

**Stephen Rourke**

children  
first  
and  
foremost

**An education  
investment plan  
for the Canal  
Communities**

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## Foreword

Addressing issues of educational disadvantage and under investment are of fundamental importance for organisations such as area based partnerships, charged with the task of combating social exclusion within their communities. By now, most of us are familiar with the links between educational attainment and future life chances. The messages have been consistently clear – poor attainment at school, leaving school early, lack of formal qualifications, all lead, more often than not, to unemployment, poorly paid employment and greatly reduced opportunities in adult life.

Because of this, Canal Communities Partnership (CCP), along with the other partnership companies, emphasises the importance of addressing problems of educational participation and underachievement. CCP has produced this education profile and investment plan as part of our ongoing efforts to highlight the education needs in our area and the range of investment needed to address these needs. From our analysis it is quite clear that the various communities and schools within the canals area, notwithstanding the excellent educational work already in place, are still under resourced in many respects.

In preparing this investment plan we are thinking also of the future. We are conscious, for example, of the significant regeneration programmes planned for areas such as Fatima Mansions and St. Michael's Estate. Over the next few years this will involve the demolition of existing flat complexes and the creation of new neighbourhoods. It is important that our education system plans now for the needs of the children and adults who will live in these communities.

This investment plan contains twenty seven recommendations. All of these are valid and will be pursued vigorously by Canal Communities Partnership, in conjunction with the relevant state and community agencies. The developments these various recommendations propose are necessary if the children, young people and adults living within the canals area are to have the range of educational services and facilities they deserve.

Canal Communities Partnership  
February 2003

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# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Background

The Canal Communities Partnership (CCP) is one of the 38 Area Partnership Companies which have been set up in areas of high socio-economic disadvantage within the Republic of Ireland. The roles of these Partnership Companies are to improve the co-ordination and integration of service delivery within their Partnership areas; to provide financial assistance to local projects and groups involved in actions aimed at tackling disadvantage and social exclusion within the Partnership areas; and to provide guidance, advice and support to local groups and organisations which are working with the main target groups of the Partnership Companies.

The Area Partnership Companies have a particular focus on issues relating to education and the educational progression of children, young people and adults living within the various Partnership areas. There is a clear recognition of the links between satisfactory progression through the education system and successful laterlife outcomes in relation to employment, income, self esteem, self confidence etc. Conversely, there is also an understanding of the difficulties and problems being experienced by young people who leave school at a relatively young age without any effective educational qualifications. In this context, Area Partnership Companies have placed a particular emphasis on projects and initiatives which aim to retain more young people within the formal education system for a longer period of time.

In relation to the Canal Communities Partnership area (i.e. the Rialto, Inchicore, Islandbridge, Bluebell and Kilmainham districts of the south inner city of Dublin), there are considered to be particularly high levels of educational disadvantage and educational underachievement – the number of local residents who left school at 15 or under is considerably higher than the national average, the number of local residents progressing onto third level education is considerably lower than the national average. The CCP area has clearly identified the need to improve the levels of educational achievement within the CCP area and to develop/support in-school and out-of-school actions and initiatives which will enhance the educational progression of local residents. It is within this particular context that the CCP commissioned a research project which would (i) draw up an Education Profile of the CCP area and (ii) formulate an Education Investment Plan for the CCP area. The key focus of both the Education Profile and the Education Investment Plan relates to children and young people living within the Partnership area.

## 1.2 Terms of reference

The terms of reference for this research project are as follows:

- To carry out an audit of the education services and supports which currently exist within the CCP area.
  - To identify the main challenges and obstacles which are inhibiting the
-

- educational progression of children and young people within the CCP area.
- To consider the actions and initiatives which need to be put in place to enhance the educational prospects and opportunities for children and young people within the CCP area.
- To produce an Education Investment Plan for the CCP area.

### 1.3

## Methodology

The research project aimed at producing an Education Profile and Education Investment Plan for the CCP area took place between March 2002 and October 2002. The research project incorporated the following research actions:

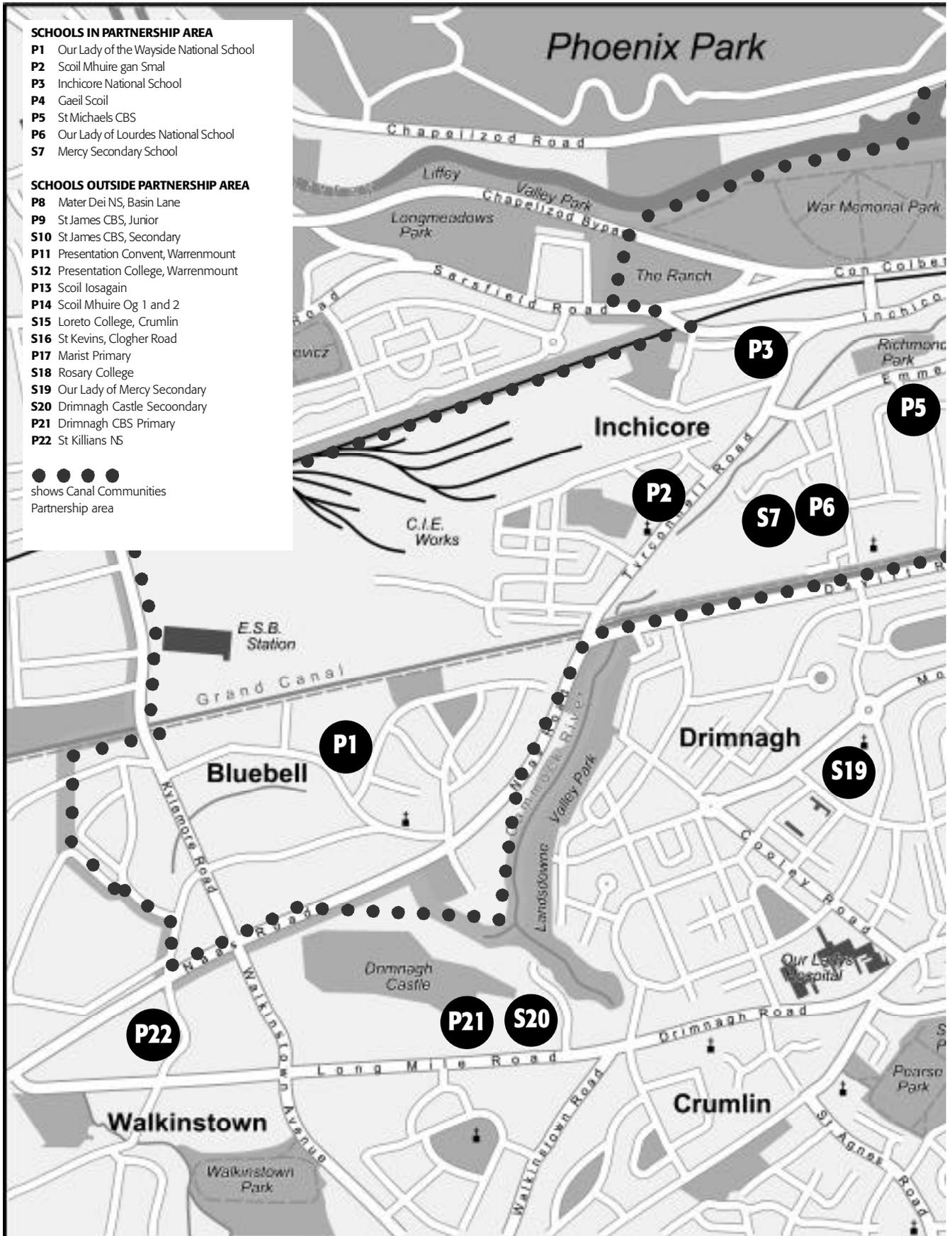
- Interviews and consultations with 16 people who are involved in the delivery of education within the CCP area. These people include the principals of all the primary level and second level schools within the area and youth workers who are providing out-of-school education programmes and services to children and young people.
- Interviews and consultations with 8 other people who have an involvement and/or particular interest in issues relating to education within the CCP area eg. staff employed by the CCP, educational psychologist from the National Educational Psychological Service, Schools Attendance Officer.
- Analysis of statistical information and data which has been produced in relation to educational progression and educational underachievement within the CCP area.
- Analysis of relevant reports and documents which have been produced by organisations like the CCP, the Canal Communities Local Drugs Task Force, Barnardos, the Dublin 8 Integrated Services Process, the Local Development Group of the Young People's Facilities and Services Fund.
- The production of an interim report on the research project. The interim report, which was presented to the Education Sub-committee of the CCP in September 2002, has acted as a basis for the production of this final research report.

