

## **KHF: Community Matters** No. 5

*Summary of a Funding Partnership Initiative with The Atlantic Philanthropies<sup>1</sup>*

# Tallaght West Small Grants Programme

**T**his issue of Community Matters provides an overview of a small grants programme which funded a range of services for children and families in Tallaght West from Summer 2004 to Spring 2006. The programme involved a partnership between the Katharine Howard Foundation (KHF) and The Atlantic Philanthropies (Atlantic) and provided €300,000 to 31 groups over the funding period.

The aims of the programme were to resource local provision and strengthen integration across community based child and family services in the area. The programme was also intended to provide a mechanism for local groups to contribute to, and link with, the planning and implementation of a ten-year strategy for the Tallaght West Childhood Development Initiative (CDI). CDI is a strategic programme to improve the long term health, safety and learning of the children of Tallaght West and is being co-funded by the Office of the Minister for Children and Atlantic.

This overview of the Small Grants Programme outlines:

- \* the background to the programme
- \* the aims of the programme
- \* the partnership that evolved between the two foundations, the K H F and Atlantic
- \* the process of planning and implementation
- \* the nature and range of groups funded and supported
- \* the lessons arising from the initiative.

### **Background to the Initiative**

Tallaght West comprises of four areas that include Killinarden, Fettercairn, Brookfield and Jobstown. These areas have experienced multiple forms of deprivation and disadvantage since they were built (around the late 1970s and early 1980s) with high levels

of unemployment, early school leaving and limited access to public services or amenities.

Despite a period of sustained economic growth in Ireland since the mid 1990s, Tallaght West continues to experience significant social disadvantage. The unemployment rate is still relatively high, as is the rate of early school leaving. There have also been problems with drug misuse and anti-social behaviour. This context was the backdrop against which Atlantic decided to make a significant investment in child and family services in Tallaght West, through the Tallaght West Childhood Development Initiative (CDI).

### **Tallaght West – A Profile**

- **One in three individuals in Tallaght West is under the age of 15**
- **One in ten people over 15 is unemployed**
- **One third of all households is headed by a lone parent- over twice the national average**
- **Over 57 per cent of all households are living in Local Authority accommodation**
- **Over 60 per cent of those who had ceased education by 2002 had no more than lower secondary education (16 per cent higher than the national average)**

*Source: How are our kids? Working Paper, Tallaght West Childhood Development Initiative, 2004*

The CDI began in early winter 2003 when a group of people living and working in the area, including parents, residents and professionals from various sectors, came together because they were concerned about the well-being of the local children. In its 2004 working paper, 'How are our kids?' CDI noted that

*In communities with such high concentrations of young people, it is inevitable that these [prevailing] conditions will*

<sup>1</sup>The Atlantic Philanthropies are dedicated to bringing about lasting changes in the lives of disadvantaged and vulnerable people through grant making and focusing on critical social problems related to ageing, disadvantaged children and youth, population health, and reconciliation and human rights. To learn more, please visit [www.atlanticphilanthropies.org](http://www.atlanticphilanthropies.org).

*impact negatively on the welfare, learning and development of the area's children, placing them at considerable risk of poverty, social exclusion and unrealised potential – both as children and as adults of the future (How are our kids? p. 16, CDI, 2004).*

The Small Grants Programme (SGP) was established both to provide much needed financial support to local groups working with families and children and to help link them into the evolving work of the CDI. The grants programme therefore, operated during the planning phase of the CDI strategy and allowed local groups to strengthen their work and at the same time to learn from and contribute to the CDI planning process.

Atlantic provided funding of €300,000 for the grant scheme and KHF 'regranted' this money to 31 groups in the community. KHF supported the groups throughout the funding period so that they could achieve their aims and link with others through the framework of the CDI.

Due in part to its long history of grantmaking and a strong focus on early childhood in its own work KHF was invited to become involved in the early stages of the initiative. The Small Grants Programme (SGP) was designed and implemented by Noelle Spring, development director (KHF) with the assistance of Marguerite Hanratty consultant. Maria Fitzgibbon, office manager with KHF was responsible for the administration of the programme. The experience of KHF combined with a commitment to a community development approach, underpinned the partnership that evolved between the two foundations.

