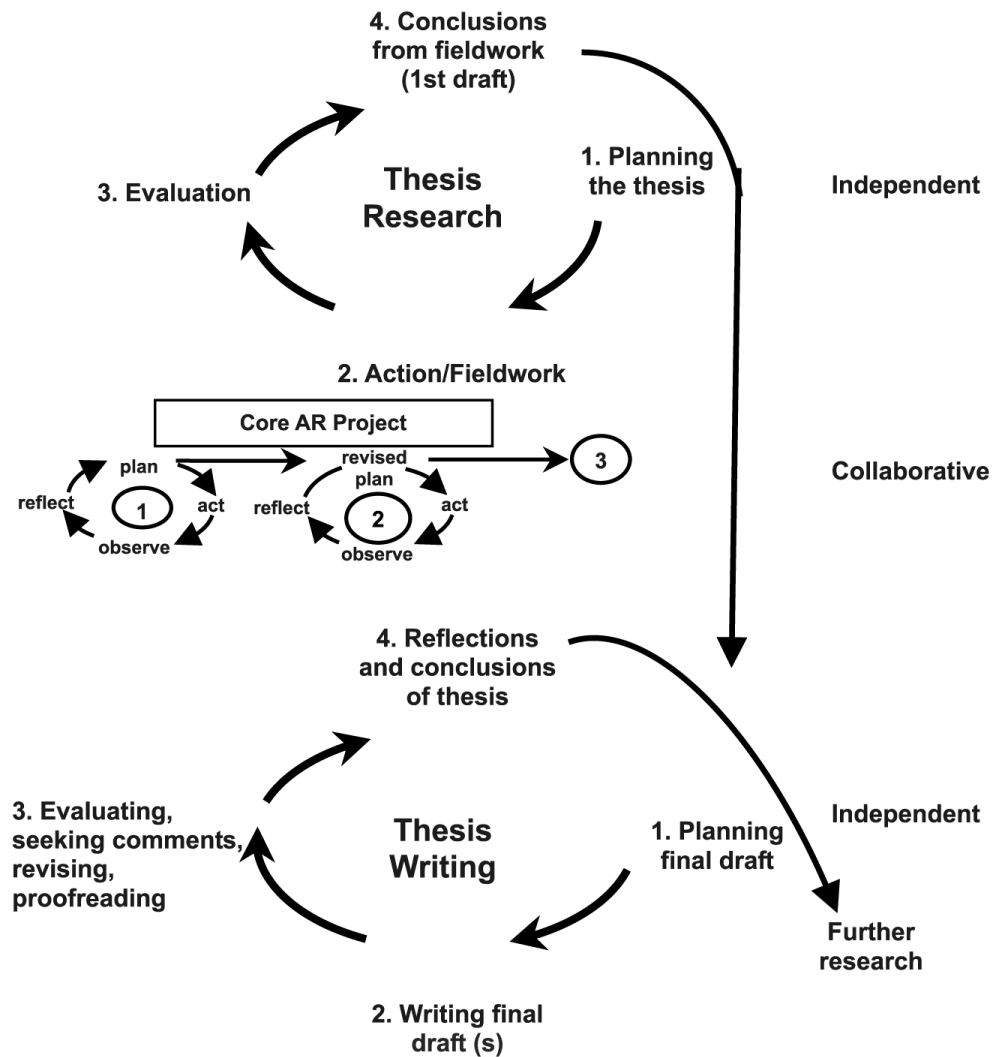
Tomaselli's Table of differences (Tomaselli K. , 1989)

Community and Professional Video: Table of Differences

Community video	Professional and conventional video
Communication	
Group media animates and mobilises personal experience in group contexts	Mass media informs and homogenises personal experience in individual contexts
Non-profit motive	Profit motive
Develops human relations	Develops techniques
Communication associated with process	Communication associated with technical quality
Knowledge	
Produces new knowledge	'Restricts' knowledge or repackages & reconstructs it in new ways
Recuperates local histories	Emulates dominant view of world
Retains local cultural specificity in terms of subjects	Homogenises local cultures in term of markets and techniques
Questions of Democracy	
Emphasises relationships	Fragments relationships
Horizontal/participative working relationships	Imposed/top-down working relationships
Transformative	Reformist
Coding	
Creates new codes, if often crude, but organic origins address community's agenda	Refines conventional styles, sophistication often hides local issues and specificities
Refers to processes beyond the community	Literal/if processes not shown, they do not exist
Production, Distribution, Exhibition	
Production cannot be executed in terms of predetermined schedules	Production must be executed in terms of pre-determined schedules
Process precedes product	Product is only goal. Process is concealed
Develops local audiences	Develops national and international markets
Crew not alienated from its labour	Crew alienated from its labour
Participant video-makers are part of local distribution networks	Are alienated from their audiences through independent distribution

Power, Empowerment	
Decision-making power vested in the subject-community	Decision-making power retained and secured in the production crew and/or producers
Initial power relationships exposed and negotiated between crew and subject-community	Nature of power relationships mystified by crew in <i>its</i> relations with the subject-community
Empowers/active response	Disempowers/passive response
Community networks strengthened	Community networks exploited and/or weakened
Community must take responsibility for completion of video	Crew takes responsibility for completion of video
Facilitates both video and political theory building	Prevents theory building by concealing processes of production
Producers are part of subject community or are drawn into it	Producers are outside subject-community
Collective decision-making	Hierarchical decision-making
Long-term relationship between crew and community develops	Short-term relationship develops
Viewers have political expectations	Viewers want to be entertained
Empowerment takes place, if differentially, at every level of production, from production techniques to recovery of local histories and catalysation of community organisational networks	Usually only film/video makers are empowered. Sometimes subject-communities can be detrimentally affected through exposure to alien influences and payment for acting services.

Appendix No. 47 Zuber-Skerritt Diagram of PAR process



Source: Adapted from Zuber-Skerritt and Perry (2002, p. 177)

Tables and Project Documents

Tables and documents produced as part of this research are included in Volume Four.

Tables are included here, project documents are available on the CD and website page:

<http://www.cmn.ie/research2000-2010/>

List of Tables

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1	Typology taken from Williams
2	Pattern of change in DCTV CoM membership
3	Needs and Methods
4	Sectoral focus of workshops
5	Focus groups within the PAR
6	Ballymun Focus group
7	DCDB consultation Focus group
8	Global CM organisations chart
9	Workshop participation

List of Project Documents

1. Programme Types Schema
2. Report on Men At Work (MAW)
3. Programme Formats Module

Table No. 1: Williams Typology of Media Function

Type	Devices	Historical place	Skills involved	Access controls
Amplificatory	Megaphone	Amphitheatre –historic early electronic – recent	To speak, to hear,	Amphitheatre - Spatial Electronic - Small cost
	Live Radio	Recent	To speak, to hear, and to interpret	Transmission equipment, license, control by 'codes of practice', legal
	Live TV	recent	To speak, to hear, to gesture, to observe, and to interpret	Transmission equipment, studio for production base, license, control by 'codes of practice', legal
Durative	sound recordings mean durative quality for speech,	recent	To speak, to hear, and to interpret	
	Painting, sculpture,	late	To see and feel – touch	Classed and 'cultural' controls such as education, ability to travel,
Alternative	Use of objects as signs; development of writing; graphics, and means of reproduction	early	Reading, writing, observe, interpret	Socialisation; Education; industrial training

Table No. 1 drawn from Williams typology of media

Table No. 2: Pattern of change in CoM membership:

	CMG	CG	NGO	State agency	Independent filmmaker
DCTV ISC 2002					
Members	7	7	4	2	0
Of which active	7	7	1	1	0
DCTV ISC 2003					
Members	4	9	3	3	0
Of which were active	4	8	2	1	0
DCTV CoM 2004					
Members	5	6	3	1	4
Of which were active	4	3	2	0	4
DCTV CoM 2005					
Members	6	6	2	0	4
Of which were active	4	2	2	0	2
DCTV CoM 2006					
Members	5	1	3	0	3
Of which were active	4	0	1	0	2
DCTV CoM 2007					
Members	4	0	4	0	3
Of which were active	3	0	4	0	3
DCTV CoM 2008					
Members	4	0	4	0	3
Of which were active	3	0	4	0	3

Table No. 3 of Needs and Methods

	Basis for activity	democratic and participatory process	control of intellectual production	facilitate dialogue with stakeholders	increasing the sphere of influence of the group
	Needs supported	Suitable methods			
1	Develop CTV project	coalitions with CGs to support development of CTV in their organisations	coalitions with CGs to support development of CTV in their organisations	workshops/ conferences	submissions
		ongoing contact with key activists for reviews, consultations	discussions sessions with organisations and small groups		position papers
		Focus groups	Focus Groups		reports on specific areas
		workshops	one-to-one interviews		direct action
2	draw CG's into sphere of CTV project	reports on specific areas	coalitions with CGs to support development of CTV in their organisations	workshops	position papers
		ongoing contact with key activists for reviews, consultations	discussions sessions with organisations and small groups	submissions	
		Focus groups	Focus Groups		reports on specific areas
3	Gather experience from CTVs abroad	use of literature and information sources	coalitions with CGs to support development of CTV in their organisations	workshops	reports on specific areas
		discussions sessions with organisations and small groups	discussions sessions with organisations and small groups		
		seminars in conjunction with conferences	Focus Groups		
			one-to-one interviews		
4	keep role of researcher in review	reports on specific areas	coalitions with CGs to support development of CTV in their organisations	reports on specific areas	Focus groups
		ongoing contact with key activists for reviews, consultations	discussions sessions with organisations and small groups		
			Focus Groups		
5	work within resources available	coalitions with CGs to support development of CTV in their organisations	coalitions with CGs to support development of CTV in their organisations		use of literature
		ongoing contact with key activists for reviews, consultations	discussions sessions with organisations and small groups		
			Focus Groups		
			one-to-one interviews		
6	achieve greater visibility	direct action	conferences	workshops	direct action
		Conferences	use of literature		use of literature
7	Gain political and institutional support for project	direct action	position papers; submissions;	workshops	position papers
		seminars as part of conferences	discussions sessions with organisations and small groups		direct action
			use of literature		
		direct action			

Table No. 4 – Sectoral Profiles of Workshops and Focus Groups

	Community focus	State Agency focus	Other e.g. independent filmmakers/ CTV interest groups	Participation levels
Workshop 1	50%	50%		high
Workshop 2	40%	40%	20%	high
Workshop 3	100%	0	0	low

Table No. 5 Focus Groups within the PAR

Focus Groups

	No of meetings	actions	participants
Focus Group 1 (5 local groups operating from the same building/centre) 2002	1	1. Information session and survey	Community groups
Focus Group 2 (Groups with interest in CTV for Adult Education (AE)) 2002-2004	Many	1. Two Media Awareness Training Projects – a beginners and follow up course 2. Programme ideas – three proposals	Members of 5 community groups involved in Adult Education
Focus Group 3 (Groups focusing on community television for environmental/ local/global issues (LG))	3	1. Brainstorming session 2. Proposals for programming	Activists from environmental, local development and global development groups,
Focus Group 4 (Groups working with youth (Y))	2	No actions – discussion only	Community media groups and youth social workers

Table No. 6 Focus Group Questions

Questions to assess interests in and perceived uses of CM –

Focus group session with local groups in a community centre 2002.

Participants interests included:

Welfare rights

Housing associations

Community Action project (Community development)

Local Arts Centre

Focus group 1 – questions	Yes	No	Maybe		Not useful	Useful	Very useful
Q (1) Does your organisation disseminate information in Dublin (e.g. event or activity details?)	5						
(1a) if so how useful do you think community television would be to this?						1	4
Q (2) Do your objectives include educating on, promoting discussion/understanding or advocacy of specific issues among sections of Dublin's population?	5						
(2a) if so how useful do you think community television would be to this?						1	4
Q (3) Would members of your organisation like to receive training in video/TV production?	1	1	3				
Q (4) Would your organisation be interested in producing/hosting/participating in making your own programmes?	3		2				
Q (5) Would you like to be kept in touch with developments in Dublin City Community television (if so give your email address, if you have one or	5						

any other contact details)						
Q (6) Would you be interested in becoming a 'member' of Dublin City community Television when it is founded?	3		2			
Q (7) Would your organisation be interested in participating in some way in getting it going?	1	1	3			

Are there activities that indicate community television is useful? – Participants found a high level of activities they engaged in that could use community television, even amongst those groups who don't want to produce their own programmes or participate in the organising of ctv.

Is there interest in :

(a) training for production: This was qualified – this may indicate that groups do not see the training as benefiting their participants, and probably did not see their CEP participants being involved in CTV the long term.

(b) participation in programming and devising schedules: there was a higher interest in this aspect but still mixed feelings – reflecting an uncertainty about what this would entail. Interest was more around what kind of programming would come from CTV, rather than their being involved in constructing it.

(c) CTV organising: Very low level of interest – reflecting lack of capacity to undertake organising in this area.

Table No. 7 Focus groups in the DCDB Consultation

This was part of a series of workshops organised by the Dublin City Development Board (DCDB) in 2000 as part of the consultation around the City Strategic Planning process. Focus Group organised by the DCDB initial consultation for which I was rapporteur.

Identifying issues for DCDB consultation process

Composition of participants in session:

- 4 school students
- 5 from various residents associations
- 2 from Disability Forum
- 1 from Inner City Organisations Network

Each delegate had three votes, issues were raised in a brainstorming session and then delegates dropped some as they prioritised their three votes.

Issues raised in brainstorming session		Vote
1	Education	2
2	Employment	1
3	Health	1
4	Sport	1
5	Community	2
6	Leisure	1
7	Business	0
8	Culture	1
9	Environment and Heritage	7
10	Safety	3
11	Traffic/transport	3
12	Planning	4
13	Consultation Process: Transparency and accountability as part of this	3
14	Racism	0
15	Inter-agency Co-operation	0
16	Accessibility	1

Issues were then discussed in relation to one another and grouped under Environment and Planning. The focus group reported back to the plenary. However there is no way to know how this material or sets of priorities actually filtered through to the Strategic Plan, and people felt very distanced from the process.

Table No. 8 CM Networks and movements global and local

Date	Global Organisation / Network	date inactive	Irish Networks and organisations
1950	WACC (World Association of Christian Communicators)		
1974	ISIS - International Women's Information and Communication Service		
1976	MacBride Commission		
1980	Mac Bride report <i>Many Voices, One World</i>		
1983	AMARC	still active	
1984	US withdraw from NWICO		
1985	UK withdraw from NWICO		
1986	Community Media associations established in Netherlands; Denmark, Belgium, Spain, France. FERL (European Federation of Community Radios)		<i>First community radio Stations and NACB: Irish CM Activist Sally Reynolds becomes AMARC Rep for Western Europe</i>
1989	UNESCO's <i>New Communication Strategy</i> Mac Bride Roundtable	1999	
1990	Videazimut Free Expression network Association for Progressive Communications (APC)	2001 still active	
1991	The Cultural Environment Movement	2001	
1992			<i>Community Video Network (CVN)</i>
1993	The Telecommunications Policy Roundtable APC Women's Networking Support Programme (APC WNSP)	2001 still active	
1994			<i>Community Radio Forum</i>
1995			
1996	Platform for Democratic Communication (PDC)	becomes CRIS in 2001	<i>CVN becomes CMN</i>
1997	Center for development communication CDC		
1999	Indymedia (IMC) Voices 21		
2000	OURMedia/ Nuestros Medios		<i>CRF becomes CRAOL</i>
2001	Communication Rights for the Information Society (CRIS)	Originally PDC	
2002	Action Coalition for Media Education (ACME)		
2003	Media Justice Network		
2004	Open Channels for Europe		
2005	Media and Democracy Coalition		
2006	Community Forum Europe		<i>Community Television Association Ireland</i>

Table No. 9 Participation in Workshops

Date	Workshop title	Description – purpose and organizing group	No in attendance
2001	Media Workshop	Establish CMF	45
2002	A Day for Community Television	Forum for the CTV interest groups to meet with BCI. Development of community coalitions	80
2003	Developing Thematic Content Groups	Supporting community organizations to create content production networks; DCTV Co-operative society formation and development	18
2004	Independent Media Centre	Coalition with CMN, Indymedia and Dublin Grassroots network	Over ten days – numerous events big attendances 60+
2005	DCTV workshops	DCTV License Application process and exploration of the Sound and Vision Funding Scheme (BFS)	Three workshops average 50 participants in attendance at each
2006	Section 40 Programme Development Workshops (PDWs)	An effort to do a needs assessment, this series of workshops looked at production processes and again focused on community groups capacity to engage with production	30 Participants (all representing organisations) attended a series of workshops
2006	Taking the Air – weekend	Looking at CTV ways of operating and producing programmes	35
2007	Taking the Air Again	CTV ethos development	20

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VOLUME THREE

Appendices, Tables, and Supporting Documents

Margaret Gillan

04/09/2010

This document contains a range of documents supporting the Dissertation “Class , Voice, State” submitted for qualification of PhD. These include Appendices, Tables, and a number of supporting documents.

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Introduction to Appendices, Tables and Supporting Documents

This Volume of Appendices, tables, and documents have been compiled to support the main body of the Thesis. The documents are evidence of the processes and work undertaken over the course of this study.

Material drawn from the field consists of a range of documents comprising group process; correspondence; position papers; documents from participating groups and from relevant sources. Appendices also include sections of relevant legislation and regulatory policy.

Tables have been compiled to illustrate processes and patterns referred to in the text.

A number of documents are also appended as examples of knowledge production directly resulting from this PAR project. These include DVD's comprising clips which are approximately 4 mins long and I suggest that a small number of these clips should be viewed as they are the product of key strategies in community television production and are referred to in the text.

Recommended clips are:

1.1. Templates and Bulletin Boards:

1.1.1. CAN TV interactive bulletin board - watch out on this clip for the callers logging in to the bulletin board – one call is to number 028 for information on tenants rights and eviction, followed by information on low-cost dental services and an annual Pow-Wow.

1.2. Picture Stories.

1.2.1. CAN TV – Barbara Popovic talks about their services with clips from Childserv and Harmony House picture stories.

1.2.2. CAN TV user groups - CAN TV gets user groups to talk about how the channel works for them

2. Studio-based Programmes ;

2.1. Call-in Programmes using a “Hotline Studio”

2.1.1. CAN TV : “Countdown” Clip – Maths programme for children. Followed by the presenter talking about how they used the programme .

2.1.2. CAN TV: AIDS call-in Clip from DVD Help-line programmes are popular with the community groups such as health organisations promoting safe-sex, domestic violence help-line, and education organisations.

5.5 Drama

5.5.1 Community Response – “Hidden Voices” see Note 7 - this clip shows a facilitated question session after a performance. This group uses drama to make information on HIV available in an accessible form.

5.5.2 “In our own voices” Again from Community Response this is one of a series of advert type formats designed in a drama workshop exploring realities of drugs in the community.

Appendix 1 Dagrón's Table of CM by Media

TABLE 3: BY MEDIUM

MEDIA	TITLE	PLACE
Cellular Phones	Grameen Village Phone	Bangladesh
Computers, Internet	Gasaleka & Mamelodi Telecentres	South Attica
	InfoDes	Peru
	Nakaseke Telecentre	Uganda
	Village Knowledge Centres	India
Multimedia	Community Media Network	Kenya
	Soul City	South Attica
	The Lilac Tent	Bolivia
Radio	Bush Radio	South Attica
	Community Audio Towers	Philippines
	EcoNews Attica	Regional, Attica
	Kiritirnatu Radio	Republic of Kiribati
	La Voz de la Comunidad	Guatemala
	Local Radio Network	Indonesia
	Miners' Radio Stations	Bolivia
	Moutse Community Radio	South Attica
	Radio Chaguarurco	Ecuador
	Radio Gune Yi	Senegal
	Radio Huayacocotla	Mexico
	Radio Izcanal	El Salvador
	Radio K wizera	Tanzania
	Radio Mampita & Magneva	Madagascar
	Radio Margaritas	Mexico
	Radio Quillabamba	Peru
	Radio Sagarrnatha	Nepal
	Radio Sutatenza	Colombia
	Radio Zibonele	South Attica
	Tambuli	Philippines
Radio / Internet	Kothmale Community Radio PULsar	Sri Lanka Regional, Latin America
Theatre	Aarohan Street Theatre	Nepal
	Nalamdana	India
	Popular Theatre	Nigeria
	Teatro Kerigma	Colombia
	Teatro La Fragua	Honduras
	Teatro Trono	Bolivia
	Wan Smolbag	Vanuatu, Solomon Islands
Video	Action Health	Nigeria
	CESPA	Mali
	CESPAC	Peru
	Chiapas Media Project	Mexico
	Kayapo Video	Brazil
	Labor News Production	Korea
	Maneno Mengi	Tanzania
	Nutzij	Guatemala
	PRODERITH	Mexico
	Television Serrana	Cuba
	TV Maxambomba	Brazil
	Video & Community Dreams	Egypt
	Video SEW A	India

Appendix No 2 Global Village CAT Chart of CTVs

	Country	Number of Stations	Distribution	Financing Distribution	Financing Program production	Commercials and/or Sponsorship allowed
1	Australia	10	UHF (Ch. 6)	Self	Self	C no; Sp yes
3	Belgium	1	see Germany (Open Channels)			No
4	Brazil	82	Cable			
5	Canada	150	Cable	cable opr voluntarily	cable opr. Voluntarily	Sponsorship
6	Denmark	27	UHF cable	self must-carry	govt support**)	No
7	Fiji	1	UHF	Self	grants, self	No
8	Finland	18	UHF cable	self must-carry	voluntary TV-license fee	yes (not used)
9	France	8	UHF	Self	Self	No
10	Germany	79	cable	cable opr must-carry	part of TV-license fee	No
11	Holland	110	cable	Community	Self	yes ***)
12	Israel	9	Cable	Community	local govt	-
13	New Zealand	3	UHF	under development		
14	Norway	1	UHF(NRK2) + cable	Govt	Self	No
15	South Korea	1	satellite (DBS)	-	-	-
16	Spain	under development				
17	Sweden	28	cable	cable opr must-carry	Self	Sp yes
18	U.K.	10	cable/UHF	must-carry	Self	Yes
19	Uruguay	1	Cable			
20	U.S.A.	1.8	cable also microwave, UHF	cable opr must-carry college/university	municipal concession fees on cable operators	No
-		540.8				

*) one TV-station = one access channel;

***) part of TV license fee + fee commercial radio and TV;

****) Commercials allowed if income used solely for non-profit operation (to finance production)

(<http://www.openchannel.se/cat/overview.htm>)

Appendix No 3 Links to Global CM Organisations

ACM (US)	http://www.alliancecm.org/
AMARC	http://www.amarc.org
APC	http://www.apc.org
CRIS	http://www.crisinfo.org
Indymedia	http://www.indymedia.org/en/index.shtml
Media for Development in Democracy	devmedia@listserv.uoguelph.ca
OLON (NL)	http://www.olon.nl/index2.php
Open Channels Network	www.openchannels.se
OurMedia	http://www.ourmedia.org/
Panos	http://www.panos.org.uk/
The People's Communications Charter	http://www.pccharter.net/
Videazimut	Links to documentation at: http://www.comminit.com/en/node/114470 http://web.mit.edu/21f.853/africa-film/0876.html http://www.namac.org/node/1185
WACC	http://www.waccglobal.org/

Appendix No 4 Case Studies (CS) in the PAR project

Introduction

Reasons for case studies are often that these create finite, encased, examples of relationships, however case studies developed in this PAR became extended and reflect the capacity of these situations to produce other outcomes some of which were unexpected. The case study work grew rather than being planned as part of a process of gathering empirical data from our developing relations with groups and organisations as part of the PAR process. The first CS on Community Response became an extended case study that has remained within the main body of the Dissertation.

When I introduced people to the project, I invariably said something that went like this:

Everybody making community media is operating in different circumstance, the circumstances are particular to a group of people, or to a place, or both. But often those circumstances will be reflected in some way in different places and with different groups, there will be different recognitions – both of difference and likeness. There are organisations in Dublin - some who have equipment and have done productions and who have used all sorts of media, and there are some who have nothing, so whatever information I can gather about people using media in *different* sorts of situations is useful.”
(Recorded on tape - Interview 7)

But this information needs to be directed in order to be useful, just as with making community television it can't be just a case of putting it out so that “someone out there will pick it up”. How and where to direct the information or to use the knowledge being generated is then the question, knowing where the content is going and establishing channels for feedback and interaction are key elements of this activity

As relations developed with groups throughout this process I began to feed information directly to the groups themselves, providing updates on DCTV and the general CTV development, on lobby actions, on new legislation etc, they in turn kept me updated about their activities. In order for some of this process to make sense it needed to be incorporated into this report.

I presented the second CS as a report on NvTV for DCTV in Dublin (see Appendix No 28) the group found it useful even though there were huge differences in the capacity and stage of development of the two organisations. There were ideas there and connections that could be made. In other cases people were not interested in reading or discussing particular case studies, but very often wanted to be fed further information that was relevant to what they were doing. In the case of NvTV – the study was used in a number of ways to provide

information and discussion input on a number of aspects of CTV including: programming, funding, and training.

The third CS, the Adult Education Working Group (AEWG) has also been incorporated into the main body of the Dissertation, and a set of Appendices relating to this are included in this Volume 2.

The following studies concern two initiatives undertaken by participating groups.

Case 1: “An Tubaiste” – local participatory video work in County Leitrim

Choice of project:

One CMN (founder) member, Maria Gibbons, had relocated to Leitrim and she joined CMN’s BCMI Project as a trainer and as a liaison to groups in and around Leitrim. She told me about this project, “An Tubaiste” when I interviewed her for this PAR research and she discussed her approach to video work within a community development environment. I include this study because it is an independent low budget project developed with local organisations.

Leitrim is a midlands and border county which had the worst emigration record in the country; the land is poor, tending to be boggy, which meant the life was hard and so the county is relatively disadvantaged.

Produced in 2000 the video is called 'An Tubaiste' meaning 'The accident', I was impressed by the production which had involved the whole village and there was a clear sense of ownership of the project by the community. The project used video in a creative way to respond to an historical event with a local connection recreating a boating tragedy. The following is drawn from email correspondence and notes Maria sent me. While Maria says there was little follow-up, and is doubtful of the value of the video itself, she also affirms that women who volunteered on that project continue to participate in voluntary media projects and she is happy with this long term impact.

Project duration: two-two and a half months; the group met initially once a week or so, then more often. Filmed over over 2 days & a bit extra (12 hr each day!);

Resources: Available Budget came to IR£1,680 (today's value possibly just under €2,300). It was funded by Co Leitrim Partnership through its then arts worker (none in place now!); by extra time spent by the Trainer & by the film-making team (5) who gave their time for free, plus travel, etc. Music and all extras were also provided freely. Project had use of a camera/tripod & mic from Leitrim Partnership; was filmed on miniDV and hired Marias edit suite. Funds came from the local Partnership.

Methodologies: We did workshops in video production while we developed the script (all had done some video work before); I got in an artist (& paid her from funds) to spend a day with them developing ideas too”

Problems encountered: There was no money to make more than a couple of VHS copies so apart from a few local screenings in the area (in the pubs), apart from the involvement as extras (perhaps 25 adults & children turned up), really there wasn't much obvious benefit to the community. No other resources apart from time/ imagination of participants (which was a lot!)

Follow-up possibilities: No reflection afterwards as the group didn't meet again apart from screening the tape (I'm afraid) - we were all too tired out I think. Member of group did editing with me supervising, no record of how long it took;

Letter of invitation

VIDEO PROJECT 2000

Hi Folks, I'm writing to let you know that I've arranged a day in Arus Padraig, Drumshanbo on Tuesday, June 6th, to work on the video project.

The arts worker, Clare Lynch, will work with the group from 10am to 4pm on that day, using sound, image and the written word to explore aspects of our chosen topic (the tragedy in Lough Allen during the 1840s) in non-video form. Clare will bring scrap materials, clay and drawing tools, and you will work mainly in pairs.

The aim of the day is to have fun, to get to know each other better, and to come up with some novel ideas on how we might approach making the video itself.

I am meeting Clare next Thursday June 1st to finalise arrangements for the day, and it would be useful if I was able to provide her with any information or other material about the event in question. If any of you has acquired anything in your research, could you get it (or a copy) to me before next Thursday?

If you are unable to make it on June 6th, please let me know as soon as possible.

Regards,

Maria

Meeting Notes

LOUGH ALLEN PROJECT

From: meeting in Manorhamilton, July 13th 2000

PROP LIST

hession bag - Gerry

pig - Mary

boat/oars - Gerry

sail, rope - Gerry

town clock - Carrick-on-Shannon

potatoes - Ballina

oats ??

grappling iron - Gerry

pitchfork, rake - Frankie

child with apple - Ballina

names on ricepaper, flower petals, candles, knitting needles, wool - Mary

loys & spades - Verona, tongs - Frankie, scythes - Frankie

horsedrawn hearse - Ballinagleragh

teeming cans - Gerry, Frankie

cattle feeder - Corry

nails, hammer, wood - Gerry

feathers - Frankie

torches - Dave & Mary

eggs - Gerry

ribbons - Frankie

gate banging - Gerry

SOUND LIST

piper	lonely sheep
hens, cattle, pigs, horses	market sounds
water & rhythm of oars	poem
lapping sounds	comments (Irish)
wind sounds	mummers
tearing cloth, creaking timber	music
breaking timber	inn sounds
murmur voices	IV Gerry
concerned voices (Irish)	praying
magpie, pig or crow	spade/loy in gravel
voices in distance	hammering nail
sounds of lake	gate banging
bell	footsteps

SHOT LIST

modern lake from shore - wideangles from a number of locations, of lake and surroundings, including late evening & setting sun over lake, storm on lake, calm lake, shorelines

Corry - women hurrying by wall, feet on style & running on grass, man with full bag (pig or hens), shawl slipping, people arrive to board boat (POV boat), W/A from shore of men in boat with grappling irons

miscellaneous - shadows scurrying, warning omen (crow, magpie or black pig), river ford, town clock (twice), gate banging, lone piper at lakeshore, knitting needles & wool, cattle feeder, torch scene, house ruins

nature - sky, foliage, water (under different conditions, both calm & stormy)

onboard boat - *a) outward* - boat sections C/Us, boat trail in water as it leaves, fish disturbed by boat passing, tracking shots from moving boat (of shore, of water ripples, of c/u sections of boat), wideangle of boat in distance on lake, tilt up helmsman from hand to face, OS some passengers, C/U boat as it passes across frame of camera, C/U of oars in water, hands on sails, sail cloth billowing in breeze, C/U hands with rope mooring; *b) return* - oars starting to pull away, wideangle of boat on lake in distance (evening), oars pulling in rough water, water hitting side of boat, using teeming cans to empty water, cloth tearing, sail under pressure from wind, oar flying through sky, shadows flailing in boat; *c) aftermath* - c/u grappling irons with arms straining, debris on water (ribbons, oats, shawl, broken timbers, straw, cloth, feathers), candles on water, names in water, flower petals on water

Drumshanbo market - modern town, old buildings in town, farm implements, sacks of potatoes & oats, dung, farm animals on street, linen folded, eggs in basket, c/u child eating apple, ms person with uisce beatha, ms fluter playing to crowd, c/u bargaining, buying ribbons

Drumshanbo pier - boat approaches pier, feet alight off boat, c/u pointing at clock, c/u fingers indicating three, pacing feet, boat waiting, c/u waterline on boat, sacks, os mrs forde pointing to waterline, w/a mrs forde & companions walk away, c/u feet climbing onto boat, c/u bags dropped onto boat

Kilbride - c/u hammering nails, w/a & c/u digging grave, w/a modern cemetery, location of common grave, c/u laying of wreath, Mummers, IV Gerry

SCHEDULE

I'd suggest we organise the shooting schedule as follows:

on Day 1 (Monday July 24th) we shoot- the IV with Gerry, shots around the lake, Kilbride, miscellaneous shots and nature shots; (not necessarily in that order) mummies??

on Day 2 (Wednesday July 26th) we shoot- the Corry shots, on board the boat both outward & return, the pier scene at Drumshanbo, Drumshanbo market (for which we need actors & boat), aftermath shots (for which we need boat), plus pick up anything we can on nature shots & miscellaneous shots (not necessarily in that order) mummies?

Let's meet up early on Monday morning & arrange details of the two days from there, but obviously **we'll need the props** for shots to be taken on Monday, see that we have those on Monday morning. The planning meeting should take about 2 hours.

I have 2 female actors who should be available for Wednesday (yet to confirm), Dave is to ask Brian, do we need any more? (we can fill in ourselves on occasion, as for any shot we could have 3 of us free if necessary).

Monday 24th 9am all meet in Drumkeeran at petrol pumps (if it's raining we're probably better off to cancel? but if it is raining, ring around that morning & we'll see from there; if anyone has a spare broolly, then bring it for the camera, please).

Wednesday 26th 9am all meet in Drumkeeran at petrol pumps prior to going to start shooting aftermath shots, then Drumshanbo market shots, then drumshanbo pier shots (for which we need actors) and so. This would mean we'd need the actors by about 12pm in Drumshanbo. We could head back up to Corry to pick up shots there later.

We have nothing sorted re the mummer's circle, but perhaps we can talk about it on Monday morning. Any ideas?? Please ring each other to discuss anything you need to; also I'll be around all week if anyone wants to contact me. Most of our recording will be outdoors, so we will be at the mercy of the weather to some extent, & I would recommend postponing if necessary if the weather is inclement. But let's be optimistic.....

See y'all soon.....

Maria G.

Case 2: Frameworks Films and the Pilot Week for Cork Community Television

Choice of organisation and project

Frameworks Films is an independent production company based in Blackrock in Cork, run by Eddie Noonan and Emma Bowell, it is a Company Limited by Guarantee. Both have been involved in a range of community media activity for many years and have been persistent activists for community television. They provide training and production for youth and community organisations and now have historical relationships with many organisations both in Cork itself and around the country. They see their work as being based within the community sector and not simply as providing a service, but a commitment to the use of media as a tool for community development.

They have also been involved in a number of initiatives to raise awareness about community television in Cork, e.g. 'Action' in 2002; Community Television 2003; the development of a Cork Community Media Forum in 2003.

Of particular interest is the week of community television programming they developed and co-ordinated that went out on Chorus Sports channel in the Autumn of 2005 and was repeated over two weeks of the Christmas period. Cork won the Capital of Culture title in 2003 and this was the incentive for what was named "A Pilot Week of Cork Community Television"

we knew there was going to be project-based funding and we thought on the one hand it would be the opportunity to get some programmes made but also a chance to address the confusion around what community television is, the confusion with local television, all of that. We thought that if we could, before we develop community television, that we could use this opportunity to get that concept out there it would be great... and it would be a testing ground too, to see what the reaction would be, if people were interested at all..."

The schedule for the week was compiled from a range of sources, but the core programmes were those developed through a project funded by the Cork 2005 European Capital of Culture. So there were, in fact two projects involved: firstly the production project "Cork Widescreen" and secondly the "Pilot Week of Cork Community Television".

"Cork Widescreen -12 short films, was a collaboration between Frameworks Films and a range of community and voluntary groups in Cork.

Its purpose was to provide an opportunity for a diverse group of people living in cork to express their view on issues in their community and to challenge Cork's citizens to critically reflect on their city and its future

The films included work with Women's Community Education Initiatives, Immigrant Support Centre, Social Housing Development Company, Gay, Traveller and disability groups. Frameworks approached the groups they thought would be interested in producing

films, with some of these they had a historical relationship, but they also approached some groups they knew were doing interesting work. A big incentive for groups to get involved was that they knew there would be publicity with the Year of Culture and that people would be watching what was happening, it was a good opportunity for those groups to get exposure for their work and to reach the wider community.

Methodologies:

- **Workshops** with participating groups provided an introduction to programme-making, to the processes, screenings of films, and discussion on community television.
- **A contract with each group** was devised by Frameworks to clarify a range of issues – working processes; ownership and copyright; permissions for filming and screening;
- **A liaison person** was established within each group to communicate with Frameworks.
- **A core group** of 4-5 people was established within each group to work on the production, from ideas through issues of schedules etc.
- Frameworks held a **Post-production Editorial Workshop** and
- **Editorial control remained in the hands of the groups.**
“I’m thinking about the board of the organisation where people who did interviews might have said things they wanted changed because they wanted to check the accuracy of stuff they’d said, that kind of thing. So that by the time it came to broadcasting stuff we were sure that all of the groups were 100% happy with the material.”

Problems encountered:

- **Time and money:** the delay on the go-ahead for one year meant a shorter time-scale for the whole project. The Budget was cut by one-third and this combined with the time element meant that the training element had to be cut completely, which was a negative aspect and meant that Frameworks had to have more of an input into the production than originally intended. Some groups had more involvement in their film than others.

we could have done that whole training block and that didn’t happen, we couldn’t do it. It did mean then that some groups, depending on what their idea was, say for example, the Traveller visibility group, they ended up being in the film, they were very involved in the production because they were there every day. They learned. Other groups, for example, would have come up with the idea, but they wouldn’t have been in the film, they might only have come along for one or two days of the filming, that kind of thing. It varied very much from group to group.”

- **Demanding** – but interesting to work with 12 core groups and a diversity of levels of involvement, capacity, organisational models and coherence.

Possibilities to follow up:

- **Cross-community programmes** – working with collaborations between for example the Gay and Traveller groups,
- **Link programmes** that are designed to link groups doing work of interest to each other, say in youth programmes, arts programmes, or even media skills.
- **Public meetings** that can be recorded and then broadcast
- **Returning the films to the community** and possibilities off-screen:

“we’d love loved to had had a screening of the films apart from the community television week - that each film would be screened individually within their community. We did have a gala night screening – but they were just simply screenings - you could do a whole seminar around some of the issues that were coming up in the film. But we can’t do all of that, the people themselves have to engage in looking at things and taking ideas on. And I think a lot of them have used these films for discussions and seminars themselves.”
- **Review and evaluation with the groups.**

Issues they see for community groups;

- **Editorial control:**

“I think that issue of editorial control is huge. All of the groups would have said that – “we need to have some input into this – we really want to take stuff out if we don’t like it”. That is very important, but obviously much further down the road when groups are completely making their own programmes, then that’s no longer an issue for us. But in the interim period I think there’s going to have to be a lot of collaboration between production companies and groups, apart from groups that have already gone through a period of training. So these are issues that we have to watch”.

- **Developing production capacity within the organisation:**

“– or groups becoming producers and then going through that process. It will take a lot, not only do we need technical skills but we need communication skills as well, and all the other skills you need to work on production - and the patience to do that. It’s important to recognise that it’s a slow process too.

Its like any realisation, you get to the point where you have the knowledge, you have the power, that you don’t misuse it; that you bring others to where you are. I was there now I want to see that in my community.

- **Holding or losing the skillbase:**

You could have a situation where someone says, ah now I’ve learned so much I could walk into commercial mode and start up my own business, and I’ve been asked to do the football match and I’ve been asked to do this, and its commercial activity, its money. And that will happen. It will happen with community development groups, when community TV people begin, and someone rings them up and says I want someone to shoot something would you help us out it’s a total commercial thing. And so we start losing people – good people, researchers, scriptwriters – all that.

- **Payment and differentials – who gets paid and why?**

Frameworks: if you’re going to do a job, you have to be properly paid for doing a job. You have to be valued, its not going to be a second task or second this or community as seen as amateur. You’re there and that should be as valued, as equal as other jobs.

. . . if someone is paid in their community group already, I think that some of those people aren’t going to be looking for additional fees if it fits into part of their job description as being the community media person, then I don’t think people will be looking for that.

... if I can survive on €500 a week, it pays my mortgage, bills and I'm quite willing to work for that because I believe in it, and I want to give back now, not when I retire, and that's the individual's choice, on the other hand then there may be an individual who wants a bit more, wants to be paid the going rate.

CMN: perhaps salary scales could be set according to community development scales instead of media – because there are different processes and different range of skills. There's multi-skilling for example - we don't operate in the same way as mainstream media

Frameworks: That's probably the reason why I am still doing it. I've been offered work in RTE, and camera jobs, and I'd probably be paid more, I don't do it because my heart wouldn't be there, this is what satisfies us rather than being a camera operator. You need a person like that you need someone to be the camera operator, to be the administrator, to be the director all at once. I know I could be earning a lot more, in a sense it is a sacrifice because you are giving up a lot.

... but when you are talking about salary scales are you talking about people working in DCTV rather than people working in the community and voluntary sector?

CMN: yes, we actually see CTV as part of that sector and that it is a community developmental approach to media as a job,

Frameworks: For the community groups who will be making programmes – some of those people will be on their own salaries anyway, so therefore there wouldn't be an issue. Some of the people [working on the Cork Widescreen projects] had to clear with their management committee that they could give over so many hours to the production, it was important that that wasn't taken for granted, especially if some of the hours were outside their regular hours as well.

CMN: There's a learning curve that has to go throughout the whole organisation so that there's an understanding of what it takes to be involved in something like this. This is where your Widescreen project would have benefited those groups so much.

Frameworks: we now want to go to each of those groups and sit down and talk about what did you feel you got out of it, was it beneficial to them as an organisation, what were the difficulties they had with being involved in it.

Appendix No 5 Excerpts from Flood Tribunal 2nd Interim Report

Extracts from the 2nd Interim report

Flood Tribunal: The Second Interim Report of the Tribunal of Inquiry into Certain Planning Matters and Payments. DUBLIN, PUBLISHED BY THE STATIONERY OFFICE
To be purchased directly from the GOVERNMENT PUBLICATIONS SALE OFFICE,
SUN ALLIANCE HOUSE, MOLESWORTH STREET, DUBLIN 2,
September 2002

CENTURY RADIO

16-12 The Ministerial Directive obliging RTÉ to provide its facilities to Century issued by Mr. Burke as Minister for Communications on the 14th March 1989, was issued to advance the private interests of the promoters of Century and not to serve the public interest.

16-13 The payment of £35,000 to Mr. Burke by Mr. Barry on the 26th May 1989 was a corrupt payment made in response to a demand for £30,000 cash by Mr. Burke, and was not intended by Mr. Barry to be a political donation to Mr. Burke or to Fianna Fáil.

16-14 In proposing legislation which would have had the effect of curbing RTÉ's advertising, altering the format of 2FM, and diverting broadcasting licence fee income from RTÉ to independent broadcasters, Mr. Burke was acting in response to demands made of him by the promoters of Century and was not serving the public interest.

16-15 The payment of £35,000 to Mr. Burke by Mr. Barry ensured that he was available to serve the interests of Century's promoters, as is evidenced by his willingness to meet with their bankers and to give them assurances that he would take steps, including, if necessary, the introduction of legislation which would be to Century's financial benefit.

PAYMENT TO MR. BURKE AT BRIARGATE, SWORDS IN THE WEEK PRIOR TO THE 15TH JUNE 1989

16-16 The meeting at Mr. Burke's home at Briargate, Swords, Co. Dublin, in the week prior to the 15th June 1989, was specifically arranged by Mr. Michael Bailey and Mr. Burke so as to allow for the payment of money to be made to Mr. Burke. The meeting was not arranged in order to receive a political donation, but was arranged for the purpose of paying Mr. Burke money to ensure his support, and his influence over others, so as to achieve the alteration of the planning status of the Murphy company's North Dublin lands, described as lots 1-6 in Mr. Bailey's letter of the 8th June 1989 addressed to Mr. Gogarty.

16-17 The parties present at the meeting were Mr. Burke, Mr. Michael Bailey, Mr. Joseph Murphy Jnr., and Mr. James Gogarty.

16-18 The Murphy executives present at the meeting believed that the JMSE payment which was passed in a closed envelope by Mr. Joseph Murphy Jnr. to Mr. Burke was being matched by an equal payment from Mr. Michael Bailey contained in an envelope which they observed being passed by Mr. Michael Bailey to Mr. Burke.

16-19 The meeting took place with the prior knowledge of Mr. Joseph Murphy Snr., Mr. Frank Reynolds, and Mr. Roger Copey, each of whom was aware that it was intended to pay Mr. Burke £80,000 in order to ensure his support in achieving the intended changes in the planning status of the Murphy's North Dublin lands, which were at that time the subject

of a participation proposal, which if concluded, would have resulted in Mr. Michael Bailey receiving a 50% interest in the Murphy's North Dublin lands.

16-20 Mr. Joseph Murphy Snr. was the ultimate decision maker when it came to either selling the lands or entering into the participation proposal with Mr. Bailey.

16-21 On a date subsequent to the 3rd July 1989 and prior to the 10th July 1989 Mr. Joseph Murphy Snr. decided not to enter into the participation proposal envisaged by Mr. Michael Bailey, but to sell the lands outright.

16-22 The role of Mr. James Gogarty was that of a functionary only, and all actions taken by him in connection with the sale of the lands, the participation proposal, and the attendance at Mr. Burke's home, were taken by him at the request of Mr. Joseph Murphy Snr.

16-23 Mr. Burke assured those present at the time of the payment of monies to him that he understood that the payment was being made in connection with the proposal to alter the planning status of the Murphy lands and further assured those present that he would honour his commitment to do so.

16-24 The payment received by Mr. Burke amounted to a corrupt payment and all present at the meeting were aware that it was such.

Appendix No 6 Charters, statements, and Declarations

- 2008** AMARC Bogota Declaration*
- 2006** **The World Congress on Communication for Development**; Rome, Italy – October 25-27, 2006. The Rome Consensus: Communication for Development: A Major Pillar for Development and Change. Available at http://www.uneca.org/africanmedia/documents/Recommendations_Rome_Consensus.pdf accessed 10/4/2008
- 2006** APC Internet Rights Charter
- 2006** AMARC Amman Declaration*
- 2005** AMARC Jakarta Declaration*
- 2003:** AMARC Kathmandu Declaration [on the Right to Communicate], includes an International Charter available at <http://kathmandu.amarc.org/article/articlestatic/73/1/3/>
- 2003** Civil Society Declaration to the WSIS; available at: <http://www.itu.int/wsis/docs/geneva/civil-society-declaration.pdf>
- 2003** Bellagio Statement available at http://www.itu.int/dms_pub/itu-s/md/03/wsispc3/c/S03-WSISPC3-C-0180!!PDF-E.pdf
- 2002** **Right to Communicate of the Incarcerated**; available at http://www.mega.nu:8080/webconst/section_Right_to_Communicate.html
- 1999:** **Voices 21**; available at <http://comunica.org/v21/index.htm>
- 1998:** Videazimut **Declaration of Capetown on the Right to Communicate, 1998. (See CLIPS)** <http://commposite.uqam.ca/videaz/indexen.html>
- 1998:** AMARC Milan Declaration on Human Rights*
- 1997:** **Antipolo Declaration** 2nd August 1997, Phillipines, WACC (see Tracking, Winter 1997; CMN, Dublin)
- 1997:** **Boulder Statement** 2nd Oct 1997. Ninth MacBride Round Table (see Tracking Winter 1997 , CMN, Dublin) documents on the MacBride Round Table can be found at <http://web.archive.org/web/19970617091808/http://tdg.uoguelph.ca/~drichard/macbride/>
- 1997:** **The Berlin Declaration**; Open Channels for Europe 1997. 4th Convention of the German Open Channels, Berlin November 13-16, 1997. Available at: <http://www.openchannel.se/europe/berlin97.htm> accessed 12/3/2008
- 1996:** Declaration of Communications as a Human Right, Venezuela.

- 1995: The Universal Communication Rights Charter:** Rome 10th November 1995
- 1994 The Community Radio Charter;** AMARC; 18th September 1994; Ljubljana, Slovenia.
First AMARC Pan-European conference *
- 1993 The People's Communication Charter;** available at: <http://www.pccharter.net/>
- 1992 (revised 2000) TASH** Resolution on the Right to Communicate. Available at
<http://www.tash.org/IRR/resolutions/res02communication.htm>

Sources:

*AMARC Charters can be found at

http://www.amarc.org/index.php?p=international_declarations

WACC <http://www.waccglobal.org/en/resources/useful-links.html>

Comprehensive list of resolutions on the right to communicate is available at:

<http://www.righttocommunicate.org/viewGroup.atm?sectionName=rights&id=2>

Appendix No 6b

The AMARC Community Radio Charter for Europe

Recognising that community radio is an ideal means of fostering freedom of expression and information, the development of culture, the freedom to form and confront opinions and active participation in local life; noting that different cultures and traditions lead to a diversity of forms of community radio; this Charter identifies objectives which community radio stations share and should strive to achieve.

Community Radio Stations:

- 1.** promote the right to communicate, assist the free flow of information and opinions, encourage creative expression and contribute to the democratic process and a pluralist society;
- 2.** provide access to training, production and distribution facilities; encourage local creative talent and foster local traditions; and provide programmes for the benefit, entertainment, education and development of their listeners;
- 3.** seek to have their ownership representative of local geographically recognisable communities or of communities of common interest;
- 4.** are editorially independent of government, commercial and religious institutions and political parties in determining their programme policy;
- 5.** provide a right of access to minority and marginalised groups and promote and protect cultural and linguistic diversity;
- 6.** seek to honestly inform their listeners on the basis of information drawn from a diversity of sources and provide a right of reply to any person or organisation subject to serious misrepresentation;
- 7.** are established as organisations which are not run with a view to profit and ensure their independence by being financed from a variety of sources;
- 8.** recognise and respect the contribution of volunteers, recognise the right of paid workers to join trade unions and provide satisfactory working conditions for both;
- 9.** operate management, programming and employment practices which oppose discrimination and which are open and accountable to all supporters, staff and volunteers;
- 10.** foster exchange between community radio broadcasters using communications to develop greater understanding in support of peace, tolerance, democracy and development.

Appendix No 7 Southcoast CTV early history and brief

Southcoast Community Television: Michael Sullivan

Early History

Southcoast Community Television was established in Carrigaline in 1985, as a community owned not for profit organisation to bring multi channel television to the town.

Very quickly other towns and villages in Co Cork saw what was happening and decided that they also wanted this TV service. It expanded rapidly and today has more than twenty transmitters on the network.

Back in 1985 most people in rural Ireland had access only to two TV channels namely RTE 1 and RTE 2 while those living in cities had multi channel TV via cable systems. In 1989 the cable TV Company operating in Cork City received a license for a Microwave Multi-point Distribution System (MMDS) to bring multichannel TV to rural Co Cork.

Coverage footprint & facts and figures on customers

(info from 1996 census - LMR survey and SCTV records)

Southcoast's coverage footprint extends to two thirds of Co Cork, a part of southwest Kerry and into west Co Waterford. This area has over seventy thousand households and a population in excess of two hundred and twenty thousand.

From recent research we know that the service is being used by a third of these households (twenty three thousand and by over seventy thousand viewers). We also know from our membership records that over ten thousand households paid the £ 40 subscription in 1999.

In terms of market penetration within our coverage footprint we are second only to the national services (see Lansdowne Market Research report). This is amazing given that we have been in competition with the MMDS company for ten years and while they have been able to conduct many high powered promotional campaigns we have had to expend most of our resources fighting legal battles to stay on air and be licensed.

Differences in the number of households using and paying for the service

The difference between the number of households using the service (see the numbers above) may seem high but taking the following factors into account we believe it is reasonable.

Firstly our service is "free to air" and this means that anyone can buy a UHF aerial, install it on their rooftop, tune their TV receivers to the appropriate frequencies and have access to the services being transmitted. This can be done without any contact with Southcoast or indeed the payment of any subscription.

Presently Southcoast is unable to prevent anyone receiving its service and relies on householders who are using it to respond positively to its representatives if and when they call. The organisation doesn't have a sufficient number of representatives to call to all known users of its service and consequently some areas go uncollected.

How does the present system work?

The services supplied by Southcoast are BBC 1 - BBC2 - HTV and S4C which originate in Wales and are essentially the same as in available in the rest of the UK except S4C which broadcasts a few hours of Welsh language programs each night.

While there has been a considerable overspill of UK TV services into Ireland especially along elevated areas of the East Coast and the border regions for many years, these services cannot be received directly with any degree of consistency in Co Cork.

In order to bring these services to Cork Southcoast had to identify a location receiving good quality consistent TV signals from the UK with a clear path back to Cork.

Southcoast's present network works as follows,

Its Monovullagh transmitter eight miles north west of Dungarvan in Co Waterford receives an overspill of TV signals from Wales and retransmits these through the UHF band (Ultra High Frequency) back to two transmitters in Cork. These in turn retransmit the services to more than twenty local transmitters throughout the regions.

These in turn deliver the service locally where householders with UHF aerials (the type purchased from any TV dealer to pick up the national services) receive the service directly off air.

As described above the UK TV services originating in Wales travel hundreds of miles before ending up in thousands of homes throughout Cork, Kerry and Waterford.

History regarding the development of the Monovullagh transmitter

In September 1985 Southcoast identified a site capable of receiving good quality UK TV signals from Wales on the Monovullagh mountains.

Developing this presented an enormous challenge as it was situated 2000 feet above sea level and two miles from the nearest road and power source. All materials had to be brought from the roadside to the mountaintop on foot with each round trip taking five hours. This was where the genuine community spirit and effort first became apparent when many people took time off work and gave up their weekends to travel to Co Waterford.

When the transmitter was built the organisation had another hurdle to overcome in finding a power source. With the nearest ESB supply over two miles away it was decided to use tractor batteries to power the system. Eight of these were purchased with four being sufficient to provide the necessary power for one week.

Thus began a ritual whereby for six months during the winter of 1985 and spring of 1986 the four spent batteries had to be replaced with four recharged one's each weekend in order to maintain service.

It involved eight people leaving Cork early on a Saturday or Sunday morning and travelling to the mountainside with the fresh batteries. These were attached to slings and timber batons and carried shoulder high to the summit.

Each pairing shouldered one battery and these treks had to be undertaken regardless of weather conditions. When the fresh batteries were hooked up the spent one's had to be brought down and taken back to Cork for recharging and the whole process repeated on a weekly basis.

The round trip from Cork to the mountainside was 120 miles and the trek up and down the mountain could be completed in four to five hours on a good day but in bad weather conditions it often extended to twelve.

Many people undertook this task and for most after experiencing the rigours of one just trip they were unwilling or unable to repeat the experience. Some found that they just weren't physically up to it and on occasion had to abandon the batteries on the mountainside.

Eventually in July of 1986 Southcoast managed to lay a two-mile underground power cable to the mountaintop and end the need for batteries.

As before volunteers from all communities had traveled to Waterford each weekend to dig the trenches, lay the cable and cover it in afterwards.

It was during this period that those charged with running the fledging organisation first began to realise the enormous support and commitment that existed within the community for Southcoast.

History of legal battles and other major events

From the day Southcoast first started transmitting the Cable TV company Cork Communications (now Irish Multichannel) began to exert pressure on the government to shut it down. Several raids on Southcoast installations resulted in the confiscation of equipment however the organisation quickly acquired new equipment and the service was usually restored within a matter of days.

Eventually the massive public outcry, which followed each confiscation, had the effect of making the government reluctant to shut Southcoast down.

Having realised that the government wasn't going to do the job the Cable TV Company decided to issue court proceedings against the network to finish the task themselves.

In 1993 on three occasions Southcoast were in court defending individual transmitters following actions taken by Cork Communications Ltd. They successfully obtained injunctions shutting down Southcoast transmitters in Fermoy , Kinsale and Glounaclohy.

It quickly became apparent that unless the organisation countered these legal actions it would be picked off transmitter by transmitter and eventually have no network.

In June 1994 in the high court in Mr. Justice Declan Costello granted an injunction to Southcoast restraining Cork Communications Ltd. and the Minister for Transport, Energy and Communications from interfering with its network and services until such time as all the issues had been fully heard. Only twice previously in the history of the state had an injunction of this type been granted and it effectively protected the network up until January 2000 when an actual license was granted.

In July 1994 The Supreme Court unanimously upheld Mr. Justice Costello's decision following a joint appeal by Cork Communications Ltd. and the state.

In a series of further actions Southcoast got the injunctions lifted against Fermoy , Kinsale and Glounaclohy and service was restored to its entire network.

In November 1994 John Bruton TD Fine Gael leader at a public meeting held by Southcoast in Carrigaline during by- election campaigns in Cork South Central and Cork North Central gave the

following commitments. He stated that " Immediately on taking office he would give Southcoast a two to three year temporary license."

Within several weeks the Fianna Fail led coalition government collapsed and John Bruton became Taoiseach in a Fine Gael / Labour / D.L. coalition.

Despite some meetings with the new minister Michael Lowry T.D and his department officials no progress was made and so Southcoast's legal action proceeded.

Between the **26th April and the 28th July 1995** during a twenty nine day hearing before Mr. Justice Keane in the high court in Dublin Southcoast made its case against the state and Cork Communications Ltd.

Southcoast sought a number of reliefs's. Declarations were sought confirming that sections of various broadcasting acts were unconstitutional, that the awarding of MMDS licenses was against competition law, that a decision to refuse Southcoast a license in 1992 was taken ultra vires and was null and void, and finally that the court should direct the Minister to consider Southcoast's license application fairly and in accordance with law.

Mr. Justice Keane reserved his judgement to a later date.

In his judgement delivered on the **10th November 1995** Mr. Justice Keane found in favour of Southcoast on the last two issues and directed the minister of the day to reconsider the license application fairly and in accordance with law. He also continued Mr. Justice Costello's injunction until the minister made a final decision The organisation was awarded most of its costs for this and the original injunction hearing.

The state accepted this judgement and in **January 1996** at a meeting in Thurles between Southcoast and ministers Hugh Coveney T.D. and Michael Lowry T.D. Mr. Lowry announced his intention to appoint independent consultants from outside the department of communications to advise him on the license application.

On the **20th and 21st August 1996** a group of consultants under the aegis of the EBU (the European Broadcasting Union) and chaired by Ken Hunt head of broadcasting technology with the EBU visited sites in Cork and had a series of meetings with Southcoast.

14th February 1997 The EBU consultant's final report showed that Southcoast could be licensed and it set out a possible licensing format.

15th April 1997 Having been summoned to a meeting in the minister's office Southcoast were informed by Alan Dukes TD that he had both good news and bad news to impart. The bad news was that he was refusing Southcoast's application for a license while the good news amounted to an invitation to reapply under a new nationwide licensing scheme which he intended announcing in the Dail that very day.

It was strongly pointed out to the minister that having made his decision the injunction which had protected Southcoast from interference pending a ministerial decision would now lapse, and would leave the network vulnerable to attack from the Cable/ MMDS company. The minister stated that his advice was that this couldn't happen.

Later that day Alan Dukes TD announced his proposed new scheme in the Dail.

May 1997 In answer to adverts in the national press inviting applications under the proposed new scheme Southcoast submitted the necessary application forms and monies while reserving its position on seeking a judicial review of the ministers decision of the 15th April 1997.

June 1997 Having been defeated in the general election the rainbow coalition left office without signing the necessary regulations to give the proposed new scheme the force of law. The incoming FF/PD government indicated that it wouldn't be proceeding with the regulations thereby effectively killing it off.

June 1997 In the high court Mr. Justice Keane confirmed to Cork Communications Ltd. that having received a negative ministerial decision on its license bid Southcoast's court protection was now at an end.

With the prospect of being injunctioned within days Southcoast decided to seek leave to obtain a judicial review of the minister's refusal while also attempting to tie in the Cable/ MMDS company to the proceedings to stall any early injunction moves on their part.

July 1997 After a day of high drama in the high court Mr. Justice Catherine McGuinness granted Southcoast leave to seek a high court judicial review of Alan Dukes TD's decision to refuse its license application and also allowed the Cable /MMDS company to be adjointed to the proceedings.

October 1997 Southcoast's judicial review of the minister's decision of the 15th April 1997 was heard by Mr. Justice Paul Carney over six days in the High Court in Dublin. Mr. Justice Carney reserved judgement. As expected the Cable /MMDS company protested strongly at having been dragged into a case that solely concerned a review of a ministerial decision and were duly excused after three days. However Southcoast's objective for including them had worked and the only question to be resolved was to decide who would have to pay their costs.

January 1998 In delivering his judgement Mr Justice Paul Carney found that the minister Mr Alan Dukes TD hadn't dealt properly with Southcoast's license application and therefore it was still effectively on the minister's desk awaiting fair and proper consideration in accordance with law. He awarded costs to Southcoast and decided that the state should also be liable for Cork Communications Ltd. costs. He also restored Southcoast's court protection.

Both parties agreed that as the duties of the minister in the areas of licensing and regulating TV transmission had passed to the newly appointed Office of the Director of Telecommunications Regulation (ODTR), it was this agency and its director who would now have to consider Southcoast's application.

December 24th 1999 Following the signing by Mary O'Rourke TD minister for Public Enterprise of regulations prepared by the ODTR, the regulator Etain Doyle signed the documents giving Southcoast its long awaited license.

17th January 2000 following some delays due to administrative problems the license finally arrived at the Southcoast office.

Details of UHF license and what it means for SCTV and its customers

On an emotional level it was vitally important to win through. This meant that the 14 year battle including setbacks, legal cases and political campaigning was worthwhile and wasn't a wasted exercise. Southcoast is now in possession of a license to provide its service in a regulated

environment. It has achieved its original goal against all the odds despite being told by countless officials, experts and politicians that it just wasn't possible.

On a practical level under the regulations the license can be renewed for a further year up to the 31st December 2001. The situation will then be reviewed and depending on the number of frequencies available further licenses could be issued.

It also means that Southcoast is for the first time a fully legitimate player in the multichannel TV business and can concentrate on channeling its resources into providing improved quality of service for its customers and developing the new digital delivery platform.

Despite predictions from its competitors that it would have to substantially raise its subscription charges in the event of being licensed, Southcoast has announced that the 1999 subscription amount of £40 per household will remain at its present level for the year 2000.

Detail and layman's explanation of the new platform

it involves adapting existing satellite technology for use on land to relay TV and other services to customer's households via rooftop aerials.

It will be a digital based system operating on a different part of the spectrum from that which is presently being used by Southcoast and the national TV services. It is also far removed from the 2.5 GHz band being used by the MMDS companies.

It will in fact be located on frequencies in the 11.7 to 12.5 GHz band which is used for satellite broadcasting but this part of the spectrum is also available for terrestrial broadcasting in Ireland.

Signals received on the subscriber's aerial will be converted down through a digital satellite box to allow the services to be enjoyed on a conventional television set as is the case with viewers who presently have a satellite receiver.

What will the new platform mean for customers.

It will mean that existing and new customers will be able to enjoy an increased number of TV channels with a quality of picture and sound not previously experienced.

Increased capacity will allow Southcoast to provide a basic package of channels

(up to twelve) plus a tier of premium services (also up to a twelve) at an additional cost depending on the options chosen.

It has the potential capacity to eventually provide up to 600 TV channels and services.

Internet access with the facility to download material infinitely faster than the conventional system. Material, which would normally take 80 hours to download through a standard telephone line, can be downloaded in 15 minutes through this platform.

The facility to provide video on demand and other interactive services.

A large proportion of customers will be able to receive the services on a tiny rooftop aerial. Many will be able to site these in their attics.

In areas, which are traditionally, difficult to cover the use of a tiny 30-centimeter dish will make all the difference.

It will give the customer another choice of service provider at a very competitive cost and the opportunity to be a member/ part owner of this network..

