

# Fighting Back

St. Thomas Gardens  
Development Committee



# ***Fighting Back***

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# *Introduction:*

This report is being published by St. Teresa's Gardens Development Committee to coincide with the awarding of certificates to trainees who participated in the Committee's Community Work Training Course. This course was a totally new kind of venture for the Development Committee and one which allowed it to find some thinking space for the further exploration of its ideas and plans for the future. This Training Programme was undertaken as a once-off venture. It was designed specifically to suit the needs of one particular community. There is no desire or intention by the Development Committee to become involved in this type of training in a full-time capacity. However, the experience of undertaking this course is one that may be shared with other similar groups in the city and country who wish to become involved in this type of activity. This is one of our reasons for producing this report - to share the experience.

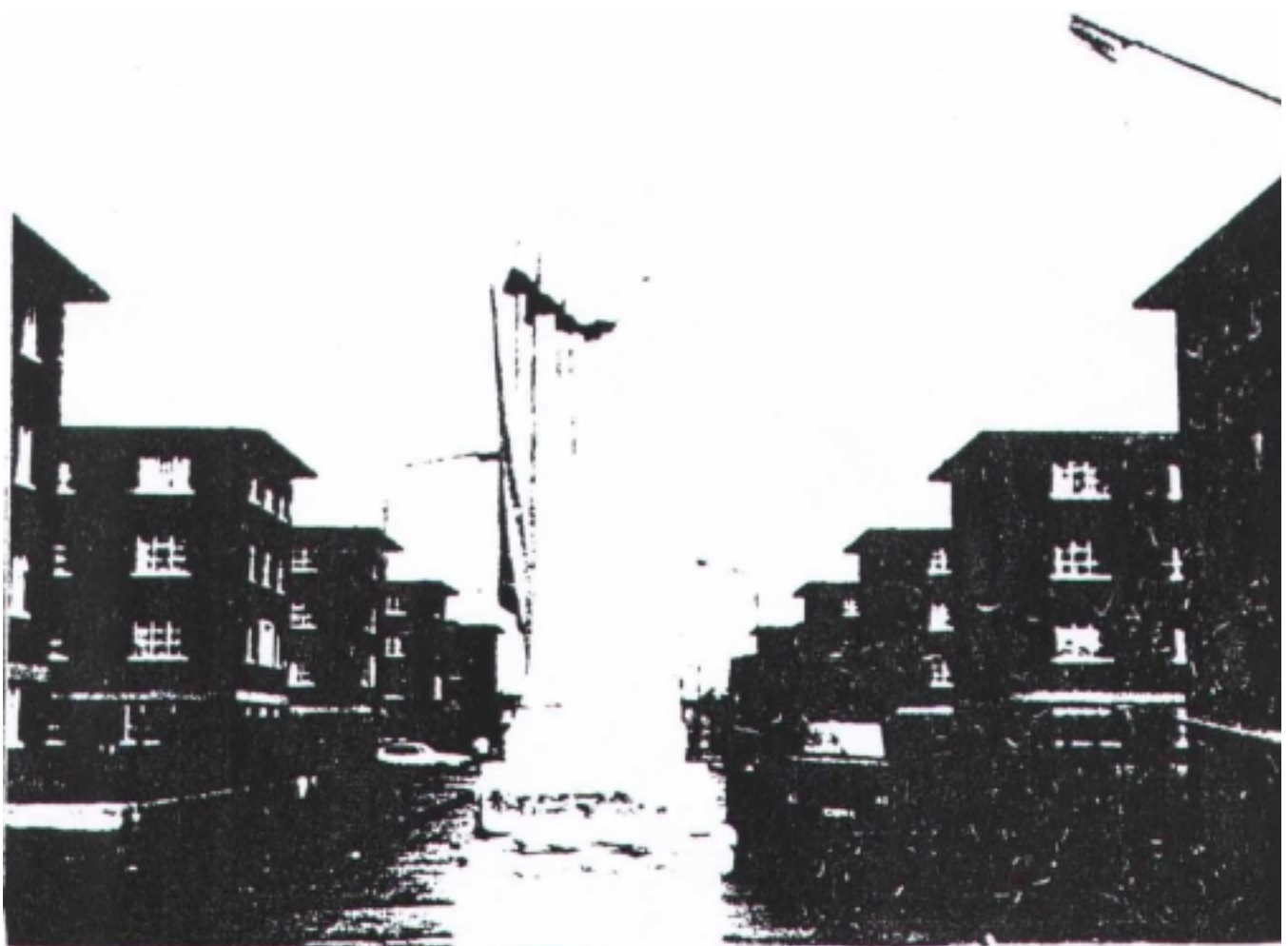
During the Course the trainees undertook a piece of research in St. Teresa's Gardens. The findings of the research are such an indictment of the policies of successive central and local governments in urban development, that they demand publication. To avoid publishing these findings would be to shirk the responsibility undertaken when the research study commenced.

Finally, we are publishing this report to outline proposals for community development in our area. We have already circulated these proposals in greater detail to the relevant government agencies and departments. We are now placing our proposals on record, that such departments and agencies might respond with greater haste to our needs.

It is not all doom and gloom in the Gardens. In fact the main tone of this report is a hopeful one. As people deeply involved in the life of the community we have great hope for our type of community. In the first chapter, Matthew Bowden looks at community life in Teresa's Gardens; community life as we know it. The second chapter deals with the Community Worker's Training Course, its background course content, etc. Chapter three outlines the main findings and recommendations of our recently compiled research study. Finally chapter four outlines the proposals of the Development Committee for a Community and Co-operative Development Project

# ***1. The Gardens - 'A Fine Place To Live'***

*Matthew Bowden*



## Area Profile

Built in the 1950's, St. Teresas Gardens, like other Dublin Corporation flat complex of the time, was widely considered as a 'fine place to live'. The structure would, then, have been considered to be one of the finest in modern urban accommodation. The 'flats' were well landscaped and the environment was clean and tidy. Trees were planted on both sides of the main thoroughfare, gardens separated the blocks, from each other and the common ground area was well maintained.

People were close to town and it was in the vicinity of most of the major employers of the time. The original tenants must have been amazed when they first moved into their flats. They would have been thought to be spacious, neat and modern, as many of the first tenants were moved from the old tenement accommodation of the inner city.

Donore Avenue would then have been looked on as a place where people went for walks on Sunday afternoon. It must have had an eyesore affect on some people to see a massive construction built on a place where all there would have been before was fields. These fields were the last remaining space of the old 'Tenters' fields, where during the last century linen was layed out to dry. Houses were built on the 'Tenters' during the twenties and thirties and the people of that area must also have been shocked by the sight of this huge construction - St. Teresa's Gardens.

The complex consists of 350 dwelling units which are contained within 12 blocks. The blocks are divided by the main thoroughfare that is 6 on each side. Each two consecutive blocks face out onto a wide courtyard which houses washing poles and pramsheds. To the rear, there are the gardens- a patch of grass which divides each two blocks from the next two. In the front there are two rows of terraced houses built parallel to and on both sides of the main roadway - five on each row.

In the front, facing onto Donore Avenue there are shop facilities and 'small club' rooms. When people moved in they found convinces like running water, electric light, sanitation and inside toilet and bathroom. This was a complete contrast to their slum tenement rooms, where often families of ten would live in one room in the most appalling conditions.

## Open Community

People have told all of the younger generation of the 'good times' in Teresa's Gardens. There was a time when one felt that they oelonged to and were proud of the area. People got to know their neighbours. Front doors were left open on every flat so as neighbours could call as freely as they pleased. Visiting your neighbour was a major social activity. The families were strong and supportive to each other. In times when a family had no money groceries or fuel the neighbours were looked to for help.



Before 1973, people in St. Teresa's Gardens had no need to organise into any type of political pressure group. A tenants association was formed in light of the excitement which existed when NATO were pressurising for tenants rights in Dublin, and in Ireland as a whole. The association were to the forefront in all of the protests, sit - ins, public meetings and marches. Apart from all this, the association began to look inward and organised some community activities. Summer community sports, outings to resorts, a youth club and a disco, were started. They operated from a basement premises which was two shop units converted into a community centre. However after some years, the leaders of the association moved to Tallaght. Some controversy arose about money that tenants had paid to the association during the rent strike of the mid - seventies and a lot of questions were asked, some of which are still unanswered. In 1970, the parish of Donore Avenue built a massive Youth Centre on Donore Avenue. When first opened it was considered to be the finest youth club in the city. Activities were held in the centre for youth, old folks as well as many social functions. People were generally happy with the building; seeing it being used and the young people of the area having somewhere to go. Gradually, however, the building became absolute as its only activities were bingo and old folks clubs.

## Summer Projects

In 1977, Dublin Corporation, employed some students to run a Summer Project. This was a programme of activities designed to occupy children during their long school holidays. One of the objectives of the project was to involve local people in the activities. Some local people became involved, one of whom co - ordinated the project of the following year. He was Willie Martin, then a 29 - year - old, who was reared in the Gardens but went to work in England as a teenager. He had not long returned when he became involved. The co - ordinator of the project was paid a salary for its four week duration by Dublin Corporation via the Catholic Youth Council.

Although it was a playscheme for children it must be considered to be the foundation stone for community development as we know it in Teresa's Gardens today.



The success of this self - run community project led to further developments. In late 1978, it was felt that there was a need for a group to come together to manage this project, to develop services for youth and gradually to become a tenant's pressure group. This group became St. Teresa's Gardens Development Committee. Since then Summer projects have been co-ordinated by Paul Humphrey 1979, Harriet Reddy 1980, Thomas Conlan 1981, and Matt Bowden 1982. This year 1983, the responsibility returns to Willie Martin.

Summer Projects have been a key part of the communities life. They have been a means where people have become involved in the development of the area.

## Resources

The youth centre is the largest resource that we have been using since 1980. The centre stood on its foundations as a white elephant for years. It was unused for its original purpose, i.e. youth activities.

Built in 1970 it cost £50,000 to complete. There is a main hall, lounge, coffee bar, stage, toilets, upper activity rooms, showers and storage rooms. Throughout the seventies there was a management committee structured to deal with groups booking the hall.

