

Co-operation Fingal Community Partnership



Evaluation of the Dormant Accounts Disability Project

October 2004 - March 2007



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I am 14.

I went to the ISPCC course run by the North Fingal ADHD support Group through the Co-operation Fingal Disability Project.

I thought it was a great way for children with ADHD to meet their peers and make friends.

It was great to talk with others who really understood.

Before I went in I was unsure because I thought it would be one of those things that I would be under a micro-scope.

When it started I went in and saw all the other kids, just like me.

I felt that ADHD is a real condition and I had questions answered.

I felt that we made good friends.

I feel protective over the younger children there, and will always look out for them.

By a participant of a course delivered through the Project

Independent Evaluator - Patricia Hunt,

April 7th 2007

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1. FOREWORD

As Chairperson of the Steering Group for the Dormant Accounts Disability Project, I am pleased to present the evaluation report of this project.

This project was established in order to respond to the needs identified through Co-operation Fingal Community Partnership for significant support on the part of three voluntary disability groups, namely; Remember Us – support for young people with learning difficulties/special needs, F.A.D.E – support for people with physical/sensory disabilities and North Fingal ADD/ADHD Parent and Adult Support Group – support for young people and adults with ADD/ADHD. This project was initiated as a result of funding secured through the Dormant Accounts Fund. Through the establishment of this project and recruitment of staff, local groups were able to access support to respond to the needs of service users. This support took the form of facilitation with training courses for young people with disabilities plus a range of seminars, workshops and practical day-to-day support to individuals and groups in responding to their needs, including advocacy support. Over 1,600 individuals have directly benefited from this project since its inception in March 2005.

This evaluation report provides a comprehensive overview of the key outcomes from the project, including learning and recommendations for the way forward. Some important factors to note include the impact of a strong Steering Committee (involving representation from the local disability groups as well as key stakeholders), the structured and clear/transparent systems established through Co-operation Fingal to administer and oversee the project as well as the tailored nature of support delivered in response to target groups needs based on inputs from Project staff. The successes achieved through the Project can be attributed to the above factors that are incorporated into an interesting mapping of the path of the project, which the Steering Group believes, is a valuable resource to other projects of a similar nature (See Appendix D in Report). This path clearly outlines the key milestones in the establishment, delivering, monitoring and evaluation of a very effective project.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the members of the Steering Group, whose time and valued experiences guided the development of a project which far exceeded its targets in relation to providing information, supports and training for people with disabilities. Steering Committee members included Emer Mulligan (Co-operation Fingal Community Partnership), John McTiernan (HSE), Carol Doolan (HSE), Declan Coogan (Mater CAMHS), Michelle Gaynor (community representative), Anne Marie Ellison (Remember Us), Representative (North Fingal ADD/ADHD Parent and Adult Support Group) and Norma O'Brien (FADE). Special thanks goes to Sarah Musharack (Project Co-ordinator) and Louise Earley (Advocacy Worker), the staff of the project, without whom this project would not have been as effective. The role of Co-operation Fingal in supporting the groups to work together and managing the overall project, thereby ensuring that targets were not only met but exceeded must also be acknowledged.

I would especially like to thank Patricia Hunt whose patience and ability to delve into the complexity of the project requirements brought this evaluation report to the stage whereby the needs are clearly identified and the paths towards unravelling them is laid out.

Finally, this evaluation report would not have been possible without the funding made available firstly through Dormant Accounts for delivery of the project and secondly through Co-operation Fingal for printing of the report.

Amanda McLoughlin

Chairperson

2. INTRODUCTION

As a result of funding secured through the Dormant Accounts Funds, in October 2004, Co-operation Fingal formed a partnership with three local voluntary disability support groups to deliver the Disability Project at Co-operation Fingal.

The three local voluntary disability support groups are FADE (Fingal Awareness of Disability and Equality), Remember Us - an integrated social youth club for young people with special needs, their siblings and friends and North Fingal ADD/ADHD Parent & Adult Support Group.

These three groups represent three disability strands namely:

- People with physical/sensory disabilities – FADE.
- People with learning difficulties/special needs - Remember Us.
- People with emotional/behavioural difficulties - North Fingal ADD/ADHD Parent & Adult Support Group.

