

# A Guide to Developing Resources for Community Groups

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City of Dublin Vocational  
Education Committee

Worksheets designed by  
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## Foreword

The City of Dublin Vocational Education Committee has a commitment to Community Education, which acknowledges its unique capacity to enhance and enrich the lives of individuals and their communities.

This guide was produced as a resource for groups to assist them with planning and development. It will help groups to identify why resources are needed, what resources are required, who to apply to and how to make applications for support.

Following the step-by-step approach, groups will discover how to present their organisations in the best possible light enhancing the chances of successful resource development and sustainability.

We wish to thank the community groups from the Crosscare network who took part in the piloting of this project - their contribution is much appreciated.

This is the first in a series of resource materials for community education providers from the Adult Education Service of the City of Dublin Vocational Education Committee.

We welcome suggestions that would assist the development of our support service to the community education sector.

*W.J. Arundel*  
Chief Executive Officer.

How will we fund this Project ?

Will anybody sponsor an outing?

How will we provide tea/coffee for the group?

How will we pay for a room?

Resource development is only one part of an organisation's plan, but a key element to the sustainability of your organisation.

This guide is intended to assist community groups seeking resources (human, accommodation, financial.) to carry out their aims and objects.

It is a step-by-step approach to preparing appeals to benefactors for support. This guide stresses the importance for your organisation to decide what it is going to do before raising support - not the other way around. Otherwise, you run the risk of shaping your organisation around the support available.

A workshop for groups of 10 – 12 people is available on request.

Comments and suggestions that would help develop and update this guide to the benefit of other groups are welcome.

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# Planning your application

## *'Know your Organisation'*

Before you start the development of resources for your organisation you have to know and show the reasons why your service exists and why your target group needs the service you provide. This is best done in a structured way, giving a lot of thought to the aims and objectives of your organisation – What do you do? Why do you do it? Who are the beneficiaries/target group? How the community will benefit? What are your financial/staff/equipment needs? Most organisations have a 'Mission Statement' where some of the answers to these questions can be found.

Develop your 'campaign'

Identify and prioritise your project's development objectives. Highlight the objectives, which need support in order to be achieved.

Develop an outline of each objective highlighted – 'Who? What? Why? Where? When? How?'

<b>Who?</b>	<b>Where?</b>
Who is the project for?	Where will this project take place?
Who is going to benefit – lone parents, elderly, adults returning to education.....?	Where will the supports come from e.g.VEC, FÁS, Partnerships, Local Community? Identify the agencies involved prior, during and after the project.
Who will manage the project - key people, i.e. course co-ordinator identified to oversee the project?	
Who are your partners?	<b>When?</b>
Who will evaluate the outcomes?	When will it start?
	When will it finish?
<b>What?</b>	When will evaluation take place?
What is the title of the this project?	
What is the project about?	
What is the project's particular/special/unique approach?	<b>How?</b>
What are the special skills required within your organisation: without further training: with training or skills/experience that can be brought into the organisation?	How much will this project cost? (Budget in detail)
What impact will this project have – individually, locally, county or nationwide?	How much cash and resources are already available from your centre?
	How much funding is required?
<b>Why?</b>	How much is this request for?
Why is this project needed?	How will this project be sustained?
Why is your organisation interested in this project?	How will it be managed? (Management structures, reporting procedures, auditing and evaluation.)
Why is this target group in need of this project?	

Gather together any additional information needed to make your case e.g. statistics relating to your area, newsletters, audited accounts, annual reports, research carried out in your area, statistical evidence and testimonials from service users or interested groups are all helpful to have when making a case for assistance. Highlight anything that makes your project unique.

You now have the background information to complete application forms or to contact prospective benefactors to seek resources for your project. This process will help you to focus on the project objectives and outcomes, rather than the external broader agenda of interested parties.

With these plans you are now in a position to identify relevant sources of support. At the back of this document there are some examples of funding sources. The Directory and Guide to Fundraising for non-profit work in the Republic of Ireland CAFÉ Publications 'Irish Fundraising Handbook' is a valuable source of information for addresses and contact numbers. AONTAS, National Association of Adult Education, have also published a helpful list of funding agencies.

Talking to other organisation about your project can often help to guide you to useful sources.

The process that organisations go through in their quest for funding is valuable to both themselves and others. Sharing your story good or bad, about your fundraising experiences is of benefit to everyone.

### Sharing information

Pros	Cons
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ Sharing ideas</li><li>✓ Extend your directory of benefactors</li><li>✓ Learn about successful approaches</li><li>✓ Who will fund your target group</li><li>✓ Reduce duplication of projects in your area</li><li>✓ Good practice</li><li>✓ Inform policy</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ Feeling that there is more competition for the same funding source</li><li>✓ Giving away your trade secret</li><li>✓ Time factor</li></ul>

Add your own Pros and Cons ...

