

Taskforce on Active Citizenship

“Together, We’re Better”

***Background
Working Paper***



Taskforce on
active
citizenship

TASCFHÓRSA UM SHAORÁNACHT GHNÍOMHACH



Introduction

This paper elaborates on a range of issues raised in the *Public Consultation Paper of the Taskforce on Active Citizenship*. It draws on recent research and evidence in the area in order to provide more background information.

The nature of citizenship....

A number of broad theoretical approaches have informed political thinking in relation to citizenship. Some liberal approaches emphasise citizenship as a status entitling each individual to the same formal rights that are enshrined in law. The main function of the political realm, according to these approaches, is to protect and maximise individual interests. More recent communitarian approaches emphasise that citizenship is socially-embedded: an individual's identity is influenced through their relations with others.

So called 'liberal' and 'communitarian' approaches are not necessarily mutually exclusive. A sense of balanced rights and responsibilities to the wider community can also be found in earlier political philosophies. A 'civic republican' perspective on citizenship arises from the capacity for collective self-government and the individual's sense of social concern as a member of a polity. These acknowledge the multi-faceted nature of citizenship as a philosophy and practice that values the mutually compatible goals of liberty, equality and fraternity (or community).

Citizenship can be seen as a status, with legal rights such as equality before the law, and duties such as paying taxes or even as incorporation into a particular jurisdiction or cultural identity. However, the concept of *active citizenship* is broader and refers, ultimately, to both the capacity to exercise power as a citizen as well as peoples' values, attitudes and behaviour.

... and of active citizenship

There are a number of different approaches to defining *active citizenship*. Rather than seeing active citizenship as mainly to do with volunteering or informal social engagement and thereby separate from political and civic engagement, it is suggested that active citizenship is an all-encompassing concept embracing formal and non-formal, political, cultural, inter-personal and caring activities.

Honohan (2005: 175) identifies three aspects of active citizenship that are desirable:

- an **awareness** of interdependencies and common economic, social and environmental concerns: *'they inform themselves of the social conditions of their fellow citizens and pay attention to political issues, contributing to policy decisions directly or indirectly'*.
- an **attitude** of civic self-restraint: *'giving more weight to common interests than prevails in the contemporary culture of individualism...Those who recognise interdependence are more likely to accept, for example, redistributive measures that maintain political equality, individual costs incurred in taking time to recycle,*

limiting their own pursuit of material wealth, engaging in activities of care, and giving time and energy to political concerns'. Such an attitude implies a willingness to effectively challenge infringements not only of one's own rights, but also those of others.

- an openness to **deliberative engagement**: *'Citizens form their own judgements, are prepared to explain their own positions, to listen to other points of view, and to revise their opinions in deliberation They are prepared to raise, and support others who raise, issues of concern in the public arena, and to defend the interests of fellow citizens subject to injustices as well as defending themselves.'*

The Government's White Paper on Supporting Voluntary Activity (2000: 14) defines active citizenship as:

the active role of people, communities and voluntary organisations in decision-making which directly affects them. This extends the concept of formal citizenship and democratic society from one of basic civil, political and social and economic rights to one of direct democratic participation and responsibility.


In *The Policy Implications of Social Capital* published in 2003 by the NESF (2003: 136) has defined it as: *'the active exercise of social rights and shared responsibilities associated with belonging to a community or society; the concept is broader than just a formal or legal definition and encompasses social, economic and cultural rights and obligations.'* In relating the concept of active citizenship to similar areas the NESF (2003: 5) went on to say:

There is a continuum from informal, unstructured networks of friends, neighbours, relatives and others right up to more formal participation in intermediary structures between public agencies and the citizen. Social capital, active citizenship and community development are all inter-related. A broad concept of active citizenship relates, by right, to all members of society including those who are presently excluded on grounds of ethnicity, social position or other identities.