Co-operation Fingal was the lead agency in delivering the Project. A number of statutory and voluntary agencies delivering services to people with disabilities in the North Fingal area also participated in the Project Steering Group.

Representatives from local statutory and voluntary agencies that participated on the Project Steering Committee were: The Citizen's Information Board, HSE Disability and Mental Health Services, Mater Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) Swords, and FÁS - see Appendix A. The Project started in October 2004 and funding is due to end in June 2007.

The Disability Project was essentially about supporting voluntary disability groups to provide: information, a range of supports and skills training for people with disabilities and their families.

3. EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

Following a tendering process the Disability Project Steering Committee appointed an independent evaluator to carry out the Project evaluation. The evaluation process began in December 2006 and was completed in April 2007. The methodology used to do the evaluation included:

1. Meeting with the Manager of Co-operation Fingal and Members of the Steering Committee Evaluation Working Group to agree the evaluation framework, process and schedule.
2. Carrying out desk research – reading all relevant reports, project application, ongoing evaluations, reviews and quarterly reports.
3. Meeting with the three participating voluntary disability support groups: FADE, Remember Us and North Fingal ADD/ADHD Parent & Adult Support Group.
4. Meeting with the Disability Project Steering Group.
5. Preparing a Draft Evaluation Report.
6. Receiving feedback from the Steering Group.
7. Submitting a second Draft Evaluation Report.
8. Completing the Final Evaluation Report

4. EVALUATION SUMMARY

In summary the principal findings of the evaluation of the Disability Project at Co-operation Fingal are as follows:

1. The Project far exceeded its targets in terms of providing information, supports and training for people with disabilities.
2. There appears to be a significant and growing demand for information, supports and training for people with disabilities.
3. This demand does not appear to be met by existing statutory agencies.
4. There is clearly a role for Co-operation Fingal in supporting individual voluntary disability groups at start-up, operational and strategic development stages.
5. There is a role for Co-operation Fingal in supporting the groups to work together so that they can share information, pool resources, develop policy, provide services and develop models of good practice.

6. Co-operation Fingal needs to be provided with adequate funding from statutory agencies in order to fulfil both these roles.
7. The role of the voluntary disability support groups in providing flexible, locally based, soft-skills integrated training and development cannot be over stated. Groups providing such essential services need enhanced support and adequate levels of funding.
8. The Project Steering Group worked well in terms of developing models of good practice and as a forum for statutory, voluntary and community organisations working together. It provided a positive and challenging learning environment for the three voluntary disability support groups.
9. The Project Steering Group should consider a follow-up Project.
10. A follow-up Project should provide strategic development support for individual disability support groups, facilitate further collaborative development amongst the individual disability support groups, provide advocacy support and secure mainstream funding for the activities of the groups.

5. PROJECT AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The aim of the Disability Project at Co-operation Fingal, as stated in the Project Application Form March 3rd 2004, was:

'To establish a holistic information, training and support service for people with disabilities in North Fingal. The main focus will be on training and support in core areas relevant to the needs of specific groups of people. This will include three strands to the Project.

- 1. Preparatory/core job skills training and job coaching for people with physical/sensory disabilities.*
- 2. Independent Life Skills coaching for young people with special needs.*
- 3. Behaviour support strategies for young people with emotional/behavioural difficulties (EBD).*

The approach taken will be one emphasising life long learning across a broad range of ages, incorporating support directly for participants as well as training and support in some cases for the families and siblings of the young people'.

6. PROJECT OUTCOMES

In quantitative terms the Disability Project at Co-operation Fingal far exceeded the targets it set in its initial application to Pobal. Project delivery numbers in terms of: people benefiting, the level of activities, range of stakeholder involvement and the production of booklets, a DVD and a website all far exceeded initial targets – see Figure 1. The roles of both the Project Co-ordinator and Advocacy Worker were critical to this success.

The Project Co-ordinator was responsible for liaison with the Steering Group, setting up effective application systems, supporting the three groups, helping to organise activities, monitoring activity and organising evaluation of activities– see Appendix B.

The Advocacy Worker supported both individuals and groups linked to the three voluntary disability groups. The Advocacy Worker facilitated access to mainstream services in areas such as information, education, training, transport and accommodation – see Appendix C.