# Planning your application

## *Know your benefactor*

Take the time to get to know the group to which you are applying. This time is well spent. Put together your own directory of possible benefactors that may be interested in supporting your identified objectives.

Make contact with the prospective benefactor at an early stage.

Make sure you have the correct details:

- Name;
- Job title;
- Address;
- Closing date, if any, for applications.

Who?	When?
Who is the benefactor?	When is the deadline for application?
Whom do they wish to benefit e.g. disadvantaged groups, community, elderly, e.g., AIB Better Ireland Programme fund under the following specific areas :-	When will the decision be made?
■ Drugs and Alcohol Abuse – Effect on Children	When will the outcome be known?
■ Education & Poverty – Children	When will support be available?
■ Homelessness - Children	When are reports required?
Who will decide the outcomes of application? (Internal committee or do they pass all applications through an independent external group?)	<b>How?</b>
<b>What?</b>	How do you apply? (application form, letter, individual approach)
What type of projects do they normally support?	How much support is allocated to each project?
What are the criteria for assessment?	How often do they invite applications?
What do they not support?	
What acknowledgement do they require?	

This is the start of developing the relationship between the funder and your organisation. **Establish a rapport with the contact person.** Sell your organisation and the project to them, highlighting how important this project is to the people who will benefit. Believe in what you are doing - if you don't why should anyone else? Support the enthusiasm for the project with planning, structure, sustainability, and the ability to fulfil all aspects of the venture.

## Questions to ask yourself before formally requesting support:

Do the ethics of your organisation and those of the benefactor match?

Is the amount of work involved justified by the amount requested?  
(Estimate how much time and effort will be involved for what return).

Does your organisation have the capacity to handle the resource received?  
e.g. experienced staff available, equipment in place, venue, audited accounts.

Does it have the staff to administer and report back to the benefactor?

Is this a once-off grant for a specific project?  
If so, and you wish the project to continue, how will you sustain the ongoing work?

Does your organisation have the documentation and information to support this application?

It is important to stress the need for your organisation to decide what it is going to do before raising the support, not the other way around. You run the risk of shaping your organisation around the support available.

## The Application

Read all the guidelines and all the questions on the application form.

- ✓ Get to know what information the benefactors require.
- ✓ Take a note of key words or phrases that are used.
- ✓ Do they request that the application is typed or can it be hand written?
- ✓ Do they welcome additional information or request that no additional information is included?
- ✓ Do a rough draft.

### Be:

#### Clear:

Assume someone who knows nothing about your organisation is reading the application.

#### Concise:

Assume the reader has only a short amount of time to read and absorb the information. Don't waffle.

#### Correct:

Assume the reader will check up on all the details in your application. Do not exaggerate or mislead your claim.

## Tips!

Avoid using jargon or acronyms. Always proof read then ask someone else to proof read the application. If not typed, print clearly.

Remember this is your opportunity to present your project to the benefactor, whether this is by application form or letter. The quality of your presentation is very important. The better the presentation looks the more professional your organisation will appear and the better chance your organisation will have of being successful.



If an application form is supplied ensure you answer all the questions. Remember to check you have your correct address and contact person's details clearly written.

Budget your project. Although this might be a difficult part of any application it is important that you show the funding agency/benefactor that you have thought through the project.

Include testimonials from service users to strengthen your case. (if appropriate)

Break down costs:

List the costs of the project, which may include:

- ✓ Equipment i.e. computers, printers, stationery, (get quotes for all items)
- ✓ Staff costs both paid (including PRSI, PRSA) and voluntary
- ✓ Administration costs, insurance, advertising costs, rent, postage and telephone.

## **Don't forget to make allowances for inflation!**

If another group is running a similar project, contact them to hear about the 'hidden costs' so that you can include these in the budget at this early stage.

Ensure the budget is realistic and achievable.

Take into account what the benefactors will contribute and state clearly what you request.

Never send in an incomplete application form or a messy copy, as this will seriously undermine your chances of success.

Keep a copy for your records of all documentation issued.

## **Post-Application**

### **It's not over yet!**

Following up on your application prior to the assessment date is important.

Make contact with the key person and continue building on your rapport. Has your application arrived safely? What are the stages of assessment it will go through? When is the earliest you will hear of the result? But, do not be a nuisance!

In some cases you may be requested to meet with the benefactor to discuss the application. Always go prepared and ensure that you and your representatives have full knowledge of your project and your application. Dress neatly. First impressions are vital.

