

Evaluation of the Community and Voluntary Sector Research Grant Scheme 2001-2005

(2007)



Research conducted by:

Kate Ennals Associates

Aim:

The purpose of this evaluation was to establish how the aims and objectives for the scheme were met, assess the process involved and how effectively the scheme was implemented. Benefits and challenges for the NACD, the grantees and the community were examined.

Method:

The process involved desktop research comprising the reports, files, NACD minutes and documents relating to the Community and Voluntary Sector Research Grant Scheme (CVRGS). Interviews took place with the four community groups who completed the research and evaluation focus group sessions were held with the NACD members and staff and also with the community groups (grantees).

Recipients:

The four grant recipients who completed research projects were:

- Ballymun Youth Action Programme (BYAP):
Benzodiazepines – Whose Little Helper?
- Kilbarrack Coast Community Project (KCCP):
A Prevalence Study of Drug Use by Young People in a Mixed Suburban Area
- Merchants Quay Ireland (MQI):
Drug Use Among New Communities in Ireland: An Exploratory Study
- Tallaght Homeless Advice Unit (THAU):
Heroin – The Mental Roof Over Your Head

Key Findings:

- Whilst the NACD had little experience of managing grant schemes, the supports and resources provided by it were considered excellent and beneficial by grantees
- Managing the scheme and providing technical support placed an administrative burden on NACD
- There appeared to be a lack of clarity as to the priority of the scheme within the NACD core work programme
- The assessment criteria did not wholly reflect the initial aims and objectives of the scheme.

Benefits were outlined as follows:

- Four quality research reports were produced and published
- New quality information acquired and documented
- Community groups acquired new skills in research methodologies
- Increased profiles and confidence in community organisations

- More awareness of drug issues in local communities
- Some changes in local policies and activities (BYAP/MQI)
- New partnerships and alliances were forged and developed by community organisations
- New network of links and contacts developed in the community sector for NACD
- Validation of the benefit of qualitative methodology and community research.

Recommendations from the Evaluation Report:

- The CVRGS should become biannual, given the benefits outlined
- Pressure on resources for NACD should be reduced
- NACD should link with established structures at regional level to support community organisations in partnership with NDST
- NACD should establish Regional Research Advisory Groups to support those community organisations which would be successful in obtaining a grant
- Set up a clear framework to provide management structure and direct links to the NACD work programme
- Establish agreed objectives, relevant assessment criteria, and clarify ownership and the role of the NACD
- Strengthen networking and training components to support the scheme.

NACD Conclusions

Having considered the evaluation report the NACD concluded that it did not have the capacity to run another grant scheme. In making this decision the NACD also took into consideration the number of research projects funded in 2006 and planned for 2007 through the NDST and Local and Regional Drugs Task Force process. The NACD agreed that the best use of its resources would be to support the Drugs Task Forces and the NDST in developing and managing their own research projects. It concluded that communities have more opportunity for research now than when the scheme was initiated.