

**Evaluation  
of  
Alcohol Related Harm Projects  
funded through  
Dormant Accounts Fund**

**Report  
for  
Dormant Accounts Fund**

**15 March 2010**



*turning complex problems into simple solutions*

<b>1 Introduction</b> .....	2
1.1 Dormant Accounts Fund	2
1.2 The Evaluation	7
<b>2 Meeting Project Aims</b> .....	10
2.1 Meeting Dormant Account Fund Measures	10
2.2 Meeting Project Objectives	11
<b>3 Reducing Alcohol Related Harm</b> .....	22
3.1 Overview	22
3.2 Awareness, Attitudes and Alcohol Use	23
3.3 Health and Antisocial Behaviour	30
3.4 Other impacts	33
3.5 Summary	36
<b>4 Effectiveness of Approaches</b> .....	38
4.1 Overview	38
4.2 Involving key stakeholders	38
4.3 Targeting and Involving Participants	42
4.4 Appropriateness of Activities	45
<b>5 Conclusions and Recommendations</b> .....	48
5.1 Conclusions	48
5.2 Recommendations	53
<b>6 Appendices</b> .....	56
6.1 Overview of project types	56

# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Dormant Accounts Fund

**1.1.1** Dormant Accounts are accounts in banks, building societies, An Post, and insurance policies, which have not been used or claimed for 15 years. The Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs has responsibility for the Dormant Accounts Fund. The Dormant Accounts legislation allows this money to be used for programmes and projects which are designed to alleviate poverty and social disadvantage. The Dormant Accounts Fund aims to address disadvantage and promote opportunities for social and economic inclusion. A Dormant Accounts Disbursement Plan has been developed and its main objectives are:

- ◆ to improve the quality of life and reduce isolation for people who are economically or socially disadvantaged
- ◆ To improve opportunities for individuals who are economically or socially disadvantaged to overcome the impediments arising from such disadvantage through deriving appropriate benefit from education
- ◆ To enhance the potential for persons with a disability to play a more active role in society and increase their level of independence.

**1.1.2** Disbursements from the Dormant Accounts Fund target three broad categories of persons:

- ◆ Category A - Those affected by economic and social disadvantage
- ◆ Category B - Those affected by educational disadvantage
- ◆ Category C - Persons with a disability

**1.1.3** Pobal, an independent, not for profit company with charitable status, has been allocated responsibility for administering Categories A and C on behalf of the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs. Pobal focuses on promoting social inclusion, reconciliation and equality through

local social and economic development and manages a range of programmes for Government and the E.U., in addition to the Dormant Accounts Fund. Round 1 funding took place in 2004 - 2005. Round 2 took place in 2006 - 2007. In Round 2, one of the Measures under Category A (Economic and Social Disadvantage) was "Alcohol Related Harm". This measure was intended to facilitate interventions and supports to strengthen community based responses to alcohol related harm. Local voluntary or community groups with experience of working in the area of alcohol related harm were invited to apply for funding in collaboration with appropriate statutory and/or voluntary and community stakeholders in their area (a partnership approach was advised). Locally based national voluntary organisations were also eligible to apply. Proposed projects were to be locally focused and demonstrate complementarity to existing core activities and any existing local and/or regional strategies on alcohol related harm.

**1.1.4** Guidelines indicated that the type of projects which could be funded should be proactive measures designed to contribute to a targeted and measurable reduction in alcohol related harm at local level. Proposals should indicate a multifaceted approach which would include actions such as:

- ◆ Education and awareness raising projects (including amongst parents)
- ◆ Community initiatives to address cultures of binge drinking, underage drinking and tolerance of intoxication
- ◆ Community mobilisation projects such as short brief interventions, help lines, media workshops, debates, promotion of alcohol free venues/facilities for young people, training, etc. (Community mobilisation is an approach that aims to increase public awareness of the particular alcohol problem in a community and to gain public support for policies directed at preventing or reducing the problem - as per the recommendations of the second report of the National Strategic Taskforce on Alcohol 2004).
- ◆ Other appropriate holistic approaches

The funding criteria indicated that applicants must have a strong track record (3 years) of working in the area of alcohol related harm.

**1.1.5** The application and appraisal process was managed by Pobal. The process involved a launch of the measure, open calls for applications (advertised through various media outlets), closed calls (letters sent directly to the relevant parties), information sessions, answering queries about the applications and the process and making decisions about the applications received. In total 104 applications were received. Priority was given to projects which proposed actions proactively designed to contribute to a targeted and measurable reduction in alcohol related harm at a local level, as set out in 1.1.4.

**1.1.6** In total, just over €1 million was allocated to 18 projects in January 2007, for a 3 year period until the end of 2009. (due to their nature some finished before that). The table below outlines the organisations funded to deliver projects (with the type of project funded as described by Pobal in brackets\*) the areas in which they operate, and the amount of funding agreed.

\* Pobal initially categorised projects as Education/Awareness, Conferences, Community Mobilisation, Youth Cafe, or, Publication.

Project Code	Project Promoter	Area of Operation	Amount Awarded (€)		
			Staffing	Operational	Total
3329	The Base Ballyfermot Youth Centre and Childcare (Conference)	Dublin 10	0	15,350 (100%)	15,350
3336	Pairtiocht Inis Eoghain (Community Mobilisation)	Donegal	0	34,348 (100%)	34,348
3341	Balor Development Community Arts Group (Education/Awareness)	Donegal	34,320 (69%)	15,680 (31%)	50,000
3348	Foroige Carrigtwohill Youth Project (Education/Awareness)	Cork	47,487 (95%)	2,813 (5%)	50,000
3355	Pobail Le Cheile, CDP, Teo (Education/Awareness)	Donegal	39,176 (78%)	10,749 (22%)	49,925
3357	Lough Allen Community Development Project (Conference)	Leitrim	0	10,000 (100%)	10,000
3360	Moville & District Family Resource Centre (Education/Awareness)	Donegal	0	49,065 (100%)	49,065
3364	Monaghan Youth Federation (Youth Cafe)	Monaghan	15,000 (30%)	35,000 (70%)	50,000
3368	North West Alcohol Forum (Community Mobilisation)	Donegal	85,333 (43%)	111,000 (57%)	196,333
3369	Comhar Chathair Chorcaí Teo (Publication)	Cork	0	39,500 (100%)	39,500
3375	Tramore Youth and Family Project (Foroige) (Youth Cafe)	Waterford	36,000 (75%)	12,000 (25%)	48,000
3376	North Leitrim Men's Group (Education/Awareness)	Leitrim	40,000 (80%)	10,000 (20%)	50,000
3388	MFG Comhar Dhuibhne (Youth Cafe)	Kerry	62,000 (62%)	38,000 (38%)	100,000
3397	Athboy No Name Club (Education/Awareness)	Meath	0	17,000 (100%)	17,000
3400	Tuam Travellers Education and Development Association (Community Mobilisation)	Galway	22,500 (48%)	24,500 (52%)	47,000
3404	Kilbarrack Coast Community Programme Ltd. (Education/Awareness)	Dublin 5	35,360 (75%)	11,500 (25%)	46,860
3409	North Clondalkin Community Development Programme (Education/Awareness)	Dublin 7	50,000 (57%)	37,000 (43%)	87,000
3425	Foroige (Youth Cafe)	Dublin 12	51,000 (42%)	58,200 (48%)	121,484
	<b>Total</b>		<b>518,176 (49%)</b>	<b>531,705 (51%)</b>	<b>1,061,865</b>

- ◆ There was a wide variation in the amount of funding awarded, from the smallest amount at €15,350 to the Base Ballyfermot Youth Centre in Dublin, to €196,333 to the North West Alcohol Forum in Donegal. The guidelines indicated that groups could apply for between €10,000 and €50,000 with exceptions being made for larger projects which were demonstrably

innovative and made part of a larger community response to alcohol related harm. There were 3 such projects.

- ◆ A high percentage of the overall funding (35.8%) went to projects operating in Donegal, with just over half of this being accounted for by the projects delivered by the North West Alcohol Forum. In fact, 5 out of the 18 projects funded are operating in Donegal. 25.4% of the funding went to the 4 projects operating in Dublin. The remainder was spread among projects in Cork, Leitrim, Monaghan, Waterford, Kerry, Meath and Galway.

	No. Projects	Percentage of Funding
Donegal	5	35.8%
Dublin*	4	25.4%
Kerry	1	9.4%
Cork	2	8.4%
Leitrim	2	5.6%
Monaghan	1	4.7%
Waterford	1	4.5%
Galway	1	4.4%
Meath	1	1.6%

\* 4.4% of funding to Dublin 4, 8.2% to Dublin 7, 1.4% to Dublin 10 and 11.4% to Dublin 12.

- ◆ 37.7% of funding was allocated to 8 education/awareness projects. 30.1% of funding was allocated to 4 Youth Cafes. 26.2% was allocated to 3 community mobilisation projects, 3.7% of funding was allocated to 1 Publication project and 2.4% of funding was allocated to 2 Conferences. Further details of the projects are outlined in section 3.
- ◆ Just under half the funding covered staffing. However, this varied widely from project to project. Six had no salary costs and seven had over 60% of their funding dedicated to staffing.

**1.1.7** Although the groups were notified of funding being awarded in January 2007, the projects have, for various reasons, commenced and progressed at different times. More detail on the projects is provided in section 2 below and in the Appendices.

- 1.1.8** Throughout the funding period, Pobal has monitored projects and provided any support and advice necessary. Projects have submitted six-monthly finance and monitoring reports to Pobal.

## **1.2 The Evaluation**

- 1.2.1** Part of the statutory remit of the Dormant Accounts Board is to review and assess the extent to which the objectives identified in the Dormant Accounts Disbursement Plan have been achieved and the effectiveness of the strategies and disbursements.

- 1.2.2** On behalf of the Dormant Accounts Board, Pobal sought tenders for the evaluation of the impact of the funding measure for Supports to Projects Tackling Alcohol Related Harm. The purpose of this is to evaluate the impact of the measures to date with the following objectives:

- ◆ Review progress made to date by the beneficiaries against the agreed programme of activities and the extent to which the objectives they have set have been achieved
- ◆ The effectiveness of the strategies used by the groups in implementing their projects, identifying in particular the most effective types of strategies for tackling alcohol related harm
- ◆ The effectiveness of the funding, including whether they have resulted in impacts that, but for this funding, might not have been achieved.

