



NATIONAL PROFILES OF WORK INTEGRATION SOCIAL ENTERPRISES : IRELAND

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The "ELEXIES" Project

This project is specifically concerned with the different types of social enterprise for integration, also known as work integration social enterprise (WISE) in 12 EU countries. Its aim is to identify and describe their main characteristics as social enterprises, the type of work integration they provide, their numbers, and how they have developed and are supported. The ultimate goal of the project is to build a database accessible on internet.

The study is conducted using the EMES Network definition of social enterprise as a common reference point and guideline for determining the social enterprises to be included in the study. The EMES definition distinguishes, on the one hand, between criteria that are more economic and, on the other hand, indicators that are predominantly social.¹

Four factors have been applied to corroborate the economic and entrepreneurial nature of the initiatives.

a) A continuous activity producing goods and/or selling services

Social enterprises, unlike the traditional non-profit organisations, are normally not engaged in advisory activities as a major goal or in the redistribution of financial flows (as, for example, grant-giving foundations). Instead they are directly involved in the production of goods and the provision of services to people on a continuous basis. The provision of services represents, therefore, the reason, or one of the main reasons, for the existence of social enterprises.

b) A high degree of autonomy

Social enterprises are voluntarily created by a group of people and are governed by them in the framework of an autonomous project. Although they may depend on public subsidies, public authorities or other organisations (federations, private firms, etc.) do not manage them, directly or indirectly. They also have the right of participation and to terminate the project.

c) A significant level of economic risk

Those who establish a social enterprise assume totally or partly the risk of the initiative. Unlike most public institutions, their financial viability depends on the efforts of their members and workers to secure adequate resources.

d) A minimum amount of paid work

As in the case of most traditional non-profit associations, social enterprises may also combine monetary and non-monetary resources, voluntary and paid workers. However, the activity carried out in social enterprises requires a minimum level of paid workers.

¹ See C. Borzaga & J. Defourny (2001), *The Emergence of Social Enterprise*, London, Routledge, pp.16-18.

To encapsulate the social dimensions of the initiative, five indicators have been selected:

i) An initiative launched by a group of citizens

Social enterprises are the result of collective dynamics involving people belonging to a community or to a group that shares a certain need or aim. They must maintain this dimension in one form or another.

ii) A decision-making power not based on capital ownership

This generally means the principle of "one member, one vote" or at least a voting power not distributed according to capital shares on the governing body which has the ultimate decision-making rights. The owners of the capital are obviously important, but the decision-making rights are shared with the other stakeholders.

iii) A participatory nature, which involves the persons affected by the activity

Representation and participation of customers, stakeholder orientation and a democratic management style are important characteristics of social enterprises. In many cases, one of the aims of social enterprises is to further democracy at local level through economic activity.

iv) Limited profit distribution

Social enterprises not only include organisations that are characterised by a total non-distribution constraint, but also organisations like co-operatives in some countries, which may distribute profits only to a limited extent, thus avoiding a profit-maximising behaviour.

v) An explicit aim to benefit the community

- One of the principal aims of social enterprises is to serve the community or a specific group of people. To the same end, a feature of social enterprises is their desire to promote a sense of responsibility at local level.
- The database of work integration social enterprise has been produced for each country. Due to different circumstances in each country (especially legislative frameworks) there have been slightly varied approaches to mapping the sector. Researchers have generally made a great effort to ensure that the most interesting and progressive initiatives are represented. There are certain types of social enterprise which have their own legislative framework, and which are *exclusively* concerned with work integration. The second type, concerns those social enterprise which are exclusively engaged in work integration, but though they are recognisable as a distinctive type, they do not enjoy a complete and specific legal recognition, and thus generally operate under a range of different legal forms also used by organisations out of the field of work integration. Other types of social enterprise do not have their own specific legislation, and only a proportion of that type will be engaged with work integration. Researchers have made particularly strong efforts to ensure that the first two categories are included, but lack of data has meant that some of the latter category may be missing.

National Profiles of Work Integration Social Enterprises: Ireland

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Introduction

In recent times the role of the Irish voluntary and community sector in tackling local social exclusion has been reinforced at both national and European levels through various policy and support measures. An interesting feature of this current thrust of local development is its "partnership" nature involving the collaboration of private, public and community representatives at the local level. Another interesting aspect of this process is the perceived role of socio-economic initiatives in addressing social exclusion.

Ireland has a long history of collective action originating in the meitheal system of informal co-operation between farmers during the harvesting period. Religious bodies have made a notable contribution to the delivery of health and educational services. Employment in non-profit schools accounts for approximately 45% of total jobs in the Irish non-profit sector².

The Irish voluntary and community sector has historically played a key role in tackling social exclusion and providing key social services to the poor and marginalized of Irish society. The state financially supported the voluntary and community sector to the amount of £ 1 billion (1.267 billion euro) in 1999. Many voluntary and community development organisations have come to rely on labour market measures to resource their work. Approximately 1.75% of the Irish GDP is spent on active labour market interventions. This rate of expenditure is one of the highest in the OECD countries and provides support to a host of social economy organisations including social enterprises.

This short paper concentrates on one particular type of social enterprise: work integration social enterprises that provide training and employment opportunities to the long term employed, the disabled (and other specific categories of socially excluded groups). These social enterprises also deliver a range of social services for local community consumption. The paper begins with a brief overview of the range of social enterprises found across the Irish landscape and concludes with a particular focus on two main types of work integration social enterprises.

² Salamon & Anheier (1998).

Ireland's Social Enterprises

In 1996, ADM published the findings of a study carried out on community businesses within the social economy in Ireland³. A survey was undertaken of a sample of "social enterprises" drawn from both rural and urban areas. Findings highlighted a high degree of dependence on public funding. Fifty per cent of social enterprises obtained at least 75% of their income from the public sector, and only 22% generated at least 75% of their income from trading. The survey also revealed that 73% of workers in social enterprises were previously unemployed and women constituted 48% of "management employees". Over 65% of the social enterprises surveyed indicated a level of dissatisfaction with support from the public and private sectors. The survey concluded that:

- social enterprises have shown a capacity to deliver targeted local development;
- social enterprises offer an important third sector approach to tackling social exclusion;
- direct and indirect job creation should be a by-product of social enterprise activity, not its main focus (Mallaghan, Hart, MacFarlane & Connolly, 1996).