By December 2006 approximately 1,250 people benefited from the Disability Project in comparison to the projected amount of 138 people – see Figure 1. The number of initiatives/activities also far exceeded the expected amount. Similarly the numbers participating in education and training far exceeded targets.

The range of stakeholder participation was also much greater than initially expected. For example the Teacher Training Day in the Drumcondra Education Centre provided 30 teachers with training in how to support children with ADD/ADHD. In addition people from all over the country attended the Ben Polis Seminar on ADD/ADHD. There is clearly a significant demand for information and training from a wide range of stakeholders including people with disabilities, their families and, unexpectedly from the Project's initial perspective, from statutory service providers such as teachers and health care workers and students.

Employment targets in relation to FADE were the only targets not met in the Project. This was due to a number of factors but primarily the initial need was not as clearly identified as it might have been. The number of people with disabilities linked to

FADE seeking employment does not appear to be significant. However other relevant needs identified by the group such as information and advocacy support were clearly met through the Project.

Feedback from activities and seminars was largely very positive. Demand for skills training in areas such as: relationship building, teacher training and ICT training for independent living were much higher than expected. Seminars on topics such as Independent Living and the Ben Polis Talk were very much in demand by all of the stakeholders. The production of good quality ADD/ADHD Information Booklets and a DVD were also very tangible outcomes of the Project. The Groups acknowledged appreciation of equipment grants for ICT and grants for other activities essential for the delivery of their services.

FIGURE 1 - DISABILITY PROJECT AT CO-OPERATION FINGAL

Performance Indicators for the Project

Source Dormant Accounts – Beneficiary Monitoring Return Form 31/12/2006

Disability Project	Projected Figures	Figures Achieved
1. No. Benefiting	138	1,250
• Target Group	53	314
• Service Providers	0	290
• Parents	85	646
2. No. of Initiatives	1	21
3. Education & Training Initiatives	138	427
• Target Group	53	200
• Service Providers	0	80
• Parents	85	147
4. No. into Employment	8	0
5. No. of Seminars	0	11
6. Attendance at Seminars	0	800
• Target Group	0	90
• Service Providers	0	222
• Parents	0	488
7. Publications	3	980 disseminated

7. ACHIEVING PROJECT AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The Project objectives were to:

- Establish a holistic information, training and support service for people with disabilities in North Fingal.
- Provide training and support to specific groups of people namely:
 - Preparatory/core job skills training and job coaching for people with physical/sensory disabilities – FADE.
 - Independent Life Skills coaching for young people with special needs – Remember Us.
 - Behaviour support strategies for young people with emotional/behavioural difficulties (EBD) - North Fingal ADD/ADHD Parent & Adult Support Group.

The concept of establishing a holistic information, training and support service for people with disabilities in North Fingal was developed. To see this fully developed and to explore what shape it could take would require a follow-on project.

With regard to providing training and support to the three specific groups this varied. The employment skills training strand planned for FADE did not happen as expected. The target group was not well defined sufficiently nor were there sufficient numbers of people with physical/sensory disabilities interested in this option. In addition FÁS the statutory agency with responsibility in this area did not participate, to any great extent, in the Project. However FADE did run an Employment Seminar, which was attended by over 50 people; this reinforced the need for and benefits of networking.

With regard to the independent life skills coaching for young people with special needs, this was a dominant strand throughout the Project. Remember Us with the assistance from the Project in terms of the Steering Group, the Project Staff and project resources ran a series of life skills coaching activities for young people with special needs. These included: healthy living, relationship development, household responsibilities, youth club activities and technical skills in ICT. Whilst this was a

very successful element to the Project it also highlighted that additional ongoing funding is critical in this area.

With regard to the behaviour support strategies for young people with emotional/behavioural difficulties, this strand also proved to be successful. The North Fingal ADD/ADHD Parent & Adult Support Group with assistance from the Project focused on providing information and advocacy support for families with children and young people with ADD/ADHD.

In addition two excellent information publications '*Children with ADD/ADHD*', '*ADD/ADHD: An Adults' Guide*' and a DVD were produced and circulated. A website was also developed which has provided a valuable on-line information point.