It will also be able to carry high definition TV.

Projected development costs of the new platform and projected customer charges

To put in place the complete infrastructure including transmitter hardware, customer equipment, installation, customer servicing and back up will require an investment of close to £8,000,000.

This will include upgrading administration, acquiring additional premises, making provision for increased copyright, royalty and licensing payments, advertising and public relations budgets and employing additional staff to facilitate a network capable of delivering two tiers of TV channels and other services.

The service including fast Internet access and video on demand and other interactive services will be capable of reaching a high percentage of the 70,000 households within the existing Southcoast coverage footprint.

Financial projections are based on acquiring an early take up of the basic services by 80% of existing customers with a medium term objective of securing 15,000 customers. Longer term Southcoast would expect to capture at least 20,000 customers with a significant percentage signing on for both premium and other additional services.

On acquiring a license for its existing regions Southcoast believes that it would have a reasonable chance of extending its coverage footprint to include new regions.

Southcoast is also confident that it would succeed in any legal challenge to remove the present embargo preventing it from transmitting into Cork City which is virtually surrounded by Southcoast's existing network.

Presently Irish Multichannel who hold the Cable TV franchise has stopped extending the cable network to houses in the suburbs and instead offer an MMDS service. Given that they are the company holding the franchise for the MMDS service adjacent to the city they are in a perfect position to this. However MMDS licensees are prohibited from operating within a licensed cable TV area under the terms of their license but the authorities turn a blind eye to this development.

It is also clear that the new nationwide Digital terrestrial TV service, which may come on stream later this year, will be also allowed to sell its services within cable TV areas.

So effectively Southcoast is the only one excluded from operating in this region.

Southcoast has had many enquiries from city residents over the years and should this market be opened up the organisation would immediately double its potential customer base to almost 500.000, which could be completely covered from its existing transmitter network.

This scenario would dramatically change the economics of the venture and could make it attractive for Southcoast to take on board a partner who could concentrate on the internet, video on demand and other interactive services while Southcoast could concentrate on its core business of providing multichannel TV and a local community TV channel to its members at a reasonable cost.

Based on customer responses to the LMR survey the basic tier of services will probably consist of the four existing national TV channels plus the four UK TV channels (possibly originating from England or

Northern Ireland) and three mainstream popular satellite channels together with a local community TV channel.

The cost of the basic tier is presently budgeted for at £121 incl. VAT per annum and will be significant cheaper than its competitors.

A second tier will include premium channels including sports and movie channels these will be available at competitive rates. The financial projections haven't relied on revenues from premium services so any significant take up on these will improve the organisation's balance sheet. A subscriber taking a number of premium sports and movie channels will pay in the region of £180 incl. Vat per annum.

It is envisaged that there will be no installation charge levied on the customer.

How technically advanced is it

We believe that it will rival cable TV systems in terms of capacity and quality of picture and sound.

It could potentially have the same effect on terrestrial TV transmission that the development of fibre optics had on cable.

It uses proven satellite technology and the very latest digital technology.

With the success BSKYB and other satellite TV services around the world there have been major advances in the development of satellite equipment and technology. This has resulted in the availability today of top quality ultra sensitive equipment at reasonable cost.

For example the new national Digital UHF service will be compressing and sending six TV channels through a bandwidth of 8MGzs while the new Southcoast platform will be carrying a maximum of twelve TV channels through a bandwidth of 27MGzs.

The amount of bandwidth available for each TV channel or service will influence the level of quality delivered to the end user. This is especially true when providing fast moving action or sports programs, which need extra bandwidth to be received and enjoyed at their best. Conversely programs which have less movement can be successfully compressed into a narrower bandwidth.

The system will be able to address each household unit individually and be capable of allowing different combinations of services through to the customer depending on the sought and the payments made.

Why has no one else come up with this system

All the present players have heavily invested in developing their various existing analogue infrastructures and converting these to digital appears to be the less costly and less disruptive option especially in the short term.

For over forty years the national services have developed a nationwide network of VHF (Very High Frequency) and UHF (Ultra High Frequency) transmitters on specific frequencies which have had to be co-ordinated with other administrations. This has involved a lot of planning and investment and cannot easily be discarded.

We also believe that there is a great reluctance by the state and national broadcasters to depart from the traditional tried and trusted methods and engage in some lateral thinking.

I give the following example to illustrate this point.

As recently as 1995 during the high court action brought by Southcoast both the state and RTE strongly disagreed with the organisation's technical evidence.

Southcoast advocated that using UHF frequencies with just two channel spacing as opposed to the traditional practice of leaving a spacing of up to four channels was both technically feasible and made perfect sense in terms of making more channels available to allow for an increased number of services.

Southcoast argued that advances in transmitting and receiving equipment were such that the continuation of the traditional configuration represented a wasteful use of what was an important and scarce national resource.

Today less than five years later a remarkable transformation has taken place. Both RTE and the state are now perfectly happy to put this configuration into practice to facilitate the introduction of a nationwide digital terrestrial TV network on the UHF band. Obviously the urgent need to have more frequency space available has hastened their conversion.

Since starting in 1988 the MMDS companies have invested heavily in developing their particular infrastructure on the 2.5 GHzs to 2.65 GHzs frequency band and again it would take a considerable investment and change of direction to shelve the existing hardware.

What is the timeframe for development of the new platform

This largely depends on when and if Southcoast receives a license to transmit on this platform. The organisation has plans to begin the roll out of its new service within three months of receiving a license. Contingency plans are in place to have available the necessary installation crews to cater for a minimum of 8,000 connections within nine months.

What is the present position regarding the test license

Southcoast applied for the test license to the ODTR in late November 1999. From telephone contacts with the senior licensing officer Mr. Hugh Tuckey we have learned that it was sent to the ODTR legal advisers prior to Christmas and we were told as recently as last week (W/E 14th January 2000) that nothing had as yet been received back. Further contact will be made this week.

Comment from the Chairman

Southcoast is on the threshold of a new and exciting era and looking forward to the launch of its new digital TV platform. It will shortly be in a position to offer existing and new customers a much wider range of TV and interactive services of a quality previously unattainable.

Available at a very competitive price Southcoast will be the only community owned not for profit service provider giving the customer a real choice against the other big multinational providers.

We note that over the past year the ODTR has issued new integrated licenses to Cable TV and MMDS companies whose existing licenses were close to expiry. These licenses allow the companies to transmit an increased number of TV and other services in a digital format for an extended period of fifteen years with five years exclusivity within platform.

These same companies have been in receipt of licenses for telephony and other services and have recently received sizable EU grants to help develop their infrastructures.

We welcome competition and believe that the customers are entitled to a choice, however in most parts of Ireland consumer choice doesn't exist in this market.

Presently each MMDS or Cable TV Company is licensed to provide both the UK terrestrial and satellite TV services in discrete areas or cells to the exclusion of all others, effectively having a monopoly.

Following a period of consolidation two companies, namely, Cablelink and Irish Multichannel now control most of the franchises for cable TV and MMDS.

Southcoast Community Television as the third largest provider of multichannel TV services in Ireland today is seeking the same consideration from the ODTR and the government in its bid to continue in the digital era. Southcoast is awaiting a response to its application to obtain a license to proceed.

The organisation is confident that the ODTR and the government will see the merit in giving Southcoast the opportunity to develop this exciting platform and continue to provide householders with a real choice into the millenium.

It would undoubtedly cause consternation if at the end of 2001 due to a scarcity of UHF frequencies Southcoast has to shutdown its service having been refused the opportunity to go digital.

The twenty three thousand households in Kerry, Cork and Waterford identified in a recent survey as users of the service would suddenly be left with blank screens after fourteen years.

It would be ironic if the advent of Digital TV technology a medium which affords providers the opportunity to carry many new TV channels and services ended up being used as the reason for closing down the third largest provider of multichannel TV in Ireland.

We do not expect this to happen however and in the new era of competition and choice we confidently expect the ODTR and the government to respond quickly and positively and look forward to getting the green light to begin developing our new service in the very near future.

Could this new system be franchised out to other groups or companies in Ireland

The answer is yes. This system could indeed be replicated in other parts of the country. Of course the one stumbling block would be the scale of the initial investment involved.

It could be that a commercial group or company in this type of business might see the potential and be interested in getting involved. Some of the bigger community TV / Deflector TV groupings around the country might be capable of getting involved.

Appendix No 8 CMN Community Employment Project and CSP

Government Schemes to intervene in long-term unemployment began in the mid 1980's with the (SES) Schemes which were in general seen to be exploitative and to provide employers with cheap labour. These were improved in the Community Employment Scheme (CE) which introduced a training package to support workers trying to get back into the job-market.

The Community Employment (CE) programme is operated by Ireland's training and employment authority FÁS. It aims to help long-term unemployed and others with difficulty accessing the labour-market get back to work by offering part-time and temporary placements in jobs based within local communities. Participants are on the scheme for 19.5 hours per week and may seek other part-time work during their placement. Training in the Community Employment scheme is intended to support participants' search for permanent part-time and full-time jobs. To be eligible a person must be in receipt of welfare or other allowance. The CE is managed by a local 'sponsor' – an eligible company or community employer, and monitored by FAS officers.

CMN sponsored a CE Project from 1994 to 2003; Numbers grew from 11 participants in 1994 to 26 in 2002. Participants worked on the administration of their own project and on CMN projects including the magazine, the website, and a range of CMN projects. The CE project closed in 2003 when CMN could no longer pay rent for the premises.

In 2003 CMN started a smaller Community Services Project (SEP) which demanded less resources to run (Manager and two Participants) and focused on supporting the campaign for community television. SEPs were required to become self-sufficient after three years of grant aid, so these projects were seen as start-up for local enterprises. However the period between 2000 and 2008 was marked by intense cut-backs in these schemes and a push from government to

The emphasis shifted when this scheme was reviewed, becoming the Community Services Project (CSP) and was transferred to an new agency Pobal which took over management of community supports and projects leaving FAS with a training remit. At this time it was recognised that these enterprises had greater difficulty in becoming self-sufficient and that they serviced a resource poor sector. However the recession has forced another change in direction and in 2009 CSPs were told again that they must earn money to keep themselves going.

For CE see <http://www.fas.ie/en/Communities/Community+Employment/default.htm>

For information on CSPs see:

<http://www.pobal.ie/Funding%20Programmes/csp/Pages/Background.aspx>

Appendix No. 9 CMN Strategy 1998

Strategic Issues and Priorities for CMN FOR THE COMING YEAR

Proposals approved at the AGM, March 1999.

The following are a set of proposals approved by the CMN AGM on March 3rd 1999. They build on the aims of CMN as set out in the Statute. They have been developed by CMN's Strategic planning and development group, drafted by the Chairperson, and approved by the Steering Committee.

Mission:

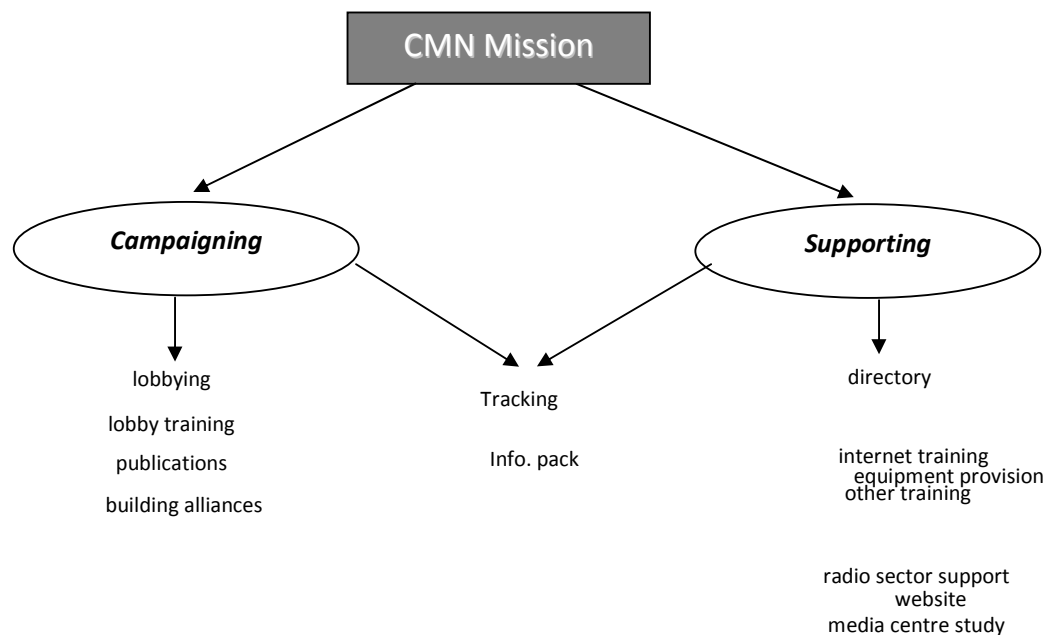
The mission of CMN is:

To ensure that all groups, especially those disadvantaged and marginalised, are fully informed about, and can actively participate in and share control of, community and alternative media. The goal is thereby to enhance effective and democratic means of expression and contributing to progressive social change.

CMN seeks to play a catalytic role in this. CMN as an organisation is open for membership to all those who share these goals.

The Figure below indicates the mission, means and specific actions proposed for CMN for the coming year.

Figures 1: Mission, Means and Actions



Means and Priority Actions :

CMN focuses on two means to achieve this:

1. Campaigning in support of Community Media.

CMN is mandated only by its membership. CMN campaigns on issues of general interest to all those involved in community media in an open manner. CMN welcomes and seeks opportunities to join with others in these activities.

Specific activities for the next year include:

1. **Lobbying:** Lobbying activities, focusing especially on gaining recognition and support for the community media sector in the Communication Green Paper and subsequent processes, and on developments in EU policy;
2. **Information Pack:** A specific lobbying information pack for broad dissemination (part of a larger Information Pack: see below); This will include broader marketing activities for CMN;
3. **Campaign Publications:** Using Tracking and monthly Bulletins as regular publications to disseminate information, and the Website as a means to educate around campaigning issues and to draw people in;
4. **Campaign Training:** Project-related training actions like the incorporation of relevant issues and skills into the INTEGRA and CEDIS projects;
5. **Building Alliances:** Actively seeking out liaison and building bridges with other relevant organisations around campaigns and lobbying.

Other actions may include public meetings, conferences, targeting publications, influencing mainstream media, and so forth.

2. Supporting the development of Community Media

CMN will actively seek to provide support and resources to the community media sector in general, by building up its identity and self awareness, providing concretely useful tools and materials, supporting skill development, and creating a central focus for networking and exchanges. CMN's aim is to supplement and enhance not compete with existing activities.

Recommended activities for the next year include:

- **Tracking Magazine and Bulletin:** as the core means to disseminate information and build up awareness of the sector;
- **Information Package and Brochure:** Producing an information pack, including folder and inserts, for general information, education and lobbying.

- **Directory:** The directory of community media resources will be completed.
- **Training:** Continuation and completion of the INTEGRA supported training in community video, radio and photography, and securing means to make it into a permanent training capacity within CMN or outside, taking into account the training services of CMN members;
- **Equipment Provision:** Obtaining equipment and putting it at the disposal of the community sector;
- **Internet Training:** Development of the CEDIS-supported Website into a permanent and state-of-the-art resource for those seeking to use the internet effectively;
- **Website Resource:** Building the Website into a resource for the community and voluntary sector in Ireland in general and for community media sector in particular;
- **Radio Sector Support:** Renewal of support to the community radio forum, if it seeks such support;
- **A Community Media Centre:** The exploration of the feasibility of seeking financial support for the creation of a multi-media community media centre, to provide (where not available from members), training, equipment, studio, and other resources to the sector as a whole. This would involve a research-based assessment of the needs and desires of members in this regard, and of the sector in general.

3. Core and Project Funding

Project funding for CMN comes to an end in December 1999. Furthermore, CMN currently receives no core funding from any source for its activities. A further priority for 1999 and beyond will be to locate and secure a source of core funding, and to continue to develop project level funding as the opportunities arise.

Appendix No 10 CMN background and projects

Established in 1992, the overall objective of CMN is to initiate and support networking within and between media, and to provide support where key resources are absent. CMN aims to promote community development and empowerment, including both geographical and issues based communities, using video, radio, print and other media as a resource and tool.

With the support of a CE project CMN ran a small but high quality media resources centre from 1998-2003 where training in a range of media was available and video post production facilities could be accessed and projects supported with expertise and equipment. The centre closed in 2003 due to lack of funds; CMN continued to work to develop community television with a smaller Social Economy Scheme, now a community Services Project (CSP).

In 1998 the AGM approved the following Mission Statement:

To ensure that all groups, especially those disadvantaged and marginalised, are fully informed about, and can actively participate in and share control of, community and alternative media. The goal is thereby to enhance effective and democratic means of expression and contributing to progressive social change.

CMN seeks to play a catalytic role in this. CMN as an organisation is open for membership to all those who share these goals.

Since then CMN's strategic objectives have been:

1. To provide support to the community and voluntary sector in the form of provision of low-cost facilities and training in media areas and has provided the following:

- Video production and post-production;
- Mutli-media training in Web design, Graphic software and Desk Top Publishing;
- Facility for hire of video, radio, photographic equipment.

2. To campaign for the development of resources and capacity-building in all media areas, but particularly in respect to community television, legislated for under the Broadcasting Act 2001. CMN has successfully lobbied for the political recognition of community media and has had significant successes with the Broadcasting Acts since 2001 which legislated for community television; in its involvement with the Dublin City Development Board and the Dublin Community Forum CMN founded the Community Media Forum through which community media was made a strategic objective within the

Dublin City Development Plan; CMN was also a founder of Dublin Community Television (now broadcasting on Ntl Channel 802) and provided a secretariat for the young channel from 2002-2007.

In practical terms CMN's aims have translated into the following activities:

- Nurturing and supporting the advocacy capacity of the community media sector in Ireland. The scope of this includes lobbying for appropriate legislation, regulation and institutional support structures for community media in Ireland and in the EU. CMN makes **submissions to Green and White papers** at Irish and (e.g. the Green Paper on Broadcasting) and European Commission level (e.g. the Green Paper on Living and Working in the Information Society) and raises questions through its publications, conference presentations and participation in meetings. CMN has made significant contributions to the consultations around the **Broadcasting Act 2001**, and five of its proposed amendments were written into the Bill.
- Engaging with Research: CMN is involved in a Participatory Action Research (PAR) Project on the development of community television in Ireland. This project is linked with Maynooth NUI, and is funded through the Royal Irish Academy Third Sector Research Programme.
- Collating a **Community Media Directory** as a resource for the sector and developing an accessible database of community media resources.
- Establishing a **Web Site** to act as a resource and distribution mechanism for community media, with links to community media internationally. www.cmn.ie
- Running an **"Altered Visions Festival"**, a **"Media in our hands"** Conference, various seminars and workshops that have focused on issues ranging from Community Access TV to Lobbying Strategies for community media advocates.
- Publishing a magazine **Tracking** and a bi-monthly **Bulletin**. These cover a wide variety of topics, each issue including feature articles on different kinds of community media. Originally in print, the magazine is now an on-line publication.

CMN has also been responsible for managing and co-ordinating several projects:

Building Community Media in Ireland 1997 – 2000. Funded under the EU Integra programme, CMN gave training and support to 18 community organisations in three centres around Ireland: Dublin, Cork, and Leitrim, to set up a community media initiative or enterprise in video/television, radio, or photography. After training, ongoing support was offered to communities to face the challenges of the early stages.

Community Empowerment through Distance learning in the Information Society (CEDIS) 1997-1999. Funded under the EU's Information Society Activity Centre the objective of CEDIS was to develop within the community voluntary sector the capacity to utilise Information Society services effectively. Each participant

organisation completed an intensive training course in the effective use of the Internet and a practical assignment addressing its aims.

A Day At The Races 1997. Funded under the EU Year Against Racism CMN in collaboration with Pavee Point Travellers Centre and the Irish Refugee Council worked with groups of Travellers and refugees to produce video tapes, radio programmes and a photographic exhibition dealing with their own experience of racism. The project provided introductory training in these media to enable participants create the programmes with support from CMN member organisations.

Through it's work in these projects, CMN is in a unique and appropriate position to develop further understanding of the media needs of this sector.

Currently CMN CSP supports Community and Voluntary groups by providing training and production support in community media.

List of Transnational Partners.

This list is taken from the project documentation of the time (CMN 1997)

AMARC –Europe: Voices Without Frontiers

VWF encompasses a network of ethnic minority radio stations and anti-racism networks and organisations

Community Media Association: Voices Without Frontiers

Target groups are ethnic minorities, refugees, migrants and urban disadvantaged.
Project aim: to combat social exclusion to the labour market. Activities: training for media trainers , taster training courses.

Dimitra Institute: On Line/More Colour in the Media

Project aim: Training journalists with immigrant backgrounds to promote their participation in the media.

Swedish Radio: On Line/More Colour in the Media

Project aim: Training journalists with immigrant backgrounds in partnership with the School of journalism. This is a one-year project.

STOA: More Colour in the Media

This project offers advice and consultancy; development of networks and empowerment of journalists. The project will set up a mentor pool to work with new journalists/media professionals entering the industry. STOA is funded in this partnership through the EU's ADAPT programme. In Holland ADAPT can be combined with INTEGRA.

Confederation National des Radio Libres (CNRL) France

CNRL member stations are non-commercial promoting pluralism and heavily engaged in anti-racism work. This is an unfunded partner.

LFDA: New Voices, New Visions

This is a project based on training and entry for film and TV producers into the industry.

Radio Robin Hood, Finland

Unfunded partner. Working with INTEGRA partnership to continue their HORIZON programme

Hammersmith Council: INTERMEDIA

The project aim is to match the target group with media organisations in the area. Expanded target group this year to include ethnic minorities and long term unemployed as well as refugees.

MINE, Italy

This project is part of the EU's Horizon Initiative and provides training to help young ex-offenders develop specialised skills to enhance their career prospects.

Appendix No 11 CTV Groups Consultation on Television Policy

RESPONSE FROM COMMUNITY TELEVISION GROUPS TO BCI

Following the BCI Workshop on 5th November 2003, an independent meeting of Community Television Groups on 3rd December 2003 and recent contact by phone and email, the following has been agreed by all five groups.

CTV GROUPS AGREED POLICY STATEMENTS

a) Definition of Community TV:

'Community TV is a tool for community development. A Community TV channel is characterised by its ownership and programming, and by its interaction with the community it is licensed to serve. It is owned and controlled by a not-for profit organisation whose structure provides for membership, management, operation and programming primarily by members of the community at large. It should be based on community access and should address the special interests and needs of those it is licensed to serve.'

b) Ownership and Control:

1. Should strive, during the time span of the pilot phase, for democratic ownership and control by the community to be served.
2. Be not-for-profit organisations.
3. Provide for membership, management and operation by the community served.
4. Staffed by both core paid staff and volunteers.

c) Funding and Finance:

1. Be financially viable and non-profit.
2. Ensure independence by securing funding from a variety of sources.
3. Set a limit of 50% on funding from any one source. This policy to be open to review if, during the pilot phase, unforeseen changes occur in the broadcasting landscape.

Note on Agreed Policy Statements: These are based on the Community Television Proposed Interim Policy Model proposed by Ciarán Kissane of the BCI at the second Community Television Workshop on 5th November 2003. The above points were agreed by all five groups since that meeting and should be incorporated into the Proposed Interim Policy Model document.

SECTION 40 ASSESSMENT PROPOSALS

- A Section 40 Assessment should be carried out.
- It should not however be carried out prior to the licensing process.

- It should be conducted with the successful applicants of the licensing process between the awarding of the licence and during contract negotiations.
- Applicant groups should be involved in deciding on the how the assessment will be carried out.
- The timeframe for completing the assessment should be 6 to 12 months maximum after the awarding of a licence.

2. Proposed timeframe for the initial licence and evaluation

- | | |
|--|--------------------|
| • Applications for a community content contract: | February 2004 |
| • Decision from the BCI Board | June 2004 |
| • S40 assessments and contract negotiation | June 04 to June 05 |
| • Total length of initial contract | Four years |
| • First broadcasting (latest) | January 2006 |
| • End of pilot project | January 2008 |
| • Conclusions from evaluation | January 2009 |

Note of clarification on the proposed timeframe:

If a group completes the Section 40 assessment and contract negotiations within 6 months, they could potentially begin broadcasting from January 2005. This would then mean they could be broadcasting until Jan 2009, which explains the total length of initial contract being four years. However if the assessment/negotiations took the maximum 12 months and the group began broadcasting in June 05 or Jan 06 at the latest, then the contract would still end in Jan 09 and the total time broadcasting would be reduced to 3 or 3 and a half years.

FINAL EVALUATION & SECTION 39(6)

The five groups consider it is too early at this stage to make a definitive statement on the implementation of Section 39(6) but would be willing to discuss it at the next meeting with the BCI. Some initial comments on it are as follows:

- 1) Any evaluation will have to establish the optimum balance between the quality and relevance of output, and the extent of community participation, services available and active empowerment. Both are important.
- 2) We anticipate (as in Radio) that there will be ongoing BCI monitoring, which will be built into the evaluation.
- 3) Any evaluation (and the radio model is relevant here too) should be largely (but not entirely) qualitative, participative, and enable positive feedback to the channel.
- 4) There may be a case for ongoing (e.g. annual) feedback evaluation mechanisms, such as a workshop, from an early stage. The evaluation may thus be ongoing.
- 5) The evaluation may include elements that are not explicitly referred to directly in Article

39(6) since the latter is (by necessity) narrowly focused on scheduling, programming and broadcasting activities (as distinct from training, equipment provision, support etc.)

Appendix No 11a BCI Television Policy 2004

Extracts re Sections 39 and 40

Sections 39 and 40: Community Content Contracts

Guided by the contents of Sections 39 and 40 of the Broadcasting Act 2001, the Commission has worked in consultation with representatives of community groups towards the realisation of the common objective of delivering community television programme services. As a statutory body, the BCI has taken the lead in a number of respects but has elicited the views and general agreement of its community partners at key junctures in the process.

Consultation and consensus are the hallmarks of the approach taken by the Commission, in setting its community radio broadcasting policy. A similar approach was undertaken in respect of the development of community television broadcasting, in order to inform the policy. A number of consultative meetings were held between July 2003 and January 2004 with those groups who had expressed an interest in the provision of community television services.

Broad agreement was reached on the main principles that should underpin the BCI's community television policy. The following will apply:

• *Definition of Community Television*

Community television will be licensed to serve a specific geographic community and/or community of interest. Additionally, a community television channel should promote and support active participation in, and demonstrate commitment to, principles of community empowerment and community development. Endorsing these principles, the following definition will apply:

'A Community Television channel is characterised by its ownership and programming, and by its interaction with the community it is licensed to serve. It is owned and controlled by a not-for profit organisation whose structure provides for membership, management, operation and programming primarily by members of the community at large. It should be based on community access and should address the special interests and needs of those it is licensed to serve. In supporting these principles, it should serve as a tool for community development.'

• *Ownership and Control*

Community television services will be owned and controlled by not-for-profit organisations and the community they are licensed to serve, with ownership/control structures which provide for membership, management, operation and programming primarily by members of that community.

- ***Programming***

Community programming will be based on community access and should reflect the special interests and needs of the community it is licensed to serve. The Irish experience demonstrates that the development of a viable community broadcasting service depends on the provision of a new and unique forum for communication between individuals and groups within the community served. It is, therefore, deemed important that a community television channel addresses the interests and the specific needs of the community. The service provided should add to the diversity of programming available. Due to the specific ethos of community broadcasting, audience participation should be promoted.

- ***Funding and Finance***

Community broadcasting will operate on a not-for-profit basis and services will be funded from a variety of sources with any surplus reinvested in the service. A limit of 50% of funding emanating from any one source should be put in place in order to ensure the independence of the channel and the community served.

- ***Community Needs Assessments in Respect of Broadcasting***

Section 40 of the *Broadcasting Act 2001* allows for the BCI to assess the needs of a specific community in respect of broadcasting; notably in regard to the availability to the community of production facilities, training and resources. The community organisations consulted see the value of such assessment and are in agreement that the BCI should initiate such assessments as appropriate. Though the design and the methodology to be used have yet to be formulated, the groups have expressed a preference for Section 40 assessments to be carried out after the awarding of a contract with the successful applicants. It should be noted that the statutory requirements would support such a preference. However, the Commission will also, in line with the statutory provisions, consider any requests made at any time, by a community organisation.

Pages 19-20

Appendix No 12 Report to DCTV SC on proposed visit to Ch 9

By email 10th April 2005

See below for a short report on Channel 9.

I contacted Gary Porter to see if we could arrange a meeting and perhaps a visit to the studios at the same time. I got a very clear response which will probably not surprise anyone, but it does mean that things are moving on.

A short preamble:

Channel 9 operates within UK regulations under which community and independents are the same licence. While there is recognition within the terms of contracts the licence is essentially the same. Our position here is different in that our licences are separate and distinct entities.

Another important point is that their licences are not guaranteed to roll-over when the change to digital happens I think by 2006/7 and all analogue frequencies will cease in 2012. Their futures in this sense are very insecure.

Gary made very clear that he would not engage with us in any discussion of technicalities, technology or channel operations. Channel 9 has, in his view taken five years to develop their operations and this is now intellectual property that they will charge for. The board has taken a firm line on this matter. He sees their role as a consultancy one and wants to get a franchise to offer this service to community television. He specifically mentioned a 'draft order for local digital franchise, or consultancy type services'.

They have tried and tested equipment and therefore it is their prerogative to charge for their investment.

He explained his approach as being concerned with sustainability. He is seeking a model that will accommodate the needs of both sectors (independent and community). OFCOM do want to see local television established, but are waiting for a sustainable model to emerge.

They have developed a package, what he described as a 'TV in a box' that communities could buy into to broadcast. He sees the future as being in digital-tailored solutions and that we will see these within the next 3 years. The software is now copyright - so he is satisfied that there is now in fact intellectual property.

His intent is to develop a 'user-friendly and capacity friendly service. This is conceived of as the independent broadcaster providing services (paid for) to the local community. Gary says that commercial television is unsustainable before 5pm. He has done a lot of market research and examined the trends on the weekly reach for local tv. He says that with 4% of the audience there is no commercial basis for television ventures.

However he sees the community programmes occupying the unprofitable daytime hours - and providing content only to the independent channel that broadcasts them. I did not ask him what their plans might be once ctv groups had created daytime 'audiences'! but I did say that this (broadcasting daytime hours only) was not necessarily the ambition of community television groups. He seeks to bring the community and independent sectors together in an alliance against what he sees as the main threat - those large corporation

(multinationals) that will buy up the spectrum and squeeze out the likes of Ch9. This however is within the UK framework. However he was not interested in the fact that ours is somewhat different south of the border. Channel 9 being so near the Donegal border clearly has a keen eye on southern 'audiences'.

To his mind the UK Government will inevitably see the frequencies as valuable assets delivering VAT income and will not be interested in giving any channels without collecting cash. He therefore thinks that the highest bidder will control the digital.

He is happy to talk with us about the macro issues, and will also attend any event if we invite him. He has presented this position at CMA conferences in England.

The situation currently is that the various groups (ie CMA, Independents, etc) meet once a month/quarter with OFCOM so there is a recognised process and discussion ongoing.

Appendix No 12a CHANNEL 9, DERRY - STATION PROFILE

CHANNEL 9, DERRY - STATION PROFILE in CMA research?

Broadcast Area

Channel 9 first went on air in October 1999, and then re-organised under the current management team in March 2000. The station is based in Derry, Northern Ireland, but its transmitter footprint covers a wider regional area including Limavady and Coleraine. A further transmitter for Strabane has also received ITC clearance. At present the station has a potential audience of about 190,000. With the Strabane signal - and allowing for some overspill into the Irish Republic - this will rise to about 300,000.

Company Structure

The company is owned by a group of local business interests, including investors with a background in local entertainment.

Staffing & Operations

C9 is run by a staff of 30 full-timers under the direction of Station Manager Gary Porter. At present they operate from an industrial unit on the fringe of Derry City centre, but will be re-locating later this year to new premises on the City's waterfront. The current base includes both a TV studio and administrative/production offices.

Programme Schedule

C9 runs a 7 day schedule, broadcasting for 19 hours per day from 7am in the morning to 2am at night. The schedule is made up of 3 strands of programming. The first strand - which accounts for the bulk of the airtime - is the station's own local production, most of which is live to air. The second strand is Sky News which runs 4 times per day. The third strand is acquired programming (movie and games review magazines, music shows, etc).

Local Production

The C9 schedule is built around extended blocks of live, mostly studio-based programming. Overall, this local output accounts for about 75% of total transmissions. The schedule includes extended morning and afternoon shows, a 2 hour children's slot, a weekly studio debate, and a 10pm - 1am show aimed at young adults. The anchor slot is from 6pm to 7pm, made up of a half hour local news slot, followed by a local sports news segment (15 minutes) and a consumer and local interest segment (15 minutes).

Market Research & Sales

C9 have commissioned their own market research to track audience trends & provide a baseline of data for marketing & airtime sales. The most recent survey (published February 2001) was done by Ulster Marketing Surveys.

This survey indicates that C9 has built up a leading place as a local media brand, and as a local news provider. Research indicates that the early evening local news slot now reaches about 36,000 viewers per night - a total weekly audience of around a quarter of a million. Survey data indicates that - for a large segment of the local audience - C9 is now the preferred local news provider, out performing the regional 'opt outs' coming from Ulster TV or the BBC.

Overall, by running a schedule with a strongly 'live and local' ambience the station has built up strong viewer interest and awareness, and the sales data indicates that the station's schedule is now seen as a prime vehicle for local advertising.

The station reports that it 'has has been trading at a satisfactory profit' for almost a year (ie since June 2000). Airtime sales income is currently split about 60/40 between local advertisers and national brands.

Website: The station's website is at: <http://www.c9tv.tv>

Appendix No 13 Mainstream Viewing Categories

Mainstream Television viewing categories					CTV target groups
Day slots	Named	Programme type	Demographic assumptions		
5.30am-10am	Breakfast TV	News and entertainment – business, stock market, weather and commuter travel	Before workforce leaves household – based on 9-5 or daytime workforce	1am – 10am	Night shift workers; restaurant workers; disabled; hospitals
10am-6pm	Daytime - Domestic / home-maker orientation –	Information segments with discussions of news stories, human interest, entertainment news – ‘infotainment’	predominantly female demographic – assumption that majority of women are at home	10am - ?	Creche’s – early learning programmes; Adult learners; immigrant groups – language support; Education programmes;
6pm-10.30pm	Prime time	Premium programming – usually marked by main news programme of the day	Slot with the most viewers Majority of workforce at home / family viewing		Range of groups
9pm – 5.30am	Watershed	Over 15 and Adult content	Adult viewers only		Channel hoppers

Appendix No 14 CWC Community Development Principles

CWC understanding of Community Development

Community development is based on certain principles:

- It enables people to work together to influence change and exert control over the social, political and economic issues that affect their lives.
- It is about a collective focus rather than a response to individual crisis.
- It challenges inequitable power relationships within society and promotes the redistribution of wealth and resources in a more just and equitable fashion.
- It is based on participative processes and structures which include and empower marginalised and excluded groups within society.
- It is based on solidarity with the interests of those experiencing social exclusion.
- It presents alternative ways of working, seeks to be dynamic, innovative and creative in approach.
- It challenges the nature of the relationship between the users and providers of services.
- It is open and responsive to innovation from other countries and seeks to build alliances with organisations challenging marginalisation in their own countries and globally.
- It involves strategies which confront prejudice and discrimination on the basis of gender, ethnicity, class, religion, socio-economic status, age, sexuality, skin colour or disability.

Appendix No 15 Mainstream Media Roles

Siptu Job demarcations and rates of pay 2001

		hourly	Day rate (8 hours)	weekly (SIPTU 39 hours)	PA
bottom end					
Group 1	Lighting Camera	79	636	3,100	161,201
Group 4	Production Manager	45	361	1,758	91,408
Group 4	Accountant	42	339	1,642	85,386
Group 3	Editor	34	273	1,332	69,266
Group 2	Camera Operator	34	269	1,303	67,759
Group 5	Art Director	33	267	1,302	67,727
Group 8	sound Mixer	32	257	1,254	65,208
Group 6	Assistant Director	29	236	1,149	59,751
Group 5	Costume Designer	28	226	1,103	57,350
Group 4	Casting director	25	199	969	50,376
Group 5	Assistant Art Director	23	188	915	47,565
Group 5	Set Dresser	23	188	915	47,565
Group 9	Make-up Artist	23	183	892	46,369
Group 3	Script Supervisor	22	174	848	44,077
Group 5	Property Buyer	22	172	840	43,656
Group 4	Stills	21	171	834	43,377
Group 2	Focus Puller	21	171	834	43,377
Group 3	Assistant Editor	21	167	815	42,398
Group 2	Grips	17	134	654	34,022
Group 4	Assistant Accountant	17	134	651	33,838
Group 4	Production secretary	17	134	651	33,838
Group 2	Clapper Loader	12	98	492	25,575
Group 2	Trainee	8	61	303	15,757
SIPTU					

Appendix No 16 Tomaselli's Table of difference

Tomaselli's Table of differences (Tomaselli K. , 1989)

Community and Professional Video: Table of Differences

Community video	Professional and conventional video
Communication	
Group media animates and mobilises personal experience in group contexts	Mass media informs and homogenises personal experience in individual contexts
Non-profit motive	Profit motive
Develops human relations	Develops techniques
Communication associated with process	Communication associated with technical quality
Knowledge	
Produces new knowledge	'Restricts' knowledge or repackages & reconstructs it in new ways
Recuperates local histories	Emulates dominant view of world
Retains local cultural specificity in terms of subjects	Homogenises local cultures in term of markets and techniques
Questions of Democracy	
Emphasises relationships	Fragments relationships
Horizontal/participative working relationships	Imposed/top-down working relationships
Transformative	Reformist
Coding	

Creates new codes, if often crude, but organic origins address community's agenda	Refines conventional styles, sophistication often hides local issues and specificities
Refers to processes beyond the community	Literal/if processes not shown, they do not exist
<i>Production, Distribution, Exhibition</i>	
Production cannot be executed in terms of predetermined schedules	Production must be executed in terms of predetermined schedules
Process precedes product	Product is only goal. Process is concealed
	Develops national and international markets
Develops local audiences	Crew alienated from its labour
Crew not alienated from its labour	Are alienated from their audiences through independent distribution
Participant video-makers are part of local distribution networks	
<i>Power, Empowerment</i>	
Decision-making power vested in the subject-community	Decision-making power retained and secured in the production crew and/or producers
Initial power relationships exposed and negotiated between crew and subject-community	Nature of power relationships mystified by crew in <i>its</i> relations with the subject-community
Empowers/active response	Disempowers/passive response
Community networks strengthened	Community networks exploited and/or weakened
Community must take responsibility for completion of video	Crew takes responsibility for completion of video
Facilitates both video and political theory building	Prevents theory building by concealing processes of production
Producers are part of subject community or	

are drawn into it	Producers are outside subject-community
Collective decision-making	Hierarchical decision-making
Long-term relationship between crew and community develops	Short-term relationship develops
Viewers have political expectations	Viewers want to be entertained
Empowerment takes place, if differentially, at every level of production, from production techniques to recovery of local histories and catalysation of community organisational networks	Usually only film/video makers are empowered. Sometimes subject-communities can be detrimentally affected through exposure to alien influences and payment for acting services.

Appendix No 17 List of Surveys and questionnaires

Experience with Questionnaires and Surveys has been disappointing as noted in the main text. This is a common experience in the community and voluntary sectors.

It is also worth noting that often the purpose of a questionnaire is to establish the grounds for a mandate to an organisation to carry out a certain task, and this is a very circumscribed intent. It also raises the possibility that people would not want to respond to a questionnaire if they felt that to do so would validate an organization where they felt there had not been an acceptable process of validation, or if there other issues – power issues, or other agendas – were uppermost for them.

List of known Surveys and Questionnaires undertaken for CM

Date	Organsiation	Survey type	result
1993	Open Channel	Unsupported Questionnaire	nil
1996	CMN	Integra participant questionnaire, supported by phone call	No of applicants?
2001	CMN	Media in Community Audit	nil
2001	Nexus	Feasibility Study, with interview	good
2002	DCTV	Interest group survey	nil
2003	CMN	Published in document	nil
2006	DCTV	Members survey	11 of 70

Appendix No 18 Changes in Timescales for CTV Pilot

Taken from PAR Project Report to Royal Irish Academy (RIA) Third Sector Research Programme (TSRP) 2006

Timescales:

The timescales drawn up by the BCI for the rollout of the Community Content Licences changed. The following table reviews the progress and projects likely outcomes but will have to be confirmed. While the community sector has wanted to re-negotiate some of these dates particularly the end of pilot and evaluation dates highlighted below, any such negotiations could now become part of the individual applicants contract negotiation.

Phase	Original timescale	Actual timescale
BCI Consultation process	September - December '03	Sept '03 - February 2004
Publication of new Television Policy	January 2004	July 2004
Call for community Licences	February 2004	September 2004
Broadcasting Funding Scheme Consultation	July – September 2004	September – November 2004
Launch of BFS	December 2004	October 2005
Applications for a community content contract:	June 2004	Submitted April 2005
Decision from the BCI Board on license Application	September 2004	January 2006
S40 assessments and contract negotiation	June 04 to June 05	June 06 –September 06
Total length of initial contract	4 years	10 years
First DCTV broadcasting	January 2006 (at latest)	Technical launch in September 2007; full launch in august 2008
End of pilot project	January 2008	2017
Conclusions from evaluation	January 2009	?

Appendix No 19 – Position Paper on Communications and Community Media

(Community TV/Internet/radio)

**To: Strategic Policy Development Group on Culture,
Communications and Participation – *Citizens shaping the city***

From: Community Media Network
Margaret Gillan, Co-ordinator
8th December 2000

Summary

We are concerned here with the state of community media in Dublin. The special nature of community media - participatory, accountable and diverse – is emphasised with particular attention to how it contributes to a developing multicultural society.

The community sector has had little access so far to this powerful tool, constrained by perceptions of community media; the type of information and training available in the use of new technologies; who delivers training programmes and their methodologies; access to broadcasting and distribution - the legislative and regulatory context; who should pay.

Community radio, with 16 stations established since the early 1990's provides a useful model for how community broadcasters can be structured, now their experience covers a wide range of lessons learned. Video is used in community contexts as a means for evaluation, promoting and explaining the work of community organisations and services, historical record; and expressing community identity. The pool of experience within the city in a variety of community media, including the use of the Internet, is a unique resource available to the CDB strategic planning process.

Community TV's greatest potential is as a tool for participatory democracy, as media created and controlled by the people. The proposed legislation and converging technologies mean that community TV will soon be viable in the City of Dublin. Equipment, training, and facilities are clearly identified as needs by the community sector. Facilities for production should be embedded within community centres, where equipment can be housed and training programmes designed to combat exclusion co-ordinated.

Our recommendations address: - mechanisms for participation, needs identification, and feasibility studies. Recognition of the social, economic and cultural value of community and the inclusion of the essential, defining, features of community media in the strategic plan. Access to the new digital infrastructure and the contribution of service providers such as cable companies to both carrying content and developing infrastructure.

Introduction

The City Development Board and inclusion of community media

CMN welcomes the consultative process afforded by the City Development Board and the breadth of its vision. We are therefore very hopeful that the strategic plan for the City of Dublin will enable participation in the democratic process for all its citizens. An important part of this, in our view, is the recognition of community media as a tool for empowerment which in and of itself provides an effective means of participation that supports social inclusion.

We see in the CDB process a special opportunity to initiate a citywide approach that will harness the potential of a capital city with all its interest groups to develop a unique and internationally recognised model of community media. There is already a strong pool of experience and resources to be drawn upon within the city amongst organisations working in different media – radio, video, community TV and Internet. We hope the consultation process will recognise the special nature of the community media sector, and provide protection for these initiatives within the plan.

Currently, CMN is focusing its efforts on the provisions for community TV under the new broadcasting legislation. It seems clear to us that the City of Dublin should, by virtue of its population and status, have a community TV broadcast service.

The opportunity now exists to ensure that the CDB strategic plan will support the provision of a community TV service that focus's on inclusion, and promotes inclusive and creative access to media. In our view, such a service can *only* be provided by a sector that is community owned, accountable, and not-for-profit. We support the establishment of a forum that would bring the actors and organisations involved in community media together to contribute to the plan.

The importance of community media

Community media is an important player in the media environment, it constitutes in effect, a 'third pillar' that acts as a democratic counter-balance to the growth of commercial media and the power and influence of media empires. Community media differs fundamentally from commercial and public service media in that it regards people as active agents in their communities who produce and broadcast their own material. Community media has participatory and accountable structures - a community station is owned and controlled by the community it serves and is an integral part of the development and growth of the community itself, a successful station will mobilise the commitment, creative talents and energies within the community. In most parts of the world community media is already recognised as a legitimate third pillar; Ireland is an exception in this regard amongst the developed countries.

Many Voices

Community media is believed by many countries to be essential for freedom of speech, and to the development of participatory democracy. It therefore has an important part to play in a changing society. Cherishing diversity and openness to the richness of other cultures is an oft-repeated aim of policy makers, and yet this remains vacuous without some follow through providing the means by which the diverse elements of our society are included and reflected.

Community media in all its forms, video, TV, radio, print and Internet, is a means for expression of different voices and cultures, it is also a means for communication between cultures, and these functions are particularly important in a changing society. A key feature of community media is the fact that it is totally determined by the communities themselves. It can be big, small, a village or have no physical boundaries. It is therefore able to provide a medium for communities identifying around their common interest rather than a geographical locale. Islanders, small farmers, women, Travellers, lesbians and gays, all may have more in common with each other than with geographic neighbours.

Access to means of communication such as community media is vital in the development of new immigrant communities. A common means of recognition of ethnic groupings is to import cultural products from the home country. This is important in terms of contact with cultural roots, histories, and maintaining identity, and has been seen in Irish communities abroad who have transported Irish culture and traditions to many parts of the world. However, as has been widely demonstrated, the conditions, concerns, and aspirations of new immigrants, may not be reflected or given voice by this means. Community media allows such groups the space to express and discuss their needs in a developing situation and it has often been the case that this has given rise to new methodologies and approaches, making significant contributions to the wider cultural context.

Community media initiatives in Ireland

Community Radio

While we await the arrival of community TV, Ireland already has international renown for its community radio legislation; indeed this is openly envied by community media organisations all over the world including the USA, Europe and the UK. This initiative, regulated through the IRTC, has enabled the development of 16 community radio stations, 4 of which are in Dublin: NEAR FM, South Dublin Community Radio, Tallaght Community Radio, West Dublin Community Radio; as well as a special interest station in the heart of the city – Anna Livia. These are vital creative initiatives that are run with volunteers from the local community, operate an evaluation procedure within their communities, and who now have a wealth of experience in this area. They are therefore a unique resource in the city, and provide an example of a working community media environment.

Community use of the Internet

Access to the Internet has been the subject of concern for many groups in the city who have highlighted the lack of access to new technologies leading to marginalisation and

disenfranchisement. Recent surveys have also reported distinct inequality issues in early and secondary education due to poverty – it is clear that this affects whole communities. Organisations that represent these communities need to stay abreast of the other sectors and failure to do so means an inability to engage in partnership structures and exacerbates social exclusion.

Provision of Information on how to use the Internet and email is poor, being over generalised and driven by commercial interest. There is a need for programmes that address the needs of community organisations in accessing this information. Such programmes should take account of the time and financial pressures on the voluntary workers, paid staff and steering groups of these organisations. The negative impact of programmes that do not take account of these needs and are perceived as time-wasters by people whose energies are already overstretched cannot be overstated.

We have seen various initiatives aiming to develop community capacity in this area and the importance of EU funding in these efforts is significant. However, many initiatives in this area concentrate on the development of IT skills on an individual level due, in the main, to the design of project funding such as the EU Employment programme. When project funding is geared towards the training of individuals, and is linked to the unemployment register, it automatically means that those who receive the training are destined to move into jobs and often away from the project. Programmes need to address the development of the organisation, rather than individuals, and educate key actors who will pass on the skills in the course of their ongoing activity.

Resources must be made available to support community oriented, introductory programmes grounded in participatory methodologies. These programmes can be developed by community media organisations who will have an understanding of the issues involved. Development funding should be made available to facilitate this process.

Also needed are further developmental programmes that support capacity building amongst organisations in the use of this technology as a strategic tool. Our project work has provided us with an understanding of the problems experienced by the community sector in utilising IT which we see as follows:

- The majority of capacity building in this area happens on an ad hoc as opposed to organised basis.
- There is no established structure with an understanding of the needs of community organisations where projects can turn to for support in this area.
- CDPs and other community organisations do not have the resources, either in terms of staff or money, to invest to any great degree in this area.
- To a significant level, staff of community organisations are somewhat intimidated about using new technologies.
- Dependence on a single staff member or a single volunteer to take charge of the computers and software in the organisation is commonplace.

There is a clear need for the establishment of a not-for-profit organisation that is dedicated to supporting the strategic development of IT in the community sector.

Broadcasting legislation.

Currently, this country stands at the verge of developing its communications infrastructure to encompass the convergence of media and digitalisation. Our state services are being de-regulated as the global trend in the commercialisation and commodification of communication advances. The Broadcasting Bill, currently in the Committee Stage, mentions community media for the first time, and, in particular, creates the possibility for community TV broadcasting in this country. This is a welcome acknowledgement, however, the fact that community media is not defined within the Bill, and that there is no existing funding line to develop this initiative, are serious flaws. There is a risk that the legislation will fail to allow the emergence of a vital and lively entity either by unwieldy restrictions or simply by failing to recognise the true spirit of community media and protecting this in the Bill. We will see, very shortly, an expansion of our broadcasting networks that include some version of what is called Community Media.

The following four points address the issues as understood by community media activists,

- The definition of community must recognise communities of interest;
- The Social, economic and cultural value of community media should be signaled;
- The legislation must include the essential, defining, features of community media;
- Community Media will need access to the new digital infrastructure, if it is to join the digital age.

None of these requires fundamental changes to the Bill, and can be accommodated with relatively minor changes and additions.

Community video and community TV in the City of Dublin

Perceptions of community production

The perception of community productions in all media as being ‘low quality’, ‘uninteresting’, and essentially ‘for free’ is a strong one amongst the funding bodies, broadcasters, and producers in the industry.

This perception has been steadily challenged not only by the groups involved in production gaining access to high standard equipment and training, but also by people’s demand for relevant content, feedback and accountability in the media. The situation is now slowly changing as funding is directed towards community interests – the introduction of the idea of the ‘community brief’ is a good example.

However, funding is still ad hoc, community organisations cannot invest resources to develop their capacity to use media as a strategic tool to benefit their community, and voluntary support organisations need core-funding to continue and develop the work they are doing.

Bodies such as the Combat Poverty Agency, FAS, and EC programmes have proved the most receptive applications for community media. However, of 127 projects in the last

round of the EC EMPLOYMENT Programme, only 13 were in any way arts related, and of these 5 were media projects aimed at specific target groups. Only 2 were specifically orientated around community media, the others focused on media training for access to industry related or employment skills. For this to be the number of community media projects within this fund pool is indicative of the pathetic provision for this area.

Uses of community video production

Video is being used within the community for a variety of purposes, at a recent conference entitled 'Changing Images', Ballymun Media Cooperative identified the use of video in their community as follows:

to promote and explain the work of centres, - family centres, advice centres etc.; to showcase the work of the many, and different, organisations in the community; as an evaluation tool; to record events of significance for the community and it's achievements providing historical record and reflecting the values of the community.

Video can also be an expression of the identity of a community as was the case with the work of Leitrim Video Group in the making of a 15-minute production about a boating tragedy on Lough Allen. These organisations have minimal access to equipment and resources, but the community sense of ownership of their productions is strong.

Community organisations in Dublin, Leitrim and Cork, who were participants in an INTEGRA project run by CMN (1998-2000) that aimed to help community organisations develop a media initiative in video, radio or photography, identified their needs as equipment, training, and facilities.

Facilities for community video production in Dublin

Community video production can and should happen within the community and not from outside, i.e. in a studio 'somewhere else'. It is important that the facilities for production be developed in community centres, taking account of the needs of the community. It should be possible for training and equipment, precisely those needs identified by the participants on our project, to be accessed within the community, training must be designed to meet the particular needs of participants. In this way an inclusive approach can be identified that will provide access for members of the community who face marginalisation if their circumstances are not catered for – e.g. lone parents, Travellers, refugees, carers, disabled.

The development of community media resources within established centres will provide the content necessary for a community broadcasting service. This is the basis for a representative community TV service and will ensure that whatever organisational structures are arrived at will be a proper function of the community. In this way, also, the development of a community broadcasting service is a subset of the community centre.

Potential for Community TV broadcasting in Dublin

At this juncture, the CDB process and the strategic plan could play a significant part in the direction that this very important development would take. Given it's size and population it

is conceivable that Dublin City *can* support a community TV facility and feasibility work should be undertaken. Indeed, Dublin *should have* a community TV broadcasting facility.

- A survey of existing groups and facilities is necessary and should be commissioned. This should provide the basis for the establishment of a Media and Communications Forum.
- A feasibility study is necessary and should be commissioned by such a Forum.
- There are a number of not-for-profit community organisations that constitute interest groups, they have been active in the city around these issues for many years. Their experience is vital to the development of any service; it is likely they would be ready to create a network of community production units that could feed a community broadcasting service.
- These groups may also be interested in providing, or being part of a consortium that would provide, a local service.
- There will be a need for specialised facilities, and, while these could be planned on a regional or even national scale, Dublin is both demographically and geographically a high priority area. The distribution of local production units will also affect the positioning and functioning of these facilities, and a networking approach to establishing these facilities would increase sustainability for the production units.

There is now the possibility of creating a vital and creative resource. However, there is a long way to go to achieve this. The circumstances of the very first community TV slot to be legally broadcast in this country is significant. The “Place” series, devised and produced by Open Channel, is broadcast by TG4. This consists of three series of 6 half-hour community programmes, the second series was broadcast this autumn, the last will be broadcast in 2001. TG4 provides airtime only. No funds, no equipment, no resources. This has been a labour of love indeed and such a contract is indicative of the attitude of all the agencies to the community and voluntary sector, as well as toward that part of it that attempts to give it a voice.

The CDB has now the opportunity to demonstrate the possibilities of innovatory planning to unleash such creative potential within the community.

Are people interested in community TV?

As this question will no doubt be rhetorically asked, we put the following points for consideration.

As the roads are being dug up to provide cable for the new technologies, the people who are sustaining the inconvenience and problems involved get no return. The City Manager has already publicly stated his opinion that the companies should pay for the privilege – however they have not been required to do so. It should be noted that public access TV

was initiated in the US on the basis that cable companies should give some return to the people for their co-operation in infrastructure development.

It is also pertinent that the take-up in the UK for domestic users of the networks post-convergence in recent years has been disappointingly (for the industry) low. Speculation on the reasons why this is so has highlighted public *disinterest* in the *content* of programming. Community TV has meaningful content for people, both in its structures and in content - we think it should be seen in this light - not simply as part of converging technology that delivers thousands more homes to e-commerce and vote-seekers.

Community TV's greatest potential is as a tool for participatory democracy, as media created and controlled by the people. The following statement comes from an evaluation of community radio, funded by the IRTC and conducted in 1996, these findings might equally be applied to community television or other community media:

the most valued aspects of community radio in Ireland were seen as:

- *They establish and deepen intra-community linkages of all kinds, especially in rural areas and amongst scattered populations;*
- *They are a source of skills, training and employment, including general education regarding the media and specific media skills;*
- *They sustain and renew a sense of community identity that comes from the people themselves;*
- *They act on behalf of the community on issues that concern it, with no vested interests other than those of the community itself;*
- *They provide local information and entertainment.*

Note that most of these are not simply about producing programmes that people enjoy, but about the deeper interactive functions between a broadcaster and the community, intimately linked not through a legislated or commercial relationship but by the fact that are in effect one and the same. The Broadcaster is a legitimate expression of the community.

In the words of a participant in the survey:

It was not just the services provided, but the manner in which they were provided – through direct creative community involvement – that was usually seen as the distinctive and valuable point.

Recommendations

- *The CDB should explicitly recognise the social, economic and cultural benefits of community media and in particular, community broadcasting, and its positive role in media for the 21st Century.*
- *The CDB should recognise the special, democratic and participative nature of a community media broadcaster and include a definition in its plan, similar to that adopted by the IRTC from the AMARC Charter. The definition of community should include communities of interest. The difference between a community broadcaster and local commercial television should be made entirely explicit to ensure the community focus and indeed viability of the former.*
- *A Media and Communications Forum should be established through the Community Forum that can make representations to the proposed Broadcasting Commission of Ireland, the Arts Council, and other statutory and advisory structures.*
- *This Forum should carry out an initial survey of the community media environment.*
- *The Forum should also commission a feasibility study on the provision of community TV in the Dublin area*
- *Community Media deserve their own designated funding line, or a means of finance. This is true for all the community media, video, community TV, radio, Internet, and print media – including photography. The CDB could initiate action within the local authority, to set up designated funding lines and to make recommendations to the ODTR. The broadcasting legislation before the Select infers a ‘must-carry’ obligation on cable companies; this should be made explicit and should ensure the requirements extent to include infrastructure and facilities as well as content as a condition of issuing a cable license, as already exists in many countries.*
- *The CDB should ensure that a participative evaluation process run on behalf of the community, is part of any community media broadcaster’s brief. (The IRTC has already sponsored such community consultative processes for community radio, with great success.)*

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Margaret Gillan

Co-ordinator, Community Media Network, 34 North Frederick Street, Dublin 1

Phone: 01 878 3344; Fax: 01 878 3206; email: mgillan@cmn.ie

Community Media Network (CMN) is a 32 county, not-for-profit organisation that aims to promote the use of media as a tool for empowerment and community development. CMN is founded on the basis that working together within each medium, and indeed between the different media, makes a lot of sense. Its overall objective is therefore to initiate networking within and between media and to provide support where key resources are absent. CMN members, with organisations such as Open Channel, have been involved in campaign and lobby efforts for the past ten years or more to promote access to broadcasting for the community sector. As part of this work CMN has supported seminars and workshops often encouraging an international dimension – running workshops at the prestigious IAMCR meetings in Dublin in 1993, and in Seoul in 1994, Brussels in 1998, and Cincinnati USA in 1999. Submissions have been made to Green and White papers at national and European levels (e.g. Green paper on Living and Working in the Information Society and the Green paper on Convergence; also contributions have been made to strategic plan consultative processes, e.g., the Arts Council and the Combat Poverty Agency.

As part of its own strategic Plan, CMN is working to establish a media centre designated to the use of the community and voluntary sector, to this end a sizeable and state-of-the-art equipment resource has been accumulated with the help of European Regional Development Funding.

Margaret Gillan is co-ordinator of Community Media Network since 1996. She has directed a number of EC funded projects providing training and developing infrastructure in media for the community and voluntary sector. She has worked with a range of media including, video, film, and print media and taught in Further Education, Adult Education, and in the community sector. She is currently serving as CDB Representative from the Culture Cluster of the City Community Forum.

References:

- Report to IRTC on Pilot Community Radio Stations; NEXUS Research 1997
- IRTC Policy Document on Community Radio Broadcasting
- "Community Television- the way forward" Open Channel 1993
- "Where Community Television fits in" CMN Paper for IRTC Conference 2000
- CMN Manifesto on the Information Society ; Tracking 1996
- CMN Strategic Plan 1999
- Submission to DSCFA on Information Technology in the Community sector; CMN 1999
- Submission to the Information Society; CMN
- Submission on Information Technology to Combat Poverty; CMN
- Proposal for Dublin City Information Society Initiative ; DICP
- "Getting Connected"; Information Society 1999
- Submission to Select Committee on Heritage and the Irish Language; CMN and Open Channel 1999
- Submission to Review of Arts Legislation, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Islands; CMN 2000

Appendix No 20a Advisory Group on Community Media (AGCM) activity:

Invite to join Think-tank on Community Media and Communications

Re: Think-tank on Community Media and Communications

9th February 2001

Dear

As you are a significant community media content producer/ contributor in the Dublin City area, we are writing to invite you to participate in a round table think-tank on the issue of forming an *Advisory Council on Community Media and Communications in Dublin City* to the City Community Forum.

Enclosed you will find the Capital Vision Brochure, giving background information on the Dublin City Development Board, the City Community Forum and its constituent Clusters, Social, Economic and Cultural. The Dublin City Development Board is in the process of establishing a number of FORA that will enable networking and provide a voice for those participating in local activities. These FORA will have a number of functions including contributing to policy-making as part of the Dublin City Development Board's strategy for Dublin for the next decade.

In line with this strategy, Media and Communications will also be a Forum area. Such a forum will include all interest sectors in the Dublin City area, ranging from community, commercial and public sector.

The Culture Cluster want to ensure that the community and voluntary sector – particularly organisations working with community media such as community radio, community video and TV, community use of photography, Internet and print - are able to participate fully in this process. We are therefore organising a lunchtime brainstorming session with key players from the sector. The meeting will be held at the beginning of March, and its purpose is to that will draw up an agenda to be considered at a wider meeting of interest groups from the Dublin City area at the end of March. The proposal from the Culture Cluster and the Executive Bureau is that The City Community Forum have an *Advisory Council on Community Media and Communications*.

Your expertise and experience together with other key players (see attached list) is needed to help identify and prioritise areas that a Media and Communications Forum would explore. We feel that keeping the numbers small would allow this to be a constructive meeting and we know that your contribution would be most valuable. If you feel there are other community media organisations who would want to contribute to this think tank and should be invited, please let us know as soon as possible.

The round table think tank meeting will be held in the

Civic Offices, Woodquay

On

Friday 2nd March?

At 1pm

Refreshments will be available during the meeting

For your information, I enclose documentation of the first of these FOR A, the Sports and Recreation Forum. This forum was established through the workings of a think-tank organised by the Culture Cluster of the City Community Forum and inaugurated by a conference of sports and recreation groups from the Dublin City area. Invitations were sent out to 800 groups of which 80 attended and 220 have since registered.