Categories of Irish Social Enterprises

One of the most recent attempts to categorise Irish social enterprises has been undertaken by O'Hara (2001). Social enterprises adopt a variety of legal structures including the company structure limited by guarantee or share, industrial and provident societies, co-operatives or trusts. O'Hara (2001) has developed five broad categories of Irish social enterprises on the basis of their objectives, activities and operation. These categories are as follows:

- work integration social enterprises, associated with insertion of members of excluded groups into the labour force;
- credit unions;
- social enterprises providing personal and proximity services;
- local development organisations;
- social enterprises concerned with housing provision (O'Hara, 2001).

Work integration social enterprises

The primary objective of this type of social enterprise is to create employment and facilitate labour market integration for people with physical and social disabilities. In Ireland these social enterprises have been generally established and managed by voluntary and non-profit organisations. O'Hara suggests that whilst these social enterprises are commercially orientated they also avail of public subsidies.

³ ADM (Area Development Management) is an intermediary company set up by the Irish Government and the EU to manage the Local Development Programme (1994 - 1999) and other local development initiatives Mallaghan *et al.* (1996).

Credit unions

The Irish credit union movement was established in 1957 and is a voluntary movement. Each credit union is an independent, autonomous body. Support and advisory services are organised by a central body, *The Irish League of Credit Unions* (ILCU). This is an umbrella organisation for most credit union bodies. There are approximately 530 credit unions in Ireland with approximately 2.1 million members. The average Irish credit union has 4,000 members (Irish League of Credit Unions Annual Report 1998).

Social enterprises providing personal and proximity services

Hayes (1999) notes that after independence in 1922 Ireland inherited a version of the British Welfare System based mainly on the Poor Law. The minimal nature of such statutory provision encouraged religious groups to set up their own institutions. Religious bodies have made a notable contribution to the delivery of health and educational services.

In general the Irish voluntary and community sector has historically played a key role in tackling social exclusion and providing key social services to the poor and marginalized of Irish society. The most common target groups include the elderly, children, the unemployed and more recently refugee and ethnic minorities.

Local development organisations

O'Hara suggests that many of the recent social enterprises have emerged within the context of a local development strategy based on social partnership. The past decade has been characterised by a local development approach based on the partnership principle and local community representation.

This has resulted in the establishment of 38 partnership companies and 33 community groups under the administration of the Operational Programme for Local Urban and Rural Development. The EU LEADER programme for Rural Development encompasses 34 Leader groups. Common to all of them is, on the one hand, an organisational structure that incorporates public, private and local community sector representatives and, on the other hand, their non-profit status. O'Hara (2001) suggests that many of these organisations are seeking to tackle social exclusion through enterprise creation and/or supporting the development of local social enterprises such as rural transport services, child and elder care facilities.

Social enterprises concerned with housing provision

The voluntary sector, assisted by government grant aid, plays an important role in social housing provision. In 1999, the national dwelling stock was 1.258 million. Non-profit/voluntary & co-operative housing constituted approximately 1.0% (13,000 dwellings) of this figure.

Housing co-operatives originated in the 19th century as mutual aid societies, seeking to clear slums, provide security of tenure and affordable housing. Small home-ownership building co-operatives developed in Ireland during the early 1950s. These

were established by local self-help groups seeking to provide housing for themselves. A housing co-operative is a distinct form of not-for-profit mutual housing association working to relieve housing needs for community benefit. The members are the users of the housing services provided by their co-operatives (NABCo., 2001).

The National Association of Building Co-operatives (NABCo) is the key source of information and advice about the formation and management of housing co-operatives. The association was formed by representatives of co-operative housing societies in 1973 and is a federated co-operative society or association of affiliated local housing co-operatives and registered co-operative housing societies. NABCo is a registered non-profit industrial & provident society (IPS).

Examples of this type of co-operatives, which grew throughout the 1960s and 1970s, are mainly to be found on sites allocated by local authorities in rural towns and the suburbs. Rental housing co-operatives are more evident in recent years. The rental co-operative is open to local authority waiting list applicants and offers security of tenure with subsidised affordable rents for those member/tenants who are prepared to share responsibility for the general upkeep and care of the housing estate/apartment block.

A sixth type of social enterprise can be added to this typology, the community co-operative.

Community co-operatives

The Gaeltacht (Gaelic speaking) community co-operatives found along the west coast of Ireland emerged in the 1960s and 1970s. These co-operatives have an explicit aim to serve the community and deliver a wide range of services to many rural and island inhabitants. Many of these rural locations and islands are characterised by declining and unbalanced demographic structures with severely depleted public service provision.

Services provided by the community co-operatives include the provision of piped water, electricity supplies, the importation of bulky commodities, marketing local produce and tourism development. Udaras na Gaeltacht, the body charged by the government with the economic and social development of Irish-speaking communities, subsidises many of these co-operatives (Briscoe, McCarthy & Ward 1999).

As already stated, work integration social enterprises (WISE) play a significant role in creating training and employment opportunities for a range of socially and economically marginalised groups, in addition to providing a variety of community services. The remainder of this paper provides an overview of two specific types of work integration social enterprise: those working with the long term unemployed, and a second category of social enterprise centred around individuals with learning difficulties and the physically disabled.

Work Integration Social Enterprises: Tackling Long-Term Unemployment & Developing Community Services

1. Brief historical description

Irish work integration social enterprises (WISEs) generally have two broad objectives: to provide training and employment opportunities to the long term unemployed (and other specific categories of socially excluded groups) and to deliver a range of social services for local community consumption. These services can include family resource centres, meals and respite care for the elderly, resource and information centres for the unemployed, community transport, recycling services and childcare provision. WISEs have evolved to address community needs and to tackle long term unemployment. An understanding of the growth of these types of social enterprises is best obtained through a brief discussion of local and community development and the influence of social partnership on this sector since the mid 1980s.