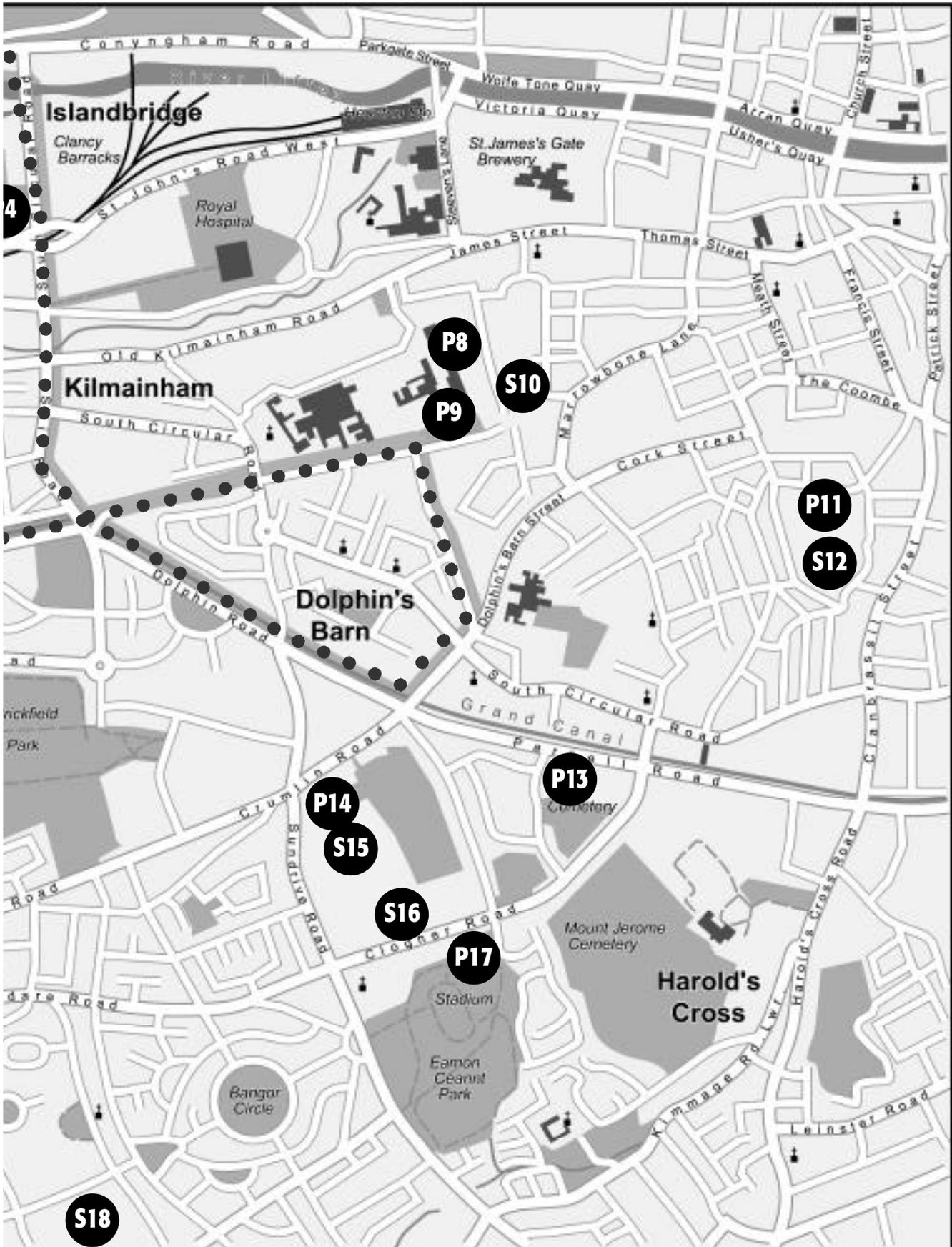
### 1.4

## Structure of research report

This introductory section of the research report will be followed by the Education Profile of the CCP area (Section 2). This profile will consider formal in-school education provision (eg. primary level schools, second level schools), formal out-of-school educational provision (eg. Youthreach) and informal out-of-school education provision (eg. youth services). Section 3 of the research report sets out the Education Investment Plan for the CCP area – this section makes a number of recommendations in relation to improving the educational prospects and educational progression of children and young people living within the CCP area.

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## 2 Education profile of CCP area

### 2.2 Profile of formal education sector

#### 2.2.1

##### **Introduction**

There are six primary level schools and one second level school within the geographical boundaries of the CCP area. However, only a certain proportion of the schoolgoing population of the CCP area attend schools which are directly located within the area. Virtually all of the children from Rialto (including the flats complexes of Dolphin House and Fatima Mansions) who are participating in primary level education attend national schools outside of the CCP area (in the Liberties, in Crumlin, in Drimnagh). In relation to participation in second level education, all of the boys attend second level schools outside the area (there is no second level school for boys within the CCP area) and most of the girls attend second level schools outside the area (there is only one second level school for girls within the CCP area, the Mercy Secondary School in Goldenbridge).

In overall terms, most children from the CCP area attend 14 different national schools (of which 6 are located in the CCP area) and 9 different second level schools (of which only one is located in the CCP area). This type of dispersal of children and young people amongst 19 different schools (of which only 7 are directly located in the CCP area) poses particular challenges in relation to the production of an Education Profile for the formal education sector in the CCP area. Whilst it has been a fairly straightforward task to extract information in relation to the schools within the area, it has been much more difficult to secure information about the schools outside the area which are attended by children from the Bluebell, Inchicore, Kilmainham and Rialto areas. Within the pupil population of these schools, children from the CCP area generally only represent a relatively small minority and it has not been possible to secure specific detailed information in relation to that percentage of the school population who live within the CCP area but who attend schools outside of the area. Therefore, this section of the Education Profile of the CCP area is largely informed by data and statistics provided by schools within the area and by less empirical information about those schools situated outside the area which are attended by children who live in the CCP area (and especially by children from the Fatima Mansions and Dolphin House flats complexes).

#### 2.2.2

##### **Audit of formal education sector**

As stated earlier, there are six primary level schools and one second level school within the CCP area. The six primary level schools are Gael Scoil Inse Chór, Inchicore National School, Our Lady of Lourdes National School, Our Lady of the Wayside National School, St. Michaels CBS and Scoil Mhuire gan Smal (Oblates). The second level school in the CCP area is Mercy Secondary School, Goldenbridge. The number of pupils attending these schools and the teaching resources available to these schools, as of September 2002, are as follows:

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<b>Name of school</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Pupil Numbers</b>	<b>Mainstream class teachers</b>	<b>Other teaching resources</b>	<b>Total teaching staff</b>
<b>Gael Scoil Inse Chór</b>	Kilmainham	220	8	Principal 1 part-time Learning Support Teacher 1 Resource Teacher	10.5
<b>Inchicore National School</b>	Inchicore	190	9	Principal 1 Learning Support Teacher 2 Resource Teachers 1 shared Home School Community Liaison (HSCL) Co-ordinator	13.5
<b>Our Lady of Lourdes National School</b>	Inchicore	240	11	Principal 2 Learning Support Teachers 3 Resource Teachers 1 Multicultural Teacher 1 shared HSCL Co-ordinator	18.5
<b>Our Lady of the Wayside National School</b>	Bluebell	94	5	Principal 1 Learning Support Teacher 2 Resource Teachers 1 shared HSCL Co-ordinator	9.5
<b>St. Michaels CBS</b>	Inchicore	77	5	Principal 1 Learning Support Teacher 3 Resource Teachers (1 for Travellers) 1 shared HSCL Co-ordinator	10.5
<b>Scoil Mhuire gan Smal</b>	Inchicore	250	10	Principal 1 Learning Support Teacher 2 Resource Teachers 1 shared HSCL Co-ordinator	14.5
<b>Mercy Secondary School</b>	Inchicore	222	17	Principal 1 Resource Teacher 1 HSCL Co-ordinator	20

The total number of children and young people attending the schools in the CCP area is 1,292 – 1,070 in the primary level schools and 222 in the Mercy Secondary School. There are varying patterns of increases and decreases amongst pupil numbers in the area. Whilst some are over-subscribed and have a waiting list (eg. one school had a total of 80 applications for 20 available places in Junior Infants for the 2002-2003 school year) other schools have seen a noticeable decline in their pupil numbers over the past five year period. A number of research interviewees referred to the competition which now exists in relation to attracting pupils to their schools and felt that more co-operation and co-ordination should take place in relation to the issue of annual pupil intakes. It is evident that one of the reasons for declining pupil numbers in some schools relates to the redevelopment programmes taking place in locations like St. Michaels Estate. It is also apparent that the influx of new residents into the CCP area (into the new houses and apartments) presents opportunities for local schools to stabilise or to increase their pupil numbers.

There are a total of 72 teaching staff employed in the six primary level schools in the CCP area. This figure comprises 6 principals, 48 mainstream class teachers (from Junior Infants through to Sixth Class) and 18 other teachers (including Resource Teachers, Learning Support Teachers and Home School Community Liaison Co-ordinators). There are a total of 20 teaching staff employed in the only second level school in the area (principal, 17 mainstream class teachers and two Home School Liaison/Resource Teachers). It is apparent that there has been a noticeable and welcome increase in the number of teachers who are employed to work with pupils who have special needs or who require more intensive support/assistance than is normally available within mainstream classes. In addition to the teaching staff within the primary level schools, there are also a number of additional workers who are employed to assist the local schools and the teachers in their work eg. 12 Special Needs Assistants work in 3 of the local schools. The employment of these workers also enables the schools to provide more intensive support and assistance to individual pupils within the schools.