The UK Home Office (2004: 11) has suggested three components which might constitute a continuum of active citizenship:

- **Civic participation**: (includes signing a petition, contacting a local councillor, contacting a public official, attending a public meeting or rally, contacting an MP)
- **Formal Volunteering**: (unpaid help through a group or organisation)
- **Informal Volunteering**: (unpaid help to an individual or others who are not members of the family)

In practice, active citizenship refers to how people play an active and responsible role together with others in their communities. It may also refer to time spent in caring for one's own family. Active citizenship may include membership of a residents' association or lobby group, or volunteering to help out in a local sports club or simply being active and caring about the local neighbourhood, the environment as well as larger global and national issues.



For the purposes of this consultation it is proposed to focus mainly on the following areas of active citizenship: civic participation and formal volunteering/community involvement. At the same time, informal volunteering and family care are, also, of key importance and relevance to active citizenship. All of these aspects are related to each other: for example, parents who take their children to local sports activities are contributing as active citizens as indeed are family members who make an enormous, sometimes heroic, and difficult to measure contribution as 'active citizens' to public welfare by caring for the elderly, the young or persons with disabilities.

Hence, there is, potentially, a close link between civic participation, formal volunteering and informal volunteering. Much of the discourse around 'social capital' has focussed on volunteering and informal social networks and, to a lesser extent, on civic participation. At the same time, discourses on active citizenship have tended to focus mainly on civic participation and less on volunteering, associational membership and informal social contact and support. All perspectives are important. Honohan describes two complementary dimensions of active citizenship – 'the sense of wider social concern and the capacity to participate deliberately in self-government' (2005: 179). She observes (2005: 180):

We should be wary of exhortations to be more active or civic spirited, or to join voluntary associations in order to strengthen social capital, unless ordinary citizens are given a larger voice in decision-making, opportunities for meaningful participation and the material conditions necessary for active citizenship in the two senses outlined here.


Is Active Citizenship in Decline?

There have been growing concerns in Ireland in recent years about the extent to which people are prepared to be involved in their communities. Pressures of time, work, commuting and patterns of changing values and lifestyles have raised questions about whether there is a 'crisis' of volunteering and 'community'.

No firm evidence has emerged, so far, to support the claims that 'social capital' or volunteering has been declining. Plenty of anecdotal evidence abounds in relation to the impression that volunteering and civic engagement have declined. However, most of the evidence considered, extremely limited as it is, suggests that Ireland:

- is rich in terms of informal social networks compared to many other economically developed countries (Table 3 in Appendix II);
- is average to slightly below average in terms of reported group membership and volunteering across OECD countries¹ (Tables 1 and 2); and
- to the extent that data are available has not experienced any dramatic decline in the 1990s in the numbers of people claiming that they are active in the community, (NESF, 2003: 125); but
- has experienced a fall in levels of inter-personal trust (NESF, 2003: 124) and in voter turnout (NESF, 2003: 126).

¹ However, membership of groups is higher, here, than in most European countries. Refer to NESF (2003: 63)



Evidence with regards to European comparisons, reviewed in NESF (2003: 61), indicates that:

..Ireland is about average or above average for European countries on most indicators of social capital – for example, membership of voluntary or community associations, volunteering, interpersonal trust, trust in various institutions and voter/political engagement. Informal social contact is likely to be higher in Ireland – although the evidence is very limited. As in all international comparisons, care is needed with respect to the basis of comparison, the meaning and interpretation of particular data findings given the diversity of cultures, institutions and patterns of social interaction, and the set of comparator countries chosen.

More recently, OECD has published statistical comparisons of group membership based on the *World Values Survey*. These show that Ireland is average to just below average in a ranking of OECD countries (OECD, 2005: 84-5). Hence, there are grounds for concern.

Other research indicates declining levels of electoral participation, particularly amongst young people in disadvantaged areas. For example, CSO research (2003) found that over 55% of those aged under 26 had not voted in any election since they became eligible to do so.