There is a long history of Irish community and voluntary activity in the provision of a wide range of community social services. Groups such as the elderly, the disabled, young children and the unemployed have traditionally been the focus of this sector. In recent years, new client groups have emerged such as refugees and asylum seekers. The religious bodies, in particular the Roman Catholic Church, were generally associated with the supply of such services and, although in receipt of some direct state funding, these organisations enjoyed a certain degree of autonomy from the state. Since the mid 1980s two particular events have shaped the Irish community and voluntary sector: the emergence of a social partnership approach to national social and economic policy formulation and an increase in state funding to the community and voluntary sector.

Social partnership has underpinned national development programmes, including the *Programme for National Recovery (1987-1990)*, the *Programme for Economic and Social Progress (1990-1993)*, *Partnership 2000*, the *National Agreement for Inclusion, Employment and Competitiveness (1997-2000)* and the most recent *Programme for Prosperity and Fairness*. The pervasion of this partnership approach in local and community development has resulted in the emergence of a large number of tri-partite structures at the local community level. These structures incorporate the interests of the private, statutory, community and voluntary sectors and include 38 national area based partnership companies, 33 community groups and 37 LEADER companies (EU programme of Rural Development). A significant feature of the Irish local and community development process is the participation of the community and voluntary sector in the formulation and implementation of local development programmes. Participation at the decision making level has been further strengthened by the inclusion of this "Third Strand" (or "Fourth Pillar" - comprising representatives of the voluntary and community sectors) in negotiating the National Development Programme (1997-2000).

The state has traditionally viewed the role of the community and voluntary sector as a means of addressing social exclusion and long-term unemployment. The recent publication of the government White Paper, *A Framework for Supporting Voluntary*

Activity and Developing the Relationship Between the State and the Community & Voluntary Sector (2000), has reinforced this view; it describes the sector as "essential partners in social and economic development (...) pioneering new approaches to service provision and local and community development" (A Framework for Supporting Voluntary Activity, 2000). The perceived role of the community and voluntary sector in tackling social and economic exclusion has found expression in a number of national programmes and initiatives for local social and economic development, many of which have created the conditions for the growth of WISEs.

2. Key features

2.1. Legal form(s) and structure of ownership

The importance of having a legal structure has become increasingly evident amongst WISEs. This provides a legal identity for the group and provides protection for the individual group members. A number of different legal structures are available to companies in Ireland; these include the private limited company, public limited company, company limited by guarantee and industrial & provident society. The industrial & provident society (IPS) legal status was established in the 19th century and all IPS must be engaged in "*industries, business or trade*". WISEs are generally legally incorporated as either a limited company (by share/guarantee) or an industrial and provident society, the legal form adopted by co-operatives.

Company limited by guarantee

These are registered companies. The liability of members is limited to the amount that each member has guaranteed, in writing, to contribute to the company in the event of the assets of the company being insufficient to deal with all debts, on the dissolution of the company. The body responsible for the overseeing of the operation of the Companies Act is the Companies Office in Dublin Castle, the overall responsibility of which falls to the Department of Enterprise, Trade & Employment. In order to register as a company limited by guarantee an organisation must draw up a constitution, setting out the objectives of the company and the rules and regulations by which it is run. A company limited by guarantee is controlled by its members; a board of directors is appointed by the membership and this board is responsible for the management of the company subject to the overall direction of its members. In the past two years, a Director of Corporate Law Enforcement was appointed to actively enforce the Companies Act.

Industrial & provident society (IPS)

Each IPS must have a constitution which is known as the Rules of the Society. This outlines details such as the objectives, terms of admission of members, voting details and a provision for the appointment of auditors. The body responsible for overseeing the operation of the IPS is the Registrar of Friendly Societies. The management committee is responsible for the management of the society subject to the overall control of the annual general meeting.

An incorporated scheme under the Charities Act

An organisation recognised as having charitable status can acquire legal status by applying to the Commissioners of Charitable Donations and Bequests to be incorporated. In order to apply for this type of incorporation an organisation must:

- draw up a draft deed of trust;
- get a barrister's opinion that the trust is of a charitable nature;
- be granted Charitable Status by the Revenue Commissioners.

Charitable status does not confer any legal status on an organisation; it is not an alternative to acquiring a legal status, but is related to fund-raising, tax or financial issues. In order to be recognised as having charitable status, an organisation must have a guarantee written into its constitution/rules that any money received by the group will be used for charitable purposes. In this instance charitable has a specific meaning i.e., the advancement of education, the relief of poverty, the advancement of religion, and other purposes of a charitable nature beneficial to the community. An organisation may have both a legal status and a charitable status.

Trust

A trust is an arrangement whereby one person or a number of people are appointed under a legal document known as a "deed of trust" for the purpose of holding funds or property on behalf of another individual or group. A deed of trust does not provide legal status for the general work of the group and strict rules apply for trustees under the 1893 Trustees Act. Members will be individually responsible for any activities of the group. A trust can also be created orally, except where land is involved, but best practice is to establish a deed of trust.

2.2. Pursued goals

A significant goal of these initiatives is to provide training, employment and re-employment opportunities for the long-term unemployed. This, it is hoped, would improve the skills base and self-confidence of the employee/trainee, as well as enhancing his/her economic situation. These social enterprises also seek to provide a wide range of services to disadvantaged communities.

2.3. Types of jobs provided

The types of jobs provided include full-time, part-time and grant-aided employment. In some cases the nature of the employment can often be dependent on the type of programme supporting the activities of the organisation; for example, different active labour market measures place specific obligations on the "employee". The *Community Employment* measure provides grant aid to "employees" for up to 19 hours per week. These employees are thus eligible to earn additional earnings. Under the new national *Social Economy Programme*, the grant-aided employee is paid for 35 hours of work per week (for approximately a three-year period). Grant-aid assistance for the appointment of a manager to the social economy organisation is also provided for under this programme.