In 1979 when the Development Committee applied to run a disco, a youth activity, they were turned down. The Management committee said that it was the decision of the parish priest that counted. The parish priest however maintained that it was the decision of the management committee. The Development Committee kept up their fight for the use of the centre despite the point blank refusals and the ambiguous decisions taken by the management committee, a committee in which the parish priest had the final say even though he didn't sit on it.

New clergy moved to the parish in 1970, the management committee folded and the centre became used once more. First discos, then youth clubs etc. The centre however still remains grossly underused.



## Small Club

The 'Small Club' comprises of two shop units converted into a community centre which itself is also grossly underused. It consists of three boxy rooms, office space, storage, kitchen and toilets. It has been used for youth clubs, playgroups, development committee meetings, public meetings, parents group. Some groups were forced to fold because of a ridiculous affair involving the ESB and the Corporation in 1981 when the electricity mysteriously was cut off.

The matter swung like a pendulum from department to department for approximately six months. The groups which folded have still not been revived and can people be blamed for not coming together in St. Teresa's Gardens if they become apathetic. because of the incompetence of the Corporation and other Beauracracies. The club is grossly underused, a situation which should be revised giving its position and potential in the community.

## Resource Centre

Established in 1981, the centre is run by a Social Worker, Sister Joanna. The centre caters for preschool children, parents groups, youth clubs, classes, cookery etc. The centre has a good level of community involvement, and its development will be important in the overall development of the area.

Within the centre, the Development Committee have established a training room. This room is being used currently for a training course in community work. The object of the course is to train people for community work in Teresa's Gardens and build resources for the community. The course is co-ordinated by Barry Cullen, a social worker with the Eastern Health Board. Eight people are being trained in an intensive course which is one of the three full - time training courses in Ireland.

The project is funded by AnCO, Catholic Social Conference, and Inner City Fund. Barry Cullen will outline the details of this course in the next chapter.

## Open Area

In effect an open area means that the designated area becomes a dumping ground for Dublin Corporation's heavily numbered housing and transfer lists. Those who are allocated housing accept them because they urgently require accommodation. Most of the families are young and unstable and would rather live elsewhere. Teresa's Gardens is one such area and has been since 1977. Stable families are immediately put off living in Teresa's Gardens because of the way the Housing Advisor in the Corporation presents the area to them. Since then, there has been a rapid transference of tenants. In a two year period from January 1980 to December 1981 there was a transference of one hundred and thirty nine tenants representing one third of the total tenants. (Dublin Corporation's own figures). It is very hard to give a scientific analysis of how this situation came about, but I will give an opinionated account of how the open area stated in Teresa's Gardens.

In the early seventies an economic recession was been strongly experienced throughout the world. We had an oil crisis and employment began to rise drastically. The Gardens was highly affected as most industries in the area laid off workers by the hundreds. Factories like Guinness's were forced to rationalise and workers were replaced by machines and computers, Donnelly's sausage factory closed and Jacobs moved to Tallaght. School leavers couldn't get jobs in the area and were forced to turn to crime to provide them with money for their recreational needs.

### Joyriding

The more apparent signs of crime were highlighted by the numbers of kids who joyrided in stolen cars and who stole ladies handbags. People gave up their confidence in the area and wanted to move out. Police activity was stepped up almost every night they chased stolen cars at high speed through the flats. The media sensationalised stories of Joyriding and crime in the area. The end result was that people wanted to move because they had no confidence in the area. The first people to start moving were those who had tried to restore some sort of order. These were the leading members of the Tenants association. This gave the corporation a chance to move people in to the area. A chance to get rid of some of the families who were urgently looking for housing. Those people did not want to live here. They had no pride, no feeling of belonging and did not want to stay. Some were unstable people with domestic problems. This created a feeling in the community that it was now at a point where there was no return - no return to those days when your neighbour was your friend and you life line in some cases. The area was not accustomed to having unstable families.

Crime increased and people grew even more apathetic and sought transfers. To this day this open area policy, although its existence is denied by the corporation, is in full operation and now a hard vicious circle. How therefore is it possible to build a stable community if people are constantly on the move?

The problems regarding open area are outlined in a later chapter on the Development Committee's research study.



### Parish Snobbery

St. Teresa's Gardens has been isolated by the surrounding area because of it's problems.

Another good reason for this happening is the level of snobbery which exists in peoples' minds in the area surrounding St. Teresa's Gardens. Perhaps it's all the better. In saying that, I must go further and say that St. Teresa's Gardens is a community on its own, it is self contained.

The people are the same, having common values and they are tenants of the one landlord. In short it's just as well that it is an isolated community from the surrounding area, the Parish. It is more difficult to change snobbish attitudes than to create a critical consciousness in the people - an easier job for the Development Committee.

The people in the Parish; the Tenters, Maryland, Cork Street Buildings, have alienated themselves from the Gardens. There cannot be any unification if attitudes aren't changed. People in the Gardens are working class people who have been deprived of their right to work and are looked down - on by the wider community - themselves working people.

When people think of community they think of the Parish. This can be so but under certain conditions. They are that people who have much in common; attitudes, values, beliefs and are of the same class. A parish however can only provide a geographical boundary for a community.

In the case of Donore Avenue this is not so. St. Teresa's Gardens is different to the rest of the parish, (with the exclusion of Chamber Street). Efforts were made in the early seventies to unify them but this was an impossible task.

### Crime

The crime rate in the Gardens is relatively high. The crime rate can be intimately linked with the social economic and political situations which exists in the country. The social and economic forces of unemployment, irrelevant education, education drop out, and the lack of recreational amenities provide the necessary criteria for crime to thrive in Teresa's Gardens. It is necessary for some to resort to crime to supplement income and fulfil material desires and leisure needs.

Since 1979, crime in Teresa's Gardens can be linked with the epidemic level of drug abuse in the area. Each addict is compelled to steal in order to meet their habit and the need to buy a fix before the haunting affects of Cold Turkey. Handbag snatching is one major source of funding for the heroin addict.

When you think of the different responses to drug abuse you can plainly see that emphasis is not placed on prevention, treatment, or rehabilitation. Instead it's on prisons, guards and tougher penalties for offenders.

It is therefore fair to say that the public response has been in total ignorance to the causes of drug abuse. Who are the Government to be proposing solutions to a problem they know absolutely nothing about. The same goes for crime. No attention is paid to the underlying causes of crime.



What needs to be done in Teresa's Gardens is for people in power to listen to what the community has to say about crime and drugs. They will have to pay attention to the people, support what they say for it's not out of ignorance but, local experience that we analyse a problem at our level. Statutory bodies need to give support and follow this with resources in order for the community to initiate action.

## Police Relations

The Gardens have been for years, plagued with a high level of police activity. This is the Government's response to crime. The behaviour of the police reflects the contempt, ignorance and the fear of the politicians. For years the Gardai have harassed, beaten and tormented the people of St. Teresa's Gardens. It would, however, be fair to say that the police have had their share of the bad times, but when you think of it you cannot blame people reacting violently to the brutal, bullying behaviour of the Gardai. People in Teresa's Gardens are looked down on as animals, a difficult species of being. They despise and are despised as a result. They tear up the main thoroughfare at fifty mph, (regardless of how many children are playing on the street) stop, search, and question people repeatedly. They are ambitious young gentlemen who are trained in being a guard in a country village or a country town. Their training bears absolutely no relevance to what is happening in an urban community. Their remit - catch as many criminals as you can and you can become a Kojak or a Starsky.

The police authorities need to come into reality. They need to be given some social awareness before they are allowed to patrol the streets. Police community relations needs to become an issue for if we are serious about crime we must look at it from both points of view. They need to be conscious of both the causes and conditions which create crime and not just know how to twist somebody's arm.

The riots of St. Pauls, Toxteth and Moss Side in England points toward the need for action, before the people of St. Teresa's Gardens lose their patience and they react in a violent protest of annoyance.

The alienation of the police from the community is being perpetuated by their increased brutality and harassment of innocent people.

The minister in charge of police needs to command a policy of better relations with input at local level to prevent and eradicate crime from our community and in Ireland as a whole.

## Community's Future

St. Teresa's Gardens has had many problems over the last ten years. It's once strong and patient community spirit has been diminished. Demand for flats in the area has become a thing of the past, as have jobs. People no longer leave their halldoors open in fear that somebody would come in and steal something. Crime and drug abuse are the effects of ten years of decline for the community. A vast number of the tenants are relatively new to the area. Older neighbours tend not to socialise



with them in any big way. There is a lot of conflict within the community, people are frustrated, confused as to why the place has become as bad as it has. Nobody has the answer for them. They are therefore forced to feel powerless about their situation. They don't have degrees in social sciences or politics. The mistake made is that it's all left to people who do have them, to decide the fate of the people.

People within the community need to be made conscious of why the community is in the crisis' state that it is. To do this we must bring people together. People need to be organised around the issues that affect their lives, become critical of their oppression and consciousness will evolve as a result. The Development Committee will need to initiate a project which will develop the community by giving the people awareness of the realities of oppression .through a programme of activities. The activities must have the long term objective of creating a greater awareness in the people. An and drama are such activities. They can express or convey messages to people in ways that the written word cannot do. People need information on what are their rights and entitlements. By some kind of service being set up to do this we are also creating an awareness in the people.

How do we show people the way in which society operates, the structures and what leads to oppression and marginalization?

## Drama

We have to select a medium in which we can convey this. One such medium is the powerful medium of drama. Through drama it is possible to give indirect images which can be absorbed by the imagination.

The setting up of a community development project would ensure the acquisition and maintenance of resources. Existing resources would be taken into consideration and used to their full potential in the planning and implementation of a programme.

We must build a demand for resources whereby people need particular equipment etc. to work. We must allow people to benefit from any resources that are or will be available. The people, in organising themselves around issues, skills or talents can not do so in a vacuum. They need to be provided with a base to work from and provided with resources to enable them to organise and develop.

## **Changing Attitudes**

New tenants look on the area as being a stepping stone to a house elsewhere. I have observed that when older tenants speak of the good times, the younger tenants seem to listen and imagine the scene. This is common at public meetings. It can give the more recent people a glimpse of what it is like to be part of a strong and caring community. We need to visually present to them the history, the battles and triumphs and indeed the future. The people as the community, need to know and be clear on the work of the development Committee and how they can feed into the development of the community.