- 1.2.3** The evaluation was undertaken in two stages. Stage 1, an interim evaluation, was undertaken from November 2008 and involved the following:

- ◆ Consultation with all project promoters
- ◆ Consideration of project applications and Pobal records
- ◆ Consideration of any project monitoring forms

- ◆ Consideration of any project evaluations available
- ◆ Consultation with project beneficiaries, where possible
- ◆ Consultation with key stakeholders in each of the area where projects were being delivered.
- ◆ Consideration of appropriate evaluative methods to be used in the second stage of the evaluation process and against which outcomes can be measured at the final evaluation stage
- ◆ Preparation of an interim evaluation report which outlined:
  - The overall context - an overview of alcohol misuse in Ireland, the impacts of alcohol misuse and the main policy and objectives to address alcohol misuse outlined in the National Strategic Taskforce on Alcohol Related Harm
  - an overview of project activities and impacts to date - why they came about, who they are targeting, their main activities, how they are structured, and the main impacts and lessons learned
  - Conclusions and recommendations
    - Key impacts to date in terms of improved knowledge, awareness, attitudes and actions towards alcohol use
    - Wider impacts in terms of health, crime and antisocial behaviour
    - Effectiveness of project delivery and structures - lessons learned and factors affecting delivery
    - Fit with policy and addressing needs
    - Value for Money
    - How impacts could and should be measured

**1.2.4 Stage 2, the final evaluation, involved gathering information from project promoters in relation to:**

- ◆ Advising project promoters in relation to self evaluation processes and clarifying the nature of information required for the Stage 2 external evaluation process.
- ◆ Project activities - an update on the interim evaluation report

- ◆ Project impacts - in terms of raised awareness of the issue of alcohol related harm, changes in attitude/behaviour, wider impacts (health, crime, antisocial behaviour, other impacts)
- ◆ Delivery structures and key learning points
- ◆ Feedback from key stakeholders (project participants, statutory, voluntary and community representatives, etc.). Following the interim evaluation the consultants prepared questionnaires for stakeholders to complete and forwarded these to project promoters. A copy of the Questionnaire is included in the Appendices.
- ◆ Overview of project budgets.

12 out of the 18 funded projects provided the information that was sought. Details of those who did, and of the contact made with all projects, are included in the Appendices.

**1.2.5** This final evaluation report highlights our key findings in line with the evaluation objectives. Details on the wider context can be found in section 2 of the Interim Evaluation report. This report is structured as follows:

- ◆ Section 2 - Meeting project objectives
- ◆ Section 3 - Addressing issues around alcohol related harm
- ◆ Section 4 - Effectiveness of the approaches adopted
- ◆ Section 5 - Conclusions and recommendations

## 2 Meeting Project Aims

### 2.1 Meeting Dormant Account Fund Measures

2.1.1 Overall, the projects have generally fitted well with the objectives of the Dormant Account Fund Measures and with wider policy relating to dealing with alcohol misuse and alcohol related harm.

- ◆ Three key aims of the Strategy Taskforce on Alcohol are: to reduce consumption (including binge drinking); to provide greater protection for children in relation to them being pressured to drink; and to prevent and reduce the risk of alcohol related harm in a variety of settings and situations. The projects funded by the measure address these issues by providing alternatives to the pub/drinking culture for young people and by raising awareness and educating young people/new communities/the community as a whole about the impacts of alcohol misuse. In turn, it is hoped that the measures taken will pay a part in preventing/reducing the risk of alcohol related harm. However, this is only likely to be evident in the long term. In terms of the 10 main objectives of the Taskforce Strategy:
  - There has been some work undertaken by projects in relation to controlling the promotion of alcohol at local level through work with vintners and sports associations and the community as a whole, or through event associated elements of projects (e.g. the Lenten Campaign). **Perhaps this is one element where more work could be undertaken and is an issue which requires a strategic approach at a wider regional level.**
  - None of the projects are working towards regulating availability. However, some have commented on their work with the Gardai at a local level to address the national ID issue.
  - The projects generally aim to enhance society's capacity to respond to alcohol related harm at local level through raising awareness, providing information and advice and, in some cases, training.
  - By undertaking work to reduce alcohol misuse and therefore reduce the impacts of alcohol misuse (e.g. antisocial behaviour) the projects are contributing to the protection of public, private and working environments.
  - Some of the projects are aiming to promote responsibility within the alcohol beverage industry through initiatives such as the Responsible Serving of Alcohol. However, it can be difficult to encourage publicans

and retailers (especially those most likely to serve drink irresponsibly) to become involved.

- All of the projects are providing information and education on alcohol misuse and its impacts in their local area through a range of mechanisms including publications, drama, work with schools, etc.
  - The Dormant Accounts Funding, and therefore the projects, are not aiming to put in place effective treatment services. This is something which the HSE is better placed to do.
  - The project promoters supported by Dormant Accounts Funding are all non-governmental organisations and they tend to work with local government representatives where appropriate.
  - The projects have not focused on research, however, they are monitoring their own progress and impacts through self evaluation activity and through this evaluation.
  - One of the issues many of the projects hoped to address was that of drink driving. This was done through information and use of drama and other media.
- ◆ The aim of the Measure under which Dormant Accounts Funding is administered by Pobal is to facilitate interventions and supports to strengthen community based responses to alcohol related harm. All of the projects funded were community driven with input where necessary from key statutory agencies.

**2.1.2** Details on each of the project's origins and aims are included in the earlier Interim report (i.e. the project promoter, why projects came about, who projects targeted, what Dormant Accounts Funding was used for and how the project would be delivered). This section briefly outlines the extent to which projects met their own objectives.

## **2.2 Meeting Project Objectives**

**2.2.1** The bullet points below provide a broad overview of the extent to which projects met their key aims. Whilst all are different, many share similarities in terms of what they are trying to achieve and the approaches they are adopting. Pobal had categorised the projects in terms of Education/Awareness, Youth Cafes, Community Mobilisation and Publications or Conferences. In practice, it appears that most undertake some or all of these elements. The projects have generally been

developed in response to needs identified by the project promoters or others within the community, through knowledge gleaned by undertaking work in the area, or through research specifically looking at the issue of alcohol misuse

### 2.2.2 The following bullet points provide a brief overview of projects and the extent to which they met their broad aims.

- ◆ **The Base, Ballyfermot** (awarded 15,530) - The funding allowed the Base to run activities for young people “at risk of alcohol misuse” including peer education, a conference, design of logos and distribution of information. These activities reflected what the Base intended to do, however, fewer were involved than anticipated. It was anticipated that the project would result in young people learning about the dangers of alcohol and not be affected by negative peer pressure, and that they would develop organisational skills. There was a view that awareness has been raised and that this would result in changed attitudes towards the misuse of alcohol for those involved. However, the project has shown that this work requires a much longer term, persistent approach. Longitudinal monitoring would be required to establish impacts on health and quality of life.
- ◆ **Pairtiocht Inis Eoghain, Donegal** (awarded 34,438) - The funding allowed the Partnership to provide training and support for the immigrant community as well as the translation and publication of a guide for parents on teenage drinking. 5,000 booklets were translated and produced in 4 languages. Very little had been done with ethnic minority residents in the past and there had been concerns about alcohol misuse. A range of groups were involved in the project. It was anticipated that the work would raise awareness of the impacts of alcohol misuse and equip parents with the coping skills to deal with possible alcohol misuse. Those involved indicated that the project has raised awareness and knowledge of the impacts of alcohol misuse and that the parenting approach worked well.
- ◆ **Balor Development Community Arts Group, Donegal** (awarded 50,000). The funding enabled the group to run an alcohol education project in conjunction with the schools, which involved teachers and pupils and used drama workshops, poster design, story writing, and a showcase event. Alcohol misuse among young people had been considered a serious problem in the area and it was hoped that a programme of this kind would raise awareness and change attitudes and behaviour. Feedback has indicated that the project has been successful in raising awareness of the consequences of alcohol misuse and the dangers of binge drinking, by looking at the impacts of alcohol in a range of family, community and work life circumstances. It also challenged perceptions and led to a better

understanding of legal issues around alcohol sales and consumption. Changes in attitude and behaviour of those involved are likely in the long term but more widespread, continuous and persistent work of this kind is required for real benefits to be realised in the area.

- ◆ **Foroige Carrigtwohill Youth Project, Cork** (awarded 50,000). The funding enabled Foroige, the SVP Family Resource Centre and the local school to come together to target young women aged 15 - 22 who were at risk of misusing alcohol and increase their awareness of the dangers of alcohol through peer educational programmes, including personal development, coping skills, parenting skills, work/education skills. There had been concerns about binge drinking among young women in the area and it was anticipated that the project would increase awareness about the dangers, which in turn would result in changed attitudes and behaviour. It was also anticipated that participants would be better linked to education, training or work and act as positive role models for others. Feedback has indicated that the project has raised awareness of the impacts of alcohol misuse (physically and in relation to quality of life) and enabled young women to make more informed decisions about alcohol use. It has introduced participants to alternative activities and several have indicated reductions in alcohol intake. Relationships have been developed with youth workers and activity providers and parents have been better able to deal with their childrens' alcohol misuse. Participants have gained valuable life skills.
- ◆ **Pobail Le Cheile, CDP, Teo, Donegal** (awarded 49,925). The funding enabled the organisation to deliver projects aiming to raise awareness around alcohol misuse in The Yard (alcohol free venue for young people). This included drama, the production of a DVD, multi-media work, exhibitions, peer leadership, diversionary activities for those at risk of alcohol misuse, a Lenten Live Alcohol Free challenge, work with schools in preparing SPHE modules on alcohol awareness, a survey for parents, substance awareness facilitator training, and the delivery of Responsible Serving of Alcohol for licensees. There had been concerns about alcohol misuse among young people and resulting crime and antisocial behaviour, as well as alcohol related road accidents. It was anticipated that this project would raise awareness of the issues around alcohol misuse and tackle perceptions about alcohol use. Feedback indicated a much greater awareness of the impacts of alcohol misuse among young people and the community in general. The Lenten campaign was considered successful. The diversionary activities were well attended. However, it did prove difficult to involve licensees in the RSA programme.
- ◆ **Lough Allen Community Development Project, Leitrim** (awarded 10,000). The funding was originally going to be used for an alcohol awareness weekend conference. However, following personnel changes within the organisation a new member of staff suggested that the funding

could achieve a better outcome if it was used to target young people in schools, with the support of the NW Regional Drugs Taskforce Drug and Alcohol Youth Worker. The funding was then used to deliver weekly youth work sessions exploring alcohol misuse followed by a residential weekend for participants and drama workshops, culminating in a community drama event. There had been problems with young people misusing alcohol in the area and it was anticipated that this project would raise awareness of the effects of excessive drinking and would result in changed attitudes and actions. Feedback indicated that the project raised awareness of the implications of alcohol misuse, demonstrated to the community what issues are important to young people in relation to alcohol misuse, and developed links with young people in the community. It also resulted in community development approaches being accepted as a way of addressing issues of concern in the area.