2.4. Weight of training

Training provided in the social integration enterprise is often related to the nature of the service being delivered. For example, in the case of one particular enterprise engaged in the delivery of elder/disabled care services, the employees have availed of a variety of training programmes. These included manual handling patient course, Irish Red Cross First Aid training and a range of ancillary courses directly related to the needs of the service users. This training has enhanced the ability of the employee to take up full-time paid work in nursing homes and public hospitals. In some cases, the manager of the WISE (usually in collaboration with other professionals that may sit on the management board) develops training programmes suitable for the employees. This training and education is sometimes made also available to the service users. Some managers regard the continuous provision of training as important. They suggest that this enables the WISE to maintain service provision if an "employee" leaves to take up full-time employment (often used as a measure of the success of the social enterprise by public funding agencies).

2.5. Types of employed workers

Employees can include the long-term unemployed and other specific categories of people such as lone parents, travellers and small farmers.

2.6. Types of resources

Social enterprise mobilise different sets of resources; through the market place from the sale of goods and services, through subsidies from the State (often in the form of grant-aided employment/capital and over-head grants) and volunteerism from within the local community voluntary sector. This latter activity includes volunteers that sit on the board of management of the social integration enterprise and additional personnel that provide hours of voluntary work (e.g. the preparation and delivery of meals to elderly rural residents).

2.7. Links with public policies

Various policy documents such as the National Anti-Poverty Strategy (1990), Partnership 2000 for Inclusion, Employment and Competitiveness (1997-2000) and groups such as PLANET (the network of area-based partnerships), the Community Workers Co-operative and CORI (Conference of Religious in Ireland) have contributed to the national discourse on social enterprises and the social economy in general. PLANET, in their publication "*Building the social economy – new areas of work, enterprise and development*", recommended a number of support measures for social economy organisations including the "*provision of resources to employ the long-term unemployed*".

One of the earliest initiatives designed to encourage the development of community business was the *Community Enterprise Programme* (CEP). Established in the early 1980s, the CEP was designed to provide advisory and financial assistance to community enterprise projects. Research on these community enterprises, among other things, led to a call for support of services "for direct consumption by the community" (O'Hara (2001), O' Cinneide and Keane (1987), Kelleher and Whelan

(1992)). Subsequent research, such as the 1996 ADM study of social enterprises, indicated "a high level of dependence on public funding"; 50% of the sample obtained at least 75% of their income from the public sector. This study also revealed that 73% of the workforce of their social enterprises was previously classed as "long-term unemployed" and 75% of the employees "lived locally" (Mallaghan, Hart, MacFarlane & Connolly, 1996).

There are strong linkages between national active labour market programmes and local and community development. These programmes have sought to increase labour market participation and reduce the levels of long-term unemployment through policies of re-integration into the labour market. In 1999, the Irish state contributed almost £ 1 billion (1.267 billion euro) to the voluntary and community sector. As already mentioned, approximately 1.75% of the GDP is spent on active labour market interventions; this is one of the highest rates of expenditure in the OECD countries.

The *Community Employment* (CE) programme is one such measure. FAS, the National Training and Employment Authority, officially launched CE, described as a general training and direct employment scheme, in the mid-1990s. CE was developed to provide training, development and work experience to the long term unemployed (and other disadvantaged persons) on specific projects designed to meet community needs. This was funded under the sub-programme "*re-integration of the socially excluded*" and contributed to the strategies contained in the local *Urban & Rural Development Programmes* (Human Resource Development Operational Programme (1994-1999)). There were approximately 39,100 participants on CE in 1997, with a gross annual expenditure of approximately 370 million euros (£ 291 million). CE has been described as the largest direct labour market intervention measure available.

Job Initiative was established in 1998. This is another measure which enables certain categories of long-term unemployed people to avail of part-time employment. The "*employee*" obtained a weekly allowance for this work instead of their unemployment payment. Community and voluntary organisations, many of these involved in the management of these initiatives, have availed of this measure to staff their services.

The Irish government recently launched the national *Social Economy* programme. The programme is administered by FAS, the National Training and Employment Authority, and is designed to provide employment and capital grants to social economy enterprises. The programme was established as a result of recommendations made by the national Social Economy Working Group. The group presented a typology of social economy enterprises:

- community businesses, ultimately financed by trading income alone;
- deficient demand social enterprises, where the demand for particular goods and services within a community is not matched by resources to pay for these, due to disadvantage or low density of population;
- enterprises based on public sector contracts, which deals with the potential for subcontracting from public sector (Social Economy Working Group, 1998).

Enterprises which are started by unemployed persons can avail of advice, training, financial loans and grants through the state, private banks, community and voluntary based organisations such as credit unions. Duggan *et al.* (1999) suggest that over

16,000 long-term unemployed businesses starters have accessed income support through national programmes such as the Area Allowance Enterprise Scheme and Back to Work Allowance Scheme. The former scheme was only available to unemployed persons living in areas that had an Area Based Partnership Company (ABPC) (found in localities of social and economic disadvantage and high unemployment) whilst the latter measure was available across the country.

2.8. Basic Data

O'Hara (2001) has noted the absence of any "systematic attempts to catalogue the range and breadth of social economy activities". Mallaghan *et al.* (1996) identified 489 "social enterprises" (deemed by the authors to be unrepresentative of the actual sector) and investigated ninety-seven of them on a range of issues including legal identity, funding sources, activities of the social enterprise and types of employees.

In 1999, the ILO Research programme on Micro-Finance for Unemployed Business Starters carried out a survey of business starters in the Dublin area (Duggan *et al.*, 1999). One hundred and fifty six clients of three Area Based Partnership Companies were surveyed. The study concluded that businesses developed by the long-term unemployed people were generally in the service sector (e.g. transport, security and repair sectors) and largely did not create employment other than for the business starter. The study also demonstrated that many unemployed business starters were living and operating their businesses in disadvantaged localities thus raising questions about their "*capacity to generate income in areas with restricted markets and low consumer spending*" (Duggan *et al.*, 2000).