If you want any further information, you can contact Margaret Gillan, at 878 3344, or Phil Delaney, at 672 3426

We look forward to seeing you on the 2nd March

Yours sincerely,

Appendix No 20b: Advisory Group Meeting Agenda

ROUND TABLE MEETING ON COMMUNITY MEDIA AND COMMUNICATIONS

City Community Forum

Friday 2nd March 2001

1pm

Room 23, 4th Floor, Civic Offices

SUGGESTED AREAS OF CONCERN FOR THIS MEETING

- Proposal from the Community Forum Executive referring to the Position Paper on Media and Communications by CMN that an **Advisory Council on Community Media and Communications** be established.
- **A Peoples Media Centre** short paper submitted, introduction from Sean O'Siochru, CMN
- **Dublin dot.ie** to be introduced by the Director of Community and Enterprise, Peter Finnegan
- **RAPID** investment in disadvantaged areas
- **A City-wide Media Strategy?** Partnerships, roles of and within.
- **Networks** - encouraging community organisations to engage with media
- **Distribution and outlets**
- **Broadcasting Bill** – Communities of Interest Amendment going before the Seanad

Appendix No 20c : Advisory Group on Community Media – Minutes

Report from Brainstorming Meeting on Community Media and Communications

Convened by the City Community Forum

2nd March 2001, Room 23

Present:

Tom Redmond, ICRG and City Community Forum;
Margaret Gillan, CMN and CDB Rep;
Brendan Dowling, Whitefriars Community Centre, City Community Forum;
Robbie Byrne, Community Response;
Caoimhe McCabe, Pavee Point;
Oliver McGlinchey, Ballymun Media Co-op;
Jack Byrne, Chair, Near FM;
Declan McLoughlin, Chair, Community Radio Forum;
Alan Connelly, Anna Livia;
Mary Long, Manager Anna Livia;
Ciaran Kissane, IRTC;
Sean Ó'Siochrú, Chair, CMN; Nexus Research;
Giancarlo Ramioli, Public Communications Centre;
Farrel Corcoran; Professor of Communications DCU, ex-Chair RTE;
Elaine Hess, Strategy Manager, Department of Community and Enterprise;
Breda Bowden Dept of Community and Enterprise, Notetaker.

Apologies:

Peter Finnegan Director of Community and Enterprise;
Kelly O'Sullivan, CDB Strategy Manager Culture and Communications;
Seamus McGrenery, Open Channel;
Cormac O'Hanrahan, Printwell;
Brian Trench, DCU;

Absent:

Seanie Lambe, ICON;
David Connolly, DICP

A round table discussion was held that touched on a number of ideas and initiatives concerning community and media in the city. The meeting was brief, starting at 1 pm and finishing at 2.30 pm, in general a critical but positive and purposeful tone marked the

discussion. Overall this was felt to be a useful and necessary initiative. The notes that follow are a brief resume of the major areas touched upon and the decisions reached by the meeting.

Notes

1. The meeting began by discussing the first item for consideration: the establishment of an *Advisory Council on Community Media and Communications to the City Community Forum*. The question of how meaningful this sort of intervention could be, what exactly the group would be, who will finance it, will it have a budget etc, was raised immediately. However, it was generally acknowledged that this forum provided an opportunity for the community sector to make their voice heard in relation to media and communications needs. It was agreed that this could be tested, given a few objectives with a tight timeframe, to see if it would deliver.
 - **It was therefore agreed that the group would constitute itself as the Advisory Council on Community Media and Communications to the City Community Forum.**
2. The meeting agreed to support the amendment to the Broadcasting Bill now before the Seanad that the term 'community' should not only refer to geographical communities but also to 'communities of interest' and adopted the wording as proposed by CMN.
 - The meeting agreed to send a letter expressing this concern to the Minister.
3. The meeting had been called to address the issue of an agenda for a wider forum that would bring together the interest groups in the city. A number of issues had been aired at the meeting including:
 - A Peoples Media Centre;
 - Dublin.ie Project, a meeting should be held to discuss this project with the Director of Community and Enterprise;
 - community representation within the mainstream media and on an organisational level in RTE etc.;
 - the need for research into community media activity;
 - the need to maintain a dialogue between community stations/media organisations and community development groups to identify needs and working practices.

All these required a wider forum and the following was agreed:

- **A full day meeting to which all interest groups would be invited should be held.**
- **the meeting agreed to reconvene to decide what process should be begun to establish a wider forum for Community media in Dublin and to work on a agenda.**
- **Item 1 on the agenda for the next meeting will be how to make this forum as inclusive as possible.**

Next Meeting:
Tuesday 27th March 2001
1.00pm
Room 23, Civic Offices.

Contact List

E-mail	Name	Organisation/Company
For community media organisations		
giangarlo@pcc.ie	Giancarlo Ramioli	PCC
sean@nexus.ie	Seán Ó'Suiochrú	CMN, Nexus Research
mediacoop99@eircom.net	Oliver McGlinchey	Ballymun Media Coop
mgillan@cmn.ie	Margaret Gillan	CMN
For community radio		
tcr@eircom.net	Declan McLoughlin	Community Radio Forum
osullivanlong@indigo.ie	Mary Long	Anna Livia FM
alan.connolly@ipb.ie	Alan Connolly	Anna Livia FM
jacknear@iol.ie	Jack Byrne	Near FM
For Community Development Projects		
commresp@iol.ie	R Byrne	Community Response
brd@iol.ie	Brendan Dowling	Community Sports Forum
pavee@iol.ie	Caoimhe McCabe	Pavee Point
icrg@iol.ie	Tom Redmond	ICRG
For supporting institutions to community media		
farrel.corcoran@dcu.ie	Farrel Corcoran	DCU
ckissane@irtc.ie	Ciarán Kissane	IRTC
dconnolly@dicp.ie	David Connolly	DICP

For Department of Community and Enterprise, Dublin Corporation

doce@dublincorp.ie	Breda Bowden	Dublin Corporation
kelly.osullivan@dublincorp.ie	Kelly O'Sullivan	Strategic Policy Manager
peterj.finnegan@dublincorp.ie	Peter Finnegan	Director of Community & Enterprise

Appendix No 20d: Report on Advisory Group for 'Tracking'.

Group set up to explore creating a Dublin City Media and Communications Forum

Report from Margaret Gillan, City Community Forum Representative.

The Dublin City Development Board (CDB) is in the process of establishing FORA that will enable networking and provide a voice for those participating in local activities and contribute to policy-making as part of the Dublin City Development Board's strategy for Dublin for the next decade. In line with this strategy, Media and Communications is also proposed as a Forum area. Such a forum would involve all interest sectors in the Dublin City area, including the community, commercial and public sectors.

This proposal from the Culture Cluster and the Executive Bureau of the Community Forum is that The City Community Forum establish an *Advisory Council on Community Media and Communications* that can clearly identify the needs of the community and voluntary sector in this area and bring these forward into the policy arena. The Culture Cluster want to ensure that the community and voluntary sector – particularly organisations working with community media such as community radio, community video and TV, community use of photography, Internet and print - are able to participate fully in this process.

A round table think tank meeting was held at the beginning of March including invitees from Community media groups, community organisations who are involved in media production, various support organisations - umbrella groups, academic, and statutory organisations.

The first discussion touched on a number of ideas about community and media in the city and while a critical tone was maintained it was a positive and purposeful discussion. It was felt that this forum provided an opportunity for the community sector to make their voice heard in relation to media and communications needs. This could be tested, given a few objectives with a tight timeframe, to see if it would deliver. The group agreed to constitute itself as the *Advisory Council on Community Media and Communications to the City Community Forum*. The issues discussed by the group to date include:

- A Peoples Media Coalition;

- E-projects for the city;
- community representation within the mainstream media and on an organisational level in RTE etc.;
- the need for research into community media activity;
- the need to maintain a dialogue between community stations/media organisations and community development groups to identify needs and working practices.
- A clear need for networking amongst community media groups in the City of Dublin was also recognised.

All this requires more work and the meeting agreed to work to establish a wider forum for Community media in Dublin and to develop an agenda for a workshop that would address the issues.

A workshop is now being organised to take place in mid June, if your organisation is interested in this initiative or has ideas for the workshop get in touch with the people named below.

For details of the workshop contact: Kelly O’Sullivan, Strategic Policy Group Manager, 675 5035 kelly.osullivan@dublincorp.ie , Sean O’Siochru, 272 0739, sean@nexus.ie , Margaret Gillan, 878 3344, mgillan@cmn.ie .

Participants in the group include:

Farrell Corcoran, DCU; Ciaran Kissane, IRTC; Giancarlo Ramioli, PCC; Brendan Dowling, Whitefriars Community Centre; Robbie Byrne, Community Response; Caoimhe McCabe, Pavee Point; Jack Byrne, NEAR FM; Declan McLaughlin, Community Radio Forum; Mary Long and Alan Connolly, Anna Livia; Oliver McGlinchey, Ballymun Media Cooperative; Sean O’Siochru, Nexus Research; Margaret Gillan, CMN; Peter Finnegan, Director Community and Enterprise; Kelly O’Sullivan, Strategic Policy Manager.

Appendix No 20e : Briefing document for community Media workshop

Community Media Workshop

The following is to help you get the most from the Community Media Workshop on June 20th. It summarises the background, and the issues to be discussed during the sessions.

Opening Session - Introduction and Presentation of the Issues around Community Media

This plenary session begins with a few words on the format and agenda of the Workshop. A presentation and discussion will follow. The presentation is intended to inform participants about the benefits of community media, what is happening in Ireland, around the world and the potential and opportunities that exist for Dublin right now.

Opening Session Summary: The Why, Where and How of Community Media?

- *Community Media: What are they? Why should we care?*

This outlines the basic benefits and characteristics of community media. Community media represent the best hope for people to counterbalance the take-over of media, everywhere in the world, by commercial and corporate interests. With public service media losing its way and trying to compete with the commercial sector, community media allow people to drive the agenda and content, deciding what is produced and broadcast, and why; by participating in the running of media; even by making our own programmes.

- *Community media is a worldwide movement*

There exist thousands of community media entities, throughout the world, in radio, television and, increasingly, the Internet. From radio stations connected to the internet in the mountains of Sri Lanka, to indigenous peoples' television stations in Australia and Canada, to non-profit internet-based press agencies for community radio in Latin America; to the dozens of Open Access channels in Europe and North America – community media now lead the way in innovating in technologies, but more important in content and participation from communities.

- *Community Media in Ireland – We are just beginning to participate*

Although Ireland is a relative new comer, there is probably happening here than most people realise. The fourteen community (three more in negotiations) radio stations serve communities all over the country, offering innovative local and outside programming, and opportunities for organisations and people to make their own programmes. Video and television, up to now lacking a means of transmission, are less developed, but nevertheless can boast perhaps a dozen active groups around the country about half of them in Dublin. Open Channel has been providing training and making programme – and managing to air a few of them - for over a decade. Community Media Network has been going for eight

years, linking media and communities, and the Community Radio Forum has become a force in its area.

- *Identifying the Potential and Grasping the Opportunities*

There is great potential to build on, but also some unique opportunities right now. From a number of directions, the potential to build these elements into a coherent community media sector in Dublin is emerging. In terms of equipment, the community radio sector is already well endowed; but there exist also several community bodies in Dublin with enough video equipment to produce broadcast quality output. A number of new Media Centres, including studios, are being built in Dublin. There are also a good number of community activists qualified in media production. On the transmission side, the new Broadcasting Bill will permit a community station for the first time the right to broadcast over the cable network here; Internet technologies are now at stage where live community access or even access over television is both possible and relatively cheap. The challenge is to bring these together in Cupertino, and to fill the key gaps, in organisational terms that will harness the energy of community in Dublin, and in resources that will enable the production of innovative content.

Participatory Workshops II and I

There will be two Workshop sessions breaking into smaller groups. The purpose of each will be to develop concrete proposals on how we would like to see community media in Dublin evolve over the coming years, and what is needed to turn it into a vibrant, innovative and empowering new media sector. Each will be preceded by a short presentation in plenary.

Workshop I: Draft Principles and Structures of Community Media

The aim here is to discuss the principles that should be applied in developing community media, of all types, and the kinds of generic structures that these apply. Some initial ideas will be presented, summarised in the following. The groups, however, will be free to develop these along their own lines.

The Case for Inclusive Principles:

- Lively participation in the affairs of society is vital to a democratic way of life.
- People and their organisations must be actively facilitated to understand and debate issues affecting them, and to engage in practical responses.
- Since media are central to the democratic process, all people must have equal and affordable access to mediated public debate, and to diverse sources of information enriching participation in social life.
- Media literacy, including in information and communications technologies, is now essential, and a vibrant democracy must be served by an array of accessible media, some under democratic control.

- An initiative to ensure that media content retain its value as a public good, not just as a product for sale, will enlarge citizen choice, provide opportunities for diverse voices to be heard, and create a space where public opinion can be formed.

A People's Media could, therefore:

Foster direct democratic participation, respecting cultural diversity and the autonomy of the individual

Promote the right to communicate, assist the free flow of information and encourage creative expression

Provide the infrastructure for all citizens to access training, production and distribution facilities.

Support people and groups in advocacy, lobbying and campaigning, and them to become content providers.

Be democratically owned and run as a not-for-profit entity, financed from a diversity of sources.

Devise ownership structures representative of local geographic communities or communities of interest.

Encourage empowerment, citizenship, cohesion, cultural development and community building.

Support grass roots initiatives, ensuring the voice of minority groups find expression.

Stimulate greater understanding in support of peace, tolerance, democracy and development.

Influence society towards social and economic inclusiveness, where equality of treatment, opportunity and access are the norm.

What kind of structures might follow for individual community media initiatives?

A starting point might be the IRTC's model for community radio, based on the membership, management and operation by the community itself. Participation, ideally, is at all levels in the initiative from management, to content production, to fund raising. And in the end, the media initiative entity is accountable directly to its community members. This model underlines the need for a clear definition of the community served, geographic or community of interest, and of devising mechanisms to actively encourage participation and enable it in practice. The composition of the management committee, including the participation of statutory or other bodies locally, is also issue for careful consideration. At another level, a key issue for community media in Dublin as a whole is how the various platforms (television, radio, Internet) and individual initiatives can interact, co-operate, resource and supply each other.

Workshop II: Community Media Content and Resources

The core issue for community media is less the technologies of production, or even dissemination. The real questions revolve on the issue of producing content – radio or television programmes, internet and Web content – that is entertaining, informative, challenging, empowering.

In the real world of people and their organisations, with their aspirations, priorities and constraints, what can community media add?

How can the promise be turned into practical realities?

And when this is answered, where should the resources come from?

The presentation, focusing on the first part of the above question, will first take a couple of examples of an actual community organisation and explore what community media might, in practice, mean to them.

View from a Community Organisation

Caoimhe McCabe will discuss the perceived “opportunities” and “strengths” that exist for Pavee Point to create their own media content. In contrast, the forces, which may threaten the community organisation and inhibit the creation of media content, will be examined. The weaknesses that exist in the organisation in relation to content creation will be identified.

Pavee Point is a partnership of Irish Travellers and settled people working together to improve the lives of Irish Travellers through working towards social justice, solidarity, socio-economic development and human rights.



Where might the Resources come from?

Already communities have considerable resources and a community media initiative would exist mainly thanks to the time and energy freely given by the community. However, additional sources are needed and might include:

- Direct Local authority, or central exchequer funding
- A proportion of the public license fee;
- A levy on the Cable Company, in return for the exclusive license;
- Advertising, to an extent that will not influence content or schedules;

- Community subscription and fund raising drives.

The public sector, local or central government can enable the right combination of these through direct contributions or regulatory action.

Appendix No 21 : Community Media Workshop 2001

Mercer Hotel, June 20th, Summary Report

Introduction

The following comprises the report on the Community Media Workshop of June 20th 2001. The Workshop was organised by the *Advisory Council on Community Media and Communications*, itself set up by the *Community Forum* on behalf of the *Dublin City Development Board*. The Workshop was very well attended, with participation from about forty-five representatives of community, voluntary, statutory and media groups around the City (See Annex 2 for the list of Attendees). Three parallel discussion groups were held, as well as the plenary sessions.

This summary report lays no claim to completeness, and nor can it be said that an explicit consensus was reached on every item. Discussion was very lively, and the time too short to do justice to all matters arising – it was agreed that much more discussion would be needed over the coming months as the ideas were confronted with emerging concrete possibilities.

Nevertheless a general consensus was obtained on the following, and these are considered an adequate starting point for further movement in the area of community media for Dublin City. Notably, **there was complete agreement at the Plenary that the situation warrants the formation of a *Community Media Forum*, alongside the *Sports and Recreation Forum*, ultimately to feed into the Dublin City Development Board's Social, Cultural and Economic 10 year strategy for the City.**

This short report was drafted by Seán Ó Siochrú, based on the facilitators notes (Annex 1) and on the understanding of the organising group. It is now being returned back to all participants who will have an opportunity to comment further. After that it will go back to the Advisory Council who will forward it to the appropriate arena.

The first Working group considered four key questions for Community Media:

1. Community Media: Do they comprise a distinct and separate sector?

There was general agreement that community media are distinct, but not separate. Community media cannot exist in isolation, if only because they may be competing for audiences, for funding (advertising, license). But community media are distinct in many ways, for instance as a tool for community development, in its ethos and ownership structures. Community media will also have to develop distinct funding arrangements, before they can become viable at all. Such arrangements would determine whether

community media could reach their potential, in terms of independence, quality of product, participation and other factors. Appropriate funding structures are thus critical.

2. What principles should govern the Community Media Sector?

The workshop discussed the essential features of the proposed Principles for Community Media (that had been circulated in advance: see annexe). They were presented for discussion as follows:

- Democratic Ownership
- Facilitated access by the community
- Independent and not-for-profit
- Diversity of income
- Content determined by need of the community.

The issue of what defined a community arose in all groups. Is it interest based? Geographically based? How can you prevent it being exclusive, even divisive? For instance, it was suggested that the principles should include anti-racist, non-discriminatory objectives. The meaning of democracy in this context was also debated – many governments claim to be democratic but are anything but. This also raises the issue of inclusion and equality that animate community development efforts. Surely ‘community’ and ‘democracy’ should mean that active steps are taken to prioritise excluded voices, and that empowerment of the marginalised should be a principle.

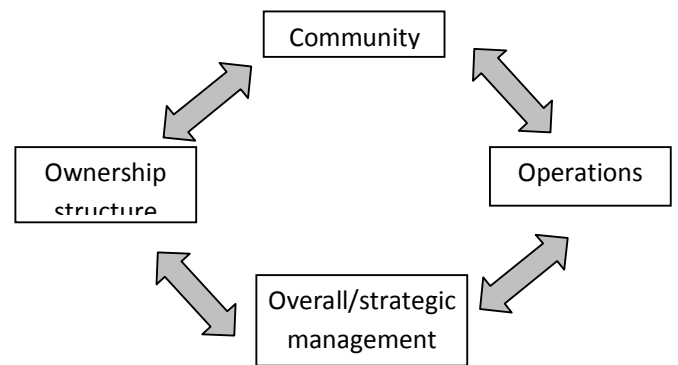
Based on comment and on specific suggestions, the summary principles for community media initiatives might be amended to:

- The definition of the community served (geographic, commonality of interest, culture etc.), and the rationale for it, should be clearly identified;
- It will have democratic ownership, enabling and encouraging active participation at all levels by the community;
- Facilitated access will be available to the community, especially targeting marginalised groups with pro-active outreach programmes;
- It should be independent and not-for-profit, its goal solely to benefit the community;
- It should have diversity of income, such that its goal cannot be compromised by funding sources;
- The content will be determined by the needs of the community, and should actively engage their interests.

It was stressed that these principles are interdependent i.e. they must be taken as a whole. However, they are not written in stone and will continue to evolve in various forms and various fora. Having said this, **the meeting was in agreement with the spirit of the above principles.**

3. What is the appropriate organisational form for the community media sector?

The Independent Radio and Television Commission (IRTC) has, in the context of community radio, developed a simple model of the community media enterprise which attempts to put the community at the centre. This was presented to the meeting, and **there was general agreement that this is a useful starting point in considering structures for a community media initiative.**



The figure on the right is a slightly modified version, suggested by one of the Working group in order to generalise the model beyond radio. The thrust of it is to ensure that the community has multiple avenue into the media initiative, and that the relationship between the community and the initiative is bi-directional and ongoing. Thus, the community will participate in ownership in one of several ways, for instance through the issue of a single share (one vote) to every one or every group interested. The community may elect or choose the overall management group. And their will many opportunities to engage in the operation of the station, for instance through producing programmes, getting training in media skills, or simply helping in administration, fundraising or other activities.

Individual media stations would, of course, further specify and refine this model as the circumstances arose, guided by the principles developed earlier.

4. A SWOT Analysis of Community Media

The Second Working Group explored a SWOT analysis of Community Media from the perspective of community and voluntary organisation. It was not geared towards achieving a specific outcome or consensus, but rather towards gathering ideas and impressions that would point the way, in practice, for people and groups in the city to implement community media. The following summarises the issues emerging.

a) Strengths of Community Media

The strengths included:

- It is accessible to the community, and has 'localness';
- Offers opportunities for people and groups to put things their way, to control the format;

- It is confidence building/empowering to create culturally-aware work for, and with, the community
- It enhanced as sense of shared experience and a local identify;
- It reduces isolation within a community, and offer new ways for groups to access people;
- It offers a different form of entertainment;
- It offers an alternative perspective to mainstream media;
- It represents a new resource for community development activities e.g promoting local success stories, profiling local groups and organisations, lobbying n community issues;
- It encourages constructive involvement of potentially destructive community elements;
- It is more transparency than mainstream media, and is more independent;

b) Weaknesses of Community Media

Weakness were identified, in relation both to community radio currently, and in developing other media:

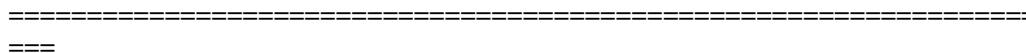
- Current lack of funding sources;
- Dependency on FÁS (CE schemes), and inability to resources for professionalism;
- The difficulty of maintaining continuity and progression on voluntary projects;
- The major time commitment of management group, detracting from other activities;
- The difficulty in promoting awareness of community media;
- Unclear understanding the public and (potential) funders regarding community media;
- People feel they do not have a stake in the (radio) station;
- Perception that community stations are not
- The sector lacks a collective voice.

c) From Weaknesses to Opportunities

This included both the opportunities currently available and what would be needed to avail of them:

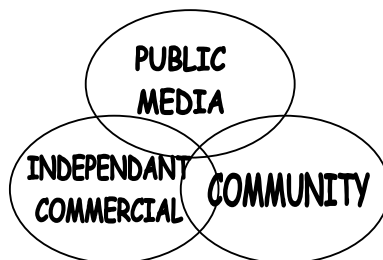
- There are new technologies, including digital distribution and the possibility of combining different media such as radio, television and internet;
- Community media could learn from RTE and others mainstream media;
- There are opportunities now to lobby for extra funding, in Dublin, Ireland and EU;
- There are many unexplored stories and experiences, and a chance to look at ourselves;
- A model of excellence is needed, based on best practice nationally and internationally, which will enable the identification of current weaknesses and gaps;
- There is currently an opportunity to develop policy with the new Broadcasting legislation and the Broadcasting Commission of Ireland
- A networks is needed of all community media to support each other in Dublin

- The Dublin City Development Board could create a Website to promote radio stations and content;
- Local 'celebrities' could be used to support the community media;



Annex 1: Facilitators Reports

Working Group 3:



Do you agree that community media is separate from independent commercial and public media?

- not separate but different & needs to be linked
- owned by the community
- reflects local information
- local ads - but no more than 50%
- it has a different tone & voice
- a tool for community development
- 70% speech - 30% music
- open
- accountable
- representative
- linked but different
- different ownership & ethos
- community owns the table

Is there a case for a set of principles for community media?

- yes - but to what purpose
- as long as they are implemented
- has to stand against other ethos
- on condition that it is policed , visible & acted out
- independent
- diverse source of income
- standards - quality
- media studies to be widely promoted in schools
- definition
- community ownership of structure
- equal representation

- change the title on the overhead slide to “community media studies”

Suggested additions to principles

- a clear definition of community should be included in the principles in terms of interest ,geography, culture etc
- clarify the 2 way relationship between all stakeholders
- honest, up front & out there
- democratic ownership
- content determined by the community
- to include a commitment to pro active out reach programmes
- no advertisements can contradict the principles
- multi-disciplinary approach
- principles need to be broadened out
- honestly inform
- to include anti-racist non discriminatory statements
- commitment to facilitated access with real links & contact with the community
- community representation

SWOT analysis from an organisational perspective

Strengths

- localness - accessibility
- confidence building - making media
- empowering - good fresh material
- attitude changing potential
- professional expertise in packaging a message
- shared experience
- an empowerment process to create culturally aware work for & with the community
- added new resource for community development

Weaknesses

- lack of funding, awareness
- credibility
- isolation lack of back up
- archive not happening now
- access technical support
- service to be offered but no resources to for groups to take it up - capacity building
- time & commitment of management group
- danger of being marginalised by ourselves

Opportunities

- new technology - digital distribution

- learn from RTE
- control of contents - quality in contents -
- a new chance for sense of history
- a chance to lobby for adequate funding
- access to creativity as a resource
- expression as a community resource
- a chance to look at ourselves
- unexplored stories and experience
- possibility to re define terms
- money - grant aid - Euro funding

Threats

- New technology controlled by media moguls
- Forces outside of our control – It could be hijacked -
- Funding
- Technological change driven by commercial interest
- Standards could be set to high
- Legislation
- Manipulation of media - Agenda setting
- Editorial control

Feedback

I feel that there was a lot of concern in the group about the operational structures involved in engaging with community media.

It would have been very beneficial to have had time to tease out some of the responses from the group as there was a lot of varied experience a lot of which could have been shared.

There was a lot of concern around the idea of hijacking of community media and also a lot of excitement around the possibilities community media holds for community development.

I feel the layout of the day might have been improved by moving the coffee break between the workshops giving people a chance to discuss and brainstorm thoughts and perspectives. In general there was a lot to cover in a very limited time but then again there was a lot covered.

Sharon Harding

=====

Facilitator: Fiona Cormican

Working Group 2

First Session

We were asked to look at four questions in this workshop.

Q1 Respond to the question that community media is different and a separate sector from public and commercial media?

Response: Agreed that it was different but that it was impossible to look into it any further until the question of funding was sorted out.

The issue of funding decides the context in terms of

- Independence
- Quality of product
- Audience
- Competitiveness
- Community media projects cannot operate solely on Community Employment, jbs initiative or social economy programme funding. The criteria for these schemes demand a high degree of training and support for the participants and who can do this. Also when the participants reach a level of skill and ability where they can fully contribute to the project their term of funding runs out. This creates a scenario where the project trains people who then move in public or commercial media and the project receives no recognition for the work done and does not have the resources to employ these people that they have invested so much time and resources into.
- A suggestion was to look for some thing back from the general media in terms of support and expertise to be volunteered to community media.
- Funding needs to be independent of government and the ideal form of funding would be through an independent community trust.

Q2 Do you accept that there is a case for a set of principals to govern community media projects?

Response: Yes

Q3 Are you satisfied with the kind of principals that are being proposed?

Response: Yes but we need to clearly define what determines the “community” is it interest, issues, numbers, geographical areas etc, and how do you stop it being divisive?

What defines democracy and is democracy as defined by Irish or American governments truly inclusive?

A further principal needs to be included that looks for community media projects to operate on the basis on inclusion and equality.

Q4 Respond to the proposed structure for community media organisations?

Response: We agreed to the proposed outline of operational structures but stressed that a lot of work needs to be done to capacity build the community to participate.

Who are the “community” and how can we capacity build them to participate and who resources this.

Structures need to be inclusive, equitable and sustainable.

It was recognised that there was more strength in building a community around common interest issues than on a geographical area, but that common interest audiences need access to wider distribution.

2nd group session

We looked at the two SWOT analysis presented and then listed the strengths and weakness of community media as the group saw them. We then looked at how to turn the weaknesses into strengths.

Strengths of community media

- Assumes standards
- Provides opportunities for people to say what they want to say
- Provides a focus for information
- Offers opportunities to develop context around local identity as opposed to a global identity.
- Platform for voices and collective voices that wouldn't get an other opportunity to be heard.
- Diversity
- Different form of entertainment
- More transparency
- Reduce isolation
- Capacity building
- Opportunity to create a community and maintain a community
- Independence
- Alternative perspectives
- Constructive involvement of potentially destructive elements in a community.
- Can promote cultural and heritage issues.
- Provide local information i.e. upcoming events and other information of interest to communities.
- Support and empathy

Weaknesses of community media

- Funding
- Unclear definitions
- Current structures
- Job transition- prospects- accreditation and recognition for training and support provided to FAS participants
- Unable to buy in professionalism when dependant on FAS
- Lack of recognition of the community and voluntary effort

- No opportunity for continuity and progression with in project.
- Sector lacks collective voice
- Attitudes and perceptions of community media by funders and general public
- Lack of promotion of the idea
- “Cynical” phrasing in new legislation

How to turn weaknesses into opportunities

- There is a need to develop a model of excellence for a community media organisation based in a ideal situation (including funding situation) and work back from there. This model would be based on best practice nationally and internationally and on the principals of local Agenda 21.
- Then it is possible to see what is missing or lacking in other projects and what they should be aiming for in terms of the ideal. The participants in the group were all interested in developing this idea and it was agreed that there was a lot of work already done on an international scale that could be made use of.
- There is the opportunity to combine various sorts of media from radio to the internet etc.
- There is an opportunity to develop policies around community media and influence legislation.
- There is an opportunity for a community media forum and people were interested in participating.

FACILITATED DISCUSSION:

WORKING GROUP 1

Attendance: Pirooz Daneshmandi, Ciarán Kissane, James Conway, Cora McCrystal, Tom Merchan, Michael Farrell, Mary Fay, Rebekah Spendlove, Brendan O’Neil, Mary Crosbie, Seán Ó Siochrú & facilitated by Daithí Doolan.

Opened session with general introductions.

1. Community Media – A separate Sector?

Discussed the 3 ringed image of the public sector, community sector and independent/commercial sector.

It was agreed that the community media does not operate in isolation. Practical examples of this were given, i.e. RTE broadcasting, sourcing funding, programme content.

2. Analysis of principles.

- Democratic Ownership & active participation on all sides.
- Facilitated access by the community
- Independent not for profit & solely to benefit the community.
- Diversity of income
- Content determined by needs of the community & actively engaging their interest.

These principles are interdependent and can not operate in isolation of one another.

Need to define what we mean by 'community' and what we mean by 'democratic'.

Principles need to encourage active citizenship through community media.

Various issues were raised about definitions and interpretations but it was recognised that none of these principles were written in stone and people agreed to support the spirit of these principles. People can continue to have an active input right through the process. The report from this seminar will be circulated and people can continue discuss these principles and other issues.

Some of the principles were modified as outlined above.

3. Non hierachial Structure.

A non-hierarchical structure was proposed in order to assist in the running of the community radio station. This structure involves the community, ownership structure, operating station and overall management. It was agreed to change some of the terms e.g. from operating station to operation, station management to overall management. The changes were needed so as to all aspects of community media not just radio stations.

After a brief discussion people agreed on this structure.

Facilitated Discussion – Workshop 2 - S.W.O.T. Analysis

Strengths:

- Greater access to the public
- Better programme format
- Adapting what we already doing
- Ability of local groups to accessing local media
- Increases profile of local groups and organisations
- Ability to promote local success stories
- Offers a medium to lobby
- Provided new ways of accessing people and their community.

Weakness:

- Public's lack of awareness of local radio stations.
- Lack of promotion of radio stations
- Funding
- Perception that community stations are not 'hip' enough
- People feel that they do not have a stake in the station.

Opportunity:

- A Dublin Forum to advertise local radio stations.
- Redefine programme content and editorial control.
- Develop a network of stations and their personnel.

- City of Dublin Board to set up a web site which will promote radio stations and their programme content.
- Use local celebrities to promote stations.
- Local media gives people the opportunity to empower the community
- Meet with community and agree on what people want to listen to and when.

Overall view:

I felt there was a very good turn out. More time could have been given to issues of funding and the practicalities of the non hierachial structures.

The concept of local media offers great oppportunities to local people empowering themselves and telling 'the world' their storey.

A practical solution to one of the main problems of promoting local radio stations is the idea that CDB set up a web site. Co-ordination of the city's local media is vital to its success.

Appendix No 21a: List of Attendees

Organisation	Organisation Type	Participants
An Garda Siochana	CDB Board Member	Mary Fay c/o Bill Donoghue
Anna Livia	Committee	Mary Long
Ballymun Media Co-op	Committee	Oliver McGlenchey
Belgrave Residents Assoc	Community Platform	Mary Crosbie
Community Media Network	CDB Board Member/Committee	Margaret Gillan
Community Radio Forum		Declan McLoughlin
Community Response		Robbie Byrne
Dublin City Development Board		Fiona Healy
Dublin City Development Board		Kelly O'Sullivan
Dublin City Development Board		Phil Delaney
Dublin Corporation	Community Media/NEAR FM	John Houghton
Dublin South fm		Tom Merchan
Dun Laoghaire Rathdown CDB		Brenda O'Neill
European Institute of Women's Health	Director General	Peggy Maguire
Family Resource Centre St Michael's Estate		Joe Lee
Family Resource Centre St Michael's Estate		Rita Fagan
Fatima Group United		Aileen O'Gorman
Frameworks Community Video Production	Media	Emma Howell
Inner City Enterprise	Community Platform	Cora McCrystal

Inner City Renewal Group	Partnership/CDB Board Member	Tom Redmond
Irish Council for People w/ Disabilities	Community Platform	John Murtagh
Irish Marital Arts Commision	Committee	Brendan Dowling
Larkin Community College		Jacqueline O'Brien
Larkin Community College		Martin Byrne
Larkin Community College		Maura O'Higgins
Larkin Community College		Rebekah Spendlove
MEEM	Community Forum	Siraj Zaidi
NEAR FM	Committee	Jack Byrne
Nexus	Committee	Sean O'Siochru
Pavee Point	Committee	Caoimhe McCabe
Planet		Elaine Melon
Rathdown Road & District Association		Pirooz Daneshmandi
Rathmines Writers Workshop	Community Platform	James Conway
Special Olympics Ireland		Claire Hunt
The Ark		Julie Hogan
Vincentian Refugee Centre	Community Forum	Jean Martin
Whitefriar Akido Club		Brigid Ruane

There maybe people missing from the above list who participated in the Media Workshop, if you know of someone please let us know, so we can amend the list, by contacting Kelly O'Sullivan, Dublin City Development Board

Tel:(01) 675 5053 email kelly.osullivan@dublincorp.ie

Appendix No 21b: Community Media Forum: CTVWG

Working Group on Community Television

Plan For A Development Strategy:

Initial requirements

The following comprises the current members of the Working Group on Community Television:

Seán Ó Siochrú (Coordinator: NEXUS and Open Channel); Margaret Gillan (CMN); Ollie McGlinchey (Ballymun Media Coop); Jack Byrne (Coolock Multi-Media Centre, NEAR FM)

The Advisory Group meeting of 12th of July asked each of the three Working Groups on Community Media to produce a plan for developing a strategy. This comprises an outline plan for community television in Dublin. It is contingent on a significant commitment from the CDB towards working with communities in Dublin to create their own television station, in line with the outcome of the Community Media Workshop in June.

In response, the Advisory Group has agreed the following. [add date]

The Current Situation

The following first takes stock of the current situation:

1) Community Support

Community organisations in Dublin recognise the unique contribution that community television can make to culture, society, economy and politics in Dublin. The Community Media Workshop concluded that:

- Appropriate funding structures are required to make it work, and that a vibrant and community centred station will not emerge solely on a market basis;
- A clear set of principles must underlie any such station, to ensure democratic ownership, independence with the sole aim of serving the community, content that serves community needs, and access by the community
- An appropriate organisational form, as contained in the Workshop report, allows for community participation through ownership, operation and strategic management.

2) Current Television Related Activities

There exists at present a number of organisations in Dublin active in community video and television. Resources potentially available to a station include equipment, studios, training resources and expertise.

But it is important to acknowledge at the outset that a 'Community Television Station' cannot be conceived as a single building, location or even organisation. In keeping with its ethos, and bearing in mind the rational utilisation of existing resource, it will comprise a

consortium of existing initiatives, resources and centres, and community interests, cooperating together to create a service for all of Dublin.

3) The Legislation

The Broadcasting Bill for the first time allows for the granting for Community Broadcaster licences. The IRTC has now been transformed into the Broadcasting Commission of Ireland. It is very likely that sooner rather than later applications will be submitted for a license communication television license in Dublin. It is vital that such application(s) should genuinely represent communities in Dublin, especially marginalised communities and those currently without a significant voice in mainstream media.

4) The Dublin City Development Board

The Board offers an excellent vehicle that can bring together the communities of Dublin, and link the idea of community media and television into a broader strategy for the City. It is a very timely development, that should be fully utilised by communities in creating genuine community media in Dublin.

Building a Strategy

Given this baseline, the Working Group on Community Television proposes the following in terms of building an ambitious but realistic strategy:

1) Enhance the Representation of the Working Group

The Working Group should be extended to become the nucleus of a Dublin Community Television promotion group. It needs especially deeper community representation. We must consider the best means and structures to adopt.

2) Identify Needs and Explore Opportunities

The needs of communities in terms of community television, and what such a resource could offer a community, requires research on two sides. The Communities themselves will have ideas, based for instance on radio and video experience, of what could be achieved. At the same time, a review of community television activities around the world, and their experiences, would also offer a menu of possibilities and opportunities.

3) Identify Existing Media Resources

A survey is required of the existing media resources available to a potential Dublin Community Television Station. This would include not alone existing media groups, but also colleges, universities, arts centres and others. It would cover all that is required to launch and run a community media station, conceived as a coordinated effort building on existing resources.

4) Identify Requirements

After considering needs and potential, and existing media resources, it would be essential to identify what additional resources and activities would be required to launch and run a minimal (initially) community television service. This would assess the requirements of providing affordable access to communities and individuals to make programmes, especially disadvantaged communities; of the station itself producing content; as well as of

broadcasting existing content from within the community and outside. External content would be assessed in terms of the cost of access and the nature of material available from public, non-profit and community sources.

5) Identify Sources of Support

Community television requires support. This can be of many kinds and indeed should come from a diversity of sources within and outside the community. This would research and outline the potential areas of financial and other support, including: core funding mechanisms devised in other countries (e.g. license fee, local government.); grant and once off donors; community sources; self fund-raising; suitable advertising; and voluntary activities. Other forms of support might be in terms of endorsement from publicly known individuals.

6) Undertake a Feasibility Study

Building on all the above, a feasibility study would be undertaken, to consider the level and nature of resources and support required and available; the costs associated initially with a launch and then ongoing; and the circumstances in which sustainability will be achieved.

7) Develop A strategy

With a Feasibility Study pointing the way, a strategy for launch and running the station would be developed.

Next Steps

The following are the next steps:

- **Extend the composition of the Working Group** as outlined above;
- **Write to the Broadcasting Commission of Ireland**, indicating an intention to apply for a Community License, and beginning negotiations to determine requirements;
- **Draw up Terms of Reference**, including a budget, to undertake the work above, culminating with the Feasibility Study and Strategy.
- **Obtain the necessary resources** to undertake the work. The Working Group will clarify the resources are available from within its own membership. A proposal will then be put together for the additional funding required and submitted to the Dublin City Development Board.

Appendix No 22 CMF action Plan Summary

TBA

Appendix No 23 Feasibility Study List of Interviewees

From Feasibility Study 2001 - Annex 1 Interviews Completed.

The methodology for this report was straightforward. It relied primarily on a large number of face to face interviews and analysis of documents.

Those interviewed individually were:

Amnesty Ireland: Brian Dooley
Arts Squad, Finglas: Mary McDermot

Association of Refugees and Asylum Seekers: Sebit Iwa

Ballymun Media Coop: Ollie McGlinchey
Broadcasting Commission of Ireland: Michael O'Keefe, Margaret Tumulty
Cómhlámh: Colm of Cuanacháin
Community Action Network CAN Monica Manning

Community Media Network: Margaret Gillan, Bill McConnell
Community Response: Robbie Byrnes
CONCERN: Paddy McGuinness
Creative Activity for Everyone, CAFE: Wes Wilkie
Dublin Adult Literacy Centre DALC: Mary Maher
Dublin City Council, North East Community Area. Paul Moloney, Ronan Rogers
Dublin City Council: Deirdre Ni Raghallaigh

Dublin City Development Board: Peter Finnegan
Dublin City University, School of Communication: Farrell Corcoran
Dublin Institute of Technology, Media Production Centre: Gráinne Rourke
Dublin Institute of Technology: Aungier Street. School of Media, Brian O'Neill, Edward Brennan
Feasta: Emer Ó Siochrú,
Firestation: Tony Sheehan.
ICON Inner City Organisations Network Seanie Lamb
ICRG Inner City Renewal Group: Tom Redmond
Irish Refugee Council: John Daly
Lourdes Youth and Community Services: Valerie Bow, Helena McNeill, Damien Keoghan
Meitheal. Aideen Ni Cléirigh
National College of Art and Design, Thomas Street, School of Media Studies: Kevin Atherton
NEAR FM and North East Dublin Community Media Centre: Ciaran Murray
Office of the Director of Telecommunication Regulation: High Tuckey, Rory Hinchy, Carmel McLaughlin
Pavee Point: Caoimhe McCabe, Patrick Neville, Catherine Mannion
Sustainable Ireland: Davie Philip

A group meeting was held in Ballymun, facilitated Ollie McGlinchey and Margaret Gillan, attended by:

Ballymun CAP: Suzanne Keily
Welfare Rights Centre: Áine Rooney and Rosie Doherty
AXIS Centre: Linda Hegarty
Tógáil: Winnie Ryan
Computeach: Anne Crowley

Appendix No 24 – 1st meeting of the DCTV ISG and list of members

1ST Meeting of the DCTV Interim Steering Committee and Subsequent Meeting of the “Institutional Group”

Minutes Meeting 14th June / 19th of June Television

Dublin City Community

Attended by:

Margaret Gillan	Community Media Network
Seán Ó Siochrú	Community Media Network
Bill McConnell	Community Media Network
Jack Byrne op, Coolock	NEAR FM-Community Media Co-
Ciaran Murray op, Coolock	NEAR FM-Community Media Co-
Val Farrelly op, Coolock	NEAR FM-Community Media Co-
Gavin Byrne op, Coolock	NEAR FM-Community Media Co-
Ollie McGlinchey Communications	Axis Centre-Ballymun
Tom Redmond Community Forum Chair	Inner City Renewal Group (ICRG)/
Pirooz Daneshmandi Residents Association	Rathdown Road and District
Sue Esterson (DALC)	Dublin Adult Literary Centre
Ronan Rogers	Dublin City Council
Kelly O’Sullivan	Dublin City Development Board
 <i>Apologies:</i>	
Cormac Leonard	Irish Deaf Society
Valerie Bowe Services	Lourdes Youth and Community
Brian Dooley	Amnesty Ireland
Caoimhe McCabe	Pavee Point
Davy Philips	Sustainable Ireland
Pat Grant	Gingerbread/CMN
 Niamh Randall	 Merchants Quay Ireland

(It was also noted that a number of others could not attend the meeting but did express strong interest. These will be contacted to see if they are ready to join the group.)

1. Recommendations / Points for Report - Points emerging from discussion, to be acted upon:

There was general agreement that strong outreach and support into the community is going to be essential for attracting interest in making content. Seán agreed to amend the report to include perhaps two people who would work with communities to produce programmes, record events etc.

2. Formation of Interim Steering Committee

The organisations represented who agreed to be on the interim steering group include:

1. Community Media Network
2. Community Media Centre (NEAR FM)
3. Ballymun Communications
4. Dublin Adult Literacy Centre
5. Lourdes Youth and Community Services
6. Rathdown Road and District Residents Association
7. Dublin City Council (Central Area)
8. Dublin City Development Board
9. Inner City Renewal Group

Function of the Interim Steering Committee is to take the initiative on to the next stage (including applying for a license). This is broadly in line with the final section of the report - *Building Community through Television; A Plan for Dublin Community Television, NEXUS Research, 2002*. It was agreed that funding would be required for co-ordination of our efforts during the summer and after. All members will look into this, CMN and DCDB will consider their context (See Institutional Group).

Another task of the committee is to make final recommendations to the report, then publish and launch the report in the autumn, and also to arrange a meeting in October. It was agreed that October would be a good time to aim for to complete the initial stage of work for the next phase. The meeting would be used to present the idea of community television to other groups in Ireland, and also more widely to groups in Dublin. The meeting could include a workshop for those moving forward on the plans to date; (North East City Community media Centre is planning to have a training expert, Jesikah Maria Ross, over in late September. Another expert, Rika Welch, who ran a community television channel for a long time, might also be willing to come.) Funders of the event might include the BCI.

3. Activities of Interim Steering Committee

The members of the Committee will be divided into two groups. 1) **An Institutional Group** and 2) **a Content Group**. The rationale is that members should be active in an area of direct concern to their organisation.

3.1 The Institutional Group:

This comprises media organisations and those centrally concerned with promoting community television. It may break into smaller groups, or allocate different tasks among its members.

The Institutional Group met on Wed 19th of June. The meeting was attended by:

Margaret Gillan	Community Media Network
Seán Ó Siochrú	Community Media Network
Bill McConnell	Community Media Network
Val Farrelly	NEAR FM-Community Media Co-op,
Coolock	
Gavin Byrne	Community Media Co-op, Coolock
Ollie McGlinchey	Axis Centre-Ballymun
Communications	
Kelly O'Sullivan	Dublin City Development Board
Apologies:	
Jack Byrne	NEAR fm
Nominee (Observer)	BCI

The group agreed that the following functions and/or tasks need to be addressed immediately; each member of the group will be active on at least one of the groups:

- **Report**
Refine the current report up to its published form - Sean O Siochrú
- **Technology & Costing**
Ollie McGlinchey, Gavin Byrne, Val Farrelly and Bill McConnell agreed to form the *Technology & Costing Group*
- **Structure (Membership) & Licensing**

Jack Byrne, Margaret Gillan and Sean O Síochrú agreed to work towards getting a license and will form the *Structure (Membership) & Licensing Group*

- **Core-Channel Funding (Short, Medium and Longterm)**
Margaret Gillan, Kelly O'Sullivan, Bill McConnell and Sean O Síochrú agreed to form the group looking at core funding (and short term project funding)
- Draw up **Terms Of Reference For A Co-ordinator** to work with the group towards developing a TV Channel
Ollie McGlinchey will draw up initial ToR with support from both Margaret Gillan and Kelly O'Sullivan
- **Premises**
Sean O'Siochrú, Margaret Gillan, Bill McConnell and Kelly O'Sullivan will look into current options re premises
- **Outreach / Development** - Over the next two weeks group members (listed above) will outreach to assigned organisations to develop the content groups. (See Content Groups). In the medium-term the whole question of outreach and development will be addressed in conjunction with the role of the Co-ordinator.
- Other matters as agreed

3.2 The Content Group:

The content group will immediately split into subgroups, of organisations that can see the benefits of developing content in their specific domains. (See Terms of Reference)

Initial members of this group are (meeting held on the 14th June):

Dublin Adult Literacy Centre
Rathdown Road & District Residents Association,
Dublin City Council
Inner City Renewal Group

It was decided by the **Institutional Group** at the meeting on Wed 19th of June to try and engage groups that have shown an interest in the project to date. It was agreed that a member of the Institutional Group would be available for meetings of the Content Sub groups to provide context and the larger picture. The following have been identified as having shown an interest:

Content Group :	Action:
1. Adult Education ordinating role with these groups	Sue Esterson will take a co-ordinating role with these groups with support from Margaret LYCS / NALA / DALC
2. Local Governance Raghallaigh / Paul Moloney	Kelly to meet with Deirdre Ní
3. Local / Community Development Margaret & Ollie will meet	Tom Redmond with support from

- | | |
|---|--|
| | with some Area Based Partnerships and CDPs |
| 4. Irish Deaf Society
Friday 28 th of June | Sean & Kelly will meet the IDS on |
| 5. Pavee Point / Travellers
McCabe / Pavee Point. | Margaret will contact Caoimhe |
| 6. Sustainable Ireland
and Emer O'Siochru | Sean to contact both Davy Phillips |
| 7. Merchants Quay Ireland / Community Response
(Niamh Randall & Robbie) | Kelly and Bill to meet with groups |
| 8. Immigration / Refugees / Comhlámh
Colm Ó Cuanachain | Sean will meet Doras / Comlamh, |
| 9. Education & Training Group
Miriam Judge DCU | Sean to meet with Paul O'Brien and |
| 10. REHAB / NTDI
of Rehab | Kelly will meet with Katherine Burke |
| 11. Gay / Lesbian Groups
HIV Strategies] | Sean to talk with groups in Nexus [|
| 12. Women's Group | Gavin to meet with P.A.R.C. |
| 13. Age & Opportunity | Sean will meet with group |

Each organisation will decide how best to contribute, possibly by forming a sub-group of communities of interest, and following the Terms of Reference of Content Sub-group (See Attached).

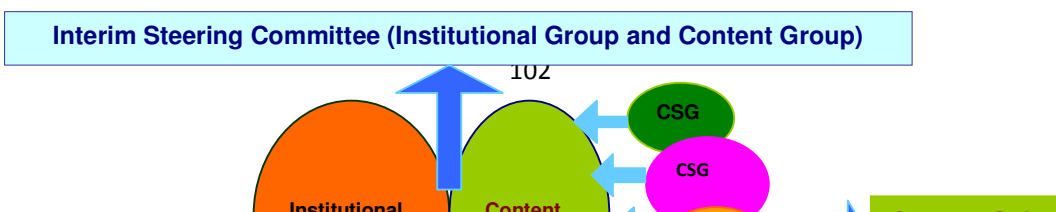
4. Secretariat

Community Media Network offered to take the role of 'Secretariat' for the initiative during this interim phase. This would offer an address, a phone number, office facilities, a Web presence etc. The group has agreed to this interim arrangement.

5. Working Structure of Interim Steering Committee

Each content working-group, it is envisaged, would have some participation, perhaps one member in the overall content group.

Briefly, the Structure of the Group will comprise of:



Terms of Reference for Content Sub-Groups (Generic)

The following are draft generic terms of reference for each of the content sub-groups. These will be amended by these groups as they see fit.

The aim of each group is to provide a succinct and credible statement of value of the content (programmes) produced in this theme, and how it can realistically be produced or sourced externally. In the first case, it is probably necessary for the group to extend its membership somewhat, to include others active in the same thematic area.

A: The Theme of Programmes and Target Groups

- The theme and nature of the programmes to be produced
- Who the organisation's target groups are?

B: Benefits to the Organisation and Communities of Dublin City

- What are the benefits to the organisation in producing / being involved in / utilising Community TV?
- What are the potential benefits to the communities of Dublin City?

C: The Partnership that will produce it

- What types of organisations might be interested in getting involved?
- What types of organisations could be potential partners and/or potentially good partners?

D: Production and Sourcing

- How will the programmes be produced and/or sourced?
- (Here, the various options from using professionals through production by the group themselves; to sourcing material from around Dublin or outside Ireland, will be outlined.)

E: The Volume and Scheduling of Programmes

- How many hours or programmes can realistically be produced and/or sourced, perhaps in different scenarios? When would they ideally be scheduled for transmission?

F: Funding and Requirements

- How would the programmes be funded?
- What requirements would need to be supplied by the Channel (equipment, studios etc.)

G: A Realistic Timeline

- Given the various factors involved, when might be realistic to get programmes incrementally on stream and ready to broadcast?

H: *Any Other Information That Your Organisation Feels Is Important To Note At This Time?*

Appendix No 25 Action around the Forum on Broadcasting

The issues:

1. The Forum was established to review the issues in media and to make recommendations to the Minister on foot of the Broadcasting Act 2001. The remit did not include community media but focussed on the 'great new digital revolution' and how the spectrum was to be managed, regulated, and essentially 'divided' up. The CMF wrote asking the Forum to include community television since it had been now recognised within the legislation.
2. I heard on the news as I was driving into work that the Forum on Broadcasting was holding its public hearing in the Royal Hospital to which only those who had made submissions were invited. We had made a submission from the Community Media Forum but there had been no invite. When I got to work, my co-worker, Bill McConnell had also heard the news. I had a meeting which could not be put off, but Bill said he would check and we drew up a quick list of people to contact to see how other were responding. By lunchtime we knew that the community radio forum and stations were "boycotting it" and other groups we contacted were not in a position to respond on that day.
3. Unable to tolerate what we saw as blatant exclusion Bill and I discussed the options. We left the office and went to the Royal Hospital to gate-crash. We explained to the people on the desk that we had received no invitation despite having made a submission. They obviously were embarrassed by their mistake and they let us in; without being rude I didn't hide the fact that there was a sense of grievance about this. We arrived mid-way through the last session and in time for the plenary. When the opportunity arose as Maurice McConnell asked for contributions from the floor I raised my hand and was given the microphone. I asked why we had not been invited since we had made a submission; how could the Forum ignore the existence of the community media sector when community radio had been broadcasting for six years under license and community television was specifically legislated for under the act. My message was that they could not report to the Minister on the emerging broadcasting landscape if they excluded community media which was very much there. I used my credentials as a sitting member of the Dublin City development Board and a representative of the Community Media Forum who had made the submission. Bill followed with the direct and blunt question: "why were we not invited?" This was an embarrassing moment for the Forum, we were promised from the podium that the issue would be addressed and we would be invited to meet the Forum members. Not bad for a days work!
4. I subsequently drew up a draft submission which I asked CMF members to contribute to, as was usual it was Seán Ó Siochrú who gave it the most attention and

commented on the text. This was submitted; the Forum Secretary contacted us to make a date for a hearing.

5. The response to this was very mixed within CM groupings; we had achieved something but clearly there were conversations going on in the background because some time just before the hearing Seán produced a second submission. The community radio station NEAR Fm had contacted Seán to say that the submission had not covered the ground they felt was necessary. I was signed up to this document but was not included in any discussion around it. While I had no problems with there being either criticisms of the first submission or a perceived need for a second, I found the position in which I had been placed very difficult.
6. We asked Jack Byrne from Near FM to join the delegation. Jack was a founder member of the Community Media Forum, a long-time community radio activist and his presence would add weight to the delegation.
7. Bill and I had initiated the proceedings and were preparing for the hearing when we were informed that Jack could not go and that another NEARfm delegate would join the delegation in his place.
8. While I was leading the delegation I found to my surprise that I was constantly interrupted by the NEARFM delegate throughout the hearing. Together with the appearance of the second submission this was the start of an ongoing pattern of undermining I was to experience.

Included below are the submissions and the subsequent Recommendation of the Forum to the Minister.

Submission to the Forum on Broadcasting

From:

Community Media Network (CMN)

Dublin City Community Media Forum (DCMF)

and

Dublin Community TV Channel (DCTV)

10th July 2002

The Contribution of Community Media

Summary

In the context of the current debates on the future of media, and especially of the public service role, community media (and specifically television) can contribute the following:

- 1) They can enhance the **diversity of content**, through broadcasting new, locally relevant, productions and sourcing content otherwise not available on mainstream media.
- 2) They increase **plurality of sources and ownership** by adding a new and distinct voice, and uncompromised structures of community ownership.
- 3) They enhance **media understanding and critical viewing skills** (demystification), through showing local and recognisable content, and through training and participation in production.
- 4) They promote **political transparency and public debate**, through programmes and participation in local governance activities.
- 5) They **enhance cultural diversity and integration**, through both representing our real community diversity on television and through positive programme content.

Community television is now very much in the realms of the feasible, thanks to the legislation and the falling cost of equipment. The main obstacles include:

- a general failure to recognise the potential - understandable, since it is an innovative notion in Ireland. Success elsewhere is undoubted, and vast experience exists worldwide that we can draw on. A breakthrough here is with the Dublin City Development Board.
- the difficulty of identifying the appropriate modalities for sourcing capital and ongoing finance. The case is quite clear from our Feasibility Study. The difficulty is that new concepts, no matter how worthy, must find a funding slot amongst the many competing traditional activities.

We believe the New Forum on Broadcasting can ease these problems, by giving recognition to community media within its report to the Minister, and proposing that the relevant public actors get together to design the appropriate supporting and funding mechanisms.

Introduction

This submission responds to the meeting held on 1st July 2002 between the New Forum on Broadcasting and members of Community Media Network, Dublin City Community Media Forum, and Dublin Community TV Channel (DCTV). This incorporates our formal submission to the Forum.

We are concerned about the need for political recognition of the Community Broadcasting sector and its inclusion in any official picture of broadcasting in Ireland. Here we hope to clarify the place of community media in the broadcasting environment and the benefits to the community and the broadcasting sectors. Community TV was only recently legislated for, under the Broadcasting Act 2001, Sections 39 and 40. Our focus is on the current initiatives for a community TV channel in Dublin City under the auspices of the Dublin City Development Board. This is the first of its kind in the country and it is important that in this very early stage this initiative is afforded the support it needs.

We try to indicate how the Forum could encompass the Community Broadcasting Sector within its report and support the new community TV initiative. Further information on community media, in particular community TV, is annexed and references supplied.

We thank the Forum Panel for their immediate response to the issue raised at the Public Session, their generosity with time, and the welcome extended to the groups concerned.

Community Media in the Broadcasting Landscape.

With reference to *“the objective of fostering an environment that encourages the establishment and maintenance of high quality Irish radio and television services;”* and,

“are there distinct roles for public and commercial/independent broadcasting services in Ireland in the light of the increasing range of programme services available and likely to become available in the future to Irish viewers and listeners, via terrestrial, cable/MMDS and satellite broadcasting platforms and the Internet;”

Africa, Latin America, Asia, Australia, the USA, - all boast a wide range of community media but, in Europe, Ireland stands out as an under-developed country in this area. Despite the recent and most welcome Broadcasting Act 2001- which legislated for community TV for the first time, and the success of Community Radio - broadcasting since 1994, we find that the consciousness of the part that community media can play in the cultural, political and social life of the country is dimly understood amongst the regulators, if at all.

Our understanding of community not only means a local or geographical community but also *communities of interest*. Many groups - women, islanders, Travellers, immigrants, - very often need to communicate more with each other than with their immediate geographical neighbours.

Community media are used by community and voluntary organisations, NGOs - essentially what has been called Civil Society. Seen around the world as essential to free speech, to acknowledging diversity in society, this use of media also constitutes an enfranchisement issue in terms of communication rights. Radio, video, community TV, the Internet, and many forms of print and photographic media have been used by groups to bring about change to benefit their communities; addressing social exclusion and increasing participation in

democratic processes. The added value of building identity and self esteem - nourishing healthy, sustainable communities - is well known.

The increased production and scale of media that digitalisation allows means it has a profound influence on our lives. Alongside this has come concerns about commercialisation and concentration of ownership in the media. These concerns were also voiced in submissions to the Forum and have been crystallised by the current controversy surrounding Sky, the FAI and pay-per-view of sporting events. It is worth noting Mr Murdochs much quoted statement that he would use sports as a “battering ram to control media”. Given that he has also said that it is hard to think of anywhere more conducive to business than Ireland, he clearly plans to make Irish media feel the force of this “battering ram” first.

We have put forward the argument that community media provides a democratic counterbalance to the dominance of commercial media and, given recognition of its role and capacity in this regard, can go some way towards redressing the balance back in favour of people and communities (*see Annex 1 “Where community TV fits in”*).

In response to the BCI’s recent paper *Regulating for Pluralism and Diversity*, The Advisory Council on Community Media to the City Community Forum also pointed out that:

“if community television were provided with the kinds of support and funding they receive in other cities in many parts of the world, then regulation of the commercial sector could be somewhat lighter, since diversity and plurality are reinforced through the existence of a strong community sector. We therefore feel that the policy on diversity and pluralism in the media must in the end take into consideration all sectors, and outline how the contribution as appropriate to each can be maximised.”
(*see Annex 3*)

Where community media fit in

The 1996 ***IRTC Policy Document on Community Radio*** identified

“...Community Broadcasters as a distinct strand in Irish broadcasting, the other two strands being Independent /Commercial broadcasters and Public Broadcasters”.

We think this model makes sense, and we locate the differences between these sectors in their relationship to people and how they parallel the broad sectors in which they reside:–

- The private sector, and commercial media as part of it, regard people essentially as markets and consumers;
- Government, and state media, regard people as citizens, with certain obligations and rights in terms of media diversity and education, but, in essence, as passive media recipients;
- Organised civil society treats people as actors and as participants, with the need to express themselves creatively, to develop individual and collective identities, and to renew and sustain cultural integrity and uniqueness.

While community media has its base in a social, participative and democratic remit, it is also about entertaining, educating, and satisfying the needs of its community in a variety of ways, and unless it serves this function, it has no reason to exist. There is a huge wealth of creative effort that people often direct towards their own community. This cultural richness can find its first outlet in community media. While these media really only exist to serve their own community, very often the content it produces is relevant to the wider community. It can be a springboard for people to access mainstream media and in turn produce content that is useful to public service and independent media which they can’t produce themselves.

Our point here is that there are many ways in which media can work at a local and global level. If we cannot see that broadcasting and media are not simply entities in themselves, but a voice for the sectors in which they reside, then we miss a large part of their potential. If a sector is excluded from consideration, as community media have been, then we allow dominance to others and create an imbalance. To ignore the potential of the interaction between the sectors denies a source of enrichment to each.

In other countries community media are understood to bring benefits to the broadcasting sector as well as to the communities they serve, this understanding is missing in the broadcasting environment in Ireland. This lack persists despite the history of community radio and the many initiatives in community video - including the recent community video series "Place" screened on TG4.

The White Paper on *"Supporting Voluntary Activity"*, the work of the *Task Force on the Integration of Local Government and Local Development Systems*, and the *Equality Legislation* all underline the government's commitment to the involvement of consumers and service users in policy and programme development and implementation; ensuring equality of access and opportunity; and, addressing disadvantage. They also bear witness to the importance of the community and voluntary sector in the life of the country. Community radio and TV can contribute significantly to this effort.

We had expected the Forum would play a part in enhancing public awareness of the role of community media, but the lack of involvement of the Community Sector from an early stage meant that these issues were not addressed. Maybe the Forum can still be effective in this regard by making appropriate recommendations in its report.

Principles of CTV – empowerment, participation and diversity.

With reference to: *"the need to ensure plurality of provision and diversity of choice;"*

and

"are there distinct roles for public and commercial/independent broadcasters in the provision of services at (a) national, (b) regional, (c) local levels;"

Community media are in themselves diverse and pluralist, making them hard to pin down. Yet some key defining features describe the essence of a community media channel:

- it must be democratic in ownership and management;
- It must, in all its activities (including production, management and transmission), encourage direct and equal participation from all members of its community;
- It must be transparent and accountable to the community in all its activities and operations;
- Its sole aim must be to serve that community, meaning also that it must be not-for-profit.

The Report *“Building Community Through Television: A plan for Dublin Community Television”* identifies three concepts at the core of the working of a community television station:

“Empowerment of communities in achieving social, economic and cultural objectives;

Participation, in every aspect of the channel, as well as in the governance and development of the city;

Diversity, both by celebrating the diversity of communities and by extending the range of programmes.”

These defining features and core concepts distinguish community broadcasting from Public service and Independent/Commercial Strands.

