

Tipping the System over into Change

Why do some ideas, trends and social behaviours cross a threshold and spread like wildfire? The Tipping Point by Malcolm Gladwell explores just how such change occurs and how little things can make a big difference. When systems seem immovable and unchangeable, he argues, with the slightest push, in just the right place, they can be tipped over into change. For organisations concerned with trying to bring about social change, it is a fascinating book containing a wealth of insights, including case studies, into what really works.

Three Types of People

Gladwell offers a new take on what makes social change happen. He identifies three types of people who are largely responsible for creating what he terms social epidemics. They are connectors, mavens and salesmen. These are people with particular and rare sets of social gifts.

Connectors are the kind of people who know everyone, with the extraordinary knack of making friends and acquaintances. They make connections across boundaries and Gladwell's research shows they have literally hundreds of people as acquaintances.

Mavens are people who know lots of information. Maven comes from the Yiddish word meaning one who accumulates knowledge. In Ireland, a more pejorative term is 'anorak', not the coat, but a person who knows lots of seemingly useless information about a particular issue or area. Mavens are connoisseurs who obsess about details, but willingly share their information in a helpful way. Mavens, however, are not persuaders.

Persuasion falls to the salesmen who have the skills to persuade us when we are unconvinced. This often occurs at the level the subliminal and intuitive messages we pick up from them.

These three groups of people, by word of mouth alone, can cause social change to occur. The key is to identify these kinds of people in the areas where your organisation is trying to provoke change. Probably successful social activists and organisations have elements of all three.

Think of the success of the makepovertyhistory campaign, where overseas development and trade tipped over into the mainstream via rock and pop culture, with Bob Geldof, as persuader, Bono as communicator and the economist Jeffery Sachs, as maven, and many more with similar attributes within the various NGO organisations that also drove this campaign.

In the recent furore over the TV programme Rip off Ireland, Eddie Hobbs displayed characteristics of all three types. His previous TV show, Show me the money, gave him the public recognition of an expert or maven, someone whom the public trusts to offer advice on budgeting. His new show presented facts gleaned from various reports already in the public domain, to argue how we are being ripped off. But the statistics were communicated a very accessible and persuasive manner. The message stuck.



Changing the System

Making the message stick

Gladwell highlights what he terms the 'stickiness of the message' as another key element in making change. By this he means making small adjustments to your message in order to make it stick or catch the imagination. The more personal and practical the message, the more memorable it will be. This was the success of Eddie Hobbs to focus on the breakdown of personal take home pay and offer little ways of increasing it.

Gladwell cites Sesame Street, the children's TV educational programme, as an example of stickiness. It is one of the most researched and evaluated TV programme ever. The producers were relentless in evaluating what was it that caught and kept children's attention and made them focus on the literacy aspects. They continuously adjusted their programme in line with the feedback, making it the success it is today. Testing institutions about the message and how the message is being received is crucial to making the message stick.

The Tipping Point is really pertinent to the community and voluntary sector as the sector increasingly invests resources in advocacy and campaigning to bring about social and systemic change. Gladwell argues that large resources are not necessarily needed, that change can happen by word of mouth, and that small changes to the message can make a big difference. The challenge would seem to be to reach those few special people who hold so much social power. As Gladwell says:

"There are exceptional people out there (and they do not have to be rock stars) who are capable of starting social epidemics. All you have to do is find them. The lesson of stickiness is the same. There is a simple way to package information that, under the right circumstances, can make it irresistible. All you have to do is find it".

David Rose is director of the Presentation Centre.

CENTRE POINT

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Wake up to learning in the 21st Century

By Stephen Heppell

Prof Stephen Heppell invites us to re-think learning and schooling in a new era.

