

SCOPING OF NEED IN SOCIAL JUSTICE SPHERE

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Executive Summary and Key Judgements

This is a scoping of need in the social justice sphere in Ireland in spring 2014, with a view to providing Philanthropy Ireland and its members with insights on possible areas of need that might inform their future funding programmes. Consideration was also given as to how funding programmes might be most impactful. The task was undertaken through desk research and a small interview group of 14 informants.

Ireland is a country of population growth; high in and out migration; and stability in its social patterns. The social situation is one of extreme difficulty. The economic and social crisis from 2008 saw a contraction in the economy; a sharp reduction in incomes, especially for the poor; and a threefold rise in unemployment. The political and economic context is one of continuity of austerity policy from 2008, but whose most impactful feature is the virtual elimination of the state's social policy architecture. Examining funding, although government funding fell -7.1%, its funding of the voluntary and community sector dropped -35%. The sector is expected to lose -31% of its workforce by end 2015. Three important philanthropic funders are leaving the field, reducing such funding from €60m to around €13m. The government has made it plain that government social spending will not rise from 2016, presenting us with a future of 'post-austerity austerity'.

European-derived poverty-line instruments gave us a picture of the poor (unemployed, those at home, renters, children) and the changing geographic and spatial patterns of poverty. Looking at emerging social need, fuel poverty and food poverty were readily apparent. Figures were given of the inrush of demand by those traditionally poor on social welfare charities, such as the Society of St Vincent de Paul and Crosscare, probably driven by the reduction of funding of the supplementary welfare system. The emergence of the new poor was studied, a phenomenon driven by household debt, the insufficient government response and the squeezing of disposable incomes out of the homes of middle income families by lower earnings and increased taxes. Granted the importance of the new communities, 17% of the population, social need therein was examined: some parts are at higher risk, notably Roma, Africans and especially those still in direct provision. Informants to the study recommended several groups for attention: isolated and disconnected older people, mainly rural; lone parents, asylum seekers, areas of high government disinvestment (e.g. Travelers, community development) and under-investment (e.g. mental health, suicide); and climate change.

The report examined specific concerns including human rights, civil liberties and advocacy; poverty and community development; older and younger people; equality, disability and racial justice; homelessness and mental health; and education. Analysed together, they give clues as to reasons for high levels of social need and distress, such as the weak embedding of social rights in the constitution, law and administration of the state, coupled with state antipathy toward advocacy. The most dramatic, indeed unthinkable, development of recent years was the course of action embarked on by the state since 2002 to reduce and finally eliminate its investment in community

development, which comes to an end in December 2014 and which had been historically the frontline of state outreach to disadvantaged communities. We are left with a picture of a relatively prosperous four-fifths of Irish society, but a picture of 10% to 20% children and adults living in poverty, facing lives of cumulative disadvantage across education, housing, welfare, the labour market and living conditions.

We know from European example how funding programmes, not least small grants, can be effective interventions to address social need and we also have examples from Ireland (e.g. *Voices* programme, Community Foundation of Ireland learning community). Informants to the research had a range of ideas along these lines as how programmes in Ireland could best be so constructed.

This is intended as an advisory, not prescriptive, report, making three recommendations:

First, that funders consider supporting those ideas, issues, target groups, projects and areas most likely to have applied, consequential, knock-on benefit or multiplier effect on other categories and sectors of social need;

Second, that they take account of the European experience and views of informants, which will suggest the application of range of criteria that will maximise impact with a refocus toward ideas-driven projects with an advocacy dimension and toward cutting-edge pilots and solutions;

Third, that there be a forum of structured dialogue between Philanthropy Ireland on the one hand and the voluntary and community sector on the other to focus on issues of concern and examine ways in which they may jointly confront common problems (e.g. community development).

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Terms of reference

Philanthropy Ireland asked for a scoping of social need in Ireland in order to provide information for its members to support and inform them in their grant giving programmes. This research was designed to build on an earlier scoping exercise in the social justice sphere undertaken for the St Stephen's Green Trust (SSGT), but extended to a wider field. It is particularly designed to assist funders providing small grants programmes. This research was intended to provide top-line scoping information in thematic areas, but not to cover each in depth. The areas for consideration included advocacy, equality, civil liberties, older people, mental health, homelessness, racial justice, young people, human rights, poverty, disability, community development and education (including early education and education disadvantage). It was also open to consideration of any other areas identified. The research was asked to take account of the recommendations of Philanthropy Ireland's *Small grants programmes in Ireland: review of the current landscape and best practice* (2013); the withdrawal from Ireland of the Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust; the arrival of potential newcomers, one being in education; the experience of members of demand exceeding supply; enquiries received as to areas of greatest need; expressions of interest in collaborative and or co-funding opportunities; and the desire to maximise impact from funding. The research sought to identify those funding approaches most likely to maximise impact on social need. The paper is intended to be informative and advisory, but not prescriptive.

Method and acknowledgements

The review was carried out by desk research and by interviews with a small group of informants agreed between the writer and Philanthropy Ireland. The standard procedure was for Philanthropy Ireland to send a letter of introduction in advance to ask for cooperation before a request from the writer (annex). I thank the following for their assistance with interviews and the provision of information and views:

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*Brian Harvey
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1. Context

The first chapter sets a context for the scoping review: Ireland's demographic situation (1.1), economic and social circumstances (1.2), political and institutional environment (1.3) and the funding environment for trusts, foundations and voluntary and community organisations (1.4). Conclusions are drawn (1.5).

1.1 Demographic context

Ireland¹ presents a picture of a young country with vigorous demographic features, with strong population growth, +8.2% over 2006-2011, or +1.6% a year at a time when populations of most of the 28 member states of the European Union (EU) are static or even falling.² The population has risen +30% since 1991 and in 2013 was 4.593m. The principal demographic change is the large numbers of arrivals, the new communities, who have made Ireland an ethnically and religiously diverse country in a remarkably short period, less than ten years. The proportion of the population born outside Ireland is 766,770, or 17%, 199 nationalities. The largest minority is Polish, 122,585 people, followed by descending numbers from Lithuania, Nigeria, Latvia, Romania and Slovakia.

Population growth is at both ends of the population pyramid: most at the bottom, but some at the top, with a growing cohort of older people as the postwar baby-boom generation retires, rising from 11% to 11.6%, but still one of the smallest in Europe. The Irish birthrate has fallen slightly since 2009, but remains on a high plateau of 15.8‰, the highest in Europe. The fertility rate rose in the 1990s and is now stable at the 2% mark, also the highest in Europe. Demographic growth is essentially a feature of the proportion of child-bearing age, significant numbers being from immigrant communities. The age of family formation continues to rise gradually, 32 being the average age of mother at first birth. The proportion of teenage births continues to fall and is less than 3% of all births.³

There are two important elements in population flow: Ireland was and is a country of high population in-flow and out-flow *at the same time*. As economic prospects fell after 2008, significant numbers left the country again.⁴ Most were Irish-born, the proportion of returning immigrants being small. Out-migration reached 89,000 in the year to April 2013, far exceeding the previous high of 71,900 in 1989 and making Ireland the European country with the highest emigration. We will not know for some time whether this is a peak point or not. 16% of all Irish households have been affected by emigration in the past five years, rural areas the most. The 19-24 age cohort is the only one to lose population, a function of emigration. A significant proportion departed for distant destinations (44.2%).

¹ Here, the term 'Ireland' shall mean the 26cos, what are sometimes called 'the Republic' while the six northern counties shall be termed 'Northern Ireland'. Where the 32cos are referenced, then the term 'island of Ireland' shall be used.

² This and subsequent demographic information from Central Statistics Office: *Statistical yearbook of Ireland, 2013*. Dublin, Stationery Office, 2013.

³ Edwards, Elaine: *Births to teenage girls fall 10% while average age of new mothers rises*. *Irish Times*, 15th October 2010.

⁴ Glynn, Irial; Kelly, Tomas & MacEinri, Piaras: *Irish emigration in an age of austerity*. Cork, University College Cork, 2013; Kenny, Ciara: *Ireland has highest net level of emigration in Europe, figures reveal*. *Irish Times*, 24th November 2013.

In-migration, although slowed immediately following 2008, has continued. Immigration fell from a peak of 151,000 in 2007 to 41,800 in 2010 where, having bottomed out, it began to rise again (55,900 in the year to April 2013). There are three main components of inward migration: workers from other European countries, in practice principally from eastern and central Europe; workers from further afield, principally Asia; and refugees, notably Africa (more recently Afghanistan and Syria) numerically the smallest but the most visible. In the first two categories, immigration fell to a low point in 2010, but has been rising since. The third category is the only one to see a continuous fall. Claims for asylum rose from the negligible in the early 1990s (31 in 1992) to pass the thousand mark in 1996 (1,179), peaking at 11,634 (2002), falling back to 1,939 (2010), 1,250 (2011) to below the thousand mark, 950 (2012).

Social patterns are traditional and stable: marriage continues to be popular, with the marriage rate at 4.6‰. Most children are brought up in two-parent households, normally married. The Irish divorce rate is the lowest in the EU, 0.7%, the number of divorced people being 87,770 and separated 116,263, the latter figure apparently levelling off. Civil partnership was introduced in 2011, but initial numbers are low: 536 in 2011, 408 in 2012. The proportion of births outside marriage has risen gradually over the past eight years from 32% to 35%: but the proportion of children reared in single parent households is half, 18.4%, the balance in cohabiting households. The number of civil marriages is stable at around 6,000, compared to around 14,000 religious marriages. The suicide rate, historically low in Ireland, followed European norms to rise from 1970 to peak at 14% in 1998 and has since fallen back to 11%.

Environmental indicators have improved in Ireland in recent years, with reduced levels of air pollution and severely polluted rivers. Although carbon emissions fell in line with the decline in economic activity after 2008, Ireland was slow to begin the transition to a post-carbon economy and fell short of European requirements for renewable energy targets, while the Climate change Bill was criticised as inadequate.⁵ Ireland has a high ecological footprint, high rates of water consumption and landfill.

1.2 Economic and social context

The economic and social crisis began on 17th March 2008 with the first run on Anglo Irish Bank. The broad outline of the events that followed is well known and will not be repeated here, but we will focus on those aspects with the most bearing on social need.

The early years of the 21st century saw an extraordinary economic expansion, fueled by pro-cyclical spending policies, leading to Ireland briefly becoming the richest nation state per head of population in the EU, 148% the European average, now fallen to 127%, behind the Netherlands and Austria.⁶ With the crisis, Irish GNP fell from €162bn in 2007 to €127bn in 2011, down - 21.6%, while net household wealth fell -22%. The state agreed to address bad bank debt of between €50bn - €90bn, which may take over 30 years to clear and will impose a long shadow. Government debt as a proportion of GDP rose from 25% in 2007 to describe a sharp upward trajectory to 117% in 2012, the cost of servicing the debt rising from €2.4bn a year to €8.2bn in 2014, still rising.

⁵ Lynch, Suzanne: *Commission refers Ireland to court over failure to meet renewable energy targets*. [Irish Times](#), 24th January 2014.

⁶ Eurostat: *Eurostat yearbook, 2012*. Luxembourg, author, 2013.

The immediate consequences of the crisis were a decline in economic activity and a rapid rise in unemployment and the decisions that followed. The government adopted what it called the *National recovery plan 2011-2014*, an adjustment of €15bn, divided between reduced spending of €10bn and increased revenue of €5bn over the period to 2016. Analysis of the accumulated impact 2008-2013 showed a loss of about -12.5% of income for the lowest income group, but less for middle-income groups.⁷ Social Justice Ireland calculated that the poorest 10% lost 18.4% of their incomes, compared to 11.4% for the richest.⁸

Unemployment was as low as 69,700 people in 2001 (4%), but began to rise sharply from 2008, reaching 323,000 in 2012 (14%), falling back slightly thereafter, now 12%.⁹ These figures are still far lower than the historically high figures of the early 1990s (22%). Although other European countries are higher (e.g. Spain, Greece), Ireland contrasts poorly with other European countries with whom it used to share low rates (e.g. Austria). Long-term unemployment rose from 27% in 2008 to 62% presently, men in construction and women in retail being most obviously affected, Ireland now having the highest male long-term unemployment rate in Europe. Youth unemployment is twice the national level, 28%. Benefits have become ever more conditional and although government has introduced what are termed 'activation' measures for the unemployed, they fall far short of European standards.¹⁰

1.3 Political and institutional context

This context provides an unusual picture of continuity. The incoming government in March 2011 made it clear that it would honour the commitments of the previous government to bankers and lenders and continue the austerity régime. The only modifications were a restoration of the minimum wage and the protection of basic social welfare payments, 'basic' being a narrowly defined range.

The incoming government continued to reduce the public service and its social infrastructure, maintaining the commitment in the *Public sector reform plan* (2011) to bring numbers down from 320,000 in 2008 to 282,500 by 2015, down - 37,500 or - 11.7%. The July 2008 circular §S180/20/10/0964B heralded the reduction, merger or abolition of state agencies, a list of 41 being subsequently identified. The precise rationale for this change was never fully explained and there was little recognition of the consequences of their loss. The outcome, though, was not in doubt, for numerous state agencies was extinguished, almost all in the social policy field: the Combat Poverty Agency, National Economic and Social Forum, Comhar, National Council for Ageing and Older People, Office for Active Citizenship, the Crisis Pregnancy Agency and Library Council. Smallness of size was no protection, for many small, valuable bodies were abolished, such as the Women's Health Council, the Irish Research Council for the Humanities, National Consultative Committee on Racism and Interculturalism, National Crime Council, Education Disadvantage Committee, Centre for Early Childhood Development and Education and Children Acts Advisory Board. Others had their budget sharply reduced (e.g. Equality Authority, -45%; Human Rights Commission, -35%) or were integrated into larger organisations

⁷ Callan, Tim *et al*: *Distributional impact of tax, welfare and public service pay policies - budget 2014 and budgets 2009-2014*. Dublin, Economic and Social Research Institute, 2013.