Of course while we can use words such as diversity and pluralism, what exactly do we mean? In terms of a community media channel, its diversity is evident in the range of groups that participate in it, from its organisational structures through to the content it produces. Community media, with the inclusion of communities of interest, makes for even greater possibilities. A good and current example of this is in the range of groupings that have become involved in the Dublin City Community TV Channel initiative and form the basis for the content producer sub groups of the Interim Steering Group. These include:

14. **Adult Education including** LYCS / NALA / DALC
15. **Local Governance** NEIC
16. **Local / Community Development** - Area Based Partnerships, ICON, ICRG and GDPs
17. **Irish Deaf Society**
18. **Pavee Point / Travellers** Movement.
19. **Sustainable Ireland and Feasta**
20. **Merchants Quay Ireland / Community Response**
21. **Immigration / Refugees / Comhlámh**
22. **Education & Training Group** – DIT, DCU, NCAD
23. **REHAB / NTDI**
24. **Gay / Lesbian Groups** - HIV Strategies, GLEN
25. **Women’s Groups**

These groupings are relatively fluid right now, but they are the basis for the formation of clusters, or partnerships, that can produce the sorts of structures necessary to draw in funding as well as bringing their own resources to projects.

A workshop attended by many of these community organisations in Dublin last year explored the forms and structures of community media. Subsequently during the process of our Feasibility Study many of those groups identified ways that a community TV channel could help them do their work. Alongside the programme ideas - such as regular phone-in slots, talk-shows, news magazines, and programmes that focus on local issues – the groups identified the potential of a community station to provide:

- networking opportunities – improving communications between groups working in communities;
- education options not otherwise available – linked for example to adult learning; and,
- media skills, both in the training the station would provide and in understanding and critical awareness of media generally.

Many communities are now accustomed to the use of the arts, and other creative and innovative ways of addressing issues, though film festivals, photographic and art exhibitions, research publications etc,. Our Feasibility Study asserts that:

Community Television can be seen as an important next step in developing this capacity of communities to connect with one another and to voice alternative perspectives on issues that concern them.”

Current initiatives: Community Media in the Dublin CDB Strategy

With reference to:

the current legislative framework, Irish and EU, relating to the provision and maintenance, including the basis of funding, of broadcasting services (but excluding matters that are the statutory responsibility of the Office of the Director of Telecommunications Regulation);

On the EU level, the European Parliament stated in June 1995 that it:

advocates measures to support citizens’ broadcasting and open channels in order to afford citizens direct access to and participation in the audiovisual media, thereby strengthening the democratic process at local and regional level given the growing importance of media in public information

However there has been little result from this so far.

On the national level, while the Broadcasting Act 2001 was a big step forward, the lack of clear funding mechanisms to facilitate community media is still a problem.

On a local level, the first substantial recognition for community TV in Ireland has been given by the newly established Dublin City Development Board’s 10 year Strategic Plan – **“Dublin 2002 – 2012 - a city of possibilities”** (see Annex 5). The CDB’s were instituted in 2000 under the National Development Plan to develop:

“a “vision” meaning a broad sense of direction, a view of where the county or city is going, what it wants to achieve, what its problems and challenges are, and crucially how they are to be addressed;

a “shared” vision meaning that this view must be a common one – worked out among the CDB members, the interests they represent, and other stakeholders – so that it becomes an agreed framework within which all parties can work and move forward together.

(Interdepartmental Task Force on the integration of Local Government and Local Development Systems, May 2000)

In this spirit the community media sector engaged with the Dublin City Development Process, becoming active members of the City Community Forum.

In June 2001 the Advisory Group on Community Media to the City Community Forum recommended the establishment of the **Dublin City Community Media Forum** after conducting a series of exploratory meetings and an open workshop for community organisations in the City. This group commenced work to promote community media within the CDB process and established working groups in community TV, community radio, print and photography, and community use of the Internet.

It was through this process that the Community TV Working Group proposed the Feasibility Study for a community TV Channel for Dublin City. Backed by the City Community Forum and funded by **dublin.ie**, the Consultant team has now reported to the DCD Board, the report has also been sent to all members of the Forum Panel before the meeting on July 1st.

This recognition of community media within the DCDB process, including a stand-alone strategic objective in the Strategic Plan:

Strategic Objective 3.3 : Develop and resource an independent not-for-profit Community TV Channel.

is really the first 'put money where the mouth is' recognition for community TV.

CTV Plan: Funding and institutional framework

Community TV and Community Radio have to be seen as an entirely distinct strand of broadcasting to Public Service or Independent/commercial broadcasting. As demonstrated above, the organisational structures and mode of content production operate in an entirely different way. We noted the Forum Members concern about the costings in our report and while we consider costings to be an item that will be constantly under review, a number of factors are basic to these proposals.

We have the considerable advantage of the vast amount of experience of community TV stations worldwide and the benefit of their hindsight. In our Feasibility Study process, the operations and running costs of various community TV channels abroad were looked at carefully - MNN, Chicago Access Network, and Grand Rapid community TV stations provided clear indicators of the costs involved. These stations are relatively well-funded, certainly as compared to the possibilities available in Ireland in the foreseeable future. The following examples illustrate the variety of sources in the US, and the order of magnitude of revenues.

Chicago Access Network TV's total 2000 income of \$2.75 million breaks down as follows:

Revenues 2000:	US\$ ('000)	Percentage
Cable Company Franchise payment:	1,487	76.4%
Fees & rentals	169	8.7%

Grants, contributions	52	2.7%
Interest income	225	11.5%
Miscellaneous	<u>14</u>	<u>0.7%</u>
Total Revenues:	1,947	100%

Its heavy reliance on the income it received from the cable franchise is not unusual.

Grand Rapids Cable Access Centre has a more balanced income:

Revenues: 1995	US\$ ('000)	Percentage
Cable Company Franchise payment:	374	43.4%
Rentals & sales	79	9.2%
Grants, contributions	384	44.6%
Investment income	6	0.7%
Membership fees	4	0.5%
Miscellaneous	<u>14</u>	<u>1.6%</u>
Total Revenues:	861	100%

Most of the grants and contributions here were once-off donations to the building fund for their impressive centre, occupying an old library building.

Cambridge Community Television also receives significantly higher non-franchise grants:

Revenues 2000:	US\$ ('000)	Percentage
Cable Company Franchise payment:	428	54.4%
Fees & rentals	32	4.0%
Membership	16	2.0%
Grants, contributions	273	34.6%
Interest income	24	3.0%
Miscellaneous	<u>15</u>	<u>1.9%</u>
Total Revenues:	788	100%

These three are broadly representative of access stations in the US. In general, all rely heavily on the income from their franchises. Significant income is also generated from grants and contributions (including from affiliate members), though these tend to be unique and must be reapplied for, consuming considerable management time. Fees on rentals can be appreciable, at least in relation to the cost of providing that equipment, but nevertheless remain a small overall contribution. (for **Lessons from International Experience** see Annex 2)

The proposed costs within the Feasibility Study run to €790,000, relating most to the costs involved in Cambridge and Grand Rapids.

Our plan for community TV proposes an institutional framework that links into resources in the community and organises production by means of various partnerships. These partnerships could involve several community groups supported by statutory bodies or government departments, together producing regular programmes on topics of interest, such as global development and aid, immigration, drugs in the community, or a wide range of programme content. The partner groups themselves can source funding for programme production and project costs. The list of interest groups cited above are only an indication of the richness that this approach can bring to the community TV station, not alone in terms of programme content, but in the development of interactivity between the organisations and the work they are enabled to do through the community TV station.

The costs in the Feasibility study are based on a presupposition that all production and importing costs are taken out, leaving training and staffing as the main costs. In this Study only recurring costs are detailed, and initial costs also exclude the cost of a building as this will be provided under the partnerships, a building has already been identified for the Dublin community TV channel within the North East Inner City.

In our investigations into the possibilities for cable-carriers, we found NTL very supportive of our endeavours and keen to be helpful. There would of course, be costs incurred in linking in and particularly in the case of a live linkage, there are also issues involved in sharing channels and suitability. These have been considered in the light of current negotiations within the plan, and are still under discussion. Discussions with RTE and any other sectoral interest group, will of course be possible once the process of application for a licence has begun. Given RTE's recent difficulties, it may be more productive to await a more settled period before we approach any discussions.

The Recognition Deficit

Community Media Network along with others in the sector have made many representations about community media and our contributions to the process of the recent Act brought about five amendments to Sections 39 and 40. As part of the Dublin City Community Media Forum we responded to the BCI's paper on Plurality and Diversity (*see Annex 3*), again concerned that community media - despite its clear contribution to plurality and diversity – had been overlooked. While this may not be seen by the authors as a deliberate exclusion and they felt that community media was included in the BCI's (IRTC's) Policy Document, nevertheless the fact is that community media slipped right out of sight in this important document.

This oversight also denies the spirit of the Broadcasting Act 2001, the reality of community media in the country, and underlines the gap in understanding that exists on an institutional level of the role and effectiveness of community media in Irish broadcasting. While the recognition within the Dublin City Strategic Plan is a breakthrough, it is mainly due to this lack of political recognition that community media remains underfunded and disadvantaged.

We feel the Broadcasting Act, while it may not be the appropriate context to institute funding arrangements, could have created the means for the BCI to be responsible for the allocation of subsidy in this sector.

The various arts authorities, including the Dublin City Council Arts Department, the Arts Council, the Department of Arts, Culture, Heritage and the Islands have also traditionally ignored needs here. Community media found itself unrecognised either as a cultural tool by the Arts establishment or as an integral part of community development by the Department of Social, Community and Family Affairs. At the same time community radio and various community video initiatives were busy doing their bit to fulfill both these important functions for the community and voluntary sector.

This continuing failure to include community media within the remit of government fora, papers, or departments is no longer acceptable. All the statements and legislation on an EU, national, and now regional level, over the past decade make a clear case in themselves. We feel we should not have to make this case anymore, and that we should be now looking at definite actors and actions to implement these aspirations. We will make substantial efforts to support such initiatives and are available to discuss community media activity and our action plans.

How this Forum can help

We ask the New Forum on Broadcasting to help enhance the public understanding of the role of community media, and how it fits into the Broadcasting arena by giving recognition within your report to the Minister.

We also hope that, given the potential of the model promoted by the BCI, the Forum will recommend that the relationships between these three strands of broadcasting be explored by getting the relevant public actors together to design the appropriate supporting and funding mechanisms.

Signed: _____

Margaret Gillan
For the Community Media Forum
Dublin City Development Board Member

ANNEXED DOCUMENTS

ANNEX 1 *“Where Community Television fits in”* – Paper presented to IRTC Conference 2000

ANNEX 2 *“Lessons From International Experience”* – First Report of the Feasibility Study for a community TV channel for Dublin City

ANNEX 3 **Advisory Council on Community Media - Response to Policy Paper**
“Regulating for Pluralism and Diversity in Broadcasting: The Way Forward”

ANNEX 4 References to community media in the DCDB Strategic Plan *“Dublin 2002 – 2012 – a city of possibilities”*



Community Media Network
34 North Frederick Street,
Dublin1.
Tel: +353 1 878 3344;
FAX: +353 1 878 3206
e-mail: cmn@cmn.ie
website: www.cmn.ie

To: Mr Dermot Ahern, TD.
Minister for Communications,
Marine and Natural Resources.

Supplementary Submission re. The Forum on Broadcasting

30th September 2002

Dear Minister,

We appreciate this further opportunity to make a submission commenting on the Forum on Broadcasting.

1. Significant progress with the Forum report

The Forum members listened attentively to the ideas and positions put to them by Community Media Network, and responded very positively. The following are the main points:

The Forum believes that community broadcasting is now a valued elements of broadcasting and should be fostered. Community broadcasting has a character distinct from both public service and commercial broadcasting and should be recognised as a third strand in Irish broadcasting by the Dept. of Communications, Marine and Natural Resources and the Broadcasting Authority of Ireland” (page 42)

The report also recognises the “cultural dimension” of Community Broadcasting, and concludes with the following recommendation:

31. The promotion of community broadcasting should be a stated policy objective of both the Department of Communications, Marine and natural resources and, pending establishment of the BAI, the BCI.

The value of community radio is now recognised - although its potential is by no means fully realised and further encouragement must be forthcoming. But the new and exciting frontier now is in Community Television.

2. Community Television

Community Television has been enabled by the Broadcasting Act 2001, which gives it distinct recognition for the first time. Most valuably, it also offers a 'must-carry' obligation on cable and MMDS operators. This goes a long way towards solving the transmission side of things.

Almost as significant, however, is the endorsement in the recently published *Dublin City Development Board Strategy 2002-2012*, with the words:

We need to ensure that Dublin City has its own vibrant, independent and sustainable Community Media sector... as an important democratic counter balance to the growth of commercial media and the influence of media empires...

A strategic objective is to

develop and resource an independent not-for-profit Community TV Channel...

The report recognises the multi-faceted potential contribution of a properly resourced community television.

We believe that Ireland could, with the right vision and appropriate strategy, develop a network of community television stations throughout the country. The production of television is not at all as expensive as it was in the past, and our investigation of experience elsewhere (see reference below) provides strong evidence that community television can be exciting and innovative - not just educational and empowering, but entertaining and challenging.

We have already completed a detailed feasibility study for Dublin Community Television Channel, and are further developing the idea of a Foundation to fund the production of quality programmes by and with communities and people. This introduced the key additional point we would like you to consider:

A supportive regulatory environment, and even the inclusion of Community Television within a strategic context, is insufficient in itself. Community television, unlike commercial television, can offer no future 'Pot of Gold' to the prospective investor that would attract financial support to develop and launch the concept. Furthermore, although there are opportunities to attract sponsorship and other resources, experience elsewhere (see report below) is unanimous in the need for an ongoing source of core funding. Although it is important that community television secure a mixture of funding sources, core funding is critical to provide stability.

We believe that if the aspirations in the Forum Report and elsewhere are to be realised, the Minister should consider the following, in relation to Dublin Community Television:

3. Initial Seed Funding

Initial seed funding of approximately €250,000 is required to bring the concept to the point of going for a license from the BCI. Our target is to achieve that within a period of about 18

months. We are not seeking all of this from the Minister. The BCI has already informally indicated it is willing to support our activities. Dublin City Council may also consider support, though not as the sole funder (since this is and, must be seen to be, as a community driven effort). Furthermore, over twenty community organisations so far have pledged their support to this, and sit on the interim Steering Committee. Several other statutory bodies are also keenly interested. It is therefore as one supporter, alongside others, that we are seeking funding from the Minister's Department. Indeed it is not simply the funding that would be valuable, but acknowledgement that the concept is at least worthy of further development. Thus, the endorsement of the Departments would be especially valuable to us.

4. Core Funding as part of a larger Mix

In the medium and long term, there are several means by which ongoing core funding could be realised. Experience elsewhere, in Europe, North America, New Zealand and indeed a couple of Latin American countries, suggest the following as possibilities:

- Funding through the cable operators as a percentage of their revenues (5% is the figure in the USA, but also Canada);
- Direct funding through local authorities (Netherlands, New Zealand, Sweden);
- A levy on commercial television services (Denmark, combined with below)
- A proportion of the television license fee (Germany, Denmark)

At this point, it is too early to elaborate a definitive proposal. We believe strongly that Community Television should be funded by a diversity of sources, in order to maintain its independence. These could include sponsorship or community-friendly advertising; membership fees; foundations and grants; community development organisations themselves.

However, there is a strong case for the inclusion of a very small proportion of **the television license fee for Dublin (or receiving) households alone**. Our calculations show that just a 2.4% part of the license fee (currently €2.56) would annually cover transmission costs, community training in production, self-operated studios, larger broadcast studios and the availability of the necessary equipment at affordable levels. Total annual cost will be about €790,000.

A further €3.00 on the license fee for Dublin households would yield over €900,000 for the Community Production Foundation, proposed to be set up to work on the production side

At this point, our focus is on obtaining seed funding, and indeed it may transpire that further sources of future core funding can be determined. But we thought it might be useful to

begin discussion as to which forms of core funding would be most appropriate. We will be discussing these matters with the BCI, RTE and other relevant parties in the coming months

We trust that you will take these views into consideration in deliberating how to respond to the Report on the Forum on Broadcasting. By separate letter, we will be seeking a meeting with the Minister to discuss the points above, and generally to inform him of the full and exciting potential of community television in the future of the Irish media landscape.

Yours sincerely

Sean O'Siochru

Chairperson

Margaret Gillan

Manager

References: Can be obtained at: www.activelink.org/cm/

- "Building Community Through Television: A Plan for *Dublin Community Television*." Final Report July 2002. (Community Media Forum and Dublin City Development Board)
- "A Feasibility Study and Action Plan for a *Dublin Community Television Channel*: Lessons from international experience." Final Report, December 2001 (Community Forum, Dublin City Development Board)

Recommendations of Forum on Broadcasting

Recommendation of Forum

Community broadcasting

28 The promotion of community broadcasting should be a stated policy objective of both the Department of Communications, Marine and Natural Resources and, pending the establishment of the BAI, the BCI.

Responses to Report

RTÉ point out that the Forum's recommendation that the station not become involved in local or regional broadcasting is of concern to them and runs contrary to the 2001 Broadcasting Act.

Community Media Network (CMN) ask that the Minister consider that measures be taken to foster Community television in the Dublin region and seek approximately €250,000 from the Department as Initial Seed Funding in the short term. Their longer-term requests include access to a percentage of the licence fee garnered from the Dublin region alone.

Analysis

The Broadcasting Act 2001 provides for the licensing by the BCI of three pillars of broadcasting: national, local, and community. . The Government's commitment to the concept of community broadcasting is evidenced by the provisions contained in the Broadcasting Act 2001. Under the 2001 Act the BCI has the power to licence community broadcasting services including both radio and television.

Action Proposed

- (i) Accordingly, the role of the single content regulator in the development of community broadcasting services will be considered in the context of the legislative proposals that will be brought forward in 2003.
- (ii) The Minister is supportive of the development of community broadcasting as he believes that it can help greater community participation and the fostering of a strong local and community ethos.

Appendix No 26 Lord Mayors Breakfast Attendees

Community TV Breakfast Meeting Hosted by Lord Mayor

List of Attendees - 26th of Nov 2002 - Fadó Restaurant

Organisation	Name	Surname	Position
Bank of Ireland	Kate	Bambrick	Retail Banking and
BCI	Michael	O'Keefe	CEO
BTS	Mike	Cofferon	
CMN	Margaret	Gillan	Manager
CMN	Sean	O'Siochru	Chair
Dept of Education	Niamh	Campbell	Social Inclusion Unit
Dept of Health & Children	Chris	Fitzgerald	Health Promotion Unit
Dept. Community Rural &	Micheal	O'Corcora	
DICP	David	Connolly	Manager
Dublin City Community Forum	Gina	O'Brien	Co-ordinator
Dublin City Council	Kevin	Dowling	Representing John
Dublin CDB	Eimear	Murphy	Research &
Dublin CDB	Fiona	Healy	
Dublin CDB	Kelly	O'Sullivan	Strategic Policy
Dublin CDB	Peter	Finnegan	Director
DDDA	Peter	Coyne	Chief Executive
Equality Authority	Patrick	O'Leary	
Eurotek	Kevin	Moore	CEO
Fás	Liam	Treacy	Director of Community
ICTU	Oliver	Donahue	
Irish league of Credit Unions	John	Murray	
Dublin City Council	Dermot	Lacey	Lord Mayor
Meteor	Sandra	Jackson	
NEARfm	Jack	Byrne	Chair
Northside Partnership	Odran	Reid	Communications
NTL Ireland	Anna-Maria	Barry	Public Relations
O2 Ireland	Jill	Johnston	Corporate Affairs
Province 5 TV / NTL	Kevin	McNamee	Independent
RTE	Bride	Rosney	Director of
RTE	Liam	Miller	Managing Director -
Tesco Ireland	Jack	McGowan	Head of Marketing
Tyrone Productions	Claire	Ridge	Media , Press and
Vodafone Ireland	Elaine	Hurley	
Vodafone Ireland	Joan	Keating	

Television for Dubliners Commitment Statements

Logo

Dublin City

Logo Media Forum

logo Dev Board

Declaration of Corporate Commitment to the Provision of Community Television in Dublin.

(Part A is a declaration of principled support for Community Television in the City , while Part B overleaf commitments specific support by way of resources, expertise, or facilities to the development phase of Community Television.)

A - Declaration of Commitment in principle

I commit in principle the support of our company/department/organization to the development of Community Television in Dublin and make this commitment because of

1. our corporate commitment to the economic, social and cultural development of Dublin and the communities therein
2. the advantages of building up a viable Community Television Channel in the city
3. the importance of developing an informed and connected city.

This is a commitment in principle to support the establishment and operation of a Community Television Trust under the patronage of the Lord Mayor of Dublin. I understand that I will be known and acknowledged as a “friend of television for Dubliners”

Signed _____

Position _____

Organisation/Company/Dept

Address

Tel .No

Fax

Email

Television for Dubliners

*B - Declaration of resource/expertise support to the Development Phase of
Community Television in Dublin*

Arising from our commitment in principle to the development of Community Television in Dublin, and knowing the resource needs of the development phase of this initiative we would subject to detailed discussions be prepared to quantify specific resource support through the Lord Mayors Community Television Trust to ensure that this initiative is brought to operational phase.

This is a once off commitment to be specifically quantified through discussion with the Director of Community & Enterprise and Trust Representatives acting on behalf of the Lord Mayors Trust. The commitment will be for 2003 only and will be subject to the understanding that all work on making Community Television operational in the city will be undertaken in a transparent and participative manner, in accord with best business and community development principles and practice. Any established Community Television station will operate on a viable basis and in accord with a business plan. We understand that the responsibility for content in such Community Television will rest with the Dublin Community Television Management Team. It is further understood that we will be listed and credited in all programmes and publications as being "Active Friends of Television for Dubliners."

State the type of resources you may be prepared to commit to this Initiative.

(Resources can be facilities, office accommodation, funding/finance, access to equipment, knowledge/expertise, Publicity, etc)

Signed _____

Position _____

Television for Dubliners

Television for Dubliners is the initiative taken by the Lord Mayor of Dublin following the publication of a Feasibility Study on Community Television and the establishment by the Community Media Forum of a Dublin Community Television Initiative. **Television for Dubliners will be a Resource & Support Trust.**

The Lord Mayor, initially through the Office of Director of Community & Enterprise, will hold in trust, account for and disburse resources committed by individuals, companies, organizations, agencies and Departments. All such resources will be dedicated to supporting the Dublin Community Television Initiative (DCTV) and the use of such resources will be determined and accounted for by the management committee of that Initiative.

The Management Committee of DCTV will develop Phase 2 of the Community Television project, laying the groundwork, developing funding and operational criteria, obtaining the licence, recruiting staff/expertise, identifying content, and establishing a viable DCTV structure and business by the beginning of 2004.

Those individuals, companies, organizations, agencies and Department of State who sign the ***Declaration of commitment in principle*** will be known and acknowledged as **friends of Television for Dubliners.**

Those individuals, companies, organizations, agencies and Department of State who sign the ***Declaration of Resource/expertise support*** will be known and acknowledged as **Active friends of Television for Dubliners.** Such Active Friends will be acknowledged and credited on all broadcasts and in all Publications and promotional material. They will be provided with first refusal on the sponsorship of specific content and resultant programmes.

Should you wish to consider the commitments you might pursue regarding the above you should contact :

Peter Finnegan
Director Community & Enterprise

Tel : 01-6722148
Email doce@dublincity.ie

Appendix No 26a: List of Interviews

Class and Voice:		Tape Transcripts			
No	tape no	Interviewee		date	length (rough)
Int1		Frameworks	Cmg (Community media group)	Nov-04	ongoing
Int2		Marilyn Hyndman	Cmg (Community media group)	Jan-04	days
Int3	12	Robbie Byrne	Cg (Community group)	17.11.04	ongoing
Int4	13-14	Brendan O'Caolain 1& 2	Cg (Community group)	23.11.04	2 hrs
Int5	15 – 17	John and Mark Boyle	Cmg (Community media group)	24.1.05	half day
Int6	21	Danny Burke	Cmg (Community media group)		ongoing
Int7	22	Maria Gibbons	Cmg (Community media group)	12.4.05	ongoing
Int8	23	Mike Brown	Cmg (Community media group)	13.4.05	01:16
Int9	24-25	Dave Spence	Cg (Community group)	13.4.05	27mins
Int10		Kevin McNamidhe	Cmg (Community media group)	20.4.05	3 hrs ongoing
Int11		Zalea TVMichel Fiszbin Pamela Denton	Cmg (Community media group)	19.5.05	02:05
Int12	35	Sue Esterson	Cg (Community group)	15.6.05	50:40:00
Int13	36 – 37	Phillip Keegan	Cg (Community group)		ongoing
Int14	38-39	Cork community Television Eddie / Emma	Cmg (Community media group)	2006	ongoing
Int15	40	Derek Jennings CR	Cg (Community group)	Jun-06	45 mins
Int16	41	Sandra CR	Cg (Community group)	Jun-06	45 mins
Int17		Brendan Dowling, Whitefriars	cg		1 hr
Int18		Near FM / Media co-opCiaran Murray,	cmg		2 hrs
Int19	S40	Age and Opportunity	Cg (Community group)	Autumn 06	
Int20		Gael Linn	NGO		
Int21		Irish Aid	statutory		
Int22		DIT	education		
Other research involvement		Kerry CM Project	Cg (Community group)	Autumn 05	

Appendix No 26b: References: - Interview Documents:

Draft for discussion with CMN SC – planning interviews

Interview formats - draft:

For in-depth interviews the following really are *areas* I want to address rather than devising a set of specific questions. I'd prefer to keep in-depth interviews open-ended.

However a set of questions can be constructed around the following for less intense interviewing, which could be as useful in terms of information and feedback for us and also in terms of encouraging involvement. Your thoughts on these are welcome.

- The value the organisation sees in ctv, and what benefits they see it bringing to them. E.g. do they think it would help them network with other groups/sectors and have they any ideas about this.
- The sorts of programmes they think their community needs, the sort they would like to be involved in producing – often these are different things. Who do they think should make it? How should it be made? What concerns do they have about quality etc?
- What programmes eg funding, government etc are they currently involved in? do they see funding coming through them, how prepared are they to designate resources to community television/programme production. Do they have any ideas on how dctx could finance itself?
- What resources do they have already? Equipment, skills, etc. Do they have archival material, could it be shown or is it in need of editing?
- If DCTX had a launch date, would they see themselves ready for:
 1. Autumn 2005;
 2. Spring 2006?
- How involved they want to become in the the Co-op. I guess people will want to be involved in training programmes, but not in managing volunteers, or the organisation of dctx – etc. Have they any ideas about the structure? What do they think of the current state of the DCTX Co-op, its proposals for organising, will it work?
- How do they feel about CTV on cable networks – will it reach their groups/targets?
- Have they used CMN's resources or materials – are they helpful? Do they think CMN is needed after community television is set-up – what is the value of the network? What sort of supports do they think they need?

Interview Questions:

Media

- Do you, or your organisation, engage with mainstream media? In what way – press releases, interviews, involvement in programme-making?
- What problems have you experienced with media – mainstream and independent?
- Do you use the term 'media literacy', what do you mean by it? Do you think media literacy education would support your work? Do you do any media literacy activity already?
- What sort of programmes does your community need on television?
- How can your organisation use community television, and what benefits do you think it will bring?

Production and access

- What sort of programmes would you like to be involved in producing? Who do you think should make them? How should it be made?
- Do you have concerns about the quality of productions on community television?

- How do you feel about CTV on cable networks like Ntl – can your people get it?
- What funding and government programmes are you currently involved in? Do you see funding for programmes coming through them?
- How prepared are you to designate resources to community television/programme production?
- What resources do you have already? Equipment, skills, etc. Do you have archival material, could it be shown or is it in need of editing? Are there particular issues that could be addressed in this way?
- What do you think you would have to put in place produce programming? If DCTV had a launch date for example, do you have any idea what you need to do? Have you thought about the sort of supports, resources or materials that will be necessary to sustain your programme making once started? Do you need help to do this or do you have this sort of expertise already?

DCTV

- What do you know about, and think of, the current state of the DCTV Co-op, its proposals for structure and organising, will it work?
 - How involved can you become in the Co-op? e.g. representation on SC; Content planning groups; Working Groups on fund-raising, promotion, outreach, station policies; Using training and production facilities.
 - Do you have any ideas on how DCTV could finance itself?
 - What sort of support, resources or materials have been helpful in learning about or making community television to date?
 - Is it important to network to deal with the advent of community television? Does this seem like a good idea for information and knowledge sharing, establishing support structures, or does it seem to create a difficulty in terms of time and commitments etc? Is there a need for a support structure?
-

B: Terms and conditions – Consent form

CMN Research Project



Community Media Network,
54-55 North Great Charles Street,
Dublin 1

Tel: 00 353 1 874 8226
FAX: 00 353 1 874 8227

CMN Research Project: community television in Ireland

Researcher: Margaret Gillan

Consent to Interview

I am happy to be interviewed by Margaret Gillan for the research project and for excerpts from the interview to be quoted. I have a copy of the terms of confidentiality.

Signed

Date:

C: Terms of confidentiality

The following outlines the basic terms on which interviews are conducted for the purpose of the community television research project. If other conditions are needed they can be appended with signatories.

1. The purpose of these interviews is to establish where interest groups are right now in relation to production, programming, and involvement in DCTV/CTV. What difficulties they see with the process so far, and in the future. The research is collaboration between CMN, Sociology Department Maynooth, and the Royal Irish Academy. The project aims and considerations are set out in the Summary sheet.
2. Interviews will be recorded on tape and Margaret Gillan will keep the tapes/recordings in safekeeping.
3. All interviews will be analysed for the research; interview material will be used to offer illustrative quotes from the interviews in publications.
4. Issues of confidentiality will be discussed with interviewees before interview.

Transcripts will be kept as kept intact until the research project is completed, after which whatever action is necessary will be taken by the researcher to protect the confidentiality/ anonymity of the interviewees. The interviews are unique contributions and it is the interest of CMN to preserve the content of the transcript as far as is possible with respect to the rights of the interviewee.

Appendix No 26c Interview 3

Interview Transcript

IT3:

*Robbie Byrne, Community Development and Outreach Worker; Community Response
15th November 2004*

Based in the Liberties in Dublin, Community Response (CR) was a response to the drugs crisis in the community in the '80s. Its path of development from vigilantism through a process of self evaluation to a support organisation for drug-users, their families and community, means that the organisation has strong roots in its community. It is now a community health project funded by the Health Board and the Department of Community Social and Family Affairs Community Development Programme.

CR uses arts, drama and a range of media to develop materials that will provide accessible information and culturally acceptable material to the community about drugs, the effects, treatments, and the range of support measures available. Their approach is a holistic integrated one involving collaboration with the community and those most directly affected by drugs, and using participatory methodologies within the context of support groups to collect the information used in developing their materials. The use of a form of drama known as legislative drama is particularly central to the work of the organisation – finding a theoretical framework particularly in the work of Augusto Boal. As with Boal's work, the purpose of the work is to address issues that are difficult for the community to deal with in an open manner because of stigma, prejudice or hostility. Its aim is to bring the voice of those experiencing the issue to the policy makers in order to initiate changes that will bring real benefits to those most in need and who are most affected. These dramas have been performed in order to elicit statements on the real needs of the community and to make recommendations based on these to the Health boards, Task Forces, and other government agencies.

CR has extended their drama activity into video, developing different strategies that will project the voice. The group see this as testing a medium to see how far it can extend their practice.

CR was involved in CMN's Integra Project (1997-2000), and although they did not produce a finished product on that project, there were significant outcomes for them: e.g. they planned to buy their own equipment; they looked at how they could integrate media production skills within the organisation; and saw themselves as being involved in community media. CR has been involved in many of CMN's activities and initiatives, and the relationship is ongoing.

Three people within CR corresponded with this research in formal interviews and also in informal follow-up correspondence: with an outreach/drama development worker; a family support worker – also a drama workshop participant; and a CR worker who was, again, a

drama workshop participant. The following is a transcript of the first interview with a key worker, Robbie Bryne.

Margaret firstly gives Robbie an update on DCTV/CTV progress since last meeting.

Interview:

Margaret: What value do you see in CTV for yourselves?

Robbie: For us the benefits would be a bigger audience. Most of our engagement with the community in terms of putting across stories or messages or information about the drugs issue, we've used drama quite a lot as it seems to be quite effective to draw people out. But we also have video'd the dramas as well. I think it would be really beneficial as well if we had a way of more people seeing that and obviously it's very expensive to tour around with a drama group, most of the people involved are involved on a voluntary basis, but just in terms of basic expenses, and then moving sets around, you do need technical people there. So that would be a huge benefit, I think if we had the opportunity and the access then we could probably do more work on the ground with the local community. Because the way that we have incorporated the arts is not so much for people to have an experience of arts as if that was something very profound, it's to use story-telling and creativity that reflects the social situation that people are living in. and using drama and that creative process more and more as a community development tool, and more and more as something that really gets to the heart of the story that people want to tell, rather than it being analysed in terms of research or any methodology that, it stands alone and its unedited. I think the more work that's done like that at the local level, its just that people seem to get a great sense of empowerment and ownership of their own work.

Margaret: and that's the value of the voice . . . ?

Robbie: And that's the value of the voice - mainstream media would have done it originally in terms of capturing the culture of the dying language and the dying music, people would have travelled the length and breadth of the country and simply recorded the people and their stories so its not that extraordinary. In a lot of poorer countries, I know people who would tell you that if people don't tell their own stories then they don't move on, whatever that story is. Even though we're in the middle of the Celtic Tiger era we haven't always been in that position. Some people haven't experienced the Celtic Tiger anyway, and they are really second or third generation from a series of disadvantages, and people internalise that. So we'd still be working with the internalised oppression of people even though there may be more material things about, people have more access to material things, but there is that sense of exclusion which is intergenerational poverty and lack of education. Because some people think that, they're searching for these stories as if they're not present, that they couldn't be at this point in Irish history, you know with the level of economic success, But it is there and people are struggling with it on a daily basis,

Margaret: So the power is in being able to tell the stories in the first place, then record them, then distribute them?

Robbie: Yea, I think that if people are engaged in addressing the power imbalance between who have control over the media and the technology, if people gain a sense of strength or solidarity through firstly the expression of it and the recording of it and the performance of their story. But then they're involved in seeing how that story might look on screen, and how its edited and how do you edit, you know, and an opportunity to say if they want to use community television how would they use it. I know that locally people would say that Prime Time can come in and do a programme on poverty and they come and go and they have they have their airspace filled with the stories of the people they leave behind and in the wake of it they leave literally pain and hurt and embarrassment and shame that people have to deal with and it can be a terrible knock to the community and to the development work as well when that happens and they don't have any way of addressing it. I mean.

Margaret: Is it just that nothing's done, its been on telly, everybody's seen it and where does it go to..?

Robbie: Yes, and where does it go to and people would like to have the opportunity to respond to that and if they had access to community television, I think people would be screaming to have a programme and to bring people back from Prime Time and ask them why and how and who do they think they are . .

Margaret: This is to respond to be able to use it as a response . . .?

Robbie: very much so, and with newspaper coverage as well. Because the level of internalised oppression is quite extraordinary and I think we all have it in one way or another, but when your area is constantly branded by the media, when all the young people in your area are constantly branded, as having no value.... they're areas to be frightened of, they're people to be frightened of, when that's continually thrown up in your face, day after day throughout your life . . . it has a deep, deep, rooted effect which is very bad. And I suppose its like to use the community tv its almost like a form of celebration of a social analysis of peoples lives that by their ability to claim that by telling their stories and share it.

Margaret: I know you've used video, have you used any broadcasting media – community radio or any of those . . .?

Robbie: Yes we used community radio once, Ballyfermot radio, West Dublin, we used that for a programme on ecstasy when things were very bad, and the programme was made by parents who had fears for their own children.

Margaret: Was this a one-off , there was no follow on.?

Robbie:No follow-on from that. We did a piece for television for Leargas, a part of a play, but otherwise no, we'd be quite reluctant to be involved in media stuff in terms of protecting people or not allowing peoples stories to be used or abused. Even in terms of newspapers we'd ask for a specific journalist to come along to do a piece on a play – not a theatre review although she had experience of it in theatre, but the type of story it was. And then ask her to fax the article to us before it went to print, and we had to read the article back with the women who were involved in the play so everybody was clear. We would have had to be really geared up to go to mainstream media and we felt it was important at that

stage that we weren't up to do it That we were happy enough to tour a play around and come back the next day and maybe have workshops with people on the content of the play. And that was as much as we could do. You'd have fears about someone ending up on Kenny Live you know, its just popular entertainment, and tragic story ...

Margaret: what did you think about the Fatima Mansions experience did you hear that?

Robbie: I did, I heard bits of it, I just think stuff is so sensationalised. They weren't interested in the mix, I would have known a good few people in Fatima Mansions on drug awareness programmes and Family Support, and its drama stuff with people – there's a whole variety of people living there. It just unfortunate that Dublin Corporation used it as a dumping ground and you didn't need any points to get a flat in it. So all sorts of people who needed an awful lot of support - families that needed huge amounts of support - went there. It was just such a volatile situation in the '80's as regards to drugs, it was just impossible for anybody to keep any sort of control on it.

Margaret: I want to talk to them about that experience, I don't think people were very happy.

Robbie: They weren't,

Margaret: I know they put huge amounts of effort into trying to control it.

Robbie: They did. There was some training, some of the people were trained in how to deal with the media. The most recent thing on 106.8 community radio, Derek here did a couple of interviews as a family support worker, and they were extremely fast, the interviewer has the technique so unless you know what to do in the situation, how to use it, you can get lost very easily, or you get dragged into stuff so. In one way I suppose there was a knock-on effect because what Derek wanted to speak about was men going to support groups because they don't, fathers who have to struggle with the family don't, and he works with a group of men, and I work with them and we're doing a piece of drama together. What that's like for them. It seems an appropriate way to draw them out. And the Families Support Network would be in a position where its so vast, its rising on the east coast in terms of membership, and though it doesn't have a strategy in terms of media it needs to get one. Now the Families Support Network would be fairly safe in terms of journalists or stories or anything else. It has tended to be covered a fair bit. There's been stuff in the newspapers. Now that's affiliated to the Citywide Drugs Crisis Campaign, so they would be seen as the representative voice, as an umbrella organisation for a number of organisations and different groups. But I think for the Families Support network, community television would be extremely useful because its directly into someone's living room, and people are living in isolation and fear in relation to family support so, it's a very good way to get information across to them and its also very good in terms of the parents participating in the creation of a programme which would make it easier for people to access support, or for people to see people like themselves accessing support and hopefully that will make it easier.

Margaret: just check re cable television – how many would have access to people –

Robbie: I'd say majority of people are on cable in the area.

Margaret: what sort of programming do you imagine you would have or do?

Robbie: A whole variety of stuff: we do Awareness programmes on drugs HIV and hepatitis, specifically in terms of people not having that information and needing that information. A lot of the time we are trying to address people's fears, very specifically around hepatitis and – 90% of intravenous drug-users have it. So there's lots of families living with it. So we would be trying to produce materials anyway. Local workshops – they were very tangible. I suppose in using television we would be looking for ways in where we could most effectively get across information, in a culturally, recognising the culture that's been affected say where hepatitis is and designing something or programming something around that. We could do a mixture of stuff really a lot of the time using drama is very accessible or story telling and more and more there are people who have skills now at this stage in terms of drama, and a variety of age groups that could participate. I'd have worked with and would know women under 18 participating in the Mothers programme, to grandmothers aged between 65-70. And all the age groups in between that. And a lot of people are looking to do something more creative and they're not particularly interested in the more academic approaches.

Margaret: strategies to make information available in all sorts of forms... what about age groups?

Robbie: its general community – we wouldn't work with younger people so much because that's the remit of the Youth Clubs and Department of Education although we would contribute to materials designing them and we would work in collaboration or partnership with them so I think its everybody after that. From time to time we would have run schools competitions, for photography, short story, poem, and some people have done short videos, around a drugs topic. And that has been very successful.

Margaret: what do you think is the most successful thing you've done?

Robbie: I suppose in terms of audiences, and people seeing things the most successful thing we've done is drama, touring the play, Taking Liberties. That that works extremely well in terms of social animation. And really what we are trying to highlight with the play was that there was family support and it was limited but it was there, and trying to have a sense of, for people to be able to see, other people who were having that experience involved ... and see the benefits of going through the support group or looking for support . . . for the parents. And that toured for 2 yrs.

Margaret: what was the other one I saw?

Robbie: Touching On, part of the EU project. I think it was only 10 performances, the cast of that play there were about 12 people and then there was the crew and we didn't have the money to move it around, and then, we just didn't.

Margaret: This is so adaptable to television and the way it was done, the scenarios, I could see it, despite the difference between live performances and recordings, I could see it being a really powerful piece of television . . .

Robbie: yes, it had that. You can video it live as a performance, but if you can also engage people in the project of making a video of it, that changes it, not to change the content of the story, but the visual images and how you use that to create the atmosphere and stuff like that, which I think is a wonderful project for people to be involved in, but the theatre company who facilitated that, Taking Liberties, was Inside Out, there were just 3 people involved in it, myself, Barbara Bergin and Maggie Byrne, and we'd worked in the prisons together, we'd collaborated like that, and we'd worked outside the prisons as well, so I suppose our sense of theatre was more about people than about art or entertainment in a way, and although it ends up being very entertaining.- but there's a difference between – the means for a theatre company to – its objective is always to make plays, but in order to make plays you have to do something with it. For myself, I needed to question that. So I tend to focus pieces of drama as being around 20mins of a story and to engage with the audience after the performance immediately for them to ask questions of the characters in a play, so you get into a deeper conversation about the subject of the play, the drama is like a code to invite people into a deeper conversation about whatever the story is telling and for them to suggest in a very immediate way what resources they think the people need. Which means getting people suggesting things in relation to policy, which you can carry forward and which you can show as evidence of this - what people are saying. If you perform to enough of a variety of groups of people – and I think that could be very interesting for community television as well that you show a piece of drama and then you have a discussion afterwards which I think helps really to assuage peoples fears about different issues. And also I think there's a huge need for a rational debate about drugs, the use of drugs because heroin was so completely demonised and HIV was so apocalyptic so people couldn't have any rational place for it at all, you know. And one of the reasons that we have been working for the last four years on hepatitis C would be to try to prevent the same sort of fear and irrational responses happening.

Margaret: How do you see the problems you will face if you want to engage with community television, what are the key issues there?

Robbie: On a very practical level it's about the technical stuff, having access to people who have technical skills, that's one thing. But also the other kind of thing is trying to develop some kind of partnership or understanding with people who have enough sensitivity or humanity to work with groups of people that are under them. I just have terrible fears, constant fears about people, about some sort of an abuse of power in terms of people having information and not having information, having skills and not having skills. So it's trying to develop that kind of partnership with people that can work. And whether this is idealistic or not, those people have to trust one another in a different sort of way than they'd be working in other areas. A lot of the time, the people we're working with are quite vulnerable and have a hard time of it to say the least. They might be at a point in their lives where they're claiming something back, so somebody entering into that has to have an understanding or humanity about that sort of situation.

Margaret: so are you saying then that, you know, we talk a lot about training, and about skills, and training 'the people', do you think training goes both ways?

Robbie: I think so - What we say quite a lot in Community Response is that we create learning events. We have skills – practically for myself working as a drama facilitator, I'm working on a piece on hepatitis. Basically I ran a series of workshops but the people have the story, you know. I showed them some skills about how you might go about presenting the story. We recorded what they said, what people were saying in the improvisation, so I don't have any special position in it, even though I have skills - I have gathered a lot of skills over the years, that group of people are creating something together, I haven't got some skills that they have, but we create something together, it's a collective creation, it doesn't have the individual stamp of a director or an author or anything, I facilitate it. That's what I say I do, sometimes when scenes are particularly difficult I will write something for it, but I'll give it to the people whose story it is and say what do you think of that, you try it out and change it in whatever way and bet you won't. There is a learning in that, yea. There's a thing about you know keeping it simple in a way, Inside Out would have said and I'd agree that we're involved in telling stories that otherwise wouldn't be told. That was it. You enter into that situation as openly as possible and to produce something collectively to the highest standards that you can. And the standards have been very high.

Margaret: I think that's important though –because its about an approach to community TV and that its on the ground, what can you do, and the whole process that you set up of working towards organisations being able to produce for themselves and just bring to the station or the channel or something which would be ultimately an aim for DCTV. There's a whole set of things that have to be achieved in that which is about media literacy for a start – that's one way of doing it, the other thing is about growing something internally and organically with groups that are working on themes and with key people for instance.... Some groups don't have a tradition of working in that way, because they don't have somebody like you who's been interested in it. So those groups will have to find out some way to start and where their starting point is – it's going to be different.

Robbie: the problem that I would look on it as – and the problem for Inside Out as well is that we were very fortunate because we were linked to a community development organisation. Specifically dealing with drugs and HIV and Hepatitis and Community Response were very open to the idea – we incorporated the idea of drama into family support groups where on a very practical level...

Margaret: so were you originally with Inside Out then?

Robbie: I was originally with Inside Out yes

Margaret: so you came from that theatre side if you like and...?

Robbie: I worked as a professional actor by accident more than design but I'd have done a lot of work with communities using drama. All age groups, all over... three of us, myself Maggie and Branach worked quite closely in prisons and particularly in one place which was the separation unit in Mountjoy which was about HIV. Worked with a group of fellas that had HIV, and that sort of that experience drove us on to do more work around that issue. I then incorporated it more into my work in community response. I still am looking for ways to incorporate it, and the piece we're doing now on hepatitis we're using Augusto Boal's work

on legislative theatre – we’re not doing it in its purest sense as we don’t have a partnership with a statutory agency which would be involved in policy making. But at the same time our work will be shown to the local drugs task forces when they meet, so we’re bringing the ideas and the opinions and the lived experiences of the people into that scenario. What we are saying is that people don’t have to learn the language of bureaucracy at all the story would be presented and I think that’s what people find in communities that they just have to put so much energy into learning a new language or a new system that it just becomes all-encompassing and

Margaret: the language doesn’t necessarily carry the message....

Robbie: no it doesn’t but I suppose the point that I was making was, in that experience in Inside Out, was that we were lucky to be involved with a community development organisation and that’s the gap, I think, the gap between arts and the gap between technology and working with people on the ground is that you don’t have this partnership between groups with the different skills. You know it’s a tag-on or somebody’s brought in for a while and then they’re gone. And I think for something like community television to work it’ll have to be very evident on the ground it has to be part of an organisation. Organisations need to decide what their opinion of it is, it’s the need for organisations to decide what their involvement in community television is, and they need to be proactive on that level and to see it as an option, when an organisation’s offering a service that its incorporated into it rather than an add-on or something that possibly might happen in the future. But I think there are a whole range of arts and arts stuff that and technologies that has been the difficulty – its like the circus coming to town – people get involved in this project for a while and then its all disappears and doesn’t go anywhere and not a lot of people are left with the skills to reproduce something like that themselves.

Margaret: yea. The issue there is how organisations are convinced that it’s an important thing to do. Organisations like yourselves and Pavee Point that have a history of engagement with media – and because media was doing things to them, and dealing with that in the mainstream but also recognising their needs for education, literacy, control, during production, you’re one of those groups – there’s a lot of groups out there that have never really done that. Its hard for organisations to build that capacity.

Robbie: the bit we’re doing on HepC is being videod as well, so there’s a whole process of the story and technology being introduced at this stage in terms of the filming of it and there’s five performances planned, they’re going to be videod and then they are going to be edited in terms of what’s the common theme between the five groups, and we’ll look at it to see is there other groups that we need to look at the drama piece and see what they have to say about it, so it’ll be interesting to see. It’ll be the first time I’ll be involved with a group of people in an integrated way to decide on what way this should be edited and what we are saying with it. I’ll be using this very much as a pilot experiment, to engage with other people firstly but also as evidence for this organisation as well that this is a very tangible thing to do and this is how it works. And I think you have to have an understanding of that to convince organisations of the value of creativity, the human value, the possible healing and empowerment that people experience through that.

Margaret: the bridges it builds as well – I'm thinking of the extraordinary level of understanding that can come from watching one of your plays.

Robbie: and its not a certificate or diploma or anything – people can enter into this experience just as themselves and whatever resources they have and its open for – it really is open for everyone to participate in. and its its one of the few things that I've ever been involved in that's that completely open to all possibilities and anything that people wanted to go through with it.

Margaret: do you know of many other groups that are working in this way around? In creativity...?

Robbie: I think there are more groups doing this, there's a group in Rialto they're documenting the experience in Fatima Mansions and they're using drama, and they're using photography. Otherwise I don't really know. And I suppose using drama as social change or community development, people have often claimed theatre as the stage as the geographical space to make political commentary on something, but in Ireland it hasn't been much used for social change, people are only in the process of using it in that way or as a community development tool. One of the reasons is quite simple – it's not funded. Whether that's the fault of the practitioners, that they can't get it together well enough to write a proposal that's sellable, I don't know. Or that they won't become funding driven to create themselves. I suppose though the one way it can happen is that its incorporated into community development project and I suppose its happening a little bit more in community health projects and things like that.

Margaret: That's the other thing about how things are funded and how this thing can actually run. What sort of groups are going to be able to access the broadcasting fund and that sort of thing. And something like the CDPs or community organisations involved in running it on a voluntary basis as well, can that happen?. I think that means that the departments or wherever people are getting their funding from, that they have to be forced to recognise that this is a valid way of working. That's another issue.

Robbie: in terms of work I've done in finding theoretical framework for it is using Boals stuff and also finding examples of projects in England where there was collaboration between the Health Boards and the local community around the issues of single parents and older people and they basically they all did the same thing – they found a group of people to work with, a group of people decided on what the story would be and they made it into a piece of drama and they toured it around for other people to see it. Then they engaged with people after the performance and they said what they thought this group of people needed and that went straight back to the NHS. The final outcome – I think it did become part of the health strategy, but, I suppose, in many ways its pretty straightforward as long as you have people on the ground with a broad range of skills in terms of working with people, its one of the most concrete ways of learning what people want and what people need in terms of just citizenship. I mean it could be about parks, it could be about anything. The story – needs people spending the time allowing the story to happen. I suppose that is the other time constraint in relation to it. Finding stories, and often people will say to me that they couldn't possibly fund what I do, because it takes too long. You couldn't be at it that long, how could

it take that long. But before we get to the story at all I'm equipping people with skills around theatre workshops and getting creativity development of concentration, and having fun and people aren't used to analysing stories about their own lives. So it takes quite a while to build up trust with a group of people that you can explore these issues and a lot of these issues are very close to peoples lived experience through they may not be playing the character, and a lot of the time it would switch. If the story was very close to your own lived experience then maybe people would chose not to do it, or someone else would do it, but sometimes people would chose to do it themselves. So you have to think very carefully about that – people are investing a huge amount in the sharing of their stories.

Margaret: I've been talking to NvTv and they're already broadcasting though not live yet – and what marilyn was talking about was precisely that process, someone going out and working with a group that was actually interested in engaging on this level and the hours cant even be counted, and the multi-skilled nature of the work, and they either are already multi-skilled or else you have to go and build that set of skills and that's a huge thing... That's something that has to be built into community television but it's not your regular training.

Robbie: no

Margaret: it's a completely different process.

Robbie: it does get to the point because I find now that I've done so much drama now around the place that if somebody falls out, or they can't do it for some reason, I can call somebody else in. and I suppose, that there's a group of people that say I would know at this point and I would say to them lets do this for community television or lets do that or lets do the other and there would be no problem with doing it. I'd set up questions.... And people wouldn't have an difficulty doing it. There are people I know who could write who would be into doing some political satire or music or there's a whole range of things actual we know that its there and its going to happen that it's possible. It happens very quickly though, and people say that they get more used to it - to see their grandmothers in performances and plays, and daughters or brothers and sisters and then its easier for people to get involved in a piece of drama and I imagine that could develop into community television. And we will have somebody doing an evaluation on this process and possibly with the audience as well to see – evaluation is built into a lot of things I do anyway. but I think this Hep C project at the moment is the culmination of a of things in terms of it being effective community development.

Margaret: you've made video stuff, have you made video along the lines of theatre as a production sort of thing... like a film, like taking a play and making a video of it...?

Robbie:no we've only videod a live performance, we haven't sat down to do a video piece although there's one piece we had spoken about it possibly being a video. And that's something that could happen fairly soon. Sometimes I thin that making a video would be better for some groups of people. Some groups of people I work with who are in recovery programmes so they might not have that much stability in their lives, or it varies s keeping the groups together over the whole process of drama workshops and developing a script and

developing it up to performance stage can often be quite difficult to maintain the same group of people whereas the video might be a faster process in a way. It might be just an attractive alternative as well.

Margaret: I'm thinking about the different sorts of skills – we have to start looking at how those get put in place. And how groups are going to cope with that because it does demand certain processes and certain roles and all that sort of stuff. And that has to be looked at in terms of translating that into the way the community works. You've got your own equipment, haven't you ?

Robbie: That's what I was thinking of, we now have more staff who can use the equipment. They're getting a sense of it. The piece on Hep C has a peculiar beginning and end in terms of being filmed as we go through it – rehearsals are being filmed, and it will be edited. Sometimes it can be that a piece is just filmed and there's nothing done with it. There's a need to establish that in terms of the process.

Margaret: would you see a community archive as being a useful thing?

Robbie: this room is the beginnings of a library and it would probably have more in it than anywhere else in terms of the history of drugs and the idea of it was to have a library but I think what we saw as a huge need was to make culturally relevant material. I still think that's what we should be doing the community development process is focussing on the creation of material that can be shared with the rest of the community and whatever that material is. And I think the information seems to be much more tangible to people and when it takes the type of audience that would be looking at it or listening to it or reading it into consideration.

Margaret: one of the things the Broadcasting Funding Act will do is to fund archives, but there is a worry that it'll end up for mainstream. Archives that contain community media could access that funding and that could be a repository. Could be useful and save time and energy. In terms of all the funding that's necessary – how do you see it?

Robbie: its difficult, but I suppose now that the Taoiseach has come out and said he's a socialist it should make things easier, we have something in common! The emergence of the drugs task force which Community Response would have been involved in – in fact Community Response would have been involved in partnership before the state really took it on board. And the experience of the DTF has created some good changes in terms of treatment services for drug users. But that's what it really set out to address. That there wasn't services there for methadone programmes and rehab programmes and a lot of its energy went into that and it seems to me that a lot of money was put into it initially and there was a lot of goodwill towards it and the people were working together, to come up with the plan for their task force areas. And then all of a sudden it was this far and no further, you know. Partnership does not extend into governmental departments they will decide what's in your plan and what's not in your plan. This is round two, the first one there were questions asked about projects and stuff like that but it seemed to me that almost there were significant elements of plans which bureaucracy could not see as being tangible things. And a lot of the time that was in relation to community development work the=at was necessary on an ongoing basis. And had this direct effect on the way that drugs were

used and not used in communities. To have those sort of infrastructures in terms of community development and things like that were just kicked to touch out of plans and people were quite shocked.

Margaret: what sort of things were they though?

Robbie: well it was an integrated approach where you would have drug services and they would be integrated with broader community development projects as also with youth services. That there was an integrated plan and approach. But some things I've seen have not been drug specific so they were the remit of someone else to fund so they shouldn't have been in the drugs force plans. But people would have been working very much in this holistic type of approach what was the component that would change the dynamic of the amount of drugs that were being used in their locality. A lot of people had been working on it for the last twenty years in those areas and then lots of other people would be coming into the task forces that wouldn't have had any experience of that development at all. But in terms of the funding I think its impossible to know, I think people were really shocked because voluntary agencies and community agencies entered into the partnership because the problem was so complex and so difficult and put an awful lot of energy into their participation and into the creation of plans worked extremely hard at trying to develop the concept of partnership. But it all seemed to be very tokenistic, a lot of people weren't into partnership at all it was just a convenient way to put some order which they perceived as being a bit at sea. And I don't think there is any understanding of community development, I don't think they take on community development as worthwhile or realistic. So it depends on the length of time an organisation is in existence and what it's doing what sort of funding it will get. But it's very difficult to attract any new funding.

Margaret: we're getting the same run around, all sorts of cop-outs will be taken by the funders - we have too much media and not enough community – CMN had no success in setting up technical support service for the CDPs and the Department never commissioned anyone to undertake the tender.

Robbie: the approach of successive governments is that they won't invest in social capital – they wont invest there's no interest in citizenship – they wouldn't invest in the citizenship of the people of Dublin and its happening in lots of other European cities..... civic fora etc.....

Robbie: people are burned out with the process of RAPID, community policing for a, communities are not there as equal partners at all. Level of evaluation on any funded projects is enormous and ridiculous.

Margaret: Is CR linked to the Department?

Robbie: CR has core funding from Department of Health under section 265, other projects through Canal Communities, Task Forces. Some projects could be mainstreamed – community drug workers is mainstreamed, 1st year now.

Margaret: DCTV is now set up as a Co-op – I wanted to check what sort of involvement can you take on with the co-op itself?

Robbie: My involvement would be very slight - my involvement is with drama for community development. It depends on whether the organisation takes it on board. My time is set. Only way is by doing a piece on HepC methadone etc.

Margaret: do you see your involvement as producing stuff, and building content groups,?

Robbie: yes, health promotion workers are mainstreamed – called the HepC project. CR has two people working on it fulltime and they deliver awareness project weekly on a full-time basis. (This has recently changed and worker left)

Margaret: Have you used CMN's resources – ?

Robbie: Yes especially in the EU project – contact with CMN has been hugely influential in developing a process towards recording stuff locally and developing culturally relevant materials and the fusion between community development and community arts and media stuff that we didn't have any access to it became more tangible as a possibility although its taken quite a long time to get something up and running, but there has been enough bits and pieces over the years to get the organisation to recognise its value. And maybe to pursue it a bit further at this point.

Margaret: CMN originally set up to develop CTV, now that DCTV is set up the question is what does CMN do now? Does it have any place? Or is there something else it should do? – Is there any other value to CMN being around?

Robbie: We're back to that tangible thing of working on the ground. There's a need for something to bring the two things together, to advise and show people how the things can work. There is a role in bringing these two things together. Need advice or support.

Margaret: Do you think DCTV could provide that?

Robbie: I suppose it could yes. [pause] but DCTV need to show a track record. DCTV has learned from CMN – there is a need for this trusting partnership arrangement in terms of working with people in the community and to make stuff for community television. There's a lot of ingredients in that and it is easier for DCTV to have the technical expertise and for them to go out and make programmes with people. But there's a coldness about it as well, I think that for community television to have that for it to be created by the community you need that sort of collaboration. You have to be pretty sussed working with people, otherwise you are going to get a version of the stories. You will never get the real stories a lot of the time unless there is some collaboration. (only versions if you don't have the contact on the ground.)

Margaret: NVTV needed lobby work, on the other hand working with community organisations, community print enterprises, all cross media, a lot of them have a connection with something else. They already have a bit of experience in working in some way then all that goes in and and you get the spin-offs between the different forms, print media, drama, that sort of thing and my feeling is that that interaction is necessary. There is a need for something where all those things can operate in the same space, and something that will work to keep the interaction going and the information flowing. But will that ever be seen as

something that is necessary, that will get the funding to keep going? It the same issue as the funding being only for drugs specific actions, and all that integrated work which provides a base and infrastructure and all the rest, doesn't get supported and its only a few projects are allowed to go ahead. Where does it all come from if you don't have all that base building, how do we set up things that are really going to work?

Robbie: I'd be doing things by stealth, I'd like to get into partnership with a statutory body around health policy on a particular area as a pilot, but I won't bother at this stage in my life to try and start those negotiations until I actually produce something and say this is the way it works and this is the outcome. Because they don't seem to be able to enter into that space.

Margaret: They are going further away from it, general government policy is going towards private sector. Thank you.. time moving on, is there anything else you wanted to ask me about?

Robbie: The whole thing about DCTV and how it will be involved with the community. There'd need to be some clarity around that. I just have the sense that things can often become and generally do become very disjointed. I'd be fortunate now that I'd know the system very well and the task forces. So I'd know where I'd be doing a performance placed strategically so I'd know who'd see it and I'd know at the end of the day that what we produce will be . . . And that people in the task force will have to look at what people are saying. What effect it has ultimately I don't know but it's the beginning of bringing something to somewhere else where it needs be. And I think you need people with a range of skills that can be involved in the process. I think community groups are going to need a lot of guidance and its going to take a while before schemes are disseminated and people feel its going to ... to do it themselves. But I do think it (community television) will take off fairly quickly in this area because I know there's a lot of people in Rialto that will be interested.

Margaret: Getting to the point – you've got equipment, you know what's involved, if we came back to you in a month and said it looks like we're going to be passed, you'd start saying, heck, get moving, we know what has to be done – there's other groups that wouldn't have a notion and its trying to be able to pick up there and see what has to be put in place to help them get on board, and that's a tricky one, there's loads of issues there too . . .

Robbie: I think it's the outreach stuff that we've talked about before – the most recent one was with grandparents being left with children, because their son or daughter had died or wasn't capable of looking after children, and trying to get allowances from the state, its just horrific. And people in services not really knowing that these people exist, social workers not knowing that people are entitled to anything and the need for... like out of that, a small piece of research set up for a half-day last week or the week, before the recommendations from the workshops is all like, they could have a key worker, and the key worker could do outreach to people, because there's people so afraid that the children would be taken off them if they go near a social worker that they wont go. Its just there's so many situations that you need really skillful set of outreach – arts, cultural, workers. And how many of them should we have? Should it be the Arts Council, arts officers that should be doing it?

(Laughter here) – if Derek went around with a knapsack full of clean syringes he could do some quick interviews as well!

There actually was a project myself and Taru were talking about, she had seen a programme and I had seen a programme on it - people injecting. Really sensational stuff and they never really get to say anything, the drug users. I was trying to do a piece – a video piece, a documentary over a period of time, getting to know people who were using periodically.

Margaret: Caoimhe says that all organisations need an outreach and media worker – issues as well with early radio projects building the station – issue around equipment being mobile enough, people can't be expected to come into studios. There's still an awful lot of contact that people need and an interface for groups who are wanting to engage with media, but need advice. People have come to us because they have someone approach them and they are interested but not sure and they've come to me and said what do you think? And I'd say look this is what community television would do, and this is the sort of problem you're going to face, it's like a confidential advice so that they can face the media makers or the people with the skills and there's that sort of interface- its desperately important. I don't think its going to happen without it, all you're going to have is false start and disappointment...

Robbie: We say whatever you do don't compound the sense of disappointment that people already have. But I will say what was really effective, Dave Lowndes that we worked with on the audio tapes for Hepatitis C, we did three audio tapes, and it worked extremely well – we used a conversation with drama and sound effects and stuff, he got a mobile studio in and we recorded most of it in the office. People had a chance to get familiar with it, to hear the sound of their own voices. We had to do work around why that, if they don't have those sort of experiences and they walk into a studio, then they're frozen.

Margaret: It is the most intimidating and awful thing

Robbie: It is

Margaret: And there's a huge process of familiarity that has to happen, and there's also just trust and there's knowing what you're dealing with

END.

Appendix No 27 TV Nova–International Networking Potential

In the winter of 2001 I attended a seminar in Brussels entitled TV Nova, which was organised by the cinema house Cine Nova. The seminar was designed to bring community television activists from all over the world together to share experience and to discuss possibilities for networking activities. Participants came from Korea, Brazil, Columbia, Guatemala, Venezuela, India, Ethiopia, Philippines, UK, France, Belgium, Spain, Italy, Denmark, Belgium, Austria, Greece, Lithuania, and these are only the ones that registered. An email list was set up – which elicited many emails seeking, for up to at least a year afterwards, to make contact with other participants. The event may have supported many coalitions but I don't know which ones. For me it was an inspiring and useful trip, I certainly wanted to maintain contact with many participants but our incapacity to offer opportunities for funding – including the funding of similar events and an inability to commit to engage with production – in particular a proposed news reel project - may have been factors in the subsequent collapse of communications.

