

# Family & Community Services Resource Centre Programme



Resources  
Activities  
Partners &  
Achievements  
2008



Family Support Agency



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## Foreword

### **Pat Bennett**

Chief Executive Officer  
Family Support Agency




Irish families faced major challenges during 2008. This is especially true for those families struggling to overcome disadvantage and rising unemployment. For these families the work of the Family and Community Services Resource Centre Programme has been invaluable.

As Chief Executive of the Family Support Agency, I am proud to present the SPEAK FRC 2008 National Report. The Family and Community Services Resource Centre Programme funds Family Resource Centres in 107 communities nationwide. Ninety six of these FRCs were in a position to submit data for consideration in this report.

The SPEAK system (Strategic Planning, Evaluation And Knowledge-networking) affords the voluntary management committees and staff of Family Resource Centres the opportunity to evaluate their work, to inform planning for the coming year and to share information among centres relating to successes achieved and challenges faced during the year.

This report provides further evidence of the clear and tangible returns provided by FRCs at local community level. Over 208,000 people were provided with information or advice. FRCs received over 783,000 visits by individuals to use facilities provided in FRCs. A further 28,859 visits were made by local community and voluntary groups. On top of this, FRC meeting space was accessed over 16,000 times by local community and voluntary groups. On their own, these figures demonstrate the central role that FRCs command in local community life. Add to this the fact that 22,606 people that completed education and training courses in FRCs, or that existing community and voluntary groups were helped over 1,200 times by FRC staff, and it is evident that FRCs operate as the focal point for community activity within the communities where they are located.

These results would not be possible without the industry and commitment of the 1,006 people that acted as voluntary directors of FRCs, or the 2,222 volunteers that helped implement FRC work plans, during 2008. These volunteers, along with the paid staff, contributed much needed community supports and services for families and the most vulnerable in our



society. Crucially, the manner in which this work was undertaken has meant that vital skills and experiences have been cultivated and nurtured within communities. The development of local activism and leadership is central to the work of FRCs.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the voluntary management committees, volunteers and staff of the Family Resource Centres and to congratulate them on the excellent results that have been achieved. I look forward to continued success in 2009 and beyond.

*Pat Bennett*

## Introduction

In 1994, to mark the International Year of the Family, the Department of Social Welfare funded 10 Family Resource Centres (FRCs) on a 3 year pilot basis. This decision was motivated by the perception of a possible gap in statutory support for community development activities focused on support for families and tackling child poverty. These FRCs were to focus on developing the skill levels and capacities of their local communities, to encourage communities to become self reliant and self directed.

An evaluation of the work of these FRCs was published in 1997. The key recommendation of the report was that funding of these FRCs should be mainstreamed by the Department as a Family and Community Services Resource Centre Programme (FCSRC). The report of the Commission on the Family in 1998 also recommended an expansion of the programme.

The Family and Community Services Resource Centre Programme provides financial assistance to FRCs to assist with the staffing and equipping of local Family Resource Centres which provide a focal point for community development activities. There are now 107 FRCs in receipt of core funding in the Family and Community Services Resource Centre Programme.

Since May 2003 the Family Support Agency has overall responsibility for management of the programme, including monitoring of centres, financial administration and executive decision making.

The emphasis in the centres is on the involvement of local communities in developing approaches to tackle the problems they face and on creating successful partnerships between the voluntary and statutory agencies in the areas concerned.

The services provided and activities supported by the resource FRCs are designed to meet the needs of the local community. They include:

- the provision of information, advice and support to target groups and families in the area.
- practical assistance to community groups such as the provision access to information technology and office facilities.
- the provision of education courses and training opportunities.
- the provision of childcare facilities for those attending courses provided by the FRC.

- the running of after-school clubs.
- the establishment new community groups, networks and initiatives to meet local needs.
- contributing to relevant social policy fora.

This report is based on information relevant to 2008 provided by 96 FRCs using the SPEAK (Strategic Planning, Evaluation And Knowledge-networking) system.

SPEAK offers organisations the capacity to self-evaluate, leading to a comprehensive understanding of the work of the organisation and the impacts of that work, and uses that new understanding to improve strategic and work planning for the organisation.

Information provided through SPEAK from each FRC is collated into a national programme database, creating a database of enormous potential to understand the full programme and its impacts, and most importantly to influence the direction of the programme and related areas of policy and practice.

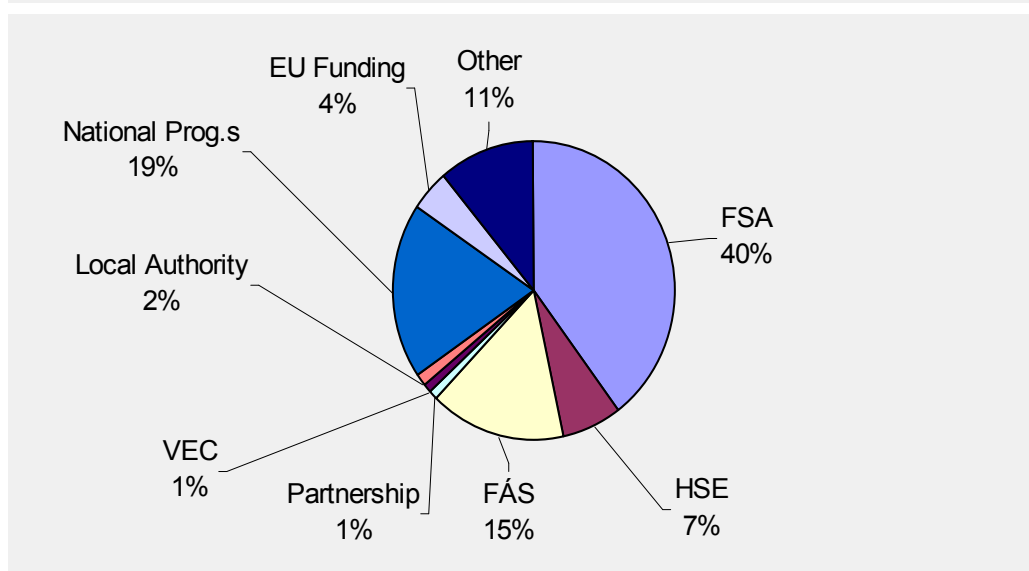
## FRC Resources and Funding

### FRC FUNDING SOURCES

Core funding, granted by the Family Support Agency, to the 96 FRCs that contributed to the SPEAK FRC database during 2008 amounted to just over €15.1 million. FRCs generated a further €22.7 million from other sources during the same year. Total budgets for the 96 FRCs amounted to just over €37,558,844 during 2008.

Figure 1, below, gives a breakdown of all funding sources for FRCs in 2008.

**Figure 1: Proportion of FRCs' Funding from All Sources, 2008**



The main shifts in the funding base for centres have been:

- While the level of core funding to FRCs has increased slightly in real terms, as a percentage of overall funding it has decreased from 42% in 2007 to 40% in 2008.
- An significant increase in the percentage of funding sourced from national programmes (up from 12% in 2007 to 19% in 2008).
- A small increase in the percentage of funding received from the HSE (up from 6% in 2007 to 7% in 2008).

'Other' funding in 2008 covers a wide range of public and private sources, the most significant of which were the County Childcare Committees, Regional Youth Services, Community Foundation for Ireland, the ESB and the Katharine Howard Foundation.

## FRC MANAGEMENT, STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS

### **PARTICIPATION ON FRC VOLUNTARY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEES**

FRCs contribute to the enhancement of voluntary capacity both in an internal and external sense: through representation of groups experiencing poverty and social exclusion within their management and volunteering structures; and through supporting individuals to become actively involved in their communities on a voluntary basis.

- In 2008, a total of 1,006 people served on the management committees of the 96 FRCs. They collectively contributed more than 40,478 hours of their time.
- This level of participation represents a further decrease in numbers participating at management level from an average of 17 per FRC in 2006, to an average of just under 16 per FRC in 2007, to under 11 people per FRC in 2008.
- However, there has been a significant increase in the time committed by volunteers at management level – up from 213 hours per FRC in 2007 to 421 hours per FRC in 2008.
- The majority of management committee members in 2008 were women (72%). The proportion of men involved in management committees has declined from 33% in 2006 and 29% in 2007 to 28% in 2008.

### **REPRESENTATION ON MANAGEMENT COMMITTEES**

Some FRC management committees have representation from statutory agencies and local service providers. The most significant of these are:

- Other local community and voluntary groups (on 35 management committees)
- HSE representation – including community care (on 32 management committees)
- Local Authority representation (on 15 management committees)
- Area Based Partnership Companies (on 15 management committees)
- Local Schools (on 13 management committees) and
- An Garda Síochána (on 11 management committees).

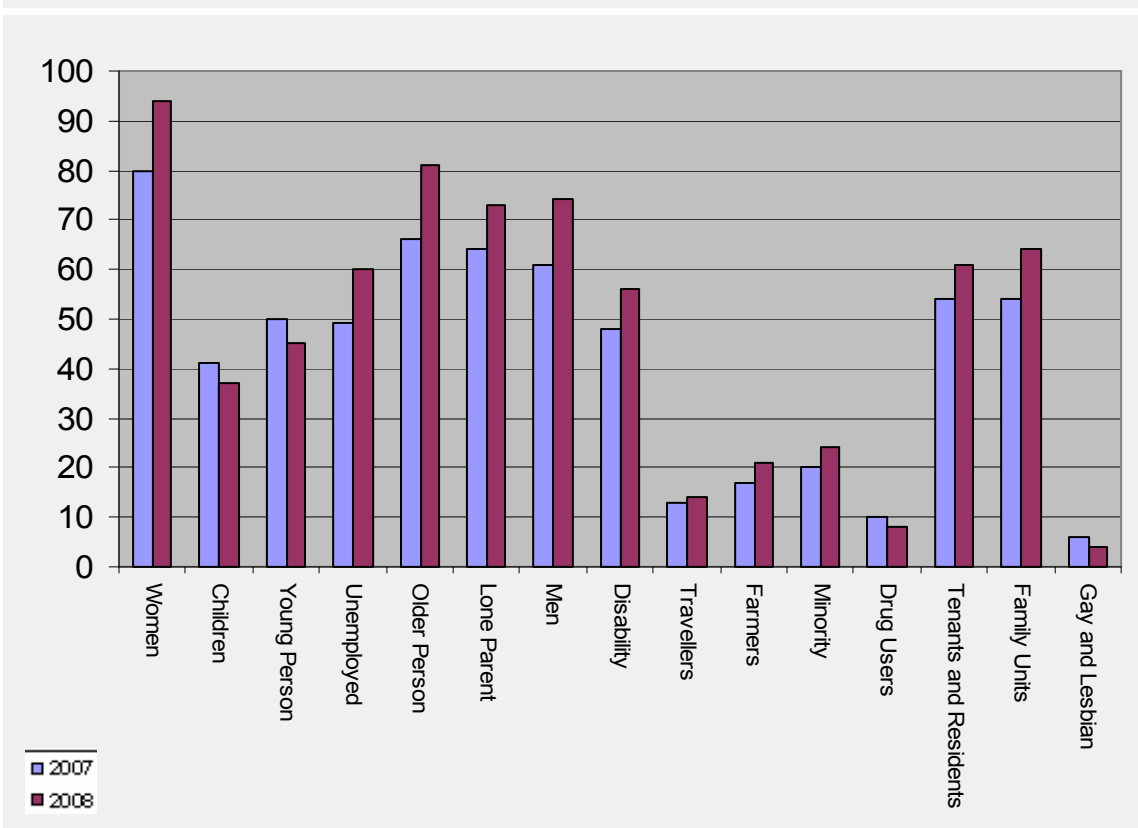
The high level of representation from other local community and voluntary groups on FRC Voluntary Management Committees indicates that considerable networking has taken place at local level. This figure indicates that other local community and voluntary groups participated on 29% more Voluntary Management Committees in 2008 than in 2007.