⁸ Social Justice Ireland: *Who really took the hits during Ireland's bail-outs?* Dublin, author, 2013.

⁹ Note that these are labour force definitions of unemployment. Live register figures have been as high as 430,900; neither take into account under-employment or involuntary part-time work.

¹⁰ Pobal: *Employment and social inclusion in rural areas - a fresh start*. Dublin, author, 2013.

(e.g. Homeless Agency into Dublin City Council).¹¹ These extinctions achieved total savings of €6.457m. By contrast, new economic agencies were created, such as the National Asset Management Agency (NAMA), (operating budget €1.033bn), Uisce Eireann, NewERA and the Fiscal Advisory Council.

The consequences of these changes for the voluntary and community sector attracted little critical analysis, but are likely to be profound. The social policy functions of the state were sharply diminished; the infrastructure that sustained social policy in general and championed voluntary and community organisations in particular was seriously weakened; and the state was now in the worrying position of taking social policy decisions in the absence of advice rather than with its benefit. The only notable institutional reform of this period was the establishment of the Child and Family Agency, eventually established in 2014, which took responsibility for children's welfare away from the Health Service Executive (HSE), its first task being to tackle continuing deficits in the quality of care for children at risk.¹²

Criticism of the social consequences of austerity was muted: mainstream media strongly backed the government, 83% of coverage being supportive.¹³ Resistance to austerity ranged from the intellectual (TASC think tank, NERI Institute); to *ad hoc* NGO coalitions (*The poor can't pay*); social movements (e.g. *Claiming our future*); occasional protests of community workers (*Spectacle of defiance*) and an occupation of Dame st, but they failed to achieve an impactful critical mass.¹⁴

The austerity programme had both similarities and differences with the previous great upheaval, the *Programme for National Recovery* (1987) and the development of social partnership. Then, housing and health were most affected, both leaving a legacy to the present time, with few reductions in social welfare and education; the social policy infrastructure was unaffected, the government's only proposed agency closure being thwarted (the National Social Service Board). This time, health was hardly affected, social welfare more, while the already diminished housing budget was redirected toward the subsidisation of landlords (€403m, 2013). The chief institutional legacy of the PNR, social partnership, no longer functioned as a means of reaching consensus on economic and social policy, although its structures remained in place to facilitate access to officials. Economic and social policy continued to be orientated toward the axis of 'Boston' rather than 'Berlin'.¹⁵

Although Ireland exited the troika programme in December 2013, the austerity programme remains in effect for at least another year, with a further €3.5bn of cuts due October 2014.

¹¹ Crowley, Niall: *Empty promises - bringing the Equality Authority to heel*. Dublin, A&A Farmer, 2010.

¹² O'Brien, Carl: *Children in care have no social workers*. *Irish Times*, 22nd February 2013.

¹³ Merceille, Julien: *The role of the media in fiscal consolidation programmes - the case of Ireland*. *Cambridge Journal of Economics*, December 2013.

¹⁴ Hearne, Rory, forthcoming (2014); Social Justice Ireland: *What would real recovery look like?* *Socio-economic review*, 2013. Dublin, author, 2013; Kirby, Peadar & Murphy, Mary: *Toward a second republic - Irish politics after the celtic tiger*. London, Pluto Press, 2011; Murphy, Mary P: *Participating in popularising policy alternatives - a case study of Claiming our future*; and Sheehan, Helena: *Occupying Dublin - riding the wave* in Deiric O Broin & Mary P Murphy (eds): *Politics, participation and power - civil society and public policy in Ireland*. Dublin, Glasnevin Press, 2013; Fergal O'Ferrall (ed): *Toward a flourishing society*. Dublin, TASC, 2012.

¹⁵ This refers to the remarks made by Mary Harney, Tanaiste, 21st July 2011 that Ireland was closer to the American model of development, with its individualism, low taxes and low levels of social investment, compared to the European model of high social protection, equality, solidarity and higher taxes.

Although overall government spending will begin to recover in 2016, social spending departments are set to flatline.

1.4 Funding context

There are about 7,980 charitable voluntary organisations in Ireland, concentrated in the health and social services field.¹⁶ The value of the voluntary and community sector was estimated in 2008 at €6.5bn, or between 3.52% and 3.97% of GNP, with an employment of 53,098 Full Time Equivalents (FTE). The broad outlines of funding for voluntary and community organisations have been known for a number of years: their main sources are government (53%), personal giving (25%), foundations (3%) and the corporate sector (2%). By international standards, both corporate and foundation funding are unusually low in Ireland. The government recently took the decision to promote philanthropic giving in a structured way so as to lift it by 10% annually to €800m by 2016, launching the *1% difference* campaign to encourage citizens to give 1% of their income or time to a cause of their choosing.¹⁷

There have been significant changes in the funding environment since 2008. The principal focus is on the pattern of government spending, the largest funder of the voluntary and community sector. Overall government current spending fell -7.1% over 2008-2014 (€53.4bn to €49.6bn) and will fall a cumulative total of -9.64% (€48.25bn) by end 2015. Funding for voluntary and community organisations, though, has fallen in the order of -35%, but the pattern across sectors has been quite inconsistent. Funding has fallen most sharply in those funding lines reaching the most disadvantaged groups and communities, especially community development; but least in health funding, which is the largest single sectoral funder for voluntary organisations. Neither the outgoing government, nor the incoming, ever explained why voluntary and community organisations should see their funding reduced so disproportionately, nor the differential nature of those reductions. Table 2.1 outlines the level of reduction in funding across the period 2008-2014. They are referenced (last line) against the overall cut in government spending.

¹⁶ Some sources give higher figures, such as INKEx, around 12,000 (Quinn, Patricia *et al: Irish non-profits - what do we know?* Dublin, INKEx, 2012), but this uses an American-originated definitional system unsuited to Europe and which may overstate the size of what most people working therein would understand to be the 'voluntary and community' sector. The definition of voluntary and community sector here draws from Acheson, N *et al: Two paths, one purpose - voluntary action in Ireland, north and south*. Dublin, Institute of Public Administration, 2006.

¹⁷ Forum on Philanthropy and Fundraising: *Report*. Dublin, author, 2012.

Table 2.1: Change in government funding for voluntary and community organisations, 2008-2014 under principal funding lines

	2008	2014	Change
Voluntary social housing	192m	95.925m-50%	
Youth organisations	8.9m}	{50.53m	-44.1%
Special Projects for Youth	81.6m}		
Arts Council	81.6m	56.893	-30.2%
LCDP (community development)	84.7m	47.7m	-43.6%
Sports grants	58.1m	23m	-60.4%
Sports council	57.2m	44.236	-22.66%
Community Services Programme	55m	45.11m	-18%
Drugs	44.3m	27.951m-37%	
Family Support Agency	36m	24.294m*	-32.5%
CLAR (community development)	24.1m	0	-100%
Supports V&C organisations	18.6m	10.875m-41.5%	
Probation services	16.7m	10.773m-35.5%	
RAPID (community development)	9.7m	1.9	-80.4%
OPMI (migrants)	6.7m	2.312m	-65.5%
Cosc (violence against women)	3.1m	1.915m	-38.2%
Women's organisations	0.585m	0.3m	-48.7%
<i>Overall government current spending</i>	<i>53.4bn</i>	<i>49.6bn</i>	<i>-7.1%</i>

*2013. The agency closed end 2013, being made part of the larger Child and Family Support Agency.

Ancillary sources of funding for voluntary and community organisations also declined: dormant accounts, the poor box and Europe. Dormant accounts used to be a significant funder of voluntary and community organisations working in the area of disadvantage: allocations fell from €16.4m to €5.456m, were transferred to ministerial authority and from 2013 used to meet shortfalls in local authority budgets. The poor box was a valued funder of voluntary organisations, 700 benefitting to a total of €2m a year but within weeks of a national assessment being made of its value, the government announced that it would be transferred to the department responsible.¹⁸ European funding that had benefitted voluntary and community organisations was now largely streamed into government agencies, leaving only a few distinct lines: the European Integration Fund, the European Refugee Fund and the *Daphne* programme against violence against women and children. The Peace programme, which had in Peace I and II been a substantial funder of voluntary and community organisations, was now routed to the local authorities (Peace III, IV).

The final part of the funding context is the philanthropic sector. Developments here will be well known within Philanthropy Ireland, so will not be treated in detail here. The key development is the exit of three trusts, the two largest being the Atlantic Philanthropies (AP) and the One Foundation, both of whom will exit by 2017, reducing the annual value of the sector from about €60m to less than €13m. The number of organisations that they supported was quite small, but they were high-profile, professionalised, advocacy organisations across a range of critical sectors. The third exit is the Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust (JRCT), which closed its Ireland programme in 2013 (€655,000 in 2012). JRCT had begun a programme of work in Ireland in 1994, combining strategic, long-term grants with small, once-off grants for

¹⁸ MacCormaic, Ruadhan: *Charities share €2m from court poor box*. [Irish Times](#), 21st January 2014; Beesley, Arthur: *Court poor box system to be replaced*. [Irish Times](#), 5th February 2014.

organisations concerned with citizenship, accountability, the misuse of power, rights, new ideas, democratic dialogue and the socially excluded, some of these being areas unlikely to attract public or private funding elsewhere. It was regarded as a model funder. JRCT concluded with a number of exit grants, the last of which will end 2016.¹⁹ The exit of Atlantic, One and JRCT will leave a much smaller trust sector with one large funder (Ireland Funds, €10m (2012)) and a handful of small funders of which the Community Foundation is by far the largest (€2.4m, 2012).

The level of corporate funding is reported to have fallen -27% since 2008, unsurprisingly granted the some of the larger contributors were based in banks. Although there are reports of new corporate donors in the field, information on them is limited. An emergent group of funders is focused on the promotion of social entrepreneurship, which has the merit of focusing on a sequence of 'problems - ideas - solutions', though not all will agree with the focus on backing individuals rather than organisations.

Voluntary organisation adopted a range of strategies to maintain their funding, the most successful being retailing (300 charity shops),²⁰ electronic crowd fund-raising²¹ and online campaigns.²² Although some larger charities managed to sustain their position, almost all reported substantial falls in public donations from 2008, typically from -8% to 25%.²³ A typical example was Crosscare, which fell from €650,000 to €450,000 (-30%). Public donations were further affected by revelations of salaries and bonuses in a small number of charities.²⁴ Although these organisations were outliers in the voluntary and community sector as a whole, the drawing out of the crisis over weeks ensured that the damage was widespread. 69% of those polled indicated that they were now less likely to give to charities, while Fundraising Ireland reported a drop in donations across the sector of -40%.²⁵

There is a social enterprise sector in Ireland, whose size, depending on definition, has been estimated along a range from 14,400 jobs, or about 0.68% of total employment, to much larger estimates provided recently by Forfas (25,000 - 33,000 people, 1,400 enterprises.²⁶ The dedicated programme for social enterprise in Ireland, the Community Services Programme has a budget of €45m (2014) which supports about 420 enterprises and services, but has been closed to new applicants.

¹⁹ E.g. €150,000 for Equality and Rights Alliance; Afri, €90,000, for cross-border work, both for 36 months.

²⁰ Irish Charity Shops Association, www.icsa.ie.

²¹ E.g. www.fundit.ie.

²² Donegal Community Workers Cooperative: *Newsletter* §15, March 2013.

²³ *The Wheel: A portrait of Ireland's non-profit sector*. Dublin, author, 2012; Deegan, Gordon: *Chernobyl charity says donations down*. *Irish Times*, 13th February 2013; O'Brien, Carl: *Many charities all too dependent on state aid in an uncertain climate of shrinking resources*. *Irish Times*, 15th August 2013. This recorded losses of -8% in ISPCC; -9%, Hospice Foundation, -10%; Oxfam; -13% Barnardos; -14%, Amnesty; but gains for Simon, +5%; GOAL, +10%; Society of St Vincent de Paul, +20%.

²⁴ O'Regan, Eilis: *Probe into top-ups for €150,000 charity chiefs*. *Independent.ie*, 30th March 2012.

²⁵ Collins, Stephen: *Majority less likely to donate to charity since top-ups controversy, poll finds*. *Irish Times*, 16th December 2013; Siggins, Lorna: *'I think we are all being affected by the CRC publicity', says homeless charity boss*. *Irish Times*, 23rd December 2013; Roche, Barry: *Fewer people are giving and that's evident since the CRC story broke*. *Irish Times*, 18th December 2013.

²⁶ Gerard Doyle & Tanya Lalor (eds): *Social enterprise in Ireland*. Cork, Oak Tree Press, 2012.; Justad, Tor: *Social enterprise in Sweden and Scotland: local and national responses*, from Doyle & Lalor (eds), *op cit*; Forfas: *Social enterprise in Ireland - sectoral opportunities and policy issues*. Dublin, author, 2013.

Reductions in funding, be they from government or public donations, had an effect on employment in the voluntary and community sector. Calculations based on the reported reductions of funding indicated that employment fell from 53,098 in 2008 to 41,948 in 2013, with a further projected fall to 36,638 by end 2015, down -31%. These figures do not give a picture of the extremes of measures taken by voluntary and community organisations to maintain services, such as pay cuts, short-term working, paying for one's own working expenses (e.g. travel), increased hours without pay and additional time committed to fund-raising. Contrary to assurances by government that it would protect front-line services, these were closed or reduced.²⁷ Barnardos, for example, initially closed all services for a week in 2012 but by the following year had begun to close projects, such as the pioneering Child Contact Centre run with One Family.