The approach in the Project was one of lifelong learning for children as young as five in the Remember Us Project to people in their late 60s in the FADE Project.

As previously stated the level of uptake of activities in the Project from service providers was an unexpected outcome. Initial projections did not anticipate service providers participating in the Project. By the end of the Project service providers had participated approximately 592 times. This included teachers, health care workers and some students attending many of the Project Information Seminars and undergoing training organised through the Project.

The level of uptake by parents was also an unexpected outcome for the Project. It was expected that parents would participate approximately 170 times. By the end of the Project parent activity occurred approximately 1,281 times again in areas such as attending Project Information Seminars, undergoing training, attending other relevant seminars, participating in networking sessions and in some activities.

These levels of activity, particularly through attending seminars, indicates a huge desire for information and support amongst a wider than expected range of stakeholders.

8. FEEDBACK

Feedback from both the individual disability support groups and the Project Steering Group in relation to the Dormant Accounts Disability Project at Co-operation Fingal was largely positive.

From the perspective of FADE, although the core initiative of employment was not achieved, many other worthwhile developmental initiatives were achieved. The Seminars on Employment and Transport were well supported by the Project. Support for the provision of ICT equipment was invaluable. Support from the Advocacy Worker was a key resource to the group. The group was disappointed that a Seminar on Independent Living was not financially supported. However participation in the Project has helped FADE in terms of learning from other groups and networking. The capacity of the Board of Management of FADE is being examined by the group and should be supported in any future follow-up project. The collaboration of cross-disability groups in a single project is in line with EU policy. FADE is interested in developing this cross-disability collaboration.

The Project supported Remember Us to provide additional services for their client group. Remember Us provides a locally based social outlet and soft skills training programme for over 80 young people with special needs from the ages of 4 – 18 years. The Youth Club runs four nights a week and sibling members are welcome to participate. Remember Us is interested in further collaboration with disability groups and statutory agencies. However should a follow-up project occur, Remember Us needs to build the capacity of its organisation to move from being a very effective voluntary operational organisation to being a strategic organisation with mainstream funding to support the critical services provided.

The Project supported the North Fingal ADD/ADHD Parent & Adult Support Group to provide a range of educational and information initiatives for parents and people with ADD/ADHD. The Group felt that the Project helped them to establish contacts, reach their target group of over 400 people, parents, siblings and service providers coping with ADD/ADHD, The Project was also good in terms of its process – the Steering Group, the ongoing evaluations, the support provided by the Project Staff

Feedback from the Steering Group was also largely positive. The groups felt that by participating in it they learned from one another, they formed relationships with the other groups and with statutory agencies in a different context to their normal dealings and the process of being involved in the Steering Group reduced their isolation as voluntary groups.

The agencies felt that the processes developed and put in place by the Steering Group worked well. The processes developed by the Steering Group for funding applications and tracking initiatives were seen to be transparent, fair, rigorous, flexible and a good discipline for the groups. They formed good working relationships with the voluntary disability support groups. They heard directly the needs and concerns of the groups.

Members of the Steering Group did acknowledge the enormous contribution carried by Co-operation Fingal throughout the lifecycle of the Project. As stated the role of both Project Co-ordinator and Advocacy Worker were critical to the success of the Project. In addition support from Co-operation Fingal in terms of Project Management, staff supervision, administrative support was also a critical factor in the success of the Project. The groups are not at a point where they could manage a project of this complexity.

The Project has probably raised expectations of advocacy support amongst the groups. There appears to be a very significant demand for advocacy support on a one-to-one basis from members of each of the three groups. In addition other emerging groups in the area such as the Dyspraxia Support Group and the Autism Support Group are seeking support.

The evaluation mechanisms such as completing feedback sheets whilst acknowledged as necessary were sometimes seen as repetitive and lacking in depth. A mix of different types of evaluation was suggested such as small group discussion to gain a more in depth analysis of activities.

9. KEY LEARNING POINTS

The following are the key learning points from the evaluation of the Disability Project at Co-operation Fingal:

1. Rigorous needs analysis is critical at project identification stage.
2. A wide range of stakeholders is seeking information and supports.
3. The commitment of all members of the Steering Group is critical to the success of the Project.
4. Further capacity development is needed at individual disability group level and between groups if they are to work collaboratively.
5. Continued support from Co-operation Fingal is critical for the groups.

