

KILLINARDEN DRUG PRIMARY PREVENTION GROUP

PROJECT REPORT

1. BACKGROUND TO PROJECT

The Killinarden Drug Primary Prevention Group (KDPPG) has been operational in the Killinarden area of west Tallaght since September 1993. The project is involved in the provision of drug awareness and drugs education activities to young people attending primary schools and the second level school within Killinarden. The project is an unincorporated association with a written constitution. There are six members on the management committee of the project - these comprise teachers from local schools and local residents from the Killinarden area.

2. DEVELOPMENT OF PROJECT

(i) Rationale for setting up the project

The project was set up as a response to the serious drugs situation within Killinarden and concern about the lack of information or misinformation which existed around the drugs issue/problem. The project promoters were particularly concerned about the information and awareness needs of young people in relation to drugs. There was a sense that young people were not receiving clear, accurate information about drugs - the different types of drugs, the effects of drugs, the causes and consequences of drug addiction/abuse. In this context it was considered necessary and appropriate to set up a local drugs awareness/education initiative which would be devised, designed and delivered by a group of trained facilitators who were living within the Killinarden area. It was considered that this local focus would help to ensure that the drugs education provided to young people would be relevant and accessible, and would be grounded in the reality of community life within Killinarden.

(ii) Objectives for the project

The objectives for the project were established by members of the project's management committee and by staff/representatives from four schools within the

Killinarden area (three senior national schools and Killinarden Community College). The education and awareness activities were selected on account of the lack of drugs awareness/prevention programmes within local schools in Killinarden; and as a response to the requests for drugs awareness activities to be introduced into the school curriculum - these requests came from both parents and teachers.

The aims of the project, as agreed by the project's management committee, are:

- To empower young people and parents to create their own effective responses.
- To encourage young people to take responsibility.
- To help young people explore feelings and develop healthy attitudes.
- To encourage change by working together to change the things WE CAN change.

The objectives of the project, as agreed by the project's management committee, are:

- To create a warm and safe environment where the youth in our community can come to speak openly.
- To provide drug awareness, and promote healthy attitudes for young people in our community and schools.
- To work in partnership with schools on drug education, prevention, health education and life skills in our community.
- To run drugs and assertiveness courses for local primary and community schools plus fun follow up programmes courses for 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 5th, and 6th years in local schools.
- Long term development of high self-esteem for the youth in our community.
- To recognise where the programmes are failing and the make changes where appropriate.

These aims and objectives, which were formulated in 1997, have remained unchanged over the last three year period.

(iii) Target group for the project

The main target group for the project are young people attending primary and second level schools within the Killinarden area. The profile of this target group is similar to the general profile of pupils attending the local schools in

Killinarden - many of the children come from disadvantaged communities and are considered to be 'at risk' (of leaving school early, of later life unemployment, of becoming involved in drugs and anti-social behaviour). Contact with the target group was initiated through the schools and, in particular, through the principals and home school liaison teachers within the schools. These teachers enabled the project to link up with young people in both the local primary schools and Killinarden Community College.

A secondary target group for the project are local residents who are provided with opportunities to receive training in groupwork and facilitation, skills and to work directly with young people within the local Killinarden schools.

(iv) Project activities.

The project works through eight trained facilitators who deliver a number of programmes and courses to pupils in schools within the Killinarden area. These courses/programmes are as follows:

- Introducing self-esteem at 3rd class (approx. 8 year olds).
- Introducing a drug awareness programme in 6th class (approx. 11 year olds).
- Follow up programmes for 1st, 2nd and 3rd year students in Killinarden Community School.
- 8 week young adult Assertiveness Programme for 5th and 6th years in Killinarden Community School.
- The project also organises assertiveness, personal development and drug awareness education courses and activities for parents.

The development of the project's activities are monitored on an ongoing basis by the project's management committee which meets on a regular basis. Review meetings also take place with trainers/facilitators from the Crosscare organisation - Crosscare has provided an ongoing review/planning and support service to the project over the last five year period. Feedback on the work and activities of the project is also received from the children and teachers within the participating schools.

Information on the progress being made by the project is communicated to the wider community in Killinarden through a variety of means:

- Through the participation of local residents on the management committee and steering committee of the project.

- Through the strong contacts and relationships which have been established with local schools - these contacts provide children, young people, parents and teachers with opportunities to contribute to the ongoing development of the project.
- Through the production of brochures and information notes,
- Through making presentations on the work and activities of the project.
- Through articles which have been produced in the Tallaght Echo and other local newspapers.

3. DELIVERY OF PROJECT

(i) Staffing

The project is staffed by two part-time workers - a part-time Co-ordinator and a part-time Administrator. These workers, together with the trained team of local facilitators, are primarily responsible for following through and implementing the main objectives of the project. In relation to training, the staff and sessional workers/facilitators employed by the project have participated in a range of training courses/programmes. The topics covered in these courses/programmes have included:

Facilitation skills	Adult assertiveness
Addiction studies	Motivational interviewing
Group dynamics	Drugs awareness

In considering the overall training needs and requirements of the staff team within the project, it is evident that key enabling factors include the quality of the training which is provided and the accessibility of the training (geographical accessibility, the timing and duration of training courses/programmes). The major restraining factors are the cost of some training courses/programmes and the logistical difficulties involved in attending training courses/programmes (on account of other work/family responsibilities). In relation to support structures, supervisory meetings take place once a month for the staff/facilitators involved in the project. These meetings provide opportunities for people to share any problems or concerns which they might have. The project also has an ongoing relationship with Crosscare through which Crosscare staff provide support to the staff/facilitators employed by the project.