The schools also employ ancillary and administrative staff eg. school secretaries, caretakers. Many of these people, who play an important role in the operation of schools, were previously employed through the FÁS Community Employment Programme. Responsibility for the funding of these employment positions has now become the direct responsibility of the Department of Education and Science i.e. the positions have been mainstreamed. There is considerable concern, however, amongst some local principals that this transition from FÁS to the Department of Education and Science has not been satisfactory and, in more particular terms, it has discriminated against smaller schools. The allowance to schools for ancillary and administrative staff is based on a payment for each pupil enrolled, thereby enabling the larger schools to employ more workers (although the need for school secretaries and caretakers is equally necessary in the smaller schools). A number of interviewees felt that the operations of their schools had suffered significantly with the phasing out of Community Employment within the formal education system and that the new system (of direct payments from the Department of Education and Science) has had a detrimental impact on their capacity to provide a range of ancillary and administrative services within their schools.

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### 2.2.3

#### Department of Education and Science special programme and initiatives

Local schools in the area have had limited success in linking into special educational measures/initiatives that have been set up by the Department of Education and Science. Although virtually all the schools are designated as working within disadvantaged areas (and the rates of socio-economic disadvantage are exceptionally high within some parts of the area), it is a cause of considerable concern and frustration that schools in the area were not selected for inclusion in initiatives like Early Start, Breaking the Cycle, 8-15 year old initiative, Stay in School Retention Initiative and the Junior Certificate Schools Programme. It is considered that these initiatives and programmes could have made a considerable difference to the progression of children and young people within the formal education system, if they had been set up within the CCP area. The reasons for the non-inclusion of local schools in these special programmes and initiatives include the relatively low number of pupils in some of the schools (with the programmes and initiatives being targeted towards larger schools), the lack of effective lobbying for inclusion in these programmes and initiatives, and the absence of information or guidance about some of these programmes/initiatives

The schools in the CCP area have, however, had some degree of success in linking into the Home School Community Liaison Co-ordinators programme and the School Completion Programme. All of the schools in the CCP area, apart from Gael Scoil Inse Chór, employ a Home School Community Liaison Co-ordinator (generally on a shared basis with one other school in the area). These Home School Community Liaison Co-ordinators have helped to develop and enhance relationships with parents and with the local communities in which the schools are located; and have played a particularly useful role in enabling more parents to become more involved in their own education and the education of their children.

In relation to the School Completion Programme, all local schools, apart from Gael Scoil Inse Chór, are now linked into the school clusters which have been set up through this programme which aims to have a *'significant positive impact on levels of pupil retention in primary and second level schools and on the number of pupils who successfully complete the Senior Cycle (within second level school)'* – extract from Department of Education and Science information note. Through the School Completion Programme, participating schools will be able to access financial support and programme assistance for actions and initiatives aimed at improving retention rates and the levels of educational achievement within the formal education system. The schools from the CCP area are linked into the following school clusters which have been set up through the School Completion Programme (which is due to become fully operational in early 2003)<sup>1</sup>:

1 Schools within the CCP area are highlighted in the table on page 12

Cluster No.	Project Site	Second Level Schools	Feeder Primary Schools
5	Ballyfermot A	Kylemore College	Sn Barrion na nAingeal 1 Sn Barrion na nAingeal 2 <b>Inchicore National School</b>
35	Drimnagh Castle	Meanscoil Iognaid Ris, Drimnagh  <b>Mercy Secondary School</b>	Drimnagh CBS <b>Our Lady of the Wayside National School</b> <b>Scoil Mhuire gan Smal</b> <b>Our Lady of Lourdes National School</b>
59	Dublin 8	Presentation College, Warrenmount James St. CBS Liberties College	Presentation Convent, Warrenmount Scoil Seamus CBS, James St. St. Brigids Convent, The Coombe St. Audoens National School Scoil na nBraithre, Francis St. Whitefriars St. National School <b>St. Michaels CBS</b>

It is anticipated that participation in the School Completion Programme will provide local schools in the CCP area with opportunities to access additional resources for actions/projects which will enable more children and young people to remain within the formal education system for a longer period of time. It should also be noted that, in addition to the participation of the six schools from the CCP area, the School Completion Programme will also include a number of other schools which are attended by children and young people who live within the CCP area. These schools, located outside the CCP area, include James St. National School, Scoil Iosagain, Marist National School, Presentation College (Warrenmount) and St. Kevins College. Indeed, the only schools attended by a reasonable number of pupils from the CCP area which are not currently included in the School Completion Programme clusters are Mater Dei National School, Scoil Mhuire Og 1 and 2, Crumlin and Loreto Secondary School, Crumlin.

#### 2.2.4

#### Other in-school supports and services

Within the schools in the CCP area, there are also a range of projects and activities that have been set up to support the work which takes place within the classroom and to provide additional services and opportunities for children attending local schools. These projects/activities are as follows:

- The Canal After Schools Club, a collaboration between schools and local communities, which involves the provision of after school homework support and the organisation of play/developmental activities for children from three primary level schools in the CCP area.
- The provision of counselling services for a number of hours each week to

children attending certain schools within the CCP area. These counselling services are provided by counsellors from Hesed House and the South Western Area Health Board.

- Childcare workers who work for one hour per week with a selected group of children within one of the primary level schools in the area.
- An Art Therapy project which operates for three days per week based in two schools in the CCP area.
- Creativity in the Classroom project which involves a collaboration of six schools working with three artists and teachers in exploring creative artwork in the classroom.

Many of these projects and initiatives have received and/or continue to receive financial assistance and developmental support from the CCP. Some of the projects/initiatives are also funded through the Canal Communities Local Drugs Task Force. In considering their impact and effectiveness, it is apparent that most of the projects and initiatives can only provide a fairly limited range of services and interventions (on account of the amount of money which is available). Whilst interviewees commented favourably on the benefits of these projects and interventions there is also a view that they are generally not in receipt of sustained, ongoing funding and that it is difficult to plan effectively over a 3-5 year period (especially when working with a selected group of children and young people) when there are so many uncertainties in relation to year-to-year funding. In order for these types of initiatives and projects to reach their full potential it is considered important that they are properly resourced (eg. for full-time co-ordinators, for equipment, for materials, for other programme costs) and that a certain level of funding is guaranteed for a 3-5 year period.

**2.2.5**

**School attendance within the schools in the CCP area**

The school attendance levels in the primary level schools are relatively good within the CCP area. All of the primary level schools in the area are in Area 5 of the School Attendance Department within the County Borough of Dublin – this area covers Kilmainham, Walkinstown, Ballyfermot, Bluebell, Inchicore and Rialto. The average school attendance in this area for the period between 1998 and 2000 is as follows:

<b>School Attendance Levels 1998–2000</b>		
<b>Year ending</b>	<b>Area 5</b>	<b>Average for Dublin City</b>
30th June 1998	89%	91%
30th June 1999	87%	90%
30th June 2000	88%	90%

In relation to individual primary level schools within the CCP area, the average attendance rates for the year ending 30th June 2000 ranged from 86% to 91%. Therefore, whilst there are some variations in the figures in the CCP area vis-à-vis the Dublin City average it is also recognised in the report of the Chief School

Attendance Officer that account must be taken of the socio-economic difficulties and pressures which exist within areas like Area 5.

There is some concern, however, about the rates of school attendance within the second level schools attended by children and young people from the CCP area (including the second level schools located outside the CCP area). A number of research interviewees estimated that there is a reasonably high number of children and young people who are not attending second level schools on a regular basis – whilst they are still on the school role/register their poor school attendance record (for reasons relating to family responsibilities, part-time employment, rolling suspensions from school) would suggest that they are falling well behind the rest of their schoolmates in academic terms; and are unlikely to secure the types of qualifications which are needed within the labour market and which they have the potential to achieve (if they could improve their school attendance patterns).

Whilst it is difficult to estimate the number of young people whose attendance at second level school is less than 60-70%, the feedback from interviewees consulted during this study would suggest that a large number of young people would fall within this particular category. On the basis of the research interviewees it is estimated that there are particularly high levels of absenteeism and non attendance at school from children and young people within certain communities in the CCP area – St. Michaels Estate, Dolphin House and Fatima Mansions. There is a sense that urgent remedial action needs to be taken to improve the levels of school attendance within these communities, work which will need to incorporate collaborative, partnership arrangements involving schools, relevant statutory agencies, community based groups/organisations, parents and the young people themselves.