By the year 2000, there were approximately 1,070 registered IPSs in the country (Registrar of Friendly Societies, 2002). According to the Companies Office there were 8,124 limited companies by guarantee, with or without a share capital, registered at the end of year 2000 (Companies Office, 2002). There is no information available as to what percentage of these are community owned or controlled.

3. Relation to the EMES socio-economic criteria

3.1. A continuous activity producing goods and/or selling services

The objective of the WISE is twofold: training/employment provision for the socially excluded and enhancement of service delivery in disadvantaged communities. This latter goal can be described as a social goal; however, social integration enterprises can also attempt to generate revenue, although quite limited, from the commercial sale of goods/services produced.

3.2. A high degree of autonomy

WISEs are generally legally incorporated and usually have a clear management structure. Most have an appointed full-time paid manager and he/she is generally answerable to the voluntary management board/committee. This committee is largely responsible for formulating policy and overall decision making within the organisation. Reliance on government supported labour market programmes could be

argued to limit the autonomy of the organisation in "recruiting employees" given that grant-aid is available only for certain categories of "employees" (as determined by the funding agency). Practical management and business decisions are generally left to the discretion of the appointed manager, usually in conjunction with the voluntary board of management.

3.3. A significant level of economic risk

As with all trading activities WISEs experience a level of economic risk. WISEs that avail of social finance to develop their activities must secure sufficient income in order to repay loans.

3.4. A minimum amount of paid work

Workers employed through specific labour market measures receive an allowance provided by the state through grant-aided employment programmes. These employees can earn additional income derived from the sale of services/goods. Volunteers often reduce the workload of the organisation. The manager's salary can be derived from a variety of sources including *management grant aid* through specific programmes, and/or funds provided by the organisation derived through voluntary contributions and income generated in the market place.

3.5. An explicit aim to benefit the community

The objectives of most WISEs are twofold. They seek to create training/employment/re-employment opportunities for socially excluded groups. In addition to this they also seek to enhance and/or develop new community based services in disadvantaged areas. For example, a WISE could have up to 60% of its workforce classified as socially excluded (lone parents, long-term unemployed, the disabled or travellers). In addition to providing training and employment to these marginalised groups, the social enterprise is also likely to be engaged in a wide variety of community based initiatives, e.g. community based child/elder care, rural transport, recycling, family support, counselling, meals to elderly rural population, managing community recreational facilities. Many of these services are delivered in disadvantaged urban and rural communities.

3.6. An initiative launched by a group of citizens

There is a strong tradition of community development, mutuality and self-help in Ireland, which can be traced back to the 1930s. Many work integration social enterprises are initiated by locally based voluntary and non-profit organisations. These actors often sit on the board of management and make a voluntary contribution of their time and skills to the operation of the social enterprise.

3.7. A decision-making power not based on capital ownership

Decisions are generally made by the appointed, paid manager of the enterprise in close collaboration with the board members. This voluntary board usually includes representatives of the local and voluntary community sector, statutory agencies, the private sector and local development companies. Some of the more recent social

integration enterprises have begun to include their employees and end users on voluntary management boards. This type of inclusion is increasingly favoured in WISEs providing a range of family and community based support services.

3.8. A participatory nature involving the persons affected by the activity

WISEs exhibit different levels of "user" participation. End-user participation is achieved through representatives on the voluntary management board. Some initiatives engage with their end users through surveys or the creation of informal networks of local groups. These groups can communicate their "needs" via appointed facilitators and these "needs" are communicated to the management of the WISE. This information can be used to "tailor" services (ensuring that the services provided reflect a true demand and also ensuring that the organisation can remain competitive at offering a relevant service).

The "grant-aided" employee can also be regarded as a "user" of the services of the social enterprise; they use the WISE to regain confidence, receive counselling where appropriate, learn new skills and re-train. Some of these employees hold positions on the management board and thus can influence policy and decisions (although their presence is quite rare). Good communication with the appointed manager also serves as an effective mechanism in facilitating "employees" participation in the operation of the work integration social enterprise (e.g. the 'employee' negotiating his/her prescribed training within the organisation).

3.9. A limited profit distribution

WISEs are generally non-profit. Monies generated through sale of goods/services are used in paying/supplementing employees' wages and/or developing the service.

4. The supporting umbrella structures

A long history of voluntary activity has manifested itself through a variety of networks and national voluntary based bodies. The type of supporting structure accessed by the WISE will be specific to the particular type of social enterprise. For instance, a work integration social enterprise engaged in elder/child care may be affiliated to organisations such as the National Women's Council and National Carer's Association. Financial support for social integration enterprises can be sourced through organisations such as Clann Credo; this is a Social Investment Fund, established in the mid-1990s by the Presentation Order of Nuns, and it is part of a worldwide network of social investors. To date, over 80 Irish community based projects have received social financing from the organisation. Additional networks of umbrella structures include the Community Workers Co-operative, Irish Rural Link (a national network of marginal rural community groups and development organisations) and Muintir na Tire (a national organisation, formed in the 1930s, that advocates the principle of self help for the betterment of the community).

5. Innovative features

The following example provides us with an insight into some of the innovative features of these types of social integration enterprises.

Rural Community Care Network (RCCN) –West Limerick Ltd. provides a house repair/refurbishment service in West County Limerick and been in operation for over three years. This WISE is located in a rural region characterised by an ageing and dependent population. This company has charitable status and is managed by a voluntary management committee representing the public, voluntary and community sectors. The central objective of the social enterprise is to improve housing conditions (to offset the demand for residential care amongst this group) and provide training/employment and re-employment opportunities for socially excluded groups. RCCN-West Limerick Ltd. is supported by a direct employment measures programme. It employs 10 persons - previously long-term unemployed and including travellers (gypsies) - and each have been trained in a variety of construction skills: blocklaying, plastering and basic carpentry. Voluntary community activists liaise with the manager of the WISE in identifying housing repair needs within the community. Payment is obtained from the statutory Health Board and County Council. This is supplemented by a monetary contribution from the homeowner.