- ◆ **Moville and District Family Resource Centre** (awarded 49,065). The funding enabled the centre to run a range of activities to raise awareness about alcohol misuse, building on the Centre's existing work to tackle the issue. Activities included a community audit, parenting courses, a drama project, an art project, and a Responsible Serving of Alcohol project. The Centre was also going to facilitate a conference and a week of events but felt that this would not have been well accepted by stakeholders (due to "weary acceptance"). There had been concerns about drug and alcohol misuse in the area and the project aimed to raise awareness and to influence the wider environment and to involve young people as part of the solution. Feedback has indicated that the project has raised awareness of alcohol misuse within the community and opened up the discussion among young people and the wider community. It has also given rise to a desire among the community to develop more services for young people (funding has been sought to develop diversionary programmes for those at risk) and a counselling service (for which the centre has obtained funding). Though it did take time and perseverance, the Centre aims to continue its work in relation to addressing alcohol misuse by launching its family conversation tool (about alcohol misuse, maintaining contact with the NW AF, providing further parenting courses, engaging young people in personal development and encouraging the community to take a more responsible attitude to alcohol.
- ◆ **Monaghan Youth Federation** (awarded 50,000). The funding allowed the Federation to establish a consortium to support the development of a youth cafe and deliver projects to examine the impacts of alcohol within the community. Activities included an awareness campaign, peer education training and programmes on drugs and alcohol, mental health awareness, personal development, etc. The cafe provided a drop on 3 evenings a week for young people. There were concerns about the lack of youth facilities for young people and about public disorder offences and depression among young people as a result of alcohol misuse. It was anticipated that the

project would provide young people with somewhere to go and would raise awareness of the impacts of alcohol misuse with a view to changing attitudes and behaviour. Feedback indicated that the youth cafe fills a huge gap in terms of provision for young people. The cafe provides a good diversion from drinking culture. Activities have raised awareness of alcohol misuse and there has been some evidence of a change in attitudes and reductions in underage drinking in public areas, as well as a reduction in crime and antisocial behaviour.

- ◆ **The North West Alcohol Forum** (awarded 196,333). The North West Alcohol Forum is a multi sectoral community initiative with representatives from a range of sectors involved in management and treatment of people affected directly or indirectly by alcohol (e.g. H.S.E., V.E.C., Gardai, Vintners, Foroige). The Forum formed following the first report of the Strategic Task Force on Alcohol 2002 and its overall aim is to assist in the reduction and prevention of alcohol related harm in the area through community mobilisation. It published a report "A Portrait of Our Drinking " - June 2004 and has developed a 5 year Alcohol Action Plan (2005 - 2010) which complements existing provision and has been approved for HSE funding for the elements of the work associated with the remit of the H.S.E.. The emphasis on the plan is:

- the community are central to prevention and harm reduction
- focus on work with families and young people and those working in the areas of community, education, health and justice
- awareness raising, intervention and evaluation
- tackling alcohol-related problems such as crime, antisocial behaviour, injury, trauma and absenteeism

Funding from the Dormant Accounts Fund has enabled the forum to address issues which do not directly fall within the remit of the H.S.E., i.e. those linked to community mobilisation. The Action Plan targets the whole of the North West region including Donegal, Sligo, Leitrim and West Cavan (population 222,762).

Activities undertaken with the funding included:

- Lobbying to reduce promoting alcohol at underage events
- Strengthening Families Peer Parenting
- Surveys with post primary school students
- Alcohol and Drug Spring School
- Alcohol Training Programme for voluntary/community groups
- Awareness raising

- Small community grants
- The employment of a community worker
- Exploring cross border initiatives
- Straight Talk booklet (a guide for parents on teenage drinking)

Feedback has indicated that the funding has enabled the employment of a community worker who in turn has been able to help a range of local groups in the area. In addition, training has led to the development of community skills in dealing with alcohol misuse (which some of the other DAF funded projects have availed of). The strategic approach as allowed for a wide range of information to be gathered in the area, strategic lobbying, and for a widespread awareness campaign to be adopted on buses and through the press, etc. The focus is on developing structures within which to address the problem at more local level and to adopt a community wide approach. The NWAFF has linked with many organisations in undertaking its work and details relating to this are noted in the sections below.

- ◆ **Comhar Chathair Chorcai Teo (Cork City Partnership)** (awarded 39,500). The funding enabled the Partnership to translate information on alcohol misuse into 4 main languages spoken by the immigrant community in Cork. 10,000 leaflets and a directory on Drug and Alcohol Services was produced. In addition, 32 targeted individuals participated in training on brief interventions. There were concerns about alcohol related harm in the area, particularly by the growing immigrant population, who were not being targeted in local drug/alcohol prevention strategies and that there was no information available in any language other than English. It was anticipated that the project would result in an increased awareness of the health risks associated with alcohol consumption and an increase in harm reduction measures and uptake of services, resulting in a potential reduction in the harm associated with alcohol consumption. It is hard to establish the impact of information dissemination. However, those involved in the training have indicated an increased awareness.
- ◆ **Tramore Youth and Family Project** (awarded 48,000). The funding has enabled the Project to establish the Youth Booth (alcohol free youth cafe), within which young people are encouraged to discuss alcohol misuse. Where there are concerns about young people they are referred to key relevant agencies. The town has recently experienced rapid population growth with a large teenage population and few facilities for them. Alcohol misuse among young people has been identified as an issue of increasingly concern by local schools, Gardai and other youth serving agencies. The need for a safe alcohol free place for youth to meet was identified by young people, parents and local agencies in a needs analysis undertaken in 2004. It was anticipated that the cafe would provide somewhere for young people to go, where issues around alcohol misuse could be discussed and that this

would result in changed attitude and behaviour. Feedback has indicated that the cafe provides an excellent alternative for young people, there is less hanging around the streets, school attendance has improved, the cafe provides opportunities to examine healthy living/diet/exercise, young people where were previously at risk are becoming involved in the running of the cafe. However, there were views that some young people at risk still need to be targeted.

- ◆ **North Leitrim Men's Group** (awarded 50,000). The funding enabled the group to undertake alcohol education and prevention initiatives targeted young men aged 18-35 through the local GAA club and youth forum. This included encouraging the use of non alcohol events. Activities included health awareness programmes, providing brief interventions, working with key health and justice statutory agents and voluntary and community groups, developing and delivering alcohol training and education. Research undertaken by the group had highlighted concerns about alcohol misuse among young men in the area and resulting violent and antisocial behaviour. It was anticipated that the project would result in better attitudes to alcohol use and promotion, more alternatives to drinking being offered, and that this would result in reduced consumption and reduce antisocial behaviour associated with alcohol misuse. Feedback indicated that, while there were positive impacts for those involved, creating awareness of harmful effects of alcohol and impacts on individuals, families and communities is a slow process and needs to be integrated into mainstream events and educational activities at every available opportunity.
  
- ◆ **MFG Comhar Dhuibhne - Kerry** (awarded 100,000). the funding enabled the group to develop a youth cafe in the area which would incorporate peer mentoring, counselling, homework support, etc. . Activities included discos, quizzes, pool, table, tennis, soccer, crafts, talent shows, salsa, photography, posters, writing, etc. Parents are involved in volunteering. Where there are concerns about alcohol misuse, referrals are made to key agencies. A wide range of young people attended who would not normally mix with each other. The need for an alcohol free youth cafe in the area was identified following research carried out by the Kerry Diocesan Youth Service (a member of the Klub Kerry Alcohol Forum), and consideration of statistics relating to alcohol misuse in the area as well as feedback from local young people. There were also concerns about antisocial behaviour and health risks associated with alcohol misuse. It was anticipated that young people would have a safe place to gather and would have a greater awareness and understanding of the dangers of alcohol misuse. Feedback has indicated that the cafe has been very successful in providing an alternative venue. It has kept young people off the streets and created a diversion to drinking. It has empowered young people and has linked them to other community activities. Some have indicated a reduction in alcohol intake. Drink related antisocial behaviour has declined.

- ◆ **Athboy No Name Club, Meath** (awarded 17,000). The funding enabled the club to deliver a series of activities to address alcohol issues. Activities included a Safe Talk programme (examining issues between alcohol misuse and depression), peer and relationship training, safe driving, first aid, therapeutic art, sexual health talks, street theatre, talent shows and quizzes. Binge drinking was perceived as a problem in the area with concerns about progression into drug misuse. There were also associated problems with antisocial behaviour and criminal damage. Young people in the area themselves identified the need for an alternative to the “pub culture” due to links between alcohol misuse and suicide. The project aimed to empower young people with the coping skills to deal with the effects of alcohol misuse. Feedback has indicated changes in attitude to alcohol misuse for the better, changes in drinking patterns, and suicide aversion.
  
- ◆ **Tuam Travellers Education & Development Association** (awarded 47,000). The funding enabled the Association to facilitate courses designed to educate and assist Travellers with alcohol related problems in their community. Activities included developing a Code of Practice and Good Ethics, workshops on the effects of women drinking while pregnant, implementing the RSA programme, a young people’s programme, youth leadership training, health promotion training, and adapting health promotion information to make it more culturally appropriate. Alcohol was identified as a key issue for young Travellers through a needs analysis conducted with them. The project aimed to raise awareness of the issue and as a result change attitudes and behaviour. Feedback indicated that the programme did raise awareness and has the potential to change attitudes.
  
- ◆ **Kilbarrack Coast Community Programme** (awarded 46,860). The funding enabled the group to deliver a peer education model. This involved developing 5 short films on the issue of alcohol misuse. Posters and leaflets were also distributed and the films were submitted to the youth media and democracy conference in DIT. Research had highlighted the need to tackle the problem of alcohol misuse among 10 - 18 year olds which resulted in antisocial behaviour. Feedback has indicated that the programme has had an impact on alcohol consumption. Good relationships have been established with key stakeholders. Some young people have expressed an interest in becoming peer leaders in the future.
  
- ◆ **North Clondalkin Community Development Programme, Dublin** (awarded 87,000). The funding enabled the group to address alcohol related harm through education and awareness raising projects (including among parents and in schools), and community initiatives to address the culture of binge drinking and underage drinking. The project focused on children aged 11-13 and their parents. The problem of alcohol related harm and underage drinking has grown considerably in North Clondalkin over recent years, in line with the rest of the country, but with the additional problem of a lack of role

models, a level of gang activity and rising antisocial behaviour. It was anticipated that the project would result in increased awareness and knowledge of the effects and consequences of early alcohol use among children and parents.