### 2.2.6

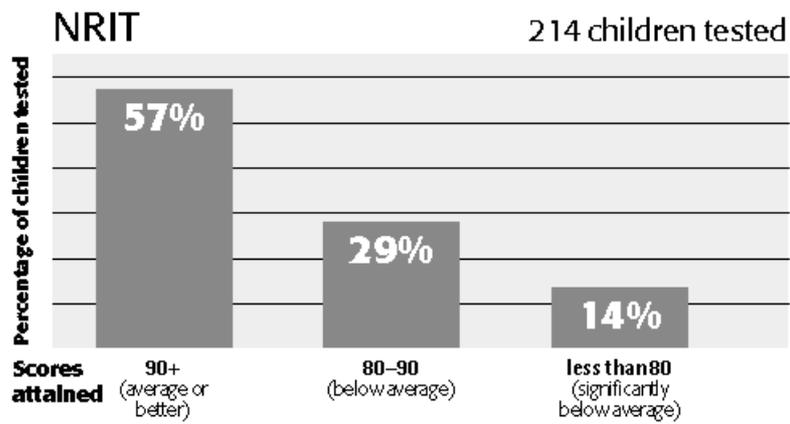
#### **Academic progress and achievements**

In relation to academic progress within the primary level schools in the CCP area, three of the standard testing mechanisms are:

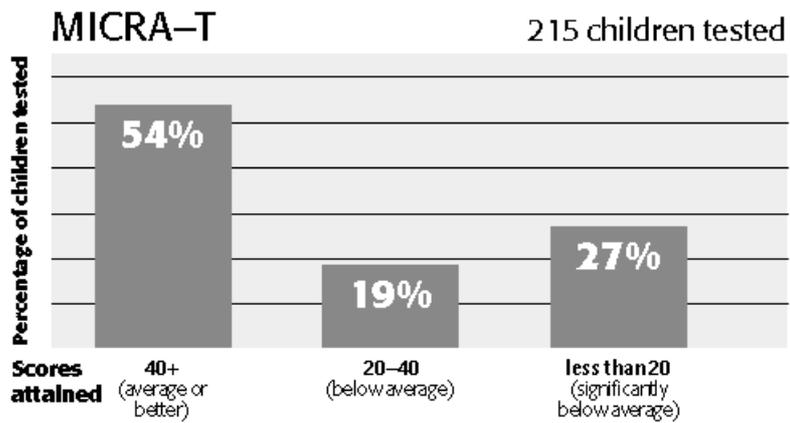
- the NRIT (Non Reading Intelligence Test)
- the MICRA-T (in relation to reading attainment)
- the SIGMA-T (in relation to mathematical attainment)

The most recent set of results in relation to these testing mechanisms for **two of the primary level schools in the CCP area** are as follows:

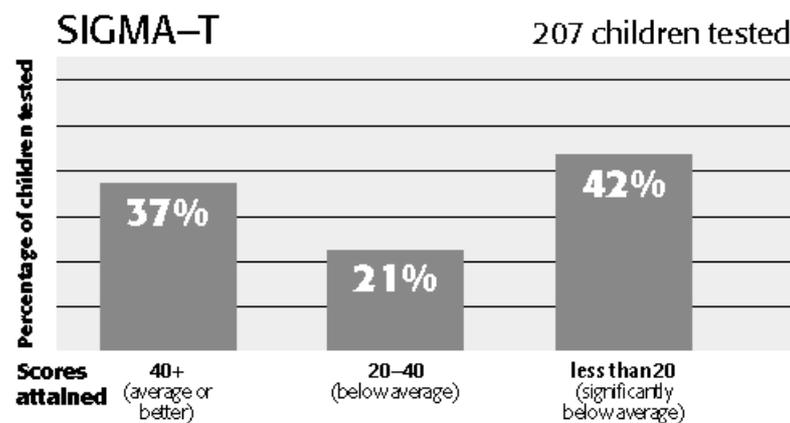
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In relation to individual classes, the numbers who scored less than 80 (i.e. significantly below average, requiring special supports or special needs education) ranged from 9.3% in fifth class to 21.2% in sixth class.



In relation to individual classes, the numbers who scored less than 20 (i.e. significantly below average, indicating serious reading problems) ranged from 23.3% in fourth class to 33.3% in second class.



In relation to individual classes, the numbers who scored less than 20 (i.e. significantly below average, indicating serious problems in relation to mathematics) ranged from 11.9% in third class to 56.8% in sixth class.

The outcomes from these nationally recognised tests would suggest that a significant minority of children attending local primary schools within the CCP area are experiencing difficulties in their classwork and in attaining reasonable levels of competency in relation to core subjects like reading, writing and mathematics. The outcomes from the tests would indicate that up to 40% of the pupils attending the two primary level schools which submitted their test results are having some problems in relation to core subjects. Furthermore, comments and feedback provided by teachers would suggest that up to 20–25% of primary school pupils are struggling with a number of different aspects of the current school curriculum.

In relation to transition from primary level education to second level education, it is estimated that approximately 98% of local children in the CCP area make this critical educational transition (this figure was provided by the School Attendance Officer). Upon entering second level education, information provided by the Mercy Secondary School in Goldenbridge (the only second level school in the CCP area) would suggest that this particular school succeeds in retaining the large majority of its pupils from the time that they enter the school in first year to the time of their Junior Certificate examinations – of the 59 pupils who started in this school in September 1996, 55 pupils sat their Junior Certificate examinations in June 1999 (i.e. a retention rate from first year through to Junior Certificate of 93.2%).

The information provided by Mercy Secondary School would also suggest, however, that there are particular difficulties in retaining pupils from the time of their Junior Certificate examinations to the time of their Leaving Certificate examinations – of the 55 pupils who sat their Junior Certificate examinations in June 1999, only 39 sat their Leaving Certificate examinations in June 2002 (i.e. 29% of the pupils left school between their Junior Certificate and Leaving Certificate examinations). This outcome serves to emphasise the importance of developing strategies and initiatives which will encourage and motivate more young people from the CCP area to remain in school until the time of their Leaving Certificate examinations. The need to develop effective progression routes through to the Senior Cycle in second level schools and the Leaving Certificate examinations was also emphasised by the principal of a primary level school who estimated that 50% – 60% of the pupils who leave his school will not sit their Leaving Certificate examinations.

Participation rates in third level education are relatively low amongst the local residents who live in the CCP area with only 1.9% of local residents having attained a third level qualification compared to a national equivalent figure of 3.3% (based on outcomes from 1996 Census). In relation to more recent analyses, the studies carried out by Professor Patrick Clancy would also indicate that the participation rates in higher education are lower in the CCP area than in most other parts of Dublin. Professor Clancy's latest analysis of admission trends to higher education colleges and universities, for the year 1998-99, concludes that the rates of admission to these colleges and universities from the Dublin 8 postal district (which includes the CCP area) are lower than the Dublin average. In Dublin 8, there is a higher education participation rate of 21.2% of young people who are at the stage/age when they can enter college or university – this is the

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tenth lowest participation rate amongst the 21 postal code districts within the Dublin area. Although the third level participation rates in Dublin 8 are not as poor as in other postal district areas (eg. Dublin 10, Dublin 1, Dublin 17) research interviewees considered that the number of young people accessing third level education within some communities in the CCP area (eg. Fatima Mansions, Dolphin House, St. Michaels Estate) is extremely low.

### 2.2.7

#### **Nature and extent of educational disadvantage**

The analyses and outcomes contained in this section of the Education Profile have served to emphasise the nature and extent of educational disadvantage within the CCP area eg. the poor results achieved by many primary level pupils in standard reading and mathematics tests; the number of young people who leave the formal education system in the Senior Cycle of their second level education; and the relatively low number of young people from the CCP area who progress onto third level education. All of the indicators and comments from research interviewees would suggest that the problems of educational disadvantage are particularly concentrated within a number of specific communities in the CCP area. Further evidence of the nature and extent of the educational challenges and problems being experienced by children and young people in the CCP area is highlighted by the following analyses and opinions which were provided by research interviewees:

- There are low levels of self esteem, self confidence and self awareness amongst many young people living in the CCP area. A number of the research interviewees commented upon the ways in which lack of success and lack of achievement within the education system impacts negatively upon the self esteem of a large number of children and young people within the CCP area. As these children/young people fall further and further behind their schoolmates in relation to classroom tasks, it is natural to assume that they will feel less capable and less confident as they struggle to keep up with the school curriculum (at both the primary and secondary school levels) – this obviously impacts upon their own sense of self worth and their own belief in being able to complete tasks which are being achieved with relative ease by other children and young people in their school/class.
- There are a relatively high number of children and young people attending schools in the CCP area who have special educational needs and requirements. As an example, 11 out of 18 pupils enrolling in one primary level school in September 2002 had been identified as requiring special supports and assistance (in order to cope with issues relating to behavioural problems, Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder, very poor communications skills, speech and language problems etc). Principals of other schools in the area also highlighted the particular needs and circumstances of their pupil population – in one school the principal estimated that approximately 40 out of the 240 pupils in her primary level school required a psychological assessment whilst the principal of another school stated that 29% of the pupil population in his school have already had psychological assessments.

- Educational disadvantage is inextricably linked to the socio-economic disadvantage being experienced by many communities and families within the CCP area. In the national Deprivation Rankings produced by GAMMA/ADM, three of the District Electoral Divisions within the CCP area (Ushers D, Inchicore B and Kilmainham C) are amongst the highest 5% of disadvantaged communities within the Republic of Ireland. On the basis of statistical and anecdotal evidence, it is apparent that the highest levels of educational underachievement and educational disadvantage are within those communities which are most affected by poverty, poor infrastructure of services and community facilities, poor quality of built and natural environments, high rates of unemployment etc. In the opinion of a number of study interviewees the first step in the process of tackling educational disadvantage should be to improve the living conditions and circumstances of people living within the flats complexes and other disadvantaged areas within the Canal Communities area – until such a time as their basic needs and requirements are met (eg. reasonable employment, reasonable income, reasonable housing, reasonable range of community/social services and facilities), it will be difficult for many local people to give a sufficient emphasis to the educational progression of their children.