Work Integration Social Enterprises for People with a Physical Disability and/or Learning Difficulty

1. Brief Historical Description

Work integration social enterprises seek to provide training, work and employment opportunities for socially excluded groups, including those with physical disabilities and learning difficulties. The use of voluntary organisations for the provision of services to people with disabilities has been described as a "unique feature of Irish health policy". Under Section 65 of the Irish Health Act (1953) statutory health authorities were permitted to "support voluntary organisations providing services, similar or ancillary to their own" (Quinn & Redmond, 1999). As a result of this earlier act some of the oldest and largest service providers such as the Daughters of Charity, Brothers of Charity and COPE foundation continue to receive direct funding from the state, a factor which Quinn & Redmond (1999) suggest has not affected their autonomy over time.

Services to people with disabilities in Ireland include the provision of training, work, sheltered employment, care and residential services. In 1997, the steering committee on Sheltered Work/Employment published its report, *Employment Challenges for the Millennium – A Strategy for Employment of People with Disabilities in Sheltered and Supported Work and Employment*. An interesting feature of this report was the classification of the most common types of work and employment accessed by people with disabilities. The most prevalent types included sheltered work, supported work, rehabilitative work, open employment, sheltered employment and supported employment. The National Advisory Committee on Training and Employment (NACTE) distinguishes work and employment in the following way: work is defined as the "undertaking of organised tasks which may attract some forms of organised work, but which is not covered by employment protection legislation or pay related social insurance". In contrast, employment is described as "work which complies with statutory requirements in regard to employment protection legislation, pay related social insurance and income tax liability" (NACTE, 1997). Sheltered work is described by the committee as work "undertaken by people with disabilities in workshops specifically established for that purpose".

2. Key features

2.1. Legal form(s) and structure of ownership

Legal structures are commonplace within these types of social enterprises. This provides protection for the members of the organisation in addition to being a requisite of state funding. As already mentioned, a number of different legal structures are available to companies in Ireland. These include the private limited company, public limited company, company limited by guarantee and industrial & provident society (McInerney, 1996); the industrial & provident society (IPS) legal status was established in the 19th century and all IPS must be engaged in "industries, business or trade". WISEs are generally legally incorporated as either a limited company (by

share/guarantee) or an industrial and provident society, the legal form adopted by co-operatives.

Company limited by guarantee

These are registered companies. The liability of members is limited to the amount that each member has guaranteed, in writing, to contribute to the company in the event of the assets of the company being insufficient to deal with all debts, on the dissolution of the company. The body responsible for the overseeing of the operation of the Companies Act is the Companies Office in Dublin Castle, the overall responsibility of which falls to the Department of Enterprise, Trade & Employment. In order to register as a company limited by guarantee an organisation must draw up a constitution setting out the objectives of the company and the rules and regulations by which it is run. A company limited by guarantee is controlled by its members, a board of directors is appointed by the membership and this board is responsible for the management of the company subject to the overall direction of its members. In the past two years, a Director of Corporate Law Enforcement was appointed to actively enforce the Companies Act.

Industrial & provident society (IPS)

Each IPS must have a constitution which is known as the Rules of the Society. This outlines details such as the objectives, terms of admission of members, voting details and a provision for the appointment of auditors. The management committee is responsible for the management of the society subject to the overall control of the annual general meeting. The body responsible for overseeing the operation of the IPS is the Registrar of Friendly Societies.

An incorporated scheme under the Charities Act

An organisation recognised as having Charitable Status can acquire legal status by applying to the *Commissioners of Charitable Donations and Bequests* to be incorporated. In order to apply for this type of incorporation an organisation must:

- draw up a draft deed of trust;
- get a barrister's opinion that the trust is of a charitable nature;
- be granted charitable status by the Revenue Commissioners.

Charitable status does not confer any legal status on an organisation; it is not an alternative to acquiring a legal status, but is related to fund-raising, tax or financial issues. In order to be recognised as having charitable status, an organisation must have a guarantee, written into its constitution/rules, that any money received by the group will be used for charitable purposes. In this instance charitable has a specific meaning, i.e. the advancement of education, the relief of poverty, the advancement of religion and other purposes of a charitable nature beneficial to the community. An organisation may have both a legal status and a charitable status.

Trust

A trust is an arrangement whereby one person or a number of people are appointed under a legal document known as a "deed of trust" for the purpose of holding funds or property on behalf of another individual or group. A Deed of Trust does not provide legal status for the general work of the group and strict rules apply for trustees under the 1893 Trustees Act. Members will be individually responsible for any activities of the group. A trust can also be created orally, except where land is involved, but best practice is to establish a deed of trust.

2.2. Pursued Goals

WISEs are generally run by voluntary, non-profit and local development organisations. A key objective of those working with persons with a disability is to provide training/ employment and re-employment opportunities. Support for these initiatives is derived from the state, through the commercial sale of goods/services and by means of voluntary donations and fund raising activities.

2.3. Types of jobs provided

The types of jobs provided include full-time, part-time and grant-aided employment. Employees are engaged in a variety of activities including pottery production, food preparation, electronic assembly and the manufacture of wood products.

2.4. Weight of training

In general, most work integration social enterprises allocate close to 10% of their income for training and education provision. However, the allocated amount can vary between social enterprises, depending on the type of enterprise, employment and the nature of the disability.

2.5. Types of employed workers

These types of social enterprises seek to create employment and/or training opportunities for those registered with a physical disability and/or learning difficulty.