1.5 Conclusions

This chapter set the context for the subsequent analysis of social need in Ireland. Ireland is a youthful country of rapid population growth, with a substantial proportion of new communities (17%) and rapid in and out migration at the same time, emigration now passing earlier historical high points. There is an underlying stability in its social patterns, with high rates of marriage and two-parent families the norm for rearing children. The economic and social crisis which began in March 2008 led to a contraction in economic activity, a sharp loss of incomes especially for the poor and a trebling of unemployment. The change of government in 2011 marked a continuation of the austerity policy introduced by government.

One of the most impactful outcomes of the austerity programme was the dismantling of the state's social policy infrastructure. Although a loss of some state funding for voluntary and community organisations might have been expected, the overall reductions were in the order of -35%, more in some areas (disadvantaged communities) than others (health), contrasting with the overall reduction in government spending of -7.1%. These developments coincided with the withdrawal of the two largest philanthropic foundations and a third, smaller and influential one, reducing the sector from €60m to about €13m. The voluntary and community sector is now much smaller, with an employment loss in the order of -31% by the end 2015. Such a rate of reduction is unparalleled in any part of Europe since 1948.

Discussion on the exit of both Atlantic Philanthropies and One Foundation has focused on the funding hole created and the numerical consequences for the funded organisations.²⁸ The point of discussion has been the dramatically reduced *volume* of funding, rather than the *purpose* to which it was put. The principal impact, largely missed by commentators, is that both provided core funding for leading national organisations with an emphasis on advocacy and systemic change, building up strong competences and skills in campaigning, media and navigating skills in dealing with the state. The withdrawal of the Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust, which has not been reported in the media, is equally relevant, for it provided smaller grants in similar but sometimes more politically controversial areas. Between them, there is a danger that the advocacy capacity of Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) in key sectors

²⁷ ICTU: *Downsizing the voluntary and community sector*. Dublin, author, 2012; National Forum of Family Resource Centres: *Cuts in the work of the Family Resource Centres, 2008-2012, impact and consequences*. Dublin, author, 2012 (unpublished).

²⁸ Crosbie, Judith: *Winding down of philanthropic businesses will create €50m funding vacuum*. *Irish Times*, 9th May 2013.

(e.g. women, migrants, civil liberties) will fall back toward its comparatively ineffectual level of the 1990s.²⁹

2. Social need: general

This chapter first devises a framework by which social need may be identified (2.1), then focusing on emerging social need (2.2), There is an examination of the situation of the new communities (2.3) before conclusions are drawn (2.4).

2.1 *Framework to determine social need*

The principal government agency responsible for identifying and systematically measuring social need, the Combat Poverty Agency, was extinguished in 2009, as were other agencies with roles in this field such as the National Economic and Social Forum and the Irish Research Council for the Humanities (>1.2). The state's intelligence-gathering in this area has dwindled to the insignificant to the point that the government public procurement service, *eTenders*, has no category for social policy.³⁰

The principal instrument left us is EU-SILC. During the 1980s, the European Communities introduced a standard system for the identification of poverty, which evolved into the European Union Survey of Income and Living Conditions (EU-SILC). This is applied across Europe with Irish data collected by the Central Statistics Office (CSO) and uses a poverty line, identifying 'the poor' as those who fell below that line, defined as below 60% median income (€10,889).

EU-SILC categories are quite blunt and indicate only broad categories for those below the poverty line, such as those who are unemployed, with low educational qualifications, at home (which implies disability or caring responsibilities), students and renting. They are useful, though in identifying trends in poverty and the life-cycle. The proportion below the poverty line fell over the early 2000s to a low point of 14.1% in 2009, following which it began to rise to its current level of 16%. In terms of the age cycle, the highest risk of poverty was for children (18.6%), then people of working age (16%) and least for older people (9.5%). EU-SILC also indicated those categories where the level of poverty increased most since the start of the austerity period: men more than women, those of working age, students, those with lowest educational levels, the unemployed. Earlier poverty line studies, though, gave additional levels of detail, highlighting lone parents (over 50% below the poverty line) and low farm incomes. Some much smaller groups in poverty are also captured by census, namely Travelers and homeless people, but they are dealt with separately (>3). Overall, though, we lack the type of depth available in comparative European analyses of poverty, especially Germany and in France, where there is an observatory on poverty and social exclusion.³¹

²⁹ For a description of its level of activity at that time, see Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust: *Rights and justice work in Ireland*. York, author, 1993.

³⁰ For a more detailed exposition of the weak intellectual infrastructure of the Irish state, see Lee, Joe: *Ireland 1912-85*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1988.

³¹ Deutscher Bundestag: *Erster Armuts und Reichtumsbericht*. Berlin, 2001; 2011; <http://www.onpes.gouv.fr/>(2011).

We can also use other CSO data to enable us to map the geography of poverty by using proxies for poverty (unemployment, local authority accommodation, education level, lone parent households, occupation, age dependency).³² In the early years of the new century, the geography of poverty moved from the border regions and the west to the midlands and the south-east, with its continued persistence in distinct rural areas. The impact of the crisis from 2008 was felt across the entire country, but most evident in traditional areas of high poverty, especially the north west.³³ In terms of population types, the sharpest increases in deprivation were evident in small towns of populations of 3,000 to 5,000, more so than predominantly rural or urban areas.³⁴ In Dublin, the overall pattern of deprivation has been remarkably stable since 1991 (affluent southside, poor peripheries), with the striking exception of the inner city, which changed from being one of its most disadvantaged parts to becoming one of its more affluent (but with extreme contrasts of wealth and deprivation).³⁵

Drilling the analysis a stage down, poverty is concentrated in local authority housing, those displaced or isolated by urban regeneration and those located in long-neglected municipal accommodation. In some estates, most visibly the old inner city estates of Dublin and Limerick, the concentration of poverty and squalor can be extreme, years of neglect compounded by the introduction of public private partnerships to manage regeneration.³⁶ Although the largest regeneration project, Ballymun, is almost completed, many 'non-regeneration areas' have been left far behind.

2.2 Emerging social need

EU-SILC and CSO data can give us useful 'snapshot' in time pictures of social need. To capture emerging social need, we rely on a different theoretical base, that of social exclusion and a multiplicity of practical methods to make a composite picture. Theoretically, social exclusion, introduced by France to the European Communities in the 1970s, focusses more on the dynamics, processes and forms that shape social need. Practically, we rely on a broad range of sources: academic, the Oireachtas record,³⁷ NGOs³⁸, shadow reports submitted to international treaty bodies (e.g. Council of Europe, United Nations) and press (*Irish Times*, *Examiner*) and evidence reported into state agencies (e.g. Citizens Information Board, Equality Authority, Irish Human Rights Commission, social welfare appeals). This is an approach similar to that adopted by the French observatory on poverty and social exclusion (*op cit*). The oral views of external informants will also be considered (>4.2).

First, taking the framework of social exclusion, it is possible to examine dynamics of poverty, such as fuel poverty, before looking at a new dynamic (food poverty) and then examining the evolution of the 'new poor'. Fuel poverty remains an enduring set, having first emerged in the 1980s as a distinct form of poverty, defined as spending more than 10% of household income

³² Central Statistics Office: *Survey on income and living conditions*. Cork & Dublin, author, 2013.

³³ Haase, Trutz & Pratschke, Jonathan: *2011 Pobal HP deprivation index for small areas*. Dublin, authors, 2012.

³⁴ Pobal: *Employment and social inclusion in rural areas - a fresh start*. Dublin, author, 2013.

³⁵ Haase, Trutz: *The changing face of Dublin's inner city*. Dublin, Dublin Inner City Partnership, 2009.

³⁶ Bissett: *Regeneration - public good or private profit?* Dublin, New Island, 2008; Kelly, Olivia: *State accused of UN rights breach over flats squalor*. *Irish Times*, 26th May 2010.

³⁷ www.oireachtasbrief.ie records developments in the Oireachtas in the area of poverty.

³⁸ For example, Social Justice Ireland, European Anti Poverty Network.

on fuel, generally associated with low-income households, old and thermally inefficient households with expensive fuels. The recent Report of the Commission on Older People of the Society of St Vincent de Paul identified fuel poverty as a continuing feature of the poverty of older people on low incomes.³⁹ Ireland has an excess winter mortality of 650, with 1,600 extra hospital admissions of older people.⁴⁰ 51.1% of older people reported going without food or clothing so as to pay for heating for their homes, while almost a quarter described their homes as too cold.⁴¹ In recent years, fuel poverty has been compounded by utility costs rising far ahead of inflation: in Ballyfermot, of those seeking debt advice, 52% reporting going without heat for lack of money; 60% were in utility debt, the average being €5,700, three-quarters in uninsulated homes.⁴² There are unconfirmed reports of fuel costs for some low-income families falling, simply because they have ceased to buy fuel at all, a form of self-disconnection.

Food poverty may be defined in a number of different ways, such as absence of meals or particular food over a defined time for lack of money.⁴³ Food poverty rates rose from 7% - 8% in 2005 to 10% by 2012, especially evident in low income deciles where food costs are disproportionately high, especially in under-40, female-headed, urban rented households with low levels of education.⁴⁴ Food poverty is known to be especially impactful on children, up to 21% being affected.⁴⁵ The food poor numbered 457,000 in 2010, the main concentration being in Dublin (112,300). There was supporting evidence in the demand on Cork Penny Dinners (1,400 people daily), Crosscare, Twist soup kitchens (360 daily) and the rising demand for food on such organisations as the Society of St Vincent de Paul (€7m spent on food annually) and the Capuchin day centre in Dublin (950 callers a day).

‘Water poverty’ was introduced to the lexicon during debate on the Water services §2 Bill, 2013, defined as spending more than 3% income on water, this being a characteristic of the three lowest income deciles in England and Wales. The government established an interdepartmental group, including the voluntary and community pillar, to advise on future water affordability when charges are announced in summer 2014, but they are likely to be high because of the set-up costs in Uisce Eireann and the need to resource its subsequent privatisation.

Before moving on to the new poor, there is a picture of the dynamic of need of those traditionally poor. Voluntary and community organisations are important barometers of social need. The Society of St Vincent de Paul is one of the largest charities in Ireland.⁴⁶ The greatest

³⁹ Society of St Vincent de Paul: *Report of the Commission on Older People*. Dublin, author, 2011.

⁴⁰ Mc Greevy, Ronan: *Ireland has more winter deaths than Norway, forum told*. *Irish Times*, 7th February 2012.

⁴¹ McGreevy, Ronan: *Half of older people forgo essentials to pay for heat*. *Irish Times*, 18th December 2011.

⁴² Stamp, Stuart *et al*: *Profile of clients of Dublin 10 and 20 MABS and the extent and nature of their financial difficulties with a focus on utility debt*. Dublin, Dublin 10&20 MABS, 2014.

⁴³ Maître, Bertrand & Carney, Caroline: *Constructing a food poverty indicator for Ireland*. Dublin, Department of Social Protection, 2012.

⁴⁴ MANDATE/UNITE: *Hungry for action - mapping food poverty in Ireland*. Dublin, authors, 2013; Healy, Alison: *Food poverty affecting 10% of the population as diets hit by recession*. *Irish Times*, 17th October 2012.

⁴⁵ Freyne, Patrick: *You are two steps away from having nowhere to live, with just the clothes you stand in*. *Irish Times*, 18th May 2013; Duncan, Pamela: *One Irish child in five goes to bed hungry - survey*. *Irish Times*, 17th April 2012.

⁴⁶ The largest charities are in the disability and development field (income figures given): Rehab, €187m; Concern, €167m, St Michael’s House, €97m; Society of St Vincent de Paul, €73m; Ability West, €25m; Focus Ireland; €19m.

call on its services is for food (23%), followed by fuel (16%), its spending on fuel rising from €3.79m in 2009 to €10.4m in 2012.⁴⁷ Calls coming in to the society rose 104% over 2009-12, with over 100,000 people now seeking help. Although the government prided itself on maintaining basic social welfare rates, most other payments were reduced. Reductions in ancillary social welfare payments, such as child benefit, impacted on poor families, leading to debt, severe stress and hardship, it reported.⁴⁸ In Ireland, supplementary welfare payments fell from €2.19bn in 2009 to €1.18bn in 2012, down -46% and this may be a significant contributor to these figures, accompanied by greater conditionality. These were compounded by inflation, with consumer prices rising +2.6% in 2011, +1.7% in 2012. Students familiar with the welfare state experience in both Britain in Ireland have long been aware that poverty can only be prevented by supplementary rates reinforcing basic benefits.⁴⁹

Crosscare is a similar barometer in the capital. When Crosscare opened its new Information and Advocacy Service in Sackville Place, Dublin in February 2013, it received 9,427 visits from 3,500 people by end November, with 889 turned away, the main issues presenting being denial of or problems with social welfare (37%) and immigration issues (27%), with 33% at risk of homelessness, 'people slipping through the cracks and refused emergency support'.⁵⁰ The Council of Europe, in its analysis of Irish social welfare provision in 2014, ruled that Ireland fell below the minimum level of benefits required for a social security system.⁵¹ The traditionally cautious Citizen's Information Board has been critical of the functioning of the social welfare system, so inefficient as to be the cause of hardship and distress.⁵²

Most of those drawing on social welfare services were, arguably, traditional low-income groups at the edge of the poverty line. In the 1980s, European analysts began to use the term 'new poor' to refer to the manner in which the dynamics of poverty prompted groups becoming poor which may not have been so in the past. Here, the 'new poor' are most closely associated with debt: one of the defining social problems arising from the economic and social crisis was debt or financial exclusion. Lending rose between 700% (credit) and 1,000% (mortgages) over 1995-2008 but when incomes contracted sharply thereafter, many households lost the ability to repay that debt. The proportion of loans in arrears more than 90 days rose from 5.4% in 2008 to almost 20% in 2013, 99,189 people. One third is more than three years overdue. Household debt, although declining as households restructure their debt, is currently estimated at €174bn, over 204% of disposable income and over 100% of GDP, the second highest in Europe, averaging €37,928 per household.⁵³

These 'new poor' are not homogenous but comprise a range, from those in negative equity to those at risk of losing their homes, especially those in low-income families unable to afford the accumulated costs of home and utility debt. The 'new poor' may also include those whose debt may be manageable, but whose household income may have been badly squeezed by falling wages and rising taxes and charges: 'the middle class with no money'. Evidence may be

⁴⁷ Boland, Rosita: *Vincent de Paul reports surge in calls from 'a forgotten layer of society'*. *Irish Times*, 30th January 2013; Holland, Kitty: *Risk of dying of the cold highlighted*. *Irish Times*, 12th March 2013.