Certainly I brought back to the community television working groups the suggestions from that meeting and from a number more subsequent events that an international meeting be held in Dublin and that an international news-reel coalition had been proposed. The fact that people could travel to Ireland cheaply was an important factor. However I consistently met with a negative response from all sides at home. The reasons were the difficulty with funding, the need for translation services, and the fact that we had too few people to take on organising such an event while we were engaged in the issues we had on our own ground. I still think this was a mistake and we could have sought both help and funding, but it was a significant stance and reflects more of the problems that were emerging for groups wanting to engage with CTV and even within the DCTV organising group itself than any issue to do with costs or needs.

I found it difficult to initiate follow-up to the meetings I had attended – if I could not attend the next one I could not necessarily depend on the person who was going to follow up on the information I brought back. Diverging interests got in the way. In 2003 our Community Employment Project was closing down; I had fifteen people who had to be supported in finding new placements or indeed simply new support structures; their needs were wide-ranging, and the organisation faced homelessness. I was tied to the ground. A colleague went to Porto Alegre but was disinterested in following up contact I had made with Tele Maxambomba – a group who had faced very similar problems to those we had in Ireland. After a long struggle this group had succeeded in gaining support from the Local authority and when we met had funding that allowed them employ thirteen full time workers. Of course I wanted to know how they had done it but my colleague did not see how he could make this contact whilst in Brazil. I found this frustrating, another link broken.

Irish community media activists are extremely proud of the fact that they were part of the formation of AMARC, and that a significant AMARC meeting (AMARC 4) was held in Dublin in 1994. But there is no record of the Mac Bride Round Table that was held in Ireland in 1993. By 2002 Irish community media activists didn't want to even discuss hosting an international meeting for the community television sector. In the meantime the community radio forum built an annual training event that gathers activists from all over Ireland. Given that community radio activists would understandably want to attend the four yearly AMARC conference if they wanted to go to meet activists from other countries, it's understandable that a suggestion to engage with community television may to them seem excessive. The AMARC network is worldwide, huge, and capable of drawing down significant funds. It is also a network of community radio stations and therefore, similarly to the CMA in the UK, does not have the 'culture' or tacit knowledge needed to mobilise around community television; although other 'small media' such as Internet, digital software etc., can be happily taken on board. As in the UK where the ACTO split from the CMA problems arise around what knowledge and activity base has the ability and the power to steer directions.

It is worth considering, if these events were not supported by funding - if they did not carry the possibilities for funding partnerships - who would attend them? What sort of networks would be built? What kinds of activities would result? Even with the mobilisation of the 'movement of movements' we do not get away from structural inequalities. Now activist-researchers are asking who goes to International and world-wide events; how it is managed; and what mechanisms are built to bring the very crucial survival issues on the ground to these events. These are key questions for the CM if it is to maintain its relevance as a social movement.

Appendix No 27b –Report to DCTV on TV Nova

Increased action on networking globally for independent and community TV – report on the TV Nova meeting in Brussels December 2001.

Margaret Gillan

TV Nova is the name for a regular series of public meeting organised by Cinema Nova, an autonomous non-profit cinema established in 1997 in the city centre of Brussels that screens mainly undistributed films. These meetings involved groups and individuals active in community and independent TV, audio-visual media made by citizens, grass roots initiatives, independent local televisions, community based televisions, broadcast by cable, web or satellite. The meeting in December 2001 brought together groups both in and outside of Europe to present and discuss their work, the circumstances and constraints they operate under and to develop new networks.

Marie Eve Cosemans of VOX, a group who were instrumental in setting up TV Nova, said “It seems important to us that these experiences from all over the world have a place and a space to meet. Very often, they might have heard of one another, but there's no structural communication amongst them, although they all share the same kind of experiences and problems. The idea is to create the necessary instruments for permanent exchange of information, films and/or images, and to create the necessary conditions to distribute on an international level.”

Cinema Nova itself is an old building run collectively by volunteers. When they got a grant to do up the building, the group decided to put all the money into a decent central heating system. The walls are stripped to the brickwork, seating is basic and comforts are few. However the place works, the screen is big, and, in the middle of Northern European wet cold grey winter, their central heating certainly did work! They got a small amount of funding to run TV Nova, paying basic costs.

Evening screenings showed a wide range of video work - scratch video dealing with the nature of media, documentaries, news items – eg. local housing issues, actions such as the Spanish anti-globalisation activists refusing to pay for food en masse (good fun and you didn't need translation to know what was going on!) A small videotheque with 4 video players was set up, groups were invited to lodge copies of their tapes there and a copying facility was available.

Participants came from the Philippines, South Korea, Brazil, Venezuela, Columbia, Lithuania, Ethiopia, as well as many European countries - Spain, France, Italy, Holland etc, etc. . . . Translators were volunteers from the groups and all sessions were conducted in French, Spanish and English which made for slow progress. The volunteer translators were incredibly patient, though those who spoke needed to keep their contributions short – not always achievable! Not all sessions followed a set procedure. Some were given over to hearing about people, their organisations and their issues, and a deal of time was given at the start to reorganising sessions.

Some thematic workshops were:

- *"Other forms of media-activism"* How to use video as a source of counter-information, as a mean of analysis and investigation in processes of participation and political decisions (civil empowerment). Axel Claes (PTTL / Brussels) and Mark Saunders (Spectacle / London) organise video workshops in a working class area in Brussels. They use video as mean of communication and as audio-visual base in local political decision-making, e.g. in urbanism development.
- *"Public Access and Labour News Production"* Jung Mi and Dong-Won Jo from South Korea – LNP was set up in 1989 to politically and culturally support the labour movement. Production, distribution and training are key areas of concern and establishing public access centres.
- *"Different ways of distribution"* this session was given over to Zalea and the French TV stations – support appeal. Zalea TV (France) is an autonomous television that came out of experiences like Onde Sans Frontière and TV Bocal. French TV stations are being refused licences in 2002 due to it being election year in France!! (see **Tracking**) Pirata (France) is a group in Marseille who literally pirate local television to distribute their own programs. Primitive in Marseille organised pirate action in mid December to highlight the situation.
- *"www: Web TV, free access, free software"* What are the possibilities for independent media to construct a real web based work? When will MPEG4 be available? What is free/open software?
- *"conclusion and common projects"* Opportunity to think about networking. (How? What do we expect from it? How to finance...)

At the end, the session split into 3 workshops:

1. International news blocks
2. Exchange and Distribution
3. Web – who is going to do what

Some broad areas of discussion that emerged over the few days were:

- Defining what is media activism
 - Ensuring diversity of content in our videos, reflecting how people live their lives – rainbow idea, and allowing conflicts and questions to emerge;
 - The tendency towards activist video that concentrates on actions and the documentation of demonstrations to the exclusion of other aspects of resistance;
 - How people form their own resistance discourse;
- Defining community TV – open TV as opposed to mainstream programming etc.
 - While new forms/language may be needed, this raises issues of access –
 - ‘access’ also means access to the language of film and video;
 - how to critique ruling class media

- Media is owned and controlled by ruling class, need for the working class to own and control our own media;
Media not in the hands of individuals, but in the hands of communities;
- Different channels of distribution, dangers of over-dependence on one means.
Important to combine techniques and technologies to make it as cheap as possible;

Concern about over-focus on the Web – not accessible for everyone

Need for off-line approaches – no off-line approach, no on-line success
- Need to work with social movements;
What is relationship between TV and social movements;

Need for research;
- Indymedia – how broad-based is it?

Some proposed actions were;

- Put up e-groups, keep contact and information flow going
- Develop webpage for distribution
- Establish international news blocks
- Develop an archive
- Establish exchange for video and film in non-profit sector
- Languages – 4 languages – spanish, french, portugese, english. (still difficulties for asian and other countries)
- Funding agencies – create list
- Explore how to support Africa/Philipines with equipment and fundraising
- Establish research group to network on international level.

The TV Nova mail list is tv-nova@lists.collectifs.net

Appendix No 28: NvTv Northern Visions Community Television, Belfast.

“Class, State, and Voice” - the development of community television in Ireland
Research Project:

CMN Working report /CMN Interviews: NvTv – working report: M.Gillan
March/May 2004

NvTv Broadcasting since February 2004

Licence:

4 year licence from OFCOM, free-to-air using one 500watt transmitter.

Mode:

Make programmes during the week; repeat all programmes at weekend. Tape/DVD at site straight into transmitter. Free-to-air, analogue.

Hours broadcast:

1.5- 2 hrs pr week, (useful as DVD only hold 2 hrs). They buy in Sky for filler if needed. Change tapes (physically) at 5pm every day – fresh programming (not including repeats).

“It goes on at 5pm and repeats until the next 5pm. At the weekend the hard drive goes up and you can see any programmes throughout the week there and that’s the system at the moment.”

Transmitter location:

On Hills around Belfast. They had serious problems here – took forever to find out who owned the site – couldn’t put it on the site, and by pure luck found friends who offered their building to put the mast on just further down the hill – as good as the original site. There are four masts around Belfast, and NvTv signal is only on one aerial site, which is between two aerial sites. It depends where your aerial is pointing so if you’re pointing to the other two you won’t receive the signal.

Even if the house has NTL it’s only on the one tv in the house and very often there is a 2nd in the bedroom attached to the aerial.

“So they can tune in and it’s on over 24 hours. People say it’s on the 2nd TV. And I’ve heard comments like – “oh there was nothing on the TV last night at 10 o’clock, that was it – switch over. . . . Can you

really watch more than one or two hours of community television a night? Probably not!”

“We’ve had lots of conversations – what to do – we had 16-20 hours of original programming on the radio when we ran it for 18 months. Just feed it throughout the week and at the weekend you did it all. We decided to do the opposite with the television that we’d do it [produce] during the week and repeat it all at the weekend – so you can see everything at the weekend.. . . but it isn’t regular tv, somebody produces a 35 min programme it doesn’t fit a slot on Broadcast TV – or 43 mins – it doesn’t fit the TV slot. But what does it matter. You were saying should you put it into cafes and all the rest of it. I was thinking – its on DVD – its just like a film, you just go up and put the film in for that night.. . Some of the centres have tuned in too, so we’ve even tuned them in.”

Platform issues:

They have satellite, but want cable, almost the reverse of what some groups here need (e.g. Kerry.)

“A lot of British television stations had gone down because they hadn’t enough signal, this was the case with Channel 9 too. Some had investments in them so when it was down, they went down for good.”

Ntl is important to them: -

“100,000 people – about 30% of audience in Belfast are on Ntl, that 100K we can’t reach. . . . There’s a lot that comes with Ntl that would be useful to us - advertising, independent income – that’s important in terms of keeping something going, more importantly you’d know how many people were watching, you see they can tell you all those sorts of things.”

Lobby history:

While CMA did very well in radio, there were difficulties with their lack of experience and knowledge in television. When OFCOM began the consultations CTV groups set up ACTO (Association of Community Television Organisations) in December '03 in order to progress CTV meetings with OFCOM, (they hope this will become a subgroup of CMA eventually). At this stage CMA could not deal with the issues community television was facing. NV thinks it will come back together but they needed another structure to move forward with the consultations.

Where programming comes from:

- Community groups and 4 NV staff produce 2 hrs per week;

- Volunteers produce regular programming;
- Others from UK send programmes,
- Films;
- Film Commission films.

How they contact groups:

Most contact is through historical relationships; NV always ran a community media scheme –which is like a development scheme. £20,000 a year from city council for outreach coupled with subsidised training and bursaries. Groups pay subsidised rates.

Who does it? What groups document projects?

- Play schemes, youth groups, and community groups wanting to highlight issues in their communities. A lot of funding goes towards young people to the exclusion of other age groups it hard to get money for over 50's.
- Important to go for communities where they knew they could receive the signal.

Who does the work?

Volunteers: However NV have schemes to support these.

NV Team: Simon had a team, including free-lancers, who would maybe be working on a feature film and then people working in the industry.

Sometimes a group isn't interested in doing technical work or training, they want the video made for them. They want to document the project and so then somebody else would document it. Also depends on capacity of group to do training and technical work.

"Some people Simon would have worked with would not have wanted that much to do with video, they did editorially and all the research and what went into it, but technically no."

Various sources: Programmes produced with a range of projects and crossover outcomes, see below.

NvTv Training - Approaches

Training linked to production

Training is done on productions/linked directly to production. It aims primarily to produce programmes.

*“And the other thing we said we would do was to **assist** really to get the money, because the other thing you don’t want to be doing when you are trying to ensure that programming is coming forward, is masses of training because again all your equipment is tied up in training and you’re not making programmes. . . and trying to explain to funders that actually you have never, and we have never trained in isolation other than those one or two day workshops that you see that we do, everything else is training on production.”*

Multi-skilling:

“Making sure that in all those little projects that people, no matter however long they’re employed have multi-skills. You either teach them to be multi-skilled or they come to you multi-skilled, which is the best way – in that they can pick up a phone and sort out how to get to a place and do the research and so on or they can find somebody who can do it for them. The newspapers are very good at that kind of a level, they can do camera and sound, when they’re out on location and we don’t have to worry about it and they can come back and edit it. That’s the way we’re looking at the volunteers as well, teaching them in exactly the same process – going out to a group, they can do everything, then whoever goes out there if anyone is shadowing in those groups and then eventually they learn it and those people themselves are multi-skilled. Its kind of like a decentralised approach, because you’ll never have enough money to rely on your own staff totally to fill the hours – it just can’t be done. The BBC and UTV can’t, they’re not producing two hours a day – so they can’t do it with all their millions particularly, - and you have to think of different ways of how to do it. And that is about more people out there producing things. “

Training Schemes

Young Peoples Production Units

“Where you want the young people to do everything themselves and become a production unit, and you don’t have to work with it, so it’s a whole range of things, and that was one area that we kind of developed over a number of years.”

Funders: Bursary schemes; Film Commission, City Council

Duration: Held over summer period 8 weeks, full-time.

Recruitment:

Participants: 12

Aim: to train young people to do everything – multi-skilling to set up production units.

Skills taught: wide range, multiskills

Methods: Give them the content and very structured learning environment. Don't ask them to think of project themselves – too young and inexperienced, lose enthusiasm, and interest dies. Brought in adult researcher who introduced the issues, the people to interview and the questions to ask. So they quickly move to doing the filming, interviewing etc and come back with material to edit. Within a month they have had an idea of what they could do.

Output: 4-5 ten-minute programmes

Best scenario: Should be part of another project - it takes a long time.

Problems: Producing for television requires quick response and quick production time *“over two months in the summer, they would have made 4 or 5 10 minute programmes which was the best we'd get out of something like that.”*

Community journalism school

Funders: Social economy project: wages and materials;
Arts council lottery: equipment Camera, G5, etc for each journalist;
Peace money

Duration: Block of 7-8 days in June

Recruitment: Open application, but this seen as problematic. Historical contact better. Will invite previous participants onto next school.

Participants: 12

Aim: To work with communities to generate programming, communities of interest, the gay

community and others, or it could be totally geographical; Set up 4 outreach production centres max.

Skills taught: everything from research through to editing same with young people.

Methods: set up project beforehand, as with young people

Output: ongoing.

Best scenario: Based in community organisation, particularly community media producers – e.g. Shankill Mirror.

Problems:

Volunteer schemes

Funders: Schemes like Film Council; overlap with Social economy project but not really part of it. Community groups find funds themselves.

Duration: ongoing – time for production.

Recruitment: On the website

Participants: 70 registered which is too many, and more coming in daily

Aim: Get volunteers who want to make a programme, offer mentoring, and training in video. Idea is to make a programme.

Skills taught: Everything from research through to editing same with young people.

Methods: Fairly strict procedures with rules. Volunteers have the idea for a programme, are given training (?along with CJS people??), mentoring throughout project. Volunteer Co-ordinator who has production experience, camera, editing etc, will accompany them on shoots. Guidelines: research first and then camera training mandatory; sound recording also same process. They must give their work to the Editor; they can sit with editor but can't do it themselves at first.

Rational: to ensure that project gets through each phase successfully; people say they've been trained

on camera/equipment but it often proves to have been bad training or a different camera; people will hold up time on the computer if they can't edit or don't know the technical or content issues. Strong editorial policy on paper but doesn't work like that in reality. Volunteers want the boundaries, want to know that an experienced person is there to get them over the problems. Need to ensure high production quality – people will turn off the TV if they can't understand the programme and they don't know anything about filmmaking, or the people who made it.

- Output: 10 volunteers have gone through the system.
- Best scenario: Always choose people with an idea, who want to make a particular programme. Full-time staff to deal with them, these staff need good people skills.
- Problems: staffing requirements; A lot of mentoring needed, can be difficult.

What types of programmes are produced and how:

Shankill Mirror:

Good programme; produced by journalists; Editor involved.

“...go out once a week and make the ½ hr programme. And that's good as all the research and all the programme is done by the editor of the Shankill Mirror”

“Then this dynamic begins to happen about what's possible. Especially when somebody working in print sees what's possible in television terms, like he's presenting it and it's a fantastic programme, it would rival anything on CH4, its really excellent. I could see that eventually with the Shankill Mirror they would have their own unit and there's really high quality stuff comes out of it t. .

They want to work with 3 other newspapers. One new venture in East Belfast; Community News, and a commercial East/North/Andersonstown.

“Well they're community newspapers but they're not quite in the way that we understand it, they're out to make money. The

Andersonstown Newsgroup is really keen. The editor has been out to Chicago and seen what's happening with access television and said "oh yea, we could do that".

Newspapers ensure publicity; links articles to programmes; they are community based providing cover of community stories:

"We started with them as the whole Shankill community was very supportive of this venture and they're close to the area [to receive the signal] we knew most people should be able to receive it. So we did a night with the new Lodge which is about to be repeated. In publicity terms you do this in your leaflet area so people will think "I must see this, must tune in, How do I get it?" That part of publicity is important and where you have one-up on other TV stations in that they are unlikely to be able to devote a whole evenings entertainment to one community. TV does not break that way. Someone may watch and say:

"There's my neighbours; oh I know him! Look at what the kids did"

School animation:

Animation project in the primary school with 10 yr. Olds. – excellent. And they watch their kid's stuff and all of this. And I think that's a good way to market. And it's regular.

Archiving projects (video documentation):

Useful way of generating material and programmes. "You can either do this yourself or watch-shadow with somebody else, and to archive this it would take over the period of your project, which might not be a video project you know it might be a gardening or something, but to archive that particular project we can send somebody out say one afternoon every two weeks or such and such and you cost it for them. You work it out with them because its always different – there's never really a generic unfortunately that's what we discovered – that everything is costed separately because projects are always different. So it is a bit of a problem. So some people will just put archive costs in and the funders were quite happy to pay for that because it's a record, but you can make that record a programme, and Simon, he was more or less doing that and the money that was coming in from those groups was also paying for someone to be here to do it."

Thematic approach:

At the start, but not a consistent way of bringing in programmes:

*“When we put together all the research it was all themes- cos that’s the way you kind of think – youth strand, new innovation strand, hundreds of them, ethnic minority, Irish language. You have all these things, you do think thematically. I think its still important and there’s a few things in the pipeline that I think will be thematic. But **actually what has worked so far thematically is where you get anti-racism week, environment week**, those sorts of things, they suddenly begin to fit in because everybody is focussed at that point in time on those organisations, on publicity, on getting the message out and all those sort of things and you work in with them”*

In same vein they also mentioned **the film festivals, a travel show** that produced 5 half-hour programmes. They find the **Arts** good as they lend themselves very well to television.

Council Local Gov, local Council:

This is very slow to take off, but NV think it will happen. They have found officials and councillors positive and keen, but the bureacracy is slow-moving:

“ we thought if met with them that once a week or fortnight, we’d get together with our councillor and if they’d talk about what went on that week, what was coming up in the council. We’d just have the interview. Then could take one of those issues and go off and explore it. Trying to get that done with the council is impossible. I wouldn’t say you’d have any political problems – they just never get to the point of doing it. But we’re going to persevere with it”

They want to get to a point where the council would have its half-hour programme saying what it is doing and what’s happening.

“to start off with, I’m not even thinking of ‘challenging’ particularly, you’d have other programmes which challenge, but I just want the information programmes – i.e. these architects and these builders re going to build this particular building in this particular place; this community has complained about mountains of rubbish just outside their doors and the council knows about this and this is what the council is going to do or not do about it. . .

And it comes from the council it doesn’t always come from the community in terms of complaints. Because people do say things like the roads are in a mess and complain to the Council, but the council has no control over the roads in Belfast, and there are many areas that the council has no control over – even just that. That’s about lack of education, unaware of the Planning Departments etc out there. Most people don’t understand who is responsible for which bit of everything. I think all that would be very useful and would slowly

come out as you explored issues . . . So we've not got to the council yet but I don't see that as a huge problem."

Using other publicity processes:

The city council, the arts council put NvTv on their press list. When event is about to happen they will work with NvTv to produce the half hour programme. If they are launching something:

" . . . it's not jut the two civil servants saying whatever for 5 minutes, but it's also the 6 arts groups performing. So it's profiling a particular sector." . .

Consultations and Policy Documents:

Example: "Pathways to change" – NvTV got programmes from this approach, length between 30[mins] - one hour. They went to the community group, or send out a circular saying they were interested in doing video responses.

These programmes consisted of: - an interview with an organisation, profile of organisation, work with material to show what they thought about the actual government documentation. Several groups wanted to do the interview, because they want to be consulted. In the case of PTC it is an important consultation document. Some of these have been quite interesting. They used the organisation's video throughout.

*"I finished one with the (name?) circus yesterday so you've got a lovely 5 min piece with all their work, all the young people and all their end-of-year shows, you've got the interview with director talking about – a wee bit about the circus, but mostly about the document and what they think or don't think about it, interspersed with another 5 mins piece at the end about a show that they did. It makes a really nice piece its great for the organisation, plus she got something across about the document, which – well people think the issues are very important for the organisation. We've done 5 or 6 of those so far, more to be done – it's an easier way of doing things. People do want their organisations profiled but they're actually giving you something 'cos they're giving the interview, it keeps it current and **it also means that the C&V sector are more likely to tune into to look at it.**"*

Developing links with community groups:

Continuation work with groups. Maintaining contacts is important for future programming. e.g. archiving, or groups doing a video as part of a whole training. Groups e.g. creative writers network; photographic network; Work and Education Association. *"and then people would think we'd like to run video and its just getting from that particular point as well . . . "*

Media literacy:

Community television should keep this within their operations:

“don’t let go of it though, I wouldn’t let go of the media stuff, I wouldn’t lose control of the media literacy – I think the TV stations should keep control of it. The people that you think would do it, when you actually get going don’t. . .

There are places like e-force and so forth where they take on students and so forth we found nobody coming from those. And again with the tv there was this huge institute, a fantastic new set-up and we went round, spent quite a time talking about what might be possible, that the students themselves might produce something and that it would be shown. You’d think like since they were producing it anyway that they’d love it to be shown. But the only person who volunteered was a teacher. And maybe nothing will ever come of it anyway.

Again with Queens, a dept we’d had dealings with before and somebody who’d worked on films and had come to our workshops and was very interested, and said: well will you show the student documentaries? And we said we will, but I won’t rely on it and they haven’t come back.

I think you need to control media literacy yourself and also get the money. The money should come to the tv station for that kind of thing and not to the groups because those groups have a different agenda to the tv groups, - its adult education and all the rest of it - tv is an adjunct, and I would control that. I think it is a different thing, there is a real danger that they won’t deliver.”

Who will do it?

Individuals within groups rather than the groups themselves. NV think it’s to do with the way the groups themselves think and the way they’re run. **In their experience large organisations don’t take it up.**

“Its individuals who may well be working with the groups, or for the groups, or even be the Director of the group, but it is the individual that is key within that and not the whole group.

“And those large organisations, the umbrella organisations, I don’t think they ever come on board. Sometimes there’s someone you’ve worked with previously on video and they’ve come through all that media literacy but not always. Campaign groups – I find it harder to understand – environmental campaign issue, but trying to get groups like friends of the earth, RSPB (birds) is more active than your

friends of the earth etc – maybe if you have an individual there, maybe FOE is just somewhere else entirely.

They stressed the fact that there are all sorts of dynamics going on within groups that you don't know of, even ones you've worked with over a period. Can also be that that person left and it all collapses again.

Problems in programming areas:

Education:

Government departments – getting them involved in any way, or in providing funds.

Educational programming: while they have done work with schools, they don't see the potential for programmes in this quarter – more media education, media literacy stuff. Curriculum is issue in the North because of lack of Irish language support.

“This ward the Cathedral Quarter is in one of the North Belfast wards and I think it is called the most deprived ward in Northern Ireland. So all those schools, it's the natural place to go and say come down to the media centre for a day, bring the class and we'll everything-some photography, the film festival, you know, everyone works together and does something, but I'm not sure if programming really comes out of that. That's really something for the school. You might go back then to the school and do things you thought might spark interest – as for adult education you might be

Irish language /Irish Scots lobby / any language other than English could do their own programming for the schools, their own education programmes. Units could be set up in the bun-scoils and the mean scoils:

“ But it would all have to be within the curriculum which is a British curriculum people thought this quite interesting as they could see you'd get money for that – there was a need there, nobody'd really thought about before . . .we have TnG up here as well, but the issue here is the curriculum, it's different.

Years ago, we used to go up to the mean scoil and teach them video, but it's a long time ago now. They have no books, they are pasting Irish over the text in the regular books, things like that, it worked in the past in a multicultural resource centre, mostly Belfast, but it falls apart because of money and stuff.

Minority groups: *“these organisations tend to be under-resourced themselves and understaffed – to try to get it done you’d be looking at getting them volunteers.”*

News:

News has a number of angles: context, Belfast has a lot of news so ITC warned NV off it, Derry is different because much news is Belfast-centred. *“the ITC would have no problem seeing Derry doing news because there was very little news outside of Belfast. You’d be hard pushed to see Magherafelt on the TV or Armagh or anywhere else. So there were no issues there. But there were issues in Belfast because the news is very well covered.”*

Also NV didn’t want to do news, decided to deal with issues in depth on longer programmes.

“The ITC – advised us not to. One of the things that has always been held up about UTV and ITV here is that their local news is very good . . . If there’s enough news going on on all your other channels, why would you? Probably better to explore the issues in more depth – more satisfying for the people working for you as well.”

CH9 do a lot because it’s easy and cheap to do. *“The news comes in to you – you put the presenter there and they read it from the autoqueue- you have a team of two people who go out and do a couple of interviews with the public and it all goes out that night.*

CMN: last visit 2000, they seemed to rely on it. Outside unit two people, audience like it, They saw it as ‘good seller’, people were involved in it and of course it was the whole community side of it. *“Here people watch news”.*

Live shows:

“When we’re in the new building there’s a studio Space that should also make the programming a bit easier – if you bring the people in, you’ve got the production end to do and that will take longer but its mixed live and within 2-3 hrs you have your programme. That’s what Derry does as well – a lot of studio based work. I wouldn’t like to do loads and loads at the expense of going out into the community but I think its very useful filler.

There’s things that would work better – along print journalism, there’s “Sport Night” we haven’t asked them yet but you could see that magazines like that you might have in Dublin might be well suited to do some sort of current affair studio things.

If people are doing like-minded things [it helps]– because once you get a bed-rock of that, all the more difficult things – then you can rely on them doing their programme and then you have one-hour

studio programme coming out. Then you have the time to spend on more difficult issues, and I think community things are more difficult. The issues and working with people in training and so on- you've got more time for that – its quite a beast –TV. . . . You have to have these fallback positions . . .

Gerard goes to work with a guy in Shankill Mirror each week, - a hell of a lot of work goes into that – there is a really high quality programme comes out of it at the end of the day, but if we just bought the Shankill people into the studio you'd have it done in two hours. But you don't really want to do that, you want to be out there talking to people and trying to build something up by which, at the end of it, you could leave it. It could be a little unit of its own – you could move onto whatever was next. And its finding the right people also to work within communities like this, I think you can have – you know what I said about the community groups and working with them, but you do also have to look for like –minded people who are into issues and so forth. And magazines and just print journalism itself is very useful. They also have a distribution outlet which will publicise what you're doing too because they're part of it.

How are they keeping up with scheduling?

"I went on holiday, and was pleasantly surprised, I realised that we had passed a milestone, we weren't having to catch up all the time – no longer worrying, you need to be not a week ahead of yourself but month or maybe two months."

Who funds NvTv?

Start up funds

NV had to find start-up monies of £25K-£30K before they could start- had to earn it. Held back by this. Would have started sooner if they had had start-up/development funding.

- Regeneration Money;
- Peace money;
- City Council;
- Arts council;
- Social economy;
- Film commission schemes.
- Voluntary Service Bureau.

Community media scheme: NVTv always ran this like a development scheme. £20, 000 from City Council for outreach.

Bursary scheme: Funder: Film Commission, to produce 8 or 10 10-min videos on digital video. “digital was the ‘new thing’” the Nerve Centre did 3, NvTv did 5.

Problem with BS - no overheads, money goes to the filmmaker.

“NvTv weren’t supposed to put any money into that scheme but ended up putting a lot in. – all production work was subsidised by NvTv but with very little control. The large funders create difficulties, in one scheme the actual contract for the scheme ran to something like two hundred pages. There were real difficulties with massive workloads - like dealing with creating contracts for very temporary staff. Huge input for small output – 6-8 months work, contracts for everyone including runners (working a day or two) to produce one 10 min film. Also managers employed who know very little about it and is accountable to the funder, not to the producers.”

Regeneration Agency: '96, got 3-year funding from 97-2000 from the Regeneration Agency.

Groups also applied for funds to pay from £2K -£5K, small amounts. NV experience is that groups can cope with that level of fund-raising. There is an issue if groups do not apply for funds on their own behalf, it looks as if NV is always trying to get the money – “its seen as e.g. “Community Media Network, but didn’t we give them money?”, but whereas if its your local group or whatever is trying to get it...”

Where do groups get it?

Their own project funders, particularly around recording/archiving project work. Funders are sympathetic to groups applying for “archiving” (video documentation of the project) costs which NV would work out with groups..

“ – There’s never really a generic unfortunately that’s what we discovered – that everything is costed separately because projects are always different. So it is a bit of a problem. “

The money coming in from those groups was also paying for someone to be in NV to do it.

Social economy project: funds the community journalists – NV “assist” them in getting the money – am unsure exactly how this operates need further information, SE may not operate in exactly same way here. More support available in North due to regeneration and Peace initiatives.

Things to take note of:

Controlling Funds: Need is for funding that you can control. Large schemes, UK wide for instance, tend to ignore differences between places – operating in Cork is different to Dublin for example. NvTv needs to get money it can directly control, and separate from the funders agenda.

Role in helping groups get funds: “We *assist* groups to get the money”.

Beware of training programmes!: *“ The other thing you don’t want to be doing is masses of training because again all your equipment is tied up in training and you’re not making programmes. also its really boring trying to explain to funders that actually you have never, and we have never, trained in isolation other than those one or two day workshops that you see that we do. Everything else is training on production. When people come to do the one-or two-day workshops with us, generally speaking it’s for their job. Its because they do something and that’s why they need the training. So if they’re a filmmaker they’re coming to do the Final Cut Pro because they want to use it, or if they’re coming for the PhotoShop its because they’re maybe not in media, but because they’re working in the library or something. So they’re coming for that reason, not because they just want to get a certificate at the end of the day and we’ve always done that because otherwise you become a sausage factory. And yes the person goes through - they’ve got their certificate but they have to go out and find a job, what happened? what have they made? and all the rest of it. So how do we get round that when funders want to give the certificate and not the what is it, they’re not interested in the ongoing activity . . .”*

CMN: *they’re employment orientated?*

NV: *Yea that’s right, so the people we said we would work with in the communities and communities of interest were people who would be invited to go on a 7 - 8 days scheme. [journalist school]”*

“Again I think this is all a very difficult area because funders often require you to say “oh you’ll do this open thing and anybody can apply” and all the rest of it, but then when people do apply they drop out they don’t want to do it. I mean you – really what you’re looking for I think with programming and volunteering is actually dedication, I mean it doesn’t even matter if you’re kept in some ways, making a film requires immense dedication to bring it about – and energy . . .”

Appendix No 29 CR report on video collaboration for 'Hidden'

Post Production Report

Video Collaboration with Community Response - Hep C Drama 'Hidden'

Results / review by Gary Sargent and Robbie Byrne

ROLES	-	Camera / Editor
TITLE	-	"Hidden"
GENRE	-	Factual Drama
DURATION	-	40 minutes
RECORDING DATES	-	January – April 2005

Introduction

In 2004 Community Response facilitated a group of people in creating a drama piece to mark the 2004 Hepatitis C Awareness Day. Through a series of workshops the group created a story based on the lived experience of a community affected by Hepatitis C, explored through improvisation and role-plays.

Hidden was based on the Forum and Legislative theatre techniques of Augusto Boal. This style was chosen because it combined the high emotional awareness of a situation created by live theatre with direct community consultation.

The purpose of this project was to bring the voices and experiences of people, affected by Hepatitis C, to the attention of the Drugs Task Forces and the Health Service Executive in order to influence policy development on Hepatitis C.

Each play was performed to a community group in a live setting. After presentation the characters within the play would re-emerge taking questions from the floor on the content within the play. Importantly, these questions were always answered from their characters perspective, allowing the individual concerned to maintain anonymity or personal connection to the subject material. The maintenance of personality by the cast, even when questioned, ensures Boal's consultation process of material, cast and audience as a single bound entity.

Video Application

During the initial stages of performance, video recording of the play, within the live setting, was identified as both an appropriate archival tool, and an appropriate method of capture for the diverse and often heated debate that followed the plays presentation. The use of video in this particular capacity was potentially problematic, primarily because it was feared it might affect individuals being open and honest with themselves and others in the post performance setting.

Video capture of the consultation process after each performance did however open up the possibility of accurately recording the views being expressed. This avoided a situation where the drama group or those connected to it could in any way misunderstand or misreport the findings as they saw them at the end of the exercise.

It also ensured that any findings found could potentially be presented to the Health Board Executive in a tangible, raw and honest manner, which on reflection demonstrated the real, active and current views on Hepatitis C.

Hidden was eventually performed a total of 13 times in order to consult with a wide range of groups and was seen by more than 500 people between July 2004 and April 2005. Audiences included the Family Support Network, prisoners, service-users, service providers and secondary school students.

Results

The initial fears that the video recording may in some way interfere with the genuine open audience participation were emphatically disproved. It was agreed that the video effectively captured the interaction and debate of the consultation process, the powerful audience animation and the rewards Boal's techniques can achieve. It verified the audiences thoughts and grievances, the consistencies of misinformation within the current medical service, and the discrepancies between the family support available and the support required. Significantly it also clearly demonstrated the role of Community Response and the drama group as facilitators to discussion and not as the directive protagonists.

The informal filming approach used was also an important aspect to the projects success. Cameras were often left running at all times in a static location, intrusive camera close ups were avoided and the pace of discussion was never interrupted to facilitate camera or microphone movement. The intrinsic benefits of this casual approach certainly improved the openness of audience participation. It did however make camerawork difficult at times and left little or no 'negotiated' gaps between questions and answers. This would later make editing the final piece rather tricky. The use of two cameras towards the end of the project helped to reduce these problems.

The seating arrangements and acoustics of the different locations involved also presented particular problems. Sound quality was perhaps the most telling, with the use of large halls and gymnasiums in some cases making sound quality very difficult to control. The static camera approach and the unpredictable nature of the discussion often clashed. Individuals were sometimes themselves hidden behind other audience members and this caused the loss of the individual's body language on camera and loss of their audible sound. It was agreed on reflection that future project venues would be visited prior to filming by the film crew, minimising any possible problems audience seating may have on picture and sound.

Familiarity with the video equipment by the group was not a fundamental concern. During the early stages of filming however better camera preparation and shot execution would have improved the results; i.e. less camera panning and zooming from audience to

respondent, better choice of camera location and better knowledge of camera sound settings. With respect all of these aspects improved as the project developed. A simple setting discrepancy on the video camera to long play recording mode, although somewhat insignificant from a recording point of view, did make life in the editing room a little more difficult. Without accurate time code in the long play setting, individual tapes in some cases had to be captured manually through Final Cut Pro. This became very time-consuming as oppose to the bulk capture facility usually available. The recording heads on the lead camera also caused problems. The heads once misaligned, continued to record three separate performances of the play before the error was discovered. This led to picture and sound loss on all three performances to such a point that they were unusable. It was agreed that in future projects the material would be reviewed to identify technical problems or glitches before another show.

It was agreed a substantial portion of the editing time could be eradicated during the completion of the next project. Preparation and knowledge of the Hidden material available was shady in that performances had been spread out over a nine-month period and no review of the footage had been done. Without any notes or reference to individual tapes each performance had to be watched from beginning to end to identify and glean the important points within. The suggestion that the group drew up a treatment at this point helped to develop and focus them to identify and group material in a storyboard like method. This agreed concept then became the skeletal framework for the completed piece. The failure of the main hard drive and the loss of the final draft was a debilitating blow to a great deal of hard work, but the final product is probably better because of it.

In conclusion the video recording of Hidden achieved more than what was probably expected of it, in that the final film provides an active animated support to the true sense of feeling among those who have been affected or touched by Hepatitis C in Ireland. Like those who took part in the performances the videos function is undoubtedly met, to simply to tell the their truth, the community's, as it really is.

Appendix No 30 Conditions abroad:

This section looks at what we brought back from some of our ventures to the ‘outside world’. Here I want to focus on what it was that was useful from our perspective; how that experience supported us in building community television in Ireland and the issues we experienced in engaging with global networks.

1

The first problem that CMN activists identified on home ground was that on the one hand CM operators tried to get the community organisations to come into the studio they had so carefully built with a lot of hard work but on the other hand community organisations didn’t want to leave their home turf. This attachment to the base is a condition of community organising – it happens there, not the next village, town, or city, so the first reason they don’t go to the community studio is because they are very busy on their own turf. Secondly, they do not see themselves in the community media operator, and this is not simply to do with on-line presences but more to do with who in the studio is making the decisions:

diversity on screen is representative of people who make decisions about programming. These programs reflect the tastes of relatively similarly-minded decision-makers rather than the diverse needs of local communities (Gangadharan, 2002)¹.

In my first years as Co-ordinator for CMN I met a woman working in a Community Employment Project like mine but with the Traveller community. When I heard where they were based, I said, “oh there’s a community radio station near you could you connect with them?” her response was, “we’d love to but they won’t come to the halting site and our people are not comfortable going into the settled community”. The problem persists – as much as five years later a community radio station manager protested to me by saying – “but it’s a community radio station; the community has to come into the studio!” CM operators have to engage with communities on the terms that condition community activity and while some clearly try to address this it can take years to forge the relationships and find solutions to the problems. Many stations don’t engage with mobility until they are well established.² Such strategies do not appear until the community media operator has gone through a very extensive amount of engagement with the community on the ground. This can often be confused with building a high level of organisation – and essentially an institution, the search for funding and public visibility can dominate. So the problem persists until the cloud of organizing and corporate building (Fox-Piven F. &, 1979) is lifted so the issues that exist in the community can be dealt with.

¹ <http://www.alternet.org/story/12841>

² GRMC in Michigan had developed some very definite strategies to do this using mobile units; in Ireland the development of an Outside Broadcast Unit (OBU) was a priority for P5TV, and Nearfm radio station proudly displayed its new van <http://www.nearfm.ie/vanlaunch.html>

Perspective from the ground – what DCTV needed

At the start of this research project our question was ‘what do we need to do to set up community television?’ Our first response was to look for some examples elsewhere – ‘who is operating community channels and where?’ We know we won’t be able to import their practice - but we are not adverse to importing ideas if they provide us with what is needed. Generally our approach is that whatever will help, will do - and the quicker the route, the less difficulty, and less demand on our very slight resources the better.

While at one stage it was thought that a comparative study would be ‘a good idea’, it soon became clear that this had limited value. The first part of the Feasibility Study for DCTV, entitled *Lessons From International Experience* was undertaken on behalf of the Dublin Community Forum, this looked at channels in the US since they were distributed under license and by cable (O’Siochru, 2002) similar to legislation set down in Ireland. The report is a useful guide to what exists abroad, levels of participation that exist in community channels, and how the regulatory environment provides different opportunities as well as constraints in other contexts.

Using – or not using – knowledge from abroad

While some information on what was happening in other places seemed as though it should be useful, what we learned through the process of the CMF Feasibility Study was that we didn’t have any structures in place that we could compare with whatever other structures we found.

What the Feasibility Study did was to generate connections with people in those channels, and to learn how those CTV’s managed to deal with their own conditions. As we progressed it became clear that some activists felt that community television would happen in ‘whatever way it can’. One CTV activist told me that they had stopped doing workshops on how to set up and operate community television with other groups because “they just go away and do whatever they are going to do, or can do, in their own situation” (Interviewee - personal communication). While the information I and others were bringing to discussions, workshops and lobby processes, were welcomed, unless this is used in a live way the papers ‘collect dust’.

The activity that was necessary for the Irish activists was a dual process - on the one hand lobby activities and gaining influence, i.e. relating to the state; and on the other hand promoting awareness and organisation building on the ground. These can seem to be very separate processes but were clearly more closely linked at a later stage in the development of the new community television sector. **The information that was needed was information that could make a difference at the junctures when there was something happening.**

What was useful was material we could show and distribute at meetings where community organisations gathered, for submissions to committees reviewing legislation, presentations to local authorities. Using clips of work done in Irish organisations and having material available about these for both community workshops and presentations to councillors demonstrated the need on the ground for this kind of activity and the benefits it brought.

Sampler material like this was used in a variety of places³ and while I often felt the material was not being used as I had thought, it did prove to have other uses in different contexts.

In 2000 there was a draft piece of legislation and we were doing a lot of lobbying; when the bill was enacted in 2001 all we had were very skeletal permissions⁴. While we had the right to form a channel that was 'not-for-profit', we had no funding lines; while we could create 'community content' we could not control the transmission - a key difference with the conditions for community radio stations that transmit free-to-air; the 2001 Act contained a 'must-carry' clause meaning that community channels would be carried by cable. What this in fact meant was that CTV is tied to commercial cable companies. Williams' vision of independent networks is in fact the cable networks built by people in Indian and Nepalese villages with production added in. Had the Irish deflector pirates established not-for-profit community owned resources then they would have been half-way to community television – all they needed was the production, but that they did not do. Another connection for us to the US was that the larger of the two cable companies operating in Ireland was Ntl, an American multi-national⁵.

In 2001 community radio in Ireland had put down five years of hard work in building the stations infrastructures, developing community broadcasting, and the umbrella group the Community Radio Forum (CRF)⁶. They therefore had a huge contribution to make in terms of the tacit knowledge the stations had acquired. But even the community radio activists that joined DCTV appeared to have had problems knowing where to start with community television. In Ireland, community television activists needed help.

What were we looking for?

In looking at other community channels we realised they could only be understood in a holistic way, i.e. how the political, historical, and social factors combined to produce: -

- the regulatory frameworks in which they operate and what that allows them to do;
- the kinds of resources and facilities available to them and where these come from;
- the sorts of concerns and issues that affect their content and programming.

But this is not always transparent – for example we learned how the Brazilians had a similar legal situation to ourselves, but it was harder to find out how they had dealt with it – and much of this is dealing with local power structures and therefore remains localized knowledge. But some of the ways that community channels worked did make an impact and indicated routes for our activity.

³ an example of the type of material I produced as a support pack is included in Volume 11, also see Appendix No. ... and Chapter two methodologies)

⁴ the two sections of the act that deal with community channels fit on one page

⁵ Ntl has since taken over the Irish cable provider, Chorus, and NTL itself has been consumed by the larger US company Liberty Media.

⁶ Now CRAOL

3 Connecting across borders:

Many of the connections we had with community media in other countries were developed through the historical relations of key actors, and in CMN founder members had strong international links to Videazimut (CLIPS, 1997), AMARC (Day, 2003), (O'Siochru S. , 1998) , and subsequently CRIS. Our EU projects transnational partnerships were developed from those connections. Individuals who had claim to status put their weight behind the project - George Stoney, the veteran 'father of community television' in the US and Professor at NY University agreed to accompany us to meet with government officials when we were lobbying around the Bill in 2000. Dirk Koning came from Grand Rapids Community Media Centre in 2003 to advise about organisational and infrastructure needs of community television channels and also met with local institutions to support our work; many others came to assist by providing training and facilitation to CM activists. This kind of support has continued with people from the US and those EU countries which are the easiest to travel from to Ireland.

Connecting with activists from the Global South is more difficult, travel is harder and our circumstances don't always allow us to travel. So while there have been many global events and coalitions over the past ten years the feedback has been limited. The significant factor for this project in Ireland was that developing community television in Ireland was fraught with difficulty, our organisations closing down, becoming homeless, and a never-ending search for funding for activities while at the same time maintaining a 'positive front' in order to deal with authorities, political lobbying and advocacy. This is not unique - when we wanted CAN TV in Chicago to come and help us with infrastructure, they were too busy struggling with the attacks on the franchise across the US. It has been inspiring when we have had visitors, or when we can go abroad, but the difficulties mean our communications become very important. The online support that Independent media activists gave to the Liverpool Dockers emphasizes the potential of these communications for our activities.

As a 32 county organisation CMN has had historically a lot of cross-border interaction with our members in Northern Ireland, the relationship with groups in the UK is also different to the relationships we have with other countries. I am going to start with where we looked to first, where we saw community television active and thriving in a very clear form, and where, as the Feasibility study indicated, the license and carrier conditions would be most similar to what was contained in the new Irish legislation - the US.

4 USA: - PEG Access

"We are nearer to Boston than Berlin" – a famous phrase uttered by the free-market advocate Mary Harney, at the time the Irish Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment. Many of us fighting for community television in Ireland might wish it were true in one sense - the community access that exists in the US is impressive to our eyes, but the media culture that is being exported all over the world is broadly and strenuously objected to as a commercially driven monolith carrying poor quality content! Despite the protestations, however, US style formats for news, soaps, and other content is spreading in direct proportion to the concentration of media ownership; this is power and globalisation.

However, the existence of the community channels in the US demonstrates the fact that these are in fact another kind of media that pose a threat to the status quo by its very existence.

When I visited Cincinnati and New York in 1999 with a CMN colleague we were awestruck by the kinds of facilities we saw in community television stations. I was literally dumbfounded. It really was like walking into a wonderland, and I found it hard to know where to start, where to look first; at the station, its equipment, the programming, the staff, volunteers, their funding, its history - or what. And while I was very much aware that we would not and could not reproduce its like in Ireland, it is hard not to want to.

Origins of PEG Access

PEG refers to Public, Educational and Governmental – which are often explained as the three ways of accessing a municipality. PEG Access television channels in the US were established under the 1984 Cable franchise Policy and Communications Act. But as with all developments it didn't start in 1984 (Olson, 2000)⁷

Many US community activists trace the development of access television back to Robert Flaherty's approach to production and participation in the making of "Nanook of the North" in the 1920's. This initiative influenced the Challenge for Change programmes funded by the National Film Board of Canada in the 1960's. Early video collectives, part of the 1960's counter-culture, were also significant agents in establishing community channels. Public access channels began to appear in the US around 1968⁸, developing across two fronts – (a) the municipal and commercial sector agreements to provide access, and (b) the activists who developed organisations to support production on the ground. Olson's account separates the organising on the ground from the activities of the cable companies and the municipalities. He refers to the lobbying done by those particular activists, but the relationships that evolved either between activists and the funders and carrier companies, or between groups of activists themselves, are not explored.

Telling the history of CTV is difficult but taking this approach seems to exclude not only problematic issues, but also real histories and real people. It prevents a diffusion of the knowledge of how things happens - how these things come about; what is involved in the lobbying and what makes it succeed if it does; and in so doing it hides what it is that helps people to create their own communication channels. This approach allows people to 'move on', acknowledging histories and different agents but leaving unwanted 'baggage' behind. But how a thing is formed, the relationships and interdependencies that bring about agreements and contracts, are the grounds from which an entity grows. And if this is lost then aren't we missing some key elements in the story?

⁷ Bill Olson of Eau Claire Community Television tells the history of public access television in the US, it is a concise and readable account of the various originating events available at <http://www.geocities.com/iconostar/history-public-access-TV.html?200718>

⁸ the first agreement for public access television in New York was in 1970 when two cable companies signed an agreement with the New York City government.

Community broadcast media in the US are an example of a struggle to hold rights that have already been gained but are subject to repeated attacks. In terms of our efforts in Ireland the information we gleaned from the US was useful for lobby activities, projections of costs, types of programming, and the different services US CTVs offered, and all this was concisely presented in the Part 1 of the Feasibility Study (O'Siochru S. , 2002). But in terms of our organising and building for community television in Ireland there was little we could **directly** use from the channels themselves. The real value came from the US CTV activists sharing of their approaches, training in skills, production and training methodologies, and where possible lending specific supports for lobby activities.

What is also significant about US CM organising is the ACM (Alliance for Community Media)⁹ made up of the PEG access centres and founded in 1976, at the same time as the post Watergate Media Alliance¹⁰, the National Association of Media Arts and Culture in 1980¹¹. The cross-links between organisations are evident from a cursory Internet search, but there are also clearly differences between the range of media alliances that exists, perhaps based in history, but also based in practices, ideology, and directions. In this it bears relation to the American community organising community – diverse and integrated at the same time and finding expression in a number of forms such as Community- Wealth¹².

Conditions of community television in the US

Community television in the US exists as a right under the First Amendment to the constitution which guarantees the right to free speech. The 'franchise' which obliges cable companies to donate 2% of their subscriber income to provide for community television channels, gives the community television channels financial independence and supports their staffing and equipment needs. The franchise comes under review periodically and as a matter of course the opposition gathers whenever a channel's franchise is up for review. The main opposition comes from the cable companies themselves who don't like giving up 2% of their profits and allocating a portion of their bandwidth to the channels, but attacks also come from far right elements who are opposed to the kind of content the channels carry such as HIV/ AIDS advice, information on women's refuges, reproductive rights, and educational programming targeting low-income groups. The energies of staff and activists are regularly consumed by these struggles, though mostly they have had huge support from the communities and it is "people power" that ensures the Access channel's are heard at the franchise hearings (Popovic, 2006).

While the question of the de-radicalisation of many channels appears to be an ongoing issue, the fact that many channels draw these attacks from the right indicates they do pose a

⁹ <http://www.alliancecm.org/> originally the National Federation of Local Cable Programmers

¹⁰ <http://www.media-alliance.org/index.php>

¹¹ <http://www.namac.org/>

¹² <http://www.community-wealth.org/>

threat to conservative and capitalist forces, and this is not simply that they take 2% of profits – which is not much for a large corporate to pay for a clean bill of civic duty¹³.

Channels vary according to the gift of their franchise, so high density areas such as New York have a substantial gift as opposed to rural areas with scattered populations. Manhattan Neighbourhood Network has its own large building with full blown facilities, purpose built studios ranging from one-person studios to theatres capable of hosting different types of programmes from audience shows to dramatic productions. So while the funding can be substantial in a place like Manhattan, NY, where there is a high density of population, it can be pitiful in sparsely populated rural areas; in 2000, Cincinnati Community Video worked on a total budget of \$350,000 per year, which is a small, but there are channels operating with very little having nothing but their equipment and basic costs¹⁴. This of course does not mean that low-income channels are doing a bad job.

US community channels – some examples

MNN – Manhattan Neighbourhood Network, NY: MNN has a large state-of-the-art premises built at the end of the 1990's, housing a studio that can accommodate an audience and can be adapted for a range of purposes; a number of editing rooms; and transmission monitoring studios. In a gender and equality survey MNN proved to have the highest proportion of black and Hispanic people on its screens than any other channel –important in New York. MNN goes out on three channels, has an extensive website, issues a newsletter, and supports a youth channel.

Lots of things in MNN work extremely well - one of their innovations that has stayed with me as a vital piece of equipment for any community television was what George called their 'one-person studio' which he said was the most used studio in MNN. In a tightly organised 'cabin' is a rostrum camera, video and audio playback and recording decks all controlled with a joystick operated by the 'driver'. This allows a person to come into MNN with a prepared edit script and a range of materials (such as photographs or newspaper clippings) that can be placed under the rostrum camera; audio tapes; video footage - and construct their programme. This can be done in real-time as a live event or the studio used to construct and record a programme. The extent that this studio was used by MNN's community shows how important it is for community channel users to have access to easy to use and purpose designed facilities.

But the difficulties of running a channel include keeping a schedule in place and yet creating space for access – MNN has a waiting list of six months to get a programme on air (Stoney, G. 2001). And efforts to make space in the schedule for current issues can upset other

¹³ Phoenix Relays in Dublin in 1970's had a clear sense that this was a way to put something back into the community. Interestingly large corporations today tend to try to create a community within the company to buy worker loyalty, while this avoids relating overtly to an outside community whose geographical space they share, this in fact is often part of specific policies to change the local allegiances. Gary McGann explained Smurfitt's interpretation of the corporate responsibility role in Columbia as providing benefits to villagers who worked for the company and that worked to withdraw local support from the FARC.

¹⁴ all channels engage in fund-raising and promotional activities – at the Alliance for Community Media conference channel branded bags, T-shirts and base-ball hats were being sold on every stall

policies, like for instance ensuring that all three channels do not show the same kind of content such as religious programmes at once.

Mamaroneck was originally two towns on the borders of three counties outside New York State, it is now one town crossing three different Municipalities, including Larchmount, Mamaroneck and the 'Unincorporated Area'. The community television channel (LMC-TV)¹⁵ has three studio bases in three different sites – one in a library, another in a town centre and another in a school - an initiative that serves people across boundaries. People in the communities are governed separately but have huge cross linkages. The channel works as a means to support the needs that exist between and across these boundaries. The base of the channel in its library, school, and community centre locations underlines the community ownership of the channel and it's radical difference to mainstream television. This also means that the channel has an important role in supporting the needs of the three authorities to create bridges and develop communication channels; it can also access funding from the three authorities.

CAN TV in Chicago has five channels but what is of particular importance for us are their innovations that these serve their communities extremely well. These were designed in response to the needs of the community organisations in the city after CANTV conducted a participatory survey with their catchment area (Popovic, 2006). Within these particular frameworks CANTV has designed a range of services that yield high impact for community groups such as providing an artist to help design 'picture stories'; the 'hotline studio', a small studio that allows one or two people to conduct a live television show, connected by telephone to callers; and the interactive Bulletin Board, which is seen on screen but accessed by phone so people can listen to and see information on numbered items.

The hotline studio has facilitated help-lines of all sorts, health, victim support, lone parents advice, and it is even used to produce educational programmes like Countdown – a highly successful maths programme aimed at children who they say "will not be spoken to by a teacher at their school all day" (Popovic, 2006) and are therefore at risk of dropping out of education with a poor level of literacy and numeracy skills to cope with modern society . Community organisations report that the interactive bulletin board is a primary means for people to access their services, the channels logs also show that many people access the information late at night or in the early morning, indicating that this strategy does reach isolated individuals, which is confirmed by community groups when they follow up on how people have accessed their services (CAN TV)¹⁶.

Grand Rapids Community Media Center (GRCMC)¹⁷ Michigan, was particularly interesting to CMN for a number of reasons. Firstly, it had drawn together CM activists into one centre

¹⁵ <http://www.lmc-tv.org/facilities.html>

¹⁶ See www.cantv.org , also see "Lessons from International Experience" available at <http://www.activelink.ie/cmfdocs.html> downloaded on 9th June 2009: for more information and to see clips from Programme Formats go to document– "Programme Formats For Community Television" in Volume 2

¹⁷ <http://www.grcmc.org>

in a building in the centre of the town that had been the old library – the building itself represents an old tradition of access for the town. The organisational structure of GRCMC was also particularly interesting since it strove to network different resources within the community and link them to media services operating from the centre, including television, radio, Internet, production and archiving. Using a range of media platforms was one of the GRCMC strategies to provide a viable media centre for the town. The centers success was due mainly to the vision and drive of Dirk Koning, its Director, who had a talent for bringing people together – “I’m an aggressive peace-maker” (interview, 2003), he saw the key element of GRCMC as bringing the different strands of community media together under one roof. Dirks main advice was to diversify not only the funding sources, but also the kinds of media services that a centre encompassed. While this approach had a following amongst Irish CM groups¹⁸ there is a lack of cohesiveness and maybe even because of this, the very small nature of sector made forging alliances incredibly difficult. Despite this, efforts to forge alliances have been evident over the last two decades and continue.

Other US ‘independent’ channels

While the majority of US CTV’s are licensed under PEG Access, there are a number of channels that operate quite differently – these stem from Paper Tiger Television and include Free Speech TV; Deep Dish TV, Dyke TV; and the Independent Media Centres.

The importance of these channels is that they keep up an interaction with community channels, and are therefore a link to an ideologically driven agenda that actively promotes access and free speech issues. These are independent in that they are not the PEG access system and do not have to subscribe to the franchise system. The relationship between the PEG access channels and the independent groups is important to both, facilitating programme exchange between channels as well as other benefits (acknowledged by all: see websites, also see (O’Siochru S. , 2002, p. 30)

5 CTV in Latin America and the Global South:-

We didn’t go to war to kill or be killed. We went to war in order to be heard.
(Subcommandante Marcos)

Links with the Global South are difficult for us in Ireland mainly due to language and travel issues, but an important series of seminars called TV Nova¹⁹ in 2001, facilitated travel and accommodation to bring together activists from around the world²⁰. The further the distance in time from this event the more unique I think it was (see Volume 2 for report). TV

¹⁸ For example CMN’s strategic plan was to develop community media along these lines, NEAR Media Co-op in North Dublin, while it’s main operation is the radio station, is developing a range of community media services, such as NearTV, and IT training, and a number of other organisations also see themselves as combining media.

¹⁹ organised by the independent cinema house Nova in Brussels

²⁰ There were no North American CTV’s represented at this event.

Nova and the French FreeTV event in Marseilles made extraordinary efforts to facilitate translation. In the English language the most accessible resources are Downmunt (1993) "Channels of Resistance", Dagron's (2001) "Making Waves", Rodriguez's (2001) "Fissures in the Mediascape", although due to the efforts of the OURMEDIA Network more material is quickly becoming available. Amongst his sample, Dagron cites 13 video projects, 9 Internet / mixed media projects and 20 radio projects, of a total of 50 projects, 11 are Latin American.

The Zapatistas use of video and electronic media in the mid 1990's has probably been one of the most cited and most profound influences on activist use of media in the last decade. While the use of spectacle is not new, the Zapatista use of media demonstrated how a people organised around their approach to media could effectively turn around what was a tool of oppressive forces – corporate mass media - to operate in their favour (Halkin, 2008). The differentiation between internal and external use of video/media meant a strategic use of video in particular as a tool in people's own hands. Similarly there are numerous projects around Latin America that have taken this approach and Freire's influence is very clear here; including TV Vive (Racife) and TV Maxambomba in Brazil, who, lacking broadcast distribution systems went to town and village squares showing their work using a mobile unit and giant screens in a van. Dagron's account spans time, space, and media: miners radio in Bolivia that operated from 1949 until Meza's coup in 1980 to the Chiapas Media project in mid-1990s Mexico. All projects supporting dissenting voices from below. The range of project however also emphasise, as do the range we see in Ireland, the differences and interrelatedness of video production and television broadcasting. The Zapatista differentiation between internal and external use of media highlights the 'talking to' and 'talking with' aspects of media; Dagron differentiates three perspectives focused on either process, product, or distribution. Yet there is an aspect of television that is similar to radio and has been operating since it was invented – which is live broadcasting. This gets little attention, despite the significant achievement of programmes like Democracy Now (which began as a radio programme and became television when they turned a camera on presenter Amy Goodman when the programme was threatened by an internal ownership dispute) and the work of CANTV which utilizes live transmission and telephone lines to create a range of programming opportunities for the community and voluntary organisations in Chicago²¹.

Community television in Brazil won the legal right to exist, without any funding strategy implicit in the legislation it took a long time, but TV Maxambomba finally negotiated with the local authority and in December 2001 had 13 full-time workers. In Venezuela under the Chavez regime a public television system ViVe was developed and has been operating since 2003 that encourages participation and promotes accountability.

6 CTV in Europe

The European Parliament Policy Department published a report on the state on CM in the EU in September 2007, this study was conducted by an independent research company KEA and as such does not represent the CM sector view of itself. It is yet another signifier of the acceptance and authorisation of CM in European countries, (followed by the recent

²¹ For more detailed information on these and clips see 'Programme Formats' Appendix No 30

statement on CM by the Council of Ministers and the Austrian funding initiative that I have already mentioned) and that it is now achieving a pan-European status. The study used Hungary, UK, France, and Ireland as examples of countries that have implemented policies to support CM, but also gives a cross cutting view of the regulatory and official authorizations of CM in EU countries²². This PAR project communicated with and contributed to the study.

The study states that broadcast CM have been operating across Europe since the sixties and seventies, while this may give a picture for CM organizing that gathered and operated under the umbrella of CM it does not account for a range of other activity either legal or illegal. Being a report for the European Parliament this study focuses on the policy context and includes a caveat worth noting:

The above examples show how CM's definition in media law impacts the sectors development. Member States are therefore well advised to consider the role CM are to play in the overall media landscape if they develop or review related laws and regulations. (KEA, 2007 , p. p.28)

Under a subtitle "Towards Independence" Ireland is quoted as providing a good model for what could be seen as a 'cheap option' in its Community Radio Support Scheme which amounted to €53,000 at the time of the study, but is now curtailed to €25,000:

This scheme illustrates how a regulator can contribute to capacity building in the sector with comparably little resources (p.36)

The scheme provides little support – costs for reviews, facilitation etc , but will be discontinued in 2010. The statement that "regulation does not translate into funding" is nothing new to CM operators, but if regulation results in limiting funds, or placing constraints on the kinds of media that can be used in CM, then this is a serious issue for activists to address. The equation therefore of CM with certain forms of media based on an assumption of cost should be strongly resisted²³.

CM across Europe is developing into a strong organised lobby, it has had a deal of success that is escalating and visible in the new lobby group the Community Media Forum Europe (CMFE) established in 2004, whose lead members are also members of AMARC. CMFE was established as a network of policy experts, organisations, and federations, (although my early information said that members should be federations, a recent reading makes clear that individuals and organisations can now join).

What follows is a brief overview of conditions for broadcast CTV in EU countries, a number of these are also members of the CMFE.

²² <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/activities/committees/studies/download.do?file=22408>

²³ Particularly when a Regulator is clearly operating to provide supports to develop privately owned, commercial, for profit media, and in the name of competitiveness fails in its policies to curtail the empire building activities of media moguls.

OPEN CHANNELS

Open Channels are broadcasting channels that operate on a first-come-first-serve access system, and were originally operating in five northern European countries, however they now see themselves as part of the broader CM movement.