- ◆ **National Youth Development Organisation - Westport, County Mayo** (awarded 121,484). The funding enabled the group to establish a youth cafe that would be a catalyst for promoting a culture of alcohol free entertainment, communication and celebration. Young people in the area had identified a need for a youth facility. Feedback has indicated that young people have appeared to enjoy structured activities within a centre which is considered to be their own space. Young people are taking more and more control on the committee and coming up with their own ideas.

**2.2.3** In general, the projects aimed to increase awareness of the impacts of alcohol misuse and most have achieved some success in doing so. Many also aimed to reduce alcohol consumption and in some cases indicated that there was evidence to suggest that this had been the case. In practice, evidence tends to suggest that consolidating change in attitudes to alcohol will require ongoing long term work and putting out a consistent message over a longer period.

**2.2.4** In most cases participants were young people. However, some did specifically target ethnic minorities. While it was deemed appropriate to target young people as early as possible, there was a general view that awareness raising should be targeted at the community as a whole to encourage a more appropriate attitude and behaviour to alcohol misuse at community level, which in turn should have a positive knock on effect for young people. Some anecdotal evidence suggested that young people affected by projects were starting to question their parents' drinking habits.

**2.2.5** The North West Alcohol Forum adopted a more strategic approach in terms of raising awareness among the community in general, with awareness campaigns on buses, strategic lobbying, surveys, and training community and voluntary workers in alcohol awareness, who in turn would work with communities at a local level. The NWAFF worked with a wide range of organisations throughout the region it targeted, some of which were organisations receiving DAF funding. However, this work appears to be additional and the consultants do not

feel that there has been any duplication, as the work of the NWF has complemented other funded projects and vice versa. Representatives of smaller DAF funded groups are kept informed of NWF work and opportunities.

**2.2.6** Unsurprisingly, there were indications that some projects did not access all young people at risk of alcohol misuse in an area, especially those who were hardest to reach. However, it was acknowledged that the projects did not have the resources, or would have been equipped, to deal with participants with major drink problems, or with a larger number of participants. This is probably the responsibility of health and social services bodies and projects such as those funded through Dormant Accounts should more realistically seek to minimise the number of young people moving into problem drinking. The fact that the projects have diverted many young people from potential alcohol misuse is a worthwhile outcome in itself.

**2.2.7** It was generally thought that the projects achieved their objectives as best they could within the short time they have operated but that this work required a much more long term and persistent approach. In terms of numbers of beneficiaries most projects met or almost met their targets.

- ◆ Youth Cafes and Peer Education projects such as Balor, Carrigtwohill, Pobail Le Cheile, Lough Allen, Merville, Monaghan, Tramore, MFG, Athboy, Kilbarrack, attracted as many young people as they anticipated and achieved positive outcomes in terms of raising awareness and changing attitudes and behaviour. This worked particularly well when such organisations worked in conjunction with schools and other existing initiatives.
- ◆ While those projects which produced information such as Pairtiocht Inis Eoghain, Comhar Chathair Chorcaí Teo indicated that they disseminated as much information as they planned to it is difficult to know to what extent this resulted in people taking on board what had been publicised and how much information actually went to those who needed it most and as a result benefited.

## **3 Reducing Alcohol Related Harm**

### **3.1 Overview**

#### **3.1.1 The key impacts anticipated from projects of this kind include:**

- ◆ Increased awareness and understanding of the impacts of alcohol misuse
- ◆ Changes in attitude and behaviour relating to alcohol misuse
- ◆ Improved health and well-being
- ◆ Reductions in antisocial behaviour associated with alcohol misuse
- ◆ Reductions in admissions to hospital for issues related to alcohol misuse

#### **3.1.2 Overall, it is quite difficult to measure many of these impacts at this time and within an overarching evaluation of this kind for a range of reasons:**

- ◆ Many of the impacts are only likely to be realised in the long term
- ◆ Systems are not in place to measure the health impacts or impacts on crime and antisocial behaviour. Statistics are not always available at a very local level and in general they do not allow for the impacts of one project/activity alone to be separated out. This is problematic when there are other projects operating in the area which could have an impact (such as Garda Youth Diversionary Schemes). It is also worth noting that Gardai statistics highlight a number of offences which could be alcohol related, but are not necessarily included within their "alcohol related" categories. These include road traffic accidents, injuries, etc.
- ◆ There are other factors/initiatives which may have influenced attitudes and behaviours and it is difficult to separate these out from the impacts of the projects themselves. Where there are a wide range of factors which affect levels of alcohol consumption which are beyond the control of the individual projects (such as tourists coming to the area, events, etc.), changes in attitudes to alcohol are difficult to link to any specific initiative

- 3.1.3** Clearly, it is much easier to assess the impact of some approaches than others. For example, it is possible to survey participants of a particular ongoing project/initiative. However, it is very difficult to survey people “who might have seen a publication” or to measure the impacts on those who attended a one-off event, talk or seminar. Such activities may have a catalytic effect by encouraging participants to investigate further, or to be more open minded to other sources of information. This highlights the importance of building in aspects of monitoring evaluation to a project from day one.
- 3.1.4** Through feedback gained as part of this evaluation we have been able to identify some key impacts of the projects in relation to increased awareness of the impacts of alcohol misuse, changes in attitude towards alcohol misuse, changes in alcohol use, and as a consequence changes and potential changes in health and well-being and levels of antisocial behaviour associated with alcohol misuse. Details of feedback obtained and questionnaire returns from project promoters are included in the Appendices. Some of the projects provided very good feedback on activities, outcomes and observations. These included Pairtiocht Inis Eoghain, Carrigtwohill, Lough Allen CDA, Moville, Monaghan, North West Alcohol Forum, Tramore, North Leitrim Mens Group, MFG, Athboy No Name, Tuam Travellers and Kilbarrack.

## **3.2 Awareness, Attitudes and Alcohol Use**

- 3.2.1** As noted in section 2 above, most of the projects have created an increased awareness of the impacts of alcohol misuse. This third party feedback has been gained from project promoters and other community stakeholders such as Gardai, youth workers, schools, community groups, drug and alcohol workers, etc. This in turn has had, or is starting to have, an impact in terms of drinking behaviour. Most of those consulted indicated that it would be unrealistic to expect abstinence but that a reduction would be a positive outcome.
- 3.2.2** As part of the evaluation we advised project promoters to ask stakeholders and participants to complete questionnaires relating to the changes in awareness and alcohol consumption as a result of the project. The findings from these

questionnaires are included in the Appendices. In general the results of those surveys undertaken have indicated that there has been increased awareness and improvements in attitude and behaviour.

**3.2.3** Feedback was also obtained directly from stakeholders and, in broad terms, the impacts in relation to raised awareness and changes in alcohol consumption are noted below.

**3.2.4 Raised Awareness.** Practically all of the projects have indicated raised awareness of the impacts of alcohol misuse among their target group (which was mainly young people). For example:

- ◆ Balor Development Community Arts Group
  - Pupils now better understand the serious consequences which could arise from alcohol misuse and think about the impacts of alcohol misuse, not only on the person themselves, but on others surrounding them
  - The project helped young people realise that it is OK to drink socially once they reach 18 years old, but that binge drinking and misusing alcohol can affect every part of life from work to family and finances.
  - The programme really challenged the pupils stereotype of what an alcoholic looks like
  - The programme has led to a better understanding of the legal issues around young people drinking in pubs.
  - Representatives from the schools involved in the project were very supportive of it and highlighted the need to target young people as early as possible, to ensure that they are aware of the risks of alcohol misuse before they get to a point where they are involved in pub/alcohol cultures
- ◆ Carrigtwohill
  - Through participation in programmes the girls have developed an increased awareness of the dangers associated with alcohol misuse and its affects on the body. They now have knowledge and information to help them make informed decisions about alcohol use.
- ◆ Pobail Le Cheile

- Questionnaires filled in by pupils have highlighted an increased awareness of the issues around alcohol related harm
- ◆ Lough Allen Community Development Project
  - Young people gained great awareness about sensible drinking and the implications of excessive drinking to themselves and others
- ◆ North West Alcohol Forum
  - The work of the Forum focuses on raising awareness at a wider community level through widespread advertising and promotional campaigns. In addition, through training and its connections with a wide range of organisations it is raising awareness among those who are likely to be in contact with people at risk of alcohol misuse.
- ◆ Athboy
  - Participants now have a greater awareness of the dangers of alcohol abuse and drug abuse among the younger population and the damage it can do to physical and mental and emotional health.
- ◆ MFG
  - Young people at the youth cafe do seem to be aware of the dangers of alcohol abuse, but there is an acceptance among them that a certain amount of drinking amongst young people is inevitable.
- ◆ The Base, Moville, Monaghan, Tuam and Kilbarrack all also noted raised awareness of the impacts of alcohol misuse.

**3.2.5** The questionnaire feedback from participants and stakeholders indicated the following in relation to raised awareness. (Further details are included in the Appendices).

- ◆ Participants (129 questionnaires returned). Across all projects:
  - 72% indicated that they were a lot more aware of the impacts of alcohol misuse on health and 23% indicated that they were a little more aware
  - 74% indicated that they were a lot more aware of the impacts of alcohol misuse on their lifestyle and 22% indicated that they were a little more aware
  - 80% indicated that they were a lot more aware of the impacts of alcohol misuse on home life and 20% indicated that they were a little more aware

- 67% indicated that they were a lot more aware of the impact of alcohol misuse on friends lives and 26% indicated that they were a little more aware
  - 71% indicated that they were a lot more aware of the impacts of alcohol misuse on the community in general and 22% indicated that they were a little more aware.
  - 46% indicated that they thought their friends and family were a lot more aware of the impacts of alcohol misuse and 43% indicated that their friends and family were a little more aware
  - 44% indicated that they thought the community were a lot more aware of the impacts of alcohol misuse and 40% indicated that they thought the community as a whole were a little more aware.
- ◆ Other Stakeholders (39 questionnaires returned). Across all projects:
- 72% indicated that they thought that the projects had increases awareness of the impacts of alcohol misuse among participants a lot, and 18% indicated that the projects had increased awareness of the impacts of alcohol misuse among participants a little.
  - 28% indicated that they thought the projects had raised awareness of the impacts of alcohol misuse among young people in the area in general a lot, and 67% indicated that they thought the projects had raised awareness of the impacts of alcohol misuse among young people in the area in general a little.
  - 21% indicated that they thought the projects had raised awareness of the impacts of alcohol misuse among the community in general a lot, and 59% indicated that they thought the projects had raised awareness of the impacts of alcohol misuse among the community in general a little.