10. RECOMMENDATIONS

The following are the recommendations from the evaluation of the Disability Project at Co-operation Fingal:

1. The relevant Statutory Agencies acknowledge the critical nature of the information, support and skill development services being provided by the three voluntary disability groups.
2. Funding is put in place to enable Co-operation Fingal to support these three voluntary disability groups in terms of: individual and group capacity development, provision of essential services for people with disabilities and other relevant stakeholders, advocacy work and project management.
3. The concept of establishing a holistic information, training and support service for people with disabilities in North Fingal is explored further in a follow-up project.

11. CONCLUSION

The Dormant Accounts Disability Project at Co-operation Fingal was a successful Project in terms of:

1. Engaging with its target group – people with disabilities that are frequently marginalised and excluded from society.
2. Providing effective Project Management through an inclusive Steering Group.

3. Provision of significant inputs from Co-operation Fingal in terms of staff support, administrative support, liaison with Pobal, support for the individual voluntary disability groups and the Steering Group.
 4. Developing the capacity of voluntary groups to work in partnership with one another and with statutory agencies.
 5. Enabling statutory agencies to work together in a more effective manner.
 6. Excellent value for money – Project costs of €171,616.00 for a 23month Project employing two staff and over 2,000 people participating.
 7. Facilitating a range of well organised and delivered activities.
 8. Providing critical ICT equipment to voluntary groups.
 9. Developing a vision of how groups and agencies can work together and begin to plan strategically for the future.
 10. Raising public awareness regarding the issues facing people with disabilities and their families.
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APPENDIX A
Disability Project at Co-operation Fingal
Members of the Steering Group

Name	Representation
Amanda Mc Loughlin (Chair)	Citizens Information Board
Emer Mulligan	Manager, Co-operation Fingal
Declan Coogan	Mater Child & Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS)
Carol Doolan	HSE Disability Services Manager
Louise Earley	Co-operation Fingal Advocacy Worker
Anne-Marie Ellison	Remember Us
Group Representative	ADD/ADHD Parent & Adult Support Group
Michelle Gaynor	Community Representative People with Disabilities
Sarah Musharakh	Co-operation Fingal Project Co-ordinator
John Mc Tiernan	Director Co-operation Fingal/HSE Manager Mental Health
Norma O'Brien	FADE
Chris Kane	FÁS – October 2004-September 2005

APPENDIX B

Disability Project at Co-operation Fingal - A Summary of Activities

No.	Activity	Group	No.	Theme
1.	Disability Awareness Support Evening	FADE	10	Information & Networking
2.	Transport Information Seminar	FADE	11	Access to public transport.
3.	Employment Information Seminar	FADE	50	Information session from employment support agencies.
4.	Independent Living Seminar	FADE	60	Seminar on Independent living.
5.	Social Evening	FADE	20	Combating social isolation.
6.	Stretch & Grow	Remember Us	25	Integrated Course on healthy living
7.	Computer Course	Remember Us	30	ICT Skills training for young people.
8.	Relationships & Sexuality Education for Adolescents with special needs	Remember Us	20	Personal Development for the older teenager.
9.	Line Dancing	Remember Us	17	Co-ordination for young people with special needs
10.	Daily Living Skills	Remember Us	14	Household responsibilities for young people with special needs
11.	Songschool	Remember Us	11	Introduction to Music
12.	Ben Polis Talk on ADD/ADHD & Launch of DVD	ADD/ADHD Group	109	Internationally recognised speaker and launch of Group's info. DVD
13.	Teacher Training Day	ADD/ADHD Group	30	Teacher Training on ADD/ADHD in Drumcondra Education Centre.
14.	Complementary Therapy	ADD/ADHD Group	70	Complementary Therapy Fare

15.	Anger Management	ADD/ADHD Group	11	Personal Development
16.	Advocating for a child with special needs	ADD/ADHD Group	34	National Parents' Council
17.	ASSIST Programme	ADD/ADHD Group	2	Suicide prevention for parents.
18.	Childhood Adolescence & Beyond	ADD/ADHD Group	3	Attend an International Seminar
19.	Child Protection Training	ADD/ADHD Group	12	Information on recent legislation