### 2.2.8

#### **Gaps in provision and services**

There are a number of significant gaps in relation to the formal education sector within the CCP area. Key gaps and shortcomings identified by interviewees who participated in this research project include the following:

- There is a need for local schools in the CCP area to have greater access to educational psychologists. A number of interviewees made references to the limited service which is currently available through the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) eg. *'In my school there are 240 pupils, of whom up to 40 are in need of psychological assessments – in the last year it was only possible to have three children assessed through the NEPS'* (the words of one school principal). On account of the limited resources available to the NEPS, a number of schools in the CCP area have paid directly for the services of private psychologists to carry out assessments of pupils within their schools. On the basis of comments expressed by interviewees it is evident that there is a clear need to increase the number of psychological assessments which are carried out on an annual basis.
  - Schools require greater access to speech therapists and to other speech and language specialists – on the basis of prior research and responses from interviewees, it is apparent this type of support service is also a key priority for local schools within the CCP area – *'A school survey in St. Michaels CBS revealed 31 children (i.e. 36.5% of the school population) in need of speech and language support. Recent studies show that up to 14% of the general population present with delayed speech and language. In areas that have been designated as disadvantaged, the need for speech, language and other educational supports is even greater'* (Dublin 8 ISP).
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- There is a relative absence of pre-school services and facilities within the CCP area. In the opinion of a number of research interviewees the availability of more pre-school services would have a significant, positive impact in preparing children for entry into primary level education and on their capacity to progress satisfactorily within the primary school environment. Some interviewees felt that many children were already educationally disadvantaged at the age of 4-5 and had difficulties in keeping up with their classmates from the first day they started in Junior Infants. In this type of context, increased pre-school, childcare provision would be of benefit to many children and to the parents of these children.

### 2.2.9

#### **Formal education sector – challenges and issues to be addressed**

On the basis of research already carried out (eg. through the Dublin 8 ISP) and the views expressed by interviewees who participated in this particular research project, it is evident that there are a number of challenges and issues to be addressed/resolved in relation to the delivery of education for children and young people living within the CCP area. Key challenges and issues include the following:

- **The pressures and stresses experienced by teachers who are working in schools which are located in disadvantaged areas.** A number of interviewees felt that these teachers have to cope with more difficulties and problems than their counterparts who are working within schools in more affluent, middle class areas. There is a view that incentives or allowances should be introduced for teachers working in schools which are designated as disadvantaged.
- **The high turnover of teachers within the schools in the CCP area.** On account of the difficulties and particular pressures being experienced by teachers in some of these schools, it can be difficult to attract and to retain suitably qualified teachers – a couple of school principals said that there has been an 80% – 100% turnover of staff in the last five year period within their schools and that there have been significant problems in recruiting teachers to replace the teachers who have left. In relation to the qualifications of teachers working in the schools within the CCP area, a number of interviewees commented upon the fact that there is an increasing dependence on unqualified teachers (due to the difficulties in attracting qualified teachers) – in one school within the area, the school principal estimated that a fairly high proportion of his/her teaching staff were unqualified at various times during the last five year period.
- **The need for teachers to have greater awareness and understanding of issues relating to deprivation, poverty, community development and socio-economic disadvantage.** These types of subjects are not covered in any great detail during the teacher training process and it is considered important that teachers working in disadvantaged areas have more understanding of the causes and effects of the poverty and deprivation which impacts upon many of the families whose children attend local

schools. At present, participation in inter-agency initiatives is often limited to the principal and the Home School Community Liaison Co-ordinator within individual schools – there is a view that other teaching staff within the schools should also be provided with opportunities to find out more about issues relating to socio-economic disadvantage and urban deprivation. Reference was made to the work of the Dublin Inner City Primary Schools Network (which organises training courses and programmes for teachers around issues of common interest) as an initiative which might have some replicable potential in the CCP area.

- **The need for integrated and co-ordinated strategies which involve the local schools within the area, relevant statutory agencies and community based groups/organisations.** On the basis of responses from the research interviews there is a clear understanding that problems in relation to educational disadvantage and educational underachievement cannot be solved solely by actions which take place within schools/classrooms. Rather, it requires a more holistic and integrated involvement of a number of relevant agencies/organisations which are working with individual families and within individual communities in the CCP area.
  - **The need to develop strategies and programmes which will help to enhance the value and the benefits which some parents and guardians place on the educational progression and development of their children within local schools in the CCP area.** Parents and guardians are the primary educators and a key influence in determining the length of time that their children remain within the formal education system. The extent to which parents and guardians motivate and encourage their children to attend school on a regular basis and to recognise the benefits of a good education are considered to be of significant importance. In this context more work needs to take place with parents and guardians, with a view to them becoming more aware and more informed about the ways in which successful and satisfactory progression through the education system can have positive long-term outcomes for their children.
  - **The spread of children and young people from the CCP area amongst nine different second level schools makes it difficult to target initiatives/projects specifically at children from the CCP area.** Apart from the Mercy Secondary School in Goldenbridge, children from the CCP area would represent a minority of pupils attending the other eight second level schools in the Liberties, in Crumlin and in Drimnagh. Unlike other parts of Dublin, where the large majority of children would progress from local primary school to a local second level school within the area, the situation which pertains in the CCP area (with the large majority of children attending schools outside of the area) poses some problems both in relation to gathering information on the educational progress of that minority of the student population who live within the CCP area and in relation to developing in-school initiatives which are specifically focused on children from the CCP area.
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## 2.3

## Out-of-school education sector

### 2.3.1

### Formal out-of-school education provision

There are no structured, full-time developmental programmes for early school leavers within the CCP area. There is no Youthreach Centre, Community Training Workshop or FÁS Training Centre within the area. The nearest Youthreach Centre is in Basin Lane – this Centre, which was re-located from Inchicore, provides self-development, training and educational opportunities for up to 37 young people (of whom, it is estimated, 90% live in the CCP area). The closest Community Training Workshop is the SICCCA Community Training Workshop in the Liberties area whilst the nearest FÁS Training Centre is in Ballyfermot. On the basis of feedback from interviewees consulted during this project it is evident that the absence of full-time developmental options for early school leavers within the CCP area represents a significant gap in education provision within the area, with many young people being unwilling or reluctant to link into the Youthreach, Community Training Workshop and FÁS Training Centres which are operational in the Liberties and Ballyfermot areas.

There is a clear view that relevant and appropriate structured programmes of training, education and work experience need to be established for early school leavers within the CCP area. These programmes need to be local and need to be accessible, and should endeavour to provide early school leavers from the CCP area with a range of developmental options (including opportunities to secure qualifications and accreditation) which will help to compensate for the lack of achievement within the formal education system. Although other options do exist it is considered that they are either too inaccessible (eg. in the Liberties, in Ballyfermot, in St. Vincents Trust in Henrietta St.) or are not able to take on early school leavers of a certain age (eg. there is a particular problem in providing places/opportunities for 12-15 year old early school leavers). In this context, it is apparent that there is a need to develop full-time developmental, training and education opportunities for young people within the CCP who have left the formal education system.

### 2.3.2

### Informal out-of-school education provision

#### (a) Youth Service/Youth Projects<sup>2</sup>

In the CCP area there is a regional youth service (Canal Communities Regional Youth Service) and three 'disadvantaged' youth projects (in Rialto, St. Michaels Parish and Bluebell). The Canal Communities Regional Youth Service was established in 1999 in order to support and resource local youth groups. This service also advocates on behalf of children and young people and develops the capacity of local youth services to meet their needs.

The Rialto Youth Project was set up in 1981, the St. Michaels Parish Youth Project in 1986 and the Bluebell Youth Project in 1998. Each of these projects has a local management committee and is funded through the City of Dublin Youth Services Board. All three projects have a designated brief to work with young people between the ages of 10 and 21 who are defined to be 'disadvantaged' or 'at risk'.

<sup>2</sup> Much of the analysis contained in this section of the document has been extracted from a recent report (May 2002) which has been produced by Irene Ward and John Bisset for the Local Development Group of the Young People's Facilities and Services Fund.

In relation to staff resources, the regional youth service and the youth projects in the CCP area employ the following workers:

- The **Canal Communities Regional Youth Service** employs a team of four youth workers.
- The **Rialto Youth Project** employs a team of six youth workers (team leader, three community youth workers, one youth worker who specialises in the area of sport and one youth service support worker).
- The **St. Michaels Parish Youth Project** employs a team of four youth workers (team leader, two community youth workers and one youth service support worker).
- The **Bluebell Youth Project** employs a team of four and a half youth workers (team leader, two and a half community youth workers and one youth service support worker).

A total of 18 full time youth workers and 1 part-time youth worker are employed by the regional youth service and by the three youth projects in the CCP area. This figure represents a significant increase in the number of youth workers within the area over the last five year period. Many of these new youth work positions have been funded through the Canal Communities Local Drugs Task Force and through Round 1 of the Young People's Facilities and Services Fund.

#### **(b) Community based education projects**

A number of community based education projects have been set up in the CCP area over the last 5 year period. The purpose of these projects is to provide educational support to children and young people, primarily through afterschool clubs or groups – these clubs/groups provide a combination of homework support, assistance with literacy and numeracy, and recreational/leisure activities for the participating children and young people. There are three community based education projects in the CCP area:

- **The Dolphin House Homework Club.** This club employs one full-time co-ordinator and one part-time worker.
- **The Fatima Mansions Children and Adult Development Project.** This project employs a full-time co-ordinator and is also supported by a Community Employment scheme and local volunteers.
- **The Family Resource Centre Afterschool Programme in St. Michaels Estate.** This programme employs a part-time co-ordinator and a part-time project worker. This programme is also supported through Community Employment and local volunteers.
- **The Mapping Project.** This is a collaborative project involving Common Ground, the Irish Museum of Modern Art and local Youth Projects.