## **Development Project**

The activities should be geared at creating greater awareness amongst people, to create a community spirit and to make the area economically more viable in the long term. It should provide people with physical and financial resources for community development activity. It can stimulate awareness by providing an information service to groups and individuals on their basic rights and entitlements.

It can initiate youth employment and training projects to give some young people their first encounter with work.

The project could research the skills and talents of people within the community and meet the findings with resources by which people can practice workshops and co-operatives. Before we can talk of setting these activities in motion we must first negotiate with relevant statutory bodies for resources and for the employment of staff to manage the project. Proposals need to be drawn, budgets drafted, contracts negotiated and solid bargaining needs to be done. Concrete decisions need to be taken by the Development Committee in the coming months. A consistent strategy needs to be founded to bring this project into being. We need to be able to hit agencies with our intentions with facts, figures, objectives, plans, budgets and projects to develop, St Teresa's Gardens.

We need to be active, vigilant resourceful, but above all independent.

Details of proposals for a community development project are outlined in the final chapter.

## 2. *'Thinking Space' - Community Workers Training Course*

*Barry Cullen*



## Background

Community Development activities have become a very important feature of life in St Teresas Gardens, over the past five years or so. This is so, particularly among the young people who have been involved in Summer Projects, Youth Clubs, Discos, Community Radio, etc. in the past two years perhaps the most significant development has been the community's response to the drug abuse problem, a response widely considered as a model for other similarly affected communities. Fundamental to the success of these developments has been the involvement of the local community particularly through the Development Committee. The participation of local people in defining needs, planning objectives, implementing policies, is necessary if real change and development is to come about in the community. However, despite its energy, commitment and enthusiasm, the St Teresas Gardens Development Committee has not been 100% successful in its activities over the past few years. Far from it. It has not succeeded in reversing the high unemployment trends, now at 60%, improving educational attainments amongst young people. Nor has it been successful in reversing the 'open area' policy of Dublin Corporation. Such developments will not proceed with mere enthusiasm and commitment. Their success demands a greater allocation of resources to the area from Government departments and agencies.

## AnCo

It is against this background that in May 1982 the Teresas Gardens Development Committee initiated its proposals for a Community Workers Training Course for local people.

The proposals were circulated to AnCO (City Centre) and the Youth Employment Agency. After a meeting with a representative from both these bodies it was decided to pursue the proposal through AnCO's Community Workshop Scheme. Eventually in September after many negotiations and discussion an agreement for the funding of the training programme was reached with AnCO. The agreement gives full management and control of the training programme to the Development Committee. AnCO provides a weekly training fee per trainee to cover pay costs and other current non-

allowances to trainees. Cost for field ships, transport and overnight stays are covered through a special requisition procedure.

## Premises

From the outset the Development Committee was conscious of the need to have a suitable, comfortable premises for the training course. A feature of many south inner city national schools is the sharp reduction in numbers over the past few years. One such school is St Joseph's National School, Weaver Sq. Part of this school had been allocated to a social worker, St Joanna O'Connor, to develop a Family Centre. The Committee negotiated with St Joanna for the use of one of the old classrooms as a training centre for the course. This was agreed. The painting and redecoration of the classroom was achieved through a grant from the Department of Environment Inner City Fund. The essential furnishings, tables, chairs, heaters, etc. were bought on the strength of a bank loan. Additional furnishings and equipment, typewriter, photocopier, filing cabinet, desk. etc. were bought with the assistance of a grant from the Catholic Social Service Conference.

## Course Co-Ordinator

At the time I was working as a social worker in the Eastern Health Boards Community Care Programme. At team level a decision had already been taken a year previously that half my time should be devoted to community work, working primarily with Teresas Gardens Development Committee. The success of the training Programme was dependant on a full-time co-ordinator. A request was made to the Eastern Health Board to allow my secondment to the Development Committee for a seven month period. This secondment was granted and I became full-time coordinator of the course.

## Objectives of Course

The objectives of the Community Worker's Training Course were twofold. On the one hand it was intended to place the course participants in a competitive position for jobs in community work when and if such jobs become available. In particular the Development Committee was concerned that any jobs that should become available locally through the efforts of local people should therefore be filled by local people. The Training Course was seen as one way of preparing local people to compete for such jobs. The second objective of the course was to use the experience of it to build up local resources. It was intended that participation in the Community Workers Training Course would afford local members of the Development Committee the opportunity to become involved in a regular capacity with development activities. Using the Training Course as support and the Training Centre as a base, the course trainees could approach development



Barry Cullen



activities with a greater sense of confidence, self assurance and purpose than before. This involvement in local activities would involve a process of creating and developing resources.

The course content was designed by the coordinator in consultation with the Development Committee and persons involved in Community Work Training elsewhere; including Seamus O'Cinneide' St Patricks College Maynooth. Mary Whelan, Dept. of Social Science UCD, Michael Mernagh. Director of Overseas Community Development Course. Other inputs to the design of the course were made by various persons involved in Community Work, too numerous to mention here. The course is divided into four modules as follows:

Module A - Theoretical framework within which community work operates.

Module B - Development of practical and personal skills.

Module C - Research

Module D - Practical projects in Community.

In addition the course has other focuses including special topics like Women's Studies and field work trips.

## Module A

Module A - Objectives:

- (i) To give trainees an understanding and knowledge of the theoretical perspectives on community work and the contexts within which it operates.
- (ii) to provide trainees with a theoretical understanding of the political and social policy frameworks within which community work operates.
- (iii) to provide classroom and field settings within which trainees can identify, analyse and discuss specific issues in community work and examine the relationship between these and theoretical concepts.

This module commenced with an introduction to basic concepts in community work; historical background; community work settings; what community workers do, etc. From there the module involved a series of seminars and discussions on various concepts in political and social analysis, including poverty, inequality, social structure of Ireland, political structures and institutions, democracy, Irish political parties and voting patterns, local government in Ireland, Housing policy. Education Policy. Health Policy, etc. The module was backed up by two very practical exercises. The first involved the organising of an election hustings for the December General Election 1982. This activity allowed a much more comprehensive analysis of political parties and their relevance to the urban realities of Teresas Gardens. The second exercise involved a visit to the Mansion House to the Lord Mayor of Dublin, Cllr. Dan Browne. The visit was an exercise in Lobbying. The lobbying was well rehearsed beforehand, and at some later stage it will be possible to say whether or



not it was successful, although there have been some positive results of it, to date.

The remainder of this module involved a number of case-studies, including the housing struggle in the North Inner city and the development of worker's co-operatives in outer suburban areas of Dublin. The module finished off with a number of seminars on Community Development Policy and agencies involved in community development work.

## Module B

Module B - Objectives:

- (i) to familiarize trainees with tools, techniques and skills necessary for effective community work.
- (ii) to provide experience for trainees to enable them to develop their own personal skills.

This module was by far the most important in the training course. It put trainees into contact with a range of practical skills that are very useful for good community work. At the same time through their contact with such skills the trainees became much more knowledgeable about themselves as persons.

They began to understand their role in the community much more clearly, and they began to appreciate critically the contribution they as individuals had to make to community work, and their own personal weaknesses in community 'development.

**Course has two basic components.**

1. **Skills Workshops** - The nature of community work (helping people to help themselves and to cope with change) requires from the community worker the ability to help people and groups towards personal growth and self assessment. These skills and abilities include the following:
  - improving our self-knowledge and helping others to improve theirs.
  - improving patterns of behaviour in groups.
  - helping groups to think through and analyse issues.
  - helping members to reflect on their relationships within the group.
  - mastering the skills of Communication, Planning and Evaluation.





This course involved a series of eleven workshops, given by Michael Mernagh. The workshops commenced with a basic introduction to the role of the community worker followed by a number of trust-building exercises. From there the group developed a number of Communication Skills through listening exercises; the sharing of experiences; group task and maintenance skills, etc. The remainder of the workshops concentrated on the psycho-social method/approach to community development.

2. **Special Workshops** - The objectives of the special workshops was twofold. On the one hand they were a response to the need to develop within potential community workers certain practical skills which would be useful in full-time work. On the other, it was realised that practical skill workshops are themselves useful learning tools. It is often far easier for indigenous workers, who are not used to the rigid formality of classroom learning, to explore complex concepts in community work, through activity-oriented learning. The special workshops afforded the opportunity to do just that.

In all there were eight series of Special Workshops, as follows:

- (i) **Video** - Four workshops which gave an introduction to basic video equipment through very simple camera exercises and role plays; The workshops also looked at video as a technique for analysing self-importance.
- (ii) **Meetings and Committees** - two simple workshops on the work of committees, their roles, structures, leaders, etc.
- (iii) **Drama** - eight workshops which used drama as a technique for self-expression, developing concentration and observation, and building self-confidence in the company of others. Workshops were given by Garrett Keogh and Vincent McCabe (Red Rex Productions).
- (iv) **Visual Presentation of Information** - Four workshops which looked at the use of photography

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in presenting visual images of life in the community. The workshops were given by Joe Lee and involve practical exercises in camera techniques, photo development and printing.

(v) **Art** - Eight workshops which used art and a materials to break down the inhibitions of the trainees and explore their more creative abilities and talents, and to encourage the expression of their talents. Workshops were given by Hele O'Donoghue.

(vi) **Fund Raising** - One simple workshop on techniques in fund raising.

(vii) **Media** - two workshops which give trainees a introduction to how news is made, and to prepare them for dealing with media personnel should they ever be required to do so in the course of their world.

(viii) **Environmental Education** - four workshop which explored definitions of neighbourhood boundaries, and the use of open space in the planning of communities. The workshops were given by Loughlin Kealy.

## Module C

Module C - Objectives:

- (i) to give trainees an introduction to the basic principles and methods to social research.
- (ii) to provide trainees with the opportunity to undertake a community self survey.

**Module has four basic components:**

- (i) introduction to community self survey and action/research model of community work.
- (ii) questionnaire design.
- (iii) research practical.
- (iv) interpretation, compilation and presentation of survey results.