All around the world governments, parents, companies and others are looking to learning as a way to make progress in the 21st century. For most of them new technology is seen as the high-tech key to unlock new learning potential. Unfortunately, in some cases this leads to the fairly dismal prospect of a room full of children drill- and-practicing their way through screensfull of multiple choice questions with frenetic mouse-clicks. But this kind of "factory learning" is really only a cyber version of schools from the 19th century: teachers or computers "deliver" the curriculum, wisdom is "received", and learning is passive. But as everyone reading this will know, that passive role doesn't make for memorable learning.

Best learning experiences

Think back to your own best ever learning experience; chances are it will have involved making or doing something, working with others, with a real sense of personal progress because it was pretty tough too. You had some kind of audience for what you had learned. Probably, there was a teacher, or coach, or perhaps grandparent involved and they were really passionate about whatever it was you were learning; often they were a bit eccentric too!

Examples from Thailand and Hong Kong

Well, the good news is that learning in the 21st century can be just as memorable too, for some of those same reasons. Little by little, around the world, new learning experiences are being created using new technology in creative, ingenious ways that are seductive, engaging and tremendous fun for everyone.

What examples are there? In Thailand community learning centres are opening on the top floor of shopping malls, offering challenges for families and groups of children, from video and music making, to story telling and animation. Even the bookshelves teeter high above the ground, needing a climbing frame to reach the highest shelves! In Hong Kong children are exploring tough science experiments at 9 or 10 that children don't reach in Ireland until 14! Why? Because they write up their experiments with video cameras and this turns out

to get in the way of their learning less than the formal written method.

Examples from Australia and New Zealand

In New Zealand a school in Christchurch has a design life of just five years; it was largely designed by the children in it; when they have left, a new school will be designed around the next group's needs and ideas. It's cheap enough to do; the shop was completed by shop fitters. In Tasmania when a school burned down the community, parents and children were delighted; it had been an awful place to learn and teach in, so they were determined to do better. Their new school is full of group work, small "learning group" spaces for the whole community, places to exhibit their successes, and much else..

Nearer Home

In the UK's Surrey commuter belt a tiny school for less than 10 students uses technology to join up with other learners and shows that there is now no lower limit for school size. And the remarkable Notschool charity takes hundreds of children excluded from school and, supporting their learning at home, connects them to a global computer network with countless experts passionate about their learning. And there are countless more examples to show that computers plus imagination can add up to a whole new delightful learning experience. Many of our lives have been changed by new communication technologies. We use phones for messaging, to talk, to capture pictures, and even to swap newsworthy video clips (as we saw during the tragic July London bombings). Communities from football fans to extended families have been reconnected by mobile phones. For learning, this helps to put the community right back at the heart of our lifelong learning journey.

One thing is for sure; you just might have to revise your own "best ever learning experience". Watch this space!

Prof Stephen Heppell is the former Director of Ultralab, the internationally recognised learning technology research centre.



Taoiseach Opens Millennium Family Centre



Photographed with the Taoiseach recently at the official opening of Millennium Family Resource Centre, Glengoose are; Claire Cashman, Manager, Sr Patricia Wall, Voluntary Management Committee and Michelle Putti, Project Co-ordinator, Fun Learning Together Pilot Project (funded by the Presentation Centre for Policy & Systemic Change).

In his address the Taoiseach said that “by working in partnership with a wide range of voluntary and statutory agencies in the area, you have put in place a valuable community asset that will stand to you for many years to come.....your ability to offer such a wide range of programmes and supports stems from your partnership approach. By working in conjunction with the Local Community Enterprise Board, the Presentation Centre, South Tipperary County Council and central government departments, among others, you are best placed to offer a comprehensive service to the entire community”.



Facilitators & Participants attending “Using Digital Video in Creating and Expressing Meaning Workshop” Galway Education Centre 20 Sept 2005 Organised by Presentation Centre. Facilitated by Deirdre Butler & Magaret Leahy St Patricks College Druncondra, Dublin.