All FRCs have management committee members drawn from the communities they operate within. Many FRCs have organisations represented on their management committees that have a focus and mandate for a particular target group.

## TARGET GROUP REPRESENTATION ON FRCs

Figure 2 demonstrates that the prevalence of the two most represented target groups, women and older people, has increased since 2007. Significant increases have also taken place in relation to the representation of Unemployed people, Lone parents, People with disabilities, Men, Family Units and Tenants and Residents. Representation of Drug Users and Gay and Lesbian communities has decreased since 2007.

**Figure 2: Target Group Representation on Management Committees, 2007 and 2008**



## FRC STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS

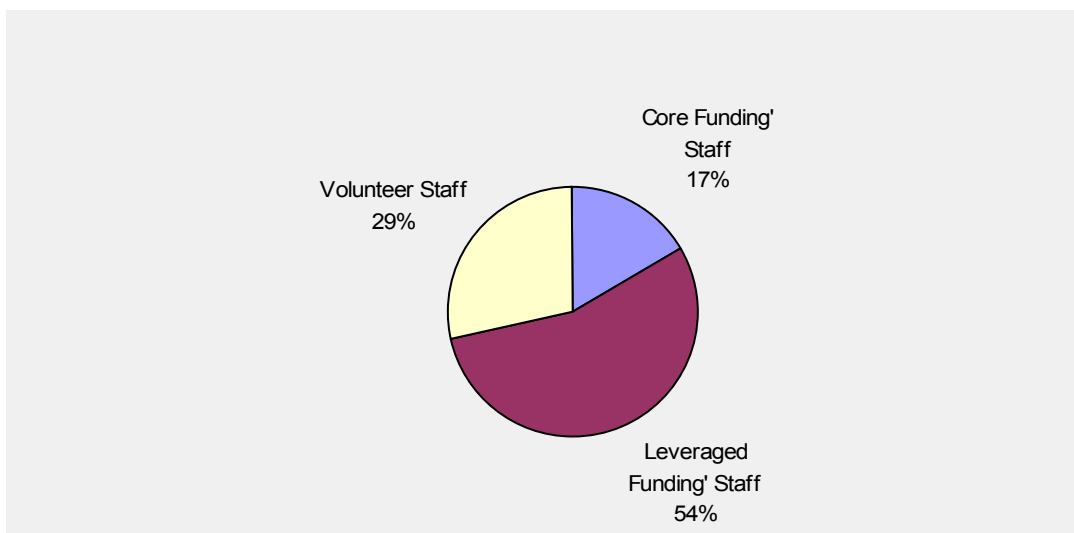
All FRCs have 'core' staff, funded by the FSA, but a large proportion also employ staff funded from other sources.

In 2008, within the 96 FRCs a staff body of 1340 people filled a total of 949.7 fulltime equivalent positions. Just under a quarter of these fulltime equivalent positions, 220.6, were funded through the FSA and the remaining 729.1 were funded by other programmes. Alongside this, the contribution of 2,222 voluntary staff members contributed a further 382.3 full-time equivalent positions across the 96 FRCs. This contribution, made by voluntary staff members, is distinct from the voluntary contribution made at management committee level.

In this context, FSA core funding is an enabler for leveraging other funding – most significantly for employment under the FÁS Community Employment Programme, and for the employment of staff in childcare programmes.

The enabling function of the ‘core funding’ provided by the Family Support Agency is demonstrated in Figure 3.

**Figure 3: Funding Source for FRC Staff (Fulltime Equivalents), 2008**



On average, 23 people voluntarily contributed to implementing FRC activities and programmes in each FRC during 2008. This represents a notable increase on the 2007 average of 20 people and further underlines the importance of voluntary contribution to the implementation of FRC action plans.

Such an increase in the numbers and the diversity of people volunteering within their local FRCs may reflect the changes that took place within the broader economic sphere during 2008. Among the FRCs to note this possibility was Clann Resource Centre.

“Clann FRC has between 60 and 100 volunteers working on an on-going basis. The exact number fluctuates from time to time. There are more highly skilled volunteers now participating in the programme due to the rise in unemployment.”

*Clann Resource Centre, Oughterard*

## What do Family Resource Centres do?

### ISSUES AND CHALLENGES

All FRCs work is informed by an assessment of local need. During 2008, FRCs voluntary management committee members and staff identified a number of key challenges in relation to developing their own internal capacity, meeting the needs of target groups and reacting to changes taking place within the public policy arena.

Firstly, the key challenges to building internal capacity identified by FRCs include:

- Building the capacity of voluntary management committees to meet their legal obligations as company directors and employers. The ongoing rotation of voluntary management committee members along with greater representation of target groups on management committees has ensured the need for continuous support and training to ensure volunteers are aware of, and in fulfilment of, their duties and obligations.
- The emergence of child protection as a specific consideration requiring specialised training and the formulation and implementation of appropriate internal policies and procedures.
- Recruiting representation from some target groups onto voluntary management committees continues to provide a challenge for FRCs. The engagement of Travellers, drug users and members of the Gay and Lesbian communities at management level remains infrequent.

Secondly, FRCs identified a number of emerging and established challenges associated with meeting the needs of target groups:

- *Unemployed and Underemployment* – The growth in numbers experiencing unemployment and underemployment was repeatedly identified by FRCs.
- *Youth* – A strong link between the persistence of unmet needs for young people and high incidence of drug and alcohol misuse was noted frequently.
- *Gay and Lesbian community* - This target group remains difficult to engage due to the invisibility that results from its stigmatisation:

“This group is hidden so we don't have information about them. We are not aware of discrimination against them, but at the same time we know of no services for them either.”

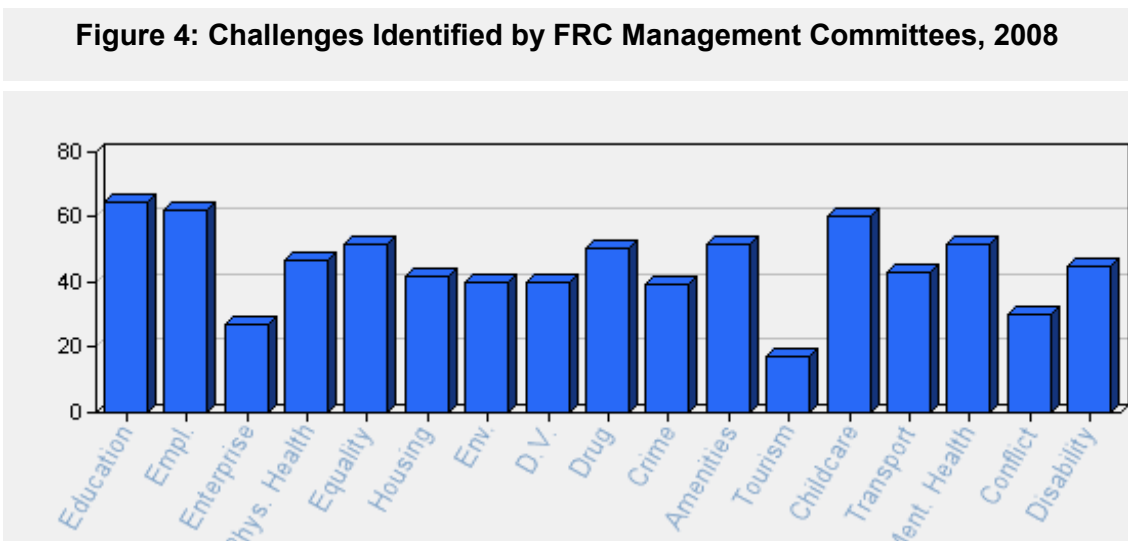
*Mohill Family Support Centre Ltd, North West*

The need to provide sustained and comprehensive supports to target group representatives on relevant decision making fora, such as the City/County Development Board structures, was also frequently cited as a major challenge for FRCs in working with target groups.

Thirdly, FRCs cited a number of public policy issues as having had a notable affect on their work:

- The lack of a consistent and dependable funding stream to support work with young people. In particular, the lack of supports for the development of Youth Cafés.
- Changes, introduced in 2007, to the provision of funding for childcare services continued to present challenges to FRCs involved in this work.
- The maintenance of a sporadic and irregular rural transport system continues to add to the potential for isolation of the most vulnerable families.

Figure 4, below, demonstrates that Education, Employment and Childcare are the issues accorded the highest priority by voluntary management committees in 2008.



The link between poor levels of educational attainment and unemployment was articulated by a number of FRCs:

“Bad educational experiences leading to literacy issues means education is a challenge for our community, this in turn leads to early school leaving and high social welfare reliance. There has been a rise in unemployment in our area due to the current economic climate; non-skilled workers are being the first to loose their jobs.”

*Newpark Close FRC*

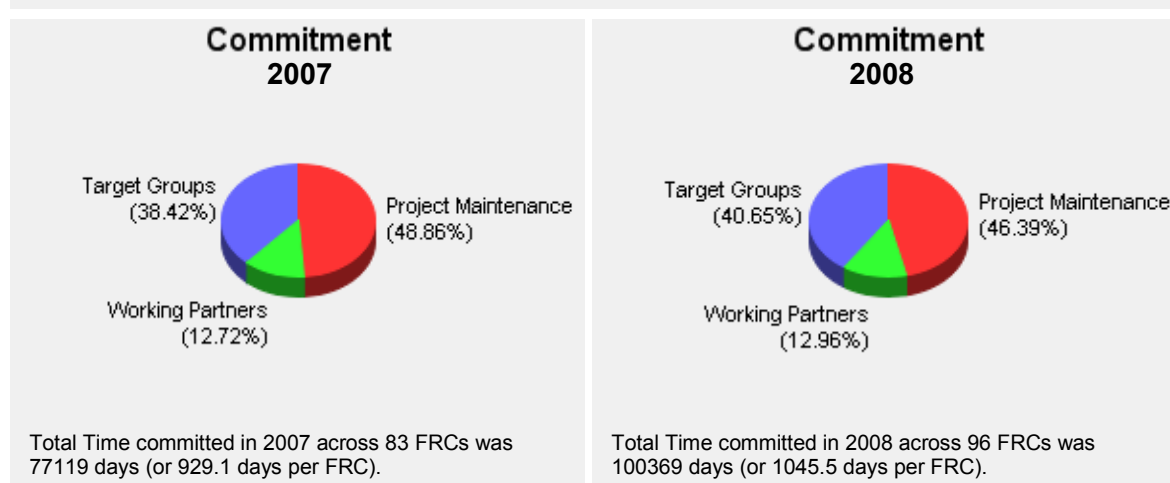
## RESPONDING TO LOCAL CHALLENGES

In addressing these and other issues identified locally, FRCs have been engaged in:

- Making links and building relationships with local people who belong to various *target groups*.
- Establishing and developing both strategic and working alliances with a range of *working partners* - mainly statutory agencies and service providers at local level.
- Delivering a *programme of work* and targeted intervention that is informed by the FRCs' ongoing understanding of family and community needs.

