

< **IRD Duhallow-Ireland** >

**General details**

Name of Contact	Maura Walsh
Organisation	IRD Duhallow, James O Keefe Inst; Newmarket, Co Cork. Ireland
Email address	duhallow@eircom.net

**Details of activity**

Background to the case study	<p><b>Details of activity</b></p> <p>IRD Duhallow is a community-based rural development company established in 1989 to promote rural and community development in Duhallow, which covers North West Cork and part of East Kerry. This is a natural area of development with a population of approx 30,000 people. Out migration has long been a symptom of the economic decline of the area.</p> <p>IRD Duhallow administers the LEADER+, Local Development and Social Inclusion, CLÁR and EQUAL programmes.</p> <p>This case study examines the development and operation of the LAG (local action groups) as a vehicle for economic and social development.</p> <p><b>Aims and objectives</b></p> <p>IRD Duhallow combines the efforts and resources of the State Bodies, Local Authorities, local communities and individual entrepreneurs for the benefit of the local area.</p> <p>The main objective of IRD Duhallow is to establish and to support initiatives directed towards the generation of enterprise for the benefit and welfare of communities in Duhallow who may be deprived due to rural depopulation, immigration, lack of training, economic deprivation or poor infrastructure.</p> <p><b>Funding</b></p> <p>IRD Duhallow delivers a range of programmes, European and National. The LEADER programme was the first to enable the LAG (local action groups) to establish on firm footing. Other</p>
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	<p>programmes followed like the Local Development Social Inclusion Programme in 1995, the Community Services Programme, the Rural Social Scheme, CLAR; and the European Commission including EQUAL, Article VI.</p>
<p>Description of activity</p>	<p><b>Outline of programme / activities and approaches used</b></p> <p>For the purpose of the case study we will focus on the development of the Local Action Group over its lifetime.</p> <p>Using the bottom-up approach to community and rural development, IRD Duhallow has succeeded in providing a vehicle for community involvement in a wide range of rural community development activities. Social Capital has been increased and tangible economic results have been achieved.</p> <p>Through LEADER the following activities have been undertaken:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Training</li> <li>• Analysis</li> <li>• Enterprise development</li> <li>• Natural resources</li> <li>• Social &amp; cultural enhancement</li> <li>• Environmental improvements</li> <li>• Trans-national and inter-territorial partnership projects</li> <li>• Development of rural and agri tourism</li> <li>• Animation and capacity building of communities.</li> </ul> <p>LEADER I was a two year programme in Ireland and therefore was project-driven. It enabled the infrastructure for tourism to be put in place with flagship projects like a Nature Park at Millstreet; the Duhallow driving trail; and the development of a long distance walking way. Moreover it provided funding for important indigenous micro and small enterprise projects which created much needed employment.</p> <p>The LAG carried out a major study (1994) on Small farmers in the area which brought it to the fore front of trying to inform and influence policy in favour of the marginalised. It also outlined the utter dependency of the region on Agriculture.</p> <p>LEADER II was more community-based with the introduction of Animation and Capacity Building as a measure. Plans were put in place in consultation with each community and dealt with economic, social and environmental issues. The face of Duhallow changed. LEADER money primed the pump and encouraged communities to help themselves. Strategic Community Projects were developed like Heritage &amp; Cultural</p>



	<p>Centres were developed. The Irish Government funded LAGs in all Rural areas.</p> <p>The LAG at this point realised that LEADER on its own would not be “the tide to lift all boats” Several in the community like those who were long term unemployed, disillusioned young people and women were not benefiting as they should.</p> <p>The Irish Government had introduced a Local Development Programme mainly in urban centres of disadvantage and some rural areas which tackled these problems. IRD Duhallow drew up a strategic plan to tackle disadvantage in the rural context and was successful in being admitted to the Local Development Programme in 1995. This enabled the LAG to address the issues of a much wider community and it had to develop its structures to deliver a multi-programme approach to Rural Development.</p> <p><b>Who was involved in the design, management and delivery of the programme</b></p> <p>Initially the board consisted of local businessmen who invited the relevant state agencies and Local Authority staff to join them as well as farming and fishing representatives. Under the LEADER operating rules the membership had to expand to bring on board the communities. The requirements of the Local Development Social Inclusion Programme saw the board expand further to include representatives of the target groups. Communities of interest and Social Partners were then included on the board</p> <p>The Board of the LAG is Community based with six members elected through three regional fora; six members from communities of interest, a further six from State Agencies and Local Authorities and the remaining four seats occupied by local business representatives.</p> <p><b>Recognition – has the programme been recognised as good practice? If so, by whom?</b></p> <p>The approach IRD Duhallow and others have taken has been accepted by the Irish Government as desirable for the whole country. Through a Cohesion Process single programme development groups are being asked to come together to form a single agency through which future programmes will be delivered.</p>
<p>Policy context within which the programme operates.</p>	<p><b>Describe the policy context in which the programme operates:</b></p> <p>The Irish Government extended the LEADER programme in 1995 (LEADER II). LEADER was mainstreamed in 2001 with</p>