Notice Board

Dates for your diary



Community of Learning Innovators

Saturday, 7 January 2006,

Gathering of Learning Innovators Presentation Centre is exploring the possibility of setting up a Community of Learning Innovators. If you are interested and would like to hear more about this please contact Ann Marie Quinn at 086 3746507 or annmariequinn03@eircom.net.

Trade Justice Workshop

Saturday, 11 March 2006, Portlaoise.

Marking 12 months of campaigning and awareness raising.

Learning spaces:

where and how - the interconnections

Monday, 27 March 2006:

2nd Conference on “Hidden Connections for Learning” - ‘Learning spaces: where and how - the interconnections’, Dublin

For All Eternity - Converting Sacred Spaces

An exhibition exploring a thousand years of monasteries and their use into the future as religious communities decline. This is an EU project encompassing religious houses and monasteries in Ireland, Belgium, Britain, France, and The Netherlands.

South Presentation Convent, Boys Old Primary School, Evergreen St, Cork
11am – 4.00pm Tuesday to Saturday, groups by appointment
Open until 8th January 2006, admission free.

Tel 086 8693598 Email maryandolivia@eircom.net

Schools in the Digital Age

Computer Education Society of Ireland National Conference at Colaiste de h-Ide, Tymon North Tallaght, Dublin 24, on the 10th & 11th of February 2006.

Booking forms will be available on their website closer to the date: www.cesí.ie



Presentation People



Alison O'Toole is in charge of administration in Presentation Centre. She brings a wealth of experience to the post. Prior to joining the centre she worked as an administration manager with the Irish Medicines Board. Since joining the centre, she has been proactive in updating all of the administration and financial management systems. She is highly competent and unfailingly pleasant in a role with multiple demands.

Trade Justice, drop the debt, more and better aid



Presentation Sisters and Associates, from Ireland and England, took part in the Make Poverty History march and rally in Edinburgh, Scotland. They joined forces with organisations and groups campaigning for Trade Justice, Debt Cancellation and More & Better Aid. Along with 250,000 others they drew attention to the widening of the gap between the world's richest peoples and the poorest.

The Millennium Summit in 2000 promised to “spare no effort to free our fellow men, women and children from the abject and dehumanizing conditions of extreme poverty, to which more than a billion of them are currently subjected”. Five years on the gap between promises and action still remains. Despite the promises of world leaders, the world will fail to reach the Millennium Development Goals, internationally agreed targets to halve global poverty by 2015.

World poverty is sustained not by chance of nature, but by a combination of factors: injustice in global trade, the huge burden of debt, insufficient and ineffective aid. Each of these is exacerbated by inappropriate economic policies imposed by rich countries. Despite the

disappointment of millions of campaigners around the world at the outcome of the recent UN Summit, which simply reiterated old promises, the work goes on to bring justice to the world's poorest.

By the Nagle Community, a community of Presentation Sisters who work in social justice, ecology and human rights.

Millennium Development Goals - Current situation

- MDG 1** Poverty and Hunger - 1.2 billion people living in poverty
- MDG 2** Education - 100 million kids out of school
- MDG 3** Gender - 60 million of those kids are girls.
- MDG 4** Infant Mortality - A child dies every three seconds
- MDG 5** Maternal Mortality - A mother dies every minute in childbirth
- MDG 6** Environment - Millions without access to clean water
- MDG 7** HIV/AIDS - 13 million AIDS orphans
- MDG 8** Partnership - Rich countries give half as much as they did in 1960.

What was needed to achieve the Millennium Development Goals and what was delivered?