⁴⁸ Society of St Vincent de Paul: *The human face of austerity*. Dublin, author, 2012.

⁴⁹ Donnison, David: *The politics of poverty*. Martin Robertson, 1982. David Donnison was chairperson of the Supplementary Benefits Commission in 1975 until its abolition in 1980.

⁵⁰ Figures kindly supplied for this research by Conor Hickey, Crosscare.

⁵¹ Council of Europe: *European social charter (revised) - conclusions*. Strasbourg, author, 2014.

⁵² Citizens Information board: *Social policy quarterly report, January-March 2013*. Dublin, author, 2013.

⁵³ See Central Bank: *Macro-financial review, 2013:1* and *Quarterly bulletin 2013:Q3*; Department of Finance: *Review of 2012*; Dublin, author, 2013 for a fuller exploration of the present figures.

found in *What's left?* surveys of the Irish League of Credit Unions, large exits from voluntary health insurance, children being moved to less expensive schools, with parents unable to meet out-of-school expenses for their children. The Citizens Information Board confirmed the impression that school costs are driving households into poverty.⁵⁴ Although not using the term new poor, it identified the self-employed as a category at especial risk from the inadequate safety net of our social protection system.⁵⁵

The government put in place a new infrastructure to respond to the problem of indebtedness⁵⁶ but independent commentators criticised its limited nature; its focus on individual, disciplined money management rather than corporate responsibility; its failure to tackle the different, endemic nature of indebtedness in low-income families; and the much lower level of attention given to solutions more in evidence in continental Europe (e.g. prevention; legally-based debt settlement; sufficient incomes to enable people to manage and save).⁵⁷

Granted that voluntary organisations may be, among other reasons, set up in response to existing or new social need, new voluntary sector formation give us a clue as to where social entrepreneurs⁵⁸ perceive there to be new areas of social need. Lack of readily available, useful state information on charities makes it difficult to identify such insurgencies. Informal indications are the 2000s have seen emerging voluntary organisations for the mental health of young people (e.g. Headstrong, spunout.ie, Reachout), men (e.g. men's networks, men's sheds)⁵⁹, the environment (grow-your-own) and the new communities (>1.3). Organisations which fund social entrepreneurs report the frontline areas for social entrepreneurship as employment, education, mental health and youth, followed by the environment, healthcare and ageing.

2.3 *New communities: new social need?*

17% of people in Ireland come from the new communities, as chapter 1.1: *Demographic context* reported and it is important to interrogate the potential level of social need therein. A first point is that the level of vulnerability of members of the new communities varies according to their category, being least for those from other European countries (who have certain levels of legal protection) to asylum-seekers (who have little). Many of the new communities have naturalised, built successful careers and formed families. They enjoy standards of living much higher than in their sending country and send remittances home. Their educational levels are higher than the indigenous population, with ambitious educational aspirations for their children.

⁵⁴ Citizens Information Board: *Pre-budget submission, 2014*. Dublin, author, 2013.

⁵⁵ Citizens Information Board: *Hard times for the self-employed*. Dublin, author, 2013.

⁵⁶ The Insolvency Service of Ireland (ISI), accompanied by Personal Insolvency Practitioners (PIPs), the revised Code of Conduct on Mortgage Arrears (CCMA) and the Mortgage Arrears Resolution Process (MARP) complementing the long-standing Money Advice and Budgeting Services (MABS).

⁵⁷ Stamp, Stuart: *Socialising the loss, personalising the responsibility and privatising the response - the Irish policy approach to personal debt post 2008*. Maynooth, Centre on Household Assets and Savings Management, 2013; Dubois, Hans: *Household debt advisory services in the European Union*. Dublin, author, Eurofound, 2011.

⁵⁸ The term 'social entrepreneurs' refers to those individuals who found and establish new voluntary and community organisations. Although use of the term is relatively new, it is attributable to Michael Young, author of the 1945 British Labour party general election manifesto.

⁵⁹ Hourihane, Ann-Marie: *The new male bonding*. [Irish Times](#), 3rd March 2012.

Having said that, some endure precarious employment, discrimination, low wages and may find themselves in need of social and even homeless services. Migrants have a higher unemployment rate than Irish nationals (18.5%), more so for Africans (27%). There is evidence of a growing resistance level to immigration, up from 4% to 20%.⁶⁰ Some groups may be at especial risk, such as the Roma community in Ireland numbering about 2,500 to 3,000, as evidenced by cases of their children being wrongly taken into care in 2013.⁶¹ There is an especially vulnerable subset that may be trafficked or at risk of prostitution, their situation highlighted most prominently by immigrant advice organisations such as Doras Luimni.⁶²

Overall, the most vulnerable category is the asylum-seeker placed in direct provision. Those not refused permission to land or deported are placed in direct provision hostels while their claims are considered. These are contracted services of bed-and-breakfast hostels, with a small cash payment (€19.10 weekly for adults, €9.60 for children), an amount unchanged since its introduction. In some cases, conditions therein are poor and have come under prolonged criticism from human rights organisations, to the point that some are called ‘the modern Magdalens’.⁶³ There is a tacit acceptance by government that this approach is designed to dissuade future refugees and Ireland has opted out of the EU council directive for minimum standards for asylum seekers. Although originally intended as a short-term solution, asylum-seekers find themselves spending many years in direct provision: in November 2013, the average stay was 4 years, with 13% there seven years or more.⁶⁴ Reflecting the fall in claims for asylum, the numbers in the direct provision system fell from 7,002 in 60 centres in 2008 to 4,414 in 35 centres by 2013.⁶⁵

Within the group of asylum seekers, a cohort of especial concern is that of separated children (previously officially called ‘unaccompanied minors’) who arrived in the country on their own and some of whom may have been trafficked. Numbers over 2000-2010 were in the order of 5,900 who, when they reach adulthood may be termed ‘aged-out minors’. Direct provision may be a contributor to the unusually high number of African children the subject of childcare orders.⁶⁶

Unlike Britain, Ireland has not experienced the concentration of minorities in particular towns and cities, but minorities have gravitated around city centres, where jobs and accessible accommodation may best be found (up to 70% of some wards); while those with young families are more likely to be found in suburban communities (25% of Dublin 15, for example) and comprise a significant proportion of children in individual schools.⁶⁷ The 2000s saw the formation of a significant number of small NGOs for the different new communities (principally African) and a few larger umbrella organisations with capacity, the principal being the New Communities Partnership and AkiDwa, supplemented by the Immigrant Council of Ireland, the

⁶⁰ McGinnity, Frances *et al*: *Annual monitoring report on integration*. Dublin, ESRI, 2013.

⁶¹ Smyth, Jamie: *Anti-Roma racism focused on by report*. *Irish Times*, 2nd January 2010.

⁶² Keenan, Dan: *Campaign group presses government to act on trafficking and prostitution*. *Irish Times*, 6th February 2014. For the situation of migrant workers, see www.mrci.ie.

⁶³ Arnold, Samantha: *State-sanctioned child poverty and exclusion*. Dublin, Irish Refugee Council, 2012.

⁶⁴ Dail Eireann, *Debates*, 26th November 2013, 612-3, figures based on latest entry into the system.

⁶⁵ Seanad Eireann: *Debates*, 25th September 2013, 727.

⁶⁶ Duncan, Pamela: *Report investigates childcare court cases*. *Irish Times*, 6th November 2013.

⁶⁷ Haase, Trutz: *The changing face of Dublin's inner city*. Dublin, Dublin Inner City Partnership, 2009; O'Halloran, Marie: *Immigrant children clustered in schools*. *Irish Times*, 5th March 2013; Duncan, Pamela: *Dublin city electoral division holds most immigrants*. *Irish Times*, 14th May 2012; Griffin, Dan: *Immigration: the Irish experience*. *Irish Times*, 25th January 2014.

Integration Centre, Irish Refugee Council and the Migrant Rights Centre of Ireland, as well as regional organisations, such as Nasc (Cork) and Doras Luimni (Limerick). Government funding is limited.

2.4 Views of informants

External informants were invited to contribute their assessments of persistent and emerging social need and were asked to be alert to those dynamics, groups or phenomena that might escape statistical analysis or other identification. While this may appear to be a randomised list, it is nevertheless an informed one based on reflection:

- Older people, often men, who had lost their social connections and were now quite isolated, both in rural and urban locations. The rural situation was more acute, for it was compounded by physical isolation (with little transport) and the loss of services (e.g. home helps). For them, low-tech outreach services could make a major impact without being costly;
- The persistence of poverty for lone parents;
- The exceptional situation of asylum-seekers, whose treatment many felt would in time be recognised in time as having been a black mark on the national record;
- Small areas of distinct need, such as violence, alcoholism and crime in the new communities, as evidenced by the volume of cases coming before the courts.

Although it is emphatically not the task of philanthropy to make good government cuts, there may be an opportunity to respond to the acute situation presented by government disinvestment in distinct areas (Travelers, community development); and those areas that continued to be underinvested (e.g. suicide, mental health)

Climate change was not listed in the terms of reference. Although there is funding for environmental organisations to participate in social partnership, there is no domestic funding stream for environmental groups. Although there is a foundation in the area (Mary Robinson Foundation for Climate Justice), it does not have a funding stream. Some environmental projects could have an important social dimension (e.g. city farms, biodiversity, grow-your-own) in providing fresh labour market opportunities. The lack of funding may be connected to the under-development of the sector: for example, there is no direct equivalent to the scale of the social-environmental improvement work undertaken by Groundwork in Northern Ireland, where there is an enabling funding stream.

2.5 Conclusions

This chapter attempted to paint a general picture of social need in Ireland, drawn from a range of sources: EU-SILC, census, academic, press and NGO, combining a mixture of statistical, snapshot-in-time studies with the evolution of particular problematics over time. The following table, 2.2, portrays these key elements in illustrative form. Note that this is an attempt to present the broad picture, while the next chapter will examine particular areas suggested by Philanthropy Ireland in more detail.

Table 2.2: Illustrative picture of current social need

Sources	Established social need	Emerging/re-emerging
Statistical and income-based	<u>Category</u> Unemployed Low educational qualifications At home - disabled, carer Students Lone parents Renters of accommodation Travelers, homeless	Unemployed (men more affected) Working age Geographical poverty re-affirmed in traditional areas (e.g. north west) Small towns more than predominantly rural or urban
	<u>Life cycle</u> Children/child poverty Working life poverty (out of work and in-work)	Extremes of affluence and poverty in inner city Dublin Disinvested: Travelers, disadvantaged communities Underinvested: mental health, suicide
	<u>Geography</u> Pervasive, moved into midlands, south east	
NGO, press, academic	Fuel poverty, compounded by utility debt Concentrations of urban poverty (uncompleted regeneration areas and 'non-regeneration areas')	Austerity-related, due to cuts in welfare incomes esp. supplementary schemes Food poverty 'New poor' mortgage and utility debt New communities, esp. direct provision and others particularly vulnerable Predicted: water poverty Isolated older, rural but also urban

This provides a composite, top-line, dynamic picture of how social need has evolved in Ireland this century. The picture suffers from the lack of state instruments that could bring together a sharper composite picture on the model of the continental European countries (notably France and Germany) and the absence of the Combat Poverty Agency, previously entrusted with the task, will be ever more keenly felt as time passes. There is only limited information on NGO formation which could be a helpful additional indicator. The picture coming from the composite sources of academic sources, media, income reports to state agencies and the informant group is quite consistent and presents a level of detail sufficient to be useful to prospective funders.

3. Social need - specific areas of concern

Philanthropy Ireland proposed an examination of 13 specific areas. For convenience, these are grouped under human rights, civil liberties and advocacy (3.1); poverty and community development (3.2); older and younger people (3.3); equality, disability and racial justice (3.4); homelessness and mental health (3.5) and education (3.6), before conclusions are drawn (3.7).

3.1 Human rights, civil liberties and advocacy

There is no standard, regular, detailed human rights and civil liberties situational review in Ireland. Although there is a state agency responsible for human rights, the Irish Human Rights Commission, it has suffered from severe budget cuts from 2008 and is undergoing a prolonged process of merger with the Equality Authority. Its output in recent years has been abridged.⁶⁸ Commentaries on human rights and civil liberties are presented by the leading NGOs in the field, notably the Irish Council for Civil Liberties (ICCL) and Amnesty International, both contributing commentaries on Irish observation of international human rights instruments (European and United Nations) and campaigning on individual issues, indicating the principal human rights concerns in Ireland. Those highlighted are mental health and legal capacity (Amnesty), reproductive rights, the Magdalenes, the rights of accused persons and victims and equality law (ICCL).