The research component of this course was very practical-orientated. In most circumstances research is a very difficult subject to teach and one in which very few people can usually grasp. Yet more;

research develops out of very simple down-to-earth concepts. In fact the simpler the concept the more accurate the research findings. Social research over the past number of years has become very complex due perhaps to the complexity of thought surrounding it as a subject, a body of thought often intimidating and always baffling and irrelevant to the public at large. On a local level the facts and figures that are relevant are those that concern the issues that exist on a daily basis. The people who are in most contact with these issues are local people themselves. The idea of community self-survey therefore very important for any person wishing to become involved in community work whether in full or part-time capacity. The research undertaken by the trainees in this course was a very simple form of research. Nevertheless it was a very important piece of research. Its importance lies as much in the fact that local people designed, conducted and compiled the research as in the shocking revelation in the survey findings. The details of this research study are outlined in the next chapter to this report

#### Module D - Objectives:

- (i) to provide opportunities for trainees to integrate community work practice and theory.
- (ii) to develop trainee's skills of observation, planning, action and evaluation.
- (iii) to constitute a positive relationship between trainees and the community sponsoring the project.

During the course's first field trip to Letterfrack Co Galway a number of workshops were held on practical activity in community work. Trainees were given the opportunity to select a specific area of work which they could develop through a community project. As a result of these workshops the trainees grouped themselves as follows around three different projects:

**Drug Abuse** - Matthew Bowden and Gerald Carey. Both Matthew and Gerald identified drug abuse as a major community problem with which they would like to be involved. They undertook to involve themselves with youth groups with a view to encouraging such groups to make a contribution to solving the drug abuse problem. After some time working around these objectives they realised they were working too much in a vacuum with complex objectives. As a result they each selected a different group of young people to work with on a more practical level, acting in a facilitative role with the development of these groups. In the long term they see their work with these groups as being directly linked with the prevention of drug abuse in the community.

Matthew spent some time with the SCCCAP in Summerhill to gain some insight into the type of models they used for working with young people. While Gerald spent a four week placement with the Neighbourhood Youth Project in Fatima, working directly with young people on a regular basis.

**Day Centre for Elderly** - Three trainees. Paul Humphrey, Des Byrne and Marie Long identified the elderly, and the provision of a centre for them as a project they would like to work on together. However, this project ran into a number of difficulties early on. The likelihood of being able to convert a local premises into a day-centre was much more difficult than originally envisaged. As a result the work of this project group split up in three ways. Paul continued to negotiate with the relevant personnel and agencies to seek the funding to develop the intended premises. This also meant further consultations with the development committee as to the precise use such a centre should be put to in the future.

Paul has also spent some time going around different workshops and centres in the city building up valuable information as to how Teresas Gardens can develop its own centre.

Marie who came from the Rialto area decided to put her project time into re-starting an old-folks day centre in Rialto which had been experiencing recent difficulties. It is her intention to continue working with this project, in the future. Des concentrated on

rights, housing etc.

**Children's Activities** - Three trainees. Margaret Williams, Bobby 'Toole, and John Moylan indicated the desire to become involved in after-school activities for children. However after further consultations with the development committee and other persons in the community involved with such activities it was decided that such a project would not be of immediate importance. Furthermore there was confusion over the use of premises for such activities. Nevertheless Margaret became involved with a mothers and toddlers group with Sr Joanna in the Family Centre. She has also undertaken a four week placement with Preschool nurseries in Finglas to develop her skills of working with young children. John has become involved in organising activities in the Chamber St area of the parish. As a result he is very highly involved in the recent preparations for this years summer project in Chamber St. In fact he will be the summer project coordinator for Chamber St. Bobby realised through his involvement with the video and photography that he had a skill for using such techniques which he would like to pass on to young people. He has as a result concentrated on the development of this skill.

The work of the trainees in these projects was supported by a number of occasional workshops designed to assist them to come to terms with immediate and long-term difficulties.

#### Other Activities

**Women's Studies** - Four workshops on women studies were given by Pat Tobin and Una Larnihan. These workshops concentrated on looking at Male/ Female roles; the origin of sex roles; defining community work in relation to women's issues; case studies of working with women in the community; and guidelines for working with women in community work.



**Tenants Groups** - One workshop on the emergence and development of Tenants Groups given by Michael Doyle, Vice - President of the National Association of Tenants Organisations.

**Field Trips** - (i) During the first weeks of the course a trip to Letterfrack was organised. The purpose of this trip was to allow the trainees the opportunity to consolidate themselves as a working group and at the same time to introduce them to community development in an isolated rural community. Michael O'Neill of Connemara West acted as host to the group. He gave a very intensive introduction to the work of Connemara West, its history, trials and tribulations and its plan for the future. (ii) During our trip to Carlow, organised to compile the results of research study, trainees visited Kilkenny Social Services and were hosted by Sr. Stanislaus Kennedy who gave a full introduction to the work of the Social Services Centre, (iii) A trip was organised to Omagh Community Development Project, where Paddy McLaughlin acted as host. Again Paddy and his team gave a full introduction to the work of the project, and this, like the other field trips was a very stimulating experience.

**Typing** - Three trainees undertook part time courses in typing.

**Bookkeeping** - Two trainees undertook part time courses in bookkeeping.

**Joint Workshops** - During the Course we had three joint workshops with the students and staff from the St. Patricks College, Maynooth, Course in Community Work. These workshops were very interesting and stimulating, and useful inputs for the ongoing education and training of community workers were made.

## CONCLUSION

The community Workers Training Course has been a tremendous learning experience for all who have been involved with it. Very often community work involves the search for space; physical space for nurseries, meetings, workshops, co - operatives, etc. With the Community Workers Training Course the Teresa's Gardens development committee searched for the intellectual space to tease out our aims, develop our approaches, refine our methods, and plan the future. The course gave the committee the space to undertake such tasks with skilled inputs from outside and a structure from within that kept control with the development committee and ensured the aim of developing the community was being adhered to.

In all, six members of the Development Committee undertook the course. These were it's chairman, Paul Humphrey, Secretary, Matthew Bowden and committee members John Moylan, Margaret Williams, Gerald Carcy and Bobby O'Toole. The other two participants were Marie Long from Rialto who has been involved in a number of community developments in that area, and Des Byrne from the Northside.

What is most important now is that the comm-

ittee take the experience of this course into a successful action - oriented, second stage. We have benefited from the period of reflection, of intellectual development. We now need to put ourselves to the test in the community. Our plans for developing the community arc outlined in the following two chapters. It is our hope that the commitment and dedication we have put into preparing these proposals is matched by appropriate responses from the relevant government departments.

## COMMENTS FROM TRAINEES:



Bob O'Toole

"I am beginning to know what community work is all about. Community work is helping people to understand themselves. I think there is an awful lot of things going on that people do not understand. They do not understand the welfare system or their housing rights; who to see where to go. There are other problems such as drug abuse, unemployment. The youth do not have enough clubs or things to do, no work, nothing, and that is why there is so much drug abuse and violence against the police." - Bob O'Toole



John Moylan

"Now that we are coming to the end of the course I feel very sad about it ending. I would like to show my appreciation to the people I worked with on the course. I couldn't find a better bunch of people to work with, and I mean that sincerely. I learned a hell of a lot out of the course." - John Moylan



"For a man of 54 years, with 30 odd years of 'amateur social work' behind me, I must say with humility, that I thought I knew all about human nature and the problems of human beings. However the course was in its infancy when it was brought home to me, politely, that I, in fact, was a problem, and like other mortals, had my own personal problem, namely, shyness and resultant inability to communicate and integrate normally with my fellow trainees." - *Des Byrne*



Des Byrne

"I have become aware of how people as a group can create a greater impact on issues than any individual. People in the group have been most supportive and encouraging. It must be said that it would have been absolutely impossible to learn what I have without this group. We had several new experiences together. We shared our experiences, our lives, our ideas. I think Michael Mernagh's techniques are brilliant. We were given ways in which it is possible to communicate and maintain a working group. We have seen how people become fed up as a result of rotten communication, enabling us to be conscious of when this happens to our committee or whatever type of group we're working with." - *Matthew Bowden*



Matthew Bowden



Paul Humphrey

"Now that I have completed the course I feel the difference, even in myself. I can go to people and talk to them in a different way than I would normally have done. I can sound people out by just listening to them, and understand what they are finding difficult to say. I thought the drama was very good because it helped me relax when having a conversation with people, something I felt before because I would never have thought to try and relax." - *Paul Humphrey*



Margaret Williams

"During the course I have learned to understand people better, and to communicate better with people. One very interesting and useful part of the course was the survey we did in Tereas's Gardens. People who were once, only another person, invited me into their homes. I found it a very useful exercise in getting to know the people. When the course is finished I would like to carry on working with and for the people of the Gardens, helping them in any way I can to establish a secure and stable community." - *Margaret Williams*

"We have met so many different people during this course that I feel I have gained more confidence in myself. I have been able to organise a social night for the old folks and it went so well that



we are having one night every month now. I have also started a variety group for the old folks and they are going to put on a little show during our community week. I would not have taken this on six months ago." - *Marie Long*