In advance of tackling local challenges, FRCs must commit time and effort to ongoing internal organisational functions – especially relevant in efforts to maintain effective and inclusive management and volunteering structures. However, slightly less time was dedicated to internal maintenance during 2008 than was the case in 2007. Figure 5 below indicates that time saved on internal maintenance tasks during 2008 was instead spent working directly with target groups.

**Figure 5: Overall Time Commitment 2007 and 2008**



The most time consuming of project maintenance tasks concerned the maintenance of financial records and the compilation of financial returns. This task occupied over 40% of Project Administrators' time; equating to just over 8% of the total time of the FRC staff team.

Considerable time was also spent in maintaining FRC premises, including the management of Resource Centres. This task accounted for 7% of the total time of the FRC staff team.

During 2008, time spent on travel fell slightly to under 2% of the total time of the FRC staff team.

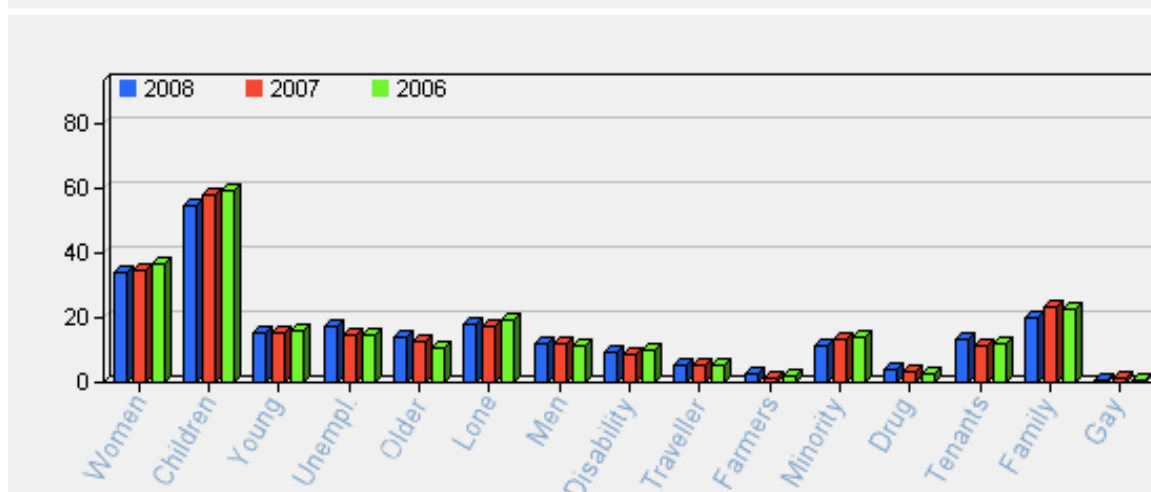
## WORK WITH TARGET GROUPS LOCALLY



Members of Support Groups for Lone Parents attending a Regional Seminar, West Region, 2008.

The following chart, figure 6, shows the percentage distribution of time FRCs spent working with the different target groups.<sup>1</sup>

**Figure 6: Percentage of Total Time Spent with Target Groups, 2006 - 2008**



As in 2007, most staff time is spent working with the Women, Children and Family Units. When considering Figure 6 it should be noted that members of the community experiencing multiple disadvantage are often categorised as members of more than one target group. For example, an unemployed woman is likely to be categorised as both a Woman and as Unemployed.

Notwithstanding this, the target group receiving the greatest increase in time commitment from FRCs during 2008 was the Unemployed.

<sup>1</sup> As target groups are not mutually exclusive percentages will not total to 100%.

A number of FRCs recorded particular successes in engaging specific target groups during 2008. These include:

“New initiatives included bringing Irish and Brazilian Women together for our ‘Creative Conversations’ Initiative.”

*Gort Family Resource Centre*

“Children who accompany their non Irish parents for English class benefit from the childcare facilities in the Crèche. The Staff in the Crèche try and create a place where they can feel at home and learn some words of English through play methods.”

*Killinarden Family Resource Centre*

“The DFRC organised a Youth Steering Committee to oversee the work of a research consultant engaged by the FRC. This survey was launched by An Tánaiste Mary Coughlan and we are in the process of dealing with the recommendations and findings of the survey.”

*Donegal Family Resource Centre*

“I engaged through outreach with a number of Lone Parents in various local estates and became more familiar with their issues. The outreach helped us to get a sense of the issues and demands for courses and training required locally.”

*Clara Community and Family Support Centre*

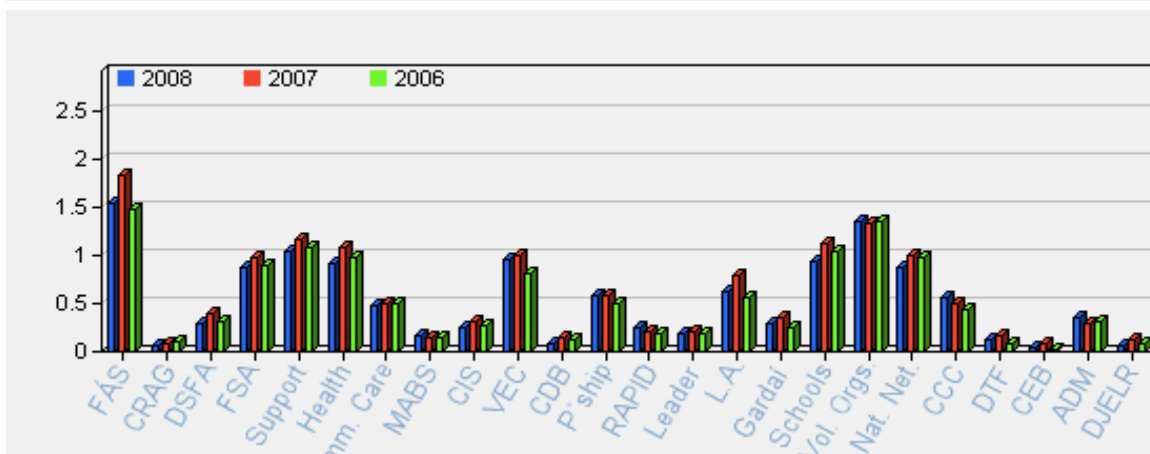
“2008 saw an increase in working with Travellers through our involvement with the North Cork Traveller Forum meetings that are held in the centre. Some individuals from this target group were referred to the Accommodation Support Service within Le Chéile FRC for additional supports.”

*Le Chéile FRC, Mallow*

## WORKING PARTNERS OF FRCs

'Working partners' refer to those organisations and agencies with whom FRCs have established ongoing relationships. The chart below shows that despite a small decrease in time spent working with FÁS during 2008, this organisation remains the most significant working partner for FRCs .

**Figure 7: FRC Commitments to Working Relationship with Different Partners (Percentage of Total FRC Time Commitments)**



This chart also demonstrates that working relationships with local voluntary groups, County Childcare Committees, Area-based Partnerships and Pobal (formally ADM) have all become more important for FRCs during 2008.

FRCs assess, on a yearly basis, the effectiveness of their working relationship with these agencies.

**Figure 8: FRC Assessment of Effectiveness of Working Relationship with Different 'Partners' (Assessment Based on Percentage Score)**



Figure 8 demonstrates that FRCs reported the highest level of satisfaction in their working relationships with The Family Support Agency, for example:

“The FSA are core to the development and progression of the Family Resource Centre. Firstly, they provide core funding on an annual basis and operate on a three year cycle. This gives the project the opportunity to develop a vision that is based on a three year work plan and sustainability for both management and staff.”

*FACT, Ballincollig Family Resource Centre*

The second highest level of satisfaction related to their relationship with the Regional Support Agencies. For example:

“The support agency has provided training in Policy Making, Conflict Resolution and Staff Support and Supervision in the past year. This has enabled management and staff to give a service to the community that implements the policies of Inclusion, Equality, Anti-Racism and Transparency at all levels.”

*Killinarden FRC*

Individual FRCs have achieved very intense and constructive working relationships with particular agencies based on addressing particular local needs. For example:

“There has been a tremendous amount of work carried out locally this year in partnership with the Community Gardaí. This work has been particularly focused around children and young people. The Castle Project is a Garda diversion project based in the resource centre. The Castle Project coordinator has been supported in delivering his programmes by the two Community Gardaí assigned to Ballyogan. The after-schools programme has also had support with outings and the Garda Schools Programme is delivered to this service each year.”

*Ballyogan Community Development Group*

“We offer information and advice on behalf of MABS, CIS, VEC and other organisations as required or requested. We have built up a way of working with these partners so that the needs of the people using the Centre can

be met either through ourselves or through one of the partnering agencies.”

*Family Life Centre*

The importance of personalities to the development of constructive working relationships was also highlighted by FRCs. This can be noticeable where FRCs engage with different staff members within the same organisation. For example:

“While overall the Centre has a good relationship with the county council, some staff find that there is often no response from the council regarding housing issues.”

*FRC in the Midlands*

## What have FRCs achieved? Outcomes and Impacts.

### INTRODUCTION

FRC outcomes and impacts can be broadly summarised under four main headings:

1. The extent to which they provide points of *Contact and Participation* for the most excluded sections of communities – this encompasses provision of information and resources to individuals and groups.
2. The extent to which they offer a route for further personal *Progression* for people in their communities – via provision of training and education.
3. The extent to which they *Promote Self-Reliance and Autonomy* contributing to local development 'infrastructure' by helping existing community groups and establishing new community groups or networks.
4. The extent to which they provide an important source of knowledge, experience and expertise in the field of social exclusion and the extent to which they can make a positive contribution to *Building Partnerships and Influencing Policy* through local networking and policy work.



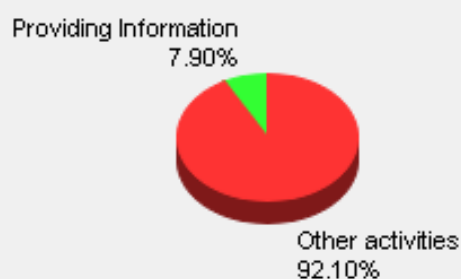
Staff and Volunteers of Kilmovee FRC, August '08.

### ENHANCING CONTACT AND PARTICIPATION

#### PROVIDING INFORMATION

In 2008, FRCs invested an average of 7.9% of their time providing information. Through the work of FRCs information is provided to individuals within the community and to groups active within the community. A distinction is also made between people who were given advice directly and people who were referred on to other agencies or services.

**Figure 9: Percentage of FRC time spent Providing Information, 2008**



A total of 208,267 people were either advised directly or referred onwards to other services by FRCs in 2008.