Key features of the grants programme which contributed to its effectiveness included:

- consultation and liaison with groups and individuals working in the area from the early stages
- the provision of information, assistance and support to groups at the application stage
- continued support to groups throughout the funding period
- funding to groups for research and evaluation of the funded work so that lessons for mainstreaming and service provision could be documented
- the provision of networking opportunities to strengthen integration between groups and to explore long term funding needs and links to the implementation of the CDI strategy in Tallaght West
- the allocation of a sufficient period of time (almost two years) to allow the programme to develop and progress from advertisement to completion.

## Programme Aims

The aims of the SGP were to resource child and family initiatives, to strengthen integration across services and to complement the work of the CDI in Tallaght West.

In particular the SGP set out to provide resources to meet some of the initial needs of service providers in the area and to do so in a way that encouraged greater co-operation between service providers locally and practical links to the CDI planning and implementation process. Funding was made available for

- ✳ Capacity building within projects
- ✳ Networking and collaboration between projects
- ✳ Service review and planning.

The scheme targeted community groups and organisations working with children from 0-13 years and their families within the four areas of Tallaght West. These included out of school activities; pre-school playgroups; childcare centres; parent and toddler groups; school related support services; family support services and toy libraries.

## Preparation and planning – a community development approach

The programme embraced a community development approach from the outset. In the initial planning stages a consultation and information gathering exercise took place. This involved reviewing relevant research and documentation and consulting with key service providers and local groups in the area. The exercise provided a profile of service provision for children and families locally, identified gaps in services and the immediate funding needs of local groups. It also provided Atlantic and KHF with a sense of the potential benefits of a small locally focused grant scheme and an estimate of the number of groups that might be eligible.

Between September 2004 and the end of that year, a series of information meetings was held in the Tallaght West area. These meetings were well attended by local groups. The focus of the meetings was to outline the aims of the SGP, criteria for eligibility and the nature of the work that would be supported. A report from these meetings was compiled. This noted that while strenuous efforts were being made to support families through crèches, preschools, after-school activities and sports activities, many groups were operating on insufficient funding and limited support.

Groups were provided with information and application forms and follow-up support was made available to assist groups in the application process. This personal contact proved valuable to the groups

involved, particularly those who had found previous experiences of trying to access funding either 'isolating' or 'anonymous'.

An advisory group was established to help implement the programme and assess grant applications. This group was chaired by KHF Trustee Noreen Kearney and included Katherine Zappone, Project Leader CDI; Tom Costello, Programme Executive for Disadvantaged Children and Youth, Atlantic Philanthropies; Heino Schonfeld, Director of the Centre for Early Childhood Development and Education (CECDE) and Sióbhán Fitzpatrick, Chief Executive of NIPPA in Northern Ireland.

Twenty-eight applications were assessed in December 2004 and were all approved for funding. A further three applications were received in January 2005 and this brought the total of funded groups to 31. The grants ranged between €2,000 and €24,500.

## Implementation

Once funded groups had been notified of the success of their applications, the SGP moved into the implementation stage. This began with a meeting that brought all funded groups together. This first meeting provided the opportunity to build a more detailed picture of the nature and range of work being supported by the SGP, and the potential links and levels of collaboration between the groups involved.

The support role of KHF was re-emphasised to funded groups and groups were also encouraged to engage actively with the programme. This active engagement with the grants programme allowed the learning to be captured by the SGP, to be shared with funded groups and to contribute to the ongoing work of the CDI. Baseline data was gathered from projects at a series of one to one follow up meetings during the first six months of the programme and this helped identify common themes across the projects.

It was clear to the SGP that funded groups were operating in difficult circumstances, as a result of the uncertainty of long-term funding and a lack of an integrated framework to guide and support their efforts across the community. Despite these problems, groups were providing much needed local services and engaged actively with the programme.

## Funded Activities

Among the activities funded were:

### Early Years (ten projects)

- Specific language skills development programmes for Traveller children and children in migrant families



- Upgrading of play equipment and improving premises
- Supporting staff training through Highscope and FETAC Level II
- Developing a new Childminding Initiative
- Supporting training for staff and parents in childcare and parenting skills
- Developing plans for early years services in one of the four areas
- Support for the development of a new management structure for community childcare centres.