From their combined work it is possible to assemble a picture of human rights and civil rights in Ireland in a comparative international perspective. The setting down of civil liberties in Ireland has tended to lag in comparison with our European neighbours: a human rights culture has been slow to become embedded in government and public administration. This is especially evident in the slow development of systems of accountability, prison conditions, access to justice, transparency and anti-discrimination law and practice.⁶⁹ 'Social' rights are among the least developed either in the constitution or subsequent case law.⁷⁰ Commentaries on the rights situation in Ireland have drawn attention to a broad range of areas that encompass children, gender, policing, the situation of the gay and lesbian community, minorities and people with disabilities. Although Ireland has a positive record in signing international conventions, its practical adherence and reporting records have been slow and inadequate, with reports submitted late, recommendations poorly implemented, lack of institutional mechanisms to follow up and commentaries by oversight bodies neither disseminated nor regarded as binding.⁷¹

Prison conditions have long been a particular source of concern in the human rights field and were the top point of attention in the Amnesty International global human rights report.⁷² The standard occupancy rate is 103.7%, 134% in the women's prison, 139% in Mountjoy.⁷³ There is a lack of treatment facilities and high rates of lock-up. Irish prisons continue the practice,

⁶⁸ Equality & Rights Alliance: *Downsizing the equality and human rights agenda*. Dublin, author, 2009.

⁶⁹ Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust: *Rights and justice work in Ireland*. York, author, 2002; *Rights protection lags behind north*, says peer. ICCL, press release, 24th November 2010.

⁷⁰ For a detailed exposition of these issues, see Whyte, Gerry: *Social inclusion and the legal system - public interest law in Ireland*. Dublin, Institute of Public Administration, 2002 (1st edition, 2nd pending).

⁷¹ ICCL: *Your rights, right now - Ireland's civil society stakeholder report*. Dublin, author, 2011, p4.

⁷² Amnesty International: *State of the world's human rights*. London, author, 2013.

⁷³ Holland, Kitty: *Women's prison lost its way, says judge*. *Irish Times*, 4th December 2013.

unique in Europe, of slopping out in eating areas, now ruled as lawful.⁷⁴ The Inspector of Prisons condemned Mountjoy as ‘unsafe, inhumane and degrading’, overcrowded, with up to eight in a cell area at a time. The use of prison appears to be class-dependent: a third of prisoners are illiterate, Travelers and minorities comprise 29% of the prison population, whereas only one person has been to prison since 2003 for tax evasion.⁷⁵

The principal human rights and civil liberties organisations have generally been supported by members and trusts (e.g. Atlantic, JRCT). The principal organisation concerned with prisoners is the Irish Penal Reform Trust, but it has not traditionally received government funding. Numerous voluntary organisations work with offenders and ex-offenders, but funding by probation services fell 35.5% from 2008 (€16.7m to €10.773m).

Ireland already has the smallest level of advocacy in its voluntary sector in Europe, with only a handful of advocacy or campaigns officers.⁷⁶ It took the Irish state 78 years to define what should be its relationship with the state and the voluntary and community sector (*Supporting voluntary activity*, 2000). This vowed to respect its independence and advocacy role, provide increased funding and establish voluntary activity units in each government department, but its provisions were effectively repudiated only two years later.⁷⁷ The Advocacy Initiative has since documented the role of advocacy, finding it a well-embedded, widespread feature of the work of voluntary and community organisations and there are many examples of the state either actively supporting or acknowledging this role. Since 2002, though, it has become a contested field, the state insisting that the primary role of NGOs is to provide services only, what is called the ‘services paradigm’. The standard template for Health Service Executive (HSE) grants prohibits advocacy and there are numerous examples of voluntary and community organisations being reprimanded for their advocacy activities, especially in sensitive areas such as childcare, development education and community development (>3.2).⁷⁸ The Charities Act, 2007 de-listed human rights as a charitable activity: since then the Revenue Commissioners have refused charitable status to NGOs engaged in advocacy.

3.2 Poverty and community development

Chapter 2.1 Framework to determine social need identified those groups under the poverty line. Here, it is useful to explore aspects of poverty and the response thereto in more detail, before moving on to the linked issue of community development. The Europe-wide development of a poverty line in the 1980s encouraged government to think of ways of ensuring that all groups at risk had incomes above that line, such a floor being proposed by the Commission on Social Welfare (1985). Measures against poverty were intensified with *Sharing in progress*, the National Anti-Poverty Strategy (1997), which set down a series of mechanisms to address both general and specific aspects of poverty, accompanied by implementation mechanisms. This systematic approach was rewarded with a fall in poverty to 14.1% to 2009.

⁷⁴ Lally, Conor: *Overcrowded prison system an absolute disaster, report finds*. [Irish Times](#), 15th March 2012; *Ex-prisoner loses his “slopping out” action*. [Irish Times](#), 15th July 2010.

⁷⁵ Lally, Conor: *Overcrowding at Mountjoy requires ‘urgent attention’*. [Irish Times](#), 25th September 2009 ; Coulter, Carol: *Over-representation of minorities in jails*. [Irish Times](#), 3rd April 2009; Logue, Patrick: *Only one person jailed for serious tax evasion since 2003*. [Irish Times](#), 27th February 2009.

⁷⁶ 0.5% of staff and volunteers, compared to European average of 1.8% (Advocacy Initiative: *Funding dissent*. Dublin, author, 2013).

⁷⁷ CV12: *Report on implementation of white paper Supporting voluntary activity*. Dublin, The Wheel, 2004.

⁷⁸ Advocacy Initiative: *Are we paying for that?* Dublin, author, 2014.

Most of those gains have since been lost, with Irish poverty rates rising faster than Greece (16.8%). The vulnerability of unemployed people is apparent, for the standard rate of benefit (€188) is set more than 10% *below* the poverty line (€209.40).

Many voluntary and community organisations work in the poverty field, health and social services being the largest single sub-sector. The most prominent generic NGO is the Society of St Vincent de Paul, which provides cash relief, services and personal support, flanked by organisations such as Crosscare (Dublin), which provides a broad range of services, as do many religious organisations. Ireland developed and funded an identifiable stream of community development from the 1890s, renewed during the 1970s in the course of the first programme against poverty (1975-80), extended during the second and third programmes (1985-9, 1989-94). This was systematised by the Combat Poverty Agency under the Community Development Programme, building to 180 projects in deprived areas and promoted as a flagship European programme in its field. Evaluations showed that they made a significant impact in providing services, articulating the voice and ensuring the participation of these communities in the decisions that affected them.

The situation changed dramatically after the appointment of the new government in June 2002. The support unit for the programme was abolished within days. Over the following years, the policy role of the CDPs was reduced and the 13 technical support units for the programme were closed.⁷⁹ The scheme of support for national networks operating in distinct fields of poverty was closed.⁸⁰ In December 2009, 14 CDP projects were abruptly closed and in the following year the rest of the programme terminated. Their voluntary boards of management were dissolved and project assets transferred into the local area partnerships.

Under the Local government reform Act, 2014, the local area partnerships will in turn be transferred into the local authorities on 1st July 2014. From 1st January 2015, the work of the local area partnerships will be put out to commercial tender. Local community projects will still be free to operate, but unfunded they will lack legitimacy in the eyes of state authorities. The only remaining funded stream is the local drugs task forces, but their funding has been substantially reduced since 2008 (-37%). Formal responsibility for community development will rest with the local authorities in Local Community Development Committees (LCDCs), which are obliged by law to meet *in camera* and for which a small number of community representatives will be selected. This marked the final stage of a state-funded stream of independent community development dating back more than a hundred years.

3.3 Younger and older people

Chapter 1.1: *Demographic context* showed how Ireland continues to have a youthful population. Our knowledge of the social situation of children and young people has improved, albeit unevenly, in recent years as a result of the *Growing up in Ireland* longitudinal study and

⁷⁹ Women's Aid, City Wide Drugs Crisis Campaign, Blue Drum, DESSA [Disability Equality Specialist Support Agency], NCCRI, Pavee Point; Tosach; Draoicht; Framework; Mid West Community Development Support Agency; West Training; and Triskele.

⁸⁰ The organisations funded were Irish Rural Link, One Parent Exchange Network, European Anti Poverty Network, Community Workers Cooperative, Irish National Organisation of the Unemployed, Irish Traveler Movement, Forum of People with Disabilities and One Parent Exchange and Network. Although there had been a national network for the homeless, this was no longer in operation.

the government's regular *State of the nation's children*. The picture that emerges is that most Irish children lead reasonably prosperous lives: they are in good health, well educated, ambitious and have embraced and are competent in the new technologies. In an international perspective, Ireland is a positively rated environment for children, one of the happiest in Europe. This picture is blemished by child poverty, with a fifth of children living in poverty, concentrated in alienated working class communities; a poorly performing lower end of the education system; serious shortfalls in services for the protection of children; a significant proportion with health problems (alcohol, smoking, drugs, obesity, unfitness); and particular groups at high risk of disadvantage.⁸¹ Although the new Child and Family Agency began work in 2014, it faces a backlog of neglected and understaffed services.⁸²

Policy and problematics tend to separate 'children' from 'youth'. Dealing with children first, government investment in children increases as children move through the educational system: 20% goes to early childhood (0-5), 37% to middle childhood (6-11) with most, 44% to the teenage years (12-17), contrary to continental European best practice which focuses most investment on the critical period 0-4, even 0-2. From the 1990s, Barnardos pioneered development of the early investment model; from the early 2000s, Atlantic Philanthropies developed a Prevention and Early Intervention Programme (PEIP), with flagship projects in Darndale, Tallaght and Ballymun. In 2013, the government approved a €29.7m co-funded extension as the Area Based Childhood (ABC) programme on child poverty 2014-2016, 14 projects.⁸³ The government also funded the National Early Years Access Initiative, a co-funded €5.25m programme of 11 projects designed to improve quality of outcomes in the early years.⁸⁴ Overall, though, services for children remain extraordinarily underinvested: if Ireland were to model the density of the *Surestart* early intervention programme constructed in England after 1997, there would not be 14 projects, but 297.

The field of voluntary organisations working with children is dominated by two large, long-standing providers: Barnardos and the Irish Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (ISPCC), with many smaller, specialised organisations (e.g. Irish Association for Young People in Care (IAYPIC), Children in Hospital Ireland, Children at Risk in Ireland (CARI) and Peter McVerry Trust (children and young people homeless). The Children's Rights Alliance has been successful in assembling over a hundred members concerned, directly or indirectly, with their welfare and rights.

Educational opportunities for young people, are, like children, strongly affected by social and occupational class and increasingly by gender, with girls ever more outpacing boys in the school system. Ireland now has a relatively high educational completion rate, third level progression rate and a correspondingly low level of early school leaving (14% male). Between 10% and 15% of the youth population find themselves in a disadvantaged situation when they

⁸¹ Barnardos: *Tomorrow's child in an age of austerity*. Dublin, author, 2011.

⁸² O'Brien, Carl: *Despite increase in children at risk, 200 social work posts are unfilled*. *Irish Times*, 30th January 2014.

⁸³ Bray; Ballyfermot/Dublin 10; Clondalkin/Archways; Dublin Docklands; Finglas (Barnardos-led project); Grangegorman/NW Inner City; Knocknaheeny (Cork); Limerick (a number of proposers from Limerick will be asked to develop a joint proposal, facilitated by Limerick Children Services Committee); Louth (Drogheda & Dundalk); and Midlands (as part of Northside project).

⁸⁴ Ballyfermot, Canal Communities, The Glen/Mayfield, South Dublin, Docklands, Donegal, Fingal, Longford, Limerick, Dublin SW inner city and Tallaght; see McKeown, Kieran & Haase, Trutz: *Summary of the baseline report on the interim evaluation of NEYAI and Sólta*. Dublin, Pobal, 2013; and *Presentation to Mount st Club Trust*, 3rd December 2012. Funders are the Atlantic Philanthropies and the Mount st Club with small funding from the departments of Children and Youth Affairs; and Education and Skills.

attempt to enter the workforce: the proportion of young people not in Employment, Education or Training (NEET) is the third highest in the Union, a rate borne out by the numbers presenting to rural Local Employment Services.⁸⁵ The most recent detailed labour market analysis by Forfas illustrates how unemployment falls heaviest on younger age groups, more so those with lower educational attainments.⁸⁶ Polling by Youth Work Ireland provides useful indications of the concerns of young people, highlighting their fear of unemployment; worries about how to cope with the costs of education (fees, charges and expenses) and an expectation of emigration (49%).

The non-governmental sector working with young people is extensive, comprising a mixture of informal organisations (youth clubs), formal (e.g. scouts/guides) and specialised (e.g., youth wings of political parties), with long-standing, strong national umbrella bodies, the National Youth Council and the Union of Students in Ireland for the student community. Youth organisations received funding from as far back as 1969 and the government set down a strategy for youth development in 1984 (*In partnership with youth*). As table 2.1 showed, funding fell -44% since the breaking of the economic and social crisis.

Although older people comprise the smallest older cohort in Europe, it is expected to grow as the larger, non-emigrating cohorts of those born in the 1950s and 1960 retire. We now have a good social picture of older people thanks to the TILDA longitudinal study on older people and the Report of the Older People's Commission of the Society of St Vincent de Paul.⁸⁷ Most elderly people live a much higher standard of living than their parents' generation, with longer lifespans and improved health, assisted by multiple social and recreational opportunities. The message of active fit old age is very much taken to heart. Contrary to reports of breakdown in family cohesion, contacts with children remained frequent and of good quality. Although most live comfortably, a significant proportion has low incomes, with the risk of poverty rising for older people living alone, women and the older elderly. These studies identified significant problems of poor mental and physical health, anxiety, depression and loneliness, with some living in poor housing. Poor older people face great difficulty making ends meet, especially to pay for fuel and heat. They are badly affected by the withdrawal of public services, especially in rural areas (e.g. home help); by the introduction of new 'stealth' charges; by the declining quality of health services; and poor transport services (especially to hospital). They did not regard themselves as an assertive generation.

Government policy for older people may be found in *Care of the elderly* (1968) and *The years ahead* (1988), marking the move from institutional care to community support and the *National positive ageing strategy* (2013). Opportunities for older people to participate in policy and decisions were already weak compared to continental Europe when the government disbanded the National Council for Ageing and Older People.