**3.2.6 Changes in Attitude and Behaviour.** Many of the projects indicated positive changes in attitude among participants and in some cases the wider community. Some also indicated that there was a reduction in alcohol consumption among participants. For example:

- ◆ Tuam
  - The project has instilled a positive change in young travellers through raising awareness of the issues and promoting discussion among the community.
- ◆ Lough Allen

- The project provided an open forum for discussions around issues such as safety and vulnerability which changed attitudes to drinking habits.
- ◆ **Tramore**
  - While at the cafe, young people do not have to face the challenge of peer pressure and can be open about their social lives and have real discussions about attitudes towards the use of alcohol. This has led to changes in attitude and behaviour.
- ◆ **MFG**
  - Although some users of the cafe continue to drink alcohol, members are reported to drink less since the cafe has provided them with an alternative option for socialising together.
  - The cafe has introduced an alternative cultural option for socialising for young people, i.e., having a coffee together as opposed to an alcoholic drink. Project promoters have highlighted a notable change in behaviour relating to alcohol use in the area.
  - The project has been successful in creating an alternative space for young people that is both accessible and affordable. It is extremely popular among young people and has succeeded in attracting good numbers. somewhere where young people could just be - not be forced to do activities
- ◆ **Athboy**
  - Project promoters highlighted some individual impacts in terms of attitudes to drinking, changes in drinking patterns and positive health and well-being outcomes. These were due to their involvement in the club and its activities.
- ◆ **Kilbarrack**
  - Whilst young people do not totally abstain, they have said that they are more aware of the dangers and effects of alcohol consumption and this has affected the amount of alcohol they drink
- ◆ Carrigtwohill, Monaghan Youth Federation and Comhar Dhuibhne, also noted reductions in alcohol intake among participants

**3.2.7** Most of those consulted indicated that it would be totally unrealistic to expect a project of this kind to result in total abstinence. However, in general, the projects have a deterrent effect by increasing awareness of the impacts of alcohol misuse on individuals, families and the community as a whole.

This in turn contributes to a reduction in alcohol misuse, and in particular binge drinking, by those who had not yet become habitual drinkers. This in turn has resulted, or is likely to result, in improved health and well-being and reductions in antisocial behaviour.

**3.2.8** Given the nature and extent of the problem it was acknowledged that projects of this kind can only achieve so much with the resources they have. It was highlighted that projects of this kind will not really affect those with serious alcohol problems, however they can cause those with serious problems to be referred to agencies which can help them.

- ◆ Monaghan - the grant was excellent but not enough to make as big an impact as the project would have liked. Some of the young people engaging needed further specialist intervention, such as counselling, that the project was unable to provide or access for them. Additional services need to be linked with the project such as counselling services, parenting courses, drop in sessions with Juvenile Liaison Officer/local guard
- ◆ Tramore - Feedback from the Waterford Substance Misuse Team highlighted concerns that not all of those who could benefit were being targeted and that perhaps this could be done through outreach work to reach the most troubled young people.

**3.2.9** In each area, many of the youth service workers indicated that, while young people presented as the main concern associated with alcohol misuse, (in local areas and in Ireland as a whole) the problem is one which affects society right across the board. Steps also need to be taken target the community as a whole around the issue of alcohol misuse. Dormant Accounts funding caused this to be undertaken in some areas including:

- ◆ Merville
  - The project opened up discussions about the issue within the wider community
- ◆ Pobail Le Cheile
  - The Responsible Serving of Alcohol programme was supported by licensees and feedback indicated that they thought it informative and interesting. However, to a certain extent, those with the main problem in terms of selling drink to young people were not as involved. At present

there is no automatic national ID system and this is hampering publicans who are trying to be responsible. The group plans to have discussions with the Gardai and vintners regarding checking and applying procedures in future.

- ◆ Lough Allen Community Development Project
  - The project highlighted to the community what issues relating to alcohol use are important and current to young people in the area
  - Many of the discussions related to the behaviour of drunken adults and how this affects young people. This led to a shift in focus from young person to adult and challenged perceptions of alcohol awareness

However, in most cases wider social attitudes to alcohol were thought to require more attention.

**3.2.10** The questionnaire feedback from participants and stakeholders indicated the following in relation to changes in attitude and behaviour. (Further details are included in the Appendices).

- ◆ Participants (129 questionnaire returns). Across all the projects:
  - 50% of participants indicated that they drink less often
  - 35% of participants indicated that they drink less at home
  - 43% of participants indicated that they drink less on social occasions
  - 43% of participants indicated that they binge drink less often
  - 33% of participants indicated that they have stopped binge drinking
  - 12% of participants indicated that they have stopped drinking
- ◆ Stakeholders (39 questionnaire returns). Across all projects:
  - ◆ 54% indicated that they thought the projects had resulted in reductions in drinking among participants and 59% indicated that they thought the projects had resulted in reductions in binge drinking among participants
  - ◆ 15% indicated that they thought the projects had resulted in reductions in drinking among young people in the area in general and 26% indicated that they thought the projects had resulted in reductions in binge drinking among young people in the area

- ◆ 5% indicated that they thought the projects had resulted in reductions in drinking among the community in general and 18% indicated that they thought the projects had resulted in reductions in binge drinking in the community in general.

### **3.3 Health and Antisocial Behaviour**

**3.3.1** Outcomes relating to improvements in health and well-being are only likely to become apparent in the long term. However, feedback has indicated, and logic would suggest, that reductions in alcohol consumption can only have a positive impact on health and well-being.

**3.3.2** Unless a project seeks to have a concentrated effect on a sizeable population, it would be difficult to quantify any improvements in health and well-being or reductions in crime and antisocial behaviour which are directly attributable to the projects alone.

**3.3.3** As noted above, measures are not in place to accurately assess impacts in terms of reductions in antisocial behaviour. However, feedback project promoters, Gardai, schools, youth workers and community workers has highlighted the following:

- ◆ MFG
  - Drink related antisocial behaviour seems to have declined amongst users of the cafe. Violence and general disorder that would have been evident as a spin off of binge drinking in the past have also reduced. The community have commented on the reductions in crime and antisocial behaviour as an outcome of the cafe
  - Youth binge drinking on the streets has reduced significantly since the cafe opened.
  - Because young people now have a place to go where they have no access to alcohol (or an apparent desire for alcohol) the amount of drinking has lessened in the area
  - The Gardai viewed the youth cafe as a great idea as it provides somewhere for young people to go and socialise with their friends under a limited amount of supervision and this helps keep them away from the drinking culture,

◆ Monaghan Youth Federation

- The project has created a diversion from the drinking culture
- The youth cafe fills a huge, well identified gap in terms of giving young people a safe place to hang out in a safe environment where programmes are provided for them.
- There has been a reduction in underage drinking in public areas.
- The Juvenile Liaison Officer has reported a reduction in crime and antisocial behaviour
- The Gardai were involved in the set up of the cafe and they had hoped that it would reduce the number of young people congregating on street corners, etc. They have indicated that, to date, the cafe has been effective in keeping young people off the streets and away from the drinking culture. In addition, due to the events and talks held in held in the cafe young people's knowledge and awareness of the impacts of alcohol misuse has increased.
- A local youth community worker highlighted that part of the problem of alcohol misuse can be put down to accessibility. Again, she indicated that since the opening of the cafe there have been less young people hanging around in areas where underage drinking occurs and are instead coming to the cafe. She also highlighted that, whilst it is difficult to stop some young people drinking when they want to, the provision of a cafe like this is a good diversion from the drinking culture.
- Local shop owners and residents have also indicated that there has been a fall in the number of young people hanging around the streets, around their shops, and around the "island" since the cafe opened

◆ Tramore

- The Youth Booth has provided a safe place for young people to hang out as an alternative to going to the pub or drinking in fields.
- While at the cafe, young people do not have to face the challenge of peer pressure and can be open about their social lives and have real discussions about attitudes towards the use of alcohol. In addition they have opportunities to work on different aspects of healthy living, including alcohol, diet and exercise
- The project has provided opportunities to examine healthy living, diet and exercise
- There is evidence from the Gardai and schools that a number of young people have improved attendance at school and are not coming to the attention of the Gardai as the Youth Booth provides an alternative to hanging around the streets

- ◆ Carrigtwohill
  - Participants have developed an awareness of healthy lifestyles and the benefits of exercise and nutrition (through yoga/dance, cookery, music, surfing, hill walking, swimming, camping, etc.) Young women are able to make more informed decisions about their alcohol use and have become more involved in healthy activities
  - Parents also received information that would assist them with helping their children deal with alcohol misuse
- ◆ Athboy No Name Club
  - Two suicides were averted due to information having been provided about support sources
- ◆ Comhar Dhuibhne have also noted reductions in antisocial behaviour

**3.3.4** It was widely acknowledged that projects of this kind will not necessarily stop all young people drinking and would struggle to help those young people who are seriously misusing alcohol and who would require support from social services. However, the projects appeared to be successful in reaching many young people who were not already problem drinkers and should play a part in reducing the likelihood of them falling into this group in future.

**3.3.5** Feedback on the impacts of the projects in terms of improved health and well-being and reductions in antisocial behaviour was sought from questionnaires disseminated to stakeholders and participants. While findings are noted in the Appendices, in summary:

- ◆ Participants (129 questionnaire returns)
  - Across the projects 17% of respondents noted that they have less contact with the Gardai/hospital.
  - 30% indicated that they are less likely to spend time hanging around.
  - 73% indicated that they feel more healthy.
- ◆ Stakeholders (39 questionnaire returns). In each case:
  - 28% indicated a reduction in antisocial behaviour among participants and

- 36% indicated reductions in hospital attendance's.
- 45% noted better health.