Rapid economic and social change coupled with changes in expectations and values have also provided a context in which people may be less inclined to know or trust others – whether at the local neighbourhood level or at the level of national politics and governance. Moreover, growing ethnic diversity alongside relatively high levels of socio-economic deprivation in some areas present a challenge to all sectors of society. In this regard, fostering integration of non-nationals has been generally recognised as a key policy challenge facing Irish society.

Events such as the Special Olympics in 2003 as well as the on-going levels of participation in sports at a local and national level suggest that there is a lot of engagement and goodwill – if it can be tapped and people are asked and enabled to play a role. Also, local events, the arts, sports etc can trigger great interest and involvement.

Considering the evidence ...

Does active citizenship make a difference to individuals and communities? There is a large literature on the benefits of social networks and engagement (reviewed, for example, in OECD, 2001 and NESF, 2003). Active involvement in communities is generally beneficial. The spillover benefits can extend to health, crime prevention, job creation and innovation. However, it is important not to interpret all types of social connection as positive. Some forms of community engagement and bonding may be highly insular, regressive and excluding.

The NESF (2005: 220) identifies four reasons why healthy community and voluntary organisations are an important requirement for overall economic and social development:



- *many social and economic problems are better addressed when individuals and civic organisations are involved in finding and implementing solutions;*
- *vibrant voluntary and community organisations generate networks of support and connection, both within social groups and across groups;*
- *participation in voluntary activities and community organisations is, in general, good for the individual people involved;*
- *a healthy and varied range of voluntary and community organisations is good for democracy.*

Evidence from the 2002 survey of social capital undertaken by the ESRI for the National Economic and Social Forum showed that the distribution of social capital varies according to social group with considerable variations by age, marital status and level of education (NESF, 2003: 49-66). In particular, measures of volunteering were found to be highly correlated with level of educational attainment.


In relation to measures of 'active citizenship' such as volunteering and active community involvement, the following factors emerge as statistically correlated with volunteering/community engagement (Healy, 2005):

- formal education (the more educated volunteer, the more time is given in the local community)
- number of children in the household
- marital status
- length of residence at current address
- amount of time watching TV (as a negative factor).

So, other things equal, people who are well educated, married, with children and are settled in a particular geographical location are more likely to give time in volunteering or community activities. This is hardly surprising. An important and potentially significant finding is that participation by women in the labour force in Ireland does not appear to be associated with lower levels of volunteering and community involvement – even controlling or comparing for other factors such as income, education etc. (Healy, 2005: 17).

There is some, weak, evidence in the analysis that longer hours of work are negatively related to volunteering and active community engagement. Along with the finding that hours spent commuting to and from work are not significantly negatively related, either, to 'active citizenship', these results suggest that caution is required in relation to claims over a meltdown social capital in Ireland due to traffic gridlock and greater female participation in the labour force.

Recent work by the ESRI (Delaney and Fahey, 2005) has highlighted the key role of sport in helping social engagement. It showed that around 15% of adults volunteer for sporting activity in the course of the sporting year. An estimated 30% of all adults are members of some type of sports club (40% for men and 20% for women). The GAA is the dominant sports organisation for which people volunteer. Volunteer rates also vary by socio-economic position, with professionals about twice as likely



to volunteer as semi-skilled or unskilled workers, and those at work more than three times more likely to volunteer than the unemployed.

Further empirical evidence will be available, in due course, on aspects of voluntarism and civic engagement from sources such as the 2006 Census of Population and the 2006 Quarterly National Household Survey module on social capital and sport. The European Social Survey will also enable researchers to compare some measures of civic engagement in Ireland with other countries in Europe. A survey of time-use undertaken by the ESRI on a pilot basis in 2005 may be extended, in the future, to cover a broader range of activities as well as a larger sample size.

One part of the Taskforce's Terms of Reference is to 'review the experience of organisations involved in the political, caring, community, professional and occupational, cultural, sporting and religious dimensions of Irish life regarding influences, both positive and negative, on levels of citizen participation and engagement'. This will provide an opportunity to establish through engagement with those sectors whether there are grounds for concern about the impact of trends in relation to civic engagement.