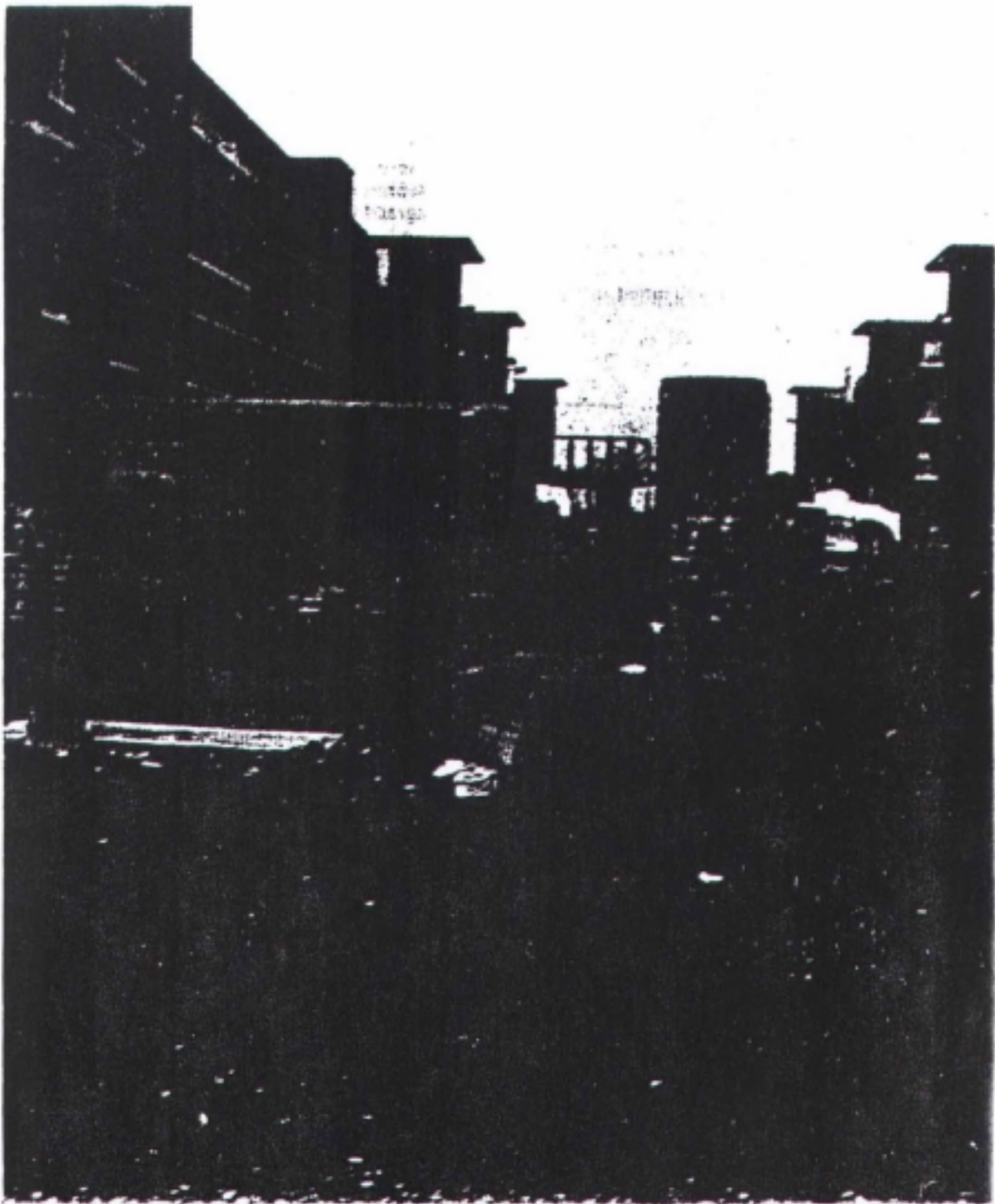


"I found that community work is about caring. It is about sharing and participating with people, people of all classes. It is about equality for everyone. I have been involved with children and young people a long time. But now I have ideas on how to establish things with them. I have been to different communities and I have seen how people with dedication and willpower could establish resources and facilities for people with the help of people from their community. For the future I hope to be with the people of my community; to establish it as a better place to live; a place where people are able to say with pride that they live there." - ***Gerald Carey***



### ***3. Now For The Facts- Research Study***

*Course Trainees*



## Background

The problem of maintenance has been a very important issue in Teresa's Gardens in the past few years. Numerous complaints have been made to members of the Development committee by tenants experiencing difficulties with plumbing, carpentry, dampness, etc. Tenants have become very frustrated in bringing these complaints to Corporation officials as very little happens as a result of these representations. Matters regarding maintenance came to a head in Spring 1982 when after a series of heavy rainfalls the upper end of the flats remained flooded for weeks because of blocked drains. The failure of Corporation officials to remedy this situation forced a number of tenants to seek a public meeting to discuss the issue. The Development Committee was approached to organise the meeting. The meeting was organised and 100 tenants attended. It was decided that the Development Committee should formulate proposals for Dublin Corporation and organise a walkabout of the area for local representatives and Corporation officials and to present the proposals to them. These proposals were submitted to Dublin Corporation and a walkabout was arranged in early April. Two public representatives (Cllr. Dan Browne and Mr Tom Fitzpatrick, then TD) turned up for the walkabout and a third Cllr. Brendan Lynch turned up for the second public meeting held after the walkabout. This second public meeting which was covered by certain sections of the media had an attendance of approx. 70. A motion that the Development Committee should seek a meeting with senior Corporation officials to discuss the proposals and that the Committee should represent the tenants at such a meeting was put to the attendance and unanimously accepted.

Requests for a meeting were submitted to Mr Mills head of Maintenance and Mr Liam Clare head of Community and Environment sections of Dublin Corporation, and a meeting was organised two weeks later in Mr Mills office. Four representatives

of St Teresas Gardens Development Committee and six representatives of Dublin Corporation attended the meeting. An agreement was reached with the representatives of Dublin Corporation that certain measures would be taken immediately to remedy the maintenance situation in St Teresas Gardens. Meanwhile the Development Committee invited local representatives to meet them to discuss ways in which they could assist the committee's ongoing negotiations. Public representatives, Mr Gay Mitchell, Mr Ben Briscoe, Mr Fergus O'Brien, Mr Brendan Lynch, and Mr Tom Fitzpatrick attended this meeting. At the suggestion of Mr Gay Mitchell it was decided that public representatives sitting on City Council would put a motion down at the Flats Committee of the Council supporting our proposals. The Committee volunteered to forward a copy of minutes of meeting with Corporation officials on to the public representatives to assist them in their Flats Committee meeting. Nothing more was heard from any of the public representatives on this matter. Weeks later it was agreed to increase the refuse collection in the flats from twice to three times per week. The latter has never happened nor have the Development Committee received any written communication from either Corporation officials or public representatives on the matter, since.

Meanwhile the maintenance situation deteriorated with tenants becoming more frustrated upon realising that their representations to Dublin Corporation officials and public representatives had yielded no positive results.

As a result the Development Committee organised a third public meeting to discuss the issue in late October. The meeting was attended by 60 tenants and a motion was passed that the Development Committee should organise research into the extent of the maintenance problem in Teresa's Gardens.

As the Community Workers' Training Course intended undertaking some form of community self-survey, it was decided to approach the co-ordinator and trainees on the course to undertake such a survey. This was agreed and the course trainees and co-ordinator set about planning the research.

The trainees in the community work course discussed the possibility of broadening the research to include other vital information of importance to the community, including information on population structure, transience unemployment, etc.

It was also decided that the results of the survey should be used to assist statutory and non-statutory agencies in formulating plans for assisting community developments in the area, and that the results would be a firm basis upon which the development committee could plan its activities in the community.

The questionnaire was designed by the course trainees. It was a fairly simple questionnaire, and quite adequate as a method of preliminary research into the Gardens. It did, like most questionnaires, have its faults, being far too long and having many irrelevant questions. Nevertheless it yielded much relevant and important information.





## Interviews

The interviews were undertaken in January by five of the course trainees; Matthew Bowden, John Moylan, Gerald Carey, Margaret Williams and Bobby O'Toole. The response from the people in the flats to the interviews was tremendous, with a response rate of 85%. People in the flats were very co-operative, mainly because the interviewers themselves were local. In fact local people took a great interest in the survey. They were very keen to ask questions about the survey, the training course and of course the development committee. Overall the interviewing experience was a great learning experience for the interviewers themselves. It was an essential ingredient to their community work training to be able to call to people's doors, ask questions and build up their knowledge of the area. Quite apart from the questionnaire itself, all the interviewers felt they had learned an awful lot about the area and its people through talking to them at hall-doors or in their living rooms.

The coding and compiling of the survey information was done in January and February by course trainees Paul Humphrey, Des Byrne, Marie Long,

Gerald Carey, Matthew Bowden and Margaret Williams. When the full information on the survey was prepared the course trainees and co-ordinator took off to a cottage in a quiet location in Co. Carlow to write the report. The full report findings, conclusions and recommendations were compiled during this three-day trip.

While the original intention of the survey was to research the extent of the problem of maintenance in Teresas Gardens, the most valuable information arrived at in the survey was that on population structure, transience, unemployment. Unfortunately the manner in which the questions on maintenance were designed did not allow for this problem to be adequately quantified, although the persistence of the problem is more than adequately clear. However, we now have a clear breakdown of the population structure in Teresas Gardens, indicating the most prevalent age groups, and which will be very useful for any social or economic planning concerning the area. We have clear information on the rate of transience in and out of

me area, information which does not look too heartening for the future of Teresas Gardens. We have also discovered a shocking rate of 60% unemployment in Teresas Gardens, which must rate as one of the worst for any community of its size in the country.

## Findings

The response rate to the survey was 85% representing 292 households in St. Teresas Gardens. The total population for these 292 households is 1113 persons. An estimate of the total population of Teresas Gardens was arrived at by calculating, through local knowledge, the number of people living in flats where there had been refusals or where interviews were not conducted for whatever other reason. The estimate arrived at through this process was 1250 persons.

## Youth

The population distribution of age in Teresas Gardens shows the rate of young persons (0-24) to be greater than the national rate (which stands at 47.9%) by 9.8%. This feature becomes even more striking when one considers that the rate of young persons in Ireland is one of the highest in Europe.

A high rate of young people in a community is usually present in new suburban communities, where the occupants of new houses are usually young families. However Teresas Gardens is not a new community. It was built thirty years ago and its first tenants came primarily from the surrounding inner city traditional communities. It should also be pointed out that while the youth population of Teresa's Gardens is relatively high, the overall population of its electoral ward it belongs to has been steadily declining over the past fifteen years.

It would appear that the single greatest factor giving rise to this high youth population has been the rate of transience in Teresa's Gardens over the past few years and coupled with this the 'open area' policy of Dublin Corporation in relation to the area.