### **Successful Applications**

Ensure:

- ✓ Project is completed in accordance with the application.
- ✓ Requirements of the benefactor are satisfied in a professional and timely manner (reporting and/or auditing).

- ✓ Regular contact is kept with the benefactor through reports, newsletters, photographs and telephone calls, letting them know what the project is achieving with their support.

## **Always remember that you may wish to return to this source again!**

Acknowledge the support received on literature, at openings, advertisements and any appropriate material, unless requested otherwise.

## **Unsuccessful Applications**

Although it is disappointing to have your application rejected, it is important to contact the relevant agency to find out exactly why it was unsuccessful so you can learn for the next time. The application may be successful with some modification for the next round.

### **Some reasons given by agencies for rejecting applications: -**

Organisations sometimes fail to demonstrate that they have a good level of communication and an active working relationship with the state agencies that have responsibility for this area of work locally. This can reduce the potential for the funding body to appreciate the unique role the group may have vis-a-vis the work proposed.

Some groups do not outline any systems for maintaining and managing participant data and financial records. In most cases, government funding is subject to rigorous audits to ensure it is being used for what it is intended. This often forms the basis for continued funding that is targeted at specific interventions". **Co-ordinator, Further Education Development**

*Number of applications far exceed the fund available, insufficient evidence given on form, did not meet the criteria clearly set out, are some of the other reasons given for unsuccessful applications.*

It can take a number of attempts to achieve success. Don't give up. The effort put into preparing an application can reduce the effort required in the future.

## **Other Sources**

Raffles, jumble sales and summer fetes, are all tried and trusted methods of bringing in financial support. Although a lot of effort goes into these events for what may be a small result, they can be a good way to promote your project and create awareness of the service you offer in the area.

Trusts are in place to give support to specific target groups. Learn what their criteria is and only apply if your project fits.

Corporate or local sponsorship may assist your project. Attracting business sponsorship is not easy. Your chances of success are improved if you approach businesses in the right way.

It is better to make a direct personal approach. Mass mailings can waste time and energy.

Short-list a small number of local businesses to start with. Research their interests and the correct person to contact. Is your organisation/ target group operating in their marketplace. Introduce your organisation and clearly state your request. Don't be 'woolly'

If you are looking for a donation of thousands, don't go to a company with a small turnover.

If unsuccessful, revisit your appeal letters and adjust for the next businesses on the short-list.

Be prepared for companies to ask "What's in it for us?" Example answers: "Good publicity", and "Good-will in the community" if appropriate.

## Resources are not always direct cash donation: -

Maybe a business will: -

- Donate paper/stationery for a computer course for a year?
- Assist you with advice on your publicity/planning/advertising?
- Include your staff on their staff training days?
- Allow one of their staff to facilitate workshops for your clients/staff?

**Volunteers:** Identify the people needs of your organisation then draw up a role description for volunteers and tasks you wish them to carry out. A guide to recruiting volunteers is available at the Comhairle website. [www.comhairle.ie](http://www.comhairle.ie)

Recognise the voluntary contribution made in your organisation. A way of doing this is to put a financial value on the work they are doing. This will show the real contribution your organisation is making to the community.

## Partnership

### Should you go it alone?

Maybe you will find another group who will share the project with you to make for a better service for your clients. This can work well if from the onset a clear path of communication is agreed, it is vital that each group /organisation knows what part they play in a team effort.

The following example of a community based education programme, 'Investing in People', located in a neighbourhood setting in Ballybough, Dublin 3, has a model of operation that is based on a partnership approach between all stakeholders, the community and state sector. Dublin City Council has from the outset played a key role in supporting the implementation of the project. The nature of this support has included funding to cover project costs, use of a local premises, and provision of tutors. This initiative also benefits from the support of FAS, the Department of Social & Family Affairs, and the City of Dublin VEC.

## Investing in People

This initiative is about bringing learning closer to the learner and has been established as a joint undertaking between the local community, the statutory sector and the Larkin Centre, with the Larkin Centre acting as host manager for this project.

**Project aims:** To facilitate adults in the target area in developing basic competencies to fulfil a variety of life roles, through the creation of new opportunities for learning and growth.

Investing in People is one of eighteen approved projects under the Education Equality Initiative sponsored by the Department of Education and Science.

**Learning Activities.** The learning programme comprises daytime and some evening classes. At present there are eleven participants attending the daytime classes, all are women and range in age from mid twenties to early fifties. A further twenty, including a number of men, have participated in the evening classes. The daytime programme runs from 9.30 - 1.30 Monday to Friday, and the subjects taken include I.T., Maths, Communications and Social Studies. The option of accreditation through FETAC and ECDL is open to all. In June 2002 the evening programme includes I.T., Craft and Gardening. In addition to class based learning, the project is also encouraging interest in cultural activity and this has included trips to the theatre.