**Table 1: Numbers of People Advised, Given Information or Referred on to Other Services, 2008**

Category	Number	%
People advised or given information	149,913	71.9%
People referred onwards to other services	58,354	28.1%
Total	208,267	100%
Average per FRC	2169.4	

The proportion of people seeking information that were referred on to mainstream service providers during 2008 (28.1%) is consistent with the corresponding figure for 2007 (27%).

The manner in which FRC staff and volunteers handled information queries has impacted greatly upon those who received it:

“Making contact with us directly has encouraged people to take part [in community activity] as we have been able to support them in making a decision. In 2008, 4 individuals to whom we provided information and encouragement progressed to attending an accredited IT course and 3 of those completed it.”

*Downstrands Family Resource Centre*

“People are coming into the centre to access information and this gives us the opportunity to meet with them and engage with them. They can access information in a supportive environment, that is safe and confidential, without fear. This often leads to involvement in the project.”

*Arden View Community & Family Resource Centre*

“A member of the public that came into the Centre for information has joined the management committee.”

*Loughrea Family Resource Centre*

During 2008, FAS, the HSE, the VEC, Citizens Information Services and the Money Advice and Budgeting Service remained the most important onward referral services for FRCs providing information to individuals locally.

In terms of broader levels of communication:

- Over 80% of FRCs produced and circulated a local newsletter in 2008.
- Just over 70% used local radio, and 90% used local press, to communicate their activities and programmes.
- Almost 11% used national radio to contribute to debate in social exclusion issues in 2008 (a considerable increase in the corresponding proportion of 3% in 2006).

The most apparent and immediate impacts of information provision are related to the increased capacity of individuals to access services and opportunities for economic and social involvement. For example:

“One member of the public informed us that they were housed by Galway Co. Council as a direct result of our information provision...People have informed us that they appreciate our help and direction in relation to service provision and they have found the service extremely helpful. We regularly refer individuals to the local employment mediation service which in turn supports participants in accessing education, employment and training opportunities. MABS has informed us that their worker has provided help to individuals that have been referred to them from the Family Resource Centre.”

*Loughrea Family Resource Centre*

During 2008 many FRCs noticed that the nature of information being requested from the

FRC had changed to reflect changing economic circumstances.

“The changing economic situation saw an increase in the numbers of people seeking information and help with employment related issues such as CVs and understanding their social welfare entitlements after being made unemployed.”

*Ballyhaunis FRC*

The role of FRCs as information providers is especially important in rural areas where such a service would otherwise be unavailable. For example:

“St Johnston & Carrigans is an isolated rural community with no transport to the main town of Letterkenny where support services are located. Having outreach services such as the VEC, MABS and CIS, has enabled people to find new direction in their lives. Staff within the FRC have the skills and understanding to support people in a confidential and enabling manner which respects where people are at. People have confidence in the support that is provided that enables them to fill in application forms, to access the information they need or to be referred to more specific services.”

*St Johnston & Carrigans FRC*

Similarly, FRCs tend to act as a central point for information within communities experiencing unique periods of development such those undergoing urban regeneration. For example:

“Receiving this information impacted on a number of different fronts including residents becoming more aware of their rights regarding the redevelopment of the area and becoming involved in various programmes.”

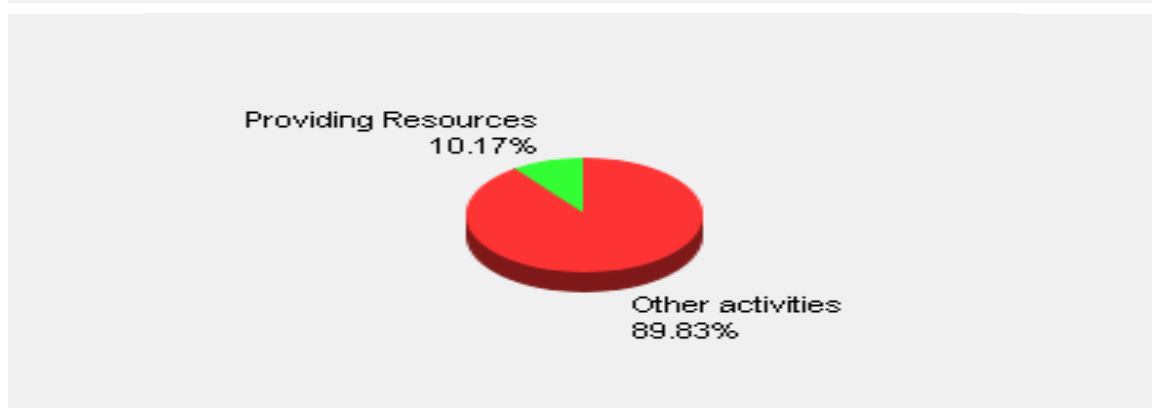
*Fatima Groups United*

## PROVIDING RESOURCES

'Providing Resources' relates to the provision of physical resources in the FRC to individuals or groups, for example the use of office administration facilities (computer, phone, photocopying, email etc.) or making meeting spaces available for groups to meet.

In 2008, FRCs invested 10.2% of their total time providing resources (an increase on the equivalent proportion of 8.8% for 2007).

**Figure 10: Percentage of FRC time spent Providing Resources, 2008**



FRCs have recorded significant returns for this investment of time:

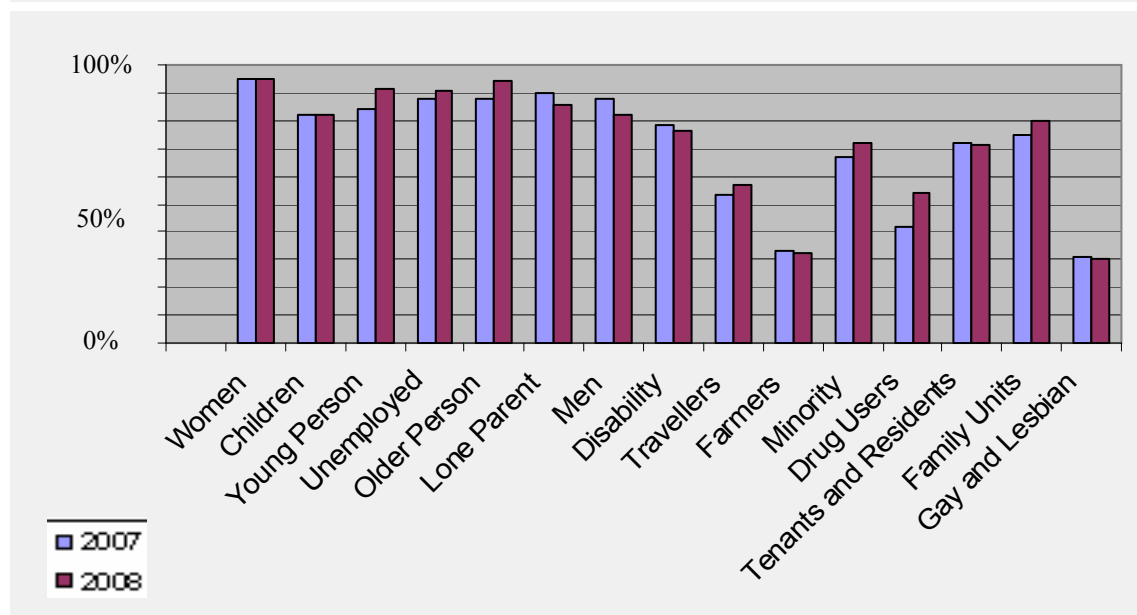
- There were 783,378 visits by individuals to use FRC facilities/premises in 2008 (up considerably from the 125,685 individuals that used FRC facilities in 2007).
- There were 28,859 visits by groups to use FRC facilities/premises (down from 35,788 in 2008).
- FRC facilities/premises were used 16,085 times in 2008 by groups for meetings (a figure that is consistent with the 2007 figure of 16,716 times).

The chart overleaf illustrates the continued importance of the main target groups accessing FRC resources locally (with women, young people, older people and the unemployed remaining the most significant).

It is also clear, however, that there are significant increases in the numbers of FRCs providing resources to:

- Travellers
- Drug users and their families
- Members of Minority Ethnic Groups

**Figure 11: Significance of Particular Target Groups Using FRC (Proportion of all FRCs Providing Resources to these Groups, 2007 and 2008)**



Longer-term impacts associated with resource provision are linked mainly to the fact that initial contacts from those accessing FRC resources frequently leads on to increased participation in activities, increased progression through courses etc., and increased community integration.

Using the FRCs' resources is often a first step for individuals and families through which FRC staff can build relationships and understand more about needs:

“While [providing resources] can be time consuming it is a great support to groups and is also a way of meeting the community, building up relationships and identifying potential support needs.”

*Aonad Resource Centre*

“Some of the centre users have joined our committee and help with other groups in the area.”

*Donegal Family Resource Centre*

Over time, FRCs tend to act as a focal point for other voluntary and community activity. The impact achieved through making resources and meeting spaces available to other groups can be far reaching:

“There is no other physical infrastructure in this rural community apart from the

Family Resource Centre.”

*Duagh Family Centre*

“The services offered in the centre had a positive on the community. Without these resources, there would be nowhere for youth or older people to meet.”

*Hillview Community Resource Centre*

The availability of these resources locally has contributed to the on-going development of the community sector at a local level:

“The community is more organised due to the availability of accommodation for meetings. There is an increase of community activity, e.g. meetings, networking, together with coffee mornings for a variety of causes.”

*Mohill Family Support Centre*

“There are now more groups operating in the area and the participants are now actively promoting the establishment of specific groups to meet specific identified needs...The groups are now operating at a higher level with participants pursuing self development and educational goals.”

*Monsignor Mc Carthy Family Resource Centre*

Accessible meeting space is also of great benefit to mainstream service providers who can use the local FRC as a conduit into local communities. For example:

“Galway Home Services have told us that they rely totally on using our meeting room and would be unable to operate their service in the East of the county without us.”

*Loughrea FRC*

## PROGRESSION

### PROVIDING RESOURCES AND TRAINING

In recent years, the provision of education and training has become a core activity for FRCs. This working method has consistently accounted for an increased time commitment from FRCs. In 2008, FRCs spent 15.35% of their time providing education and training opportunities. The corresponding figures for 2007 and 2006 were 14.5% and 12% respectively.

**Figure 12: Percentage of FRC time spent Providing Education & Training, 2008**

Providing Education and Training 15.35%



Other Activities  
84.65%

FRCs either directly provide, or arrange the provision of, education and training opportunities to the community. This normally occurs within three categories of provision:

- *Training* refers to courses that are linked in some way to employment (developing work-related skills).
- *Education* is a much broader area, and refers to both formal and informal learning.
- *Self-Development* refers to courses in personal development, awareness, assertiveness training etc.

During 2008, 96 FRCs have been responsible for:

- 5,839 people having completed training courses.
- 10,982 people having completed educational courses.
- 5,785 people having completed self-development courses.

These figures may have been higher but for difficulties experienced by many rural FRCs facilitating participants as a result of a lack of travel and childcare services.