The existence of such a high proportion of young people in Teresa's Gardens is a major cause of concern for the people themselves and anybody or agency seriously involved in the economic, social and cultural planning of the area. On a national scale young people are becoming very disillusioned with the social, political and economic systems that are failing to provide them with a job and a positive future. In an area where there is a greater proportion of youth than nationally, the level of disillusionment is bound to be higher. In fact it is, as the levels of crime, vandalism and drug abuse indicate. It cannot be surprising that disaffected youth should turn to crime and vandalism when so many in one area can become almost totally neglected by statutory and voluntary bodies who bear responsibility towards youth. In Teresa's Gardens there is no outside statutory or voluntary agency involved in the provision of youth services on an ongoing basis, although the Eastern Health Board is committed to the provision of a Youth

## Summary of Main Findings

### (1) Youth

57.7% of population in Teresas Gardens is under the age of 24 years.

The population distribution by age in Teresas Gardens shows the rate of young persons 0-24 years, at 57.7% to be greater than the national rate (1979 census) by 9.8%.

Only 5% of the age group 15-24 participate in full-time education. In fact nobody from the age group 20-24 is in full-time education. Nobody participates in third-level education.

Only 6 people in age group 15-24 are undergoing training with AnCO. Two of these are on Community Workers Training Course.

### (2) Unemployment

The overall unemployment rate in Teresas Gardens is 59.2%.

The unemployment rate for those in the age group 15-24 is 57.9%.

The unemployment rate amongst tenants who moved in. in the past two years is 67%.

### (3) Transience

Almost 50% of existing tenants have been moved into the area in the past five years.

55% of lettings in the past two years have been to families who did not indicate Teresas Gardens as a positive choice.

65% of existing tenants wish to leave the area.

44.5% of existing tenants are on Dublin Corporation's transfer list.

### (4) Maintenance

Over 50% of tenants are dissatisfied with maintenance service in the area.

There is clear confusion amongst tenants of Teresas Gardens as to which Corporation working-sections are responsible to particular maintenance functions. There is a corresponding confusion amongst Corporation personnel themselves.

development Project in the area. Recreational activities that do exist, do so through the hard work and sheer determination of local people themselves with occasional and indirect assistance from outside agencies. Teresa's Gardens is going through a crisis if youth. Its worst manifestation has been the laming rate of heroin abuse by young people, which has been documented elsewhere. The crisis is quite possibly on a scale unknown elsewhere in the country. Even in Northern Ireland the scar of continuous and persistent cross community violence in similar communities, could not have as negative impact on young people as the years of neglect, abuse and depression in Teresa's Gardens.

The outcome of this crisis is that in 1983 of the 257 arsons in the age group 15-24; only 14 are at school

(none at third level); 6 are undergoing training; 65 are full time housekeepers; 69 have jobs which leaves 103 unemployed - an unemployment rate of 57%.

It is quite clear from these figures that the vast majority of young people leave school as soon as they legally can.

There is absolutely no evidence that failure to participate in education has been in any way compensated by positive expenditure in other forms of education, training and development. Only six persons in age group 15-24 are undergoing AnCO training. As pointed out already expenditure by agencies with responsibility for youth is inconsistent and piecemeal. The only real area of expenditure by the state in the youth of Teresa's Gardens, is in the





form of negative expenditure through dole payment. Other expenditures are subsequently incurred through attempting to control the "youth problem", eg Garda manning levels, court costs, services for drug abusers, probation officers, etc. In seeking solutions to the youth crisis in Teresa's Gardens, there is no point in just pinpointing those who have failed to participate in a normal way in mainline activities and services, and controlling their subsequent deviant activity. It would appear the majority have given up on school and other mainline activities, so it is quite possible that such systems have failed them and not the reverse. Expenditure on youth in Teresa's Gardens must involve a process whereby young people participate in defining their own needs and designing programmes to meet them.

We would like to make the following recommendations:

1. The provision locally of an alternative type of education structure styled similar to the Rutland Street Youth Encounter Project, to be designed following consultations with the relevant local educational and other community groups who have identified this need and of course the relevant government departments.
2. The immediate commencement of the Eastern Health Board's proposed 'Youth Development Project' for the treatment and rehabilitation of adolescent drug abusers, in Weaver Sq.
3. The more active involvement of youth service agencies with disadvantaged youth to include the provision of grants and resources to community youth group in areas like Teresa's Gardens.
4. The provision of a locally based co-operative resource through the Youth Employment Agency, that would develop locally based goods and services, and eventually market these goods and services through co-operatives.
5. The more involvement of the Youth Employment Agency and AnCO in the Education. Training and Development of young people towards employment and job-creation.

## Unemployment

The unemployment rate in Teresa's Gardens is almost 60%. This figure is the rate of unemployment of those who would be considered to be eligible for work. No consideration was given to housewives who might wish to work if they were in a position of organising satisfactory child-minding facilities.

The rate of unemployment amongst young people (15-24) stands at 57.9% which like the overall figure for the area is phenomenal and very disturbing. These figures came as a major shock to the development committee, although some members were by no means surprised. The most disturbing feature of these figures is the fact that the extent of unemployment has remained unknown for so long, and it would have remained unknown were it not for the initiative of the local development committee in the matter. There is absolutely no indication that any agency statutory or otherwise, whose major concern is matters of employment, labour and industry, would have taken any initiative in seeking these figures.

We believe the following factors are the major causes of the high unemployment rate in Teresa's Gardens.

### A. Primary Factors

(i) The fact that the whole country is going through an economic recession. There are fewer jobs for a greater number of people. Competition for even the most unskilled jobs is therefore very intense. The level of education, training and skill amongst the unemployed in Teresa's Gardens is lower than Nationally, effecting their ability to compete for scarce jobs.

(ii) The rationalisation of many traditional inner city industries has caused a net reduction in the number of jobs available locally. Furthermore there is no evidence to suggest that the IDA complex in Newmarket, nearby, has in any way lowered the level of unemployment locally.

(iii) Nationally there is a crisis in confidence in the ability of manufacturing employment to lift the country out of its economic gloom. This lack of confidence in capitalist corporate enterprise exists every bit as much among working class as it does, among the business and middle classes. The net effect of this in areas where unemployment is rife is that crime and the black economy become serious options for some people, who abandon all hope of becoming involved in permanent, stable employment. In the current economic conditions, the will to work and pride in work is lacking when such work means employment with unstable industries.

Stability and security of income can often be more easily found through combining dole payments with occasional nixers.

### B. Secondary Factors

(i) Teresa's Gardens as an address is not very convenient in seeking a job. Local employers tend to have a very negative attitude towards job - applicants from Teresa's Gardens.

(ii) The treatment of the media to the area in the past has been very unhelpful, with each single in-



cident involving Teresa's Gardens totally blown out of proportion in the papers, and with little recognition given to the hard dedicated work that has gone into positive community development over the years.

(iii) Some people, particularly young people are experiencing not first, but second and third generation unemployment in Teresa's Gardens. As a result of this there can tend to be very negative attitudes towards work and employment. Therefore the mere provision of jobs is not in itself a solution to the problem. There has to be serious consideration given to the way in which people relate to work. In any new job - creation ventures there will have to be a total restructuring of the relationships between capital, labour and profit.

In order to solve this tragic unemployment rate we propose the following:

- (i) The undertaking of a comprehensive research study into the level of education and skills attainment, and job experiences in the area.
- (ii) The undertaking of research into the development of new locally based goods and services for local employment ventures.
- (iii) The provision of community based retraining programmes for the over 25's unemployed, linked to potential job-creation ventures.
- (iv) The exploration of co-operative principles and methods for the development of new viable jobs in the area.

## Transience

Almost 50% of the tenants of Teresa's Gardens have been living there for less than five years. This represents a phenomenal turnover in tenancy for a single community.

100% of new tenants in the past two years were young families.

It is normally expected that after a single generation has grown up in a new community, henceforth the community would develop with a consistent mix between young families, older families, elderly people and single people.

This has been far from the case in the Gardens. According as flats become vacant in Teresa's Gardens they are being populated by more young families, which contributes to the high amount of young people in its population.

This situation may be contrasted with that which prevails in places like Ballyfermot or Hardwicke St., which were built at around the same period as Teresa's Gardens. It is virtually impossible for a new family to transfer into these areas through Dublin Corporation as few flats or houses become available for transfers. As a result, the population in such areas stabilises and the area begins to experience a better mix of elderly, middle-aged, young and single people. 190 residents in Teresa's Gardens expressed the desire to transfer out of the area. Of these 130 are on the transfer list with Dublin Corporation. This represents a phenomenally high level of dissatisfaction with place of abode.

When St. Teresa's Gardens first opened it was considered an 'open door community', a trustworthy community where neighbours confided in each other and depended on each other. Years later, much of this has changed. It is now no longer difficult to get a transfer into Teresa's Gardens; for persons and families with few or no points on Dublin Corporation's housing list, Teresa's Gardens becomes a serious option, sometimes the only option. In fact the flat is often 'sold' to prospective tenants by Corporation officials as a short term temporary solution to their accommodation problem. If they are prepared 'to do some time' in Teresa's Gardens they might then be considered for a transfer to better 'standard' accommodation elsewhere. St. Teresa's Gardens along with a number of other south city flat complexes have been open area for difficult or multi-problem families for four years now. The fact that this open area policy exists is denied by Dublin Corporation officials and spokespersons. But with or without a policy, this 'dumping' of difficult and problem families happens. The outcome of this is that almost 50% of the tenants have moved in over the past five years. 65% of existing tenants want to move out. The 'area is rapidly becoming a half-way house; a place to put young families until they secure enough points to be placed elsewhere.

The first signs that Teresa's Gardens might become a problem community were seen in the early seventies, during and after a tenant dispute with Dublin Corporation. Up to then, the area had a very strong tenants association which organised social events, youth activities and represented the tenants at all levels. The tenants group also organised the rent strike within the Corporation dispute. However in the wake of the dispute, the tenants association split up and disintegrated. At the time new houses were becoming available in Tallaght. A number of tenants who had lived in Teresa's Gardens for years were becoming disheartened with the area and the 'bad name' it was getting for itself in the papers. At the time a spate of car thefts and joyriding occurred in the area. As a result these older tenants decided to opt for Tallaght. This process of transferring out continued right through the seventies. These older tenants were replaced by young families who were finding it difficult to be accommodated elsewhere. With the



outbreak of heroin abuse in the area in the late seventies the situation became untenable for families with growing children. The result is that most families with growing children now want out. Those who wish to stay consist mainly of those who have struck it out from the start, and those who have come into the area as a positive choice. For such families who want to stay and make a healthy independent vibrant community, their task is made almost impossible because of the transience and open area policy. A whole new look will have to be given to the procedures for designating areas as being low demand, while at the same time a whole new approach to the allocating of resources for building stable communities will have to be considered.