2.6. Types of resources

WISEs mobilise different sets of resources: income generated in the market place from the commercial sale of goods and services, financial assistance from the state (often in the form of grant-aided employment/capital grants) and volunteerism from within the local community and voluntary sector. For instance, Gandon Enterprises (Rehab Group Ireland) has availed of subsidies from the national *Pilot Programme for the Employment of People with Disabilities*. This subsidy contributed to the employment of large numbers of disabled employees within the workplace.

2.7. Links with public policies

As previously stated, voluntary, non-profit and religious organisations, in particular the Roman Catholic Church, have played a significant role in providing services to

people with disabilities. The state has traditionally contributed funds to support the activities of these voluntary and community based service. This funding relationship was formalised under Section 65 of the 1953 Irish Health Act. This act enabled statutory health authorities to "support voluntary organisations providing services similar or ancillary to their own" (Quinn & Redmond, 1999).

1961 was designated the Irish Year of the Disabled and this has been attributed to the formation of numerous voluntary local committees, representing the views of disabled groups, around that time. In 1996, the Commission on the Status of People with Disabilities published its *Strategy for Equality*. The report, described as one of the first significant documents on the nature and extent of service delivery, contained a number of recommendations on sheltered work settings and set specific targets for sheltered and supported work and employment places up to the year 2004. Against a backdrop of national economic growth, decreasing levels of unemployment and an estimated rate of 70% unemployment within the disabled sector, the National Rehabilitation Board established a steering committee on Sheltered Work/Employment in 1996. The work of this committee was to complement the activities of the National Advisory Committee on Training and Employment (NACTE) and produced the 1997 document *Employment Challenges for the Millennium – A Strategy for Employment of People with Disabilities in Sheltered and Supported Work and Employment*. This national focus on employment and the disabled is also evident in Partnership 2000, the national agreement for Inclusion, Employment and Competitiveness.

2.8. Basic Data

There are approximately 7,900 people with disabilities working in an estimated 215 sheltered workshops across Ireland (NACTE, 1997). *Sheltered work-shops* receive grant aid from the state and the "employees" generally retain their social welfare payments with the opportunity to obtain a supplementary income from their employers. *Supported work* entails the provision of job coaches or similar support staff to the disabled employee in the workplace. NACTE (1997) has estimated that there are over 360 disabled people engaged in different types of supported work. Although there are no statistics available on the number of disabled workers in rehabilitative work (whereby the disabled individual works but is not "employed" in the work place) NACTE described this sector to be "quite substantial" in 1997.

Over 410 people with disabilities were estimated to be employed in the open market in 1997, many with the assistance of the Employment Support Scheme, a measure which provided the employer with a wage subsidy when employing disabled persons. *Sheltered employment* for disabled persons is common in Ireland. This type of employment has been defined as "employment in an enterprise established specifically for the employment of people with disabilities and which is in receipt of special funding from the state". These can be regarded as WISEs in that they seek to assist the integration process through the provision of training and employment. The Pilot Programme for the Employment of People with Disabilities (PEP) and Blindcraft are two measures which have supported this type of employment.

The PEP was initiated by the Irish government in 1994 to "determine if viable commercial enterprises employing a minimum of 50% of people with disabilities

could be established". A total of seven enterprises employing 178 people with disabilities participated (NACTE, 1997). Blindcraft was set up in 1957. This company created employment for blind workers of the Richmond Institute and St. Joseph's School for the Blind and was involved in the manufacture of baskets, beds and furniture restoration. It was estimated that approximately 20 persons with a disability were engaged in supported employment, i.e. "paid employment in an integrated setting with ongoing supports in the open labour market" (NACTE, 1997).

The *Rehab group* is one of the largest providers of sheltered employment for disabled in Ireland. This is a not-for-profit organisation with a key objective to address the social and economic exclusion of disabled people. It was developed in 1949 by a small group of recovering tuberculosis (TB) patients who sought to create jobs for people with disabilities. With funds raised from the public, the first workshop was opened in Dublin in 1949; this provided training in the sewing trade for approximately ten young women. Workshops were subsequently developed in Cork and Limerick in the late 1950s and state funds were not made available until the 1960s. After 1957, the workshops were opened up to disabled people other than TB victims; in later years the organisation began to work with psychiatric patients. Rehab workshops have been in receipt of some state funding since the 1960s. The organisation has a current annual turnover of over 126 million euro originating from state grants, fundraising (including lotteries) and income generated through the commercial sale of its services.

The Rehab group also manages the National Training and Development institute, an organisation which is estimated to provide training to over 2,500 disabled students across 50 national training and employment units. In 1994, Rehab established Gandon Enterprise, which has an approximate disabled workforce of 230 people, employed in nine different enterprises. Gandon enterprises, ranging from electronic assembly to biscuit making, with an approximate annual sales figure of 24 million euro, have been described as "Ireland's single largest employer of disabled workers" (<http://www.rehab.ie>).

Additional examples of work integration enterprises include *Shannon Community Workshop* and *Sunbeam House Services*. Shannon Community Workshop is a company, limited by guarantee with charitable status, providing an integrated workplace for disabled persons. The main activities of the enterprise include the manufacture of pottery and the management of a visitor centre and small food production unit. The workshop employs over 60 persons on a full-time basis and approximately 16 people on a part-time basis. This WISE employs both the long term unemployed and people with physical disabilities and learning difficulties. Approximately 80% of the income is sourced through the commercial trading activities of the social enterprise; twenty per cent (20%) is obtained from statutory sector. The employees are supported by means of the FAS Community Employment Programme (an active labour market measure) and state disability allowances. A voluntary board of management representative of the community and voluntary sector, parents of the disabled employees and statutory representatives govern the social enterprise.

Sunbeam House Services (SHS), a company limited by guarantee with charitable status, actively seeks to create training and employment opportunities for the intellectually disabled, in addition to providing care, training and residential services.