**Figure 13: Particular Target Groups Completing Education and Training Courses (Proportion of all FRCs Providing Courses to these Groups, 2007 and 2008)**

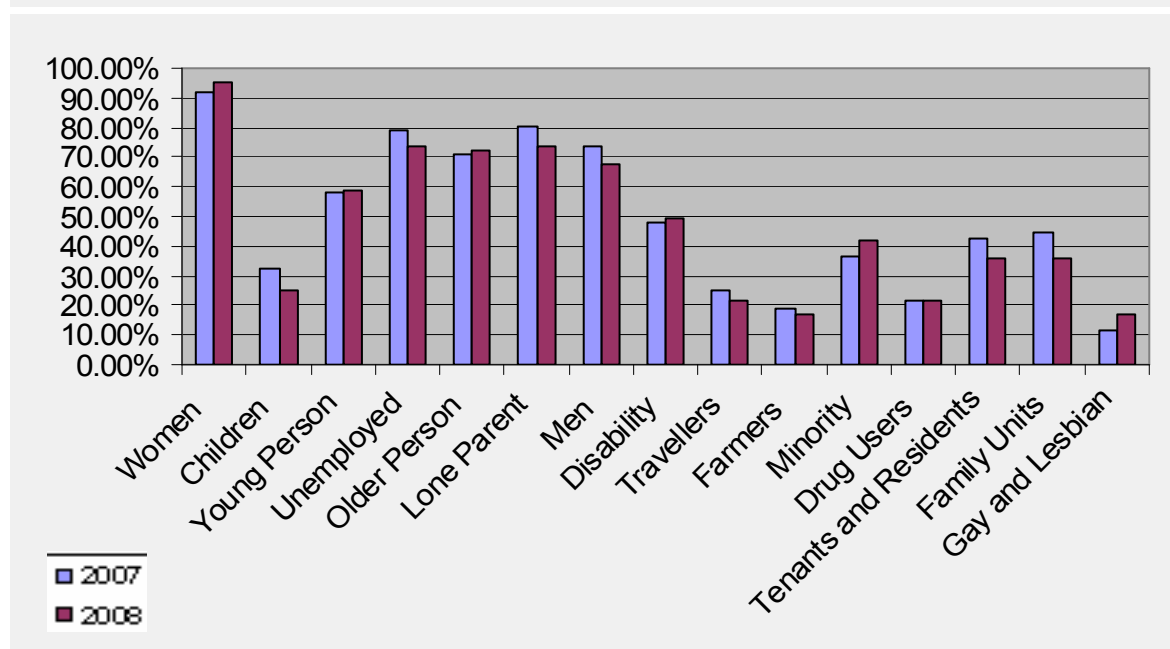


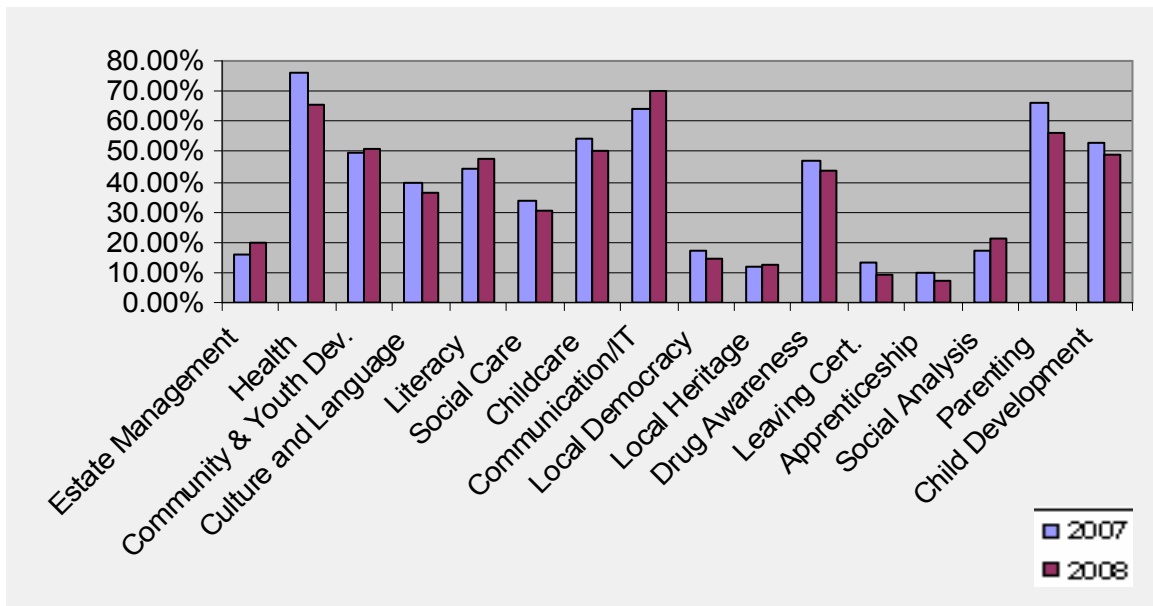
Figure 13 indicates that a greater percentage of FRCs are providing education and training opportunities for Women, Older People, People with Disabilities, Minority Ethnic Groups and members of the Gay and Lesbian community.

Fewer FRCs are providing education and training opportunities for Children, Lone Parents, the Unemployed, Tenants and Residents and Family Units.

The themes covered in these education and training opportunities can be seen in Figure 14. The themes addressed by the highest percentage of FRCs include Information Technology, Health, Parenting, Community and Youth Development, Childcare and Literacy.

The themes that experienced a growth in popularity between 2007 and 2008 include Information Technology, Literacy, Social Analysis and Estate Management. Fewer courses addressing Health, Parenting and Child Development were made available in 2008 than 2007.

**Figure 14: Themes Covered in Education and Training Courses (Percentage of all FRCs covering the Theme in 2007 and 2008)**



Impacts of these programmes are most evident in terms of personal progression for individual participants:

“Because the project has become very busy more time is spent supporting participants in educational and training courses. Five Lone Parents from the Tullacmongan area have received their Diploma in 'Parents in Education' programme from NUI following a 3 year training programme. One of the group is now doing facilitation with other groups and two of the group are continuing in further education.”

*Teach Oscail FRC*

“Eleven women now have both payroll (manual /computerised) and computerised accounts training completed and 2 of these have secured employment. The completion of an accredited first aid course...meant that 3 of the male participants could secure employment on the off-shore gas pipe laying project. Two female participants also progressed into to self employment, a [horse] riding instructor and a holistic therapist. Three other participants required it to complete their Childcare qualifications and one has since found employment.”

*Downstrands Family Resource Centre*

“Twelve participants completed a FETAC level three accredited course in basic computers. Of these, four have gone on to complete an Office Skills Procedures Course. One has enrolled in a FÁS Carers Course. Six have participated in The Back to

Education Course. Two have returned to repeat their Leaving certificate.”

*Ballyspillane FRC*

Equally important is the contribution made by educational and training courses to building social inclusion:

“The English classes promote greater interaction and cohesion in the community between Irish people and newly arrived communities. It also gives the attendees better labour market mobility.”

*Westport FRC*

“The provision of educational and lifestyle courses enables local people to participate in programmes in their community, thus increasing community spirit, combating isolation and aiding in the forging of new friendships.”

*Balally Family Resource Centre*

“By having access to affordable education and training local people have gained knowledge. We have a high rate of progression in our educational courses. Training courses such as Health and Safety and Child Protection have equipped local people with the necessary skills to volunteer and give back to their community. Self-development courses have helped participants to help themselves and their families.”

*Rosemount Community Development Group*

Some FRCs mentioned that the approach taken to the delivery of education and training opportunities greatly affected the take-up within local communities. For example:

“Our approach to education is very reassuring to participants and helps them grow in confidence. Participants are encouraged to take part in formal and informal training and allowed to work at their own pace.”

*Cherry Orchard Family Resource Centre*

## PROMOTING SELF RELIANCE AND AUTONOMY

In total FRCs devoted over 8% of their time in 2008 to providing help for existing groups, or to setting up new groups, networks or initiatives.

### HELPING GROUPS

The help provided to existing groups involved providing them with assistance to organise their internal organisation, advice and support in tackling development issues and help to access funding opportunities.

**Figure 15: Percentage of FRC time spent Helping Existing Groups, 2008**



During the course of 2008 some 1254 groups were supported:

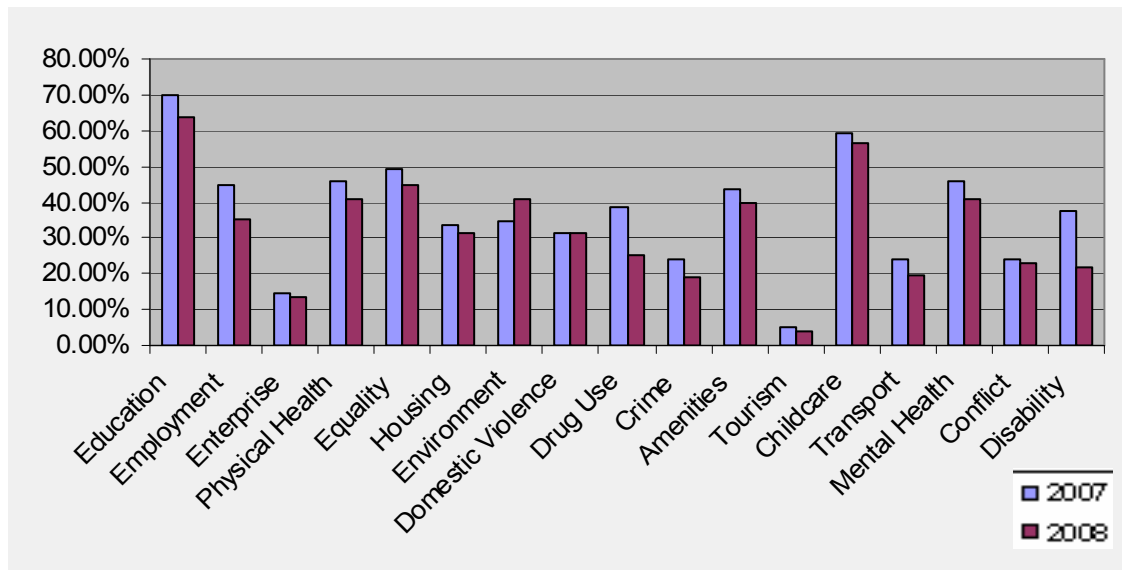
- 590 were groups helped with accessing funding opportunities.
- 351 groups were helped in developing their organisational or management structures.
- A further 313 groups were groups helped in tackling particular development or policy issues.

Figure 16 shows that most of the groups assisted were addressing local issues connected with education, childcare, equality, the environment and physical or mental health.

It is also clear that:

- More FRCs supported groups dealing with the Environment, and Domestic Violence in 2008 than in 2007; while
- Less FRCs supported groups dealing with all other issues, most notably Employment, Education and Disability.

**Figure 16: Development Issues being Addressed by Groups Supported by FRCs (Percentage of FRCs Supporting these Groups in 2007 and 2008)**



During 2008, the records of 449 active groups assisted by FRCs were updated in the SPEAK FRC system. Data relating to the remaining groups was not inputted. A total of 11,710 people participated in the work of the 449 groups in 2008. These groups employed a total of 157 people (full-time equivalents) and secured a total of €1,526,481.

The impact of the work undertaken by FRCs with these groups is evident in the extent to which local groups have become more capable and independent in their work. For example:

“The benefit to groups of receiving professional support in establishing themselves and having somebody to facilitate them to discover their aims and objectives and to move forward in a structured way, is invaluable.”