...as well as the historical context


An interesting comparison can be drawn with the transformation which took place in Ireland in the latter part of the 19th century and beginning of the next. Various movements based on sport, nationalism, unionism, trade unionism, religious endeavour and missionary effort, language, culture and co-operative enterprises came to the fore. The reasons for various forms of civic renewal at the beginning of the last century are many and complex. However it could be maintained that a spirit of self-help and mutual help combined with political and institutional forces to raise engagement compared to what it had been before.

Following independence, the strong emphasis in the 1937 Constitution on the role of the family and on the principles of social subsidiarity and solidarity provided an important context for the evolution of social policy in the post-war period. The subsequent expansion in state welfare provision provided a different context in which voluntary and community organisations related to Government and each other.

... and Active Citizenship in 21st Century Ireland

Moving to the present day, community development in both parts of the island is much more strongly supported and financed by State agencies. Also, fewer social services in areas such as health, education, youth work and poverty alleviation are undertaken by religious organisations or interests.

There is a greater diversity of provision and also a much stronger role for various public institutions. There are, also, higher levels of health, education, information, knowledge as well as expectations among citizens about their rights. Individuals are more inclined to choose their own roles and identities in communities, workplaces



and families. Commitments and identities are more likely to be determined ‘from below’ and by individuals themselves than by some traditional and permanent community or group to which they belong.

In thinking about what motivates people to be active in their societies it is important to take into account the vastly changed circumstances of 21st Century Ireland. It may be necessary to consider a new and more inclusive context in which individuals are members of many different communities or networks and have multiple needs and concerns.

As stated in *Engaging Citizens*, the Report of the Democracy Commission (Harris, 2005: 3):

Concepts of citizenship have become more relevant in the context of recent social, economic and demographic changes in Irish society. For the first time in living memory, we are experiencing significant immigration and an estimated 160 different nationalities are now living in Ireland. Modern Irish citizens no longer necessarily share common ethnic or cultural backgrounds, and there is more diversity around moral, religious and ethical perspectives. Other developments, such as the Belfast Agreement and Ireland’s membership of the European Union have challenged traditional concepts of Irish citizenship

Feldman et al. (2005) has noted a significant growth in a range of voluntary and community organisations led by members of minority groups. In a wider European context, the EU 2010 Lisbon Agenda has acknowledged the need for supporting active citizenship along with equal opportunities and social cohesion.

Role of public policy ...

A key question for consideration by the Taskforce is the extent to which public policy can effectively influence trends in civic engagement which, as indicated above, are in many cases the result of long-term, deeply-rooted changes in the nature and shape of Irish society.

A concern sometimes raised is that too much emphasis on volunteering and civic engagement will take the focus away from the legitimate concerns, needs and rights of various communities – especially those facing disadvantage and exclusion. However, there is some evidence (OECD, 2001) that growing social inequality and exclusion undermines civic engagement in the long-run. People are more prepared to be involved and to trust others if there is a more inclusive, supporting and fairer context. An inclusive range of engagement is highly desirable so that all groups including those covered on the grounds of equality (age, marital status, gender, disability, ethnicity, creed, sexual orientation) have the opportunity, recognition and support to engage.

Far from being a trade-off, policies to bring about greater social equality and State support and facilitation can be seen to actually boost civic participation. In this context, it’s worth noting that the highest rates, internationally, of civic engagement and inter-personal trust are in Scandinavia (OECD, 2001: 44)



A wide spectrum of activities have been suggested as ways in which various public agencies from central government to local and service-based delivery can potentially enhance the quantity and quality of civic engagement. For example, the NESF report, *The Policy Implications of Social Capital* (2003) identified a number of specific policy areas grouped under seven broad headings:

- measurement (through surveys and other research methodologies);
- mainstreaming (in planning and evaluations);
- community development supports;
- work-life balance;
- lifelong learning;
- spatial strategy and transport; and
- linkage of initiatives across public agencies.