Open Channels is broadcasting in ten Swedish cities and more are planned. Open Channel activity is similar to *Offener Kanal Radio+TV* broadcasting in 90 German cities. Also there are community or public access TV in *Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Denmark, Canada, Fiji, France, Finland, Guatemala, South Korea, The Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Uruguay* and *U.S.A.* . . . (<http://www.openchannel.se/cat/accesstv.htm>)

Open Channels operate in Sweden and similarly in Germany which is a state-supported access system funded on a percentage of the license fee, Denmark CTV is funded by funds from both the license fee and fees from commercial media. There is an Open Channels for Europe Network²⁴, initiated in 1997 when the Berlin Declaration called for rights to communication and was formally launched in 2004. The OCE Network is not a member of the CMFE, although some of its individual member organisations may be. The OCE member organisations are mainly CTV, whereas there is a dominance of Community radio organisations in CMFE, both groups have members that operate CM centres and use all media, but these would be in the minority.

NETHERLANDS

CTV has broadcast in the Netherlands since 1974, the Media Act 1988 provided a statutory framework for local television and CM is now recognized as a third tier of broadcasting and so occupies a place in the social understanding of media – i.e. it is part of the media environment. Community radio and CTV channels currently number 335 and having begun transmitting on cable, they now have access to a range of broadcasting platforms. Because they are seen as part of the Public Service sector of broadcasting, core funding is sourced, since 1997, via a municipal levy of €0.90 per household on the annual broadcasting fee.

The main form of organisation of these channels is in CM centres which run both Community radio and CTV along with a number of other CM operations. OLON, based in Nijmegen is the officially recognized umbrella organisation for a network of these centres and operates as a form of 'trade union' for the sector, Pieter de Wit is the Director and also President of CMFE. Nijmegen University has been a European centre for academic study on CM, mainly promoted by its lecturers Nick Jankowski, and Eric Hollander.

Local organisations that run centres are required to be representative of the community and to include groups such as ethnic minorities, young/old people, or women, and have a wide educational brief. While the board is responsible for the general programme policy and also regulates access of groups who want to participate or to transmit their own

²⁴ <http://www.openchannel.se/europe/>

programme, they tend to not engage with production within the channel. Production teams are mostly made up of volunteering contributors²⁵.

FRANCE – France has a large network of over 300 Community radio stations, the CTVChannels in Paris -Zalea, Marseilles, Toulouse, and others are developing, but have poor legislative recognition and the situation is radically different from the countries with Open Channels. France has a system of public television which is run by the local authorities and is far from any community owned system. There is a “freeTV” movement made up of ‘television associatives’ that networks to build for access, but they have to buy satellite space and are blocked by right wing local authorities. (Free TV Conference, Marseille 2005). Community radio is widespread in France but the first round of attack left them unable to network, and they are now very restricted by the ruling that all content must be local. However they do have a funding line in that a percentage of the commercial advertising revenue is levied to support community radio.

ZaleaTV has successfully fund-raised to buy satellite time on the Eiffel Tower and has run broadcasts for two periods of 6 months. They say:

Although the new French Communications law (August 2000) stipulates that non-profit television should be granted equitable means and qirspace, we were forced several times to pirate the airwaves in order to obtain from the CSA (French audiovisual authorities) even temporary legal licence to broadcast our programs. In fact pirate broadcasting was one of the main “arms” we had earlier used to bear on the new law and obtain authorization for non-profit television. So on 3 occasions and during 2002, Zalea TV pirate broadcast from its studios in Paris and also from a truck we equipped to accompany major social protest demonstrations in paris. Just as a reminder that although the law has been voted its still a constant struggle to make sure it’s at least a minimum applied! (Denton, 2003)

The first broadcast cost €40,000. Michel Fiszbin names the type of television they operate as ‘editorialised’ (Int11). There is little hope of getting access for communities on the digital network since the government has sold the spectrum to the commercial sector. This is pretty much the same across Spain and Italy.

SPAIN – there are very active networks in Catalonia and Barcelona, Spanish CTV groups are beginning to broadcast via the Internet since the digital spectrum has been sold off. Battles for local television ended with many losing their community identity being forced into commercial models. TELE K launched a big campaign to preserve its community ethos but lost and was forced into commercial model of operation, However there are long traditions of local CM and CTVs in Spain, one UK CM activist on visiting P5tv in Navan declared that he had seen many like this in Spain “built with love and passion”.

ITALY – Telestreets are low-powered channels broadcast to small local networks and a huge number of these operate both legally and illegally, depending how they broadcast. There are areas in what is called the footprint of larger broadcasters called ‘shadows’ where the signal

²⁵ for a concise summary of Netherlands CM see Peiter De Wit’s 2007 paper at http://www.communitymedia.eu/events/finding-and-funding-voices/presentations/Pieter_De_Wit-OLON.pdf

is blocked by buildings, mountains etc, this provides an opportunity for small local broadcasters to legally broadcast.

Another model of CTV is to be found in TV Arcoiris²⁶ which is an internet based CTV channel, produces programming only and is also broadcast by the local television company, The extensive website is their main channel and they use this for programming and scheduling strategies. Currently they put up programmes for viewer choice which can be viewed online or downloaded free of any charge. In their effort to democratize the broadcast schedule they have used a system of voting programmes for screening, but have acknowledged that this is subject to local or interest group organizing to get their programmes aired and this can cause particularist type problems and can marginalize other groups who cannot drum up the numbers of votes to get their programmes on air. Arcoiris is funded by an independent philanthropic group and therefore have the ability to buy satellite time (CMN, 2006).

UK

There is a strong community radio community in the UK but a small amount of community channels. The Blair New Deal brought a top-down idea of community and this had the effect of forcing community media into commercial models. Community television channels are licensed under the same regulation / legislation as commercial / independent channels, the difference being in the contracts that are drawn up at point of licensing. The UK community channels are lobbying to become a “Third Tier of Television” – and to be recognised as another form of Public Broadcasting.

The largest organisation representing community media in the UK was the Community Radio Association (CRA) – which changed its name to the Community Media Association (CMA) in 1997 in anticipation of convergence and technological changes including digitalisation. I attended a CMA conference in England in 1997 shortly after they changed the name where a session was devoted to the new legislation introducing digital television, this session was packed with the commercial/independent broadcasters who raged about the Regulators proposals for the allocation of digital spectrum. The difficulties for local broadcasters in the UK, where a lot of stations went bust, are documented and noted in the CMA report on CTV in 2005 (see below). This presence of commercial / independent operators at what we understood to be a community media event seemed strange to us at the time, again, somewhat like our experience of the US, the scale of the event was beyond what we would have seen had it happened in an Irish context. The reasons for this of course are the licensing conditions and when the community sector in the UK wanted to bring the Regulator to a discussion with the sector, they had no option but to, as a matter of course, include the commercial / independent channels. The situation in Ireland where broadcast CM is under separate license conditions avoids this problem.

This illuminated one old lesson – the commercial operators will take over the agenda giving little space to CM concerns. In fact it is in their interest to ensure their concerns dominate,

²⁶ <http://en.arcoiris.tv/>

since their understanding of the media is as a market that is their natural territory – and should not be encroached upon by non-profit interests such as the community sector. This was put very clearly by a Northern Ireland operator – which I will discuss below. But what becomes startlingly clear is that commercial operators have no interest in the right to communicate, no matter what other deals they might be prepared to do with community media.

Community radio and community television – forms and needs

The CMA remains a predominantly radio oriented organisation, whilst holding a position of representing all community media. Community television activists broke away from the CMA when the lobby activities began in 2000 and formed their own Association of Community Television Organisations (ACTO) which and actively works for access television, and produces a newsletter mainly supported by David Rushton²⁷. While the CMA and ACTO work in tandem and both organisations take a place at the table in their monthly meetings with the British regulator OFCOM, ACTO's need to organise separately reflects the differences that exist between the radio and television sectors and their different understanding of their needs, in particular the sorts of tasks and timeframes involved in setting up community channels. The community radio culture did not meet the community television need at that point. While the CMA was extremely effective with their activities and lobbying around community radio, they didn't have the experience of video or television and therefore the understanding of the issues involved (Interview – again the tacit knowledge that was so necessary to the whole process from the lobbying to construction of organisations was not within the organisation. This problem also raised itself within CMN and DCTV, although in slightly different ways, I'll return to this later in Chapter 5.

UK Channels

There are a number of channels in Scotland, England, Wales, and Northern Ireland, all these are licensed under the same conditions as Local / commercial television but their contracts will differ. The lack of a specific CM policy and regulatory framework has been a substantial problem for all UK CM broadcasters and the Restricted Service license facility that is available is a severe constraint. CMA research into community television²⁸ made a number of recommendations that are hoped would 'free up' the media environment for CM. A major concern is adequate funding for CM across the board, and the tendency within the report to promote a loosening of differentiation between commercial and community media and a 'social investment' type for-profit model of CM:

An excessively rigid demarcation between local and community television, or not-for-profit 'social investments' and profit-driven 'commercial investments' should be reviewed. (p.8)

²⁷ <http://www.maccess.org.uk/members/ilt.html>

²⁸ <http://www.equal-works.com/resources/contentfiles/1215.pdf>

CMA recommendations are to establish Community of Interest Companies (CIC) that would manage resources for communities – which all fits the New Labour and is aimed at garnering support and funds. That CM organisations seek to frame their funding proposals to fit the funder is nothing new nor is it unique to CMA and the political circumstances in the UK, but there is a problem with the tightrope walking that CM organisations then need to do and this will constitute a barrier for smaller groups, whilst favouring larger NGOs with the resources to cope with the ‘double-talk’, double accounting, and the numbers – of volunteers, projects, equipment and media outlets etc., etc., and this ultimately means they will act as a gateway to ‘voice’.

Channel 7 – channel 7 is of interest because they started as a community channel but had problems and felt the answer was to build up their resources for which they needed to find some way to raise capital. They went into partnership with a local private college of further education, and found themselves making video for the curriculum. Eventually they had to buy the college out and they now say they are ‘going community’ again²⁹.

A quick review of CTV channels in the UK reveals a very corporate ethos. The overall approach from the CMA appears to put CTV forward as a resource heavy medium that is inevitably tied to commercial activity. None of this is really surprising given the New Labour agenda that has forced a top-down notion of ‘community’ in the UK and has pitted grassroots community organisations against not only the state but also against those community organisations that have bought into the New Labour ethos. But it does seem that community groupings in the UK needing ‘voice’ will find it hard to hear an echo from New Labour and that will include their followers.

7 CTV in Northern Ireland

Northern Ireland is particular primarily because of the war which highlighted the role of communication and media and also exposed the controls over who had voice. Indymedia Ireland activist Terence (Terence, 2004) correctly places emphasis on Brigadier Frank Kitson’s influence on the developments in media. Kitson oversaw the ‘counter-insurgency’ operations – i.e. the war – in Northern Ireland from before the war broke out, his book *Low-Intensity Operations* accords a special place for media in the “battle for hearts and minds” in dealing with uprisings and insurgency. CM therefore occupies a vital position – not just in terms of the war, but also in the peace process and in the major programme for regeneration - Peace and Reconciliation. Community groups that work in this environment are subject to extraordinary pressures.

Another element therefore enters the picture which concerns the relationship between commercial and community channels and what has been presented to us shows how a micro

²⁹ I had a discussion with the Station Manager when he visited Dublin in 2006. This was at the same time that the first round of Sound and Vision was available to community television; at the time I was totally unaware that there was any connection between the two events but it turned out that he was part of the ‘expert’ group assessing the applications for the BCI.

situation can highlight what is happening on a macro level. The situation in the North throws up some important issues.

NvTv

Northern Visions CTV channel NvTv³⁰ is the only community channel operating in Northern Ireland. At the time of writing another independent channel is developing in North Belfast transmitting on a local network somewhat similar to the Province 5 TV system in Navan, but is experiencing difficulties with transmission and infrastructure, the scope of this Dissertation does not allow for further exploration with this channel but it would be good to pick up again at a later time³¹.

NvTv was promoted and set up by Northern Visions (NV) – a long-established community arts organisation based in the Cathedral Quarter of Belfast. NV was a hub for arts activity, it was non-establishment, and ‘alternative’ in the sense that the group developed a democratic policy of access to the arts and was aligned with community activity. The organisation was developed by a small group who decided to buy a property and did independent / commercial work to pay the mortgage. There was therefore a personal investment on all their parts. Their activities over the years have allowed them develop relationships with all the relevant stakeholders to a community television initiative. NvTv was launched in 2004, after NV had run a radio license for eighteen months. NvTv runs recorded programmes, for the first four years it did not engage with live television and did not want to. News and current affairs were another area they omit since the Regulator felt they would be competing with the already established news services in the area. This Northern Visions ceded since they agreed that there was sufficient news and they also felt there was a fine dividing line between what was current affairs and regular programmes made for community television anyway. A programme that deals with community organisations responses to a major policy consultation is not far off what would be current affairs in that context, yet it is a community programme about community interests. So NvTv did not see this infringing on their activity in any way.

Northern Ireland had one thing that the Republic didn’t have when we began to build for DCTV and that was local commercial television. While ostensibly the same conditions existed as the UK, the context could not have been more different³². This meant that what emerges in the NI province is of a somewhat different nature to the UK regional local channels.

³⁰ For Report on NvTv see Appendix No 28

³¹ At the time we visited they seemed to be veering towards a commercial model, Andersonstown is a republican area and local regeneration, enterprise and employment is an important aspect of any new ventures. See appendix for NvTv case study undertaken for DCTV.

³² a point that has been used by our lobby efforts in relation to the new Bill to bring in permissions within the funding scheme which is does not include news or current affairs programmes in its remit to allow for ‘community affairs’ type programmes

Channel 9 Derry –

The license for Channel 9 was originally a community contract allocated to Derry Media Access (DMA) and the channel was launched in 1999 (Boyle P. , 1998) . While DMA had been in existence for almost 10 years, the community channel lasted only a short time, it got into difficulties - they suffered as had all UK community channels by being given the wrong power capacity by the Regulator – and couldn't survive ³³ .

The first meeting I arranged with Channel 9 in 2001, including members of CMN from Dublin and Belfast, we were warmly welcomed by Gary Porter the Station's CEO, and treated to a tour of the premises, their studios, and discussed how they operated at length. He was quite frank about the nature of the channel being commercial and profit-making. He had been the business partner of the original channel and told us that the nature of the take-over had been "a internal hostile bid" that was simply business minded and was necessary to take the channel out of severe financial difficulties – but the reality was that the community channel became commercial.

Unlike NvTv, Channel 9 has a brief to provide a news service for Derry. Channel 9 operates in a city that had a particular place in the start of the Troubles in Northern Ireland, this was where the civil rights marches began, and the Battle of the Bogside ran for almost three months before British Troops were brought in to push the RUC back into their Barracks. As all other places in the province it was riven by the war, and had a great need for positive action around, as Gary Porter put it, "good news and feel-good input". Gary felt that whatever would make people feel good about Derry was a positive contribution to the rebuilding during the peace process. So Channel 9 had a community platform to operate from emerging as a consequence of years of war. This was a commercial channel with a difference, a relationship to its locality that they understood involved community-building.

However, nearly four years later, when we started working to set up DCTV and needed to look at operating systems, our reception from Channel 9 could not have been more different. Gary porter was still there, but he was no longer willing to engage with us as representatives of a community television initiative. The situation for commercial / independents in the UK at the time was that their licenses were not guaranteed to roll-over when the change to digital happens. Their futures in this sense were very insecure. I contacted Gary by phone in April 2005 to ask could the DCTV group visit and would he show us the operations of the channel. I reported back to the Committee that:

Gary made very clear that he would not engage with us in any discussion of technicalities, technology or channel operations. Channel 9 has, in his view taken five years to develop their operations and this is now intellectual property that they will charge for. The board has taken a firm line on this matter. . . . Gary says that commercial television is unsustainable before 5pm. He has done a lot of market research and examined the trends on the weekly reach for local tv. He says that with 4%of the audience there is no commercial basis for television ventures. However he sees the community programmes occupying the unprofitable daytime hours - and providing content only to the independent channel that broadcasts them.

³³ See <http://thetruthaboutchannel9.blogspot.com/> for viewpoint 2007

While Gary was not hostile he made his position very clear but the prospect of community channels being relegated to the afternoons was not what we had envisaged as welcome terms for a coalition. The interesting thing about this for us at the time was that commercial channels might see community channels as not only content but competition and would then want to control our access to transmission. We had a better deal in the Republic – even under the terms of a rather woolly act. But it is significant that Donegal activists who neighbour Derry and fall into the Channel 9 signal catchment area have not pursued a community television license despite having submitted an Expression of Interest in 2003.

Appendix No 31a Austrian Government CM Fund

>Date: Tue, 26 May 2009 11:23:10 +0200
>From: Otto Tremetzberger <otto.tremetzberger@frf.at>
>
>Dear Colleagues,
>
>after 2 years of negotiating (and many more of lobbying) the Austrian >Parliament finally passed a
>legislation on Community Media last week.
>
>The legislation includes:
>
>1) a "fund for noncommercial broadcasters (Radio, TV)" with 1 Million € per year, administered by
>the Austrian Media Regulator RTR and financed from parts of the broadcasting fees;
>
>2) a legal definition of non-commercial Radio and Television as specific form of broadcasting media.
>
>### A rough and shortened translation of the legislation follows:
>
>Fund for the Promotion of non-commercial broadcasting:
>
>To encourage the private noncommercial broadcasting and its contents the Austrian Broadcasting
>regulator receives RTR 1 million euros per year from revenues from broadcasting fees.
>
>The fund is intended to promote the non-commercial broadcasting within the Austrian media
>landscape and its support in the provision of diverse and high-quality programs, which in particular
>contribute to the promotion of the Austrian Culture, the austrian and european identity, the
>information and education of the austrian population.
>
>Grants may be used for production costs, financial support of projects that lead to production or
>broadcasting of programmes, training offers, reseach, surveys.
>
>Noncommercial broadcasters are those that are no profit-oriented, whose program contains no
>advertising and who provide open access to the public.
>
>See the full German version (page 4):
>http://www.parlament.gv.at/PG/DE/XXIV/I/I_00113/fname_156085.pdf
>
>Kind Regards
>
>Otto Tremetzberger
>
>Mag. Otto Tremetzberger, MBA
>Geschäftsführer
>
>Freies Radio Freistadt auf 107,1 & 103,1 MHz
>Freier Rundfunk Freistadt GmbH
>Salzgasse 25, 4240 Freistadt

Appendix No 31b Australian legislation due to put CTV on digital spectrum

From: apc.forum-bounces@lists.apc.org
[mailto:apc.forum-bounces@lists.apc.org] On Behalf Of andrew garton
Sent: Tuesday, November 03, 2009 6:35 PM
To: A general information sharing space for the APC Community.
Subject: [APC Forum] Community TV now approved for digital spectrum inAustralia!!!

This is big news for us down under... nothing short of brilliant!
<http://is.gd/4MtBl>

Digital pathway for Community TV

The Rudd Government has determined a pathway for Community Television to make the transition to digital broadcasting.

"Community Television is an important component of the Australian media landscape and I am very pleased that it now has a pathway to digital transmission," said the Minister for Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy, Senator Stephen Conroy.

"I am delighted that by working closely with the Community TV sector, we have identified suitable spectrum and necessary funding to enable Community TV stations to begin digital simulcasts."

The Government will temporarily allocate vacant spectrum, previously known as Channel A, to the community broadcasting sector, allowing Community TV stations C31 in Melbourne, TVS in Sydney, QCTV in Brisbane and Channel 31 Adelaide to simulcast their services until the switch to digital-only television in capital cities in 2013. A new community licensee in Perth will commence digital-only broadcasts in early 2010.

The Government has also allocated funding support, totalling \$2.6 million, to enable the community sector to meet the costs of commencing digital simulcasts.

"This initiative will bring Community TV into line with commercial and national broadcasters, and ensure their loyal and passionate audiences can continue to enjoy their beloved local Community TV stations as they switch to digital television," Senator Conroy said

When the previous government introduced digital television in 2001, all commercial and national stations were given the spectrum and support to commence digital simulcasts, but Community Television was left marooned on analogue.

In the intervening years, as increasing numbers of viewers have made the switch to digital television, Community Television has struggled to maintain its audience. A marked decline in the number of Community TV viewers has had a material impact on the sector's ability to raise sponsorship revenue, and has threatened its ongoing viability.

"Unlike the previous government, the Rudd Government greatly values the role of community television. It provides hundreds of hours of truly local content every month, and reaches more than a

million viewers each week" Senator Conroy said.

Chief Executive of Sydney's TVS and Secretary of the Australian Community Television Alliance, Laurie Patton, welcomed the Government's announcement. "This is what the Community Television sector has long been seeking from the Government," Mr Patton said.

"The allocation of digital spectrum provides a certain future for Community TV and the provision of funding support will assist us during the simulcast period ending in 2013."

"Going digital will allow Community TV to reach more people and to finally become part of the broadcasting mainstream. Community television channels already provide innovative and interesting Australian content and this will increase dramatically once digital transmission commences and more people are encouraged to get involved," Mr Patton said.

Community TV provides a unique training ground for people seeking careers in television - both in front of the camera and behind the scenes. Some of Australia's most popular media personalities - including Rove McManus, Corinne Grant, and Hamish and Andy - got their start on Community TV.

"The Rudd Government promised Community TV that we would not leave them behind, and I'm delighted to be able to fulfil that promise today," Senator Conroy said.

"I look forward to seeing Community Television grow and thrive now that it has the certainty to be part of Australia's digital television future."

Date: 4 November 2009

apc.au - online media advisory, production, commons

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APC Forum is a meeting place for the APC community - people and institutions who are or have been involved in collaboration with APC, and share the APC vision - a world in which all people have easy, equal and affordable access to the creative potential of information and communication technologies (ICTs) to improve their lives and create more democratic and egalitarian societies.

apc.forum mailing list

apc.forum@lists.apc.org

<http://lists.apc.org/cgi-bin/mailman/listinfo/apc.forum>

Appendix No 32 Independent Media Centre 2004 Documents

A coalition involving Indymedia Ireland, Dublin Grassroots Network (DGN) and CMN established an Independent Media Centre for Mayday 2004 in CMN's (rented) premises in Dublin. The difficulties experienced by this coalition were the subject of an evaluation facilitated by Indymedia UK. The following documents are relevant to the text in the dissertation. They illustrate the aims and the problems.

Indymedia.ie Notice re Mayday 2004

NO TO FORTRESS EUROPE
Dublin Mayday No Borders Weekend 2004
For an Alternative Europe
April 30th-May 3rd

[HOME](#) | [WHY PROTEST?](#) | [WHAT WE ARE DOING?](#) | [WHAT YOU CAN DO TO HELP](#) | [NEWS, EVENTS & MEDIA GROUP](#)
[INFO FOR THOSE TRAVELLING TO DUBLIN](#) | [LEGAL & OTHER PROTEST INFO](#) | [FURTHER READING](#)

How do I get to Ireland?

Last minute information for people travelling to Dublin.

Meet up times/locations for actions:

A30 Friday 5.30pm Garden of Remembrance, Parnell Square (critical mass)

M1 Saturday 10am Civic Offices, Wood Quay (reclaim the city/no borders street theatre)

M1 Saturday 2pm Grafton Street, St Stephen's Green end (afternoon meeting point)

M1 Saturday 6pm Benburb Street/Parkgate St (bring the noise!)

M2 Sunday 11am Customs House Quay, IFSC intersection (no borders camp) (15 euros return ticket)

M3 Monday 3pm Ambassador Cinema, O'Connell Street (reclaim the streets)

Please note the M2 Sunday No Borders Camp is outside Dublin and will cost 15 euros return for transport. We HAVE to leave at 11.30am due to timetabling commitments so please show up on time. If you have not contacted the Accommodation group and you require a place to stay, then PLEASE contact them at accommodation@hushmail.com IMMEDIATELY as places will be limited. When you arrive in Dublin, please go to the Indymedia Ireland Centre (Charles Street, off Mountjoy Square, Upper Gardiner Street, Dublin 1 - on the northside of the city centre) where a representative

from the Dublin Grassroots Network will have details of your allocated sleeping space, and a map to guide you there.

Please do not bring anything valuable with you that could be stolen, or seized by Gardai.

Please read up on the legal & medical guidelines on the [EUfortress website](#). Phone numbers will be available in case you are arrested or injured. Write these on your arm in permanent marker.

You can bring GSM unlocked mobile phones and use them in Ireland. Irish network SIM cards cost approximately 30 euros. If you are using a roaming phone then the international access code for Ireland is +353.

For those of you who are travelling from abroad, there are two ways you can get to Ireland, by plane or by boat. If you are thinking of going by plane, many different companies fly into Dublin so your best bet is to check with your local carrier. The two main airlines that serve Dublin are Aer Lingus and Ryanair. Aer Lingus is the national airline, and although it is slightly more expensive than Ryanair, they have a unionised workforce, mostly in SIPTU (Services Industrial Professional Technical Union). For this reason we would encourage you not to book with Ryanair even if they are slightly cheaper. By booking ahead you will save money.

Dublin Airport is situated on the north side of the city, north of Santry and south of Swords. Its approximately a 30 minute bus journey into the city centre. There are private companies that run express coaches into the city, but it is cheaper (yet slightly slower!) to get the public bus service from the airport into town, the number 41 will bring you into the city centre. A single fare from the airport is e1.60 approx. For more information on routes and fares check out the Dublin Bus website.

Ireland is served by a number of ferry routes, from the UK and France. Irish Ferries serve a number of routes, including Holyhead (in Wales) to Dublin, Pembroke (Wales) to Rosslare, and Cherbourg & Roscoff (France) to Rosslare. Stena Line are another ferry company operating to Ireland from the UK. In addition to the Holyhead to Dublin route, they also sail into Dun Laoighre, as well as operating a Fishguard (Wales) to Rosslare line, and from Stranraer (Scotland) to Belfast. Swansea-Cork Ferries does exactly what it says on the tin, i.e. it goes from Swansea to Cork.

If you are coming to Ireland for any protests, landing in Dublin or Dun Laoighre is possibly the easiest option. Dun Laoighre is served by the local DART (train) and Dublin Bus services and is only about 45 minutes from Dublin's City Centre. Rosslare is approximately 2 hours south of Dublin by train. Cork is approximately 3 and a half hours away, and Belfast is about 2 and a half. The trains in Ireland are run by Iarnrod Eireann, check out their site for a full list of train timetables. A slightly cheaper option is Bus Eireann, again their site has all details of prices and times to and from other locations.

FOR PEOPLE TRAVELLING FROM THE UK: Stenaline operate ferry crossings between Stranraer-Belfast, Holyhead-Dublin (Dublin Port or Dun Laoghaire) and Fishguard-Rosslare. Adult monthly return fares cost £39 for the Holyhead-Dublin sailings and £30 for Fishguard-Rosslare. Cheaper rates are available for OAP's and children, see website for details.

Stenaline also operate a 'sail and rail' deal. 'Super Economy Return' fares (lowest prices but limited choice in crossing times per day) are a cheap way of getting to Dublin with fares costing £34 (Chester), £41 (Manchester and Liverpool) and £54 (London & Cardiff).

The Dublin Duo special offer (Stenaline) costs £63 (Chester), £74 (Manchester and Liverpool) and £90 (London) and includes train to Holyhead, ferry crossing and DART ticket from the port to Dublin city centre FOR TWO PEOPLE.

The Virgin Value special offer also run by Stenaline offers cheaper fares depending on how far in advance you book your ticket. 14 days in advance costs £32 with fares of £48 and £58 when you book 7 and 3 days in advance. Prices include travel between London and Holyhead, ferry crossing and DART ticket from port to Dublin city centre.

Irish ferrries operate crossings from Holyhead-Dublin and Pembroke-Rosslare. Both cost £30 for adults and £22.50 and £15 for students and children respectively.

All prices quoted above are for return fares in UK pounds sterling. Consult the relevant websites for more detailed info.

Where can I stay?

We have set up a contact email address for accommodation. If you or your group are intending on coming to Ireland for Mayday or during the EU presidency then please get in touch as soon as possible. The number of people that we can look after is extremely limited. We will be helping people on a first-come, first-served basis. Apologies but it is a lot of work and we simply don't have the resources to help thousands of people! The contact address is accommodation AT hushmail DOT com (the email address is up here in this format to stop spammers automatically detecting it). We advise you to bring basic sleeping materials such as a sleeping bag and possibly a tent in case the accomodation centres are shut down.

There are loads of youth and backpacker hostels in Dublin as it is a very popular destination for young tourists (often with no money!). Some good sites to check out are Hostel Dublin, and also Allens Guide. We cant speak from experience because we've never stayed in any tourist hostel, but from talking to people who have, Isaacs seems to be a decent bet, reasonably priced and clean, plus there's a rake of pubs in the vicinity (and a Garda station as well!)

If you're looking for something a bit more upmarket then you should consult the Irish Tourist Board, Bord Failte, they will be able to recommend a bed & breakfast or hotel for you.

Accommodation emails:

accommodation AT hushmail.com (PGP encrypted)

Groups planning to travel to Ireland

People from the Wombles and the Dissent! Network in the UK are planning on travelling to Dublin for the Mayday weekend. If you are living in the UK and plan on coming to Dublin, you can email them wombles AT hushmail.com

If you want to add anything onto this site, email the site administrator:
bluekingfisher AT hushmail.com

More information

Some good sources of information on recent events are Indymedia Ireland, which is part of the global Indymedia network. The site has news, photos, and commentary. The [Struggle site](#) contains a vast archive of news reports from anarchist/libertarian actions around the country, with documents and information for you to download for free. A recent addition, [Anarchomedia](#), is an excellent pool of Irish anarchist, activist and alternative news. Recent events involving non-authoritarian groups and individuals have included the campaign against the service charges, the anti-war demonstration at Shannon airport, and solidarity actions with the Thessaloniki hunger strikers, among others.

[return to the top](#) — www.geocities.com/eufortress —
www.anarchomedia.org/eufortress —
www.struggle.ws/eufortress

Notices on Community Media Content in the IMC:

Because information had been posted on the Indymedia.ie site only and no indication that any of the space had been given to community activity I issued notices on CMN's behalf to ensure the community organisations in the city got the message that community media was involved in the IMC.

Notice posted to Dublin City Community Forum

Independent Media Festival at CMN

54-55 North Great Charles Street, Dublin 1, Tel: 01 874 8226 Go to www.indymedia.ie for the full programme fro the festival including screenings and training sessions. Sign up for training workshops asap or on Friday 23 rd April 6pm		
Specific Community Media Information and discussion sessions scheduled during the Independent Media Festival		
Mon 26 th :	6pm	CMN and Dublin Community Television (DCTV) Information Session with Margaret Gillan, Co-ordinator CMN, and Secretary for DCTV.
Tue 27th:	2pm	Drugs and the Media: community strategies. A session examining ways of using media and developing a media strategy. Organised by CMN with Citywide, Community Response, Family Support Group. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Powerpoint presentation from Citywide on the history of drugs in Dublin; • Presentation and video screening from Community Response.
	6pm	CRIS (Communication Rights in the Information Society) Information session with Sean O'Siochru, (CRIS Spokesperson).
Wed 28th	5.30	Community Radio Workshop run by NEAR fm
Thur 29th	2pm	Programming for Youth, DCTV. Videos from three groups using a variety of strategies working with Youth, and discussion with groups. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Works by Fairview Productions with young people including "Wrapped" and "Ballymun Rap and Rave"; • Open Channel's "Teic Eile", and • Frameworks "What's the Buzz".
	6pm	DCTV Information Session with Ciaran Murray (The Media Centre, Coolock, and NEAR fm
Videotheque runs programmes from 5.30pm		

Notice posted in Community Exchange

7) Indymedia Centre in Dublin. *

The Community Media Network is working with Indymedia to run a Media Centre in CMN's premises at 54-55 North great Charles Street, Dublin 1.

There will be opportunities for your members to gain valuable media training in a range of workshops, as well a wide range of screenings and photography to see. If you want to register people for workshops, please let us know as soon as possible, or places will be booked up.

The Indymedia centre will run for 10 days, from Friday April 23rd, until Monday May 3rd, and will host a large range of events. In addition to the screenings, forums and workshops, there will be an exhibition and information space where Indymedia photography will be displayed and where groups will be able to host information stalls.

You can contact us most easily by email at <mailto:mayday@indymedia.ie> check the details on the web: <http://www.indymedia.ie>

As part of the weeks activities, Dublin Community Television will be running a series of short information sessions on the development of the DCTV Co-op, the timescales for awarding of licences and transmission, and what community organisations need to know to be able to use community television.

Contact Margaret Gillan, CMN Co-ordinator. Email: <mailto:mgillan@cmn.ie>;

Tel: 01 874 8226

Independent Media Centre 2004 Schedule

Friday April 23rd

Exhibition Opens to the public at 6pm. Closes at 11pm

7pm	Opening Forum	An introduction to the Indymedia Festival	Speakers from the Indymedia collective and the Community Media Network will host an introduction to the festival. This is the session where you can sign up for workshops later in the week
8pm	Undercurrents Screening	Undercurrents European Newsreel	Irish premiere of the new film project by the award winning undercurrents activist film-maker crew

Saturday April 24th

Exhibition Opens to the public at 10am. Closes at 10pm

11am	Media Forum	What's wrong with the media?	Speakers will include Vincent Browne, Harry Browne, Sean O'Seachru from the CRIS campaign and an Indymedia editor in a look at the problems with the mainstream media and indymedia's attempt to come up way to tackle them.
1pm	Internet Workshop	Internet Activism for Beginners	How can you use the Internet to get your message out, a practical course for beginners. With Terry (maintainer www.stopthebintax.com) Andrew (mantainer www.struggle.ws) and Indymedia editors
1pm	Audio/Video Workshop	Basic Audio and Video Skills for beginners	How you can take high-quality audio and video on a tiny budget and distribute it cheaply. A practical course for beginners. With Indymedia's Wolf and Aidan (who filmed the famous footage of police violence at the RTS street party on Mayday 2002)
1.30pm	Indymedia Screening	Indymedia European Newsreel	Footage from European Indymedia projects, with a special emphasis on the accession countries.
2.30pm	Forum on	EU - reform it or	What direction is the EU taking and what can be done to improve it? Critics of current EU policy

	Europe	resist it?	debate how we can bring about change. Speakers from DAPSE, Dublin Grassroots, Trade Union Movement, Opposition Parliamentarians
3pm	Desk Top Publishing Workshop	Basic Layout and design skills for producing print publications.	Software packages and techniques for producing professional-looking publications. With Chekov Feeney (Workers Solidarity/Dublin Grassroots Designer) & Indymedia's Kevin (Printflare Designer)
3pm	Journalism Skills Workshop	Journalism skills for beginners	Interviewing, researching and writing skills for the beginner journalist.
4.30pm	Indymedia Screening	WEF summit in Poland	The Indymedia Centre in Poland will be covering the summit of the World Economic Forum (WEF) in Poland during the Mayday period. Footage from their coverage.
7.30pm	Indymedia Spain Screening	SINTEL - Spanish Trade Unionists Struggle	English Language Premiere of the Award winning documentary about Spanish Trade Unionists struggle to keep their jobs and their long march to Madrid for Mayday 2003

Sunday April 25th

Exhibition Opens to the public at 11am. Closes at 9.30pm

12am	Indymedia Screening	Short Films from the Irish Movement against the war	From pulling down the fences at Shannon to planespotting and massive marches in Dublin. Indymedia was there. Speakers will include Tim Hourigan (plane spotter extraordinaire) Indymedia Film-makers
2pm	Forum on Community Media	Using new and old technology to empower community media producers	An open forum for networking, including participants from community radio, free software advocates, community television, hosted by the community media network
2pm	Press Spokesperson Workshop	Speaking to the media for Beginners	How to write press releases, give interviews and attract the attention of the mainstream media. With Barry Finnegan (Irish Social Forum and Lecturer in Journalism)
2pm	Photography Workshop	Basic digital photography for	Photography for independent news reporters - taking your photos and

		beginners	distributing them on the internet. With Indymedia's redjade
4.30pm	Mayday Forum	What's Mayday Dublin 2004 all about?	Why are groups planning to protest on Mayday and what points are they trying to make - your chance to put them on the spot. Including activists from Dublin Grassroots, London Mayday Collective, Thessalonika June 2003 anti-EU activist, others.
4.30pm	Free Software Workshop	Free Software for beginners	An introduction to free software for the non-technical. With Indymedia's Anthony.
4.30pm	Legal Rights Workshop	Your rights as a journalist.	What are your rights as an independent freelance journalist?
7.30pm	Indymedia Screening	Berlusconi's Mousetrap - what happened in Genoa?	Screening of Indymedia Ireland's Eamonn Crudden documentary about the protest against the G8 in Genoa in June 2001, during which a protestor was shot dead by the police. Speakers will include the director and an Irish protestor who was arrested and tortured by the police

Monday April 26th

Exhibition Opens to the public at 6pm. Closes at 9.30pm

7pm	Indymedia Screening	Not in My Name	a powerful new documentary film which tells the story of the U.S. led war on terrorism you DIDNT see on TV. Further Details
7pm	Video Distribution Workshop	Using new technology to distribute video over the internet and on cds.	New techniques and possibilities for achieving distribution without depending on corporations. With Alan Toner (Indymedia V2V project, WeSeize activist)

Tuesday April 27th

Exhibition Opens to the public at 6pm. Closes at 9.30pm

7pm	Guerrillavision Screening	The global justice movement - besieging the	Since Seattle Guerillavision have been documenting the campaigns against globalisation from behind the barricades. These
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		summits	are stylistic hard hitting films (Big Rattle in Seattle, Capitals III and Crowd Bites wolf) which pull no punches. But be careful, watching all three together will have you hitting the streets and heading for the nearest symbol of capitalist oppression. Further Details With Irish participants from the various anti-corporate globalisation protests.
7pm	Video Techniques Workshop	Lighting, sound, and other advanced techniques for capturing high-quality footage	With Indymedia videographers Wolfe and Aidan

Wednesday April 28th

Exhibition Opens to the public at 6pm. Closes at 9.30pm

7pm	Indymedia Screening	Globalisation and the Media	The award-winning Undercurrents documentary on how the media shapes public opinion in the "War on Terror". Further Details
7pm	Indymedia Photo/Video Team Workshop	Preparing to cover the events of Mayday 2004	This workshop will concentrate on putting together an Indymedia team to cover the events surrounding the EU leaders' meeting in Dublin, the expansion of the EU and the expected protests
7pm	Indymedia Tech Team Workshop	Preparing to cover the events of Mayday 2004	This workshop will concentrate on putting together a technical team capable of providing a technical infrastructure to allow independent media people to cover the events surrounding the EU leaders' meeting in Dublin, the expansion of the EU and the expected protests

Thursday April 29th

Exhibition Opens to the public at 6pm. Closes at 9.30pm

7pm	Social Forum / Screening	The World and European Social Forums	Footage from the World Social Forums in Porto Alegre and the European Social Forum in Florence. Followed by a debate about the future directions of the European Social Forum, with speakers from
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Indymedia UK, Dublin Social Forum, Another Europe is Possible

7pm	Indymedia NewsTeam Workshop	Preparing to cover the events of Mayday 2004	Putting together the newsdesk and dispatch teams for the coverage of Mayday and integrating that with the teams that will be out on the streets covering the events.
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Friday April 30th

Exhibition Opens to the public at 2pm. Closes at 10pm

3pm	Mayday Forum / Press conference	What protests are planned for Mayday?	A chance for protest groups to talk to the public and the media on the eve of Mayday and EU expansion
7pm	Indymedia Screening	Non-Violent Direct Action	The right to take direct action on issues we strongly believe in is a right protected in all free nations. But what is nonviolence? Can it be effective? Is property damage violent? Further Details Speakers will include Starhawk.

Saturday May 1st

The Indymedia Centre will be closed to the public, but Indymedia will be operating a free-access Internet centre where Indymedia reporters (that means you!) can upload their stories / photos / videos onto the indymedia site. Details to be announced.

Sunday May 2nd

Exhibition Opens to the public at 2pm. Closes at 9.30pm

3pm	Mayday Feedback Forum / Press conference	What really happened on Mayday?	A look back at the events of Mayday and an evaluation of what happened
7pm	Indymedia Screening	Holiday Camp Woomera.	An indymedia documentary about Woomera Refugee camp in Australia and the mass escape of refugees helped by activists. With a discussion including Roseanna Flynn of Residents Against Racism / Campaign against the racist referendum

Monday May 3rd

Exhibition Opens to the public at 4pm. Closes at 9.30pm

5pm	Indymedia Feedback Forum	Back to the real world	A look back at the Indymedia Mayday Centre experience, the Mayday weekend events and where we go to from here.
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Notice posted in Independent Media Centre


About this space

We can all use this building thanks to the generosity and trust of the owner and CMN who hold the lease. It's purpose is to support community and independent media.

The media festival is staffed by volunteers so we all have to take care to leave as little extra work for others to do.

Please do not leave rubbish behind, and respect the house rules – they are there for our safety and so we can all enjoy the Festival.

- Entrance is by membership only.
- Children are welcome if accompanied by their parent/guardian.
- A designated smoking area is at the side exit.
- The local pub is not far away, and they will welcome you if you need a drink. Alcohol is not permitted on these premises.
- Please note Fire exits marked with signs and luminous paint on floor. Sand buckets are there as a precaution in case of fire.

 www.nearfm.ie	Outside Broadcast CALL SHEET	Doc. No	NEAR –OB.doc
		Issue/Rev.:	2
	Indymedia Public Forum	Date	23-04-04
		Pages	207 of 302

**‘Inside the Mainstream Media’
Saturday April 24th**

The Indymedia Centre
54-55 North Great Charles Street (off Mountjoy Square)
Contact Number: 874 8226

Broadcast Time: 11.30 am – 1.30pm

Call Sheet/ Running Order

Key Contacts:

Name	Details	Contact Number
Margaret Gillan	CMN Co-ordinator and Panel Chairperson	0879680696
Ciaran Moore	Indymedia Editor and Panel Contributor	0879570520
Gay Graham	NEAR fm Technical Co-ordinator	867 1016
Paul Judge	NEAR fm Producer/ Floor Manager	0868223013
George Mulcahy	NEAR fm – Technical assistance	
Niamh Farren	NEAR fm – Floor	087 6684874
John Doyle/ Ciaran Murray	NEAR fm – Studio Contacts	867 1016
Aoibheann	Indymedia – Floor, Timekeeping etc	?????

Additional Comments

- Final technical checks to take place from 9.30 am
- Audience to be seated for 11.15 am
- Margaret Gillan to introduce the talk at 11.15 am
- Doors closed at 11:20am
- Paul Judge to outline the format of the session
 - Duration of speakers
 - Questions and Answers format – questions are to be directed at individual speakers, and should be short and to the point. Ideally the questions should **not** be prescript and should only relate to the relevant topic discussed by the Panel. Answers will be kept to under 3mins.
- Handover to NEAR FM at 11.30am
- CMN landline in use for the duration of the talk. Notify relevant staff etc.

RUNNING ORDER

Time	Details	Duration
11.30	Chairpersons address - Margaret Gillan from CMN introduces the context of the discussion, introduces the panel and the live broadcast on NEAR fm 101.6	5 mins

11.35	Keynote Address by Vincent Browne Vincent outlines his experience of the mainstream media and will consider how objective the mainstream media really is, by referring to examples.	20 mins
11.55	Margaret introduces the next speaker – Ciaran Moore from Indymedia	
11.55	Ciaran Moore, Indymedia editor -outlines Indymedia's efforts to provide an alternative to the mainstream media	10 mins
12.05	Margaret introduces the next speaker – Jack Byrne, Chairperson of the Media Co-op and NEAR fm	
12.05	Jack Byrne, Media CoOp -outlines how community radio provides an alternative to the mainstream media	10 mins
12.15	Margaret introduces the next speaker – Sean O Siochru - CMN	
12.15	Sean O'Siochru - outlines CMN perspective and role regarding independent media initiatives	10 mins
12.25	Margaret introduces the final speaker – Harry Browne	
12.25	Harry Browne - gives his perspective on the mainstream media	10 mins
12.35	Margaret to introduce the Q & A open the discussion to the floor	
12.35	Questions and answers , comments from the floor	35 mins
1.10	Final question from the floor and go back to the panel for final comments from each speaker	05 mins
1.15	Margaret to ask for final comments – from each of the panel	10 mins
1.25	Margaret thanks the panel and various contributors, also thanks to NEAR FM for the live broadcast and outlines upcoming events for the festival over the coming days	
1.30	END of Broadcast	

Notes from Dublin meeting after Mayday.

The following notes were compiled by Seán Ó'Siochrú from a meeting held to contribute to Indymedia UK's evaluation after Mayday, however these were sent to IMC UK without my comments – so I have inserted the corrections in red, italicised, and bracketed as in the document that I sent back to Seán.

Inform Meeting CMN Office 06/05/2004. Rough Notes. Seán Ó Siochrú

The goal of this meeting was to review events and begin to discuss lessons.

Present: JD (Indymedia), Anthony (IndiMedia, formerly Grassroots network); William (Grassroots network, kind of); Gary (CMN), Sean CMN), Ollie (CMN), Margaret (CMN)

It was agreed by all that the Independent media Centre had been a very worthwhile experience and that we will be happy to collaborate again. *(It would be good to collaborate again given the acceptance of the issues raised in this review. However Margaret has requested that it be noted by all that she does not, at this time, feel that she can take part in an event like this again, despite having enjoyed working with many individuals and wanting to maintain contact and build on the positive aspects of the experience.)*

It was agreed that we should set up a list of the three bodies, that Sean would write up these notes and the JD would take them forward with others, The goal is to produce a short report on the lessons. It was also agreed that we could bring Dave and Rachel from IndyMedia UK into the discussion.

CMN Points:

1. (Margaret) *(CMN entered on the basis of a collaboration and a desire to facilitate. More than 50% of the content was organised by CMN. Basis of collaboration between CMN and IM was not (made) clear (to the rest of the Indymedia group by Ciaran and Chekov). It was not (made) clear what it was all about: IM Centre? Independent media Centre? IM/CMN Centre? (This was reflected in the IM Presentation on the Website, this was very slanted as it barely mentioned the community media side, and gave various misinformation such as "CMN has donated their building")*
2. There was poor communication in general between the two. *(This was exacerbated by the fact that no meetings of volunteers were organised before the event until the Friday lunchtime before opening at 5.30pm, despite repeated requests from Margaret. The fact is that bad organisation by indiimedia meant that volunteers didn't know what they were expected to do. Margaret and Gary found themselves inducting IM volunteers.)*
3. Although everyone did a huge amount of work, whose job was whose was never clearly laid out. *(This also meant that a lot of work remained hidden, there unacknowledged, on both sides)*
4. 'Triffic' meeting people and everyone getting to know each other from different groups. Felt it was a pity there was not enough cross-over between IM and the Community group/media side – it was a bit like *(indymedia saw it as) two (separate) events ignoring each other. (This was very apparent by the programming of Indymedia events for each evening, it was suggested that CMN do their events during the day, despite having the same difficulties around voluntary input as Indymedia. At the same time CMN was told*

that door and desk cover would not be provided by Indymedia for daytime events and had to ask individual Indymedia people for help. This however did not apply when Indymedia wanted to facilitate Grassroots Network and those who wanted to use the centre for other purposes – CMN was expected to facilitate.)

5. IM presentation on the Website was very slanted as it barely mentioned the community media side.
6. Lots of agreements (*Basic House Rules were agreed in the interest of volunteers doing door jobs*) (no alcohol, no kids etc.) were made, but they were never seriously implemented. (*They were never taken seriously. This put pressure on CMN to keep vigilance on the door and general security*)
7. There was widespread disappointments that no internet connection was achieved.
8. Margaret felt that she was not being listened to much of the time (*from early on*). For instance there was the case of the map of the Centre on the Website – she had made it clear long in advance not to include the second floor but it went up anyway; or decisions she took in relation to keeping the local kids out were arbitrarily reversed. Very frustrating. (*Not only very frustrating, but to dismiss someone who had key responsibilities in relation to the building and host organisation is unacceptable. At the same time she was asked to facilitate more and more demands for longer opening times and the original agreement that she would not be in the building after 9.30pm was completely ignored throughout the event.*)
9. (Gary) The door was a constant issue. He was supposed to be videoing the event etc. but spent most of his time at the door. The people at the door often had little idea of what had been agreed and what they should say.
10. When the pressure really came on, it was up to IM to be unequivocal regarding it being a media centre. However, they did not make this clear at critical junctures and it began to fall apart.
11. (Sean) The issue of there the Centre being turned into, in effect, a convergence centre exacerbated all the other problems. It ended up being neither a media centre (as much as it could have) nor a convergence centre.

IndyMedia

12. (JD, Anthony) Agree that IM were not firm enough. The problem with the journalist, which was badly dealt with, created a climate of intimidation where it became difficult to raise issues and stand firm. That was the decisive point in changing from a Media Centre to a Convergence centres. After that, it even became difficult to show planned videos and have discussion, as the space was contested and people refused to leave.
13. But this was the first time that IM had got together as a group – before this they were largely virtual, so there were inevitably a steep learning curve. But it was great for IM to get together.

14. Organisationally:

- there should have been daily meetings
- A stronger commitment was needed to idea of Centre
- Minutes of all decisions and meetings should have been available for people not their and people arriving in
- The door policy was very unclear – needed guidelines

15. As volunteers is was very difficult. IM wanted to reach out to people, and attract them so that the idea would be better understood. This was successful until the Wednesday, when it became a convergence centres. He sympathises with the grass roots people, had a difficult task first time around and when the squat was raided it became very difficult. Did a good job on accommodation.

16. IM had not really thought through its relationship with the GrassRoots people. Had connection with them but had not discussed whether IM is anti-capitalist or what. Thus

there was a reluctance to take a a strong position on these issues. There was little interaction between Grassroots and IM.

Grassroots (kind of)

17. (William) He was never sure what the relationship to the Centre was. It became an issue only when the people from outside arrived here. There was a lot of misunderstanding and false expectations, and some were even pretty rude. In another such event, he believes they would organise an accommodation and meeting centre that could not be so easily closed down

Role of Indymedia UK

IMC UK - Reporting big events

Reporting big events has been one of the projects of imc uk since it started on Mayday 2000.

Below are a set of reports, recommendations and guides.

IMC uk Post Dublin EU Mayday Evaluation (May 2004)

<http://docs.indymedia.org/view/Local/UkNetworkDublinEvaluation>

Media Centre Recommendations (uk post evian g8 2003)

<http://docs.indymedia.org/view/Local/UkDmcNotesJune>

IMC uk Post Evian G8 2003 Report

Dispatch, Remote Participation and Info Flows

<http://docs.indymedia.org/view/Local/UkNetworkEvianSystems>

Planning for a DSEI Media Centre (uk 2003)

<http://docs.indymedia.org/view/Local/UkDseiMediaCentre>

Eng trans of German Preparing to Report a Large Summit Mobilisation

<http://docs.indymedia.org/view/Local/SummitPrepEn>

Barcelona HOWTO Mount a Media Centre

<http://docs.indymedia.org/view/Local/BarcelonaHOWTOMediaCenter>

Dispatch Desk Blueprint from Global

<http://docs.indymedia.org/view/Global/DispatchDeskBlueprint>

-- [PlanetMail](http://planetmail.com) - 22 May 2004

<http://web.archive.org/web/20040817014007/http://docs.indymedia.org/view/Local/UkNetworkMajorReports>

Evaluation of IMC + Problems in Dublin (EU Mayday Mobilisation 2004)

Text of an evaluation doc sent to indymedia ireland email list after the dublin eu mayday mobilisation, where it's become one part of an ongoing discussion and review process following the events in dublin.

It was also sent to the imc europe list, and posted on indymedia uk at:
<http://www.indymedia.org.uk/en/2004/05/291226.html>

Indymedia uk reporting on Mayday 04 can be found at:
<http://www.indymedia.org.uk/en/actions/2004/mayday/>

AN EVALUATION OF INDYMEDIA FACILITIES AT THE DUBLIN EU MAYDAY MOBILISATIONS (May 2004)

This has been written by five Indymedia UK volunteers from several local collectives, and draws on discussions with Indymedia Ireland volunteers, other international Indymedia volunteers, and talks with various other activists.

To continue building a real sustainable movement there is a constant need to assess and evaluate the issues that arise during international gatherings and large mobilisations, this is one attempt, from visiting indymedia volunteers, and as such cannot be a complete document, and does not address much of the great work done in setting up and running the Independent Media Festival. Apologies in advance for any mis-representations or mistakes that may be present here.

AIMS OF EVALUATION:

There were many issues - quite inter-tangled issues - that we must face together.

Many of these issues will be recognisable from previous mobilisations and are general problems that always seem to crop up, some will be new.

Of these issues, some relate to the political and social realities of host countries in such international mobilisations as was seen in Dublin. Others relate to Indymedia, Dublin Grassroots Network, the international visitors, Community Media Network, and many to the different expectations of what it means to participate in these mobilisations, as well as the differing levels of experience and assumptions of different players.

All of these factors merged during the days of the EU Mayday mobilisation, in an atmosphere of intimidation and repression from the state and the mainstream media, both in the weeks before, and during the protest days themselves, and which in Ireland may continue for some time after, even maybe intensifying before the Bush visit.

This is an attempt to draw together some of the facts and disagreements, to identify the priorities that must be addressed to minimise the risk of a repetition of the same problems in the future, where we will no doubt work together again. This is the most important task now facing us.

NB The evaluation does look at some non-indymedia issues, since they impacted upon indymedia and the imc / cmn space.

SOME INITIAL POINTS AND ISSUES:

As stated this evaluation derives from interactions and discussions amongst particular groups, both hosts and visitors for the mobilisation including Indymedia Ireland, Community Media Network (CMN), Dublin Grassroots Network (DGN), International participants and International Indymedia volunteers.

The EU Mobilisations were called as an International Mobilisation by the Dublin Grassroots Network (DGN). This network was understood by many to be both a group organising locally and a logistical group setting a framework in which visitors would be able to effectively slot into, collaborate, interact and in turn support.

The fact that squatting is illegal in Ireland was not adequately communicated in advance. This should have been included in the legal briefings and the information about accommodation.

The DGN website named the Indymedia Ireland / CMN space as the first port of call for people arriving in Dublin since it had stall space within it for many campaigns and issues. The idea was that, among others, there would be a DGN desk at the space where people could come to find out about the protests and accommodation etc. However this function was not provided by DGN, and as such is one of the more serious inadequacies.

Indymedia Ireland had worked together with the Community Media Network to negotiate use of their building.

CMN is a small not for profit organisation that helps and facilitates those using different media to support progressive development and social justice. They have also been involved in lobbying for community and alternative programming access to the cable tv network in Dublin (trying to replicate the diversity and access on cable tv that is seen for example in Amsterdam and other European cities). They have had to move offices several times in the last year or so, have had funding cut, and work on a shoestring budget.

CMN were happy to support Indymedia Ireland, and were keen to make links between community media and more alternative media but with certain conditions on the use of the space.

CMN have their offices upstairs in the building - Indymedia Ireland worked over several weeks to clean, restore and paint the downstairs space which had been unused before hand.

Indymedia Ireland together with CMN worked to put on an extensive 10 day Independent Media Festival, with a range of practical sessions, workshops, discussion spaces, film screenings, exhibitions and stall space.

There were several conditions placed on the use of the building, including a no alcohol policy.

PRESSURES AND CRISIS:

The Police raid of a squat, two days before the main actions, shut down accommodation facilities etc, and left the Indymedia / CMN space as the main visible public space.

Indymedia Ireland were thus caught in the middle of a difficult situation, with very vocal demands from some protesters on the one hand, and the restriction conditions of the buildings keyholders - CMN - on the other.

There were immediate efforts made to try and help in the difficult situation. Discussion enabled the building to be opened up five hours earlier the following day and food was prepared in the evening - many people worked hard to source accommodation through homestay (and others raising funds for hostels) - it looked like the situation was improving.

On May 1st the building was always meant to be closed.

Further, more serious problems arose with the space on Sunday. It seems communications broke down through the Saturday street protests which resulted in the imc / cmn building not being opened until late in the afternoon. This was a serious error, aggravated by a lack of Indymedia reporting / cmn space administration meetings throughout the several main days - this is something that needs to be addressed.

Many people (including various indymedia volunteers) assumed on Sunday that the building would be open from 9.30am as it had been on Friday. The result of this was that after the main day of protests, people congregated in the park nearby waiting for the building to open, and were filmed and harassed by police during the afternoon.

When the keyholder turned up to open the building she did so on her own and received an aggressive welcome from those that had been waiting outside and were of the opinion that they had been let down by the space. This further entrenched the positions, and the situation deteriorated through the next several hours and into the evening. Some of the aggression shown (no doubt partly due to the pressures people were under) further aggravated the situation.

With the pressing need for feedback and discussion from the prior and next days coupled with the CMN need to define the center as a non-convergence space, an uncomfortable situation arose. This culminated in an excessive, ill-defined situation where suggestions were made from various individuals from various groups that activists and internationals should leave the imc/cmn building! (for their further discussions?). Significant problems over presentation / representation existed (and indeed not just at this time) with confusion over who was saying this - was it an official CMN line? was it indymedia ireland, was it DGN? was it individuals from these groups? There were certainly also serious disagreements between individuals from the same groupings as well.

On the Monday 3rd the space was closed, despite being advertised in advance as being open through to and including the Monday.

The question is, could this have been avoided? Well perhaps it could have been. There were enough people available to administer the building to a level that may have satisfied CMN, but there was not the internal co-ordination structure to facilitate this. Similar situations have occurred around other IMC spaces in other international mobilisations, with such internal co-ordination only occurring in response to crisis - this must change, with internal IMC reporting co-ordination and space administration meetings being held at least once per day. With such a structure in place, we would all have been better placed to deal with disagreements and respond to crisis in a quicker way.

But this is not the only thing that needs addressing... read on...

CAUGHT BETWEEN A ROCK AND A HARD PLACE or FIVE WAY SPLIT:

Dublin Grassroots Network - Internationals - CMN - Indymedia ie - International Indy volunteers

There were differing levels of tensions between the different groupings, and individuals within them!

These are a few of them:

There were tensions for sure between DGN and the internationals, which also reflected back onto Indymedia and permeated into the imc / cmn space. As mentioned the lack of a DGN desk and the problems around accommodation were some of the issues, also perhaps was a failure to understand the real need and significant importance to provide a convergence space. Statements on the radio from a person apparently speaking for DGN on the morning of Monday before the street party that "If anyone comes to the party wearing a mask they should be challenged" also did not help.

There seems to have been a real 'them and us' situation, which focussed time and energy onto negative aspects and not onto more productive collaboration. This impacted on the serious need for clear communication channels with which to convey needs and utilise local knowledge and resources.

Internationals produced, photocopied and distributed leaflets all day Saturday around Dublin areas and demonstrations advertising the new 6pm gathering location. Solidarity marches for those in prison were initiated and largely organised autonomously motivated by internationals. Despite their hard work there was also a communication problem regarding the legal teams who did not seem to have the information dissemination capacity necessary to react as effectively as possible to those arrested (though this was mostly down to lack of people).

This all seemed to distill itself into the problems around the imc/cmn space. CMN people were the fewest in number, one to two people, tasked with being the keyholder of the building (ie opening and closing the space), often tidying up, trying to administer the conditions of no alcohol, genuinely concerned about their relationship with the local community and long-term impact from the authorities etc. There were also disagreements with Indymedia Ireland volunteers, other international indymedia volunteers and CMN. Initially after the squats were raided imc and cmn worked well together, but the communications broke down after Saturday. Much negotiation was done to ensure the building opened on Sunday (it came very close to staying closed!).

Trying to find a balance between different demands was an impossible situation. In short such joint spaces may not be the most suitable during mobilisations, but perhaps with attention to a number of factors they can be made to work. More actual logistical support for CMN would certainly have helped the situation - see 'Learning the Lessons' section.

NOTE: Despite all of this people still came together to pull of the biggest anti-authoritarian / autonomous protests yet in Ireland - respect to all.

RESPECT IS A TWO WAY STREET

Several people quickly accused Indymedia Ireland of "deserting the movement" by communicating and accepting the CMN position of not allowing the building to be used for accommodation. It is also clear that people were let down by the changing opening times of the building.

On the other hand there was disrespect shown by many towards the building. Many people insisted on bringing alcohol into the space despite being asked not to, as well as insulting people, some even physically pushed a woman out of the way when she asked them not to bring in a case of beer. Such incidents contributed to a perception that there was no respect for the CMN building and made negotiations increasingly difficult. For a movement supposedly built on respect this raises serious questions. There were also lots of comments along the lines of "Why should we care about this building anyway, it's going to be demolished" - which displayed a worrying lack of consideration for CMN who are currently resident there, and will be for some time.

Some has already been written about different views and conflicts. Many internationals were very critical of Indymedia in Ireland, perhaps partly because it was more visible than DGN. At the same time many Irish and other people have been critical of the internationals complaining that they seem only to have been demanding and trying to impose their singular will onto people from a host country who have been working on the mobilisation for months. It is clear there were social and political differences as well, although this is always to be expected. The problem of nationalism also presented itself in some of the criticism. In short this has not been a one-sided issue or problem.

PERCEPTIONS ABOUT INDYMEDIA + REPEATED PROBLEMS

Some of these problems have occurred before. Several international Indymedia people feel that there is a problem around Indymedia being viewed as simply a service provider. Indymedia is a participative project that seeks to provide a set of facilities to support the reporting of protests, but the key thing is that it is a participative project. There seems to be a perception that Indymedia must be all things to all people.

Recognising that Indymedia has been the target of police repression and indeed state sponsored dirty tricks campaigns, and recognising that Indymedia is often a static (venue based) project that cannot 'melt away' (and indeed does not want to!), there must be a level of respect and understanding, that at times seems to be missing. Respect however is a two way street.

This is something that needs addressing. But it is something that can be best achieved through better co-ordination and planning before such protests happen, and through better facilitation of meetings on the ground during the actual period of protests - the structure for which was felt to be lacking in Dublin.

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN INDYMEDIAS

There are indeed big differences between Indymedia groups from one town or country to another. This is part of being a loose network. It is also part of recognising and respecting local autonomy.

However it can lead to problems when people see Indymedia as a homogenous body.

It can also lead to problems when people who are used to one Indymedia culture in one country, visit another country and find there are some differences.

Physical Independent Media Centres also differ from mobilisation to mobilisation. Some have been fully open, some have been just in a tent, others in a squat, some have had very strict rules, some ask people using buildings and facilities to sign waivers, others to sign up to guidelines, join collectives, even pay money to register.

As such, the communication of local realities are key.

For example in Dublin the imc / cmn space was used as a venue for the main pre-protest press conference on the Friday. This had been negotiated by imc / cmn and the Dublin mobilisation groups who wanted to participate well in advance, along with speakers from groups like the Irish Council of Civil Liberties. However there was quite a bit of confusion over this with some people accusing Indymedia Ireland of prioritising corporate media over public access. The reason local groups felt this interaction important was something that could have been clarified and communicated better.