Close to 99% of the income of SHS is derived from the state and there are approximately 70 people employed on both a full-time and part-time basis. These employees work in with the Sunbeam House "Quality System Personal Outcome". This process gives the user an opportunity to identify what they want from the service. Each employee works, on average, one day a week and 10% of the budget of the social enterprise is given over to training and education. Sunbeam House Services is managed by a voluntary board of directors and enjoys a strong working partnership with the Health Board and a network of other agencies providing supported employment to people with disabilities. Sunbeam House manages two small businesses, Arklap and Wicklow ATEC, which have been in existence for close on 20 years. Arklap produces items such as garden furniture and fencing and employs six people with learning disabilities, whilst approximately 35 people with learning disabilities are employed to make babies cots in Wicklow ATEC (<http://www.sunbeam.ie>).

The National Intellectual Disability Database (1997) indicates that there were an estimated 26,694 people with intellectual disability resident in Ireland in 1996. Quinn & Redmond (1999), in describing the profile of those with intellectual disability, highlighted an overall increase in younger people with a disability in the last twenty years, and a substantial increase in the prevalence of those with learning difficulties aged 35 years and over. Unemployment among the sector is estimated to be close to 70% (NACTE, 1997). Since 1997, a three per cent employment quota has existed in the public services (<http://www.fed-vol.com>).

3. Relation to the EMES socio-economic criteria

3.1. A continuous activity producing goods and/or selling services

The main objective of the WISE is to provide training, work, employment, care and residential services for the physically disabled and those with learning difficulties.

3.2. A high degree of autonomy

In general, these social enterprises are governed by voluntary management boards representative of the community, voluntary and statutory sectors. In most cases, the day to day management of the social enterprise is in the hands of a full-time paid manager. Obligations to adhere to the rules and regulations of statutory funding bodies could be viewed as having the potential to erode the autonomy of the organisation.

3.3. A significant level of economic risk

As with all trading activities WISEs experience a level of economic risk.

3.4. A minimum amount of paid work

People employed in sheltered employment receive an allowance provided by the state through grant-aided employment programmes. Employees in some WISEs can earn additional income, from the sale of services/goods. Those entering "open employment

generally have two options: to retain their disability allowance with the possibility of supplementing it with additional income "earned on the job", or to take a wage on the "open employment market". For instance, in one particular WISE the individual can earn the equivalent of 16 hours at the minimum wage rates without being subject to a reduction in their disability allowance payable by the state.

3.5. An explicit aim to benefit the community

WISEs seek to create training/employment/re-employment opportunities for a specific community of interest, namely the physically, intellectually disabled and individuals with learning difficulties. In addition to this, many offer caring, residential and respite care services to both the disabled persons and their carers.

3.6. An initiative launched by a group of citizens

There is a strong tradition of community development, mutuality and self-help in Ireland. Local voluntary groups have been, and continue to be, instrumental in shaping and delivering services to the disabled. Some of the oldest existing national service providers can trace their origins to voluntary groups originating in the 1840s.

3.7. A decision-making power not based on capital ownership

In general, WISEs are not-for-profit and are generally registered as limited companies with no share capital. This removes the possibility of a decision-making power based on share capital ownership.

3.8. A participatory nature involving the persons affected by the activity

WISEs can have representative structures including parents of the "user" or employee. Some of the social enterprises operate in-house councils which encourage joint decision making between staff and the "supported employee" to determine work and training programmes. This process can take place through the "personal outcomes interview", whereby the users/employees identify their requirements from the service/workplace.

3.9. A limited profit distribution

Most WISEs are not-for-profit; many are highly dependent on both state aid and voluntary contributions to survive. Monies generated through sale of goods/services are used in supplementing income for "supported employees" and/or developing the service. Additional income, generated through public fundraising and lotteries, is generally used to maintain service provision.

4. The supporting umbrella structures

The following are some examples of the support organisation available to disabled groups in Ireland. *Cneasta* is an umbrella organisation representing over 50 organisations engaged in the delivery of training, employment and development services for people with a disability. A key objective of *Cneasta* is to "develop a

forum for the exchange of views with services and organisations on a national and international basis" and to represent its members in matters relating to training, development and employment policy (www.cneasta.ie). Cneasta is also affiliated to the European Association of Service Providers for Persons with Disabilities (www.easpd.org).

Comhairle, established in 2000, is a national organisation charged with the provision of advice and information on social services to the public, including those with disabilities. The *Disability Federation of Ireland* (DFI) is a national umbrella body for voluntary, non-statutory agencies that provide support services to people with disabilities and disabling conditions. The organisation operates through eight regional networks and has approximately 70 full members and an association with over 200 other national based groups. DFI has a board of directors which are representative of the member organisations. The DFI publishes a monthly newsletter and has a distribution base of over 750 voluntary and other interest organisations (DFI, 2002).

The *Irish Council of People with Disabilities* was established by the Irish Government. Its remit is to support and represent people with disabilities. The *National Association for the Mentally Handicapped of Ireland* was formed in 1961 and seeks to improve the welfare of Irish persons with learning difficulties and intellectual disabilities (NAMHI, 2002). *Cerebral Palsy Ireland* (formally the National Association for Cerebral Policy) traces its origins to 1948 when the organisation was formed to provide specific facilities deemed necessary for people with Cerebral Palsy. In addition to providing medical, therapeutic and counselling services, CPI has also developed sheltered work and open employment opportunities for disabled persons.

5. Innovative Features

Lincs Co-operative is an example of innovation in the field of work integration social enterprises for persons with physical and learning difficulties. Links Co-op was established in 1995 with funding from the Horizon Employment Initiative and the Southern Health Board. The social enterprise specialises in growing lettuce and a range of garden plants. Lincs sells its produce to local retailers and hotels. The manager suggests that the initiative offers an alternative to the workshop and sessions service traditionally offered to people with disabilities. The Regional Health Board pays for the manager's wages. Monies generated by the workers through the sale of produce are placed in a credit union account and each worker obtains a dividend at the end of the month. This dividend complements their weekly statutory disability allowance. The manager suggests that the social enterprise is successful in "*generating a sense of responsibility and ownership amongst the workers*".

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