### 3.4 Other impacts

**3.4.1** In addition to the impacts associated with increased awareness and reductions in alcohol consumption a number of other impacts have been noted. These have included participants experiencing increased confidence and self esteem, participants learning about project development and delivery, participants being linked to other services, participants becoming involved in other community activities, and groups developing further projects of this kind. For example:

#### ◆ Movice

- The project has given rise to a desire among the community to develop more services for young people in the community. Movice FRC were able to fund a youth worker to undertake some outreach work and involved previously disengaged young people in activities they were interested in (drama, outdoor activities, citizenship, etc.) as a diversion to alcohol misuse. The work of the DAF funded project impacted favourably in the application for funding from other sources.
- FRC developed a Family Conversation document for use by families. As a result of this FRC is in a position to provide a counselling service to help people with any issues that might be raised as a result of using this tool.
- The Co-ordinator of the FRC did the Strengthening Families training run by the North West Alcohol Forum with a view to working with the Forum in their future programmes in the community
- FRC is building into its 3 year plan that it will, as an organisation, put in place measures that will take a responsible stance to alcohol (e.g. alcohol will not be serviced at any function where young people are involved)

#### ◆ Monaghan

- The project works a cross referral system with other provision in the area (e.g. Early School Leaver Project)

#### ◆ Carrigtwohill

- Participants can act as role models to others

- Participants are better linked to other services and provision, particularly in relation to education and employment, etc.
- ◆ MFG
  - Participants have enhanced confidence and self esteem
  - Participants have developed and understanding of and skills in committee working
  - The project has linked young people to other community activity though this continues to need to be developed
  - Young people who are at risk are referred to and accessing counselling and other services. Without the cafe they would have no place for ongoing contact and potential to offer support
  - Young people who have been particularly at risk have become known and in most cases additional supports such as counselling, and referral to a treatment programme have been put in place
- ◆ Tramore, MFG, Comhar Dhuibhne, and the National Youth Development Organisation in Westport all noted that young people are becoming more involved in services/community
- ◆ Athboy
  - The project has led to increased confidence and self esteem which in turn results in more appropriate attitudes to alcohol consumption
  - A group is now forming for those aged 19 - 30 (currently membership is for those aged up to 18). This has been established by those involved in the No Name Club

- ◆ Tuam
  - The group has been encouraging 13 young people to become involved in a Youth Council, where they would help define and implement youth activities in the area
- ◆ Carrigtwohill
  - Parents are more knowledgeable about, and are better able to deal with, children's alcohol misuse,
- ◆ Carrigtwohill and MFG Comhar Dhuibhne noted that participants have gained life skills and are becoming more empowered.
- ◆ North Leitrim Men's Group
  - The Liaison Workers participation in the NWF's Train the Trainers Substance Awareness Training Programme and Certificate in Addiction Studies over the period of the project opened up different approaches to training, education and knowledge of local, regional and national services and treatment programmes. As a direct result of participation in the Certificate in Addiction Studies, the Leitrim Addictions Awareness Committee was set up, with three students from the course becoming members and volunteering as a result with the main aims:
    - to raise awareness and education in regard to harm caused by the misuse of both legal and illegal substances
    - to source funding where and when necessary to run information and Bee Park Resource Centre, Manorhmailton, Leitrim Lakes Hostel, Kiltyclogher, Killargue Community Centre
- ◆ Tramore
  - Some of the members who the group initially had concerns about are becoming more and more involved in the running of the cafe and some have joined the Youth Advisory Committee. Prior to this some of these young people were drinking and getting into trouble
- ◆ Lough Allen
  - Having reaffirmed strong links with young people in the area through the project, LACDP are moving on with a new project looking at different teen issues

### 3.4.2 Questionnaire feedback also highlighted the following additional impacts:

- ◆ Participants (129 questionnaire returns)
  - 71% indicated that they now spend more time in other activities.
  - 76% indicated that they have developed new skills
  - 77% say they feel more confident
- ◆ Stakeholders (39 questionnaire returns). In each case:
  - 74% indicated that they thought participants are now involved in other activities
  - 87% indicated that they thought participant's skills and confidence had increased
  - 26% indicated that they thought the projects resulted in a more responsible attitude to the sale and promotion of alcohol.

## 3.5 Summary

**3.5.1** The projects have highlighted many examples of increased awareness of alcohol misuse among participants and, in some cases, other members of the community, improved attitudes to alcohol, reductions in alcohol consumption, reductions in antisocial behaviour, potential health and well-being improvements, increased confidence and self esteem, increased skills development, increased participation in other activities, and the development of further projects to address this issue.

**3.5.2** However, there is a view that projects of this kind should ensure that steps are taken to address attitudes and behaviour towards alcohol of the wider community as a whole. Some projects did have an impact in this regard (e.g. through drama productions, posters, Lenten campaign) but this was not generally the primary focus. Perhaps the main project which did have a focus on changing attitudes and behaviour at a wider level was the more strategic North West Alcohol Forum. Feedback indicates that it has been successful in doing so and has a presence in the area. People in the area are more aware of the impacts of alcohol misuse and are starting to

address the issue. Indeed many of the projects funded through DAF are located within the NWAFF catchment area indicating a willingness to address the issue at local level. These DAF funded projects are linked to the NWAFF and avail of the support it can offer in order to complement their own activities. It does appear to make sense to have a regional umbrella approach to the problem as well as individual local approaches. The regional approach enables a strong lobbying base to develop and link with smaller initiatives and it enables more widespread awareness campaigns to be adopted and built upon at local level.

- 3.5.3** While the funding has been welcomed it has been acknowledged that it can only provide a short term approach to addressing a long term problem. While awareness work may have a long term impact on some young people's attitudes, work such as this can only be truly effective if it persists in the long term. While these projects have made good inroads into the issue in their areas through this funding, there is a concern that once it stops the problem has the potential to re-emerge and over time worsen. Perhaps this reinforces the need for projects of this kind to fully engage with relevant statutory and voluntary sector organisations to facilitate more strategic and long term perspectives.

## **4 Effectiveness of Approaches**

### **4.1 Overview**

**4.1.1** The funding provided by the Dormant Accounts fund has enabled a number of projects across Ireland to examine ways of addressing the issue of alcohol misuse in their area. Through these projects a range of valuable lessons have been learned in terms of addressing this problem. These are noted below and relate to:

- ◆ Involving key stakeholders already operating in the area
- ◆ Targeting and involving participants
- ◆ Type of Activities

### **4.2 Involving key stakeholders**

**4.2.1** Projects generally forged relationships with key stakeholders in the area (in most cases involving those who were relevant to the objectives of each project) such as the Gardai, youth services, drug and alcohol co-ordinators, community organisations and schools. This worked well, particularly in terms of targeting those most in need of support and in helping projects fit with existing structures, build on existing activities and gain a profile and maximise available resources. These partnerships were integral to the success of the approaches taken, both in terms of ensuring that they had the backing of key stakeholders and in ensuring that projects could benefit from all expertise available. Most of the project promoters were already well established in the community and this helped them to establish and maintain contacts.

#### 4.2.2 Examples of involving stakeholders in projects are noted below.

- ◆ Pairtiocht Inis Eoghain
  - A range of organisations were involved in the project including the HSE, Gardai, the local library, citizens information, local schools and local community groups. This helped identify potential participants and ensure best use was being made of existing resources (e.g. HSE training).
- ◆ Balor
  - The Alco-Y programme complemented SPHE programmes in schools and worked with both teachers and pupils. Teachers found the exercise useful.
- ◆ Carrigtwohill
  - The project fitted well with other activities in the area provided by the Carrigtwohill Area Youth Project including teen scheme, youth cafe, day trips, film making, art and crafts, Big Brother Big Sister programme, indoor soccer, cooking, homework support groups. As a result it provided opportunities for participants to be involved in their wider community.
  - The Family Resource Centre and local schools were very supportive and provided support through meetings, access to young people in the school and through their knowledge of the area.
  - The project also linked with the local Gardai, the Community Centre and the Probation Service to identify and support participants.
  - The project adopted an existing Foroige/HSE peer support education model (IDEAZZ)
- ◆ Lough Allen Community Development Project
  - The project linked with the NW Regional Drugs Taskforce Drug and Alcohol youth work to effectively target young people and to ensure that the project complemented existing activities and that there was minimal duplication
- ◆ Monaghan Youth Federation
  - The Youth Federation established a Consortium to support the development of a Youth Cafe. Members of the consortium included: Garda Siochana; Blayney Blades; Co. Monaghan Partnership; Castleblayney Trust; Iontas Resource Centre; Town Council;

Castleblayney College; Our Ladys Secondary College; HSE; and Monaghan Youth Federation

- ◆ North West Alcohol Forum
  - The Forum has engaged with a wide range of organisations throughout the region in undertaking its many elements of work. These have included GAA clubs, schools, a wide range of community and voluntary organisations, gardai, drug/alcohol teams/workers, youth services, HSE, Donegal VEC, CAWT, Derry Healthy Cities and other cross border groups, Road safety working groups, vintners, churches, etc.
- ◆ Comhar Chathair Chorcae Teo
  - The project is managed by a Steering Group which includes members of Cork City Partnership, Health Promotion Department, NeCoDrA - New Community Drug Awareness Group, Cork Local Drugs Taskforce, HSE South, the Southern Regional Drugs Task Force, and Garda Síochána
- ◆ Tramore
  - A Management Committee was established to look at ways of addressing the issue and consisted of representatives from the local Parish, parents, the Town Council, Tramore Development Trust and Barnardos
  - The project works very closely with the schools, HSE, Barnardos and the TYRE project (government funded project involving the Garda and local schools and youth workers which aims to tackle alcohol and drug misuse among young people)
- ◆ North Leitrim Mens Group
  - The North Leitrim Men's Group, Youth Forum, Glencar/Manorhamilton GAS Club, Arigna Leader, HSE and the North West Alcohol Forum developed the proposal for Dormant Accounts Funding
  - The group works in close collaboration with health sector staff (GPs, Addiction Services/Counsellor, A&E, Liaison Nurse, local voluntary groups)
  - The group develops and delivers packages of alcohol training and education in partnership with key providers (e.g. NAAF, Leitrim Addiction Awareness, HSE)
  - The group has facilitated a range of events and outings in conjunction with other agencies
  - Developing an ethos of co-operation and collaboration between health, education, justice, community, including sports and leisure organisations

where each retains their identity but commonly works together to address alcohol related harm, takes time, dedication and hard work and a common aim

◆ MFG

- MFG is a member of the Klub Kerry Alcohol Forum which is a multi-sectoral community initiative led by HSE and made up of representatives from health, education, youth, Vintners Federation, Gardai

◆ Athboy

- The No Name Club has a management committee made up of young people, Gardai officers, a Councillor and AA member and the FAS supervisor
- The club has engaged other agencies in talks and activities for participants
- The project got support from other sources such as County Meath VEC, Meath Local Sports Partnership, Meath County Council's Arts Office, local organisations and individuals and AIB Better Ireland Programme

◆ Tuam

- The Tuam Travellers Education and Development Association (TTEDA) established a Community Alcohol Forum made up of representatives from the Joint Policing Committee, Tuam Vintners Association, Drugs Task Force, FAS, Gardai, Youthreach, Primary Healthcare, Travellers, Alcohol Awareness Worker, Youthwork Ireland, Treo Nua, County Council, youth workers, parents, local boxing club, Rapid Area Co-ordinator
- The project links with other initiatives in the area such as Youth reach, Tuam Community Training Centre, Youth Work Ireland, Treo Nua-Garda Diversion Project, School Completion project, Western Region Drugs Taskforce, Vintners Association, Tuam Youth Forum

- ◆ Kilbarrack
  - A Project Development Committee was set up which included: Northside Partnership, HSE, Dublin North East Drugs Taskforce, Dept of Education, Probation Service, and Local Community Groups
  - Posters and leaflets were distributed to schools and links were made with SPHE teachers
- ◆ North Clondalkin
  - The project worked with Ronanstown Youth Service, 3 National Schools and the South West region of the HSE.
- ◆ National Youth Development Organisation, Westport
  - There is a strong volunteer input (45 volunteers in the past year), including an officer from the Garda, teachers, parents, HSE workers and the community in general). Young people are also involved on the committee.
  - The project developed links with services such as the drugs and alcohol counselling service and the Neighbourhood Youth Project, so that referrals can be made for young people who need specialised help.