There was also mis-understanding of the corporate press policy for access to the building. Some thought that the policy was just a ban on corporate media cameras in the building (apart from the press conference event) - others assumed a blanket ban on corporate media in the building. This confusion led to both a specific incident and much bad feeling. It can be avoided in the future through a much clearer communication of the policies, and through addressing the issue through regular IMC reporting / space meetings.

(Although the reality is that undercover journalists repeatedly 'infiltrate' such open spaces, as well as meetings, and groups, as happened yet again in Dublin, and so this reality must also be recognised.)

A quote appearing in a corporate newspaper attributed to an Indymedia Ireland volunteer, that "Indymedia Ireland does not have an inherent bias towards the anti-globalisation movement" was certainly ill-timed, and caused a lot of disagreement and disquiet in many quarters. On this point there has been discussion between Indymedia Ireland and Indymedia uk volunteers, and a discussion is now being initiated within Indymedia Ireland on this issue (and indeed on strategies for dealing with the press).

In short Indymedia Ireland has a wider level of participation than many other Indymedias (for example Indymedia Uk), and a different analysis of "bias".

Indymedia Ireland recognises the roots and birthplace of the Indymedia network - forged in the streets of Seattle and other mobilisations before and after - but sees it's role and

participation as wider than just the anti-globalisation movement (for example as including the anti-war movement and the recent bin-tax campaigns). That being the case, it seems the volunteer saw bias towards 'one area of the movements' as excluding others from 'other movements' working on grassroots campaigns towards social change. However this of course was not communicated in a one sound-bite quote in the mainstream press.

That so much discussion and debate was seen as represented by one quote in a corporate newspaper is to say the least, unfortunate.

There is also the fact that Ireland has a different political reality to the UK (and indeed other countries) following the decades of conflict, and that as stated the mobilisations as seen in Dublin are relatively new.

NB More can be written on these issues, (there was also many issues around the DGN media strategy against the corporate media mayhem propaganda mis-info campaign, and perceived priority placed on this at the expense of other areas of organising) but this is perhaps best discussed outside the framework of this particular evaluation, which is intended to identify areas where positive action can be made around Indymedia organising to try and avoid similar problems happening again.

LEVELS OF EXPERIENCE + LEARNING THE LESSONS

It's true to say that the EU Mayday protests were the biggest autonomous / grassroots (and international?) mobilisation yet in Ireland. It's also probably fair to say that as such both DGN and Indymedia did not foresee the scale of some of the possible problems that may face them during the mobilisations. Indeed for Indymedia Ireland, the week/s in Dublin were the first time that many people had met each other.

This coupled with the fact that many people were experiencing this sort of mobilisation and these issues for the first time meant that the five days of intense activity has been a steep learning curve.

Indymedia UK volunteers and some other international Indymedia people volunteered to help in Dublin and were supportive, helping out in a variety of ways, however, with a little more co-ordination from all of us the net effect could have been greater.

Reporting structures for covering the events did come together at the last minute but were pretty ad hoc and were down to some folks working with each other well and others making their own arrangements. There's usually a single unified Indymedia Reporting phone number which is given out widely and a clear communication flow structure behind this to ensure the info reports get up on the website and that for example liaison with legal teams occurs. In Dublin there was not a unified number, an attempt to sort one was made but did not materialise, although imc people quickly formed their own ad hoc communication channels.

Reporting worked pretty well on the Saturday with the alternative dispatch venue in town acting well as a hub. People popped in with photos and video to upload - and irc (Internet Relay Chat) being used to link people working to report the events who were using different lines of communication or working remotely. Monday worked pretty well in an ad hoc way, but irc was not used from the Dublin side.

Again, with specific reporting co-ordination meetings more could have been achieved, or perhaps what was achieved could have run a little smoother.

The reporting of the build up to the protests was brilliantly done by Indymedia Ireland, the coverage of the protests was very extensive and a good degree of coverage was achieved for almost all of the demonstrations, statements were published, as well as good discussions about tactics.

What was also clear was a lack of resources for staffing the imc / cmn space and for providing computer access. People worked hard for several days, reconditioning a whole host of second hand computers, putting together bits here, bits there, borrowed, salvaged and skipped, and trying to sort out connectivity - a little was achieved, but obviously no where near enough. The lack of these facilities also made it difficult for people to accept the space as an IMC space, and also resulted in international indymedia volunteers putting energy into other places in order to do indymedia and report the protests, thus reducing the people on hand to work on running the imc / cmn space.

This coupled with the lack of a dedicated and public Indymedia reporting number also contributed to the perceived separation of Indymedia from the mobilisation movement, since opportunity for participation, as well as visible imc reporting activity, were both minimised.

As said this was partly due to a lack of numbers and the other demands placed on those people who were there on the ground. It is clear more work needs to be put into this area in the future. It's also clear that after the events inDublin there are now, thankfully, more people willing to get involved in ireland and to help avoid this happening again in the future.

What matters now is learning the lessons.

CONCLUSIONS + STRATEGIES FOR THE FUTURE:

It's pretty clear that much of the main problems would not have occurred if it were not for the Police action in shutting down the squatted building infrastructure, and much of this evaluation would now not be being written.

As an open virtual space Indymedia works well, however practically on the ground it is often not practical for it to be all things to all people - it can only be as strong as the people that attempt to make it work and the collaboration it receives - this is an important part of realising that Indymedia is part of 'the movements'.

However, Accommodation and Convergence space, while of paramount importance to such mobilisations, should NOT be the responsibility of Indymedia. However Indymedia should have a responsibility to show solidarity in times of crisis.

That said Indymedia should try and be in contact with groups organising such facilities to try and ensure that any boundaries set over space usage are clearly communicated through all available channels.

Joint spaces (as in Dublin with CMN) should in fact be approached with caution if planned around mobilisations, recognising the complications that may arise in the midst of police or state repression. It was also clear that a much higher level of communication, collaboration and support are needed to make such joint spaces work.

An autonomous space may be preferable, depending on the strategic aim and usage of the space.

More support and co-ordination than occurred in Dublin is actually needed to run an imc space.

IMC spaces need at least one co-ordination meeting per day, preferably two (one in the morning, one in the evening) - at clearly advertised times - not least so that there can be a quicker response to developing situations, that also involves more people.

Alongside all of this there also needs to be a more considered respect given to Indymedia, and a greater level of understanding encouraged between all of the participants at such mobilisations - again, daily meetings can aid significantly in this.

We refuse to be divided, we re-affirm our commitment to working with diversity, and in solidarity.

=====ends....7th May 2004 =====

-- [PlanetMail](#) - 22 May 2004

Appendix No 33 References to CM in the Dublin City Development Plan

Dublin City Economic, Social and Cultural Strategic Plan

2002 - 2012

References to Community Media

1. A Democratic Participative City

Communities to be fully informed and aware of local and city issues and initiatives. Communities will build on their capacity to create/ broadcast/ publish their own information. Communities to be aware of the participatory channels available to them.

- Communities will be facilitated to develop the capacity of local villages to produce their own information through a multimedia approach.
- Facilitating the development of a Community TV Channel for Dublin City taking advantage of the current Broadcasting Act 2001 which allows for the realisation of community TV.

2. A Connected and Informed City

Strategically we should ensure that by 2012 Dublin City has its own vibrant, independent and sustainable Community Media sector. Community media is an important democratic counter balance to the growth of commercial media and the influence of media empires. In most of the developed world Community Media is recognised as a legitimate media pillar. This level of formal recognition has yet to be achieved in Ireland. Community Media is a means for expression of different voices and cultures. It is also a means for communication between cultures, and these functions are particularly relevant in a changing society. Access to Community Media can be an important element in the development of ethnic communities in Dublin. It allows such groups the opportunity to maintain contact with cultural products of expression that are unique to their community, while bridging the understanding and awareness gaps between themselves and the Dublin neighbourhoods within which they live and work.

The Community Media sector itself must rest upon a strong and vibrant community and voluntary sector that has the skills, knowledge and capacity to communicate through various interactive media.

3. A Cultural and Enjoyable City

Support and develop sustainable cultural industries in the city.

- Provide education and training programmes, including access to new technologies that meets the needs of the creative industries.
- Provide affordable accommodation that meets the needs of the cultural industries.
- Facilitate in bringing culture industries to a wider audience.

Celebrate, promote and develop the City's strong cultural heritage and increasing cultural diversity.

- Develop appropriate infrastructure to enable citizens to have access to, participate in, develop and enjoy their own creativity and the creativity of others.

4. A Community Friendly City

Promote and develop communities of interest as a channel for participation and social cohesion

- Develop new channels of expression for communities (e.g. dublin.ie, Community TV channel)

Focus on marginalised communities and those at risk of becoming marginalised to develop a comprehensive range of short and long-term initiatives

- Encourage marginalised groups to express their voice through participation in communities.

Appendix No 34 – List of International Visitors supporting CM and CTV Development in Ireland 2000-2008

Visitors

Steve Buckley	Community Media Association (CMA)/ AMARC, UK
Laurie Cirvello	Grand Rapids Community Media Centre (GRCMC), Michigan, US
Bruce Girard	AMARC and Radio projects Quito
Marilyn Hyndman and Dave Hyndman	Northern Visions, Belfast, Northern Ireland
Dirk Koning	Grand Rapids Media Centre, Michigan, US
Donald Mc Ternan	CMA (London) UK
Rui Monteiro	Invandrer TV, Denmark
Jason Nardi	Arcoiris TV, Italy
Barbara Popovic	CAN TV, Chicago, US
Jessikah maria Ross	Davis Community Media Centre, US
Bob Scott	Ryerson College, Canada
Erik Schriver	Invandrer TV, Denmark
George Stoney	NY University/ Alliance for Community Media, US
Lise Jul Pederson	Invandrer TV, Denmark
Hamish Campbell	Undercurrents UK
Ana Noguiera	Democracy now, US

Appendix No 35 'How-to' knowledge and tool-kits

Introduction

As a video trainer I know that people can learn how to use a camera in a few hours, it takes more time to learn to do basic editing and to explore the techniques to make videos or television. But essentially all basic technical operations necessary to produce a simple programme can be covered within a short familiarisation course. A learner will have enough basic knowledge to produce a simple programme after such a course. ***What takes time is developing skills with these technologies, processes and techniques and also the skills of telling stories through a particular medium.*** In line with the thinking of community development and popular education practitioners such as Paulo Freire; it is usually by engaging in a production that is relevant to their own issues that community activists best learn these skills.

Third level media courses are built around specific forms of media and media history; they produce graduates that rarely end up in community media projects. Community media projects have problems with the output of these colleges: an activist working around third world debt issues complained that DCU's media course³⁴ was built around Chomsky and the political economy of the mass media but didn't turn out radical journalists who wanted to use their media skills to expose third world issues; a community media activist explained at a meeting that media graduates arrive with such a lot of baggage that they need de-conditioning before they can work with people in communities.

So the reality is that the education system really siphons off people from communities and struggle rather than training them in ways they can use in those contexts. Community activists therefore when they engage with media use tend to be focused on how the skills can be transferred to the community or organisation to build capacity and sustainability in their media use. This is the core reason for the emphasis placed on training amongst community organisations.

The problem for people who need voice is that very often the support and specific skills help is not there when they need it so they try to do it themselves seeking support from sympathetic experts who cannot always continue to make themselves available (e.g. Bailey and Dockers). Two strategies have emerged from these needs:

1. development of the community media organisation;
2. tool-kits to support DIY, provide information, and to up-date people on skills.

DIY traditions have long histories in activism; self-help manuals are produced regularly by media activists in community media environments or amongst social movement networks and there is a whole range of these now available on websites. A lot of these are doing exactly what I am doing here – which is providing links to available useful tool-kits developed by media activists – so what we are doing is bringing that resources together and also

³⁴ Dublin City University

disseminating it. I reproduce below a core set of useful links and documents that provide self-help tools.

It is important to note that there is a marked difference between the type of 'toolkit' produced by community media organisations which tend to focus on technical know-how and skills; and those produced by NGOs that tend to focus on how to get your message to fit into the kinds of slots that are likely to be available on mainstream media. Community media organisations also place high priority on building capacity in relationship with community organisations. Manhattan Neighbourhood Network in NY sees a Toolkit as an actual production and post production equipment package which it offers to groups who apply for it (7 groups in 2008) <http://www.mnn.org/node/3884>. A number of other community television channels in the US are doing similar projects – so it's worth encouraging your local community media organisation to think along those lines too!

Of course all of these approaches are important and there are some media activist groups that will include both types – I will mark these in the listing below. The listing below is a guide to where community organisations can find help in using media; I have categorised this list into the following;

Community Media Organisations Tools

Specific Skills Toolkits

Links to Media Activists Handbooks, toolkits, and 'how-to' Manuals Online

Community Media organisations tools

<http://www.cmn.ie/cmnsitenew/pdf/Guidebook.pdf> as part of its Integra project CMN produced a guidebook for community organisations on delivering **community media training**. Describes needs for training programmes in video, radio, photography, and gives some useful aids for video production.

<http://www.communitytvassociation.org/index.php?page=modules> Community Television Association (Ireland) has developed a training section of its website for **community television**. Its resources are free and include documents on a range of aspects of community television: legal and regulatory issues, CTV Structures and Programming; Programme Formats for CTV; and a section hosting clips from CTV channel's programmes.

<http://www.communityradiotoolkit.net/communities/> Community Media Association (originally Community Radio Association) has produced a comprehensive **manual for community radio stations and producers**. You have to go create an account with them to download, but it's free and in pdf format.

<http://griid.org/media-literacy/media-activist-toolkit/>

The Grand Rapids Community Media Centre (GRCMC) Michigan US has a Media Activist Toolkit on its site. The GRCMC, funded by a grant from the Media Justice Fund of the Funding Exchange, provides organizations in Grand Rapids with the tools that they need to make effective use of the media. The kit is divided into five parts:

Media in Context: What role media plays in our lives
Your Media Strategy 1: Building relationships with news rooms
Holding Media Accountable
Your Media Strategy 2: Making your own media
Media Resources

<http://www.nycgrassrootsmedia.org/learnhowto> a range of practical toolkits on this page - worth visiting – this group includes a wide range of approaches to media use that are useful to activists. Some links are difficult to find, but the range is useful and a little time spent on searching will locate useful material. I've checked some and included them below.

<http://www.cccfiles.org/shared/publications/downloads/CCCNNews18.pdf> "How to tell and sell your story – a guide to media for community groups and other non-profits" Special newsletter issue by Community Change 2001.

Barcelona HOWTO Mount a Media Centre

<http://docs.indymedia.org/view/Local/BarcelonaHOWTOMediaCenter>

Specific skills tool kits

<http://www.videoactivism.org/resource.html>

<http://web.archive.org/web/20010612064547/www.nycenet.edu/oit/videoprojects.pdf> "HANDS-ON: A GUIDE TO USING VIDEO AND MULTIMEDIA PRODUCTION IN PROJECT-BASED WORK" is a 28 page handbook still available at the above link (accessed 21.11.2009). Produced mainly for work with youth in the US, it is still very accessible.

<http://j-learning.org/> built by J-Lab (the institute for Interactive Journalism) this is a **how-to site for community journalism**, it provides links to a range of toolkits on various media and aspects of media use, legal rights and limits, and has a well developed page of links to free media software such as editing tools etc. and a useful brief guide to shooting video for the web at: <http://www.j-learning.org/present-it/page/how-to-shoot-video-for-the-web/>

http://www.africaaction.org/campaign_new/page.php?op=read&documentid=1180&type=25 Africa Action has a clear and useful tool to help people make their own 'media message' – this kind of tool can be adapted and used as a critical thinking tool for people in relation to their own issues. Community workers will recognise the process. More tools on a variety of activity are available at: http://www.africaaction.org/campaign_new/toolkit.php

http://www.centerforsocialmedia.org/resources/fair_use/ Centre for Social Media US has a heap of useful resources on issues around **Fair use – i.e. using copyright material**. Only difficulty is that this is US based.

<http://www.fair.org/index.php?page=119> "how-to" guides for identifying, documenting and challenging inaccurate or unfair news coverage, along with information about how to promote independent media.

Online video, content hosting sites, and streaming

<http://www.techcrunch.com/2007/10/10/happy-1st-anniversary-youtube-and-google-now-move-over-a-bit/> Tech Crunch has a useful guide to the different **video publishing sites and their pros and cons**.

Alternatively there are a growing number of politically sussed groups putting content online – these are just a few sites, there are more, but if you are looking for programmes, this is a good start.

<http://www.plugin.tv/>

<http://counteract.tv/?go=page&id=1>

<http://www.freespeech.org/> Radical TV site

<http://www.beyondtvfestival.info/> Undercurrents promoted International Film Festival – there have been nine so far.

<http://www.festival.sk/2009/index.php> Festival of Local television at Kosice, site also hosts videos.

CM Research and projects

<http://deepdishwavesofchange.blogspot.com/> International CM project run by DeepDish TV (US) and activists and academic DeeDee Halleck aims to document CM projects world-wide.

<http://beyondproject.blogspot.com/2007/05/media-literacy-and-power-of.html> this website is dedicated to exploring the sustainability of community media in the South-West of England – more useful to researchers but if community activists want to see what questions are arising over there its may be worth keeping an eye on this.

<http://www.makemediacentre.org.uk/> This site is still only a proposal for a resource centre for community groups and schools – but it would be good if it actually happens! CMA UK are building it.

<http://saveournet.ca/content/community-media-education-society-cmes> (Canadian)

Activists Toolkits

http://ran.org/media_center/ the Rainforest Action Network website is a tool kit in itself, it has a media centre which and a resources section at

http://ran.org/get_involved/resources/activists/

<http://www.schnews.org.uk/diyguide/> Site provides a set of links to tool-kits addressing various aspects of activism. It includes Alternative Media / Internet but its brief is wider and so includes tool kits on Housing; Alternative Energy; Gardening; Legal; Research; fun & Games; Prisoners.

<http://www.ruckus.org/article.php?id=107> Ruckus is a site for environmental activists engaged in direct action and includes a useful checklist for using media around an event at this link.

Media rights and monitoring:

<http://www.witness.org/> website of WITNESS – a group using video and online technologies for human rights. Has an online ‘How-to’ on video production at

http://www.witness.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=55 and another video format guide to practical work at: <http://hub.witness.org/en/node/4588>

Also has a free pdf download of manual “Video for Change: "Video for Change: A Guide for Advocacy and Activism." at

http://www.witness.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=277&Itemid=207&limit=1&limitstart=1.

<http://www.humanrightsproject.org/> US project which has a core project of documentary films, funded by Ford Foundation and MacArthur Foundation. Main benefit is to people/channels looking for films to screen. Also see <http://www.humanrightstools.org/>

http://www.civilrights.org/action_center/media-diversity/

and the pdf is at:

http://www.civilrights.org/action_center/media-diversity/media_justice_activist_toolkit.pdf

Media diversity - Part of the recent campaign to protect media diversity in the US.

“The Media and Communications Project was developed to help the national civil rights community play a central role in the policy debates shaping the nation’s media and communications landscape. At its core, communications policy is about equal opportunity and equal access to important local and national resources, such as education, health care, and economic equality.”

<http://www.media-diversity.org/additional-files/documents/A%20Guides/Reporting%20on%20Gender%20and%20Media%20Advocacy%20Toolkit%20%5BEN%5D.pdf>

Community organising:

Community Benefits Handbook:

<http://urbanplacesandspaces.blogspot.com/2009/04/community-benefits-agreements.html>

<http://comm-org.wisc.edu/news.php> US website for community organising based on sol Alinsky's ideas. Huge amount of resources here, the mission of the site is to support the sharing of resources, information and ideas. Has a deal of media at <http://comm-org.wisc.edu/multimed.htm>

Also range of community publications at

<http://www.goodjobsfirst.org/publications/index.cfm>

CM Resources

Media Education Foundation: <http://www.mediaed.org/wp/about-mef>

Mission: The Media Education Foundation produces and distributes documentary films and other educational resources to inspire critical reflection on the social, political, and cultural impact of American mass media.

<http://www.stayfreemagazine.org/archives/index.html> also has an email list which has useful info regularly. You can sign up on the site

<https://www.adbusters.org/> Adbusters promotes 'buy nothing day' also leads campaign to fight for media reform. You can join their email list on the site.

<http://keepusconnected.org/> and also at <http://cmediachange.net/blog/2008/05/06/keep-us-connected/> is the US site for the campaign to keep the community franchise.

<http://www.comminit.com/> Communications Initiative (CI) website has resources from around the world on communications for social and economic development. E-magazine the Drumbeat which is an ongoing and useful list which you can sign up to.

Appendix No 36 CR and CMN - Historical relationship

CR and CMN

CMN's purpose in working with CR was to see whether a media project could follow the same pattern of participation and skills transfer as did CR.

What is clear is that the structural inequalities in society that exclude people from life, as Debord puts it, will operate as usual in our initiatives unless structures are put in place to facilitate access. This demands not only resources but suitable approaches and as CR puts it "culturally acceptable materials". The issue is not how to turn community organisations into independent producers of programmes, but to equip them with the knowledge to create content for community television. This demands that we look at television in a different way and it also demands that we show television – as a medium – to these organisations in a different way.

History:

1. Origins of Community Response (CR)
2. Historical relationship with CMN

1. Origins of Community Response:

The origins of CR are in the grassroots movement against the influx of drugs into Inner City Dublin during the 1970's and 1980's. The organisation is a voluntary agency in the South Inner City which was established in 1990 to work with individuals, families and the local Community to develop their own response to problem drug misuse, HIV and more recently, Hepatitis C. Their evolution from grassroots activism - part of the vigilante movement responding to the presence of drug-pushing in local areas – through a process of reflection and questioning that produced an organisation seeking to understand and expose the reality and lived experience of drug abusers and their families, is a case study in itself.

Dublin inner city communities are historically close knit and the bonds of family and extended family are extremely important . . . Communities in Inner Dublin now confront the reality of a third generation using heroin . . . The link between social exclusion and heroin use is well-established. The south inner city is one of the worst affected parts of Dublin. Here, more drug users live with their family of origin than in any other European city and therefore families carry the burden of care. . . Community Response has a community development philosophy that addresses the dynamic interaction of heroin, HIV, hepatitis and social exclusion ... (CR Annual Report 1999)

Community Response uses an arts and drama based strategy that engages the members of families of drug users in seeking solutions to the problems and effects of drug addiction on their families. In particular CR aims to develop awareness of the needs on the ground and bring the voice of the community to the policy context – i.e. it works with the community to explore their needs and to develop recommendations to bring to the policy-makers, and in particular the Health Boards. Drama and arts are used to develop what they call "culturally acceptable materials" that serve to distribute important drug and health related information within the community and encourage people to participate in the project.

This case study focus is on the particular approach of this organisation in developing participatory strategies through the arts and drama that support people's need to explore issues at the heart of their own lived experience. We are concerned here with CR's use of media, the value of this engagement for their work and their interest in community television. Because of the success of CR's methodology in drama, there was also an expectation that this would provide some basis to explore the development of production skills within the community.

2. Historical relationship with CMN

CMN and CR have a historical relationship reaching back to CMN's beginnings, CR first engaged with CMN in its Integra Project "Building Community Media in Ireland" from 1997-2000 to build video initiatives within their organisation and, while they did not build a video initiative at the time, their involvement in the CMN Integra project was a significant step in that the interest in video was seen to be alive in the organisation on the participant level and the connections with CMN remained after the Integra project ended.

This historic relationship was the basis for the involvement of CR members with CMN's research project. Members of Community Response were also amongst those that answered the call to participate in the Community Media Forum in 2002, and they have shown consistent support for community television. This support has not been unqualified however, significantly one of the comments at the inaugural meeting of the Community Forum when community television was being discussed was that the most important information to broadcast

If we could broadcast it, is that there's bad crack being pushed down in the flats. That may be the most important message to get out and I'm not too sure that television culture, which can too often promote isolation –people sitting alone as opposed to engaging with others socially – is what we need or want to see happen (CMF discussions on community television 2001)

CR has also been very clear in its concern that community television – to succeed – must have the support of the community and engage in strategies to ensure that community participation can happen and is ongoing. The big question for them is how is this going to happen?

Appendix No 37 CMN / CTVN Strategy Review 2008/2009

From CMN to CTVN - CMN Mission statement and activities since 1998

In March 1999, the CMN AGM approved the following mission statement as part of its Strategic Plan:

“The mission of CMN is:

To ensure that all groups, especially those disadvantaged and marginalized, are fully informed about, and can actively participate in and share control of, community and alternative media. The goal is thereby to enhance effective and democratic means of expression and contribute to progressive social change.

CMN seeks to play a catalytic role in this. CMN as an organisation is open for membership to all who share these goals.”

It is now 10 years on, CMN’s work - providing information, supporting community media initiatives, campaigning, and building alliances drained the small amount of resources available - the media centre and C.E. Project closed due to rising rent costs and a number of activities were dropped due to funding cutbacks. But CMN left significant development in its wake and set up CTVN in 2003 – a small yet still productive entity. CMN / CTVN played a central role in the development of the Dublin Community Media Forum, the formation of Dublin Community Television, and on a national level, the Community Television Association.

Community television and CMN / CTVN’s role:

Community television in Ireland is at an early stage in its development, but there are now two channels operating and another due to go on air in the new year. While there are clear difficulties in building the technical organisations, it is significant that many of the community organisations that were part of the initial drive for DCTV, as well as many of those who took part in the S40 Programme Development Workshops, have been unable to access the channels as producers, audiences or organisers. CMN / CTVN’s position is that the community sector should take a significant role in steering the development of community television but this goal is complicated by two factors that need to be understood and addressed:

- The difficulty the sector has in engaging with community television on all levels from production to cable networks.
- The trend towards professionalisation that is funding-driven and excludes community organisations.

CMN / CTVN now needs to focus on building capacity within organisations to use television as a community media.

Community capacity

To build community sector capacity we need to address two aspects:

- Capacity to produce programming by:
 - a. Building coalitions:- working with community organisations to create programming around their needs.
 - b. Build production activity based in community organisations and engaging those organisations in production.
 - c. Build teams with multi-skills that are based in the community organisations activity
- Capacity to renew the skill base within the community by:
 - a. Providing community / organisation-based training.
 - b. Develop peer2peer training methodologies with the organisations
 - c. Support the development of media units within community organisations.

CMN / CTVN Plan for 2009 - Proposal

Explore the possibility of “**Community Updates**” – a series of short programmes made on a bi-monthly basis with three (a number of) partnerships / coalitions. This will consist of a template for the programmes that all groups use. Training in the use of the template and the production values involved will be part of the process. Those encouraged to take up the training need have little prior technical experience. The process will be to provide train, support and mentoring. Project Plan to be developed with partners.

Purpose:

1. Produce bi-monthly updates, i.e. 15-20 minute programmes.
2. Train organisations to form multi-skilled teams as part of production process
3. Develop peer 2 peer training system.
4. Develop mentoring relationships
5. Hand over to partners within 9 months.

Actions:

Identify groups for partnerships:

- Health / Drugs response:
 - Groups already stated interest:- Community Response – Robbie Byrne; GBRD – Phillip Keegan; Saol - Joan Byrne
- Regeneration Partnerships:
 - Ballymun
- Youth Groups:
 - Byar

Team:

CTVN CSP provides:

- Co-ordinator and Team leader: Margaret Gillan
 - Skills: co-ordination; technical – (video production and editing)
 - Multi-skilled - camera and editing. Use of CMN’s Apple system.
- Technical Support Worker: Bernard McGovern

- Video production, editing, related media
- Finance and Administration Support: Mary Cleary (possible job share)
 - Maintenance of project

Partners provide:

- Co-ordination and direction of the 'updates'; involvement in content provision and production.
- People from the organisation - as trainee crew members to train over the year in multi-skilled tasks to work on the up-date; to liaise with their organisation and partners on issues around the programmes. It is possible for partners – say three organisations to put forward one trainee each, or we can look to create a team of two or three from the partnerships to carry the work forward.

Appendix No 38 Response to Call to Tender for Hidden 3

Submitted by CMN
Margaret Gillan, Co-ordinator
May 2009

RESPONSE TO CALL TO TENDER FOR PRODUCTION OF HIDDEN 3

1. INTRODUCTION AND THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE TENDER:

This proposal deals with the Pre-production, production and post-production phases for a third production of a video drama-documentary based on Hepatitis C.

We note the participatory process that Community Response uses in its development of the dramas, and the aim to create a direct form of community consultation. Community Media Network (CMN) is also committed to an approach to media work whereby community organisations gain benefits from the experience of producing media. This means that we intend in our collaborations with community organisations to leave behind more than a single product, that the capacity of the organisation to engage with media production is increased, and that a transfer of skills is built into the experience. CMN sees this as an element of all community media production.

The two DVD's already produced are a powerful use of drama and the video medium and CMN would welcome the opportunity to collaborate with CR on another "Hidden" production. Clearly the theme music, locations, actors will all be part of the continuity into the next production, however we expect CR may have ideas about for instance developing the music through engaging a musician (which would have budget implications) and of using different public locations. These however are elements that CMN sees as being part of the CR workshops development of the script, and will be decisions that CR will make in considering a number of issues including audience in terms of music, and permissions for locations.

Ultimately the process of filming must have as its first and primary intention to create a clear and direct communication with the audience.

2. CMN's APPROACH TO COMMUNITY PRODUCTION

Engaged production: We see the video production crew as an extension of the community group. While it is important for the community group to develop their work unimpeded we propose a deeper engagement of the CMN crew than would be the norm. This we think useful firstly because if the CMN crew is aware of the drama development process we will gain a clear understanding of the script, actors, and their preferred ways of working, we can find our 'place' without being obstructive to the main

activity. Being able to do some trial runs will also allow for greater choice and control of the filming process.

A production like this presents real opportunities for the transfer of skills as long as this is planned in advance and a training element is understood to be part of the experience. However this is also subject to what the CR group requires.

The schedule of meetings and participation that we propose is also subject to what plans the CR group have made and we are flexible in this regard. The purpose of this schedule is to indicate our availability over the period.

3. PROPOSED SCHEDULE AND CMN ROLE

Production meetings:

We envisage four specific production meeting points in the schedule:

1. discuss schedule, roles, participation, training;
2. Arrange 'reccie' of identified locations and to discuss aspects of the drama, actors roles, use of visual language and impact;
3. Before production to firm up production plan
4. Editing process – initial rushes viewing; rough edits, final cut, DVD layout

This is a minimum production meeting schedule and may be augmented with additional meetings.

Workshop/rehearsal attendance and trials:

The 3 CMN crew, camera, sound, producer, will attend at a minimum of four workshops and rehearsals in the pre-production phase and their role and purpose at these sessions should be discussed and agreed at the initial meetings. This means that:

- crew and CR group can become familiar with one another
- crew can find best way of interacting with the group
- a range of issues will be noted that can affect how we frame scenes and compose shots such as actors tendencies, for example mannerisms, voice calibre and range, how actors respond to camera etc.
- the intended impact of the scenes can be discussed, tried out and improved.
- We can create training opportunities.
- We can track on camera some of the process of production
- We can do informal interviews with cast and participants

5-day shoot

It will be important to be very familiar with the script before the shoot begins. While we do not see a rigid story-board method working with the kind of process that CR uses, we will develop a script shooting plan that will support the editing process and allow us to maintain the continuity throughout the filming.

Editing

We anticipate a two-week edit with some extra time for sound treatment and graphics. This should allow for the completion of the work.

4. *OUTLINE OF PROPOSED SCHEDULE*

As we understand the CR process we expect that workshops are currently being held to develop the story. We would expect to begin to get involved in the production by the end of June when the script is being developed. After that it really depends on how CR sees the process rolling out and when are the best points for our participation - it's a moveable feast!

Timescale	Activity Schedule	Considerations
June (first /second week)	First production meeting	firm up schedule, identify workshops/ rehearsals that are best for crew to attend. Identify 'shadow' trainee
July (after 15 th)	Second production meeting First workshop /rehearsal Second workshop / rehearsal	Reccie to locations; test shots Familiarisation with actors, story, CR process. Camera and mic tests; Sometime around now maybe -Training session with CR Group: interaction with Crew; video process; technicalities as they interact with cameras, microphones, possibly some audiences.
August	Third production meeting Third workshop / rehearsal Fourth workshop / rehearsal	Trial shoot for best framing. Informal interviews with cast / CR group
September	Production 5-day shoot Post production meeting – viewing rushes	
October	Post-production 2 weeks including editing consultations. DVD production	Editing Sound treatments and graphics
November	Launch	

5. *OVERALL CONCERNS*

Reduce technical intrusion: The main locations for Hidden 1 and 2 were indoors and this in itself is a limitation that allows for only one camera. A single camera shoot can be less intrusive in terms of amount of technology around and can leave actors more free, but of necessity it lengthens the timeframe for filming. This also means that a number of issues need to be carefully managed – timing and lighting concerns e.g. filming in daylight, continuity, etc. A boom mic is advisable rather than radio mics that demand sound mixing facility.

Training: Part of the purpose of working with community organisations is to begin to build capacity within the organisation itself. We will include a training day for the actors and CR group on the video processes they are part of and we would like to discuss the possibility of a ‘shadow’ trainee from the CR group.

Involvement in Editing: Involvement of CR in the editing process is a pre-requisite, we have allocated time in the schedule for viewing and reviewing. A lot of viewing will be done whilst filming, but there will be a point when filming is complete that rough-cuts should be viewed by the drama director, cast, and group members, before any final editing process is begun.

Reduce copyright problems: Use music composed for the script, if the music is to be developed then there are budget implications. CR may have its preferences for this aspect of the production.

6. CMN CREW:

- a. Producer- Margaret Gillan
- b. Camera - Bernard McGovern (CMN)
- c. Sound - Tommy Murphy (Ballymun Communications)
- d. Editor - Bernard McGovern (CMN); Dave Bourke (Ballymun Communications)

7. ORGANISATION AND BIOGRAPHICAL DETAILS

Organisation:

Community Media Network (CMN) is the organization submitting this tender. CMN works on projects with its member organizations who all have a range of different skills from production in a range of media to research and consultancy. In this proposal CMN is partnering with Ballymun Communications, an organisation that is one of CMN's founder members and regularly partners with CMN on video production projects.

Community Media Network – background:

CMN is a 32 county organisation. It is a Company Limited by Guarantee with a Board of Directors elected at AGM. CMN is a not-for profit organisation and is open to all, groups or individuals, who agree with CMN aims. Membership is on application to the Steering Committee only, and since 2000, free of charge.

Established in 1992, the overall objective of CMN is to initiate and support networking within and between media, and to provide support where key resources are absent. CMN aims to promote community development and empowerment, including both geographical and issues based communities, using video, radio, print and other media as a resource and tool.

In 1998 the AGM approved the following Mission Statement:

*“To ensure that all groups, especially those disadvantaged and marginalised, are fully informed about, and can actively participate in and share control of, community and alternative media. The goal is thereby to enhance effective and democratic means of expression and contributing to progressive social change.
CMN seeks to play a catalytic role in this. CMN as an organisation is open for membership to all those who share these goals.*

Since then CMN's strategic objectives have been:

- To provide support to the community and voluntary sector in the form of provision of low-cost facilities and training in media production.
- To campaign for the development of resources and capacity-building in all media areas, but particularly in respect to community television, legislated for under the Broadcasting Act 2001. CMN has successfully lobbied on EU, National and local levels.
- Since 2000 CMN has been developing its research capability. A Participatory Action Research Project has been active to support the development of community television in the country.

Main Activities:

- Co-ordination of CMN network activities,
- Training and support for community organisations engaging with community television
- Projects co-ordination and management,

- Research,
- Committee of Management Member of Dublin Community Television Co-operative Society
- Member and Chair of Community Television Association

Promoters experience and expertise

Project Leaders:

Margaret Gillan, CMN Co-ordinator

Ollie McGlinchey, Manager, Ballymun Communications

Aspects of Tender not included here:

Crew Members

Budget

Appendix No 39 Account of the York Street Fire video

YORK STREET FIRE³⁵

by Brendan Dowling

There never was a plan to make a film. The day after the fire, Dublin Corporation moved in to seal up the flat in which the blaze had started. Several of us who live in the street felt that once the flat was sealed, the evidence of what had happened would be out of our reach. Luckily we had a decent camera available to us and we got into the flat just as the Corporation workmen set to work.

Once we had a few shots of the inside of the flat we decided to record the fire escape that had, the previous night, been tied up with wire. One fire escape led to us checking out the other eight halls in York Street- and what we found was damning.

The residents of York Street have had many fire scares over the last few years and after at least one such occasion the mal-functioning fire escapes were documented in some of the national tabloids. We began to ask how it was that the publicity at the time had not caused any action to be taken- either then or since. This in turn prompted the question....How are we going to ensure that this event is not simply forgotten and filed away under close calls? It was at this point that we decided to present the material that we had filmed in a format that would make it more difficult to marginalise or side-step. In effect York Street Fire is a snap-shot of the fire and the immediate reaction and spinning of the powers that be. We finalised the piece within a week and sent it to all our local TDs and to the Head of the relevant section of Dublin Corporation. The feedback we got from the politicians at least showed us that they had sat down for 12 minutes and viewed the piece.

Dublin Corporation has since promised to fix the fire escapes- and we are still waiting. This piece is incomplete in so far as we don't know how the story ends.... We are offering the powers that be the opportunity to write the final scene - depending on what they do, or don't over the coming months. Then, when the next fire occurs in York Street (we are resigned to when - rather than if) and when we publicly show how clearly we warned them of the dangers - it will be more difficult for them to deny their knowledge or their responsibility.

Within the process of making a piece like this, there is a sense of the playing field being more even than usual. There is a warning within it - a declaration that we can do this too _ we can bear witness to events within our own community, from our own perspective - just like you do all the time - and we can do it well enough that you can't just dismiss it as a home movie. For technical information: Filming done on Sony DVCAM. Editing done on iMac DVD special edition.

To get a copy of this video or to find out more

Contact:Brendan Dowling E-mail: brd@iol.ie

To get a copy of this video or to find out more contact:Brendan Dowling E-mail: brd@iol.ie

³⁵ http://www.cmn.ie/cmnsitenew/trackark/tracksummer/trackingsummer/reviews_print.htm

Appendix No 40a Broadcasting Bill 1999 Section 38

Broadcasting Bill 1999 Section 38

38.—

(1) Subject to the provisions of this section, 2 or more members of a local community may supply a compilation of programme material for the purposes of its being transmitted as a broadcasting service under and in accordance with a licence referred to in *section 36(1)*.

(2) Subject to *subsections (3) and (4)*, the Commission may enter into a contract with 2 or more members of a local community whereby those members may supply a compilation of programme material for the purposes referred to in *subsection (1)* if it is satisfied that—

(a) those members are representative of the community concerned,

(b) the supply of programme material in pursuance of the contract will be effected with the objective of—

- 45
- (i) specifically addressing the interests of the community concerned, and
 - (ii) achieving a monetary reward of no greater amount than is reasonably necessary to defray the expenses that will be incurred in effecting that supply,

37
Community
channels.

38

and

(c) there is a reasonable prospect that all such expenses as are likely to be incurred during the period of the contract will be defrayed, and such a contract shall be known as a “provision of community content contract” and is in this Act referred to as a “community content contract”.

(3) The Commission shall not enter into a community content contract save after consultation with the person who it appears to the Commission will transmit or, as the case may be, will be the subject of a requirement under *section 36(10)* to transmit, the programme material supplied pursuant to the contract as a broadcasting service.

(4) The Commission shall establish procedures whereby members of local communities are enabled, at regular intervals, to make submissions to the Commission as to what particular contracts ought, in their opinion, to be entered into under this section and what particular terms and conditions ought, in their opinion, to be included in such contracts and requiring the Commission to furnish, on request, to any such members particulars of any proposals formulated, for the time being, by the Commission itself with regard to each of those matters.

(5) Before entering into a community content contract, the Commission shall have regard to any submissions made to it under and in accordance with procedures established under *subsection (4)* and which appear to it to be of relevance to that contract.

(6) The Commission shall conduct, or arrange with members of the local community concerned for there to be conducted, a survey amongst members of that community for the purpose of ascertaining— 30

(a) the extent to which those members view any broadcasting service on which there is transmitted the programme material supplied pursuant to a community content contract, and

(b) the opinion of those members with regard to— 35

(i) the quality of that programme material, and

(ii) whether that material specifically addresses the interests of their community,

and shall have regard to the results of such a survey in deciding, in relation to any community content contract it proposes to enter into 40 with members of that community next after the conduct of that survey, with whom it shall enter into such a contract and the nature of the terms and conditions it may include in that contract.

(7) For the avoidance of doubt, if the holder of a licence referred to in *subsection (1) of section 36* is required under *subsection (10) 45* of that section to transmit as a broadcasting service the programme material supplied pursuant to a community content contract, he or she shall not be—

(a) under any duty to ensure that the material complies with the terms and conditions of that contract or the enactments that apply in respect of the supply of the material by virtue of *section 18*,

5 (b) regarded, for the purposes of the law of defamation, malicious falsehood or any other form of civil liability as having, by virtue of such transmission, published the material, or

(c) liable in damages, by virtue of such transmission, for any 10 infringement of copyright, other intellectual property rights or other legal rights of any person.

(8) In this section ‘local community’ means the community of a town or other urban or rural area.

Appendix No 40b BBA 2001 Lobby Document



Community Media Network
34 North Frederick Street
Dublin1, Ireland.

Tel: +353 1 878 3344;
FAX: +353 1 878 3206
e-mail: cmn@cmn.ie
<http://www.cmn.ie>

22 December 1999

Dear

At the invitation of the *Select Committee on Heritage and the Irish Language*, Community Media Network, in association with Open Channel made a submission regarding its views on the Broadcasting Bill. We greatly appreciated the positive reception our ideas received there, and we were encouraged to make a further submission detailing the amendments we propose. Enclosed you will find these. Their main aims are:

- To give the power to the proposed new Commission to assess the need for, and to facilitate the development of, community television broadly understood.
- To define community in a sense that goes beyond geographical boundaries.
- To put an onus on applicants for a license to ensure that the proposed Channel is transparent and accountable to the community, and has secured the active participation of the community at all levels – an essential prerequisite to any community station.
- To ensure that the licensee has no interest other than those of the community it serves.

We have avoided anything that would imply a cost to the exchequer, believing that it would be inappropriate for us to propose this as part of the Bill. However, the Committee did enquire as to how funding might be forthcoming for the development of community television, where proven benefits would result. The main options, based on experience elsewhere, are as follows:

- a) Cable and MMDS operators could, as part of their license conditions, provide funding for local television (e.g. most cities in the USA);
- b) Local and/or national authorities could provide support (e.g. Germany, Netherlands);
- c) A portion of the television license fee could go towards community channels, based on their public service role (Australia);

Please do not hesitate to contact us for further clarification.

Yours sincerely,

Seán Ó Siochrú, Chairperson

Margaret Gillan, Manager

Appendix No 40c Proposed Amendments to the Broadcasting Bill

Community Media Network. (CMN)

The following are amendments proposed by Community Media Network, in consultation with Open Channel and others among its members.

The specific amendments are followed by an accordingly revised Section 34, the main Section affected.

Amendment 1:

On page 13 (Section 9), between lines 12 and 13, to insert a new sub-section (3) as follows:

“The Commission shall facilitate the development of community television and radio by endeavouring to ensure that sufficient access is provided to production and broadcast facilities, and that sufficient training is made available, to allow for the widest possible access to and participation in programme making, production and broadcasting.”

Reason: To specifically enable the Commission to take action it sees as necessary to support community television, including production, training and other activities.

Amendment 2:

On page 33 (Section 45), after line 45 to insert a new sub section as follows:

“The Commission, on its own initiative or at the request of a community body, may carry out an assessment of community broadcasting needs which shall include the extent to which production facilities, training and resources are available to the community to enable such community to best serve its interests.”

Reason: To enable the Commission, and communities, to assess the needs for community television production and related facilities.

Amendment 3:

In Section 34, pages 33 line 2, 7, 34, 47, and Page 34 line 24 to delete the work “local”

On Page 34 lines 24 and 25 amend subsection (8) to read:

“In this section “community” means the community of a town of other urban or rural area, or of a defined community of interest irrespective of geographical proximity or location.”

Reason: To permit the possibility of a non-territorially based, non-contiguous, communities to apply for a community broadcasting license, for instance: islanders, Travellers, women, etc.

Amendment 4:

On page 33, after line 12, insert a new sub-section (2) (b) as follows:

“(b) that mechanisms are put in place specifically to permit the active participation in the compilation and supply of programme material by all members of that community, and voluntary and community organisations active in that community;.”

On page 33, to delete sub-sections (4) and (5), lines 33 to 45 inclusive, and replace it with:

“ (4) An applicant for a community content contract must demonstrate, to the satisfaction of the Commission, that a community wide, transparent and participative process of consultation has been implemented which has offered the opportunity to all members of that community, and all active community and voluntary organisations within that community, to actively join in and participate in the initiative.”

In page 33, line 47, insert the word “participative” before the work “survey”.

In page 34, line 1 insert two new subsections as follows

- (a) the extent to which the community is facilitated to actively participation in the compilation and transmission of programme material and community content contract
- (b) the extent and manners in which the community content contract serves the interests of the members of the community

Reason: As it stands the Bill places the Commission in between a community broadcaster and the community it is to serve. The community makes submissions to the Commission regarding what it wants, and the Commission assesses applicant licensees taking these views into consideration. It is critical to the survival or any community broadcaster that it has not just the support but also *the very active participation* of the community it represents. The proposed amendment simplifies the procedure to ensure that that active participation has been sought and obtained, but retains the right of the Commission to ultimately decide whether the broadcaster is actually fulfilling the needs of the community. It also ensures that mechanisms will be in place to facilitate community participation and that the community channel is transparent - without which community support will not be forthcoming.

Amendment 5:

On page 33, line 14 insert the word “sole” before the word “objective”

On page 33, delete existing sub-clause (2) (ii), lines 17 to 19.

On Page 33, insert before line 20 a new sub-clause (c) as follows:

“(c) the supply of programme material in pursuance of the contract will be effected with no profit motive, in a fashion that is fully transparent in all its aspects to the community concerned, and that is accountable to the community “

Reason: To ensure that the community stations is devoted entirely to the interests of the community, and to no other end, and to ensure transparency and accountability to the community.

Below, Section 34 is presented with the above revisions included:

Broadcasting Bill - Community Channels.

34 – (1) Subject to the provisions of this section, 2 or more members of a community may supply a compilation of programme material for the purposes of its being transmitted as a broadcasting service under and in accordance with a licence referred to in *section 32(1)*.

(2) Subject to *subsections (3)*, the Commission may enter into a contract with 2 or more members of a community whereby those members may supply a compilation of programme material for the purposes referred to in *subsection (1)* if it is satisfied that –

- (a) those members are representative of the community concerned,
- (b) that mechanisms are put in place specifically to permit the active participation in the compilation and supply of programme material by all members of that community, and voluntary and community organisations active in that community;
- (c) the supply of programme material in pursuance of the contract will be effected with the sole objective of specifically addressing the interests of the community concerned,
- (d) the supply of programme material in pursuance of the contract will be effected with no profit motive, in a fashion that is fully transparent in all its aspects to the community concerned, and that is accountable to the community
- (e) there is a reasonable prospect that all such expenses as are likely to be incurred during the period of the contract will be defrayed,

and such a contract shall be known as a “provision of community content contract” and is in this Act referred to as a “community content contract”.

(3) The Commission shall not enter into a community content contract save after consultation with the person who it appears to the Commission will transmit or, as the case may be, will be the subject of a requirement under *section 32(9)* to transmit, the programme material supplied pursuant to the contract as a broadcasting service

(4) An applicant for a community content contract must demonstrate, to the satisfaction of the Commission, that a community wide, transparent and participative process of consultation has been implemented which has offered the opportunity to all members of that community, and all active community and voluntary organisations within that community, to actively join in and participate in the initiative.

(5) The Commission, on its own initiative or at the request of a community body, may carry out an assessment of community broadcasting needs which shall include the extent to which production facilities, training and resources are available to the community to enable such community to best serve its interests.

(6) The Commission shall conduct, or arrange with members of the community concerned for there to be conducted, a participative survey amongst members of that community for the purpose of ascertaining-

- (a) the extent to which the community is facilitated to actively participation in the compilation and transmission of programme material and community content contract
- (b) the extent and manners in which the community content contract serves the interests of the members of the community
- (c) the extent to which those members view any broadcasting service on which there is transmitted the programme material supplied pursuant to a community content contract, and
- (d) the opinion of those members with regard to -
 - (i) the quality of that programme material, and
 - (ii) whether that material specifically addresses the interests of their community,

and shall have regard to the results of such a survey in deciding, in relation to any community content contract it proposes to enter into with members of that community next after the conduct of that survey, with whom it shall enter into such a contract and the nature of the terms and conditions it may include in that contract.

(7) For the avoidance of doubt, if the holder of a licence referred to in *subsection (1) of section 32* is required under *subsection (9)* of that section to transmit as a broadcasting service the programme material supplied pursuant to a community content contract, he or she shall not be under any duty to ensure that such material complies with terms and conditions of that contract or the enactments that apply in respect of the supply of that material by virtue of *section 14* and nor shall he or she be regarded, for the purposes of the law of defamation, as having, by virtue of such transmission, published the material.

(8) In this section “community” means the community of a town or other urban or rural area, or of a defined community of interest irrespective of geographical proximity or location.

Select Committee on Heritage and the Irish Language:

Monica Barnes T.D.

Martin Brady T.D.

Donal Carey T.D.

Pat Carey T.D.

Michael Collins T.D.

Mary Hanafin T.D.

Michael D. Higgins T.D.

Brendan Kenneally T.D.

Enda Kenny T.D.

Dinny McGlinchey T.D.

Olivia Mitchell T.D.

Donal Moynihan T.D.

Michael Moynihan T.D.

Brian O’Shea

Appendix No 40d Open Channel's amendments to Broadcasting Bill 1999

OPEN CHANNEL

Proposed Amendments to the Broadcasting Bill 1999

The amendments are intended as additions to those proposed by Community Media Network on behalf of groups campaigning for community media.

The purpose of these amendments is to ensure that groups who are granted a license to broadcast community television can do so using the most appropriate broadcast platform, whether cable, terrestrial or satellite without having to go through a further hurdle of applying for a separate license. In the bill as it is now drafted groups who are granted a license to broadcast community television are limited to use of a cable distribution system unless they make a separate application to transmit by other means.

First we should try to ensure that Community Television can be Broadcast by means other than Cable.

(The National conference and Ad Hoc committee demanded that community television should be broadcast on all transmission systems.)

In the proposed bill Community Television made by a community content contractor can only be transmitted by cable or MMD systems, although RTE, TV3 and TnaG are empowered to transmit services of a 'Community, Local or Regional character'.

In order to rectify this we would need to have following amendments placed in the bill:

Proposed Changes

1. To insert a new paragraph after Section 5, Subsection (4) Paragraph (b)
This paragraph to read:

(b) to transmit, by digital terrestrial means, in accordance with arrangements under this Act entered into by it with the holders of a community content contract, broadcasting services comprising compilations of programme material supplied to it by the holders of a community content contract for that purpose,

Reasoning: This amendment will allow groups who are granted a community television content contract to make arrangements with the designated company to broadcast their programmes if digital terrestrial transmission is the most appropriate for their group. This is particularly relevant to communities of interest i.e. Travellers and people with Disabilities

2. Section 10, Subsection (2) Paragraph (b) should be amended to read:

the Authority, Teilifís na Gaeilge, television programme service contractor or the holder of a community content contract for the purpose of any such arrangements, being arrangements for the transmission by the designated company of free-to-air service.

3. Section 11, Subsection (1) Paragraph (a)
Shall, if requested to do so by the body or contractor concerned, enter into arrangements with each of the following, namely, the Authority, Teilifís na Gaeilge, television programme service contractor or the holder of a community content contract whereby the company transmits-

Reasoning: These two amendments are specifically designed to ensure that community television programmes can be transmitted by Digital Terrestrial Television without the holder of a community content contract having to make a separate application to transmit by these means.

Community made programmes should be available by whatever becomes the dominant method by which homes in Ireland receive television. The option of free-to-air DTT should be included in the current legislation as there is unlikely to be another bill before the changeover to digital.

4. Section 31, Subsection (1)
A person under the jurisdiction of the State (within the meaning of the Council Directive) shall not supply a compilation of programme material for the purpose of it being transmitted as a broadcasting service (whether for reception in the State or elsewhere) by means of a satellite device otherwise than under and in accordance with a satellite content contract or community content contract.

Reasoning: Satellite can be the most cost effective means of setting up a transmission system for community television. The 'Deep Dish' satellite channel is being successfully run by community broadcasters in the USA. In Europe there are attempts (such as the European Youth Channel Project) to use satellite broadcasting to increase access to community television broadcasting.

Appendix No 41 DCTV Start-up application to DCCF

<p>Your organisation's name:....</p> <p>Community Media Network acting for Dublin Community TV (DCTV)</p> <p>.....</p> <p>The proposed project's name:....</p> <p>Foundation Phase (DCTV)</p> <p>.....</p> <p>What is the rationale behind the project – why is it needed?...</p> <p>To progress and maintain the consultation process which has begun with community and voluntary organisations in Dublin towards establishing a community TV channel for the city. To begin the process that will create the foundation of a community TV channel for Dublin City that is owned and managed by the community sector; provide a means of transmission to communities that is empowering, enabling participation in the democratic process, and that celebrates the diversity of Dublin's communities.</p> <p>To develop the community TV initiative as proposed in the DCTV Feasibility Study. The report has been presented to the DCDB and is currently being published. There will be an official launch in November. (see attached Concept Paper – Annex 1)</p> <p>.....</p> <p>What will the project do?...</p> <p>Provide support for the Institutional and Content Steering Committee of DCTV. Consult with the Dublin City Community Forum Council on DCTV. Consult for same and the establishment of content sub-groups with the Dublin City Community Fora –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Disability Forum• The Sports Forum• The Culture Cluster• The Economic Cluster,• The Social Cluster• The Childcare Focus Group <p>And will commit to consult with any other groupings the Council approves.</p> <p>Continue the ongoing consultation with the existing content sub groups of the DCTV initiative.</p> <p>This is what the project requests the Council to support. The project will also:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Establish the technological base• Co-ordinate and facilitate the Content Sub Groups.• Develop the Licence Application. Liaise with Cable Company, the BCI, and the Department of Communications.• Develop funding strategies• Develop the membership structure• Plan Outreach and Development Programme

(CMF CTV WG proposal to DCCF October 2002)

Appendix No 42 CTV Workshop 2002

WORKSHOP REPORT

A DAY FOR COMMUNITY TV -

FRIDAY 15TH NOVEMBER 2002

Organised by the Community Media Forum

Supported by the Dublin City Development Board

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Dublin Community Television Workshop was held on Friday 15th November 2002 in the Teacher's Club, Parnell Square. The workshop was sponsored by the Dublin City Community Media Forum, and supported by the Dublin City Development Board. In its strategy statement for the future development of Dublin City (*Dublin – A City of Possibilities 2002*) it identified the central role of a community television channel in the development of a more democratic, participative and learning community in the city. The research paper, *Building Community Through Television – A Plan for Dublin Community Television (Nov 2002)* identified and researched key issues relevant to the success of DCTV, and developed a plan for the launch of community television in Dublin. This workshop seeks to move the process a stage further.

The workshop brought together individuals and organisations who are committed to making a positive contribution towards the creation of Dublin Community Television; people with knowledge, interest and experience of community media initiatives, gained over many years involvement in the community sector. The aim of the workshop was to be a participative planning event to create a plan for the development of Dublin Community Television – a plan the participants would implement themselves.

A panel discussion, with speakers from various community groups from around the country, discussed what's happening around Ireland in the community television sector. There is evidence of considerable activity, commitment and participation, in community media, both at local and national level. This energy, however, needs to be harnessed and supported, new ideas need to be generated, and groups sharing similar objectives need to network and support each other. To this end, there is need for a co-ordinating mechanism to oversee and facilitate this process.

While recent legislative developments making provision for a community television channel (Broadcasting Act 2001) was broadly welcomed, there was also some frustration expressed at the perceived slow pace by the Broadcasting Commission of Ireland (BCI) in developing policy and initiating the application process for licenses.

Following the discussion panel, two case studies were presented which explored the importance of community organisations to community media.

The Irish Deaf Society (IDS) has a long history of involvement in community media, using it as a means to communicate with its members throughout Ireland. To date it has produced documentaries, videos and other educational material, but has experienced considerable difficulty getting this material broadcast, either by the public service or commercial sector operators.

The IDS is strongly committed to developing and using community media for the benefits of its members. It considers community television to be the natural medium through which it can achieve its objectives for the benefit of its members.

Pavee Point, a representative group of the travelling community in Ireland, also has considerable experience of involvement with community media. Using independent production companies they have produced documentaries and videos, aimed at diverse groups within the travelling community. While the experience of producing this material with independent producers was a positive one, it also highlighted the need for more active participation by members of the travelling community in the overall project. Content needs to be produced by the travelling community for the travelling community.

Pavee Point considers community television to be an ideal medium for achieving its objectives of development and community building within the travelling community and are strongly supportive of the community television project.

The afternoon slot was given to workshops, which were organised around two themes – funding and licensing issues, and content issues.

The report from the group discussing funding and licensing highlighted a number of important factors relevant to the success of community television. International experience shows that secure core funding is critical to the long-term viability of community television. The capacity of the community sector to produce quality content over the long-term is directly linked to adequate funding. In the short-term a sum of approximately €250,000 is required to fund the application for license stage.

Funding may come through two strands: core funding may be sourced through license fee, or local authority, and additional funding, through a foundation, may come from advertising, sponsorship or sales. However, the not-for-profit nature of community television, together with the terms of the license from BCI, may significantly restrict the ability of the community sector to source core funding through their own resources.

Criteria for granting of a licence, as outlined by BCI, includes the active participation of the community in the production of programme content. Content must reflect and be responsive to community needs. The core principles of empowerment, participation and diversity, must underpin any application for a community television license.

Recent changes in the Broadcasting Act (2001) makes provision on the cable network through the 'must-carry' clause. NTL, the cable carrier, would welcome community television on condition it can deliver viewing numbers. However, without the capacity in the community to produce consistent, quality content for itself, access to the cable network and a license to broadcast will be of little value.

Other issues identified in the workshop discussions were:

- Community building, networking, learning and sharing information through community television.
- Create a community to meet needs of diverse groups.
- Create an exciting new future for Dublin Community Television – radically different from existing public service and commercial broadcasting.
- Generate energy, commitment and shared responsibility towards the creation of Dublin Community Television.
- Foster and promote active participation in the planning and implementation stages of Dublin Community Television.
- Highlight the benefits of process as well as product.

Following from this workshop a plan of action was developed. Among the key decisions made and targets set were:

- To set up a lobby group to support, co-ordinate and monitor the on-going work of establishing Dublin Community Television. This group would also lobby and liase with BCI on an ongoing basis, particularly in relation to issues relating to expression of interest and application for license submissions.

- Community Media Network are willing to facilitate the work of lobby group by offering space on their web page.
- Groups formed at the workshop will continue to work together in partnership, generating ideas and implementing their plans.
- A *Breakfast Morning* will be held in late Nov 2002, to generate support and funding from telecom CEO's.
- Expression of interest submissions to be with BCI by 25th November 2002.

The workshop concluded with Margaret Gillan thanking the Dublin City Development Board, the Community Media Forum, and the participants for their support, commitment and energy in helping to realise the vision of a vibrant and exciting Dublin Community Television channel.

INTRODUCTION

A DAY FOR COMMUNITY TELEVISION

This one-day workshop brought together individuals and organisations that are interested in or actively involved in the creation of Dublin Community Television (DCTV). Over seventy individuals and organisations participated in the workshop. The event was sponsored by Community Media Forum, a sub-group of the Community Forum, established by the Dublin City Development Board to promote and support the participation of the Community and Voluntary sector in the strategic development of Community Media in Dublin.

Recent developments in the broadcasting sector have created exciting new opportunities for the creation of the Dublin Community Television Channel (DCTV). Changes in the Broadcasting Act (2001) offered for the first time a license for a community television channel. In its 2002 strategic plan, *'Dublin - a City of Possibilities'*, the City Development Board recognises the critical contribution a community channel can make towards achieving a number of its strategic objectives for the city of Dublin. The National Development Plan, the Government White Paper *'Supporting Voluntary Activity'*, and recent Equality legislation all emphasise the co-operation and collaboration necessary between community organisations, local government, statutory agencies and related industry. These progressive and welcome developments have helped create opportunities within the broadcasting sector conducive to turning the aspiration of Dublin Community Television into reality.

The recent study *Building Community Through Television – A Plan for Dublin Community Television*, November 2002, researched issues critical to the success of community television in Dublin city – the granting of a license to broadcast, capacity in community to produce programme content, funding, and training facilities. Among its main recommendations were further research and discussion aimed at building a broad consensus; development of

concrete proposals for partnerships, responsible for production of content; identifying sources and availability of funding; agreeing with BCI criteria for license application.

The purpose of this workshop - Dublin Community Television Workshop – is towards the implementation of these recommendations. Specifically, the aims of the workshop are to build a broad consensus among interested individuals and organisations, explore and reflect on ideas, and generate commitment towards the creation of Dublin Community Television.

The next phase of the process will entail an expression of interest, by 25th November 2002, followed by an application for a community broadcasting license, by late 2002 or early 2003.

DUBLIN COMMUNITY TELEVISION – CURRENT DEVELOPMENTS

Prof. Farrell Corcoran stressed the nature of community television, and its divergence in core values and underpinning commercial philosophy from public service and commercial broadcasting in his opening address. The essence of community television, and what makes it unique and distinct from both the commercial and public-service sectors, is its inherently democratic and participative nature. It is based on the enthusiasm and energy of the voluntary sector, who are not merely consumers, but also producers of content.

Drawing on experience of community television initiatives in the US Corcoran stated that these initiatives failed due to financial pressures and relaxation of the 'must carry' clause by Government. The lesson for Ireland is that inactivity and inertia by Government can result in failure, and a key challenge therefore will be to lobby for a more proactive involvement by Government in the development and support of community television.

Celene Craig, Secretary of the Broadcasting Commission of Ireland, outlined recent developments in broadcasting legislation. The BCI has yet to develop policy for community television giving effect to the provisions of the Broadcasting Act 2001. In the absence of stated policy for the granting of licenses, concern was expressed by participants that BCI may hinder rather than help in the development and roll-out of community television channels. However, a template of how the BCI may handle the roll-out of community television is based on the most developed strand in community broadcasting – community radio. BCI policy in this area is underpinned by key principles of ownership and control, financing and programming matters. These principles may provide a possible basis for the offering of licenses, evaluation of operators, and the re-issuing of licenses within the community television strand.

The BCI has invited expressions of interest in the provision of community television services to be submitted by 25th November 2002. Formal applications for licenses will be invited by early 2003, with licenses being issued by mid 2003 or early 2004, depending on factors such as the length of consultation process, and the re-constitution of BCI board late next year.