Supporting Voluntary and Community Activities


A considerable amount of research exists on the relationship between the State and the community and voluntary sector. Some of this research points to the way in which the role of local government and partnerships is very important to exercise active citizenship at the local level. Suggestions have been raised in relation to local governance and its interaction with local communities in Peillon, Corcoran and Gray (2006). Also of relevance are the efforts by the Dublin Docklands Development Authority to promote active citizenship. Research also points to the importance of encouraging communities to draw on their own unique capabilities and strengths and to avoid over-dependence on external support and regulation (Lillis, 2006). In supporting community development it is important to encourage community self-help as well as mutual help among community members. It can be argued that an over-emphasis on deficits and needs to the neglect of capabilities and existing skills can undermine effective community development.

Many of these issues were addressed in the White Paper on Supporting Voluntary Activity (2002) and a range of supports for community and voluntary activities are provided through the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs and other Departments.

Publications of particular relevance to volunteering are the National Committee on Volunteering report, *Tipping the Balance*, published in 2002 as well as the Report on Volunteers and Volunteering in Ireland of the Oireachtas Joint Committee on Arts, Sport, Tourism, Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs (Oireachtas, 2005). The Joint Committee received a large number of submissions from various voluntary groups.

Corporate Citizenship

Citizenship can be considered to include corporate citizenship, or related concepts such as corporate social responsibility (CSR). According to a CSR code of behaviour, companies and commercial organisations seek to integrate social and environmental



concerns into their mainstream business practices. This could include facilities for civic and family engagement through flexible and agreed working arrangements. The aim of CSR is to ensure that the interests of all stakeholders 'are balanced, enabling the company to attract the best people, improve business performance, be more cost efficient and contribute to long-term profitability'². Practical outcomes relevant to active citizenship can include financial or other supports for community and voluntary activities as well as the promotion and facilitation of volunteering by employees and private philanthropy.

Young People

In relation to the involvement of young people, NESF (2003: 65) has commented:

A key area for policy attention is young people. From the data presented in the NESF Survey, young people are not significantly less engaged socially (volunteering, voting, trusting and socialising) than older groups. However, voting turnout is lower. A consideration in any comparisons such as these is that, apart from lifecycle differences, it is likely that some forms of social interactions among the young are poorly captured in existing survey questions on social capital. For example, young people rely more on new technology to communicate and may interact with their peers on a less formal and structured basis

In addition, the Office of the Minister for Children (OMC) is also developing a recreation policy for teenagers. The contribution of adult volunteers is very important in providing recreation opportunities for young people. The involvement of young people in the governance structure of clubs/organisations providing recreation opportunities or as volunteers in the community as part of their leisure time activities are issues that have emerged in the research and the public consultation undertaken as part of the process of developing the policy.

Under the National Children's Strategy, the OMC also has responsibility to give children and young people a voice in matters that affect them and to ensure that their views are given due weight in accordance with their age and maturity. Mechanisms to support this goal include the annual *Dáil na nÓg* and *Comhairle na nÓg* at local level.

Older People

Older citizens have accumulated a great deal of experience and skills which they can make available to the community. An all-island survey of health undertaken in 2001 (Balanda and Wilde, 2003) indicates lower rates of community involvement by older people in the Republic compared to the North. The NESF survey also indicates a marked fall-off in engagement by the over-65s. Given growing awareness of the policy implications of demographic changes, there may be scope for encouraging more active engagement drawing on the experience, skills and availability of older citizens.

² <http://www.bitc.ie/corporateresponsibility.htm#WhatIs>

Political and Voter Participation

A healthy democracy relies on citizens who are well informed, interested and engaged. It is also linked to a shared sense of empowerment – we can make a difference by voting, joining, speaking, writing or organising.

The Referendum Commission commissioned research in 2004, in relation to voter awareness and propensity to registration. It found that approximately one in four of 18-24 year olds were not registered. Analysis by the CSO (CSO, 2003) has shown that lack of registration and student mobility exceed, by far, lack of interest or presence of disillusionment in the reasons given by young people for not voting. Given the relatively low level of political participation and voting in particular areas of disadvantage and among some groups there is a need to consider barriers in terms of interest, opportunity and capacity for civic engagement.