### Family Support (eight projects)

- Four projects with a focus on direct work with targeted families
- Two projects with a focus on addressing or responding to drugs issues in the community through family therapy and training for local facilitators in drugs education and prevention
- An outreach programme for families from Africa now living in Tallaght West.

### In-School Initiatives (four projects)

- Supporting an art therapy service within one primary school
- Developing Family Literacy/Numeracy Programmes in one post primary school
- Initiating a School Reading Programme across five primary schools
- Establishing a Peer Mediation Training programme for students at primary school level.

### After/Out of School (nine projects)

- Three projects: developing strategic plans for after school services
- Three projects providing sports related out of school activities
- Developing a response to specific identified learning difficulties

- Providing training for parents of Traveller children to run an after school project
- Establishing a new after school programme with a focus on drama and art activities.

## Outputs, short term outcomes and key features of supported activity

The agreement between Atlantic and KHF was based on the project *logic model* which sets out to describe the planned outcomes and outputs of the programme and how these would be produced through specified activities. Atlantic uses logic models as a monitoring tool in all its funded projects.

At the outset of the initiative the logic model was devised as a framework through which actions, outputs and outcomes over the duration of the programme could be monitored and assessed. This provided a useful support to the implementation of the programme and a valuable mechanism through which issues and learning from the various stages could be identified, discussed and documented. There was general consensus that the outcomes set were achieved with the overall challenge being the time limited nature of this programme.

Much success was achieved in relation to the partnership between the two foundations, providing funding for capacity building and collaborative initiatives in Tallaght West, links with CDI's 10 year strategy and project implementation and evaluation. The next section highlights the actual outcomes achieved in relation to these elements through the implementation of this programme.

Progress reports were gathered from funded groups towards the end of 2005 and these provided some insight into new linkages or co-ordination between groups and with the wider CDI planning process. These reports also allowed KHF to identify common issues and concerns that needed to be considered in future planning.

A number of positive outcomes were noted in relation to the funded groups. These have been comprehensively documented by KHF and have informed the ongoing development of child and family support services in the Tallaght West area and the work of the CDI. Some of the positive features of projects are outlined below to give a flavour of the practical benefits and achievements that were possible through the SGP.

- Under the theme of *early years*: improved training opportunities for staff; improved childcare facilities and premises; new programmes for children; new integrated planning for early years services and a new management model for community childcare.

- Under the heading of *family support*: the provision of a Parent Coaching Programme and Family Therapy; pilot initiatives in the Six Steps Parenting Programme and the expansion of community drugs education and prevention services.
- Under the theme of *in-school initiatives*: the Five Schools Reading Programme; the piloting of a peer mediation training and support service; family literacy/numeracy programmes in a post primary school: and an early intervention Art Therapy programme for children with emotional or behavioural difficulties.
- Under the final heading of *after school supports*: a dyslexia support project; four after schools clubs for 112 primary school children; a new after-schools programme in drama and art; a three year strategic plan for an out of schools project; supports and equipment to sporting groups and a pilot transport scheme for children attending sporting activities.



## Case studies

### *Piloting New Approaches to Service Provision*

The *Parent Coaching Programme, ACORN*, is an example of a new inter-agency approach to working with a small number of families by providing direct support in the home in relation to parenting issues. This project has received continued funding through the Dormant Accounts Fund.

The focus of the *Childminding Initiative* was to develop an outreach programme to identify child-minders and potential childminders in the community with a view to exploring their training and support needs and engage them in relevant training. This was undertaken by An Cosán.

A *Home/School Numeracy-Literacy Programme* was initiated by the Home School Community Liaison Officer (HSCLO) in a post-primary school in Tallaght West to

develop programmes for 80 children (first year) and some of their parents. Small funding through this grant allowed the HSCLO to develop four different approaches, in response to varying needs, and this initiative has received continued funding through the South Dublin County Council Linkage Fund.

### ***Encouraging Collaboration and Networking***

A Highscope Enhancement Training Programme brought 15 childcare providers together from throughout Tallaght West and a further 20 participated on a Fetac Level I and II combined training course (now equivalent to IV and V) at An Cosán. This expanded the workforce in the early years sector in Tallaght West.