ACCOUNTABILITY	
140 million campaigners demanded: Governments clearly account for their failure to progress in meeting the Millennium Development Goals, including the first goal due in 2005 - getting girls into school.	Governments have manifestly failed to account for lack of progress in reaching the MDGs, including no recognition that the first education goal will not be met.
AID	
140 million campaigners demanded: All developed countries meet their 35 year old promise made at the UN in 1970 to spend 0.7% of their income on aid.	Governments did not agree on a timetable for when the 0.7% target will be met, instead an aspiration that rich country aid may reach 0.35% of their income by 2010. Ireland agreed to reach its target by 2012.
DEBT	
140 million campaigners demanded: Every poor country that needs their debt cancelled in order to meet the Millennium Development Goals should receive it.	Leaders agreed to a recycled G8, from Edinburgh in July, proposal to grant partial debt cancellation to just 18 countries.
TRADE	
140 million campaigners demanded: That the current trade system must stop forcing poor countries to open their markets at any cost and guarantee their right to determine their own trade policies and development priorities.	Leaders made vague statements of principle that sell trade liberalisation as the only option and provide no guidance on how to achieve trade justice to enable countries to overcome poverty.

Time to think about doing time



OPINION

“ ... no one truly knows a nation until one has been inside its jails. A nation should be judged not by how it treats its highest citizens, but its lowest ones.”

- Nelson Mandela

Prison is in the news with Minister McDowell’s plans to build a new prison in North County Dublin to replace the Mountjoy complex. It would seem to be the case of more of the same only somewhat better facilities.

Prison is the last of the great Victorian institutions. No longer should a 19th century solution to crime and punishment be used in the 21st century. Our prison system has failed on a grand scale - in terms of value for money, rehabilitation of the offender, restitution to the victim, reducing crime and creating a safer society and in the interest of social justice.

We have high rates of recidivism, and a relatively young prison population with high rates of drug usage in some prisons. There is an overuse of imprisonment for petty offences and fine defaulters. Prison should be a sanction of last resort, a deprivation of liberty *as* punishment not *for* punishment. However, the experience of prisoners is of a system that is punitive, damaging and dangerous.

Ireland’s prison population is drawn disproportionately from disadvantaged areas of our cities, from people who are poor. Prison is rarely used against the powerful and privileged and those who commit ‘white collar’ crime.

Punishment extends beyond the prisoner to his or her family - innocent partners, parents and children. The lack of social supports often means that the effects of imprisonment linger long after the person is released. Far greater use could be made of non-custodial sentences, restorative justice programmes, which have particular benefits for the victims of crime; and part-time imprisonment with access to family and work.

To continue to build bigger prisons is to be locked in a 19th century Victorian mentality: quaint but belying a brutal and nasty reality. There is need to improve prison conditions certainly but also develop and invest in the whole range of cost-effective community based options for low and medium risk offenders.

David Rose is director of the Presentation Centre.

Coming Out of Prison

Centrepoint is committed to giving space for the views of people experiencing exclusion. Here are the views of someone who has ‘done time’, as told to Sr Imelda Wickham, chaplain to Wheatfield Prison.

“I left prison at 10.30am on the 26th, July. I had just served a three year sentence. Coming towards the end of my sentence I noticed that family and friends who had frequently visited me in prison were reluctant to talk about my release. It was then I realised that we were avoiding the most important question of all - where was I going to live? It was only when one of my family suggested that I get a flat rather than go home that I knew I was on my own for the first time in fifty eight years.

Eventually a friend gave me a phone number of a landlady who had a double flat for 165 a week. Having no other options I took it. When I arrived at the flat I could not believe the dirt and filth of the place. When I spoke to her about it her answer was ‘you won’t be long cleaning it up’.

Problem number one started when she asked if I was working. When I said no she was reluctant to let me stay. Eventually she agreed that I could stay until I got things sorted out. She charged me two weeks rent and two weeks deposit which came to a total of 660. This was almost the sum total of my savings. I had saved up every penny while inside and seldom bought anything in the prison shop. I was glad now.

After she left I looked around the bed-sit and realised that I would have to sleep in my clothes. There was a mattress but no bedclothes. I went out to the shop to get something to eat only to find out that I had no cooking utensils. I sat down and looked at the filthy fire-grate covered in dirt. That scene will always be with me. At that moment I just wanted to be back in my prison cell where I had a roof over my head, some food, a few “friends”.