the introduction of a sister programme exactly like LEADER+ but funded by the exchequer to ensure national coverage.

The Local Development Social Inclusion will be extended to all areas in the 2007-2013 funding period.

Irish government departments repeatedly choose the Local Action Groups as delivery/implementation agencies for a wide range of National programmes. For example, the Rural Social Scheme which is targeted at low income farmers and provides them with additional income in return for nineteen and a half hours community work is the most recent programme to be delivered through Local Action Groups.

**Is there an explicit relationship between policy priorities/local activities?**

The concept of social partnership as a means of determining government development and employment policy as well as controlling escalating wage claims through central bargaining has been a priority of government since the nineties in Ireland.

The partnership process has been the catalyst for local partnerships to develop locally to address disadvantage in urban and rural areas. Area Based Partnerships were established in the early nineties in Urban centres of high unemployment and in areas of rural disadvantage.

LEADER Groups have a similar partnership structure and in fourteen of the thirty six LEADER Groups are joint LEADER Partnerships.

In 1994 the Irish Ministry for Agriculture and Rural Development embarked on an extensive consultation process which resulted in a Government White Paper on Rural Development. Following on from this came a more specific focus on Rural Development including the concept of Rural Proofing.

The current government on its election five years ago established a separate department (Ministry) for Rural and Community Development which brought together the efforts of sections of four different departments into a single cohesive (senior) ministry.

Supporting volunteerism has become one of the priorities along with redressing rural depopulation by encouraging Local Authorities in prioritising infrastructure (CLÁR).



	<p><b>Is the policy context supportive/prohibitive?</b>  Very much supportive although those separate groups going through the cohesion process may not necessarily agree at this early stage of the process.</p> <p>In the long term the indicators are that national and indeed EU policy will cement the role of the Local Action Groups.</p> <p>The Minister has promised Interim Funds to the LAG's to bridge the gap between LEADER and LDSIP Programmes.</p> <p><b>Has the policy context changed during the life of the activity?</b>  Only insofar as the range of activity embarked upon by the Local Action Groups is expanding all the time.</p> <p>The recent European Commission Initiative for the diversification of the local economies of regions depending mainly on the fishing industry will adopt the LEADER approach to deliver that programme from DG Fish.</p> <p><b>Which came first-local activities or policy priorities (i.e. is activity leading or following policy priorities)?</b>  It is difficult for us to determine this exactly, however it seems that local action was beginning to happen at the same time national policy was taking a new approach and we suspect that both came together in the late eighties/early nineties. We had The Future of Rural Europe at the same time as local leaders were beginning to act locally.</p>
Geographical focus of the case study	<p><b>At what level does the programme operate?</b>  Area based; but it crosses county (Local Authority) boundaries in what we call a natural Area of Development.</p>
Impact	<p><b>Outputs – scale and scope of people reached through the programme.</b></p> <p>Since its inception IRD Duhallow has:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Created 790 new jobs</li> <li>• Sustained enterprises providing over 1,100 jobs</li> <li>• Levered over €36.3m in resources into Duhallow</li> <li>• Provided over 3,500 Training Places.</li> <li>• Placed over 500 into employment</li> <li>• Facilitated the creation of over 500 childcare places</li> <li>• Supported 96 Community and Voluntary Groups</li> <li>• Enabled networking and co-operation</li> <li>• Funded over 600 projects by communities</li> <li>• Implemented 26 National and EC Programmes through a single community based rural development structure.</li> </ul>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assisted 23 publications</li> <li>• Convened 40 seminars and conferences</li> <li>• Developed 25 new amenities and visitor attractions</li> <li>• Assisted and funded 15 new accommodation units</li> <li>• Empowered over 4,000 young people to get involved in the development projects.</li> <li>• Initiated support projects in 18 schools</li> <li>• Carried over 22,000 passengers through Rural Transport</li> <li>• Developed Transnational linkages with 22 countries.</li> <li>• Implemented 35 National and EU Programmes through a single Administrative structure.</li> </ul> <p><b>Any impact at European level?</b></p> <p>The lessons from LEADER in Ireland are being shared with many countries in particular the ten new member states and the pre accession countries.</p> <p>The Fisheries Programme 07-13 will use the LEADER approach. The LEADER Programme is now part of mainstream Rural Development.</p>
Partners' details and their contribution	<p><b>Community</b>  The local legitimacy necessary to become accepted locally.  Local knowledge  Focus on local solutions  Development of latent potential  Local Buy-In</p> <p><b>State Sector</b>  Resources  Expertise</p> <p><b>Local Authority Representatives</b>  Legitimacy with Local Authority  Links between the agencies.</p> <p><b>Local Business</b>  Local funding  Innovation  Focus on jobs and enterprise  Business acumen in administration  Results driven</p> <p><b>Communities of Interest</b>  Inclusion  Focus on disadvantage</p>