A small grant to *St Jude's Crèche* through the local Home School Community Liaison Officer resulted in a continuation of the drop-in facility and the formation of a Brookfield Early Year's Consortium established to review and co-ordinate childcare facilities for Brookfield.

### ***Deepening the Involvement of CDI with the Local Community***

Involvement with the Small Grant Programme was the first point of contact that many local groups/community organisations had with the CDI. Through the grant programme many of the funded groups made connections with the CDI process through membership of the small teams and through contact with the Community Development Worker. In relation to influencing long-term developments the emerging issues and concerns highlighted through the SGP have been consistently channelled into the CDI 10 year strategy by KHF.

### ***Final Phase***

In the Spring of 2006 the funded groups came together for a workshop that focused on sharing experience and learning from the programme. In addition to sharing information about the funded work, concerns were raised by participating groups about the uncertainty of future funding.



While there are no plans to repeat the SGP, it was envisaged that much of the learning from the programme would feed into the CDI implementation strategy. The grants programme provided an opportunity for local groups to link with each other, and to link into the work of the CDI. In addition, the potential for projects to explore or identify other funding opportunities such as South Dublin County Council Community Linkage Fund was part of the programme process.

### ***Lessons for Funders***

- 1. Small grants programmes can be an effective precursor to larger investment in a community**  
The learning from the Small Grants Programme about what builds and sustains community collaboration was seen as an important input into the CDI process.
- 2. A supportive relationship with potential applicants and funded groups underpinned by a community development approach is important in terms of gaining local knowledge and building up mutual relationships.**  
The support offered by the programme helped groups to refine their proposals, make links with other groups and organisations, and benefit from the funding opportunity. On the other hand it provided the funders with valuable learning about local groups work, their funding and other needs and their potential input to the CDI.
- 3. Running a small grants programme in a defined geographical area provided new insights.**

KHF felt the programme provided them with an unprecedented opportunity to learn about the effectiveness of their small grantmaking style applied intensively to a local area.





**4. Designing a grants scheme in consultation with beneficiaries is a good idea.**

Discussions with the main service providers were necessary and ensured that adequate resources were focused and matched by realistic expectations. The consultation stage and information gathering exercise provided a profile of available services and unmet needs of children and families in the Tallaght West area.

**5. Competition for limited funding opportunities can create a difficult environment for integrated working.**

The applicant groups are regularly seeking out funding – often in competition with fellow organisations for a limited pot of money. This situation can create a difficult environment for integrated and collaborative working.

**6. Collaboration between community groups requires investment and support.**

There was evidence of real attempts to integrate and work collaboratively among the participating groups. It became clear that integration was strengthened where groups were supported at senior level by their own agency. It also became apparent that the process of integration of staff from a number of different agencies/organisations

can be difficult to achieve in practice and requires clear planning, strategies and investments in terms of time and other resources over the long term.

**7. Much added value can be obtained through providing space for networking and sharing learning.**

The networking opportunities of the programme provided an important method of communication and sharing of experiences. It acted as an additional resource in the efforts of groups to integrate their work with the work of others and of the CDI in Tallaght West.

**8. Foundations can combine resources and expertise through ‘re-granting’ to add value to their work.**

Foundations that differ in scale and areas of expertise can work effectively through re-granting, adding value to what could be achieved individually. In this instance, KHf applied its proven expertise in small grantmaking, using a developmental approach to meet local need in a strategic context. Atlantic was enabled through the grants programme to provide a direct outreach into the community at a time when it was planning a major long-term investment in the area through CDI.



Further information is available from

**The Katharine Howard Foundation**  
 ISFC, 10 Grattan Crescent, Inchicore, Dublin 8  
 Tel: (01) 4002107. Fax: (01) 4531862  
 Email: info@khf.ie  
 www.khf.ie

**Philanthropy Ireland**

Philanthropy Ireland (PI) promotes the development of the community of charitable foundations, trusts and corporations through affinity groups, seminars and plenary meetings and played a key role in supporting the Small Grants Programme initiative. (PI) promotes co-operation between foundations as a powerful catalyst for effective social investment as illustrated by this innovative collaboration between two foundations.