Education

Education is a vital part of everyone's life. For most of the years through childhood and beyond we spend a lot of time in school or college. What we learn there and who we associate with can leave a profound influence on our attitude and behaviour for life. This experience along with what we learn in families, youth organisations, communities and workplaces enables us to be socially active. Education does not end when a person leaves school or college, and adult education is an example of how people can draw on their own experience of life to enrich learning and make new discoveries.

NESF (2003: 6) has commented:

Learning to co-operate, communicate and engage for a more open, tolerant and active civil society is, potentially, a major part of a policy response to the development of social capital. At school level, the involvement of communities and learning partnerships of students, teachers and parents in governance, curriculum design and implementation at local level is one response. Also, the content and process of learning in schools can be more closely linked to service and active engagement in the local community. In adult education and other areas of learning, including informal educational settings, the role of social networks and support is crucial.

Formal education structures offer learners an opportunity to (a) get to know others who are different to themselves by reason of background, identity, interests and beliefs, (b) acquire skills in participating, communicating, working with others and, (c) apply their knowledge and skills in ways that are useful to society. In addition to specific programmes or interventions such as the Civics, Social and Political Education programme (CSPE) at Junior Cycle, the ethos of schools, the openness to dialogue, co-operation and learning applied to community service all help create an environment in which civic values and habits can develop. Honohan (2005: 178) has commented on the potential of programmes such as CSPE to provide a wider range of learning experiences as well as to move to a more central place in the curriculum at second level. It is important that any measures to improve cognitive civic awareness



are complemented by approaches that encourage critical as well as active engagement and deliberation.

Linked to civics education in Junior Cycle at second level, the role of other areas of the education sector need to be considered:

- primary level;
- senior cycle;
- further, adult and community education; and
- higher education.

Concepts of ‘service learning’ have been widely used and acknowledged in the US Higher Education system. Indeed, along with teaching and learning, ‘community outreach’ and business-education links are acknowledged by many HE institutions internationally as a core function of what educational institutions should be doing. Service learning approaches have been applied, on a pilot basis, in a number of University institutions here, beginning with NUI Galway in 2002³. Service learning involves building in community service and volunteering to curriculum and assessment in the formal education sector. Linked to more deliberative and participatory forms of community engagement as well as better integration with subject or field-specific areas of research and learning these forms of learning experience could have much to offer. Already, in the Transition Year, many students undertake civic and community projects (e.g. *Young Social Innovators Programme*).

There may be scope for a new or enhanced type of scholarship and research – especially at Third Level – that engages with communities and their experiences and that allows various communities and institutions of higher education to form working partnerships of mutual learning and research.


Conclusion

Active citizenship refers to how individuals and communities relate to each other in a pluralist society. At the core of the debate about what it means to be an active citizen in a democracy are values, conversations and belonging. At the heart of democracy is a sense that we belong to each other in a community in which there are many communities – sometimes with divergent values and identities – but all sharing some common sense of responsibility and shared civic space. The institutions of elective democracy in the Oireachtas and local government can be greatly supported by a spirit of democratic dialogue, engagement and deliberation all the way up from being active in our own neighbourhoods and immediate networks to engagement with the political process at local, national, EU and international level. Citizens of the 21st Century seek to be involved, to be caring and to be co-responsible as members of societies – local and international – and not just consumers and producers in a global economic system. The challenge of Active Citizenship in the 21st Century is to stop, reflect and act beyond the familiar.