What the future holds for me I do not know. What I do know is that in order to survive when you come out of prison, what you need most of all - is patience, faith, a friend -very hard to find- and a good sense of humour.

The state claims that it wants to rehabilitate prisoners and help them reintegrate into society but this was not my experience. When you leave prison you are on your own.”

Conference calls for a re-think on prisons

“Prison is not working. We do not need to build more prison places but to look to community based and cost effective options like restorative justice initiatives”, said Sr Imelda Wickham, chaplain at Wheatfield Prison.

“Thornton Hall (the proposed new prison in North County Dublin) will continue the brick and mortar expansion but fail to provide for the needs of those who will be committed to dwell within its confines. We need an honest evaluation of the prison system,” she said.

She was one of the keynote speakers at a conference in Abbeylax Time to Think About Doing Time. Over eighty participants drawn mainly from the community sector but also including, prison visitors, Gardai, and some ex-offenders attended it. It was organised by the Presentation Centre for Policy and Systemic Change.

Brian Maguire, professor of fine art at the National College of Art



Keynote speakers, Imelda Wickham, Sheila Connolly, Eileen O'Brien, Nuala Kelly & Brian Maguire

and Design, in a deeply moving address accompanied by a slide show of artwork including work by prisoners, stressed the need to see beyond the stereotypes to the wounded humanity of those who are imprisoned. He underlined the linkage between educational disadvantage and offending. “Of all the talented men I met in 20 years teaching art in prisons none of them discovered their talent when at school”, he said.

Nuala Kelly, a member of the Human Rights Commission, highlighted the importance of families in maintaining support for those in prison. She cited the case of the Birmingham Six whose families lobbied for justice when no one else would do so. She stressed the importance of building on community-based support for prisoners and their families and the need to use human rights processes as a way to lobby for change.

Two aftercare initiatives made presentations - Sheila Connolly from the Cork Alliance for Social Justice Centre and Eileen O'Brien from the Cork Churchfield Trust.

The conference sought to identify some of the underlying issues that contribute to offending, highlight critical gaps in policy and service delivery in support for ex-offenders and to highlight ways forward.

Many of the roundtable discussion focussed on the links between poverty and educational disadvantage as contributing to offending behaviour. The retributive nature of our justice system and lack of supports such as housing for people leaving prison were also highlighted.

The conference papers and proceedings will be available in the New Year, email info@presentation.ie

By David Rose

Mountmellick wins Race Against Waste Award

By Imelda Carew



Minister Roche launches R.A.C.E. Mountmellick project

Mountmellick has recently been awarded the Race Against Waste National Award in this year's Tidy Towns competition. Mountmellick Tidy Towns Committee joined forces with Mountmellick Environment Group (MEG) to promote good environmental practices by encouraging businesses, local schools, organisations and householders to handle waste in a more environmentally friendly manner, to reduce waste and to improve the aesthetic surroundings of the town. The Presentation Centre is supporting MEG through the involvement of Sr. Imelda Carew, programme leader for ecology. Over 200 householders are currently engaged in home composting and there is a growing awareness of the need to care for the environment.

Now, Mountmellick is set to become Ireland's first town to tackle the issue of waste reduction and management as an entire community, with the view to becoming a Race Against Waste Town. It was recently chosen to be a pilot town to implement the Race Against Waste Initiative at all levels in the community.

While the project is at its initial stages, the town was alive with activity for the last two weeks. The R.A.C.E. team were busy conducting Waste Audit workshops, assisting businesses in carrying out their own waste audit, distributing and collecting questionnaires. Everyone was invited to the workshops where they got 'down and dirty' as they grappled with the issue of segregation, weight and volume of the town's waste. The questionnaires and waste audits are now being analysed and will provide the springboard for the development of a programme of management, reduction and awareness for the coming year. Mountmellick is on the way to being a model of best practice for other towns throughout Ireland. Visit the 'weblog' section on www.raceagainstwaste.ie for regular updates.