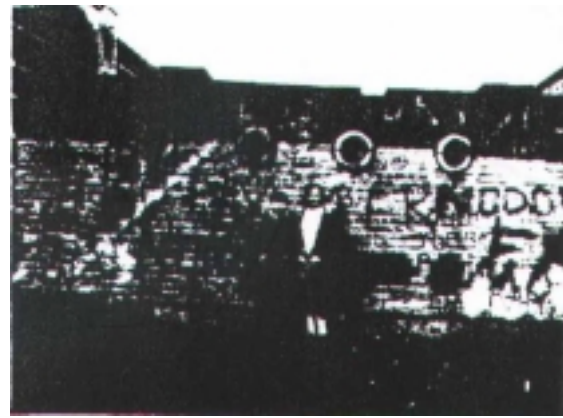
It would be our view that the following recommendations are essential to such an approach:

(i) The total abolition of 'open area' policy. At present Teresa's Gardens is in Area L of Dublin Corporation's allocation map. So too is the Coombe, New St., and Brown St. Yet to be allocated a place in Brown St., or New St., will require overall priority. One can be allocated a flat in Teresa's Gardens for little or no points. However, when one applies for accommodation with Dublin Corporation and gives the choice of area, theoretically they are not allowed specify a particular unit or street of units in their choice of area. Yet the Corporation will argue that the 'open area' policy results from too few people specifying it as an area of choice. Surely if Teresa's Gardens is a low demand area, then too other areas with Area L must be areas of low demand, which is not true. The Corporation itself has broken its own rules of procedure to allocate houses, the outcome of which has been the stigmatisation of some communities and the almost glorification of others.

(ii) The allocation of flats in Teresa's Gardens to groups of single persons. In particular if such people were middle aged, they would add some balance to an area that is almost swamped with young families. Few flats are currently allocated to single people because Dublin Corporation says it has only statutory responsibility to house families and elderly persons. But exceptions have been made in the past, and there is no reason why major exceptions cannot be made in this case now: If one considers that failure to act in other complexes that were becoming ghettoised resulted in such complexes being demolished; a net lowering of housing stock; positive action like that proposed above would avert the need for such demolition.

(iii) The setting up of a procedure for housing allocations in Teresa's Gardens through which all prospective tenants of Teresa's Gardens would have to indicate Teresa's Gardens as a positive choice. The existence of this positive choice would have to be determined through an interview process that involved as interviewers people nominated by St. Teresa's Gardens Development Committee.

(iv) The setting up of a locally-based trust which could buy a certain amount of flats from Dublin Corporation, and rent these flats to single persons at commercial rates.



(v) The designation of Teresa's Gardens as a priority area for environmental improvement schemes, by Dublin Corporation and the Department of the Environment. It would be important that such schemes be managed locally possibly through the Development Committee.

(vi) The allocation of resources to Teresa's Gardens Development Committee by Dublin Corporation and the Department of the Environment, for the provision of adequate amenity and recreational facilities.

## Maintenance

Unfortunately the design of the questionnaire used in this survey did not allow for the proper quantification of maintenance problems in St. Teresa's Gardens. It must be recalled that it was the maintenance problem itself that gave rise to this survey in the first place. However, from the information we have collected we feel we can make the following points.

(i) There is a high level of dissatisfaction (over 50%) amongst tenants with the maintenance service in the area.

(ii) Over 50% of tenants did not know how often Corporation personnel performed specific functions which were supposed to be performed. In the case of one specific function, the hosing of stairways, only 25% of respondents replied that the stairways were hosed once per week.

Yet Mr. Mills, Head of Maintenance, Dublin Corporation ensured the Development Committee last year that each stairway was hosed at least once per week. If this was true we fail to see how only 25% of tenants notice it.

(iii) There seems to exist a myriad of problems with internal maintenance with 221 tenants making 277 representations to Dublin Corporation with 455 specific reports of maintenance problems, in the past two years.

We feel the matters of external maintenance speak for themselves in the photos we have produced for this report.

## SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

### **Youth**

- (i) The provision of an alternative-education structure styled similar to the Rutland St. Youth Encounter Project, to be designed following adequate consultations with relevant educational personnel, other community groups and relevant government departments.
- (ii) The immediate commencement of the Eastern Health Board's \*Youth Development Project' for the treatment and rehabilitation of adolescent drug abusers in Weaver Sq.
- (iii) The more active involvement of youth service agencies with disadvantaged youth to include the provision of grants and resources to community youth groups in areas similar to Teresas Gardens.
- (iv) The provision of a locally based co-operative resource through the 'Youth Employment Agency', that would develop locally based goods and services, and eventually market these goods and services through workers' co-operatives.
- (v) The more intense involvement of the Youth Employment Agency and AnCO in the education, training and development of young people in the area towards employment and job-creation.

### **Unemployment**

- (i) The undertaking of a comprehensive research study and analysis into the level of education, skills attainments, and job-experiences in the area.
- (ii) The undertaking of research into the development of new locally based goods and services.
- (iii) The provision of community based retraining programmes for the over 25s unemployed, linked to potential job-creation ventures.
- (iv) The exploration of co-operative principles and methods for the development of new viable jobs in the area.

### **Housing, Maintenance and Environment**

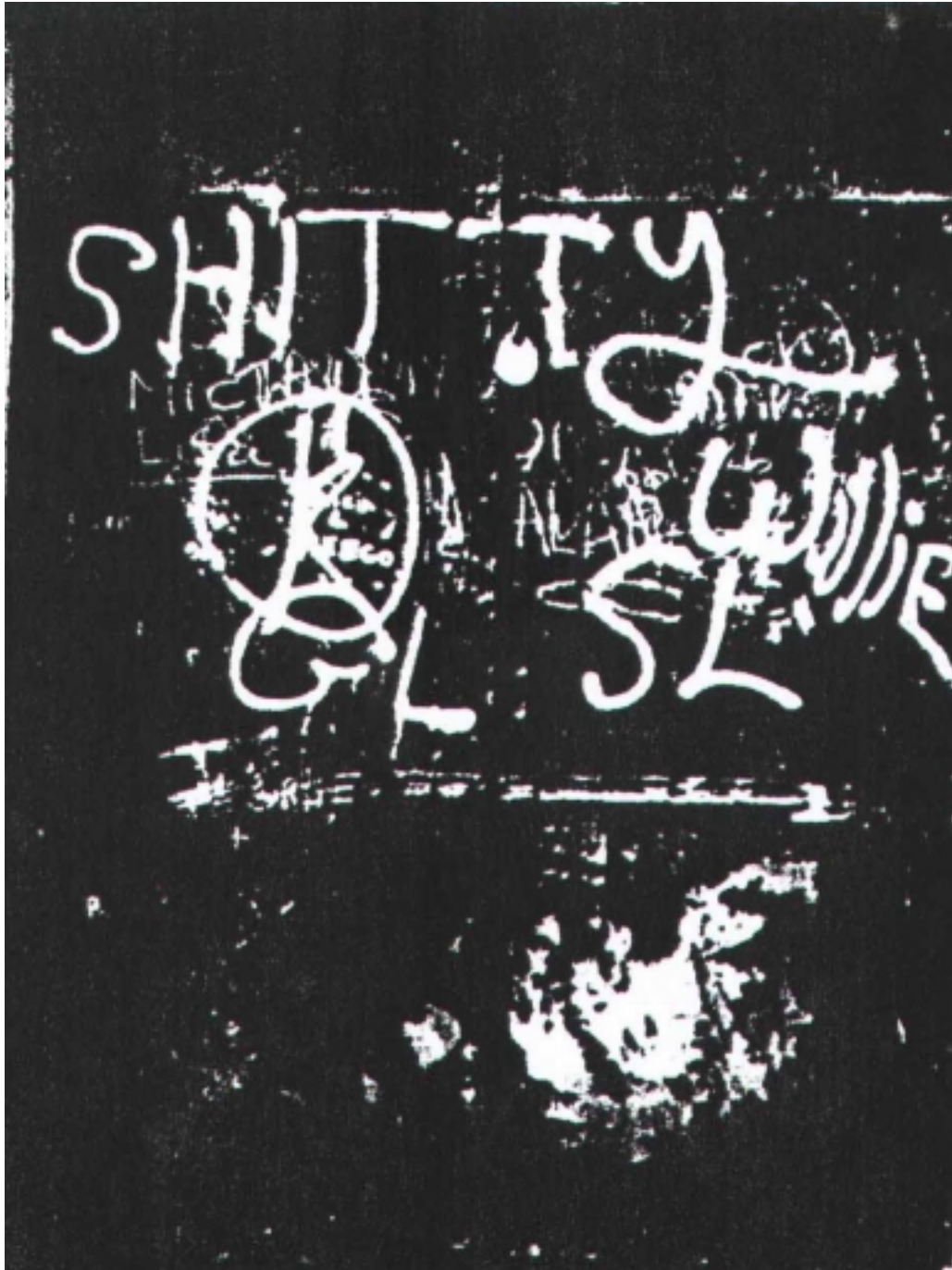
- (i) The total abolition of the policy of 'open area' or \*low demand area' in housing allocations.
- (ii) The taking of positive action to ensure a greater mix of tenants in Treasas Gardens, to include the allocation of flats to single people.
- (iii) The introduction of a system of housing allocations that would ensure all future tenants of Teresas Gardens would be there through a positive choice.
- (iv) The piloting of a scheme of flat purchase, which would enable Dublin Corporation to sell flats to a locally based trust, which would allocate these flats to categories of persons that would eventually ensure a slowing-down of transience in the area.
- (v) The piloting of a scheme for the contracting-out of maintenance responsibility to a locally based co-operative group (to be set up and properly trained).
- (vi) The designation of Teresas Gardens as a priority area for environment improvement schemes, and the management of such schemes locally possibly through development committee.
- (vii) The allocation of sufficient funds to development committee for the development and improvement of amenity and recreational facilities.