**4.2.3** Working with key stakeholders has been an important element of each project, especially the NWAFF. For some, the process has been slow as it takes time for relationships to develop. The consultants have noted an increase in partnership working in some areas since the interim evaluation, where it was recommended that stakeholder contact be instigated and maintained. Involving stakeholders in development, delivery and monitoring is a good way of ensuring their buy-in. However, some did indicate that the success of involving key stakeholders can often depend on the personalities involved and on their willingness and ability to commit to the project.

## **4.3 Targeting and Involving Participants**

**4.3.1** The majority of the projects targeted young people and the focus appeared to be on changing young people's attitudes and actions towards alcohol misuse. It was agreed that it is important to ensure that young people are made aware of the impacts of alcohol misuse as early as possible (to avoid them being embroiled in the pub/drinking culture) and are

encouraged to adopt more appropriate attitudes and behaviour towards alcohol consumption. There was also a very strong view that much work also had to be done at a wider community level in relation to ensuring adults act as appropriate role models and to ensure that the high level of tolerance to underage and binge drinking is eroded. This was a major issue for many of the projects.

- 4.3.2** Some projects were successful in including other members of the community as well as young people, for example, by encouraging parents to become volunteers in youth cafes, facilitating a Lenten campaign, putting on plays about alcohol misuse for the whole community, involving teachers, having community wide poster campaigns, etc. However, it seems likely that more needs to be done to raise awareness and change attitudes among the community as a whole, as the attitudes and practices of adult “role models” often seems to be at odds with the core message.
- 4.3.3** Some of the projects are specifically targeting “new communities”, having identified concerns around exclusion and the impacts this may have on knowledge and awareness about alcohol misuse and its impacts. While this is commendable, some of those consulted indicated that there is no need to separate out certain sections of the community as the issue affects everyone. While there are merits in translating relevant information into key languages for immigrants, some consultees questioned whether this represents a good use of “additional” money to adopt innovative approaches to addressing the alcohol problem.
- 4.3.4** Some of those consulted expressed concerns that projects were not always getting to those most in need. Some suggested that projects commonly targeted those who were not considered to be most likely to regularly misuse alcohol (e.g. some stakeholders we consulted did not think that young people or travellers were any worse than others within the community in terms of alcohol misuse, e.g., Garda in Tuam, youth service in Ballybofey). In many cases these people were targeted as they were the groups that project promoters work with generally and for whom they themselves had highlighted a particular concern. It is also worth highlighting that, although stakeholders may not have thought that a particular target

group was more needy than others, they were still supportive of ANY effective action seeking to address alcohol misuse. On balance, while the most hardened drinkers were generally not targeted by these initiatives, most projects were likely to have a greater impact on young people at risk of alcohol misuse in future.

**4.3.5** There was also a view that there is a need for projects/initiatives to promote the responsible selling and promotion of alcohol. While this is being done to a certain extent by many of these funded groups at a local level as part of their planned initiatives, it is not necessarily their primary objective. Perhaps it is something which the Fund may think about as a priority for any future projects which it may consider funding. Some projects delivered the Responsible Serving of Alcohol sessions for licensees. While these sessions were praised by those who attended, there was a view that quite often those who most needed to attend did not do so. Perhaps more persistent and ongoing contact with licensees might be a better way of putting across the message to this group.

**4.3.6** Initiatives were considered most successful in terms of targeting and involving participants when:

- ◆ **They linked with existing structures** (e.g. schools) or events (e.g. St Patrick's Day events, Lenten campaign). The examples in the section above indicate ways in which projects linked with key stakeholders in their areas.
- ◆ **They involved interactive drama/media productions.** If these were well publicised they also made an impact in terms of raising awareness of the issues of alcohol misuse among parents and the wider community. While believed to be effective, the extent to which this impacted on their behaviour afterwards is not known and was not measured. Poster/leaflet campaigns also raised awareness of the issue among the wider community although again the extent to which they impacted on attitudes and behaviour is not known.
- ◆ **Good relationships and trust have been established with the target group,** however this takes time and effort and can quite often depend on the personalities involved. It also requires a very non judgmental and non critical approach.

- ◆ **Participants and other stakeholders are more involved in designing, delivering and/or managing projects**, fostering a high level of ownership is therefore vital for success.
- ◆ **Social networking sites were used for targeting and involving participants**, especially young people.
- ◆ **Projects are promoted at every opportunity with young people and within the clubs, schools and wider community** and importantly among other professionals working in the area with young people.

## **4.4 Appropriateness of Activities**

### **4.4.1 Key lessons have been highlighted in relation to the type of activities undertaken by the projects.**

- ◆ Interactive peer education models appear to be effective in engaging and involving young people and others. These seemed to work particularly well for young people when delivered in conjunction with schools, or indeed youth groups, in a structured manner. Not only did delivery through schools ensure all young people were targeted, it also provided “real life” learning about alcohol misuse which was interesting for young people and this was enhanced when other speakers (e.g. representatives from the Garda) were involved. Peer education models also worked for other sections of the community, such as the immigrant population.
- ◆ Involving young people in activities such as poster campaigns and publicity around events also appears to be effective. However, it is important to target those young people who most need to learn about the impacts of alcohol misuse. Given concerns about the attitude to alcohol misuse of the community as a whole, it would also be beneficial to involve other members of the community in this work.
- ◆ The provision of alternatives to the pub culture or street drinking culture for young people is obviously needed in some areas. Where the youth cafes have been established they have been considered to have a positive impact, with anecdotal evidence that they have resulted in fewer young people misusing alcohol (and as a result being involved in antisocial behaviour and/or suffering from negative health impacts). The success of these facilities in changing attitudes and actions is dependent on:
  - the facilitation of interactive activities which focus on raising awareness of alcohol misuse

- the involvement of young people in the management and running of the cafes and activities
  - the targeting of young people most in need
  - the provision of an open/friendly environment where young people feel comfortable to talk about everyday concerns including those associated with alcohol misuse
  - the ability to provide one to one support and/or referral to other services if necessary
  - supportive volunteers
  - links with other community services
- ◆ Drama and the arts appeared to provide an excellent vehicle by which to explore the subject while making it interesting and producing a useful and tangible product and provides opportunity for direct rather than passive involvement.
  - ◆ Addressing the issue of alcohol misuse in a subtle way within other activities works better than a talk/seminar on the issue. It takes time for young people to feel at ease or to trust providers in a way that enables them to open up and best benefit from the initiative. Introducing participants to developmental activities which are fun, and enjoyable (e.g. cookery, hiphop, dancing, yoga, samba, away days) was a key factor in ensuring attendance and participation (not just focusing on group activities on alcohol awareness)
  - ◆ The provision of holistic support to address a range of issues for project participants has been successful for some and has been possible due to the project promoters' existing knowledge of the area and the supports available and/or due to the range of other services they provide.

**4.4.2** However, it is much harder to analyse the impact of publications on targeted beneficiaries and on the community as a whole. While these may have a significant short term or long term effect, no information exists to confirm or disprove this.

**4.4.3** The establishment of Fora such as the North West Alcohol Forum was considered a good way of assessing and addressing all the key factors which result in alcohol misuse (e.g. knowledge/behaviour of each section of the community such as young people, adults, ethnic groups and the community as a whole, and actions of those selling/promoting alcohol). That is, establishing an Action Plan for an agreed geographical area, and involving representatives from key

agencies, and from local geographic areas in identifying where the key needs are and how they can be addressed, given the provision which is already there. This can then be used as a forum through which smaller, individual projects (targeting specific sections of the population or specific geographic areas), which aim to raise awareness and as a result reduce alcohol misuse, can be supported. The profile of the Forum itself highlights the issue and perhaps an indication of this is the number of projects which applied for and received funding from the Dormant Accounts Fund in the North West region. It must be noted also that, although there were some projects funded outside of the NAAF, they were linked to it and considered complementary to its action plan

## 5 Conclusions and Recommendations

### 5.1 Conclusions

**5.1.1** Alcohol is widely used and enjoyed in Irish society. It is associated with many aspects of Irish social and cultural life. However, there have been increasing concerns about alcohol misuse in recent years and there has been a wide range of research on the level of alcohol misuse in Ireland which highlighted some alarming findings (see the interim evaluation report for details). It is widely recognised that the misuse of alcohol has short and long term negative impacts on our lives and on society as a whole in a range of ways (physical and mental health, cost to the economy, crime and antisocial behaviour, etc.) and alcohol-related harm affects those who don't drink and those who drink small amounts, as well as those who misuse alcohol. A worrying development globally is increasing consumption of substantial amounts of alcohol at a younger age. Between 2000 and 2005 there was a 135% increase in juvenile alcohol-related offences (An Garda Síochána annual reports). In 2005, 4,217 alcohol-related offences were committed by juveniles, accounting for 20% of all juvenile offences. Of these, 1,536 related to the purchase, possession or consumption of alcohol, while 2,628 pertained to intoxication in a public place. In 2000, the corresponding figure for alcohol-related crime was just 1,793 and comprised 12% of all juvenile offences. Increasing evidence suggests that the harmful effects of alcohol prior to adulthood on brains, mental, cognitive and social functioning of young people is substantially greater than on adults and increases the likelihood of alcoholism or alcohol related problems.

**5.1.2** The World Health Organisation Global Burden of Disease project estimates that 4% of the global burden of disease is attributable to alcohol. However, this varies from country to country and it is estimated that the figure is 6.8% for Western Europe (where alcohol consumption is higher). Given that Ireland has the third highest level of alcohol consumption within 28 European countries this percentage is probably slightly higher for Ireland. World-wide 76.3 billion people (nearly 8%) are diagnosed with alcohol use disorders.