(ii) Facilities

In the opinion of the promoters of this project, the current staffing levels for the project are inadequate. There is a view that the two current part-time positions need to be upgraded into full-time positions. In addition, it will also be necessary to create a number of part-time facilitation posts (perhaps 3-4). On account of the inability of the project to pay appropriate salaries for the work being carried out there is a danger of losing facilitators to part-time or full-time employment - hence the need to create a number of part-time positions within the project for the trained team of facilitators.

(iii) Premises and facilities

The project is currently renting rooms on the first floor of a building which also accommodates the local grocery shop in the Knockmore area of Killinarden. The current premises are unsatisfactory. They are not accessible to local people, they are not visible, they are shared with two other tenants, there is limited space for meetings and training activities. The project requires its own dedicated space in a more central and accessible location. The project has expressed interest in being allocated space within the Killinarden Enterprise Centre which is currently being constructed. This centre is centrally situated and would be an ideal location for the project to carry out developmental work with all the schools in the Killinarden area. In relation to other resources, the current office equipment and furniture are reasonably satisfactory although additional equipment/furniture might be required if the project is to expand and move into new premises.

(iv) Funding

The project received funding from the Tallaght Drugs Task Force. This money is channelled through the Department of Education. The project was approved initial funding of £35,000 from the Tallaght Drugs Task Force and interim funding of £35,000 - both of these allocations have been primarily expended on the employment of the two part-time workers and the costs involved in paying the trained facilitators to deliver sessions with the participating groups of young people. The current level of funding is considered to be inadequate. On account of financial constraints the project is not able to deliver the range of programmes and activities which it would like to provide. Furthermore, the existing members of the staff/facilitation team are working many more hours than

the time for which they are being paid - there is concern that some of these people might leave unless they get paid for the real time/work which they contribute to the project. In relation to the administration of the monies which have been approved there have been some delays in receiving cheque payments from County Dublin VEC/Department of Education. The management committee of the project are responsible for the project's financial management.

4. PROJECT OUTCOMES

(i) Main outcomes

The feedback from the project would suggest that the pupils/students, teachers and parents feel that the project is extremely relevant and necessary within the Killinarden community. There are a lot of misconceptions and misinformation about the drugs issue. The project is a very useful mechanism for providing accurate/clear information about the drugs issue and for providing children and young people with the opportunities to discuss the drugs problem in some detail. It has helped to ensure that the children and young people are more aware and more knowledgeable about the causes and consequences of drug abuse/addiction.

The project has also helped to develop the capacity and skills of local people who have been trained as facilitators and who work with the children and young people on the various courses and programmes. They feel that their confidence and self-belief has been greatly enhanced through their involvement in the project. They have learnt a range of skills which are transferable to other employment situations and to the work of community/voluntary organisations which are involved in developing projects and initiatives around the drugs issue/problem.

(ii) Attainment of objectives

The project has made useful progress in relation to its stated aims and objectives. The indicators which can be applied in assessing the extent to which the project has achieved its objectives include:

- The number of children and young people who are participating in the programme which has been developed by the project.
- The extent to which the participating children and young people are more aware and knowledgeable about issues relating to drugs.

- The ways in which the project has succeeded in building up the skills and capacity of local people to deliver drug awareness and prevention programmes.

The factors which have enabled the project to achieve its objectives include the calibre and commitment of the staff/facilitation team., the funding which has been provided by the Tallaght Drugs Task Force and the ways in which the participating schools have fully supported and endorsed the work of the project. The factors which have constrained the development of the project are the lack of additional money to expand and further develop the work of the project, the lack of suitable and appropriate premises in a more central and accessible location within Killinarden and concerns about the trained facilitators taking up other employment positions and not being available to deliver various aspects of the programme.

(iii) Strengths and weaknesses of the project

The strengths of the Killinarden Drug Primary Prevention Group are:

- The ways in which the project has provided developmental opportunities for local residents (who have been trained in facilitation and groupwork skills).
- The ways in which the project has continually reviewed and evaluated its work and, on the basis of this review process, has made changes and modifications to the programme which is being delivered.
- The staff/facilitators recognised the weaknesses and conflicts which existed within the group and brought in skilled people to help work through difficult situations and conflicts.
- The ways in which the project is grounded in the reality of life within Killinarden and is able to deliver programmes which are appropriate to the backgrounds and culture of local people living within the community.

The weaknesses of the Killinarden Drug Primary Prevention Group are:

- Not recording the work and achievements of the project in an efficient and methodical manner.
- Lack of experience/skills in preparing funding proposals.
- Not looking after the individual needs of the members of the staff/facilitation team.

(iv) Future priorities and other issues

The main priorities for the project over the next year are:

- To secure additional funding to enable the project to carry out the extra programmes being requested by the schools.
- To acquire additional staff.
- To locate suitable premises for the project.
- To recruit new facilitators and to provide ongoing training to the existing facilitation team.

In relation to the implementation of similar projects in other places, the promoters of Killinarden Drug Primary Prevention Group suggested that:

- Community workers should be trained to work on their own personal development and needs before they begin to look at the needs of the community. They need to have their own clear boundaries and limitations.
- Groups need constant encouragement, training and support. They need to be trained in networking with voluntary and statutory bodies in the community.
- Constant evaluation. To see this as a positive thing. Community workers should not be afraid to ask for help and to see this as a strength and not a weakness. They should not be afraid of making mistakes as this can be a learning process.
- Projects should aim to learn from the experiences of other projects/groups which are involved in similar types of work/activity.

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