In assessing the current circumstances of these community based education projects and initiatives, it is evident that they are largely dependent on a combination of short term funding arrangements (eg. for a one or two year period), Community Employment schemes and the goodwill of local volunteers. Uncertainty about future funding places these projects and initiatives in a precarious and vulnerable position and makes it difficult to construct long-term strategies and plans (which might involve working with groups of children and

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young people over an extended, protracted period of time). A key priority is to secure long-term funding for these projects and initiatives.

### **(c) Other youth activities/clubs**

In addition to the regional youth service, the locally based youth projects and the community based education projects, there are also a number of other services and activities targeted at children and young people in the CCP area:

- Five youth clubs (Bluebell Youth Club, Bulfin Youth Club, Fatima Youth Club, Ferrini Youth Club, St. Josephs Youth Club).
- Six football clubs (Belgrave Schoolboys Football Club, Landsdowne Rangers, St. Patricks Athletic Schoolboys, West Park Albion Football Club, Fatima Boys Football Club, Rialto Football Club).
- Four other sporting clubs (Liffey Gaels GAA Club, Oblates Basketball Club, Martial Arts Club, Ferrini Boxing Club).
- Five other clubs/projects (91st Bluebell/Inchicore/Oblate Scout Unit, Briggins, Girl Guides, Fatima Majorettes, Mary Immaculate Summer Project).

These clubs and projects provide a variety of sporting, recreational and informal education activities for children and young people living in the CCP area.

### **2.3.3**

#### **Gaps in provision and services**

- There is a noticeable absence of State funded provision in the CCP area for projects and initiatives targeted at early school leavers, potential early school leavers and other young people who are considered to be 'at risk' within the CCP area. There are a number of statutory programmes which have been set up to provide developmental and educational opportunities for these groups of young people eg. the Youth Diversionary Programme of the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform; the Neighbourhood Youth Projects which are funded through the Department of Health and Children; the Youthreach Centres which are jointly supported by FÁS and the Department of Education and Science. None of these programmes and initiatives are operational in the CCP area. However, the South Western Area Health Board has allocated funding for the establishment of Fatima Youth Initiative under the Springboard Initiative from the Department of Health and Children. The absence of these programmes and initiatives, which have the potential to provide a range of positive options and alternatives to young people, is both perplexing and frustrating (given the high levels of socio-economic disadvantage, deprivation and educational disadvantage which exist within certain communities in the CCP area).
- Whilst there has been a welcome and necessary increase in staffing resources for a number of the youth organisations in the CCP area (eg. the regional youth service; the local youth projects in Rialto, St. Michaels Parish and Bluebell), there are still a number of outstanding needs in relation to the informal education/youth work sector within the area. Two of the main outstanding needs relate to the employment of support and administrative staff and the relative lack of adequate premises to organise and run youth work programmes and activities:

- In relation to the issue of support and administrative staff, the employment of these workers means that the youth workers can spend more time working directly with young people rather than on administrative and bureaucratic tasks. There is concern about the lack of funding to employ support and administrative staff and, in more particular terms, about the impact which the cutbacks in the Community Employment Programme will have upon the availability of Community Employment workers to local youth organisations and groups.
- In relation to the issue of premises and facilities it is evident that many local groups working in the informal education sector in the CCP area are operating out of unsatisfactory premises which are not suited to working with groups of young people eg. portacabins, rooms within flats in the flats complexes. These types of small spaces significantly limit the capacity of youth groups and organisations to engage in developmental work with groups of children and young people. Whilst it is recognised that a number of excellent youth work facilities have been developed within the area (eg. the part of St. Andrews Community Centre which is used by the Rialto Youth Project, St. Michaels Youth Resource Centre) there is a need to ensure that additional high quality youth facilities/centres are established at other strategic locations within the CCP area. It is considered that the regeneration of St. Michaels Estate and Fatima Mansions, together with money available through the Young People's Facilities and Services Fund, might provide the context and framework within which some of the necessary youth premises and facilities might be developed within the CCP area.

#### **2.3.4**

#### **Role of youth services in education provision**

In relation to the issue of educational disadvantage and the provision of education services, it is evident that the youth services within the CCP area are of the belief that the primary responsibility for tackling this issue/problem rests with schools and relevant statutory agencies. Whilst the youth services have an obvious interest in, and concern about, the problem of educational disadvantage and early school leaving it is considered that they have neither the statutory responsibility nor the resources to set up and establish initiatives/projects which would provide an alternative to the formal school system or provide full-time support to early school leavers within the CCP area. It is evident that early school leavers, in addition to young people still at school, participate in the various activities/programmes which are organised by the youth services/projects in the CCP area – however, there are very few youth service initiatives which are specifically targeted towards early school leavers within the area.

It is recognised that the youth services have a particularly important role to play in the development of initiatives and projects which aim to tackle the problems of early school leaving and educational disadvantage within the CCP area – their knowledge and understanding of the circumstances and needs of young people within their areas would suggest that they could make a valuable contribution to multi-agency initiatives to counter educational disadvantage which are being

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developed within the CCP area. However, the primary responsibility for tackling this problem should not rest with voluntary youth services/organisations – rather it should be the responsibility of schools, parents and relevant statutory organisations.

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# 3 Education investment plan for the CCP area

## 3.1 Formal Education Sector – Strategies and Actions

### (i) Department of Education and Science initiatives

#### ● Recommendation No. 1

**The Early Start and Breaking the Cycle programmes should be rolled out into more disadvantaged areas and schools within these areas.** In addition, it is recommended that the criteria which is put in place for expanding these programmes should not be weighted in favour of larger schools but, rather, should be based on the percentage of pupils within individual schools who are deemed to be educationally disadvantaged (on account of factors relating to educational underachievement, special educational needs, psychological and behavioural concerns). It is considered that schools in the CCP area could benefit significantly through the establishment of the pre-school Early Start programme and the Breaking the Cycle programme which would serve to reduce the teacher : pupil ratios (and thereby enable teachers to give more individual attention to pupils within their classes).

#### ● Recommendation No. 2

**The schools from the CCP area which are participating in the School Completion Programme should receive the same levels of financial support and programme assistance as other schools which are involved in this initiative.** It is recognised that a number of schools from the CCP area were not originally included in the school clusters which have been set up through the School Completion Programme. Rather, they have only been invited to participate in the programme in September 2002 and have been attached to existing school clusters. In this context it is important to ensure that adequate budgetary provision is made for the schools from the CCP area so as to ensure that they receive similar financial allocations as the other schools which had originally been selected for participation in the School Completion Programme.

#### ● Recommendation No. 3

**Second level schools attended by young people from the CCP area should have full access to programmes and examinations which have been set up by the Department of Education and Science in recent years.** In particular, the Junior Certificate Schools Programme, the Leaving Certificate Applied and the Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme should be examination options for young people from the CCP area and should be available within all local second level schools (including the Mercy Secondary School which is the only second level school within the CCP area). It is considered that the availability of these programmes and examinations would improve the prospects of more young people remaining at school for a longer period of time and, in particular, a larger percentage of young people progressing from their Junior Certificate examinations onto their Leaving Certificate examinations.

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**(ii) Specialist support services****● Recommendation No. 4**

**The psychological support services provided to schools in the CCP area need to be significantly increased and enhanced.** At present the National Educational Psychological Service can only carry out approximately 3-5 psychological assessments per school per year – yet, at the same time, principals of some schools in the CCP area estimate that there are perhaps 30 to 40 pupils within their particular schools who require a psychological assessment. In this context, it is recommended that the National Educational Psychological Service be resourced to carry out a minimum of 10 psychological assessments per school per year. Alternatively, funding might be sought to employ a full-time educational psychologist to work exclusively within schools in the CCP area.

**● Recommendation No. 5**

**More resources need to be provided to enable more children within local schools to access specialist speech and language services/supports.** Earlier references have been made in this report to the number of children attending schools in the CCP area who have delayed speech and language development – this often acts as a significant impediment to these children progressing satisfactorily through the formal education system. It is recommended that the South Western Area Health Board should fund the employment of a speech and language specialist who would work with the local schools in the CCP area and assist children who are experiencing significant difficulties in their speech and language development.

**(iii) Support for teachers****● Recommendation No. 6**

**A Teachers Network should be set up within the CCP area – this network is currently being developed by the CCP.** The network would provide opportunities for teachers to meet each other and to engage in training and developmental activities which are of interest and relevance to them. Training modules and activities for teachers might include a particular focus on issues relating to poverty, social exclusion, deprivation and socio-economic disadvantage. This type of training would help to make teachers more aware and more informed about the needs and circumstances of families whose children attend local schools in the CCP area.