Unlike continental Europe, where older people's organisations began to mobilise after the Great War, Germany being in the forefront, organisational formation in Ireland is

⁸⁵ Monaghan Integrated Development: *Supporting growth and opportunity*. Monaghan, author, undated; Eurofound: *Young people not in employment, education or training - characteristics, costs and policy responses in Europe*. Dublin and Luxembourg, author, 2012.

⁸⁶ Forfas: *Profile of employment and unemployment, 2010*. Dublin, author, 2011; *Annual employment survey, 2011*. Dublin, author, 2012. See also FAS Skills and Labour Market Research Unit (Expert Group on Future Skills Needs: *National skills bulletin, July 2012*. Dublin, FAS, author, 2012.

⁸⁷ Barrett, Alan *et al*: *Fifty plus in Ireland, 2011*. Dublin, Dublin University, 2011.

comparatively recent.⁸⁸ The leading Irish voluntary organisations working with older people are Age Action Ireland, Irish Senior Citizen's Parliament and the rapidly expanding Active Retirement Ireland, flanked by a set of specialised ones (Carer's Association, Alzheimer Society, Hospice Foundation, Sue Ryder, Senior Helpline), regional organisations (ALONE, Friends of the Elderly, Westgate) and multiple local organisations and services (e.g. meals-on-wheels, day centres). Leading organisations came together to form the Older and Bolder advocacy coalition, now closed. Atlantic Philanthropies played an important role in developing the ageing sector through supporting the *Get vocal!* advocacy programme run by Age & Opportunity; and the Age Friendly Countries programme, which drew local statutory and voluntary organisations together in programmes to develop services and facilities for older people. Older people demonstrated unexpected militancy when they revolted against changes in the medical card (2009), one of the few partly-successful challenges to the austerity régime, deterring further government contemplation of proposals to reduce pension levels.

3.4 Equality, disability and racial justice

Although 'equality' has long been in the lexicon of Irish politics, Ireland's record on equality has been poor. As noted in chapter 1:2 *Political and institutional context*, Ireland has followed a development model that has valued *Boston* over *Berlin*, one favouring the benefits of markets over social cohesion, a choice repeatedly endorsed by the electorate. Initiatives taken against poverty in the late 1990s, notably the National Anti Poverty Strategy, the setting of floor incomes under national social partnership, appear to have had the effect of reducing inequality, prompting a downwards trend over 2005-9, when it fell to 29% under the Gini coefficient,⁸⁹ but has since risen to a level of 31%, where it may have stabilised. Ireland is ranked the fifth most unequal of the 53 European member states of the World Health Organisation.⁹⁰

The primary, cross-cutting form of inequality is gender. The rate of female participation in the labour force reached 54.7% in 2007, compared to 73% for men, but has since fallen back to 52.8% (67.8% for men). Women comprise 70% of part-time workers and are more represented in low-pay occupations. Women's employment falls from 85% for those without children to 51% for those with young children. Women continue to be poorly represented in decision-making, comprising only 16% local authority councilors, 15% deputies and 8% of board members, earning 17% less than men despite having higher educational qualifications (89% complete second level, compared to 83% men; while 50% complete third level, compared to 40% men).⁹¹ Like most countries, Ireland has a broad range of women's organisations, brought together by the National Women's Council of Ireland (estd. 1973), but it has experienced a sharp fall in government funding since the start of the crisis (-48.7%).

Analysis of disability is traditionally divided between those with physical and those with intellectual disabilities. In the 2011 census, 595,355 people reported a disability, 13% of the

⁸⁸ Acheson, N et al: *Social policy, ageing and voluntary action*. Dublin, Institute of Public Administration with University of Ulster, 2008

⁸⁹ This is the standard measure of equality-inequality: 0 = all wealth shared equally, 100= one person owning all the wealth.

⁹⁰ Marmot, Michael: *Review of social determinants and the health divide in the WHO European region*. Copenhagen, World Health Organisation, 2013.

⁹¹ Smyth, Jamie: *Women get €160,000 less over lifetime*. *Irish Times*, 4th March 2009; O'Connor, Orla: *Women's rights and equality must be at centre of social change in 2014*. *Irish Times*, 6th January 2014.

population, a group characterised by a risk of poverty twice that of the able-bodied population, lack of educational opportunity and high unemployment (31%): the population of people with intellectual disabilities or autism is 150,000. People with disabilities have been especially affected since 2008 by cuts in income support, education and health services, respite, home help and domiciliary services, while waiting lists for services have grown. The media has given extensive coverage to the struggles of parents to obtain appropriate services for their children, for example in particular fields of autism. Ireland still does not have a cost of living based disability payment, nor has it ratified the *UN Convention on the rights of people with disabilities*.

By the 1980s, it was apparent that Irish services fell far short of European good practice and there was little voice for people with disabilities themselves who had no legal protection. The breakthrough came with the establishment of a Department of Equality and Law Reform in 1992, which eventually led to the Equality Act, 2000 (with the establishment of the Equality Authority) and National Disability Act, 2005 (and the National Disability Authority). Ireland has long had a voluntary and community sector concerned with disability, with some large providers in both fields, such as Rehab, Central Remedial Clinic, Brothers of Charity, St Michael's House and St John of God and a range of smaller and specialised providers (e.g. National Federation of ARCH clubs). There are two national federations (Disability Federation of Ireland, Inclusion Ireland) which bring together many smaller organisations, many of which were radicalised in the course of campaigns for a rights-based approach.

Irish society has been long known to have latent levels of racism.⁹² *Eurobarometer* studies place Ireland mid-range in the European attitude field, classified as 'passively tolerant'. The group attracting the highest level of racism is the Traveler community. There are 29,573 Travelers in Ireland (2011 census), +32% on 2006, although the true figure may be higher. Travelers have, since the 1960s, been identified as the poorest section of Irish society, many living in squalid conditions, health indicators akin to developing countries, poor educational outcomes, few economic opportunities, limited legal protection against discrimination and denied recognition by government as an ethnic minority. Although in the 1990s government began to invest resources in assisting the Traveler community, this was largely withdrawn over 2008-2013: State funding for accommodation was reduced from €40m to €3m, -93.5%; education -86.6%; equality measures -76.3%; FAS, -50%; youth projects, -29.8% and the interagency programme -100%.⁹³ There is a number of Traveler organisations, the best known being the Irish Traveler Movement, Pavee Point and the National Traveler Women's Federation, but here government funding was reduced -63.6% and the local organisational infrastructure quite depleted.

The arrival of the new communities posed significant challenges to Irish values of tolerance and racism. Their members experienced levels of racism, more so the African community, though this was not as high as the indigenous Traveler community. The 2012 report on integration found deteriorating attitudes from 2008 toward migrants, with discrimination evident in situations such as shops, housing, pubs and transport.⁹⁴

⁹² McGreil, Micheal: *Prejudice and tolerance in Ireland*. Dublin, National College of Industrial Relations, 1977; *Pluralism and diversity in Ireland - prejudice and related issues in early 21st century Ireland*. Dublin, 2011.

⁹³ Pavee Point: *Travelling with austerity - impact of cuts on Travelers, Traveler projects and services*. Dublin, author, 2013.

⁹⁴ McGinnity, Frances *et al*: *Annual monitoring report on integration, 2012*. Dublin, Economic & Social Research Institute with Geary Institute, University College Dublin, 2013.

The sector in the equality area which has made the most progress for equality in recent years is the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) community, whose status was decriminalised only 21 years ago. A range of LGBT organisations has grown up, the most prominent being the Gay and Lesbian Equality Network (GLEN), whose achievements range from the Civil Partnership Act to the commitment by the government to hold a referendum on marriage equality in 2015. Recognition of transgender has been much slower, despite a clear ruling by the state in the *Foy* case taken by the Free Legal Advice Centres (FLAC).

The national body responsible for equality is the Equality Authority, but its funding was cut - 47% over 2008-2012. There is a federation bringing together NGOs working in the equality field, the Equality and Rights Alliance, funded by Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust. The body responsible for addressing racism was the National Consultative Committee on Racism and Interculturalism (NCCRI), but it was one of the first to be abolished in the rounds of cuts announced in 2008.

3.5 Homelessness and mental health

As was the case with poverty and inequality generally, in the period before the crisis it appeared that inroads had at last been made into homelessness.⁹⁵ The government adopted *The way home* strategy (2008), one committed to housing solutions to homelessness, the reduction of the emergency shelter population and the elimination of involuntary rough sleeping, very much in line with long-standing proposals by voluntary organisations.⁹⁶ The 2011 census found a 'stock' of 3,808 homeless people, the number typically homeless at any one time, while experts estimated that the total homeless in the course of a year was around 5,000 ('flow').

Since then, there is compelling evidence that the problem has become more severe, services reportedly overwhelmed.⁹⁷ Charities noted ever greater pressure on their services, Simon alone meeting 5,245 people, + 24% on the previous year, while the Fr Peter McVerry Trust accommodated 2,127 and provided 57,000 meals.⁹⁸ Crosscare reported that by end 2013 its 150 emergency beds were 'always full'. In early 2014, when homelessness in Dublin passed the 1,600 mark, the civil defence was called in to open new facilities.⁹⁹

Homelessness is a function of the interaction of a wider set of social policies, principally housing but also social welfare, employment, health and mental health. The significant change in housing policy that began with the so-called *Programme for National Recovery* (PNR) (1987) accelerated, with the virtual end of municipal housing construction. Since the PNR, the numbers on local authority waiting lists rose from 19,000 to over 89,000. Annual municipal housing fell from 7,002 completions to 253, while voluntary social housing fell from 1,900 in

⁹⁵ O'Sullivan, Eoin: *Reducing homelessness in the Republic of Ireland - policies and processes*. Social Research Institute, Copenhagen, 21st-22nd September 2005.

⁹⁶ Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government: *The way home: strategy to address adult homelessness in Ireland, 2008-13*, Dublin, author, 2008.

⁹⁷ See *Oireachtas bulletins*, Dublin Region Homeless Executive, <http://www.homelessdublin.ie/>.

⁹⁸ Holland, Kitty: *Rough sleeping trebles in one year*. *Irish Times*, 25th November 2013; and *Homeless charity 'at breaking point'*. *Irish Times*, 19th December 2013; Murtagh, Peter: *Homelessness now worse than ever, says McVerry*. *Irish Times*, 11th September 2013; O'Brien, Carl: *Rise in numbers sleeping rough*. *Irish Times*, 30th May 2013.

⁹⁹ O'Brien, Carl: *Civil defence called in to help homeless*. *Irish Times*, 8th February 2014.

2007 to 677 in 2012.¹⁰⁰ The gap between housing need and supply was illustrated in Dublin city, where in 2013 the local authority provided 29 homes in response to a waiting list of over 16,000. Government housing investment was streamed into voluntary social housing organisations and the subsidisation of private rented accommodation provided by landlords.

The homeless field is dominated by a number of large providers (e.g. Focus Ireland, €19m), the Simon Communities and the Society of St Vincent de Paul, with a much larger social housing sector which addresses homelessness and other categories in social need such as people with disabilities (Respond!, Circle Housing, Sonas, Sophia, dePaul Trust, Cluid). There is a national body for social housing organisations (Irish Council for Social Housing), but none for the homeless. The deployment of resources to combat homelessness has been substantial: in Dublin alone, even before the crisis, there were 57 organisations with 800 staff in 140 projects.¹⁰¹ Funding for homeless services was €56m in 2009, falling to €45m in 2013, - 20%.¹⁰² The persistence of the problem prompted a fresh analysis by government, the *Oversight report* (December 2013).¹⁰³ This correctly identified many of the measures required to ensure progress in reducing homelessness, principally the onward supply of accommodation and the limited capacity of voluntary social housing providers, but understated the difficulty of making progress in the absence of a supply of dedicated municipal housing and made no legislative proposals to oblige local authorities to carry out their responsibilities.

Turning to mental health, 133,650 people are estimated to have a neuropsychiatric disorder.¹⁰⁴ In the mid-1980s, the government began to de-institutionalise psychiatric and mental health services (*Preparing for the future*, 1984). This was sharply criticised by voluntary organisations for insufficiently investing in promised community-based alternatives. Legislation was updated with the Mental Health Act, 2001, the Mental Health Commission established and the landmark *Vision for change* (2006) published. Critics focus on the continued underinvestment, with funds dedicated for mental health and suicide prevention services instead diverted to shore up HSE deficits.¹⁰⁵ Investment in mental health services fell from 13% of the health budget in the 1980s to 5.2% in 2012, spending from €1bn in 2008 to €0.711bn in 2013, while Ireland has the third lowest level of psychiatrists in Europe, 7% (up to 25% elsewhere). The service was under stress, demand 13% over supply, year-long waiting lists, with children placed in adult units, while the economic crisis imposed ever more stress on family life.¹⁰⁶

There is a significant number of voluntary and community organisations working in the area, from larger service providers to smaller, specialised and advocacy organisations. Some date to the 1980s (e.g. Schizophrenia Ireland (now Shine)), while recent years have seen the

¹⁰⁰ O'Brien, Carl: *Social housing output at all-time low*. *Irish Times*, 20th January 2014 (figures for Q1-3); *Young people forming new and growing wave of homeless as rents and cuts bite*. *Irish Times*, 21st January 2014; Kelly, Olivia: *House building down as waiting list tops 16,000*. *Irish Times*, 28th January 2014.

¹⁰¹ Mc Verry, Peter, SJ & Carroll, Eoin: *Homes, not hostels - rethinking homeless policy*. *Working Notes*, \$56, November 2007.

¹⁰² Crosbie, Judith: *Charities warn homeless will suffer if cuts continue*. *Irish Times*, 8th April 2013.