- 5.1.3** Alcohol Misuse and its resulting impacts is becoming increasingly recognised by key Government agencies and funders. Dormant Account Funding has recognised this and, through the “Alcohol Related Harm” Measure under category A (Economic and Social Disadvantage), it intended to facilitate interventions and supports to strengthen community based responses to alcohol related harm.
- 5.1.4** The 18 projects allocated funding to deliver projects in line with the above Measure undertook a wide range of activities to address the issues of alcohol misuse. While Pobal have primarily classified these as Education/Awareness Raising, Youth Cafes, Community Mobilisation projects, Publications or Conferences, most undertook a range of activities which could incorporate more than one of these elements of work. For example, youth cafes ran education/awareness classes for young people. For easier clarification of activities, the table in the Appendices provides an overview of the extent to which each project undertook certain activities.
- 5.1.5** Overall, there was no sense of duplication in any of the areas. Those consulted as part of this evaluation did on some occasions highlight other projects dealing with alcohol misuse, but the general consensus was that, due to the scale of the problem at local and national level, the concerns about the impacts of alcohol misuse and the availability of existing support to address the issue, every bit of additional support available is much welcomed.
- 5.1.6** The projects were generally delivered by local organisations (community, voluntary and public sector) which identified a need to address the problem of alcohol misuse. Most are doing so with Dormant Accounts Funding as one of a range of community based activities which address other identified needs. The Alcohol Related Harm projects tend to fit with, and complement, other activities undertaken by the project promoters, providing opportunities to target those at risk and provide further support for the target group if this is needed. As the project promoters are well established in their communities there is a significant degree of partnership working and co-operation with other community, voluntary, sports and public sector agencies in the area. Many of the projects have also tried to include local businesses, vintners

associations and the community as a whole through specific events or elements of the Dormant Account Funded projects.

- 5.1.7** The only project which spanned beyond local level was the work funded through the North West Alcohol Forum, which itself is a strategic body which aims to provide a high level response to dealing with alcohol misuse. While there are a number of local projects funded by Dormant Accounts Fund in the North West, as well as that of the North West Alcohol Forum, there is a will to ensure that all work is complementary and there appears to be a major need which will not easily be met. Local groups have tended to work with the North West Alcohol Forum to ensure their work is complementary, to avoid displacement and to learn from any of the North West Alcohol Forum's experiences. The fact that so many of the projects obtaining funding from the Dormant Accounts Fund are from the North West may actually be related to the fact that the North West Forum has been successful in highlighting concerns and encouraging responses at both strategic and local level and highlights the success of this regional approach, compared to other parts of Ireland, where there is no such overarching body.
- 5.1.8** Some of the projects took longer to develop and this was mainly due to staff changes, a change in focus, and time taken to embed the project in the area of operation and involve key stakeholders.
- 5.1.9** Overall, feedback about these projects has generally been very positive. This has included praise for the fact that funding has been made available to address this recognised problem at local level.
- 5.1.10** The majority of projects targeted young people primarily and, in some cases, parents and other members of the community were involved. A small number targeted ethnic minority groups. Some of those consulted (e.g. Gardai/youth service) questioned why certain groups were targeted (e.g. why travellers or immigrants groups were targeted, or why young people in particular were targeted). They highlighted that the problem of alcohol misuse was much wider, encompassing the attitudes and behaviour of the community as a whole.

However, these groups were generally targeted by the project promoters because these were the groups that project promoters were already working with and/or that local research/consultation has highlighted them as a group who needed support in this area (particularly in the case of young people). The general consensus was that it is a priority to raise awareness of the impacts of alcohol misuse among young people as early as possible with a view to changing their attitudes and behaviour towards alcohol. This in turn should have resulting impacts in terms of reductions in alcohol related anti social behaviour and improvements in health and well-being. However, consideration also needs to be given to changing society's attitude and behaviour in relation to alcohol misuse.

**5.1.11** All those consulted recognised that the problem is much bigger than funding of this nature alone can effectively address. However, the funding represents a very welcome step towards addressing the problem and one which adds value to the limited amount of work/resources already applied. What will be important in future is the maximisation of all available resource through strategic approaches and partnership working. It is acknowledged that projects of this kind are unlikely to have an impact on those with serious alcohol problems, however, they can have a very positive impact in terms of preventing those "at risk" from reaching this stage.

**5.1.12** It is not possible to express the impacts of the projects in quantitative terms at present. Indeed, in some cases the mechanisms to gather the most appropriate information have not yet been established. However, feedback and questionnaires have indicated positive impacts in terms of:

- ◆ raised awareness of the impacts of alcohol misuse
- ◆ improved attitudes to alcohol among participants and in some cases the wider community
- ◆ reduced consumption among some participants
- ◆ evidence of reductions in antisocial behaviour
- ◆ the potential for improved health and well-being

- ◆ improved confidence and self esteem among participants
- ◆ participants becoming more involved in project delivery
- ◆ participants becoming more involved in wider community initiatives and projects
- ◆ groups taking further action to address the problem in the long term

**5.1.13** In terms of project delivery and outcomes, success factors have been identified as:

- ◆ Involving key stakeholders in the project at an early stage - research, needs assessment, design, delivery, management, targeting
- ◆ Involving participants in design and delivery
- ◆ The adoption of interactive peer education models
- ◆ Involving participants in drama/media activities, with a focus on addressing attitudes and behaviour in relation to alcohol misuse among participants and indeed the wider community. Drama productions for parents/community proved effective in this regard
- ◆ Getting the right people involved in project delivery - those who participants can develop a relationship with and trust
- ◆ Building on existing structures
- ◆ Provision of alternatives to pubs/street drinking (e.g. youth cafes) and creating an environment where participants feel comfortable

**5.1.14** While publications may have an impact on those who read them, it is difficult to assess and, in general, more intensive contact with participants has a much stronger and identifiable impact.

**5.1.15** It is very difficult to draw any conclusions in relation to Value for Money for the programme as a whole, given that there are such a diverse mix of projects with different objectives and targets and activities. In addition, some projects are working intensively with small numbers with perhaps a greater outcome

than others who are working with larger groups in a less intensive way. Therefore it is very difficult to provide a cost per participant or cost per participant outcome.

- 5.1.16** However, based on a broad analysis of project costs against a broad assumption on the numbers worked with we have concluded that on average projects had a cost of around £500 - £1,000 per participant who attended programmes delivered through the projects. In reaching this figure the consultants have discounted purely information work with large numbers of people.

## **5.2 Recommendations**

- 5.2.1** Overall, given the extent of alcohol misuse and the concerns around its impacts, there is definitely value in providing funding to local areas to address the issue, so long as this is complementary to existing provision. Funding of this kind can allow projects to be much more innovative and flexible in terms of what they can do compared with statutory sector funding and so it is appropriate that funding allows such an approach to be adopted.

### **5.2.2 Funding Decisions and Criteria**

While it is appropriate that funding be allocated to local projects to address issues around alcohol misuse, in allocating such funding the Dormant Accounts Fund should consider the following:

- ◆ evidence of the nature and extent of alcohol misuse in the area concerned (this should include views from HSE, criminal justice, youth, drug/alcohol workers, etc. in relation to the key problems)
- ◆ the type of provision already in existence and how proposals intend to build on this - e.g. addressing gaps, piloting new approaches, etc. (Again this should include views from HSE, criminal justice, youth, drug/alcohol workers)
- ◆ how proposals intend to involve key stakeholders in terms of design, delivery, management, targeting, etc.

- ◆ the extent to which proposals demonstrate that they are interactive and provide a high level of contact with participants
- ◆ objectives in terms of what the proposals is seeking to achieve e.g. in terms of raised awareness, reductions in alcohol misuse, reductions in alcohol related antisocial behaviour, improved health and well-being (qualitative and quantitative objectives should be demonstrated)
- ◆ the extent to which the proposal is addressing awareness and attitudes and behaviour of the community as a whole
- ◆ how progress will be monitored and outcomes measured
- ◆ value for money based against a broad cost parameter

### **5.2.3 Stakeholder Match Funding**

It is also recommended that proposals seek a small percentage of match funding from key stakeholder agencies, particularly in the fields of health and criminal justice as these are areas in which the projects are likely to have a long term impact with associated savings implications. While it is recognised that the current economic climate may work against such contributions, these are more likely to be forthcoming if statutory bodies see what is being proposed as valuable and should assist the Dormant Accounts Board's and Pobal's decision making process.

### **5.2.4 Strategic or Local Projects?**

While strategic approaches should be welcomed, there is also room for smaller scale projects in very local areas. The nature of the project should depend on the demonstrated need and funding decisions need to take this analysis into consideration.

### **5.2.5 Sharing Best Practice**

It is recommended that projects are offered the opportunity to learn from each other and share ideas and practice. This could be done through an annual meeting (facilitated by Pobal, for example) or through the establishment of a shared

website/interactive IT for project staff. Participating in these mechanisms should be made a condition of funding.

### **5.2.6 Promoting Achievements and Outcomes**

It is recommended that projects/Pobal publicise their projects, and their impact on participants, to key stakeholders such as the Gardai, HSE, youth workers, community workers, drug/alcohol workers, etc. This could be in the form of “showcase” events or a publication and would facilitate stakeholder buy in.

### **5.2.7 Monitoring, Evaluation and Management**

It is recommended that any projects funded in future should adopt appropriate monitoring and evaluation procedures to demonstrate how they have met their objectives and what impacts they have had in terms of raising awareness, changing attitudes, reducing consumption, etc. These mechanisms should be in place from day one. This would involve them seeking feedback from participants and other key stakeholders on a regular basis. Questionnaires similar to those used in this evaluation could be adapted for each project accordingly.

## 6 Appendices

### 6.1 Overview of project types

Project Code	Project Promoter	Education/Awareness	Youth Cafes	Community Mobilisation	Publications/Conferences
3329	The Base Ballyfermot Youth Centre and Childcare (Conference)	Y			Y
3336	Pairtíocht Inis Eoghain ((Community Mobilisation)	Y		Y	Y
3341	Balor Development Community Arts Group (Education/Awareness)	Y			
3348	Foroige Carrigtwohill Youth Project (Educ./Awareness)	Y			
3355	Pobail Le Cheile, CDP, Teo (Education/Awareness)	Y		Y	
3357	Lough Allen Community Development Project (Conference)	Y			
3360	Moville & District Family Resource Centre (Education/Awareness)	Y			
3364	Monaghan Youth Federation (Youth Cafe)	Y	Y		
3368	North West Alcohol Forum (Community Mobilisation)	Y		Y	
3369	Comhar Chathair Chorcaí Teo (Publication)	Y			Y
3375	Tramore Youth and Family Project (Foroige) (Youth Cafe)		Y		
3376	North Leitrim Men's Group (Education/Awareness)	Y			
3388	MFG Comhar Dhuibhne (Youth Cafe)	Y	Y		
3397	Athboy No Name Club (Education/Awareness)	Y			
3400	Tuam Travellers Education and Development Association (Community Mobilisation)	Y		Y	Y
3404	Kilbarrack Coast Community Programme Ltd. (Education/Awareness)	Y			
3409	North Clondalkin Community Development Programme (Education/Awareness)	Y			
3425	Foroige (Youth Cafe)		Y		



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