**● Recommendation No. 7**

**A financial allowance should be paid to teachers who are working in schools within disadvantaged areas – this allowance would be similar to the allowance paid to teachers who are working in schools located on the offshore islands and in the Gaeltacht areas.** In addition, consideration should be given to other ways of attracting teachers to, and retaining teachers within, schools in disadvantaged areas eg. in-service training opportunities, a sabbatical year being made available after having worked in a school in a disadvantaged area for perhaps 7-8 years.

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**(iv) Additional resources for support and ancillary staff****● Recommendation No. 8**

**Classroom assistants should be employed in every junior class within the primary level schools in the CCP area.** A number of classroom assistant positions previously supported by the FÁS Community Employment Programme have not been mainstreamed/funded by the Department of Education and Science. This situation needs to be corrected in order to ensure that classroom assistants are available to relevant classes within primary level schools.

**● Recommendation No. 9**

**Each school in the CCP area should be funded to employ a school secretary and a school caretaker.** Each school, regardless of size, will have its own administrative, secretarial and caretaking/maintenance requirements. In this context it is important to ensure that local schools have access to the necessary ancillary and administrative support staff, and that key positions previously funded through the FÁS Community Employment Programme are adequately mainstreamed by the Department of Education and Science.

**● Recommendation No. 10**

**Core, ongoing funding should be provided by the Department of Education and Science to sustain a number of projects and initiatives which are currently taking place within schools in the CCP area eg. Canal After School Club, Art Therapy project, Creativity in the Classroom project.** These projects and initiatives, which are making a valuable contribution to the work of schools in the CCP area, are currently in receipt of short-term, insecure financial assistance from funding sources like the CCP, the Canal Communities Drugs Task Force and the Equal Opportunities Childcare Programme. However, on account of the clear educational focus of these projects and initiatives it is considered more appropriate that they should receive direct, ongoing and adequate funding from the Department of Education and Science.

**(v) Integrated and co-ordinated strategies****● Recommendation No. 11**

**There is a need to build upon the inter-agency strategies and projects which emerged from the Integrated Services Process (ISP) which was piloted in the Dublin 8 area between 1999 and 2001.** A number of these strategies/projects related to educational issues. Whilst some of these have been progressed (eg. Londubh, Fresh Start), there are other projects and initiatives which have not been progressed to any significant degree following the completion of the ISP – the Task Groups which were set up to advance these projects/initiatives have not met since the ISP finished its work. There is a need to determine ways in which the inter-agency projects and programmes which emerged from the ISP can be progressed by relevant statutory agencies and community based groups.

**● Recommendation No. 12**

**There is a need for more clarity about the respective roles and functions of the various groups and committees within the CCP/Dublin 8 area which are involved in issues relating to education.** These groups/committees include the

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Home School Community Liaison Co-ordinators committee, the Education Sub-committee of the CCP, the Londubh committee, the proposed Teachers Network, and groups/committees to be set up through the School Completion Programme. Participation in these groups places considerable time demands on group members and it is important that this time is maximised to its optimum effect – hence, the need to be clear about the roles and functions of the various groups and how they might most effectively complement each other in their work and activities.

**(vi) Research into causes and consequences of educational disadvantage and educational underachievement**

● **Recommendation No. 13**

**A major research project should be set up to monitor and track the progress of children and young people from the CCP area who are participating in primary level and second level education.** This piece of research would aim to identify (i) the ways in which children and young people progress through the formal education system, (ii) the factors which contribute to educational disadvantage and educational underachievement and (iii) possible solutions and remedies to the obstacles which currently exist in relation to children and young people from the CCP area reaching their full educational potential. Furthermore, it is recommended that the proposed research should be long-term and longitudinal, with a fairly large sample group being monitored and tracked over perhaps a 10 year period, from the time that they enter primary level education to the time that they sit their Junior Certificate examinations. The research project would generate regular interim reports which would help to inform the policies and priorities of relevant agencies and organisations on an ongoing, sustained basis.

● **Recommendation No. 14**

**A piece of qualitative research should take place with young people who are experiencing difficulties within the formal education system or who have already left the formal education system at a relatively young age (i.e. at the age of 15 or younger).** It is considered important to hear directly from these young people about the problems which they have encountered whilst at school, about the reasons why they might be thinking about leaving school or have already left school and about the types of supports and incentives which might be put in place to enable/encourage them to stay in school for a longer period of time or to re-engage with the education process (if they have already left school).

● **Recommendation No. 15**

**Research should be carried out into the educational progression of children and young people from the CCP area who attend schools outside of the CCP area.** Earlier references have been made in this report to the fact that a large number of children and young people are enrolled in schools outside the area – in addition many children and young people attending schools in the CCP area do not live in the CCP area. In order to gain a better picture and profile of the educational experiences and progression of more children and young people from the CCP area, it is important to extract information from the schools located outside the CCP area which are attended by children and young people

from the CCP area. This type of information, allied to the Education Profile of schools in the CCP area detailed in this report, should result in a more comprehensive and thorough profile of the educational progress and educational experiences of all children and young people who live in the CCP area.

**(vii) Other school related recommendations**

● **Recommendation No. 16**

**There should be a greater focus on creativity and self-expression, and opportunities need to be created for young people to engage in a variety of creative and cultural activities eg. dance, drama, music, art.** A culture and creativity programme should be set up across all of the schools in the CCP area – this programme would enable participating schools to access specialist arts workers and to become involved in creativity projects and activities which involve two or more schools within the CCP area.

● **Recommendation No. 17**

**Building/construction work should begin on schools whose premises are in need of repair, refurbishment or extension.** Within the CCP area, there is a particular need to ensure that the Department of Education and Science follows through on its commitment to further develop and extend Inchicore National School (so that this school can provide a broader range of facilities and services to its children and their parents).

● **Recommendation No. 18**

**On account of the wide dispersal of children, especially boys, to a number of schools outside of its area, the CCP should initiate a debate and explore possibilities concerning the provision of second level education for boys within its geographical area.**

● **Recommendation No. 19**

**There should be continued support for access to Third Level programmes in all schools attended by young people from the CCP area.** The Millennium Partnership Fund for Disadvantage (Access to Third Level) should be an ongoing, annual programme of support to assist in the progression and retention of young people from disadvantaged areas within further/higher education and training.

**3.2**

**Out-of-school education sector – strategies and actions**

**(i) Out-of-school programmes and initiatives**

● **Recommendation No. 20**

**Neighbourhood Youth Projects should be set up within the CCP area.** These projects, to be supported by the South Western Area Health Board, would provide a range of developmental opportunities for children and young people who are in danger of dropping out of school at an early age. At present there are very limited services in the CCP area for potential early school leavers and it is considered that the establishment of community based Neighbourhood Youth Projects would help to meet an outstanding gap in the current provision which exists for young people within the CCP area.

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- **Recommendation No. 21**

**Youth Diversionary Projects (funded through the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform) should be set up in the CCP area.** The experiences of other areas would suggest that these projects have played an important role in providing a range of positive and constructive activities for young people and, more especially, for young people who have been identified as being vulnerable or 'at risk'. It is considered that the establishment of Youth Diversionary Projects within certain communities in the CCP area would provide new options and opportunities for potential early school leavers and other young people who have already left the formal education system at an early age.

- **Recommendation No. 22**

**Alternative education initiatives should be developed for children and young people who are in danger of dropping out of school early or who have already left formal education at an early age.** These initiatives might involve a combination of time spent in the school and time spent in a local community education project (for potential early school leavers); and more intensive out of school support for children and young people who are unable to cope with the school curriculum and who require an alternative programme of education (which might be more practical and vocational, and less orientated towards attainment of State examinations). This latter initiative might take the form of a 'Second Chance Education Programme', a programme which would aim to develop new progression routes and pathways to accreditation for young people who have left school at an early age.

**(ii) Development of existing youth services and community based projects**

- **Recommendation No. 23**

**Youth workers employed by the youth projects in the CCP area should be employed on a more secure and permanent basis.** At present, many of these workers are employed on short-term contracts and this type of arrangement often makes it difficult to attract and retain suitably qualified and experienced workers and for the employed workers to build up and develop relationships with the children and young people with whom they are working. It is considered that the employment of youth workers on a more secure basis would serve to enhance the quality and impact of the informal education services being provided by youth projects in the CCP area.

- **Recommendation No. 24**

**Core, ongoing funding should be secured for the community based education projects in the CCP area – the Dolphin House Homework Club, the Fatima Mansions Children and Adult Development Project, the Family Resource Centre Afterschool Programme (St. Michaels Estate).** Many of these projects and initiatives are currently surviving on inadequate short-term funding arrangements and it is considered important that they are able to access more adequate, ongoing, sustained funding from relevant statutory agencies. In addition, consideration needs to be given to the staffing and resourcing of these projects (with workers being placed on youth worker and Health Board pay scales). It is evident that if more financial assistance was available to employ more

project workers, this would have a significant impact on both the numbers of children and young people with whom the projects would be able to work and upon the number of weekly after school sessions to be organised for the participating children and young people.

- **Recommendation No. 25**

**The upgrading and refurbishment of community based premises and facilities which are utilised for programmes and activities with children and young people in the CCP area.** A recent audit of youth facilities in the area concluded that many of the existing premises are cramped, inadequate and in a poor state of disrepair – hence the need to upgrade the existing youth facilities in the area.