*Mountview Family Resource Centre*

“Helping groups has resulted in groups becoming independent in their own structures and operations. These groups have taken responsibility for their activities. Many groups have gained skills and leadership [qualities].”

*Clann Resource Centre*

“The groups [that] stopped in 2008 relate to our previous work with the Traveller community. The Traveller project has become an independent project and these groups are now supported by the Traveller project”.

*Le Cheile FRC Mallow*

Many local community groups have received the help required for them to access necessary financial support:

“We assisted a number of groups with funding applications to increase their activities and events. This was very beneficial to the groups involved. We helped the groups to function more effectively and with their future development. This has also had an impact on the wider community.”

*Donegal Family Resource Centre Ltd*

“When groups have increased funding they can increase the level and range of activities provided for the community. We are constantly sourcing funding for developing, establishing and supporting both new & existing groups, e.g. the organic garden development group, new youth groups, after schools meals programmes and the art & sports groups. We also helped these groups through enabling them to develop a structure for their group, to put in place policies and procedures and to elect officers.”

*Shanakill FRC*

The impact of supporting the development of local community groups is not confined to the membership of these groups but is also felt by the broader community:

“The work with the groups has brought people together and strengthened the community and it has also brought people together whereas in the past it was a fractured community.”

*Mountview Family Resource*

“Through helping Rosemount Estate Management in 2008 the physical environment of the Estate, specially Rosemount Court has been greatly improved. Clean up days, painting days and planting flowers and shrubs have helped residents have a more positive outlook and have a sense of pride in their community. through helping Rosemount Redevelopment Steering Committee local residents have an input in the upcoming redevelopment of Rosemount Court. The Steering Committee is made up of tenants from both the Court and the Estate working together. We see this as a very positive development as traditionally there was a divide between those living in the houses and the flats.”

*Rosemount Community Development Group Ltd.*

Forty five community groups that were receiving support from FRCs ceased operating during 2008. Many of these groups were wrapped up following the achievement of their aims and objectives, others failed due to lack of interest or an inability to access the supports required.

### **ESTABLISHING NEW GROUPS AND NETWORKS**

Establishing new community groups is a key component of FRC work. These new community groups may concentrate on particular target groups or focus on particular development issues. During 2008, this accounted for 3% of the FRC staff team's time.

**Figure 17: Percentage of FRC time spent Establishing Groups, Network or Initiatives, 2008**

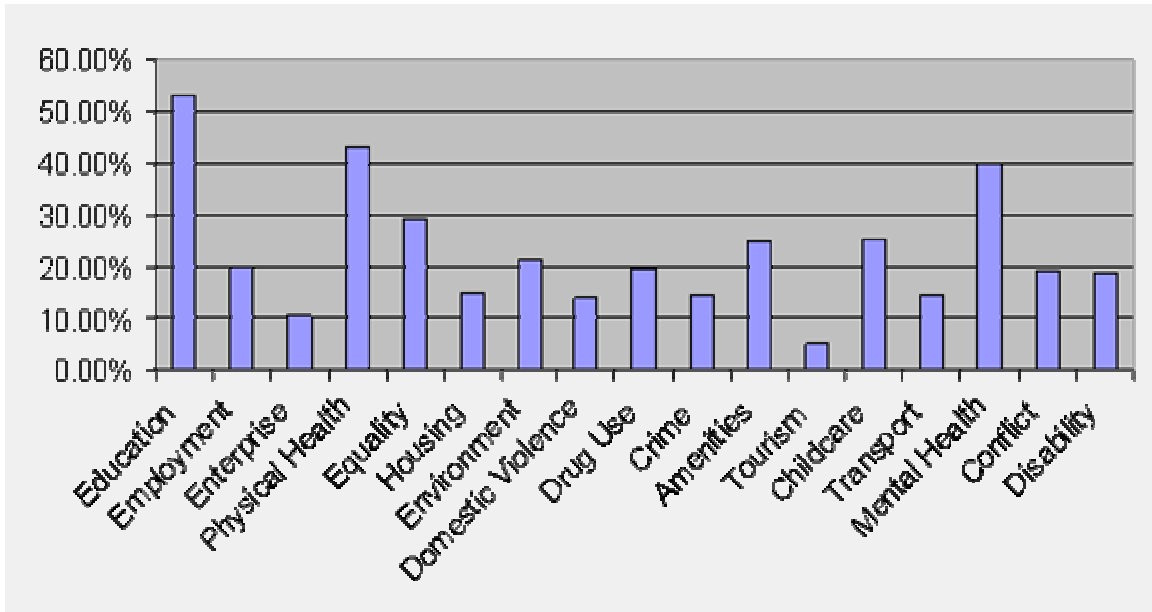


FRCs were involved in the establishment of 208 new community groups or initiatives in 2008. Since 2004, the FRC was the sole initiator for 19% of groups supported at local level; and was the main initiator in a further 40% of cases. The remainder were joint initiatives involving a range of organisations.

These newly established groups and initiatives were formed in response to a wide range of development issues. Many groups were established to tackle a number of different development issues. The development issues identified by newly formed groups and initiatives are presented in Figure 18. The most significant of these are:

- Education (identified by 116 new groups established during 2008)
- Physical health (identified by 90 new groups established during 2008)
- Mental health (identified by 83 new groups established during 2008)
- Equality (identified by 60 new groups established during 2008)

**Figure 18: Percentage of Newly Established Groups, Networks and Initiatives identifying Specific Development Themes to Address, 2008**



New groups and initiatives are typically established as a direct result of a need having been identified by members of a particular target group:

“The project is constantly engaging with the community and through consultation we can help establish groups relevant to the needs of the local community. Groups who have been set up include men's group, community games forum and from this has come more activity around family participation and support for all.”

*Teach Oscail FRC*

“A key part of our community development work involves working with people to identify local needs and then help organise people to respond to them. Over the years we have become more effective in this area as people are seeing the success of the community development groups we established in previous years and are more willing to participate themselves.”

*St. Canice's Community Action Ltd*

“In 2008 the Callan Community Savings Bank was established, this came about in response to a need identified locally and now has a membership of 61. Callan Housing Association was also set up in 2008 in response to an identified need for housing for men.”

*Droichead Family Resource Centre*

“The setting up of a carers support group and residents’ groups was identified in the survey for the workplan. The carers’ group was supported and developed during the year and they inputted into the National Carers’ Strategy. Setting up and supporting residents’ groups to link with the County Council on issues affecting their area was an important role this year. The bottom up approach has ensured local ownership of new initiatives.”

*Clara Community & Family Support Centre*

As well as developing an important focal point for organised activities and services, FRCs see the establishment of new groups and networks as being a key working method in involving the most excluded members of their communities, and in combating social isolation:

“Working with each group helps identify the needs that are appropriate to them. Coming together and forming groups and committees gives people the opportunity to speak for themselves and not have other people speaking for them. This empowers those groups that have self-organised with our support. This is especially important to those that are marginalised as it gives purpose and a sense of involvement to those that are involved.”

*Westport FRC*

“Setting up a lone parents group has meant that the Family Resource Centre has enabled individuals in this group to avail of training and supports to engage more positively with their children, to take time for themselves, to begin to identify their needs and issues and to give support to each other. The Making Choices Training Programme has enabled disabled individuals, who would not have previously been involved in the community, to come together as a group and to identify common needs and issues, support each other and become involved with organisations and groups in their community.”

*Loughrea Family Resource Centre*

### **COMMUNITY BASED ARTS INITIATIVES**

Community initiatives established by FRCs involving community arts have been recorded independently of other community based initiatives. During 2008, almost 50 new community arts initiatives were established bringing the total number of active community arts initiatives supported by FRCs to 149. Many FRCs have used community arts as a way of involving particular sections of their communities. For example:

“The community based arts, i.e. the art group, has been a useful means of engaging local men who traditionally have been reluctant to participate in community activity.”

Monsignor Mc Carthy Family Resource Centre

While, in other communities, the level of involvement with community arts initiatives has been widespread:

“Planning with all the children and young peoples’ services within the area produced both a 6 week Summer Arts Programme for up to 250 participants and a lead flagship project for Halloween for the same target group.”

Fatima Groups United

## BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS, NETWORKING LOCALLY AND POLICY WORK

### NETWORKING LOCALLY

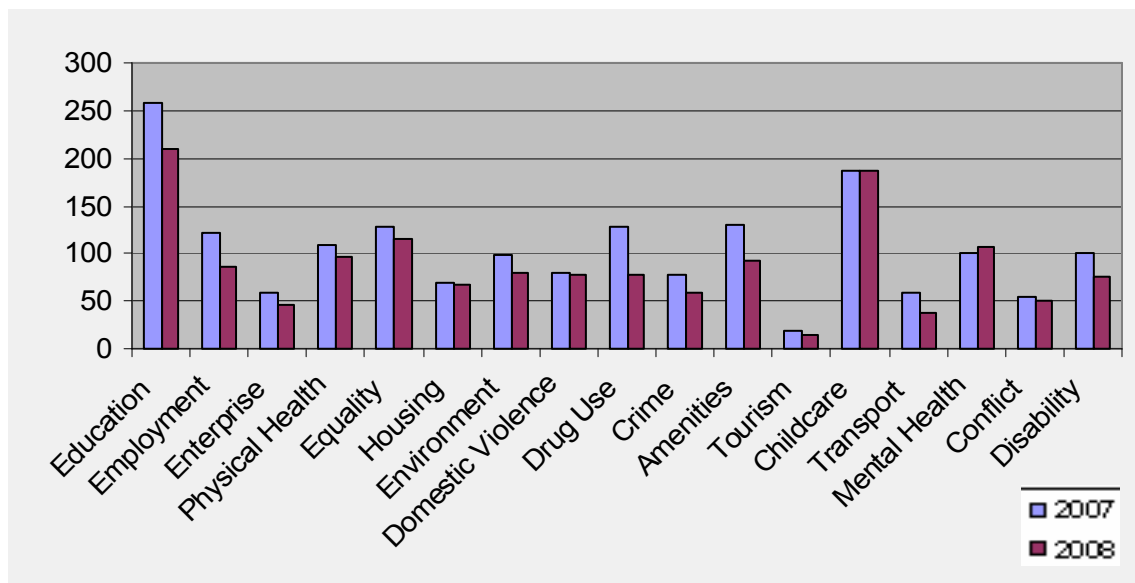
FRCs commit time to issues within the community that require a collective response. This work includes attendance at meetings, committee membership or other structured involvement in local community groups and committees.

**Figure 19: Percentage of FRC time spent Networking Locally, 2008**



FRCs invested just over 4% of their total time into networking locally in 2008.

**Figure 20: Numbers of Locally-based Networks and Committees with which FRCs were involved (2007 and 2008) by Issue**



The chart above indicates the total number of locally-based networks and committees in which FRCs were involved in 2008. The chart demonstrates that networking locally has decreased across all local development issues apart from Childcare and Mental Health. Networking associated with Childcare remained steady during the year while networking associated with Mental Health increased slightly. A number of FRCs noted that the economic downturn has led to an uncertainty surrounding funding. This, in turn, deterred FRCs from spending money on travelling to networking events.