### Innovative aspects:

- Outreach activity to identify factors that prevented people in the area participating in learning.
- Addressing identified barriers and creating conditions to facilitate learning.
- Delivering a curriculum within the community, designed to reflect learners' needs, using a timetable structured to suit learners' availability.

**Project Promoter:** The Larkin Centre  
Maria Tyrrell - Manager, Larkin Centre.  
Anne Flannery - Project co-ordinator

**Contact Details:** The Larkin Centre  
57-58 North Strand Road,  
North Strand,  
Dublin 3.

**Telephone:** 01 836 5544

**Facsimile:** 01 836 6819

**Email:** [anneflannery@larkinctr.com](mailto:anneflannery@larkinctr.com)

This programme has had a very positive impact on the community. This success is due to the commitment of the local community, combined with support of the statutory sector. Harnessing these collective resources has been key to the progress that has been made and has illustrated what can be achieved when there is strong co-operation between all. Maintaining and strengthening these cross-sectoral linkages will be important for the continuation of the project. Further information about this innovative approach can be obtained on [www.larkinctr.com](http://www.larkinctr.com)

The following example provided by Mary McDermott, Curator, Art Squad, Finglas, is a description of partnership at work and an example of how a group can connect with a local business to their mutual benefit.

## ArtSquad

Finglas During the 1980's a community activist recognised a need for a Community Art's Centre in the Finglas area. With high unemployment at a national level and 60% in the Finglas area, Finglas was deemed a black spot. The needs of artists were ignored like many other good causes: Artists were not high on the local or national agenda.

There was a group of young artists unemployed in the Finglas area among them Mary McDermott. Mary took it upon herself to do something about the situation and called many meetings. A small group was formed and decided to examine all situations to see if life in the area could be improved.

They first looked for funding for a facilitator to see where the group was going. Everybody wanted money for themselves to develop their own particular skills as artists and were not open to passing on their skills to others or sharing, as this would take the bread out of the already starving mouths. During this time Mary noticed that there were demands for art workers in the area but there was no venue available to artists or to the public unless there were funds to pay rent. This was the one big obstacle that had to be faced. "No mon, no fun".

### **This group were pioneers for Community Arts in the Finglas Area!**

In 1986, Mary decided to call a meeting with the business community in the area. Out of 50 invitations sent out only two business men turned up! They were all so disappointed they almost gave up and decide to call it a day. Mary shared her plans with one of the businessmen: to have an Arts Festival to promote an awareness of the arts in the Finglas area. This would also help the business community to bring more people to the Village. Mary suggested to the gentleman that they could start in his vacant premises for a week to see how things went. Following this the businessman was asked to be the patron of the arts, bringing prestige to the Festival.

That meeting was the start of a great friendship and patronage of the Arts in the Finglas area. Many other business people became involved in community activity as a result of this centre.

The premises are leased to Mary since 1986 and are used as an anchor tenant for the development of the shopping mall. The Finglas Art Centre is manned by the Finglas Artsquad which is a Community Employment Scheme sponsored by FÁS.

There are many volunteers who receive work experience and free training in the Arts.

In 1993, Finglas Artsquad was established as a Community Employment Project funded by and sponsored by the C.D.V.E.C. and Chatham Management. In 1996 Artsquad received a grant of £40,000 from Regeneration of Urban North Dublin Ltd., European Communities Structural Funds to refurbish Finglas Art Centre to create a state of the art community resource, which includes an exhibition and workshop space.

The sponsorship of these premises has a value of €25,000 p.a. (rent). Visit us at:

[www.finglasonline.com/info/artsquad.htm](http://www.finglasonline.com/info/artsquad.htm) or e-mail at [artsquad@finglasonline.com](mailto:artsquad@finglasonline.com)

## Other Resources

There are a total of thirty-four Community Education Facilitators employed by VECs across the country. Newly appointed in early 2003, the role of the Community Education Facilitators is still developing.

The role of the facilitators is to support the development of new and existing community-based learning groups, to network providers and help them access funding, accreditation, to share good practice and monitor quality and to promote the development of partnerships with the statutory sector particularly in relation to outreach and referral. (Department of Education and Science)

### City of Dublin VEC, Community Education Facilitators:

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A workshop for groups of 10 – 12 people is available on request. This will work through the guide in a practical and relevant way.