- **Recommendation No. 26**

**New purpose built youth facilities/centres need to be constructed in the CCP area.** Although some refurbishment work might help to improve the appearance of the existing youth facilities, it is also apparent that a number of these youth facilities are simply too small to carry out developmental work with groups of children and young people. Therefore whilst some type of upgrading/refurbishment programme might provide an immediate, short-term response to the lack of appropriate space for youth activities, the long-term solution will need to involve the construction of purpose built youth/community centres in places like Fatima Mansions, Bluebell and Dolphin House.

**(iii)**

**Development of early years services**

- **Recommendation No. 27**

**There should be a significant development of early years services and pre-school projects and programmes for children and families living within the CCP area.**

There is a direct correlation between pre-school exposure to education (either within the home or within a local childcare project) and the capacity of children to cope with their entry into formal education (and to progress satisfactorily through the formal education system). Therefore, additional resources need to be invested in family support services and in childcare projects/programmes, so as to ensure that children are well prepared for their introduction into primary level education.

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## 4 Appendices

### 4.1 Definition of terms

**Resource teacher** This is an additional teacher allocated to a school or to a cluster of schools in order to provide additional teaching support to meet the needs of children who have been assessed as having special educational needs.

**Learning support teacher** This teacher provides assistance for children experiencing learning difficulties, particularly in the core areas of literacy and numeracy. Schools have access to this service based on their level of need. Revised guidelines on Learning Support/Remedial Education have been drawn up and issued to all schools.

**Special Needs Assistants** These are additional positions available within schools to assist young people with special needs, identified on the basis of psychological assessments.

**Home School Community Liaison Co-ordinator** This is a specially appointed teacher whose role is concerned with establishing partnership and collaboration between parents and teachers in the interests of the children's learning.

**Junior Certificate** This is a certificate awarded to a young person on completion of their junior certificate examination, after their first three years in second level school. Students are offered learning opportunities in eight areas:

Language and Literature	Mathematical Studies
Science and Technology	Social, Political and Environmental Education
Arts Education	Physical Education
Religious and Moral Education	Guidance, Counselling, Pastoral Care.

**Junior Certificate Schools Programme** This programme has been designed to help young people who find it difficult to cope with the school system and who would benefit from special support when they are working towards the Junior Certificate. Schools that offer the programme are given extra resources to allow for smaller class sizes and students usually take 5 examination subjects or less. Those who do not get an examination certificate get an individualised record of their achievement.

**Transition Year** This programme is available after Junior Certificate and before beginning the Leaving Certificate Programme. All second level schools have the option of offering the Transition Year programme to their students. Some schools that offer the programme give students a choice as to whether they do Transition Year or move straight into the first year of the two-year Leaving Certificate programme. Transition year offers an opportunity to experience new subjects and to engage in alternative activities.

**Leaving Certificate** This is a two-year programme and contains a range of distinct subjects. These are normally studied at either Ordinary or Higher Level. Two subjects, Irish and Mathematics, can be studied at Foundation Level. Foundation Level is geared to the needs of students who might have difficulty with those subjects at Ordinary or Higher Level. Students normally study 6 or 7 subjects during the Senior Cycle.

**Leaving Certificate Applied** This is a distinct, self-contained two-year Leaving Certificate programme aimed at preparing students for adult and working life. The programme sets out to recognise the talents of all students and to provide opportunities for developing personal responsibility, self-esteem and self-knowledge. The programme focuses on the talents of each student and helps students apply what they learn to the real world. The two-year programme consists of 4 half-year blocks called sessions. Achievements are credited in each session.

**Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme** The Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme is a Leaving Certificate with a strong vocational aspect. The programme consists of Leaving Certificate subjects, together with three compulsory link modules on Enterprise Education, Preparation for Work and Work Experience. Students must take at least five Leaving Certificate subjects, one of which must be Irish and a continental language or vocational language module.

**College Access Programmes** These are programmes that operate in various schools in collaboration with higher / further education institutions. They aim to encourage greater participation by young people in higher and further education.

**School Completion Programme** A programme launched by the Department of Education and Science in May 2002 in order to increase retention of young people to Leaving Certificate. Clusters of second level school(s) and their feeder primary schools employ a co-ordinator to organise in-school, out-of-school and holiday time activities.

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## 4.2

## Schools outside the Canal Communities Partnership area

### Primary Schools attended by young people which are outside the Canal Communities Partnership area:

Mater Dei N.S., Basin Lane  
 St. James CBS, Junior, James Street  
 Scoil Mhuire Og 1 & 2, Crumlin  
 Presentation Convent, Warrenmount  
 Marist Primary School, Crumlin  
 Scoil Iosagain, Crumlin  
 Sancta Maria CBS, Synge Street  
 St. Killians, Bluebell

### Second level schools attended by young people from the Canal Communities Partnership Area and programmes/courses provided

School	Junior Cert.	Junior Cert Schools Programme	Transition Year	Leaving Cert	Leaving Cert Applied	Leaving Cert Vocational Programme	School Completion Programme	Access to third level programmes
Mercy Secondary	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Loreto College	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Presentation Secondary School Warrenmount	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
St. James CBS	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
St. Kevins College	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Drimnagh Castle Secondary School	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	No
CBS Synge St. Dublin 8	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes
Rosary College Crumlin	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Our Lady of Mercy Secondary School, Mourne Rd, Drimnagh	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes

### 4.3 **List of people consulted during research project**

**Peter Browne** Dublin Institute of Technology  
**Clodagh Byrne** Dublin Institute of Technology  
**Michael Challoner** Inchicore College of Further Education  
**Vincent Collins** Schools Attendance Officer  
**Caron Hannigan** Canal Communities Local Employment Service  
**Lucy Harrington** Canal Communities Partnership  
**Paul Hendrix** Rialto Youth Project  
**Brian Kenny** Canal Communities Partnership  
**Iggy Keane** Scoil Mhuire gan Smal  
**Deirdre Kilmartin** Canal Afterschools Club  
**Mary Keogh** Our Lady of Lourdes National School  
**Mary Langton** Our Lady of the Wayside National School  
**Jim Lawlor** Rialto Youth Project  
**Michael McCabe** Youthreach  
**Samantha McCaffrey** Rialto Youth Project  
**Terry McCarthy** Inchicore National School  
**Sr. Kathleen McLennan** Childrens and Adults Development Project,  
 Fatima Mansions  
**Yvonne Mullan** National Educational Psychological Service  
**Tom Mullins** St. Michaels CBS National School  
**Colm O'Brien** Dolphin House Homework Club  
**Bronagh O'Neill** Canal Communities Regional Youth Service  
**Paul O'Shaughnessy** Rialto Youth Project  
**Con O'Thuma** Gael Scoil Inse Chór  
**Kevin Reid** Irish Business and Employers Confederation  
**Carmel Solan** Mercy Secondary School  
**Aileen Walshe** St. Michaels Estate Afterschools Programme

### 4.4 **Relevant documents and reports**

Canal Communities Local Drugs Task Force – Service Delivery Plan, 2000  
 Canal Communities Partnership – Area Action Plan, 2001 – 2006  
 Canal Communities Partnership – Childcare Audit (2002)  
 St. Michaels Estate Regeneration Team – A Community Vision for the  
 Regeneration of St. Michaels Estate (2002)  
 Fatima Groups United – Eleven Acres, Ten Steps (2000)  
 Integrated Services Process, Dublin 8 – Action Plan (2000)  
 Morris M. – The Needs of 4-8 year olds in Inchicore (1999)  
 Rourke S- Study on Early School Leaving in the Canal Communities Partnership  
 Area, 2001



# Recommendations – summary

## FORMAL EDUCATION SECTOR

### ▶ **Department of Education and Science initiatives**

Expand Early Start & Breaking the Cycle  
Equitable allocation under S.C.P  
Full access to all Department of Education and Science programmes and examinations

### ▶ **Specialist support services**

Enhanced psychological supports and service  
Greater access to specialist speech and language services

### ▶ **Support for teachers**

Develop a support network locally for teachers  
A financial allowance to be paid to teachers working within disadvantaged areas.

### ▶ **Additional resources for support and ancillary staff**

Classroom assistants for junior classes  
Adequate secretarial and caretaking staff  
Core funding for existing projects

### ▶ **Integrated and co-ordinated strategies**

Build on existing inter-agency strategies  
Establish clarity on roles and functions of committees operating in the area

### ▶ **Research into causes and consequences of educational disadvantage and educational underachievement**

Develop a tracking system  
Conduct qualitative research on the experiences of young people within the formal education sector  
Examine the progression of young people who attend school outside the partnership area

### ▶ **Other school related recommendations**

Develop a cross-school culture and creativity programme  
Work to begin on school premises in need of repair  
Examine the possibility of the provision of secondary education for boys locally  
Continued support for Access to Third Level Programmes

## OUT-OF-SCHOOL EDUCATION SECTOR – STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

### ▶ **Out of school programmes and initiatives**

Establish Neighbourhood Youth Projects locally  
Set up Youth Diversionary Projects  
Establish some alternative education initiatives and 'second chance education programmes'

### ▶ **Development of existing youth services and community-based projects**

Greater stability in the employment of youth workers  
Ongoing funding for community based education projects  
Upgrading of youth facilities used locally  
Develop purpose built youth centres/facilities

### ▶ **Development of early years service**

Development of pre-school projects and programmes for young children and families.