¹⁰³ Kennedy, Mark; Langford, Sylva; Fahey, Tony: *Homelessness oversight group, first report*. Dublin, Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government, 2013.

¹⁰⁴ Faedo, Giulia & Normand, Charles: *Implementation of A vision for change for mental health services*. Dublin, Amnesty International, March 2013 (and subsequent figures)

¹⁰⁵ O'Brien, Carl: *Funds for suicide prevention diverted*. *Irish Times*, 29th December 2012; Coulter, Carol: *Call to realise mental health vision "now"*. *Irish Times*, 12th May 2010.

¹⁰⁶ Smyth, Jamie: *100 children placed in adult psychiatric units*. *Irish Times*, 7th October 2010. Unpublished data are available to the Family Support Agency that illustrate increased pressure on counselling services and Family Resource Centres. Other information from Mental Health Reform.

emergence of user-based organisations (e.g. Irish Advocacy Network). Here, 39 came to together to form the coalition Mental Health Reform Ireland, focused on ensuring the effective implementation, funding and staffing of *Vision for change*. Practitioners have promoted the reorientation of services around a recovery approach, one endorsed by the Mental Health Commission.

3.6 Education

The highly-performing and internationally competitive top end of the Irish education system, high completion rates and low levels of early school leaving obscure some endemic problems. A significant component, not less than 10%, emerges with minimal or limited qualifications and is at high subsequent risk in the labour market and life opportunities, this proportion rising to a third in disadvantaged schools. A recent study by two Suas pilot projects in Dublin found that only one student reached even an average reading score.¹⁰⁷ Absenteeism is a striking feature, with a rate of 10% in primary schools and 19% in post-primary, with a definable class gradient. Educational investment is low by European standards, weighted toward the later stages of the system, underinvested in critical areas (childhood, literacy, adult), with outcomes highly contingent on occupational class and location: progression varies from 15% in some postal districts to 100% in others.¹⁰⁸ State investment in education fell from 13.7% in 2000 to 9.7% in 2010 and during the celtic tiger period was the fourth lowest in Europe.¹⁰⁹ International comparison identified a sharp fall in educational standards (e.g. reading, maths) this century.¹¹⁰ Primary class sizes, 24.1, are far above the European average, 18.7. In the Bertelsmann Foundation social justice index of 31 Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) countries, Ireland was rated below average overall, but 29th for access to education and 31st for spending on early childhood education.¹¹¹ Irish childcare, delivered in a multiplicity of settings, stands out in Europe as among the costliest (25% to 52% of incomes), the least resourced, with the poorest density of services, behind all but three other states.¹¹² State childcare investment is 0.2% GDP, compared to over 1% in the nordic countries.

Problems of educational access and disadvantage have been recognised from the 1960s (e.g. Rutland St project, 1969-74) and were analysed systematically by the Combat Poverty Agency from the 1980s. Government initiatives focused on streaming additional resources into schools into disadvantaged areas (Delivering Education in Schools (DEIS)), resourcing special needs assistance, reducing the cost of third level education (European Social Fund grants, abolition of fees) and providing assistance to community education, but they have not reversed fundamental inequalities.

¹⁰⁷ Suas: *Intensive literacy support interventions*. Dublin, author, 2012.

¹⁰⁸ Healy, Alison: *Children from poorer backgrounds over a year behind in language skills, study finds*. [Irish Times](#), 29th September 2010; Flynn, Sean & McGuire, Peter: *Less than 15% in some Dublin areas going to college*. [Irish Times](#), 18th November 2010.

¹⁰⁹ OECD: *Education at a glance, 2013*. Paris, author, 2013; Flynn, Sean: *Irish education spending in boom was fourth lowest in OECD*. [Irish Times](#), 8th September 2010.

¹¹⁰ Flynn, Sean: *Irish students drop in rankings for literacy and maths and Shattering the myth of a world-class education system*. [Irish Times](#), 8th December 2010.

¹¹¹ Bertelsman Foundation: *Social justice in the OECD - how do member states compare?* Gütersloh, author, 2012.

¹¹² Crosbie, Judith: *Ireland ranks poorly in comparison with childcare across developed states*. [Irish Times](#), 30th May 2013; Duncan, Pamela: *Irish childcare presents 26% of parents from returning to jobs*. [Irish Times](#), 5th December 2013.

Voluntary and community organisations are in evidence in youth work (>3.3), literacy (e.g. National Adult Literacy Agency, Suas) and adult education (e.g. Aontas), but their most dense presence may be found in the early of early childhood education. First movers were organisations like the Irish Pre School Playgroups Association and the Border Counties Childcare Network, with a coalition of 51 groups formed more recently as Start Strong. Although government accepted the value of early childhood support, it was slow to move resources in the area and campaigns for change generated negative reactions.¹¹³ The Centre for Early Childhood Development & Education was closed. Not until 2010 was there significant investment in early childhood, with introduction of the free pre-school year at age 3 (68,000 participants, 2014). Philanthropic funders have invested both in playgroups (e.g. Katharine Howard Foundation) and afterschools (e.g. Irish Youth Foundation) but they have not yet been mainstreamed into scaled-up government support.

The policy community around generic education reform is ill-defined and small, being limited to the academic community,¹¹⁴ trade unions and professional associations (e.g. Irish Vocational Education Association, Community Education Facilitators Association), specialised groups (e.g. AHEAD for third level access) and the press.¹¹⁵ It lacks a recognisable NGO expression: pressure for reform fell when the Combat Poverty Agency, a champion of measures to combat disadvantage, was closed.

3.7 Conclusions

This chapter examined 13 specific areas of social need suggested by Philanthropy Ireland, providing top-line pen portrait sketches of each field. Trying to establish a hierarchy of more or less pressing need between them would be an invidious task, but it may be possible to make connections between them and find explanations as to the levels of social distress reported in this and earlier chapters. A first observation is that the relatively limited human and civil rights base in Ireland, with the weak embedding of 'social' rights, may help to explain some of the extreme forms of social need subsequently described (notably homelessness, where Ireland lags behind rights to accommodation in other European states). The more negative view of the state toward advocacy by voluntary and community organisations will make it more difficult to challenge the causes of social need and present enlightened measures to respond. This is especially evident in the field of poverty, which has risen since 2009 under the austerity programme, wiping out progress made over previous years (>3.1).

Perhaps the most dramatic development of recent years was the course of action followed by governments since 2002 to reduce investment in community development, the frontline against social need in disadvantaged communities, with the final iteration of a community development programme to conclude 31st December 2014 (>3.2). Looking at the age cycle (>3.3), children, young people and older people have a number of features in common: a contented, well-resourced, educated, participative, active majority, but with a minority of 10% - 20% living in difficult and disadvantaged circumstances. It is no surprise that Ireland's overall record on equality is trending in a negative direction (3.4). Gender and disability are two

¹¹³ Advocacy Initiative, *op cit*. Campaigns in early childhood education were identified as a highly sensitive area for government and were reflected in a number of the case studies therein (*Summary*, p6).

¹¹⁴ E.g. former President, University of Limerick, Dr Ed Walsh, www.edwalsh.ie; Dr Kathleen Lynch, University College Dublin.

¹¹⁵ E.g. the late Sean Flynn RIP.

cross-cutting forms of inequality, with racism adding a harsh overlay for already disadvantaged groups, Travelers standing out for not only historical levels of discrimination, but a spectacular level of state disinvestment since 2008. The only group to make significant progress in recent years is the LGBT community.

Homelessness is an acute, life-threatening form of social need (>3.5). Although government policies and funding have been put in place, services have been overwhelmed with incoming demand arising from other forces at work, while state disinvestment in housing dating to the landmark year of 1987 means that there is little onward supply of accommodation to house the homeless. Mental health services have long been the focus of critics for underinvestment. Finally, education (3.6) reflects the well-established divide of a majority well served by patterns of state investment, but a minority of 10-20% not obtaining the benefits of early childhood, pre-school and early primary education, putting in place a pattern that begins with low literacy skills and continues to absenteeism, early school leaving, NEET status and lifelong labour market disadvantage.

To make an overall judgement, whilst it is not true to say that the state has not invested in addressing disadvantage, the level of investment is many magnitudes short of what is required, hindered by the lack of a rights base, frustrated by the economic model of development and compounded by the nature of the austerity programme followed since 2008. Devising a meaningful response is a substantial challenge for the philanthropic community and those whom it might wish to fund (chapter 4).

4. Maximising funding impact

To identify social need is one challenge: to support philanthropic programmes respond effectively is another. This chapter looks at how funding may be maximised, especially with small grant schemes, drawing on both the international experience (4.1) and the views of the domestic informant group (4.2). Conclusions are drawn (4.3)

4.1 International experience

There is a widespread view among funders, NGOs and independent experts, confirmed by studies dating to the 1990s, that small grants, if designed in a systematic way, perform an important role in assisting voluntary and community organisations.¹¹⁶ Magowan in his assessment listed their principal benefits: speed, simplicity of process, ability to reach grass roots, potential to scale up and leverage, although there were disadvantages, such as the danger of spreading resources thinly.¹¹⁷ If designed carefully, they can even make a systemic, structural impact. The degree and manner in which philanthropic programmes in general and small grants schemes in particular make their impact is dependent on their theory of change. Some funders wish to provide direct help, through cash donations, to those providing frontline services and see their grants as limited to a humanitarian role. This form of giving is important, for it helps to alleviate immediate pain and suffering (e.g. supporting a food bank

¹¹⁶ Kiernan, Judith: *Review of small grants schemes*. Dublin, Combat Poverty Agency, 1994.

¹¹⁷ Magowan, James: *Small grants programmes in Ireland - a review of the current landscape and best practice*. Dublin, Philanthropy Ireland, 2013.

or shelter for the homeless) and should be valued. It is open to the charge though that it does not address the causes of humanitarian crises and thus inadvertently perpetuates them. For example, in their analysis of homeless services funding in Dublin, Phelan and Morris judged that only 5% addressed structural causes.¹¹⁸

Most funders fall within what may be called a post-enlightenment narrative that their funding should improve the human condition ('make the world a better place'); prompt more just, reformed and democratic relationships within society; and strengthen civil society organisations, JRCT being such an exemplar.¹¹⁹ Magowan (*op cit*) likewise argued for philanthropy as a force for change, reform, helping 'unpopular causes', solidarity and equality. The two dominant, exiting philanthropic funders in Ireland, One Foundation and Atlantic Philanthropies, have used the language of 'models for change'. Martin O'Brien, international programmes director for the latter, argued that the true function of a trust like Atlantic is to 'seek evidence from beyond the project it funds [so as to] to influence policy beyond the projects themselves' and thereby bring about systemic change for social justice.¹²⁰

Turning models for change into an effective philanthropic programme will always be challenging, doubly so in the case of small grants. Advice is to hand in the form of a study of the impact of ten years of grant-making through small and medium grant operations across Europe for the Roma community, the funding provided by the European Commission and philanthropic funders (e.g. Open Society Institute).¹²¹ This set down useful criteria, suggesting that funders favour projects that:

- Address root causes and dealt with the 'harder' social-political issues;
- Include a policy element, always going beyond purely the provision of a service;
- Build links externally and institutionally (NGOs, public administration, policy) - 'bottom-up projects that reached the middle and the top';
- Are innovative in their approach, demonstrated fresh or critical thinking, ideas or approaches with the possibility of replication or scaling up by others;
- Include some reflection and learning on outcomes;
- Have some form of dissemination of the outcomes;
- Build the organisation's leadership and capacity;
- Are of sufficient duration as to be impactful;
- Leave some form of identifiable legacy behind, albeit small.

Provision of a pre-grant facility is of proven value in enabling candidate projects to elaborate proposals along these lines, normally taking the form of small technical assistance grants.¹²²

Whilst the full range of these elements may be ambitious for a small grants programme, examples of such approaches are already in evidence: three are given here. A leader at European level is the European Programme for Integration and Migration (EPIM), which

¹¹⁸ Phelan, Elaine & Norris, Michelle: *Neo-corporatist governance of homeless services in Dublin - reconceptualisation, incorporation and exclusion*. *Critical Social Policy*, vol 28, §1.

¹¹⁹ Pittam, Stephen: *The power of money*. *Alliance*, vol 18, §3, September 2013.

¹²⁰ Holland, Kitty: *Atlantic Philanthropies \$1.1bn is 'drop in ocean' next to what state can invest*. *Irish Times*, 5th December 2013.

¹²¹ Open Society Institute: *Making the most of EU funds - compendium of good practice projects for Roma*. Budapest, author, 2007.

¹²² The original model was developed in Hungary, called the Project Generation Facility (PGF).

expects funded groups to attack urgent or contentious issues, develop advocacy, make a policy impact and join a learning network. Closer to home, the *Voices* programme in Northern Ireland not only encouraged voluntary organisations, community groups and individuals to identify social need but also to put forward, in a series of standardised short briefings, their findings, proposals and solutions. Here, the Community Foundation for Ireland has made changes in recent years to maximise its grants: it complements small grants with larger impact grants of longer duration. There has been a move to organisations that give voice and undertake advocacy work. Those who received grants are expected to self-evaluate outcomes and participate in a learning network which involves site visits to other projects and the round-table sharing of experiences. In other words, in considering the development of their funding programmes, members of Philanthropy Ireland may wish to take account of both international and domestic best practice of what makes for effective grant-giving.