## **Conclusion:**

Drawing together a campaign to address the needs of a developing organisation is not a task for an individual but is best carried out by a well led small team. There is an enormous amount of preparatory work to do. This is worth every minute of time spent.

## **Planning is the key to success.**

Knowing and believing in your organisation's worth is vital to putting across your message. Acknowledging support is an important way to keeping good relationships.

## **A final thought:**

Most people would rather give than not – make it easy for them!

## Acknowledgments

We would like to acknowledge the assistance of

Anne Flannery, The Larkin Centre for the Unemployed.

Mary McDermott, ArtSquad, Finglas.

Anna Dangerfield, Programme Manager for Community Education,  
Crosscare and Crosscare Group Network.

Further Education Development Co-ordinator.

Rev. George Ferguson.

Martin Carr, Manager Communication, Bus Eireann.

Kathleen Forde, Adult Education Organiser  
City of Dublin VEC



## Funding Options

The following is a random list of potential funding bodies. It is intended to be a guide only to your organisation and not an exhaustive list. At time of publication the information is correct. It is advisable to check that the funding body is still in existence and following the same criteria.

### **Department of Education and Science (DES) [www.education.ie](http://www.education.ie)**

The DES is responsible for the administration of public education, primary, post primary and special education. Funding for Adult Education is channelled through the Further Education Section of the Department in a number of ways:

### **BTEI (Back to Education Initiative).**

Proposals are invited from community organisations and groups to participate in the Back to Education Initiative (BTEI) under which flexible and innovatory part-time options in further education may be provided to young people and adults who are employed, unemployed or not in the labour market.

For further information please contact:

Further Education Development Unit

12 Talbot Street

Dublin 1

Tel: 01 8787144

Website: [www.education.ie](http://www.education.ie)

To find out about other options contact the Department of Education and Science, [www.education.ie](http://www.education.ie)

### **AIB Better Ireland Programme**

The AIB Better Ireland Programme has been set up to support non-profit organisations committed to addressing social exclusion within the community under the following specific areas:

- Drugs and Alcohol Abuse – effect on Children
- Education & Poverty – Children
- Homelessness – Children

Applications will be accepted and reviewed on an ongoing basis. Application forms available at your local AIB branch or Website: [www.aib.ie/betterireland](http://www.aib.ie/betterireland)

For further information contact:

AIB Better Ireland Programme,

AIB

Bankcentre,

Ballsbridge, Dublin 4

Tel: 01 6414653

### **The Community Foundation for Ireland:**

The Community Foundation for Ireland, favour projects leading to social inclusion of people and communities who are excluded by reason of geography, age, disability, family circumstances, poverty, gender or race. Applications should be made using The Community Foundation for Ireland Application form:

The Community Foundation for Ireland  
32 Lower O'Connell Street, Dublin 1  
Tel: 01 8747354  
Website: [www.ci.foundation.ie](http://www.ci.foundation.ie)

### **Dublin Bus – Community Support Programme:**

The aim of the support programme is to provide €250k per annum to local non-profit organisations who are committed to addressing social issues within the community under the following specific areas:

- Children & Sport
- Environment in the local community
- Elderly & disabled
- Education on drugs, alcohol, literacy and youth health issues.

Contact Dublin Bus Community Support Programme Co-ordinator  
Telephone 01 7033193  
Website: [www.dublinbus.ie](http://www.dublinbus.ie)

### **The Ireland Funds:**

The Ireland Funds support projects in the following four areas:

- Arts & Culture
- Community Development
- Education
- Peace and Reconciliation

Each category is accorded the same importance. Detailed guidelines and application forms available from:

The Ireland Fund,  
5 Foster Place,  
Dublin 2  
Tel: 01 6627878  
Website: [www.irlfunds.org](http://www.irlfunds.org)

### **People in Need :**

People in Need established in May 1988 with the purpose of raising and distributing money to charitable organisations throughout the country. There is special emphasis on helping the smaller, lesser known charities who, for whatever reason, are not in a position to raise sufficient funds themselves. The focus is on voluntary social service organisations

For further information  
Grants Application Department,  
The People in Need Trust,  
Clarendon House, 33-37 Clarendon Street, Dublin 2  
Tel: 01 6792944  
Website: [www.telethon.ie](http://www.telethon.ie)

## Useful sources:

AONTAS (funding document) [www.aontas.com](http://www.aontas.com)

CAFÉ Publications/Clann Credo Irish Fundraising Handbook 5th edition 2003-2004

CDVEC [www.cdvec.ie](http://www.cdvec.ie)

Comhairle [www.comhairle.ie](http://www.comhairle.ie), For information on recruiting volunteers.

The Wheel [www.thewheel.ie](http://www.thewheel.ie)

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