A panel discussion, chaired by Prof. Farrell Corcoran, explored what's happening around Ireland regarding community television developments. Sean O'Siochru, chair of Community Media Network (CMN), reported that there was a high level of interest in community television, with many projects established throughout the country. This workshop was an opportunity to hear what these diverse groups were doing, to learn from each other and to explore ways of working together in the future. These initiatives were underpinned by principles of empowerment, diversity and participation; principles that will guide the future planning and development of community television in Ireland. However, a key challenge for the development of a community television channel will be securing core funding.

Alan Byrne, Dundalk Community Media Centre, is involved in community radio, which is run as a social economy business. He expressed an interest in community television and will be making an expression of interest to BCI.

Dr Maria Gibbons, Community Video Activist, Leitrim, in abstencia, reported through Margaret Gillan that she would be delighted to network with anyone interested in developing video initiatives.

Emma Bowell, Community Video Activist, Framework, Cork described the extensive community outreach activities of their group as “sowing seeds in Cork for community television”. In the absence of a Cork community television channel video productions, commissioned by community groups or communities of interest, are shown in community centres. There is a strong need for a Cork community television channel and Framework intend to make an expression of interest.

Dave Hydman, Northern Visions, Belfast, reported on developments in Northern Ireland. At a time when much of what is viewed is produced outside of national boundaries and therefore cannot be regulated, there is a growing awareness by the British Government to reverse this trend and place more emphasis on local programming. Opening up Irish airwaves to local communities is now seen as promoting identity, local citizenship, social cohesion and democratic participation. Northern Visions currently holds a community radio license, but wants to secure a community television license. Overall, while many people in Northern Ireland are passionate in their commitment to community access broadcasting, it remains a fragile, financially impoverished sector.

Ollie McGlinchey, Ballymun Communications, described how their group offers training / education in video production. This training is provided in collaboration with Dublin City University and Ballymun College.

Seamus McGreaney, Big River TV, Open Channel, outlined how with access to training and modern technology, it is now possible for community groups to produce high quality content suitable for TV broadcasting. In contrast with Ireland, other countries have seen significant growth in community television. Legislative changes are necessary to promote such developments in Ireland.

Ken Lynam, Fairview Productions, Dublin described how his group are heavily involved with youth and community groups engaged in video and photography work. Training is offered, including production and delivery skills. As well as acquiring technical skills, these groups also decide content.

Margaret Gillan, Manager CMN, stressed the importance of the first three months after launch of DCTV to create favourable public perception of channel. Must get it right first time – there will be no second chance to make a favourable first impression. Diverse groups must co-operate and work closely in partnership to ensure success of channel.

In summary, Farrell Corcoran highlighted the significant amount of activity at local and national level. A co-ordinating mechanism needs to be created for continued generation of

ideas and networking, leading to the implementation of DCTV. This concluded the panel discussion deliberations.

Next, two case studies were presented which explored the importance of community organisations to community media.

Kevin Stanley, Chair, Irish Deaf Society outlined the experience of the Irish Deaf Society and community media (See appendix 2). The IDS has a long history of involvement in community media, employing it as a means of building community and enhancing communications within the deaf community. The current situation is that very few media productions cater for the needs of the deaf community, either through the provision of sub-titling or interpreters. The IDS has produced a number of productions in-house, but encounter difficulties getting this material broadcast.

It is not accurate to describe the deaf community as a homogenous group, rather it is comprised of a diversity of member groups, each with specific needs. This presents a challenge for the IDS, in that their members are spread throughout Ireland, and constitute a community of interest rather than a geographical entity.

The IDS has been frustrated in its efforts over many years to gain access to community media to promote and develop communications within the deaf community. It is now urgent that plans for community television be implemented, allowing the members of the deaf community to participate fully in Irish society.

Caoimhe McCabe, Information Officer, Pavee Point, reported on the experience of the travelling community in Ireland and its involvement in community media (See appendix 3). Pavee Point have produced a number of videos, aimed at diverse groups within the travelling community, for example, youth, women, children. These productions, with some editing, may be suitable for broadcasting on community television.

Independent production companies were used for these projects, and while there were many positive aspects to these arrangements, issues over editorial control emerged. There is need for a more participative process that offers access to members of the travelling community in both the production and the consumption of content. In general this highlights the need for producers who embrace the concept of community development through media, and in particular the participation of members of the travelling community in the production of content for the travelling by the travelling community. This suggests a need for training and education to provide people with the skills, knowledge and competence to access and use community television for the benefit of the travelling community.

In summary of the case studies presentation, Sean O'Siochru suggested that the participation by the Irish Deaf Society and Pavee Point in community media in Ireland is a paradigm for the involvement of other groups. Community groups are willing to participate in media projects in so far as they see these projects meeting their needs. The task for community television in Ireland is to develop a strategy relevant and responsive to the needs of community groups.

KEY ISSUES

The afternoon session commenced with a number of workshops where groups identified and explored important issues relevant to Dublin Community Television. This work in groups was an opportunity to consolidate work done to date, and may lead to link-up with other groups sharing similar interests. Workshops were organised under two themes: institutional – dealing with licensing and funding matters, and content – dealing with issues of shared interest.

Feedback from the workgroups centred around a number of key issues:

Funding Issues

- International experience shows that secure core funding is required to ensure long-term viability of community television.
- Community television may be funded through two strands: core funding and additional funding. Core funding may be sourced through license fee, or local authorities. Additional funding, attracted through a foundation, may come from advertising, sponsorship, or sales.
- In the short-term it is necessary to secure funding of €250,000 to fund application for license stage.

Quality of content will be contingent on adequate funding.

The not-for-profit status of community media implies that income generated must be invested in production costs. Under the terms of its license from BCI will community television be allowed to generate income from advertising and sponsorship?

- Community development groups may experience difficulty attracting funding for media activity, on top of core activity.

Licensing Issues

The Broadcasting Commission of Ireland has advised that the granting of a license will be linked to the active participation of the community in the compilation of programme content. Content must reflect and meet local community needs.

- If DCTV are successful in their application to BCI for the granting of a license to broadcast, it will necessitate a capacity in the community to produce programme content for itself. Indeed, without this production capacity, the license to broadcast will be worthless.

- Community television does not appear to be a priority for BCI.

The process leading up to an expression of interest appears to be more complex than suggested above by Celine Craig of BCI.

Legislation under the Broadcasting Act (2001) gives access to cable network through 'must-carry' clause.

Cable carrier NTL will welcome community television channel provided it can deliver viewing numbers.

Other Issues

- There appears to be political support for Dublin Community Television
- Dublin Community Television needs to work in partnership with existing local resources, eg Dublin City University, Dublin Institute of Technology, Ballyfermot College, etc.

There is a need for Dublin Community Television to show that they can sustain production of content over long-term.

Community television is not merely interested in broadcasting content, it also wants to have production capacity.

- The community, not the channel, is responsible for sourcing content.

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT – PLAN OF ACTION

As a result of this workshop a number of decisions were taken and targets set. These included:

- Establish a co-ordinating body to oversee and monitor progress of Dublin Community Television.
- Host a 'Breakfast Morning' on 26th of Nov to seek support and funding from both the public and private sector in Dublin.
- Form a lobby or advocacy group to lobby BCI for launch of community television service. BCI would probably support such a development.

Community Media Network (CMN) would be willing to support such a development, maybe offering slot on web site.

Groups that formed at the workshop today will continue to network, generate new ideas and work together on their plans, adding new members as they see fit.

- Expression of interest to be submitted to BCI by 25th November 2002

The workshop concluded with feedback from workgroups where each group gave a verbal report of the issues discussed (See appendix 4).

Margaret Gillan, Manager CMN, thanked everyone for participating in the workshop and for their commitment to the project of community television.

Appendix no 43a Local Global Content group

A Group convened as an environment TCG, and renamed itself the Local/Global Group the notes below are from the workshop in 2002. The group met a few times but due to the lack of supports available they did not continue. One of the members – a large NGO – Sustainable Ireland has continued and produces programmes funded by S&V, however the smaller groups could fall away.

Environment Content Group Workshop – flip charts

Page 1.

Common themes:

- global /local
- Strengthening and linking communities
- Exploring human-centred rather than profit-centred ways of living/structures
- Exploring paths to sustainability
- Critical approach to the issues confronting cities today

Page 2, 3

Looking for common ground

(LYCS)

- Promote a global perspective on issues affecting the city in NE Inner City
- Shed light on local issues
- Reduce isolation of problems, individuals, communities
- Look for solutions/ learn from other places
- Build solidarity
- Take a lead on local/community media: Promote, encourage participation, training

(LASC)

- Link Ireland and Latin America through cultural promotion, development education and campaigning solidarity
- Use Latin American experience to inform attempts in Ireland to create SD(??)

(Feasta)

- Aims to show how economic globalisation is affecting communities in Ireland
- Promoting Environmental sustainability in local cities
- Localisation: city taking back power from Global Corporates
- Managing wealth of communities

(Sustainability Ireland)

- Disseminating information re sustainability
- Zero waste, ecological footprints, etc.,
- Through Convergence, SI Sourcebook,

- Mainstreaming sustainability
- Getting alternatives out there
- Networking
- Networking between movements
- Bringing Anti-Globalisation Movement back home
- Connecting community and other movements

Page 4

Routes	Benefits
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Umbrella groups - Local networks - E-mailing list - Community Exchange - National networks - Global/local networks - Mainstream media 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Wider audience - Cost effective - Accessible - Empowering process - New audiences – not just the converted - Cultural mainstreaming - Videoing as distribution system - Having voice heard

Page 5

- Alternative versions of mainstream formats (pop idols, fair city ... big brother eg Carrickmines
- Timing issues
- Positive news
- Media report
- Cookery – organic, ethnic, fair-trade
- Q+A
- Ali G_Style (Paddy G)
- Alternative Angelus – call to meditation
- Soap-Box
- Films like “learning from Ladakh – generally available

Page 6

Groups	Programming
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - NB – sub-titles, signing - Environmental sector - Development Sector - City organisations – youth, women, etc - City Arts - Indymedia - GR/ Grassroots gathering - Holistic health - Other arts - Self Development - New communities - Migrant communities - College film depts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Irish language, foreign language, ISL, etc - Documentaries - How-to Programmes (incl capacity building) - Magazine - Live debates - Alternative music - Reporting campaigns (participative) - Oral history - Drama - Satire - Info Programmes – services etc - Round tables - Community Theatre

- Tantric sex hour!	- Ad-busting - Film shorts
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Page 7

FUNDING

- NCDE, CPA, NWCI, NTC (?NTL?)
- Groups sourcing own funding x programmes
- Sponsored programmes
- Partnerships
- Alternative aps (?)
- Depts of Environment and others
- Universities, schools, FAS, Youthreach\

Appendix 43b Dublin Community TV Initiative Invite to join the global / local content group

"The Dublin Community TV Initiative is working towards a participatory TV station for Dublin where content is produced in a bottom-up way by people affected by / involved in campaigning on the issues involved. The global /local content group brings together people active around areas such as environmental sustainability, north / south relations, immigrant communities in Ireland and the global justice movement. Anyone interested in participating is invited to a meeting next Wed. (11 June) at the Cultivate Centre, West Essex St., Temple Bar (old Viking Adventure Centre), from 7.30 - 9.30. If you can't attend but would like to be kept informed of future meetings please contact JD at <photovideo@dublin.ie>."

Hi everyone,

Bill from CMN sent me this draft programme for Tuesday afternoon (I've included a couple of changes I've made to my own bit). This'll probably change anyway depending on who comes from outside, whether it's mostly activists or mostly members of the general public, and how much they already know about the DCTV idea. (Any other comments, suggestions to <bill@cmn.ie>, please.)

Anyway, the last hour is scheduled for informal chats and recruitment, and we should try to be there in as much force as we can muster! I'll be there myself - any other takers?

Laurence

Loose schedule for Tuesday 2.30 to 5.30 at the Black Box Theatre

- 2.30 pm Videotech - Community Produced Videos playing in booth Signing In - name badges - informal introductions/networking
- 2.45 pm Opening address - Margaret Gillan (CMN)
- 3.00 pm Panel Introductions (suggested members of panel - Margaret Gillan, Ollie McGlinchey Ballymun Communications, Eddie Brennan DIT - Educational Content Group, Laurence Cox - Grassroots Gathering, Kelly O'Sullivan - Dublin City Development Board. Margaret Gillan Outline differences between CTV and mainstream - how it enables/empowers etc ; Kelly O'Sullivan; Sean O'Siuchru Update on the situation re: DCTV (post Steering Committee Meeting earlier that morning); Eddie Brennan (?)

Outline of progress in setting up of a Content Group, how it was done, how it was financed, training of staff, the programmes being done/considered
Laurence Cox - A voice of our own - what use is DCTV to us as activists?

Others volunteers please

Q's and A's

Networking - advising on content group formation - funding from cmf - suggestions
- 4.00 pm Playing of vox-pop video recorded on the day about general publics perceptions of CTV - what is it? What can it do? How can I become involved? This will give us an insight into Promotional/advertising material we might need to raise awareness among Jane and Joe Public.
- 4.30 pm Some Steering Committee members and Content Groups informal chat and available to Community Organisations/Voluntary Groups to answer queries- assist in Content Group formation. This is a good recruitment opportunity.

Tea/Coffee Sandwiches may be provided by Dublin City Council Community Media Forum?

ANY SUGGESTIONS PLEASE - VOLUNTEERS PLEASE -

Appendix No 44a Adult Education Working Group

Educational Content Sub-Group

This brief document outlines the work of the Dublin Community Television (DCTV) Educational Content Group. It describes proposed programme designs, the group's aims and objectives and a proposed media awareness course. This course is seen to be a fundamental building block in the DCTV project. Its costs are itemised in detail at the end of this document.

The Educational Content group has so far developed three brief outlines for educational programmes. The three proposed programmes share an intention to facilitate personal empowerment and in the areas of citizen and consumer rights through entertainment. The programmes will be produced and presented by people from concerned community groups. Thus, it is hoped that programmes will be more interesting, and more effective, because they reflect the language, culture and concerns of the audience.

The Programmes outlined so far are as follows:

Magazine Programme:

We propose that this programme would be one hour long, if staff, training and resources permit. The programme would provide a mixture of entertainment, discussion and information. It would follow the classic studio show format of two presenters, guests, studio events and video inserts. Local talent would fill the programme's numerous entertainment slots. The show will highlight cultural activities and also have an emphasis on media literacy. It is planned that the programme will raise awareness of citizen and consumer rights through real examples provided by people in the community. It is hoped that the show will ventilate local issues by staging and promoting discussion and debate.

To the Core

This will be a half-hour show. It is to be modelled on a Dutch educational programme that focuses, in each episode, on a particular object or phenomenon and then attempts to get 'to the core' of it. This will be done through simple humorous studio sketches. The show will provide a detailed treatment on a number of issues both serious and light. This can be applied, for example, to issues as diverse as home entertainment or problematic drug use.

A Quiz Show

This will be a half-hour quiz show with teams composed of members from a household or extended family. Teams will compete not only in questions of general and local knowledge but also activity based competitions. These will include activities like role-plays, household budgeting, cookery and so on.

Media Awareness Training

The group is in the process of implementing a media awareness course to precede the creation of programme production teams. The course is designed to raise the following issues.

- The role of community television and how it differs from commercial television or public service broadcasting.
- Ownership and control of media and how it affects content

- Production constraints in time, personnel and resources.
- A tour of a working television studio
- Basic camera work, pictorial composition and continuity
- Montage and lighting and their effects on viewer's perceptions

It is hoped that this course will allow people to go on to develop informed and critical programming. It is likely that some of our programming will be developed in collaboration with students from the Dublin Institute of Technology. This would provide valuable experience for the students while providing a 'buddy system' for training members of various community groups. Course content and costings are outlined below. The course is, in the view of this group, an essential part of the infrastructure of community television. It will develop media literacy and production skills in the community. Moreover, it will create knowledge of, and interest in, community television among the people who will eventually take over, develop and run the initiative.

Roles and responsibilities of Educational Content Sub-Group

This Group has set itself the following roles:

- Creating an awareness of the importance of mass media in shaping discussion, opinion, perception and behaviour.
- Activating people in the community by providing media education, which stresses the nature and potential of community television. This will provide them with the tools and confidence to make community television.
- Stimulating links with other community/education groups with a view to developing educational community television.
- Modifying and refining media education through course piloting and evaluation.
- Assisting interested people in becoming active in community television after finishing the course
- Developing a methodology for making and displaying community programming in the absence of licensed community broadcasting.

The Group also sees that it must fulfil the following responsibilities:

- Stimulating learning and providing information in a fun and interesting way through entertaining and engaging programmes
- Ensuring that programmes are question begging, not answer providing
- Ensuring that programmes are need-driven
- Ensuring that members of the community have a meaningful input in the production of DCTV's educational content.
- Ensuring that programmes are accessible to people with language and/or literacy difficulties.

Community Media Course timetable:

Session One

Date: 02.05.03

Content:

Introduction

What are the Media?

Session Two

Date: 09.05.03

Content:

Role and purpose of Media

Outline differences between community, commercial and public service Media

Session Three

Date: 16.05.03

Content:

Representation and stereotyping

Analysing content of different media

Session Four

Date: 23.05.03

Content:

Analysing content of different media

Opinion, truths and facts

Use of language and context

Session Five

Date: 30.05.03

Content:

Constraints

Money

Decision making process

Session Six

Date: 06.06.03

Content:

TV Studio visit(RTÉ)

Session Seven

Date: 13.06.03

Content:

Technical use of the camera

Session Eight

Date: 20.06.03

Content:

Production planning

Session Nine

Date: 27.06.03

Content:

Shoot two-minute film

Session Ten

Date: 04.07.03

Content:

Editing

Evaluation

Conclusion

Appendix no 44b Submission to Joint Committee on Education and Science

From: Dublin Community Television (DCTV)
Adult Education Thematic Content Group

15th April 2005

Contact: Margaret Gillan
Secretary, DCTV
Tel: 01 820 4008
Email: mgillan@cmn.ie

Introduction

Dublin Community Television (DCTV) welcomes the opportunity to outline the specific benefits of community media in relation to adult literacy and hopes that they will be included in a report to the Oireachtas. This submission has been prepared by the DCTV Adult Education Thematic Content Group, which brings together various organisations to develop programming and content for the channel that addresses needs in adult education and literacy. DCTV has recently applied to the Broadcasting Commission of Ireland for a community television licence.

Rationale

Adult education has long been a core component of community and development strategies, evident in programmes both in Ireland and overseas. Community media and in particular community television has developed education and literacy programming alongside this practice, and these are now well documented. There is a growing acknowledgement globally of the role of communication in these areas and the use of media is now understood to provide a key resource that acts as a catalyst to support, enhance, and sustain development initiatives. The use of media in these initiatives has also been shown to significantly increase participation and access for those most disadvantaged in society. (*see appendix 1 for an overview of community television*)

Community television is about to become a reality in Ireland and it is anticipated that one function of the community channels will be to support the education programmes organised by the network of Community Development Projects (CDPs) and other community and voluntary sector organisations. Dublin Community Television is organised around the principles of Participation, Empowerment, and Diversity; it is a Co-operative and its structures are designed to enable community and voluntary sector organisations devise programming and content that will support and develop their work and benefit their communities.

Television is a widely popular medium, and therefore can cut across traditional obstacles to learning and participation. DCTV acknowledges the successes of RTE as well as commercial

broadcasters in promoting adult education in Ireland. *Read Write Now* indicates that media, television in particular, can be of assistance to adult learners with literacy difficulties. Learners are facilitated through a workbook developed and provided by NALA, and can access a tutor through a freephone helpline. Community television hopes to further develop the range of programming available to adult learners, as well as providing consistent programming and a more integrated approach to the development of such material for broadcast.

While the Broadcasting Funding Act 2003 is designed to support community content and includes Adult Literacy in its remit, the Act caters only for the support of programmes. This leaves a yawning gap in resources to develop the sort of operations necessary to deliver effective use of television to address Adult Literacy issues. We think this needs a cross-cutting approach and would welcome consultation with the Department around the issues.

We outline below the ways in which community television has a particular contribution to make to the promotion of Adult Literacy in Irish society and what needs to happen to make it a reality.

(i) Prioritisation of those with the lowest literacy levels

Those people with the lowest levels of literacy are lacking not only in reading and writing skills but also in the other elements of basic education, which allow people to participate fully in society. Community media, both radio and TV, are ideally placed to provide targeted, locally designed initiatives to suit the educational needs of different groups.

Some of the Groups who could be targeted and topics which could be delivered through community TV are:

- asylum seekers/refugees
- travellers
- single parents working/not working
- people wishing to return to work or who need to build up their confidence before they set off on this journey
- people wishing to improve specific skills for work
- parents who want to get involved or want to know more about their children's school and school work
- people who want to know how their community works & get involved
- parents learning about youth issues – school, activities & resources, hormones, peer pressure, drink/drugs, work, training, etc
- youth & youth interests

Dublin Community Television aims

to contribute in the context of equality and social inclusion, to the empowerment of communities of interest and geography, especially those facing disadvantage and exclusion, and to work with them to achieve their social, economic, educational, and cultural objectives.

To do this DCTV has created a structure that facilitates the networking of community and voluntary groups that are directly engaged with and represent disadvantaged groups. Within the structure of the Adult Education Thematic Content Groups, organisations such as Pavee Point - the Traveller's Centre, OPEN – One Parent Exchange & Network, Youthreach, LYCS, NALA and St Vincents Trust have been working to identify useful programming strategies, devise programming formats and content for broadcasting that are accessible and support the learning needs of their communities and target groups.

There are a wide range of organisations in Dublin that run literacy components (*see appendix 2*) and would benefit from participating in this work. Engaging with a Thematic Content group in a community television channel means that organisations can:

- design programming and content streams that present integrated and blended learning opportunities at a variety of levels
- develop interactive programming that facilitates participation by those with the lowest literacy level
- profile their projects on air, increasing their outreach capacity, and the accessibility of their projects to potential participants;
- engage with the media training opportunities presented by the community television channel, and in particular, media literacy.

Recommendation 1.

The use of community television in adult literacy work will significantly increase outreach to and participation by those with the lowest literacy levels. Initiatives are needed that will support the development of literacy content through community television channels. To do this work effectively, those organisations that are actively engaged with target groups need to collaborate, and resources are needed to enable participation in community television channel structures such as the DCTV Thematic Content Groups.

In order to tap the potential of this rich resource it is important that this happen soon and at the early stage of DCTV's operations. The Department could consider opening a consultation process with the community television groups and C&V sector groups to find the best way to address these needs.

(ii) Innovative ways to reach out to those in need of the services

Adult education organisations have a holistic approach towards adult literacy and see the key issue to be the provision of integrated and blended learning opportunities. Community television offers great possibilities for outreach strategies, but the aim of this outreach is to increase participation in community activity. A tool such as community television if employed for adult literacy in this way can be extremely effective. Its popularity means that it attracts people to get involved and its immediacy can avoid obstacles to participation such as dependency on texts and classroom learning.

Community television in itself is an innovative way to: increase participation, devise programming and content, increase access by targeted scheduling, and develop integrated learning opportunities in training that is also intrinsically linked to production and programme-making.

▪ Increasing participation and building identity:

An evaluation of community radio in Ireland³⁶ found some of its most valued aspects were that:

- *They establish and deepen intra-community linkages of all kinds, especially in rural areas and amongst scattered populations;*
- *They are a source of skills, training and employment, including general education regarding the media and specific media skills;*
- *They sustain and renew a sense of community identity that comes from the people themselves;*
- *They act on behalf of the community on issues that concern it, with no vested interests other than those of the community itself;*
- *They provide local information and entertainment.*

These can apply as easily to a community television station. Community media have the particular capacity to build a sense of identity – this is key to how adult education programmes can be delivered in a significantly *different* way to other broadcasters. This specifically aims to engage those most marginalised in society in the designing of initiatives that recognise and best support their learning needs.

▪ Programmes:

The following programmes/series would be made using simple language and assuming no knowledge on the part of the viewer and with the added intention of demystifying topics, explaining all technical language and difficult words:

- Exciting introductions to all basic areas of knowledge: the theory & practice of science, geography, human anatomy, biology, how atoms work & physics,
- government, how to vote, citizenship,
- psychology, child development & parenting programmes,
- literacy thru local political issues
- health service, local history, local news for local people
- what is religion & religions around the world, how to find things out, moral issues & discussions,
- Health: depression what it is and what are the different treatments,
- Employment: different jobs and what people do,
- origins of language and where words come from, origins of writing and print,
- basic numeracy, how money works, dealing with money, understanding statistics,
- family learning, reading with children,
- counselling – support & finding services to do with such things as drug or alcohol abuse, financial advice, dealing with legal or medical issues etc, etc, etc

▪ Scheduling:

DCTV believes that the concept of using media as a tool for education is itself innovative, but programming needs to be a consistent feature of the broadcast schedule and should be broadcast at a time most accessible to the target group. This will demand research and project development.

▪ Capacity and Training:

³⁶ NEXUS Research, funded by IRTC, 1996

Furthermore, capacity building of the community and voluntary sector through the provision of production and media literacy training will enable DCTV to support adult literacy and education organisations to produce their own programmes, rather than mimicking formats adopted by mainstream and commercial media.

In general...

There are a number of innovative ways that community television can reach out to those in need of services by:

- profiling services, and encouraging services to run interactive programmes on the channel
- creating programmes that address the daily lives of learners, and these are most effective when scheduled at times most accessible to particular groups.
- providing training in a range of skills directly linked to programme -making
- building community production units that increase capacity to produce programming and participation in the channel at all levels.

Through all the above community television can enable an increase in participation in community activity by those who are most disadvantaged.

Recommendation 2

While there are clearly ways in which community television can enhance adult literacy, there is a need to provide funding and resources for:

1. *Research to produce innovative ideas for programmes and content for literacy needs.*
2. *Research into effective scheduling to reach target groups.*
3. *Funding for training that is linked to production and aims to develop community television programmers*
4. *All adult education programmes should be funded to include video documentation/archiving in their programmes.*

(iii) Expanding and strengthening referral services

Some referral services are based in community organisations or are actively seeking stronger links with them. For example the Advice and Educational Guidance Service is based in the same building as the Dublin Adult Learning Centre. DALC has also been involved in developing educational strategy and content for DCTV. Community organisations that are involved in their community television channel can build programming that will open up working relationships between referral services, and increase the effectiveness of the referral services in meeting the needs of their target groups.

There are a number of organisations in Dublin working in the field of adult literacy, many of whom are unable to access the mainstream media due to lack of resources and media skills. DCTV will continue to facilitate a network of these groups, and offer them a number of diverse training opportunities. DCTV will also provide promotional opportunities to organisations working in adult literacy, and will engage their staff and volunteers in phone in programmes and panel discussions.

Community media attracts high levels of voluntary involvement, and by working in partnership with education providers DCTV will also be in a position to refer volunteers participating in the channel onto appropriate and relevant services.

Recommendation 3

Networking and collaboration on community television programming provide opportunities for referral and support services to identify shared concerns. Organisations need to be facilitated and resourced to engage with their community television and radio channels and to be able to designate worker time to these activities. Specific training and orientation should also be provided and funded.

(iv) Development of specific initiatives for disadvantaged groups

DCTV has already outlined the potential to develop a wide range of adult literacy programmes which target various groups including Travellers, ethnic minorities etc. These programmes will be produced and promoted by organisations with expertise and direct involvement with the target group, to ensure that aspects such as content, scheduling, promotion, support and follow up are as effective as possible.

One example of an important way in which community television can develop specific targeted initiatives is through the ongoing development of programme formats and related training in collaboration with specific organisations and within the community context. These can enable participation on a number of different skill levels – e.g. from programme formats that require a low level of technical skill or are produced with the support of a community production unit, to those that are part of a development programme and provide supported learning in the community context.

Some of the materials to support this type of engagement have already been developed e.g:

- Projects devised and documented by Open Channel (see <http://homepage.tinet.ie/~openchannel/>);
- Training run and documented by Community Media Network (CMN) in its Integra Project “Building Community Media in Ireland” (see <http://www.cmn.ie>);
- CMN is currently engaged in supporting different approaches to programme-making with a number of community organisations, such as Community Response and Citywide.
- Introductory and advanced training modules devised and run by Dublin Adult Learning Centre as a Pilot programme for DCTV; and
- The Media Co-op, a community media centre based in Coolock, has strong links with the adult education sector. It works in partnership with Cholaiste Dhulaigh to deliver a number of wide ranging initiatives using video, radio and information technology, with the aim of bridging the digital divide and developing new approaches to adult learning.

But the issue identified by all groups – and most recently by those working around youth participation in DCTV – is that these projects tend to be sporadic, there are no resources available to plan advancement routes or follow-through, and so we do not get the necessary growth of programme makers from the groups. Because there are few outlets for the product, these projects also remain concerned with process, and while this is

important there is a wastage of the value of the programme/video/media as product. This has also produced an unspoken attitude that video is a leisure activity - 'they move on to mountain climbing the next week'. This is where community television can make a huge difference.

The potential that the advent of community television now offers is the possibility of showcasing work completed within youth and community programmes, providing futures for people who engage with the programme-making and increasing their capacity to participate in their community. It can be a strategy to create an alternative educational route for a wide range of people including disadvantaged youth who *become* the adults with the lowest literacy levels. The young adult age-group of 18-24 is a particular target group for community television both as programme producers and channel participants on a range of levels.

Recommendation 4

The potential of community media (as well as community arts) for providing empowering learning and advancement opportunities is well known in the community sector. Community television provides these activities with an outlet and establishes meaningful futures for the skills learnt as well as increasing participation. This should be recognised and supported at a policy level.

(v) Workplace Literacy

Organisations such as NALA have already developed programmes with Dublin businesses and have documented work in this area. DCTV proposes to facilitate that work in media formats. This will enable employers to offer employees with literacy needs access to support outside of the work environment, or where appropriate to use the television programme in a work environment.

(vi) Support Services

A quick look at the range of support services in the North East Inner City (*see appendix 2*) and with which an organisation like DALC regularly interacts, reveals the potential for the sort of activity we have outlined above.

DCTV acknowledges that although television programmes produced may be of benefit in terms of raising awareness and providing learning opportunities, access to support services is an essential aspect of the process of inclusion. This demands ongoing feedback and evaluation of material broadcast as well as assisting learners to access further education opportunities appropriate to their needs. It also necessitates an integrated approach involving partnership between the public, private, community and voluntary sector.

Conclusion

The provision of programming on adult literacy is a priority for DCTV and a working/content group has been constituted in this context. Community television has real potential to facilitate a cross sectoral approach to adult literacy by involving a wide range of interests. This will necessitate a more strategic approach and collaborative work, as well as piloting and evaluating original and innovative initiatives. There are also a number of resource implications for community media if this service is to be effective,

specifically this development calls for a dedicated budget for facilitation, production training, promotion, research and evaluation.

List of recommendations

Recommendation 1.

The use of community television in adult literacy work will significantly increase outreach to and participation by those with the lowest literacy levels. Initiatives are needed that will support the development of literacy content through community television channels. Those organisations that are actively engaged with target groups need to collaborate to do this work effectively, and resources should be put in place to enable participation in community television channel structures such as the DCTV Thematic Content Groups.

In order to tap the potential of this rich resource it is important that this happen soon, at the early stage of DCTV's operations. The Department could consider opening a consultation process with the community television groups and C&V sector groups to find the best way to address these needs.

Recommendation 2

While there are clearly ways in which community television can enhance adult literacy, there is a need to provide funding and resources for:

- *Research to produce innovative ideas for programmes and content for literacy needs.*
- *Research into effective scheduling to reach target groups.*
- *Funding for training that is linked to production and aims to develop community television programmers*
- *All adult education initiatives should be funded to include video documentation/archiving in their programmes.*

Recommendation 3

Networking and collaboration on community television programming provide opportunities for referral and support services to identify shared concerns. Organisations need to be facilitated and resourced to engage with their community television and radio channels and to be able to designate worker time to these activities. Specific training and orientation should also be provided and funded.

Recommendation 4

The potential of community media (as well as community arts) for providing empowering learning and advancement opportunities is well known in the community sector. Community television provides these activities with an outlet and establishes meaningful futures for the skills learnt as well as increasing participation. This is a cross-cutting issue that should be recognised at a policy level.

Appendix 1

Community TV - Internationally:

Around the world:

- **US:** first pilot projects by Public Access organisations in 1948; first cablecast in July 1971. Public access to cable television permitted under the Federal Cable Act of 1984, a national satellite network, Deep Dish, established in 1986;
- **Netherlands:** Since 1974 local television organisations must have members that are representative of the local society eg ethnic minorities, young/old people, women. Production teams are mostly volunteers. There are over 80 local TV stations, many have combined TV and radio licences and are concerned with a variety of media.
- **Denmark:** 1981 Act on Community Media issued just 50 local TV licences for cable distribution; in 1985 law passed on community radio, amended in 1987 to encompass community television.
- **Australia:** Began in 1983. Free-to-air throughout the country, cable is limited to selected urban areas. Broadcasting licences officially made available for community television by the Australian Broadcasting Association in 1993.
- **Open Channels**, particularly Germany, are open access and funded by the state as an alternative channel.
- **Ireland:** Community Radio regulated since 1994, Broadcasting Act 2001!!
- **Latin America, India, and Third World:** Widespread! – too many different types to put down here!

Networks

AMARC (World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters) www.amarc.org

APC (Association of Progressive Communicators) Apc-euroir-media mailing list apc-euroir-media@gn.apc.org

Network Open Channels www.openchannels.se

Media for Development in Democracy devmedia@listserv.uoguelph.ca

Organisations and Charters –

1996 Declaration of Communications as a Human Right, Venezuela.

1997 German Open Channels, Open Channel for Europe Conference *Berlin Declaration*

1997-1998 World Association of Christian Communication (WACC) – Declarations on “Gender, Communications and Citizenship” (Phillipines, Lima and Capetown) ;

1998 Videazimut: *The Right to Communicate and the Communication of Rights* –

Declaration of Capetown (South Africa,) On 50th anniversary of Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

The Peoples Communication Charter

Community Radio

Summary of AMARC’s definition of a community radio station (can be applied to TV):

- it has participatory and accountable structures;
- it is owned and controlled by the community it serves;
- It is not-for-profit;
- it is an integral part of the development and growth of the community itself;
- a successful station will mobilise the commitment, creative talents and energies within the community.

AMARC's definition is referred to by many bodies including the IRTC (Independent Radio and Television Commission) now the BCI (Broadcasting Commission of Ireland).

Appendix 2

Support services in D1.

A brief indication of the extent of services available that could tap the potential of community television.

(taken from the Directory of Services available in Integrated Services Process Area – North East Inner City excluding City Centre & Government Departments and agencies not based in D1)

AEGS, NALA, and local community services such as:

Adoption, Adult Education, Alcoholism, Animal Welfare, Arts & Culture, Bereavement, Budgeting, Children's services & creches, Churches, Citizens' Information, Civil Defence, Community Development, Community Games, Consumer Affairs, Community Policing, Counselling, Credit Unions, Dance, Disability, Drama, Drug Abuse Support, DCC Local Housing Dept & other services such as Libraries, Emigration, Environment, Family Planning, First Aid, Fitness, Foodbank, Foster Care, Gambling, AIDS Alliance, Asthma, Autism, Diabetes, Down's Syndrome, Head Injuries, Home Support Service, Homelessness, Childcare Centre, ICCL, Foras na Gaeilge, Legal Aid Board, Literacy, Local History, GROW (Comm Mental Health), African Cultural Project, A Part of Ireland Now Project, Vietnamese Irish Association, Marketown Music Collective, St Lawrence O'Toole Folk Group, City Clinic Drugs Service, Health Centres, Pre-school playgroups, Refugee Agency, Hill St Family Resource Centre, Senior Citizens, Salvation Army, Soc. Vincent de Paul, Samaritans, Adventure Sports Project, St Lawrence O'Toole's Indoor Bowls, Corinthian Boxing Club, Irish Cycling Federation, Crinan Gaels GAA Club, Kempo Karate, Travellers' Rights & Resource Centre-Pavee Point, Youthreach, Voluntary Services International, Well Woman Centre, Women's Aid, Youth Groups, Dublin Youth Theatre, Girls' Brigade Ireland, Leargas, Nickol Project (Children at Risk), Recreation Centre, St Agatha's Hall Development Group, Young Christian Workers,

Appendix No 45 ICTAG

5% Campaign

Cultivating Community Television: A Unique Opportunity for the Special Fund for Broadcasting A Proposal of the Irish Community Television Advocacy Group (ICTAG)

Summary: The *Irish Community Television Advocacy Group* offers the following proposals on how the *Special Fund for Broadcasting* (with 5% of the TV License Fee) can best be utilised to benefit community television in Ireland, in line with the aspirations expressed by the Minister.

1. **Two thirds of the Fund should be ring-fenced in the legislation for community media as a whole.** The rationale for ring-fencing is threefold: Community Television offers by far the best value for money in terms of innovative programme production; ring-fencing would ensure a level playing field with other media, by obviating the need to compete head on with well-resourced commercial and public service broadcasters; and such regular public funding would greatly enhance the long-term prospects for the emergence of what the Forum on Broadcasting's called the Third Strand of broadcasting.
2. **The funding process should be thematic and periodic:** The BAI, which will administer the Fund, should in the case of community television avoid competitive open tenders for programme ideas, and should instead be thematic and goal driven (such as: to support multi-culturalism, community arts, or adult-literacy), and offer funding over a fixed period, to be reviewed and evaluated. This would reduce the overhead involved in proposals, ensure coherence of programming over a period, encourage greater flexibility of production, promote more innovation from the community, and generally establish a better 'fit' with the ethos of community television where creativity comes not from a top-down direction but from bottom up participation with professional support. The proportion of funding to be raised by community media to match a given grant should also reflect their limited income sources.
3. **The Initial 'fund accumulation' should be devoted to community television.** The first round of funding is likely to have more than a year's yield from the License Fee, and we believe that community television should be given this additional amount to build its capacity in programme making.

At a Workshop in Dublin in 15th November 2002 (give Website) an alliance was formed of the many nascent community television groups in Ireland, the *Irish Community Television Advocacy Group* (ICTAG), with representatives from Cork, Dublin, Dundalk, Kerry, Leitrim and Belfast. The goal was to create the conditions in Ireland under which community television might flourish – or at least have a chance of coming into being. An early proposal of the Dublin group was that a percentage of the license fee in a given broadcast area should be set aside, document in the report: *Building Community Through Television: A Plan for Dublin Community Television (July 2002.)* www.activelink.ie/cmfdocs.html The Communications Minister, Dermot Ahern, subsequently announced on December 10th 2002 the creation of a *Special Fund for Broadcasting*, under which 5% (€7) of the license fee would be set aside to encourage innovative broadcasting content.

This document puts forward proposals for the application of this Fund to the Community Television Sector. It has been prepared in consultation with the Community Radio Forum, which is producing its own. complementary, submission on this matter. The following are our proposals:

1. **Ring-fence up to Two Thirds for Community Media:** A majority of the Fund should in the Legislation be specifically devoted, ring-fenced, for use by community media. The Minister's statement notes that the fund is designed to encourage content by "particularly locally based community broadcasters", and this should be firmed up. The legislation, for instance, could stipulate that two thirds should go towards the sector. The rationale is as follows:
 - **Community television provides much better value for money:** Community television around the world (see *Lessons from International Experience* www.activelink.ie/cmfdocs.html) has succeeded in harnessing the creativity, energy and resources of communities to create their own programmes across a huge range of issues, from inter-cultural experience, to community development, to local governance, to adult education. Coupled with the falling cost of high-quality production equipment and low overheads of community television, communities can produce innovative formats and quality programmes for a fraction of the cost of commercial or public service broadcasters. Five hours of community based programmes, using popular studio and mixed formats, can be produced for anything from €25,000 to €120,000 depending on the format (€2,500 – €12,500 per half hour), compared to at least €25,000 that RTE pays for a half hour mainstream production. Thus the Fund's potential impact is multiplied through community television.
 - **It is essential for the effective distribution of the Fund.** Ensuring that a fixed proportion of the Fund would go towards community television is a prerequisite to optimal allocation. First, community and mainstream approaches to content and to production are very different, and having them compete against each other would be like comparing chalk and cheese. Second, an open tender system (notwithstanding the point on the award procedure: see below) is, in the absence of ring-fencing, likely to introduce a strong bias in favour of commercial and public media who have the resources to devote to repeated call for tenders. Community organisations do not, and so would have to devote an inordinate proportion of their resources towards the preparation of professional bids.
 - **If offers minimal core funding for the 'Third Strand', alongside other sources:** The recent *Forum on Broadcasting* identified community television as the 'third pillar' of broadcasting and called on the Department to treat it as such. Yet Community media receive no public funding and, because of their nature, cannot attract the profit-seeking investment capital or ongoing commercial income of the commercial sector. The Fund is an opportunity to remedy this imbalance and to construct sound foundations for the Third Pillar. The Fund would be used as a critical core funding source for programme production, but only as one among a diversity of funding sources. The Fund could also be part-channelled by the BAI through a proposed *Community Television Foundation*.
2. **Fund Themes, not Programme:** We believe that the mechanisms set up by the legislation, to be administered by the BAI, should provide support for *thematic programming over a fixed period*, as distinct from *individual specific programmes* or series (which, for instance, is employed by RTE's funding of independent producers). Responding to calls for proposals for individual programmes or series is wasteful of time and resources, an endemic problem with the open tender system. But, even with ring-fencing, responding to applications would demand an inordinate amount of resources.

Rather, we propose that funding for community programmes should be thematic and goal-driven, and provide support over an agreed period to community television producers. The security of longer term support, for instance for two or three years, would be especially welcome in the early stages of community television. The

introduction of themes and goals (as distinct than individual programmes), such as promoting multi-culturalism or community art, would permit more flexibility of production, ensure greater coherence of programming over a sustained period, promote more innovation from the community, and generally establish a better 'fit' with the ethos of community television where creativity comes not from a top-down direction but from bottom up participation with professional support. Being goal-oriented, it would focus on the output rather than on detailed aspects of the programme production process. Of course, community television thus funded would be rigorously evaluated after each funding tranche, in terms of achieving the agreed benchmarks and goals.

A related point is that if the proposed Fund is to provide only part-funding (i.e. must be matched by the programme makers), then the proportion to be raised by community media should reflect the more limited sources of income open to the sector, and in general cover up to 90% of the cost.

3. **An Initial Boost for Community Television.** The Fund, we understand, is accumulating from the date of the increase in the license fee. Given that the entire process of legislating and creating the BAI mechanism is likely to take until the middle of 2004, then will probably be several million euro additional funding available in the first year. We would argue that this additional amount should be devoted to community television, in order to prime its programme-making capacity. Thus, given the nascent state of community television, the initial allocation to be ring-fenced for Community Media should be boosted by this amount,.

Members of the ICTAG: Dublin Community Television; Community Media Network; Kerry Community Television; Media Co-Op Dublin NE; Ballymun Media Coop; Frameworks Films, Cork; Youth Culture Television; Leitrim Video; Community Forum, Dublin City Development Board.

For more information contact: Seán Ó Siochrú: sean@nexus.ie tel: 01 272 0739 or Margaret Gillan mgillan@cmn.ie

Interested in Irish Community TV ADVOCACY GROUP

The following people put their names forward to act as a liaison between the BCI and groups interested in being granted a community content licence.

Name	Organisation
Sean Ó'Síochrú	CMN
Emma Bowell	Frameworks Films, Cork
Val Farrelly	DCTV
Gavin Byrne	Media Co-Op, Dublin NE
John Gorman	3 Grange Abbey Dr., Dublin 13
Gerry McKeever	TOSACH, 44 Gardener St, Dublin
Shay de Barra	
Angela Jones	Cork Film Centre
Alan Byrne	Dundalk Media Centre
Pat Quinn	Youth Culture Television
Marilyn Hyndman	Northern Visions, Belfast
Dave Hyndman	Northern Visions, Belfast

ICTAG re-forms to Lobby 2003

**Irish Community Television
Advocacy Group (ICTAG)
C/o Community Media Network,
34 North Frederick Street,
Dublin1.
Tel: +353 1 878 3344;
FAX: +353 1 878 3206
e-mail: sean@nexus.ie
Mobile: 087 20 48 150**

3rd April 2003,

**To: Mr Dermot Ahern, T.D.,
Minister for Communications, Marine and Natural Resources.**

Re: Irish Community Television Advocacy Group **request for meeting** with Minister
From: Irish Community Television Advocacy Group (*ICTAG*),

Dear Minister

The **Irish Community Television Advocacy Group (ICTAG)** was formed last year as an advocacy group for community television in Ireland, following the significant boost given by the Broadcasting Act 2001. It bring together ten nascent community television broadcasters from around Ireland (see attached). Please find attached proposals we have developed in relation to the proposed *Special Fund for Broadcasting*. We believe these proposals offer the best possible use of the fund; are feasible; and will be of great benefit to the emerging community television sector – which the Forum on Broadcasting described in August 2002 as follows:

Community broadcasting has a character distinct from both public service and commercial broadcasting and should be recognised as a third strand in Irish broadcasting by the Dept. of Communications, Marine and Natural Resources and the Broadcasting Authority of Ireland

Indeed that recognition is forthcoming. But it is because of this ‘distinct character’ that we believe it would be unwise and impractical to pitch community against commercial and public service broadcasters in bidding for support from these funds. In reality, the kinds of programmes produced by community television are different (more innovative, less costly, and more locally focused); and the process of production is very different (working with the communities and their organisations). Thus **our proposal to ring-fence** a proportion of the Special Fund for community media use makes good sense.

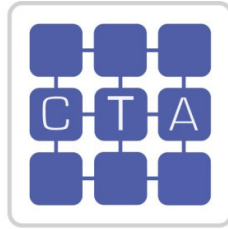
We are seeking an opportunity to put these points to you and your officials in the Department directly, at your earliest convenience.

Yours sincerely

Seán O Siochrú

On Behalf of ICTAG

Appendix No 46 Community television Association (CTA)



Community Television Association

The Community Television Association was established in 2007 as an umbrella organisation for Community Television in Ireland. It is a cross-border network and members are existing or aspirant community television stations and community production groups.

The main aim of the Community Television Association (CTA) is to build a vibrant, well-resourced and effective Community Television sector on the island of Ireland. Community Television channels are characterized by their community based ownership and programming and by their interaction with the community they are licensed to serve. Such channels are owned and controlled by not-for-profit organizations whose structures provide for membership, management, operation and programming primarily by members of the community at large. Community channels are based on community access and address the special interests and needs of those they are licensed to serve. In supporting these principles, the community channel serves as a tool for community development.

The CTA is a membership-based organisation that represents and promotes the interests of the community television sector. Current membership consists of two operating community television channels - P5tv in Navan and DCTV in Dublin, one incipient channel CCTv in Cork and other community media organisations (Ballymun Communications, Community Media Network, Community Visual Images in Belfast, Frameworks Films, Cork, the Development Media Workshop (DMW) in Enniskillen, Dundalk Media Centre, Leitrim Media Centre, and the Media Coop in Coolock, Dublin, These groups formed the Community Television Training Network which received funding from The Wheel for a twelve month period in 2006 to assess the training and development needs to assist the new channels.

The objectives of the Community Television Association are:

- To build a cohesive Community Television sector with a shared vision
- To increase public understanding of the ethos and purpose of Community Television as described in the main object set out above.
- To help build the capacity of the Community Television sector
- To influence the legal, policy and regulatory environment for Community Television in Ireland, the EU and more widely
- To attract and secure resources for the Community Television sector
- To communicate and collaborate with counterpart Community Television organisations in other countries.

The Community Television Association is incorporated as a not-for-profit Company Limited by Guarantee. It is run on a voluntary basis by members and has no core funding for its operations. The CTA collectively co-ordinates research and development projects for the sector and seeks funds from a range of sources for these activities, the main source is currently from the Training & Development Fund of the Broadcasting Commission of Ireland. Since 2006 the Association members have been working together on a range of activities that allow skill-sharing and capacity building within the organisation and the new community television channels. A website (www.communitytvassociation.org) is currently being developed as a resource for members and the general public.

(November 2007)

Community Television in Ireland –

Media Information

Contact sheet for CTA and community television channels

Community Television Association

Chairperson: Margaret Gillan
Phone: 01 820 4008
Mobile: 087 968 0696
email: mgillan@cmn.ie
website: (in construction) <http://www.communitytvassociation.org>

Secretary: Emma Howell (CCTv) see below for contact details

Province 5 Tv (P5TV)

Contact: Kevin MacNamidhe
Phone: 046 90 22 665
Mobile: 086 817 1669
email: kevin@p5tv.com
website: <http://www.p5tv.com>

Dublin Community Television

Contact: Sean O'Siochru
Phone: 01 272 0739
Mobile: 087 20 48 150
email: sean@nexus.ie
website: <http://www.dctv.ie>

Cork Community Television (CCTv)

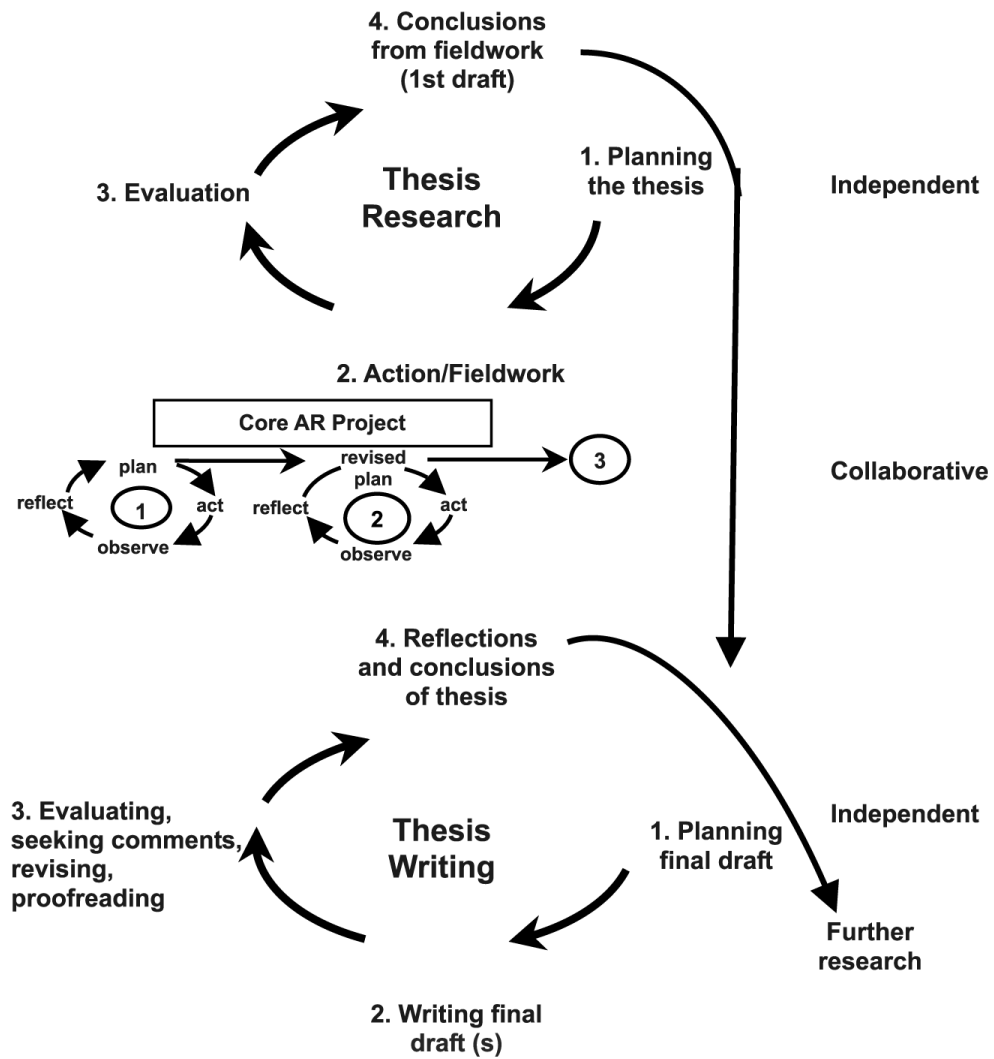
Contact person: Emma Howell
Phone: 021-43 22 454
Mobile: 087-240 6760
email: info@corkcommunitytv.ie
website: www.corkcommunitytv.ie

For further information

Community Television Association
Email: info@communitytvassociation.org
Website: www.communitytvassociation.org
Tel. 021-4322454

Appendix No 47.

Zuber-Skerritt Diagram of PAR process



Source: Adapted from Zuber-Skerritt and Perry (2002, p. 177)

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7	DCDB consultation Focus group
8	Global CM organisations chart
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Table No. 1: Williams Typology of Media Function

Type	Devices	Historical place	Skills involved	Access controls
Amplificatory	Megaphone	Amphitheatre –historic early electronic – recent	To speak, to hear,	Amphitheatre - Spatial Electronic - Small cost
	Live Radio	Recent	To speak, to hear, and to interpret	Transmission equipment, license, control by ‘codes of practice’, legal
	Live TV	recent	To speak, to hear, to gesture, to observe, and to interpret	Transmission equipment, studio for production base, license, control by ‘codes of practice’, legal
Durative	sound recordings mean durative quality for speech,	recent	To speak, to hear, and to interpret	
	Painting, sculpture,	late	To see and feel – touch	Classed and ‘cultural’ controls such as education, ability to travel,
Alternative	Use of objects as signs; development of writing; graphics, and means of reproduction	early	Reading, writing, observe, interpret	Socialisation; Education; industrial training

Table No. 1 drawn from Williams typology of media

Table No. 2: Pattern of change in CoM membership:

	CMG	CG	NGO	State agency	Independent film-maker
DCTV ISC 2002 Members	7	7	4	2	0
Of which active	7	7	1	1	0
DCTV ISC 2003 Members	4	9	3	3	0
Of which were active	4	8	2	1	0
DCTV CoM 2004 Members	5	6	3	1	4
Of which were active	4	3	2	0	4
DCTV CoM 2005 Members	6	6	2	0	4
Of which were active	4	2	2		2
DCTV CoM 2006 Members	5	1	3	0	3
Of which were active	4	0	1	0	2
DCTV CoM 2007 Members	4	0	4	0	3
Of which were active	3	0	4	0	3
DCTV CoM 2008 Members	4	0	4	0	3
Of which were active	3	0	4	0	3

Table No. 3 of Needs and Methods

	Basis for activity	democratic and participatory process	control of intellectual production	facilitate dialogue with stakeholders	increasing the sphere of influence of the group
	Needs supported	Suitable methods			
1	Develop CTV project	coalitions with CGs to support development of CTV in their organisations	coalitions with CGs to support development of CTV in their organisations	workshops/ conferences	submissions
		ongoing contact with key activists for reviews, consultations	discussions sessions with organisations and small groups		position papers
		Focus groups	Focus Groups		reports on specific areas
		workshops	one-to-one interviews		direct action
2	draw CG's into sphere of CTV project	reports on specific areas	coalitions with CGs to support development of CTV in their organisations	workshops	position papers
		ongoing contact with key activists for reviews, consultations	discussions sessions with organisations and small groups	submissions	
		Focus groups	Focus Groups		reports on specific areas
3	Gather experience from CTVs abroad	use of literature and information sources	coalitions with CGs to support development of CTV in their organisations	workshops	reports on specific areas
		discussions sessions with organisations and small groups	discussions sessions with organisations and small groups		
		seminars in conjunction with conferences	Focus Groups		
			one-to-one interviews		
4	keep role of researcher in review	reports on specific areas	coalitions with CGs to support development of CTV in their organisations	reports on specific areas	Focus groups
		ongoing contact with key activists for reviews, consultations	discussions sessions with organisations and small groups		
			Focus Groups		
5	work within resources available	coalitions with CGs to support development of CTV in their organisations	coalitions with CGs to support development of CTV in their organisations		use of literature
		ongoing contact with key activists for reviews, consultations	discussions sessions with organisations and small groups		
			Focus Groups		
			one-to-one interviews		
6	achieve greater visibility	direct action	conferences	workshops	direct action
		Conferences	use of literature		use of literature
7	Gain political and institutional support for project	direct action	position papers; submissions;	workshops	position papers
		seminars as part of conferences	discussions sessions with organisations and small groups		direct action
			use of literature		
			direct action		

Table No. 4 – Sectoral Profiles of Workshops and Focus Groups

	Community focus	State Agency focus	Other e.g. independent filmmakers/ CTV interest groups	Participation levels
Workshop 1	50%	50%		high
Workshop 2	40%	40%	20%	high
Workshop 3	100%	0	0	low

Table No. 5 Focus Groups within the PAR

Focus Groups

	No of meetings	actions	participants
Focus Group 1 (5 local groups operating from the same building/centre) 2002	1	1. Information session and survey	Community groups
Focus Group 2 (Groups with interest in CTV for Adult Education (AE)) 2002-2004	Many	1. Two Media Awareness Training Projects – a beginners and follow up course 2. Progamme ideas – three proposals	Members of 5 community groups involved in Adult Education
Focus Group 3 (Groups focusing on community television for environmental/ local/global issues (LG))	3	1. Brainstorming session 2. Proposals for programming	Activists from environmental, local development and global development groups,
Focus Group 4 (Groups working with youth (Y))	2	No actions – discussion only	Community media groups and youth social workers

Table No. 6 Focus Group Questions

Questions to assess interests in and perceived uses of CM –

Focus group session with local groups in a community centre 2002.

Participants interests included:

Welfare rights

Housing associations

Community Action project (Community development)

Local Arts Centre

Focus group 1 – questions	Yes	No	Maybe		Not useful	Useful	Very useful
Q (1) Does your organisation disseminate information in Dublin (e.g. event or activity details?)	5						
(1a) if so how useful do you think community television would be to this?						1	4
Q (2) Do your objectives include educating on, promoting discussion/understanding or advocacy of specific issues among sections of Dublin's population?	5						
(2a) if so how useful do you think community television would be to this?						1	4
Q (3) Would members of your organisation like to receive training in video/TV production?	1	1	3				
Q (4) Would your organisation be interested in producing/hosting/participating in making your own programmes?	3		2				
Q (5) Would you like to be kept in touch with developments in Dublin City Community television (if so give your email address, if you have one or any other contact details)	5						
Q (6) Would you be interested in becoming a 'member' of Dublin City community Television when it is founded?	3		2				
Q (7) Would your organisation be	1	1	3				

interested in participating in some way in getting it going?							
--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Are there activities that indicate community television is useful? – Participants found a high level of activities they engaged in that could use community television, even amongst those groups who don't want to produce their own programmes or participate in the organising of ctv.

Is there interest in :

(a) training for production: This was qualified – this may indicate that groups do not see the training as benefiting their participants, and probably did not see their CEP participants being involved in CTV the long term.

(b) participation in programming and devising schedules: there was a higher interest in this aspect but still mixed feelings – reflecting an uncertainty about what this would entail. Interest was more around what kind of programming would come from CTV, rather than their being involved in constructing it.

(c) CTV organising: Very low level of interest – reflecting lack of capacity to undertake organising in this area.

Table No. 7 Focus Group within the City Development Board's Consultation

This was part of a series of workshops organised by the DCDB in 2000 as part of the consultation around the City Strategic Planning process. Focus Group organised by the DCDB initial consultation for which I did rapporteur.

Identifying issues for DCDB consultation process

Composition of participants in session:

- 4 school students
- 5 from various residents associations
- 2 from Disability Forum
- 1 from Inner City Organisations Network

Each delegate had three votes, issues were raised in a brainstorming session and then delegates dropped some as they prioritised their three votes.

Issues raised in brainstorming session		Vote
1	Education	2
2	Employment	1
3	Health	1
4	Sport	1
5	Community	2
6	Leisure	1
7	Business	0
8	Culture	1
9	Environment and Heritage	7
10	Safety	3
11	Traffic/transport	3
12	Planning	4
13	Consultation Process: Transparency and accountability as part of this	3
14	Racism	0
15	Inter-agency Co-operation	0
16	Accessibility	1

Issues were then discussed in relation to one another and grouped under Environment and Planning. The focus group reported back to the plenary. However there is no way to know how this material or sets of priorities actually filtered through to the Strategic Plan, and people felt very distanced from the process.

Table No. 8 CM Networks and movements global and local

Date	Global Organisation / Network	date inactive	Irish Networks and organisations
1950	WACC (World Association of Christian Communicators)		
1974	ISIS - International Women's Information and Communication Service		
1976	MacBride Commission		
1980	Mac Bride report <i>Many Voices, One World</i>		
1983	AMARC	still active	
1984	US withdraw from NWICO		
1985	UK withdraw from NWICO		
1986	Community Media associations established in Netherlands; Denmark, Belgium, Spain, France. FERL (European Federation of Community Radios)		<i>First community radio Stations and NACB: Irish CM Activist Sally Reynolds becomes AMARC Rep for Western Europe</i>
1989	UNESCO's <i>New Communication Strategy</i> Mac Bride Roundtable	1999	
1990	Videazimut Free Expression network Association for Progressive Communications (APC)	2001 still active	
1991	The Cultural Environment Movement	2001	
1992			<i>Community Video Network (CVN)</i>
1993	The Telecommunications Policy Roundtable APC Women's Networking Support Programme (APC WNSP)	2001 still active	
1994			<i>Community Radio Forum</i>
1995			
1996	Platform for Democratic Communication (PDC)	becomes CRIS in 2001	<i>CVN becomes CMN</i>
1997	Center for development communication CDC		
1999	Indymedia (IMC) Voices 21		
2000	OURMedia/ Nuestros Medios		<i>CRF becomes CRAOL</i>
2001	Communication Rights for the Information Society (CRIS)	Originally PDC	
2002	Action Coalition for Media Education (ACME)		
2003	Media Justice Network		
2004	Open Channels for Europe		
2005	Media and Democracy Coalition		
2006	Community Forum Europe		<i>Community Television Association</i>

Table No. 9 Participation in Workshops

Date	Workshop title	Description – purpose and organizing group	No in attendance
2001	Media Workshop	Establish CMF	45
2002	A Day for Community Television	Forum for the CTV interest groups to meet with BCI. Development of community coalitions	80
2003	Developing Thematic Content Groups	Supporting community organizations to create content production networks; DCTV Co-operative society formation and development	18
2004	Independent Media Centre	Coalition with CMN, Indymedia and Dublin Grassroots network	Over ten days – numerous events big attendances 60+
2005	DCTV workshops	DCTV License Application process and exploration of the Sound and Vision Funding Scheme (BFS)	Three workshops average 50 participants in attendance at each
2006	Section 40 Programme Development Workshops (PDWs)	An effort to do a needs assessment, this series of workshops looked at production processes and again focused on community groups capacity to engage with production	30 Participants (all representing organisations) attended a series of workshops
2006	Taking the Air – weekend	Looking at CTV ways of operating and producing programmes	35
2007	Taking the Air Again	CTV ethos development	20

VOLUME FOUR: PROJECT DOCUMENTS

List of Project Documents

Project documents are available on this CD and at the following URL:

http://www.cmn.ie/research_2000_2010

Documents included are:

1. Programme Types Schema
2. Report on Men At Work (MAW)
3. Programme Formats Module