Secondary Students voice their concerns

By Aileen Russell

Aileen Russell, researcher with the Presentation Centre presents some challenging findings.

The Presentation Centre recently conducted research with a sample of students, representative of those identified by a Presentation secondary school as having difficulty in coping with the general demands of school life and the wider education system. The aim was to gain insights, from their perspectives, into the nature and causes of their unmet needs, and to seek their suggestions for how they might be best addressed by the school. Apart from its potential usefulness in terms of gathering information, the fact that a study like this could happen at all is worthy of comment.

The school involved, which has disadvantaged status and, thus, the associated risk factors, appears to be meeting the needs of the majority of its students: it has a lower than national average incidence of early school leaving and; as indicated by their performance in state examinations, the majority of its students benefit well from the education process. Against this background, the school allowed direct access to the small minority of its students whose needs it acknowledges are not being met. This minority is obviously important in this school. In looking to the way forward in terms of their unmet needs, it saw the value of their participation in decision-making. As a view expressed in the interim Report of the Task Force on School Discipline (June '05) suggests, this approach represents good practice:

It is short-sighted to see students solely in terms of problem creation. Making them part of the solution is a powerful approach. P.27.

As well as good practice is this not also the right and the sensible thing to do? Is it logical to make assumptions or decisions about peoples' needs and about how to address them without consulting them in the matter?

The young people consulted in this instance did so in an enthusiastic way and, whilst the study makes no claim to comprehensively address the complexity of the causes of their in-school difficulties, within the parameters of its limitations, the investigation does provide some interesting insights.

The Study - the core findings

The fundamental need of the participants in this study is that they can come to experience school in a more positive way. From their perspectives, the key to this happening will involve having access to an education programme that is more user-friendly for them and, being able to enjoy better relations with their teachers. In order for both to happen, change is required, not least in how well the system perceives and acknowledges the extent of the needs that exist in today's classrooms and, how prepared decision-makers are to appropriately and adequately accommodate all of them.

The Nature of Needs - some insights

Two areas of difficulty, as experienced by participants in the study were:

i. Coping with too many subjects

Difficulty in coping with too many subjects, including ones they dislike, find too difficult or, see as being of no use in our lives. Associated with this is a difficulty in coping with aspects of teaching methodologies, such as having to take too many notes; failing to keep up with teachers who go too fast; the focus on work, work,

work and no fun. Interestingly, being in school does not seem to be their prime difficulty: given a reduction in subject load participants say they would opt to spend the freed up time in school, provided they could do the subjects we like, be involved in fun things like games or art and catch up on subjects where they've fallen behind. Their specific requests include:

- 'Let us do things we need to do or that we are interested in'.
- 'Make school a fun place to be, where there are more sport activities and classes are easier'.
- 'Be able to get help when you need it'.

In terms of positive change for these students, both their needs and their suggestions for meeting them are clear and straightforward. From a decision-makers perspective, their requests are surely not unreasonable?

ii. Relations with teachers

The second area of difficulty reported is the participants' poor relations with teachers, linked to the issues highlighted above, as well as to other more complex factors. Their related needs are, perhaps, best illustrated by some comments that describe the kind of teachers/teaching approach that they like and can positively engage with:

'I love (the subject). I love the teacher. If you are nice to her, she will be nice to you. She explains what you don't understand. You can have a laugh with her. She's the oneteacher I do my homework for'.

'Have kind teachers who care about you and you can go to when you just need someone to talk to.....You know, you can get very hurt in school'.

What these students appear to need is an approach that goes well beyond straightforward teaching. This, in turn, brings the parallel needs of teachers into focus. In the context of working with students who may be disengaged from the teaching/learning process, the Interim Report of the Task Force cites a main thrust of international research, which illustrates the breadth of the demands on teachers in this regard. Best practice requires:

Teachers who are skilled in a variety of teaching methodologies, who use differentiated approaches and who have expertise in positive behaviour management, with access to continuing professional development in these areas. (p.18).