4.2 Domestic experience

This paper involved consultation with domestic experts. They were all conscious of the dire social situation in which the country now found itself: immiseration, extreme pressure on social services, substantial government social disinvestment. They argued that funding should focus on:

- People, organisations and ideas that offered a way forward out of the economic and social crisis, who presented a vision with blueprints for the future, ‘bringing hope to those in despair’. Funding should focus on projects with a strong ideas base;
- Ways, probably new ways, of giving voice to disadvantaged groups and communities, especially important in the light of the end of community development;
- Advocacy and voice, which should be an integral part of any project. This would include those things which government will not fund, such as building coalitions and networking; and make good some of the deficits in advocacy likely to arise from the exits of AP, One and JRCT;
- Projects that promoted active citizenship in general and which sustained social capital in disadvantaged groups and communities in particular, micro-grants being especially suitable for these purposes;
- Cutting edge solutions and pilots to problems by first movers in their fields e.g.
 - Dementia for older people;
 - Intergenerational projects between younger and older people (e.g. wifi);
 - Early intervention for children;
 - Mental health recovery programmes;
 - New models of independent care for older people (e.g. *Cúltaca, Ciel bleu*);¹²³
 - Social enterprise, especially in environmental areas;
- Some might be projects which had passed first stage, but required growth funding to enable them to reach a critical mass of effectiveness.
- Projects that systematically built the knowledge and experience base of What works? in meeting social need.

Quite a number identified education a ‘the key game-changer’ where appropriate intervention, at the earliest possible stage, may have the most long-term effect, ranging from literacy to access programmes to curriculum reform (‘soft’ skills). A belief in the importance of educational interventions is supported by the Community Foundation’s *Vital signs* report

¹²³ <http://netwellcentre.org/cultaca.html>.

(2013).¹²⁴ They were unsure, though, of how to devise the most effective intervention and the remarkable absence of NGOs promoting educational reform was noted earlier (>3.7). The role of education as an instrument of reform is a long-standing theme in educational theory and application. Analysts have cautioned that educational reform is no substitute for social reform and will not succeed in its absence: for example, the two great educational reforms in Britain (Butler, 1944; Robbins, 1963)¹²⁵ were both part of broader programmes for social equality. At the same time, carefully designed and well-disseminated interventions can prompt innovation and fresh thinking (e.g. European programme for second chance learning).

Many were emphatic that funding should *not* try to meet basic needs, for such interventions, whilst humanitarian, were potentially endless and left root causes intact. Basic needs (food, shelter etc) were the responsibility of the state. Informants stressed that, especially with small grants, there were limits as to what could be expected of the advocacy dimension. It did not have to be anything sophisticated: 'all it may involve is inviting politicians to an end-of-project meeting and tell them three things that they should do next: that alone could be enough - and effective'.

Informants felt that there was a big gap between the philanthropic sector on the one hand and the voluntary and community sector on the other - a gap which should and could be filled. There was a recommendation that Philanthropy Ireland begin a regular, structured engagement with the non-governmental community addressing social need so as to improve the volume and quality of information, views and approaches circulating between NGOs and funders. This could be a twice-a-year sharing of information, views and experiences in a participative way. An early focus of this exchange could be to consider the consequences of the end of funding for community development, for it opened an opportunity for voluntary and community organisations to work creatively with independent funders on new means of mobilising disadvantaged groups and communities.

4.3 Conclusions

This short chapter explored the tension between funders wishing to act immediately and practically to provide humanitarian response to social need and distress; and the move by most funders to a post-enlightenment narrative of directing funding, be it in a modest or more ambitious way, toward social reform, 'the good society'. Some voluntary organisations, especially in the field of development, reconcile this tension by combining a mixture of short-term humanitarian programmes, with long-term, structured, systemic development programmes, normally the larger part. To guide us, we now have an improved knowledge base, derived from Europe, of how grant programmes may be designed in such a way as to achieve systematic short, medium and long-term social improvement. Informants to this research came forward with a range of ideas, suggestions, proposals and priorities, which suggested a refocus toward projects with an advocacy dimension and on cutting-edge pilots and solutions. There was a high level of belief in the value of interventions in the field of education. Both had one feature in common: they should be ideas-driven, which sets a higher, challenging bar both for voluntary and community organisations and for those funders who might appraise them. Finally, there was a proposal to close the gap between voluntary and community organisations on the one hand and philanthropic funders on the other.

¹²⁴ Cullen, R: *Ireland's Vital signs*, 2013. Dublin, Community Foundation of Ireland, 2013.

¹²⁵ The Education Act, 1944, associated with minister RA Butler, which opened up second level education; and the *Report of the committee on higher education* chaired by Lionel, Baron Robbins (1963), which opened third level education.

5. Conclusions and recommendations

The purpose of this chapter is to come to conclusions (5.1) and make suggestions for consideration for the members of Philanthropy Ireland (5.2).

5.1 *Conclusions*

Recapitulating chapter 1: *Context*, Ireland is a country of population growth, high in and out migration, and stability in its social patterns. The social situation is one of extreme difficulty. The social and economic crisis from 2008 saw a contraction in the economy; a sharp reduction in incomes, especially for the poor; and a threefold rise in unemployment from 4% to 12%. The political and economic context is one of continuity of austerity policy from 2008, but whose most impactful feature is the virtual elimination of the state's social policy architecture. Turning to funding, although government funding has fallen -7.1%, its funding of the voluntary and community sector has fallen -35%. The sector is expected to lose -31% of its workforce by end 2015. Three important philanthropic funders are leaving the field, which will reduce funding from €60m to around €13m. The future appears to be bleak, for the government has made it plain that government social spending will not rise from 2016. Although the government has published an outline of economic targets (*A strategy for growth*, 2013), a striking feature of government planning is the absence of any social planning or the setting down of the future pathways of social policy. For those working in the social arena, the future is likely to be one of short, medium and long-term 'post-austerity austerity'.¹²⁶

Chapter 2: *Social need: general* first used European-derived instruments to determine the main categories of poor, namely those large categories below the 60% poverty line and the changing geographic and spatial patterns of poverty. To map a picture of emerging social need, a wider range of theoretical bases and instruments were used. These examined emerging social need under the headings of fuel poverty and food poverty. Figures were given of the inrush of demand by those traditionally poor on social welfare charities, such as the Society of St Vincent de Paul and Crosscare, demand probably driven by the reduction of funding of the supplementary welfare system. The emergence of the new poor was examined, a phenomenon fuelled by household debt, the insufficient government response and the squeezing of disposable incomes out of the homes middle income families by the combination of lower earnings and increased taxes. Granted the importance of the new communities, 17% of the population, social need therein was examined. Although most of the new communities have settled successfully, driven by high education levels, some parts are at higher risk, notably Roma, Africans, migrant workers and those still in direct provision and subset of aged-out minors. Informants to the study recommended several groups for attention: isolated and disconnected older people, mainly rural; lone parents, asylum seekers, areas of high government disinvestment (e.g. Travelers, community development) or under-investment (e.g. mental health, suicide); and climate change.

Chapter 3: *Social need - specific areas of concern* examined, each in turn, 13 specific concerns for Philanthropy Ireland: human rights, civil liberties and advocacy; poverty and community development; older and younger people; equality, disability and racial justice; homelessness and mental health; and education. Analysed together, they give clues as to the high levels of

¹²⁶ O'Toole, Fintan: *Children face predictable and nasty fallout from austerity*. [Irish Times](#), 3rd December 2013.

social need and distress exposed by the earlier chapters, such as the weak embedding of social rights in the constitution, law and administration of the state, coupled with state antipathy toward advocacy and finally the ending of investment in community development. We are left with a picture of a relatively prosperous four-fifths of Irish society, but a picture of 10% to 20% children and adults living in poverty, facing lives of cumulative disadvantage across education, housing, welfare, the labour market and their living conditions.

In chapter 4: *Maximising funding impact*, there was an exploration of the values base of modern philanthropic funding, which crosses humanitarian assistance to the post-enlightenment narrative of social reform and ‘the good society’. We know from European and domestic examples how funding programmes, not least small grants, can be effective interventions to address social need. Informants to the research had a range of ideas as how programmes in Ireland could best make them so, suggesting a challenging refocus toward ideas-driven projects with an advocacy dimension and on cutting-edge pilots and solutions.

5.2 Recommendations

This report is designed to be advisory and informative, not prescriptive and recommendations are put forward both in a cautious spirit and in a manner designed to maximise the learning derived from the research and the views of informants. There are three.

First, in examining social need, the picture painted was one of the persistence of ‘traditional’ poverty, with the identification of groups long below the poverty line and continuing to be so; combined with the emergence of new dynamics of poverty (fuel, food, water predicted); the overwhelming of food, homeless and distress services; and the emergence of new poor arising from household and often related utility debt. A number of categories in extreme circumstances were identified (e.g. Travelers, direct provision). With ‘post-austerity austerity’, it is likely that social need will grow in the coming years. For members of Philanthropy Ireland considering where to make choices for their interventions, this presents almost a *Sophie’s choice* type of menu.¹²⁷ In reaching a decision, many possible criteria come into play: the life-threatening nature of situation (suggesting the homeless); squalor (which would suggest assisting the Traveler community, areas of ‘non-regeneration’); early intervention to improve later outcomes (which suggests assisting young children); persistence of social need (e.g. lone parents); those areas of greatest government disinvestment (e.g. disadvantaged communities, Travelers); areas of persistent underinvestment (e.g. mental health); identifiable groups at high risk (e.g. adults and children in direct provision) and so on. Hopefully, chapters 2 and 3 will provide a stronger information base on which informed choices may be made. One way of approaching this issue is to look at those areas where funding decisions in one area would have the most applied, consequential, knock-on impact or multiplier effect in others: this may be the appeal of educational investment for a number of funders. To give one example, campaigns by NGOs such as the Irish Council for Civil Liberties to ensure Irish adherence to minimum human and social rights standards have the advantage of simultaneously impacting a broad range of social policy issues; to give another, Cúltaca-type projects for older people have

¹²⁷ Styron, William: *Sophie’s choice*. New York, Random House, 1979; adapted as film by Alan Pakula (1982), where Sophie was forced to make a choice between who of her two children she could save in wartime Germany.

application to disability; and so on.¹²⁸ Projects that work across a number of sectors also open up the prospect of several funders working together. Accordingly, in considering social need, the recommendation is that funders first devise criteria, based on chapters 2 and 3 above and second, then calculate those lines of funding likely to have most application to and impact on a broader range of social need outside the target group, area or issue funded. This will maximise their value. Some funders may also find it useful to model their funding programmes on those of development NGOs, which combine humanitarian and emergency measures alongside long-term, structural programmes.

Second, in looking at how funding programmes be maximised, especially those concerned with small grants, it is recommended that funders take account of what is known of the impact of grants, especially small grants, from the examination of both European and domestic programmes. This was clearly outlined in 4.1 and elaborated by informants in 4.2. Between them, they suggest a refocus toward projects with an advocacy dimension and toward cutting-edge pilots and solutions. The application of the criteria set down in 4.1 (p.42) will require rigour and discipline. Applying this approach will make grant-giving a much more challenging exercise for both funders and applicants, but holds out the prospect of more impactful outcomes.

Third, it is recommended there be a structured dialogue between Philanthropy Ireland and the voluntary and community sector. This could meet possibly twice a year to focus on issues of concern and examine ways in which they may jointly confront common problems (e.g. end of funding for community development). Attention would need to be given to those groups which should be invited, but they should cover a range of sectors and expertise, but a decision in principle should come first.

¹²⁸ The classic is the campaign of the *Your rights, right now* coalition led by the ICCL on the first Universal Periodic Review by the United Nations Human Rights Council (2011-2012), where the government accepted 62 of the committee's recommendations.

Annex: Letter of invitation to informants

Dear X

Research project *Scoping of areas of need in social justice sphere*

I have been asked by Philanthropy Ireland (www.philanthropy.ie) to carry out scoping research designed to provide useful top-line information for its members as to those areas of social need where it would be most useful for them to focus in the coming years. The areas under consideration include, but are not limited to advocacy, equality, civil liberties, older people, mental health, homelessness, racial justice, young people, human rights, poverty, disability, community development and education (including early education and educational disadvantage). I will be undertaking desk research and speaking to members of Philanthropy Ireland; and individuals, representatives of organisations and commentators with knowledge, perspectives or insights into social justice themes. Philanthropy Ireland is conscious of the current context: the exit of Atlantic Philanthropies, the One Foundation and the Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust; their members' experience of demand for funding greatly exceeding supply; the possibility of co-funding between their members to maximize impact; and their desire to respond to those areas of greatest social need and which could most benefit from their support. I am contacting you to ask you if you would be prepared to give me a small amount of time for a telephone interview to ask you:

- Based on your own knowledge, impressions, perspective and insights, what do you consider to be those areas of social need that could most benefit from philanthropic funding from trusts and foundations? and
- Are there particular approaches which they should take to maximise funding that responds to social need?

I realize that the term 'social need' is a broad one, so it might be helpful to analyse the problem from the perspective of those needs that strike you as most urgent/life-threatening/persistent/unresolved/forgotten or not successfully attended to; those groups most at risk of poverty; the most excluded communities (geographical, spatial or groups); fresh forms of social exclusion; points in the lifecycle of greatest vulnerability (childhood - youth - working age - old) etc. I would also be interested to know how your knowledge of social need is formed (e.g. media, books, reports, voluntary and community organizations, government, academia). In looking at the maximisation of funding, it might be helpful to look at those categories of need which seem to be least funded; those areas where you think funding can make the most difference; and purpose and design of funding (e.g. services, projects, pilots, demonstration models, advocacy, policy, research, learning, dissemination).

You should already have received a letter of introduction from Philanthropy Ireland asking you if you would be able to cooperate with this project. The research is supervised by Eilis Murray, Philanthropy Ireland, 85 Merrion sq, Dublin 2, 676 8751, eilis@philanthropy.ie. The project is to be completed in February 2014. If you could help me here and would be agreeable to take a phone call, please could you let me know by e-mail and I will then call you to arrange a time that would suit you for us to speak. I would be most grateful.

Yours sincerely,

Brian Harvey

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