³ <http://www.nuigalway.ie/cki/>

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Appendix I

The Terms of Reference for the Taskforce are to:

- review the evidence regarding trends in citizen participation across the main areas of civic, community, cultural, occupational and recreational life in Ireland;
- examine those trends in the context of international experience and analysis;
- review the experience of organisations involved in the political, caring, community, professional and occupational, cultural, sporting and religious dimensions of Irish life regarding influences, both positive and negative, on levels of citizen participation and engagement; and
- recommend measures which could be taken as part of public policy to facilitate and encourage (i) a greater degree of engagement by citizens in all aspects of Irish life and (ii) the growth and development of voluntary organisations as part of a strong civic culture.

Appendix II

Table 1. Membership of any type of voluntary or community association (OECD member countries, 1999-2002)

	Average number of groups to which respondent belongs	Proportion of respondents who do unpaid work for at least one group
United States	3.26	64.7
Sweden	3.24	53.9
Slovak Republic	1.12	48.6
Netherlands	3.06	47.3
Korea	1.47	47.1
Canada	1.96	46.8
United Kingdom ^b	0.61	43.1
Greece	1.25	38.0
Finland	1.86	36.5
Mexico	0.89	36.3
Denmark	1.91	33.2
Iceland	2.70	31.9
Belgium	1.65	31.4
Luxembourg	1.45	30.0
Czech Republic	1.02	29.8
Ireland	1.15	28.4
Austria	1.48	28.3
Italy	0.77	25.0
France	0.61	21.9
Germany	0.84	19.5
Japan	0.84	15.6
Spain	0.48	15.6
Hungary	0.43	14.3
Poland	0.40	12.1
Portugal	0.33	11.6
Turkey	0.03	1.5
Australia ^a	2.69	n.a.
Norway ^a	2.47	n.a.
Switzerland ^a	2.24	n.a.
OECD average	1.34	31.2

Source: OECD (2005: 84-5) *Society at a Glance and the World Values Survey 1999-2002*, Inglehart et al. (2004).

a) Data for Australia, Norway and Switzerland refer to 1995-96. Unpaid work data for these countries are missing. n.a. = Not available. b) Data for the United Kingdom refer to Great Britain only. c) The OECD average excludes New Zealand.

Table 2 Membership of various types of voluntary or community associations (OECD member countries, 1999-2002)

	Sports or cultural	Other groups	Political or Unions	Church or religious
Netherlands	69.6	65.7	40.5	34.7
Australia	64.3	45.2	44.0	47.4
Switzerland	59.3	35.4	34.3	47.4
United States	55.7	61.1	49.6	57.1
Sweden	52.3	53.1	73.0	71.4
Norway	49.8	48.5	58.7	32.1
Iceland	42.9	33.3	73.2	71.1
Denmark	41.7	38.1	62.3	11.9
Canada	39.2	43.3	35.5	29.5
Belgium	37.2	42.1	29.7	11.9
Korea	36.1	24.4	19.6	42.1
Luxembourg	35.5	35.6	21.6	9.5
Finland	33.1	36.1	39.4	47.0
Germany	32.1	15.2	13.9	13.5
Ireland	31.7	25.0	20.7	16.2
Austria	31.5	31.5	30.0	25.4
Greece	30.2	30.7	24.3	6.7
Czech Republic	28.9	29.1	20.1	6.6
Slovak Republic	23.1	27.9	28.2	16.6
France	21.5	17.7	9.5	4.4
Japan	21.4	20.3	13.4	10.6
Italy	18.5	18.3	16.7	10.3
Mexico	13.8	18.3	13.9	23.3
Spain	12.8	12.5	8.1	6.6
United Kingdom	12.0	21.0	13.2	5.0
Portugal	10.8	9.0	4.2	5.6
Hungary	6.5	7.3	11.5	12.1
Poland	4.6	9.1	14.5	5.7
Turkey	0.4	0.7	1.5	0.6
OECD average	31.6	29.5	28.4	23.5

Source: OECD (2005: 84-5) *Society at a Glance and the World Values Survey 1999-2002*, Inglehart et al. (2004). The category "Sports or Cultural" includes recreational activities. 'Other' includes youth work, welfare service for the elderly, conservation and ecological groups and single issue movements such as health, peace, human rights and women groups. 'Political or Unions' includes political parties, local political groups, labour unions and professional associations. Data for Australia, Norway and Switzerland are from the 1995-96 waves of the World Values Survey. Data for the United Kingdom refer to Great Britain only.