Notwithstanding this, FRCs continue to associate networking with positive impacts in relation to building consensus amongst different interest groups around the direction of resources to where they are most needed:

“As a result of networking and sharing of information in relation to the Glenties Youth Needs Assessment and Parent Support Research, the committee are more informed and have additional evidence based information.”

*Downstrands Family Resource Centre*

“Local networking has allowed more resources to be easily accessed by those most in need.”

*Trim Family Resource Centre*

“Networking has played a central role in involving the very many organisations that help us provide the wide ranging programmes and services we now provide to local families or vulnerable or unemployed adults or seniors.”

*St. Canice's Community Action Ltd*

Further advantages accrue from an increased capacity to identify needs across a range of issues and services and to develop a more co-ordinated response:

“Networking locally includes our work with RAPID, the Social Inclusion Measures sub group of the County Development Board, County Childcare Committee, Diversity Sligo, Traveller Support Group, Sligo Leader Partnership (Interagency Group on New Communities), Springboard Project, Sligo Social Services, Lifestart through the steering group for Globe House crèche and the Northside CDP. Networking among these services avoids duplication and ensures co-operation and a more comprehensive service to all families in Sligo.”

*Sligo FRC*

“Networking has improved coordination of community projects and initiatives with less duplication resulting. More work is carried out in partnership between groups and funding is shared. A common voice and vision brings about change and more policy issues are dealt with. Greater achievement all round with a coordinated approach to community development.”

*Clann Resource Centre*

“Networking has led to positive relationships being developed with local organisations and agencies, greater opportunities to engage in county policy work and a heightened profile for the Resource Centre.”

*Raheen Community Development Group Ltd*

## POLICY WORK

FRCs in 2008 committed 2.6% of their total time and effort to policy-linked work – making contributions to understanding and influencing how policy is developed in relation to social inclusion.

**Figure 21: Percentage of FRC time committed to Policy Work, 2008**



Table 2, below, shows the importance of education and childcare issues in relation to overall involvement in policy work. These issues, together with physical and mental health, also account for the most significant outputs from centres in terms of publications and research undertaken in the policy field.

**Table 2: Numbers of Seminars, Networks and Publications in Relation to Specific Areas of Policy (All FRCs 2008)**

Key Issue	Attendance at Seminars, Conferences	Participation in Regional and National Networks	Numbers of Publications, Research Projects, Videos Etc.
Education	249	199	78
Employment	77	59	12
Enterprise	41	19	3
Physical Health	72	42	20
Equality	103	176	18
Housing	37	18	6
Environment	53	42	27
Domestic Violence	91	58	18
Drug Use	96	50	18
Crime	39	10	6
Amenities	62	43	17
Tourism	14	2	4
Childcare	210	146	41
Transport	32	22	5
Mental Health	74	40	14
Conflict	35	18	5
Disability	54	52	11

There was a marked decrease in FRCs' engagement with policy work between 2007 and 2008. During 2008, FRCs attended 17% fewer seminars, 7% fewer conferences and released 11% fewer publications. Policy work decreased across all development issues apart from Enterprise and Tourism (which remain two of the issues least prioritised by FRCs).

Positive impacts, as a result of this work, were reported in relation to informing local communities about the implications of policy developments:

“Our active involvement with regional and national issues enables us to keep the local community informed and aware of policy that may impact upon their quality of life. Furthermore, our involvement in the area of policy work increases our credibility and professionalism in the area of community development which ultimately impacts positively on our status within the local community.”

*Breffni Community Development Co.*

“By attending seminars and workshops relevant to our area of work we are provided with information...and keeps us updated on any changes. Through the medium of leaflets, flyers, newsletters, local radio, information evenings and various other publications, this information is then fed back into the community within our catchment area.”

*Shanakill FRC*

Other impacts relate to FRCs ability to influence policy development through contributions informed by working at ground level within local communities. For example:

“Our presence on such wide ranging networks...has meant that we have been able to significantly impact on the policies of the social and statutory partners that we are involved with to tackle disadvantage in our housing areas. The FRCs in the City in particular have proved themselves to be key players in influencing social policy in Kilkenny.”

*St. Canice's Community Action Ltd*

“Through attendance at Seminars and Conferences information and ideas from the 'ground' can be fed onto national level, thus effecting national policy. In turn, this has a positive affect on community members.”

*Balally Family Resource Centre Ltd*

“[Our] policy document on housing/regeneration was launched by the Minister for Housing and became policy within Dublin City Council. Communities are now benefiting from this policy arrangement where commitments to resourcing community participation is built into policy. In the past this has been a difficulty as communities have had no resources to buy in architects, planners, communications, capacity building, etc.”

*Fatima Groups United*

“The establishment of the Mayo Community Platform has brought together both Family Resource Centres and Community Development Projects across the County. There are also three County Community Development/Equality Projects that have become members. This has for the first time given community development-type projects a collective voice, which was articulated in their submission to the Mayo Local Anti-Poverty Social Inclusion Strategy. The Platform also has 5 representatives on the Social Inclusion Measures committee of the County Development Board which give it a strong voice.”

*Westport FRC*

“We aim for our work to influence local practice, changing the life of the community for the better. Shannon FRC has been involved in [developing] a number of different strategies within Co Clare. For example, the Traveller Strategy Plan and The Integrated Strategy of the Co-ordination of Services to Immigrant Communities in Co Clare.”

*Shannon Family Resource Centre Ltd*

“Research was undertaken with Lone Parents in Arden View to identify issues experienced in accessing employment. We were involved with the local partnership on researching Women's needs in Mid-Offaly. A Childcare Needs Analysis Report for the wider Tullamore area, commissioned by Arden View FRC, was completed. FRC staff were involved in the SIM subgroup for the development of the Local Anti-Poverty Strategy.”

*Arden View Community & Family Resource Centre*

## What Made these Achievements Possible?

The successes achieved by FRCs during 2008 have been made possible through a continuing adherence to community development principles and practices. The work of volunteers and staff has been built upon inclusive, participative and trusting working relationships with local communities. When completing the evaluation cycle for 2008 FRCs recorded factors that helped and factors that hindered their work.

### **STRENGTHS OR FACTORS ASSISTING THE WORK**

Amongst the most important facilitating factors identified by FRCs in 2008 were:

- Positive assistance from Regional Support Agencies:

“Participating in the different Networks facilitated by the Regional Support Agency provides an invaluable resource to share learning and to bring that learning back to the local community to work more effectively on local issues.”

*Tacú Resource Centre*

“Involvement with the Regional Support Agency has sharpened our community development focus.”

*Family Life Centre*

“The Regional Support Agency provided professional support to help our voluntary management committee and our project team to carry out [our] work.”

*St. Canice Community Action*

“The Regional Support Agency provided excellent training to both the management committee and staff through evaluation and review meetings and management committee training. Training was provided to staff on Child Protection, SPEAK, lone parents and youth issues. The support and training given to the project by the Support Agency has been invaluable to the voluntary management committee and the staff.”

*Cáirdeas FRC*

- Effective working relationships established with statutory agencies and service providers. For example:

“To work in partnership with so many partners has been mutually beneficial. For example, not having a computer suite has not prevented us from realising our objectives; a mobile unit was accessed and delivery of training ensued.”

*Family Life Centre*

“Being involved in networks is very important to the role the FRC plays in the community as it informs us of other services and builds important relationships that enable us to meet the needs of the community that otherwise we could not fulfil.”

*FACT, Ballincollig Family Resource Centre*

“Networking is key for Le Chéile FRC. It ensures that we are aware of what other organisations are in a position to offer and likewise they are aware of what we offer. It consequently means that a comprehensive community response can be provided for an individual or family.”

*Le Chéile FRC, Mallow*

“By the staff and management participating in networks the centre has developed good links with other community, voluntary and statutory organisations. This allows us to support each other when working on issues affecting families, to avoid duplication of work, to undertake inter-agency initiatives and it also provides a platform for influencing social policy at a local, regional and national level.”

*Listowel Family Resource Centre*

- The Family and Community Services Resource Programmes continued to expand throughout 2007 and 2008. This meant that many FRC were still quite new during 2008. The benefit of being more established within communities was remarked upon by FRCs:

“We are now well established and people are more confident to come into the centre. Young people access computer facilities for school projects outside of school hours.”

*Arden View Community & Family Resource Centre*

“The resource provision undertaken by the CFRC is well established. The foot fall into the centre to use these services is high and continues to grow. In 2007 we obtained wireless broadband and this has allowed our internet and computer room to provide fast and reliable internet access to the public. This in turn draws more people into the community centre. Once they are there they become aware of the other activities and groups that are available to them and they become more involved in the service.”

*Castlemaine Family Resource Centre*

## **CHALLENGES AND BARRIERS IDENTIFIED**

The most significant barrier to progress cited by FRCs related to the need for additional staff:

“The lack of full time development worker hinders us in our efforts at helping groups.”

*Duagh Community and Family Resource Centre*

“Due to Ballymote FRC not accessing [funding for] a development worker we were restricted in the amount of time spent in helping groups or in forming new groups.”

*Ballymote Family Resource Centre*


Many FRCs mentioned the lack of adequate and appropriate space:

“This work was curtailed due to the FRC being housed in a temporary small premises awaiting the building of our purpose built premises.”

*Buds FRC*

“A major hindrance for the present work of the SWKFRC is that it operates from one small office which provides no space for private or confidential support to individuals who phone or come in person to the office. Neither is there space within the building where the office is located to provide a private area or to expand the Family Resource Centre premises. “

*South West Kerry Family Resource Centre*



“The main challenge for the project in 2008 was not having a central community premises from which to operate.”

*Greystones Peoples Project*

## Summary

This report is based on information provided for 2008 by 96 FRCs using the SPEAK FRC (Strategic Planning, Evaluation And Knowledge-networking) system. The information from each FRC is collated into a national programme database.

### PROJECT RESOURCES AND FUNDING

- 40% of FRC funding comes from the Family Support Agency, 60% is raised through other sources.
- 23% of FRC staff (220.6 full-time equivalent positions), are financed through 'core funding' provided by the Family Support Agency.
- In 2008, a total of 1,006 people served on the management committees of the 96 FRCs. They collectively contributed more than 40,478 hours of their time.
- The contribution of 2,222 voluntary staff members contributed a further 382.3 full-time equivalent positions across the 96 FRCs.

### CHALLENGES FACED BY FRCs

The principle challenges affecting work on the ground identified by FRCs during 2008 can be categorised under three headings:

Building and maintaining internal capacity:

- Building the capacity of voluntary management committees to meet their legal obligations as company directors and employers.
- The emergence of child protection as a specific consideration requiring specialised training and organisational response.
- Recruiting representation from some target groups onto voluntary management committees continues to provide a challenge for FRCs.

Challenges associated with meeting the needs of target groups:

- The growth in numbers experiencing unemployment and underemployment was repeatedly identified by FRCs.
- A strong link between the persistence of unmet needs for young people and high incidence of drug and alcohol misuse was noted frequently.
- Engaging with Gay and Lesbian people.
- Provision of support to the representing FRCs on decision making fora.