### **Community Development**

The provision of adequate funding, staffing and resources for a locally based community development project for the Teresas Gardens area as outlined in the proposals of St Teresas Gardens Development Committee.

#### ***4. The Future - Fighting Back***

*Development Committee*



## Feresas Garaons

### Community and Co-Operative Development

#### Project

The years of involvement with community development activities, the piloting of the Community Workers Training Course; the intense involvement with the Eastern Health Boards Youth Development Project; the undertaking of research, the publication of this report; are all testimony to the will and determination that exists amongst people within the Gardens, that their community should survive. The information contained in this report gives evidence that the cards are stacked against them. The level of commitment that exists within the Development Committee is yet to be matched by a corresponding commitment to action by Government. We are now living in the age of cutbacks, we are told that the Government is undertaking a comprehensive analysis of the efficiency of public service and statutory bodies. May we suggest one sensible cost/benefit analysis. If our recommendations are ignored it is likely that within the next five years. Dublin Corporation will be faced with a decision it has had to face in other ghettoised communities in the past. In these cases it decided to demolish, drastically reducing its housing stock in the process. As a result new homes had to be found for disposed tenants at enormous cost. Recently the opening of Trinity House in Lusk at a cost of over £3m was announced. If our recommendations are ignored more, similar Trinity Houses will have to be opened.

At a time when the public service is under constant, and often unwarranted, attack, our suggestions for contracted-out maintenance can save money for the Exchequer without any net loss of jobs.

These are all examples of how efficiency at public service level can be improved. The improvement depends on proper planning **in consultation** with local persons and organisations. The key principle for success must be local participation at all stages of development.

We are also told that there needs to be greater competitiveness in the market for our goods and services. It is our view that the single greatest factor contributing to the reduction of competitiveness in the past has been the over-dependence on private business interests. We believe that as a community we can begin to contribute to competitiveness, through the development of locally based cooperatives, with new roads and services, and employing local people. However in saying this we are also aware that we lack the one single factor that would make such development possible, capital.

It would be our view that the trust and confidence

past, should now be placed with local groups like ourselves. We realise that a major capital injection into our community tomorrow would be useless. However a planned investment into developing all aspects of the area would have respectable spin-offs for both government and the people in the community, in the future.

It is with hope, therefore that we have prepared our proposals for "Terasas Gardens Community and Co-operative Development Project" We have already circulated copies of this proposal to the relevant government departments and agencies. It is a measure of our commitment and our confidence in local people that we have already decided to initiate the first stages of this project. We have pinpointed areas where government departments and statutory bodies can assist us with this development. We sincerely hope that this assistance is forthcoming without delay

#### Aims and Objectives

"To set up a project, to be known as Terasas Gardens Community and Co-operative Development Project, which will involve the people of the community in a process of creating and developing a more healthy, active, independent, caring and economically more viable community."

The specific aims of the project involve the provision of resources for a range of community-based activities in the social, cultural, economic and political development of the community. They are AS FOLLOWS:

#### 1. Community Development

- (i) to provide a range of back-up services, administrative, financial and information, and other resources to locally based community groups.
- (ii) to provide information and specialist advice regarding their rights and entitlements to groups and individuals in **Need**, and to support them in pursuit of such rights and entitlements.
- (iii) to develop and support a range of activities for youth in the area and to encourage the participation of young people in the planning and organising of these and other activities
- (iv) to promote and assist the artistic and cultural development of the community.

Through its activities to date the development committee has already contributed to the development of these specific aims. Each year with its summer projects it has managed to organise a comprehensive range of activities for young people, and supply a different local co-ordinator each year. For the past two years the committee has consistently developed the resources of Donmore Youth Club, Donmore Ave making it one of the best equipped youth clubs in the south city area. The committee has also managed to build up its own resources. The Community Workers Training Course was vital to this development, first it enabled



ed a number of local people to be trained in community work skills, a vital resource for community development. Through the course the committee also managed to develop a training centre in Brown St., and acquire valuable equipment, including an IBM typewriter and photocopier. The committee has also managed to negotiate access to other valuable resources in community work, including a Black and White Darkroom for enlarging and developing photographic prints and a duplicator.

## 2. Training & Employment

- (i) to research and investigate existing employment skills within the community.
- (ii) to research and investigate the potential for job-creation opportunities within the community.
- (iii) to sponsor market-research and feasibility studies into a range of locally based goods and services.
- (iv) to provide opportunities for young people to gain skills for employment within community based vocational training.

The above aims are very much a second stage to achieving the aims above in Community Development. Already some members of the Development Committee through their participation in the Community Workers Training Course, have demonstrated their ability to undertake research, locally, under proper supervision, etc. We would envisage the undertaking of further research later this year under the direction and guidance of a locally based researcher.

- (i) to provide training in community and co-operative development.

- (ii) to create opportunities for local people to provide work, jobs and services in a co-operative setting, and to provide ongoing support and assistance to such developments.

It is our view that it would be pointless for the committee to engage in a long-term plan for community development without linking such a plan to the economic development of the community. We also believe that the only way of linking economic developments with the ongoing development of the community, is for such economic developments to be structured around co-operative methods and



principals. Having said that we are also aware that numerous co-operatives fold-up through lack of planning and training. We therefore recognise that training in co-operative methods and principals must be our starting point in becoming involved in such ventures. After that the initiative for setting up co-operatives must lie with their potential members. It will be the work of the project to actively assist and advise such ventures.

## Management

St. Teresa's Gardens Development Committee-or body nominated by it.

## Setting Up The Project

As already stated the details of this proposal have already been circulated to government bodies. The response we have had to date has been encouraging. However, we should point out that we are looking for specific financial commitments from government departments in relation to our project proposals. At this stage we are negotiating for such commitments. We also intend through the publication of this report to get media and other support for our proposals. But if this process fails we are also prepared to take whatever action is necessary to ensure that the necessary finance is forthcoming from the appropriate sources. We should point out that there is nothing contained within this proposal that cannot be allocated through government departments and bodies, under existing and proposed terms of reference.

Nevertheless the committee will be taking steps to ensure that the current level of enthusiasm and commitment to this project is sustained irrespective of government intentions. We are therefore setting up a Welfare Rights Information Centre in the very near future. This Centre will be concerned primarily with assisting and advising individuals as to their rights and entitlements in social welfare. At a later stage it is hoped to provide 'legal and housing advice, etc.

The committee will also be publishing a monthly local magazine, starting this summer. There is tremendous potential in such a magazine for involving local people in the work of the committee, and for informing local people of local issues and developments.

Also this summer, in the summer project, the committee will be setting up a Community Arts Resources Group, the first task of this group will be to organise a three-day festival for the Gardens in August, at the end of the Summer Project.





The single greatest factor contributing to the worsening maintenance situation in Teresa's Gardens is the total lack of clarification and confusion of functions between the different Corporation personnel involved in maintenance service. An agreement thrashed out between representatives of Teresa's Gardens Development Committee and top officials of Dublin Corporation maintenance section failed to be implemented. This agreement had the full support of local representatives who apparently brought it to a meeting of the flats committee. One can only deduce that the failure to have this agreement implemented must lie within the Corporation's own management structures and procedures. It could also be argued that the people from Teresa's Gardens themselves have not been strong enough in presenting their case to Dublin Corporation. There is a certain element of fact in this statement, but it should be added that the development committee did take the corporation officials in good faith. Retrospectively, grave concern has been expressed that the development committee was used by both the Corporation and the public representatives to defuse the situation. As a result it will be much more difficult to secure the support and consensus of the development committee by the Corporation, in the future.

Quite apart from a breakdown in the management of maintenance there is a quite obvious lack of any real enthusiasm or commitment by Corporation officials in the provision of proper maintenance. It is almost as if it is within the Corporation's interest to keep at least one flat complex constantly in a bad state. This would serve as a warning to tenants in other communities who are defaulting in rent payments or causing other difficulties.

Furthermore, the fact that so many people who 'come through' Teresa's Gardens are only passing through means that such people need not necessarily have any interest in ensuring that the place is kept clean in the first instance. This lack of interest can spread like cancer to all tenants.

However, in considering solutions to this ever-present problem, we feel it important to identify the management of maintenance and the 'open area' policy as the primary causes of it. The first step in solving it must therefore be the abolition of the 'open area' policy and complete restructuring of procedures for maintenance provision.

We would like to suggest that the Corporation consider the contracting-out of maintenance responsibility to a local 'maintenance co-operative'. Such a co-operative would of course have to be set up, and its members would have to be adequately trained in all aspects of maintenance provision. This could be done on a pilot basis, and it might later be found to be of use in other communities in Dublin experiencing similar maintenance problems. We should point out clearly that we see no long-term solution to the maintenance problem within the Corporation's existing structures.

## COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

In considering our conclusions to this survey we have been very much aware that a major contributing factor to the accumulation of so many social problems in one area has been the total lack of any comprehensive community-based resources. In making our recommendations we are also keenly aware that any statutory responses to our suggestions will be only piecemeal, unless they are co-ordinated by locally based personnel. In other more advantaged communities, the type of resources that we speak of are quite easily mobilised, because usually they exist locally, and if not the finance to pay for them does.

It is our view that it would be pointless for any agency or government department to participate in the development of our community without the support and assistance of a proper community development project.

We therefore recommend the setting up under local management and control a community development project for St. Teresa's Gardens, with adequate staffing and funding. Details of such a project has been outlined by St. Teresa's Gardens Development Committee in the following chapter.

## Conclusion

The preparation of this report is the culmination of a lot of hard work, commitment and dedication of the St. Teresa's Gardens Development Committee. It's publication comes at a very significant moment in the development of the committee; the awarding of certificates to those who participated in the Community Work Training Course. The initiative we took in piloting this course, will, we hope, encourage other communities in similar circumstances as ours. The recommendations and proposals contained in this report represent our solution to the situation outlined.

To us, this report means hope for the future; for the future of the Gardens. This future is dependant on a full and adequate response from the appropriate government departments and agencies. We look forward to it.