## Theme-Specific Questions

<p>Who was targeted by the programme?</p>	<p>Communities, Unemployed, Youth, Women, The Elderly, Small Farmers, Small and Medium Enterprises. The State Sector has been targeted to work in partnership. More recently Asylum Seekers and Migrant Workers as well as those with Mental Ill-health have been targeted through specific programmes.</p>
<p>Which levels of government were involved, informed or consulted?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local State Agencies and Local Authorities involved in the LAG Board.</li> <li>• Government Departments inspect projects every 6 weeks</li> <li>• Consult with LAG Network on Guidelines, Strategies and Policies</li> <li>• Development Boards established in each County to co-ordinate strategy between all agencies.</li> <li>•</li> </ul>
<p>What actions resulted in mainstreaming?</p>	<p><b>How did they do it? Serendipity/luck, contacts, drive, X-Factor?</b>  Review and evaluation, Local and National Popularity, Results and value for money.</p> <p><b>Where has programme been replicated?</b>  Finland since LEADER II  More recently there has been huge interest from Czech Republic, Poland, Estonia, Latvia, Croatia.</p>
<p>Sustainability</p>	<p><b>What achieved / how funded?</b>  The Local Action Group has developed a sophisticated administration system which can easily adapt to delivering multi-programme responses to the needs of the area and its people.</p> <p>It operates through a series of thematic working groups which report to the board against an agreed set of targets drawn from the targets and indicators of its strategic plan. This system enables the board to draw on outside expertise and has enhanced its governance capacity.</p> <p>The Irish Government has now adopted as policy the type of model IRD Duhallow operates and all groups who have operated on a single programme basis up to now are obliged during this year to become involved in a cohesion process which will result in a single structure. Funding for the mainstreamed LEADER Programme will become available during 2007 and the Irish Government will offer “Interim” funding to ensure all LAG’s remain operational.</p>



	<p>Duhallow's Strategic Planning Process and its inclusive approach to rural development has also ensured a sustainable development model.</p>
<p>Successes / lessons learned</p>	<p><b>What lessons have been learned</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Importance of IRD Duhallow as a Local Action Group which adheres to the Seven Specific Features of LEADER in operating a wide range of programmes through the bottom up approach. The desirability of integrating different programmes to address the wider needs of the community.</li> <li>• The economies of scale and scope which can be successfully applied to Rural Community Development.</li> <li>• Investment in the Local Action Groups development through ongoing training, review, and strategic planning.</li> <li>• Ongoing Staff Development to ensure the board and working groups have the necessary support and expertise available to them.</li> <li>• Flexibility to work in partnership with neighbouring LAG's to achieve economies of scale necessary for Regional Programmes but with delivery at a local level.</li> <li>• Integrated Resource Development</li> </ul> <p><b>If they had their time again what would they do differently?</b></p> <p>The single thing I would change is the policy whereby separate structures were encouraged in some areas to deliver different programmes which resulted in confusion among the communities and target groups and ultimately lead to the cohesion process which although painful at first will result in strong Local Development Groups in all areas with increased capacity. These Groups will be single agencies which can deliver and implement a wide range of community, training, enterprise, tourism, cultural and sustainable environmental supports.</p>