Table 3 Proportion of respondents who rarely or never spend time with friends, colleagues, or others in social groups* (OECD member countries, 1999-2002)

	rarely	never	% living alone
Japan	15.3	1.7	6.8
Mexico	14.1	4.7	1.8
Czech Republic	10.0	1.2	9.7
Portugal	9.6	1.4	5.0
France	8.1	1.5	11.5
Italy	7.7	1.6	7.4
Austria	7.6	1.0	11.7
Korea	7.5	1.3	n.a.
Finland	7.4	0.5	17.6
Spain	6.8	1.5	4.1
Canada	5.8	0.8	10.0
Iceland	5.5	0.2	n.a.
Belgium	5.1	1.7	26.0
Great Britain	5.0	1.2	12.0
Greece	3.7	0.2	6.7
Germany	3.5	0.5	17.8
Denmark	3.3	0.4	17.9
United States	3.1	0.6	10.2
Ireland	2.9	1.0	7.5
Netherlands	2.0	0.3	16.2
OECD average	6.7	1.2	n.a.

Source: OECD (2005: 82-3) *Society at a Glance and the World Values Survey 1999-2002*, Inglehart et al. (2004). *Question: 'How often do you spend time with friends, or with colleagues from work, or with people from church, sport/cultural groups?'



Appendix III

Selected Glossary of some terms relevant to Active Citizenship from the NESF Report on Social Capital

(NESF, 2003: 136-141)

Active Citizenship – describes the active exercise of social rights and shared responsibilities associated with belonging to a community or society; the concept is broader than just a formal or legal definition and encompasses social, economic and cultural rights and obligations.

Associational life – refers to activity and engagement in voluntary, professional or community associations. The term generally describes active membership of formal associations of a voluntary or not-for-profit nature rather than membership of informal social networks.

Citizenship – belonging to a society or community with prescribed rights and responsibilities in legal, social, economic and cultural domains.

Civil society – is the domain of secondary associations which are distinct from primary domains such as families, Market and State.

Community – a group of people who share a common residential area or a common identity or interest (cultural, social, professional, etc.).

Community Development – this may be defined in many different ways. Lillis (2006) has described it as ‘intricate networks of purposeful conversations about the issues that matter most to people’. The Government White Paper on *A Framework for Supporting Voluntary Activity* states that community development is ‘an interactive process of knowledge and action designed to change conditions which marginalise communities and groups and is underpinned by a vision of self-help and community self-reliance’ (Government, 2000: 49).

Community Education/Learning – refers to participation in any learning activity taking place in a community rather than in a more formal education setting as well as to the methodological approaches to learning and teaching.

Human Rights – “Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status”, United Nations’ Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948.

Service Learning – ‘is an academic strategy that seeks to engage students in activities that enhance academic learning, civic responsibility and the skills of citizenship, while also enhancing community capacity through service.’ (Furco and Holland, 2004)

Social Capital – “networks together with shared norms, values and understandings that facilitate co-operation within or among groups” (OECD, 2001: 41).



Social Inclusion – full participation and access of individuals and groups to human, political, social and cultural opportunities and decision-making.

Voluntary Organisations – are non-profit public-interest organisations outside the statutory sector.

Voluntary Sector – “often traditionally equated loosely with charities or with professionally-led non-profit organisations operating in the personal social services, but recently equal emphasis has begun to be placed on community organisations. The more usual phrase now is the ‘voluntary and community sector’” (Community Development Foundation, United Kingdom website www.cdf.org.uk/html/whatis.html).

Volunteering – “the commitment of time and energy, for the benefit of society, local communities, individuals outside the immediate family, the environment or other causes”, (Government White Paper on A Framework for *Supporting Voluntary Activity*, 2000: 4: 30).