The Challenge

The evidence from this study validates this call. As outlined earlier, these participants cannot cope with particular teaching methodologies and approaches. Their reactions compound the problem: they report switching off, becoming bored and from there progressing to what they call messing. In this scenario student/teacher relations obviously are adversely affected. Expertise and skills in behaviour management are important for both teachers and students. The issue that emerges relates to how these kinds of needs are prioritised and how well the system facilitates and accommodates catering for them. It seems reasonable to ask whether there is, or can be, enough space and time, within a system as academically-focused and examination-driven as ours is, to adequately and appropriately address them.

In conclusion, a fundamental question is what or whose needs dictate how the current system operates? For the participants in this study, and probably their teachers, it may well be that in some situations a core need is for a real alternative to what is currently being offered.

“a fundamental question is what or whose needs dictate how the current system operates?”

Huge turnout at the Reaching Out Seminar in Limerick

By Anne Coffey



Round table discussions at "Reaching out seminar"

"Even if you make learning activities affordable, accessible, provide child-care, provide learning at the times when people can get there, a lot still won't come. There are other far more deep-seated reasons why people don't come into learning", said Dr Veronica McGivney the keynote speaker at the Reaching Out seminar hosted by the Presentation Centre at the South Court Hotel in Limerick.

Her words struck a deep chord with her audience. Donna Kelly, herself an adult learner, said, "I wanted to stand up and say that every thing she said about how hard it is to get involved is right." There was much common ground between the 160 participants concerned about the most difficult to reach and those struggling in a great variety of settings with the issues of outreach and widening participation in adult and life long learning.

Among the challenges for outreach workers identified by Dr McGivney, who is head of research at the National Institute for Continuing Education in England and Wales, are - resistance, distrust, insufficient time, even-handedness, isolation, insufficient support, unrealistic expectations, and conflicts between personal and institutional values.

These and the difficulties of 'stop-start' funding, the lack of recognition for the necessity for outreach work and the recognition and recording of progress and achievement, (RARPA), were among the primary concerns identified by the participants.

Dr McGivney stressed that outreach work takes place on other people's territory. She quoted Gilman (1992): "Outreach workers need to negotiate their way through the cultural norms and dominant ideologies of the target groups. Working in an outreach setting means that you enter the clients' world on their terms, not yours".

Two outreach pilot initiatives funded by the Presentation Centre shared their experiences of outreach. Ruth Bourke and Seán O'Dwyer described their pilot outreach initiative in Southill, Limerick (See Centrepoint Summer 2003). The practical difficulties and successes they experienced were echoed in the keynote address by Dr McGivney. Emma Maher, the local adult guidance counsellor, talked about the Limerick VEC contribution to the development of adult learning. Ray Fahy, of the Presentation Family Centre outreach pilot in Listowel, shared his experience and learning as outreach worker.

Mary Kelly, another adult learner, spoke with great passion about the fear she had to overcome when she returned to learning. She appealed to her audience not to forget that. The immediacy and the expertise of her experience and the strength of her message were among the highlights of the seminar. Paddy Richardson who gave a comprehensive account of the Linkage Programme outreach to ex-offenders and employers, reiterated that we all would do well to take Mary Kelly's words to heart.

The full text of Veronica McGivney's presentation is available: email info@presentation.ie

Anne Coffey is programme leader for social inclusion with the Presentation Centre.



David Rose, Veronica McGivney & Anne Coffey

Your Say

Let us know what you think. We welcome your views on this newsletter.

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You have received a copy of Centrepoint because you are on our database of individuals and groups with whom we would like to be in contact.

Centrepoint is free. If you do not wish to receive future copies let us know.

Christmas Message

The management and staff of Presentation Centre wish all our readers peace and joy at Christmas time.