APPENDIX C
Disability Project at Co-operation Fingal
A Summary of Advocacy Support

CLIENT DETAILS BREAKDOWN AUGUST 2005-DECEMBER 2006

ADHD/ADD	Clients	No. of Interventions	Type of intervention
	81	217	160 Phone Calls 30 Meetings 27 E-mails

FADE	Clients	No. of Interventions	Type of intervention
	32	88	54 Phone Calls 18 Meetings 16 E-mails

Remember Us	Clients	No. of Interventions	Type of intervention
	18	53	32 Phone calls 16 Meetings 3 E-mails

Mental Health	Clients	No. of Interventions	Type of intervention
	9	23	11 Phone Calls 9 Meetings 1 E-mail

Dyspraxia Support Group	Clients	No. of Interventions	Type of intervention
	31	31	1 Group Meeting

Physical disability	Clients	No. of Interventions	Type of Interventions
	5	5	4 Phone Calls 1 Meeting

TOTAL CLIENTS: 176

TOTAL INTERVENTIONS: 415

35% of cases were related to educational supports.

30% of cases were related to diagnosis or HSE related issues.

25% of cases were related to information and support.

10% of cases were related to housing or independent living.

APPENDIX D

Disability Project at Co-operation Fingal Flowchart of stages in project implementation/delivery

March 2004	Identification of target group needs through consultation with representatives from three local disability groups.
April 2004	Completion/submission of initial application to Dormant Accounts.
September 2004	Approval in principle of application submitted.
October 2004	Further engagement of representatives of local disability groups and key personnel in statutory sector to form Steering Committee for the Project.
October 2004	Review of initial application and re-submission, taking account of Pobal feedback/queries and indicative budget allocated.
November 2004	Approval of application and funding secured.
December 2004	Steering Committee convened to finalise work plan and staffing requirements.
December 2004	Disability Project account opened by Co-operation Fingal and finance/admin systems for reporting/monitoring expenditure established.
January 2005	Post of Project Co-ordinator advertised.
March 2005	Post of Project Co-ordinator filled.
April 2005	Steering Committee Terms of Reference agreed.
June 2005	Process for allocation of project funds agreed through strict guidelines developed by Project Co-ordinator and approved by Steering Committee (Proposal Forms submitted for Steering Committee Approval).
June 2005	Funding Application submitted to D/JELR under Enhancing Disability Services
July 2005	Evaluation process for monitoring effectiveness of projects implemented through Project Co-ordinator and approved through Steering Committee.
Ongoing	Regular meetings of Steering Committee held to oversee actions, approve proposals and review evaluations.

July 2005	Advocacy Worker post advertised.
August 2005	Advocacy Worker post filled.
September 2005	Role of Advocacy Worker consolidated through work of project to date in supporting beneficiaries of three local disability groups.
Ongoing	Monthly accounting records maintained by Co-operation Fingal Finance Administrator.
Ongoing	Beneficiary Monitoring Return Forms completed every six months and submitted to Pobal – reviewed by Steering Committee.
Ongoing	Representation on Steering Committee regularly reviewed.
Ongoing	Funding allocated to project regularly reviewed by Co-operation Fingal Manager and contracts for staff employed extended where budgets allowed.
Ongoing	Work undertaken through the Steering Committee to assess mainstreaming options for the Project.
March 2006	HSE Service Development Plan on behalf of Disability Project submitted
May 2006	Comhairle Advocacy Services funding application submitted.
October 2006	Pobal Community Services Programme Disability Project application submitted.
November 2006	Evaluation process for the Project initiated.
December 2006	HSE Advocacy Worker funding proposal submitted
February 2007	Community Services Programme Disability Project Business Plan submitted
April 2007	St Stephen's Green Trust Application for Advocacy Worker funding submitted
April 2007	Evaluation Report completed; 1,250 people directly benefited from the Project (against a target set of 138), with 176 people accessing advocacy supports.
June 2007	Evaluation report printed
October 2007	Evaluation Report launched.