Specific public policy issues presenting challenges to the work of FRCs:

- The lack of a consistent and dependable funding stream to support work with young people. In particular, the lack of supports for the development of Youth Cafés.
- Changes, introduced in 2007, to the provision of funding for childcare services continued to present challenges to FRCs involved in this work during 2008.
- The maintenance of a sporadic and irregular rural transport system continues to add to the potential for isolation of the most vulnerable families.

#### **WHO DO FRCs WORK WITH?**

- The assistance provided by the Family Support Agency, the network of Regional Support Agencies and the Specialist Support Agencies has been extremely beneficial.
- As in 2007, most staff time is spent working with the Women, Children and Family Units.
- The target group receiving the greatest increase in time commitment from FRCs during 2008 was the Unemployed.
- Despite a small decrease in time spent working with FÁS during 2008, this organisation remains the most significant working partner for FRCs.
- Working relationships with local voluntary groups, County Childcare Committees, Area-based Partnerships and Pobal (formally ADM) have all become more important for FRCs during 2008.

#### **WHAT HAVE FRCs ACHIEVED?**

FRC outputs and impacts can be broadly summarised under four main headings in relation to the extent to which FRCs:

1. Provide contact and participation points for the most excluded sections of communities
2. Offer a route for further personal progression for people
3. Promote self-reliance and autonomy
4. Build partnerships and influence policy

#### **PROVIDING CONTACT AND PARTICIPATION POINTS**

People are advised by FRCs, or referred on to other services, giving rise to a higher profile for the FRC in the community and ensuring more people access information relating to their rights and entitlements. In 2008, FRCs invested an average of 7.9% of their time providing

information. A total of 208,267 people were either advised directly or referred onwards to other services by FRCs in 2008.

FRCs provide physical resources in the FRC to individuals or groups, for example the use of office administration facilities (computer, phone, photocopying, email etc.) or making meeting spaces available for groups to meet. In 2008, FRCs invested 10.2% of their total time providing resources. There were 783,378 visits by individuals to use FRC facilities/premises in 2008. There were 28,859 visits by groups to use FRC facilities/premises. FRC facilities/premises were used 16,085 times by other community groups.

### **PERSONAL PROGRESSION FOR PEOPLE**

The provision of education and training has become a core activity for FRCs. In 2008, FRCs spent 15.35% of their time providing education and training opportunities.

During 2008, 96 FRCs have been responsible for:

- 5,839 people having completed training courses.
- 10,982 people having completed educational courses.
- 5,785 people having completed self-development courses

### **PROMOTING SELF RELIANCE AND AUTONOMY**

Existing community groups were provided with assistance to structure their internal organisation as well as with advice and support in tackling development issues and help to access funding opportunities. This work accounted for 5.2% of FRCs' staff team time.

During the course of 2008 some 1254 groups were supported:

- 590 were groups helped with accessing funding opportunities.
- 351 groups were helped in developing their organisational or management structures.
- 313 groups were groups helped in tackling particular development or policy issues.

During 2008, the records of 449 existing groups assisted by FRCs were updated in the SPEAK FRC system. A total of 11,710 people participated in these 449 groups. These

groups employed a total of 157 people (full-time equivalents) and secured a total of €1,526,481.

Establishing new community groups is a key component of FRC work. These new community groups may concentrate on particular target groups or focus on particular development issues. During 2008, this accounted for 3% of the FRC staff team's time.

### **Building Partnerships, Networking Locally and Policy Work**

FRCs commit resources to issues within the community that require collective responses. This work includes attendance at meetings, committee membership or other structured involvement in local community groups and committees. FRCs invested nearly 5% of their total time into networking locally in 2008.

A further 2.6% of FRC time went into policy-linked work. This included making contributions to understanding and influencing how policy is developed in relation to social inclusion. Education and childcare issues, together with physical and mental health issues, accounted for the most significant outputs from centres in terms of publications and research undertaken in the policy field.

### **PROGRAMME LEVEL STRENGTHS AND CHALLENGES IDENTIFIED**

Amongst the most important facilitating factors identified by FRCs in 2008 were:

- Positive assistance from Regional Support Agencies.
- Effective working relationships established with statutory agencies and service providers.
- The benefit of being more established within communities.

The most significant barrier to progress cited by FRCs related to:

- Limitations associated with a small staff body (and the potential for undertaking additional work were funding to be made available for additional development workers).
- Limitations associated with a lack of adequate and appropriate premises.

## Appendix 1:

Data from 96 FRCs has been included in compiling this report. The centres are:

### **East**

School St & TCB FRC  
Greystones Peoples Project  
Baldoyle Family Resource Service  
Cherry Orchard Family Resource Centre Ltd  
Newbridge FRC  
Ballyfermot Family Resource Centre  
Hillview Community Resource Centre Ltd  
Quarryvale FRC  
St. Andrew's Resource Centre  
Balally Family Resource Centre Ltd  
St Kevin's FRC  
Artane Coolock Resource & Development Centre  
Ballyogan Community Development Group  
Ballyboden Family Resource Centre  
Fatima Groups United  
Rosemount Community Development Group Ltd.  
Hill Street FRC  
Killinarden Family Resource Centre

### **Midlands**

Monsignor Mc Carthy Family Resource Centre  
Cara Phort Family Resource Centre  
Clara Community & Family Support Centre  
Arden View Community & Family Resource Centre  
Family Life Centre  
Bridgeways FRC  
Knockmay Family Resource Centre  
Lus na Greine FRC



### **Mid-West**

Ennistymon Family Resource Centre

Shannon Family Resource Centre

Killaloe/Ballina FRC

Kilrush Family Resource Centre

Hospital Family Resource Centre

St. Munchin's Family Resource Centre

Southill FRC

Croom Family Resource Centre Ltd.

### **North East**

Teach Oscail

Kells People's Resource Centre

Mullaghmat FRC

Trim Family Resource Centre

### **North West**

The Forge FRC

Sligo FRC

Mohill Family Support Centre Ltd

Cara House

Downstrands Family Resource Centre

Easkey Community Family Resource Centre Ltd

Raphoe Family Resource Centre

Mountview Family Resource

St Johnston & Carrigans FRC

Mevagh Family Resource Centre

Shannow family Resource Centre

Moville and District Family Resource Centre Limited

Breffni Community Development Co.

Donegal Family Resource Centre Ltd

Dunfanaghy Community & Family Resource Ltd

Ballymote Family Resource Centre

Tubbercurry FRC Co. Ltd



## **South East**

Three Drives FRC

MFRC

St. Matthews Family Centre

Newpark Close Family Resource Centre

Spafield FRC

Droichead Family Resource Centre

St. Brigids FRC

Forward Steps Resource Centre

Sacred Heart FRC

Southend Family Resource Centre

St. Canice's Community Action

FACT, Ballincollig Family Resource Centre

Bagenalstown Family Resource Centre

Raheen Community Development Group Ltd

Curragh Pride FRC

## **West**

Loughrea Family Resource Centre

Ballina Family Resource Centre

Ballyhaunis FRC

Aonad Resource Centre

Clann Resource Centre

Solas Resource Centre

Gort Family Resource Centre

Tacú Resource Centre

Westport FRC

Cáirdeas Kilmovee FRC

Claremorris FRC

Castlebar Le Chéile FRC



## **South West**

Bandon FSG

Droichead na Daoine

Kerryhead/Ballyheigue Family Resource Centre

South West Kerry Family Resource Centre

St. Brigid's Community Centre

Presentation Family Centre, Listowel

Cobh Family Resource Centre

Castlemaine Family Resource Centre

Ballyspillane FRC

Le Chéile FRC, Mallow

Shanakill FRC

Duagh FRC

Middleton Community Forum Ltd

Buds FRC

## Appendix 2:

### TARGET GROUPS

Name	Description
Women	Adult Women.
Children	Persons under 12 years of age.
Young Person	Persons below 25 years of age.
Unemployed	Unemployed persons. May also refer to underemployed persons, i.e. part-time or seasonal workers.
Older Person	People over 50 years of age.
Lone Parent	Lone parents.
Men	Adult Men.
Disability	Persons with a disability. This disability can be either physical or mental.
Travellers	Members of the Travelling Community.
Farmers	Farmers and their families.
Minority	Members of ethnic minority groups, including refugees and asylum seekers.
Drug Users	Drug users and their families. This also refers to addiction more generally, including alcohol addiction.
Tenants and Residents	Groups of Tenants and Residents, being worked with as a group.
Family Units	A family (consisting of more than one person) which is being worked with as a single unit.
Gay and Lesbian	Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual people.

## Appendix 3:

### DEVELOPMENT THEMES / ISSUES

Name	Description
Education	Education, including formal and non-formal education. It also refers to personal development needs.
Employment	Employment, unemployment and underemployment.
Enterprise	Enterprise development, including the social economy and agriculture.
Physical Health	Healthcare, including healthcare for elderly persons and people with special needs.
Equality	Equality, discrimination and prejudice. This may be on the basis of age, gender, ethnic origin religion or sexual orientation.
Housing	Housing and accommodation.
Environment	The environment, whether it be built or natural.
Domestic Violence	Domestic Violence and its impact on women, children, men and families.
Drug Use	Drug Use, Drug Users and their families, and addiction more generally, including alcohol addiction.
Crime	Crime and criminality and Justice Issues.
Amenities	Amenities and facilities.
Tourism	Tourism and Tourist industry development.
Childcare	Childcare issues
Transport	Transport.
Mental Health	Mental Health issues
Conflict	Conflict resolution
Disability	Physical, sensory or learning disabilities

## Appendix 4:

### **SPECIALIST SUPPORT AGENCIES AND REGIONAL SUPPORT AGENCIES**

#### **Specialist Support Agencies**

Arts Specialist Support Agency

Disability Equality Specialist Support Agency

Dublin City Wide Drugs Crises Campaign

National Consultative Committee on Racism and Interculturalism

Pavee Point

Womens Aid

#### **Regional Support Agencies**

Ailim Community Development Training Agency

Draiocht RSA

Framework RSA

Midlands Regional Support Agency Ltd.

South & Mid-West Support Agency

Tosach RSA

West Training & Development Ltd.

## Abbreviations:

FRC	Family Resource Centre
FSA	Family Support Agency
RSA	Regional Support Agency
FCSRCP	Family and Community Services Resource Centre Programme
SPEAK	Strategic Planning, Evaluation And Knowledge-networking
LA	Local Authority
EU	European Union
VEC	Vocational Education Committee
HSE	Health Service Executive
FÁS	Foras Áiseanna Saothair
MABS	Money Advice and Budgeting Service
CIS	Citizens' Information Service
CDB	County Development Board
CCC	County Childcare Committee
DTF	Drugs Task Force
CEB	County Enterprise Board
ADM	Area Development Management ( <i>now called Pobal</i> )
DJELR	Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform
CRAG	Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs
DSFA	Department of Social and Family Affairs



Data contained in this report has been taken from the  
SPEAK FRC National Database.  
All data is intended to be as accurate and up-to-date as  
possible at time of publication.

Compiled by:

West Training & Development Ltd.  
Regional Support Agency

Using SPEAK FRC data.





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**An Ghníomhaireacht Um Thacaíocht Teaghlaigh  
Teach Fhaiche Stiabhna  
Ardán an Iarla  
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