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INTERIM REPORT ON A SPECIFIC COMMUNITY ACTION PROGRAMME TO COMBAT POVERTY

(presented by the Commission)

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Interim Report
on Specific Community Action to Combat Poverty

CHAPTER I

THE CONTEXT

In the final report on the First Poverty Programme it was estimated that around the year 1975, the number of poor in the nine Member States amounted to roughly 30 million. Poverty was defined as less than half the average income per head in the Member State. It is estimated, using the same definition, for the three new Member States, that the corresponding figure for the twelve Member States that now constitute the Community was above 38 million. Still using the same definition, the first estimates available indicate that roughly 44 million (14 %) of the total Community population of 315 million people were living in poverty in 1985.

The Commission is aware of the limitations of this type of measurement which refers more to the inequalities than the poverty in each country. However, the advantage of this type of calculation lies in the fact that it permits the present situation to be compared with that obtaining in the 1970s. It will be clarified, put into relative terms and, above all, supplemented with other data further on.

These figures are also limited by the fact that they relate to income poverty only. There is no comparable recent information with which to measure the extent to which other dimensions of poverty have improved or deteriorated e.g. on low quality or overcrowded housing, homelessness, irregular or inadequate schooling or illiteracy, difficult access to or poor quality of health services, lack of other community facilities, or unhealthy or dangerous living or working environments. Neither is it possible to measure the numbers of people experiencing social or cultural exclusion.

The total number of people in income poverty has increased in the nine older Member States mainly because of the growth of unemployment, underemployment and insecure and poorly paid employment and the increase in the number of single-parent families. The total number of unemployed in the Community is put at slightly more than 16 million, one to two thirds of whom have been out of work for at least a year in the seven countries for which such figures are available (1). Furthermore, the number of unemployed living in poverty (2) in the four countries for which such data are available is put at around 20 %. As for single-parent families, they account for over 10 % of families with children in the six countries for which data are available (3).

The final report on the first programme stated that the gaps in the social insurance systems of the Member States were enormous. The needy groups which have increased their numbers most are those such as the unemployed for whom systems of social insurance give the poorest protection in terms of duration of benefit and qualifying conditions as well as the actual level of protection provided.

- (1) Belgium, France, Germany, Ireland, Netherlands, Spain, UK
(Employment Outlook - September 1987 - OECD)
- (2) New Poverty in the European Community - Graham Room - May 1987
- (3) Belgium, France, Germany, Ireland, Netherland, UK
(Lone Parent Families in the European Community: Numbers and Socio-economic Characteristics - Michael O'Higgins - April 1987).

Thus more and more people are living in poverty. As a result dependence on social assistance systems has risen substantially in the majority of Member States. Parallel with this development is the growing evidence that by no means all of those legally entitled to social assistance actually claim it, whether from ignorance or fear of stigma or deportation. It is estimated in the case of one country that there can be as many eligible but not claiming as those receiving it. Finally in some Member States social assistance is not available for certain groups such as the long-term unemployed.

In the three Member States social protection systems are less developed and the process of industrialisation is less advanced than in most of the older Member States. However between 1975 and 1985, the coverage of social protection systems was widened. As a result the number living in poverty is reported to have stabilized in Greece.

While poverty increased (1975-1985) in seven of the twelve Member States, in two of them (France and Belgium) the extent of poverty was reduced and in two States (Luxembourg and Greece) it remained practically stable. The largest increase was in the United Kingdom.

There have been marked changes in the composition of the poor population over the last decade with similar trends in several countries. There has been a substantial decline in the proportion of the poor and of those on social assistance who are elderly and a sharp increase in the proportion who are unemployed despite the aging population. In Germany, for example, 40 percent of households receiving social assistance were elderly in 1970 but only 13 percent in 1985. During the same period the percentage of households receiving social assistance because of "loss of employment" rose from 0.7 percent to 26.4 percent. This is the result of the higher rates and longer duration of unemployment on the one hand and the maturing of pension schemes on the other. Despite this change, the elderly remain in many countries the largest single category of poor and of recipients of social assistance. Poor women greatly outnumber poor men partly because they are over-represented among the elderly poor. Poverty has its highest incidence among the very elderly who were unable to benefit or benefited little from the major improvements in pension systems during the post-war period.

Among the unemployed the least protected by social insurance are young people who have been unable to build up entitlements. These are left dependent on social assistance, their families and voluntary agencies. And in some countries social assistance rates have not been increased in line with prices or the regulations toughened. Where social assistance is financed by local government there are differences in local practices and levels of provision. Major budgetary problems are created for particular authorities. Among the more visible signs of greater poverty are the increases in debts, arrears in rent, mortgages, hire purchase payments, bills for electricity and gas and the increase in stress and homelessness. This indicates the problems people have had in trying to adjust suddenly to a much lower standard of living.

With limited job opportunities has come a still greater segmentation of the labour market between those with regular employment and those in precarious jobs often offering declining real wages, poor working conditions, limited job security and in some cases poor social security cover.

Employment and underemployment have cumulative effects: the lack or low level of earnings results in inadequate health and social protection, lack of protection against unemployment and the absence or inadequacy of retirement pensions. Unemployment also results in gaps in social contribution and taxation. Self-employment of a casual informal and poorly rewarded kind has been increasing. Low pay has probably increased its role as a cause of poverty and more people intermittently switch between low pay and a low level of social assistance. In some Member States the low paid have suffered particularly from cuts in social benefits and rent subsidies and from higher taxation and social contributions. Particularly severely hit by restricted employment opportunities are the disabled, women and ethnic minorities.

In some countries, in the implementation of social protection harmful dysfunctions may be encountered arising, for example, from the gap between the low wage levels offered to disadvantaged people on the employment market and the higher level of assistance and benefits they may receive as unemployed people or single parents.

Family composition and the availability of subsidised arrangements for child care have always been critical in determining the extent of poverty. Large families are becoming less common even in the rural areas of the less developed Member States. But having two earners in the family still protects many low earning families from poverty. Restricted labour market opportunities make this option less available to younger couples. Moreover, the ceilings applied under household means tests are so low that they discourage the other spouse from seeking employment as a way out of poverty.

The number of single parents, most of them women, has been growing rapidly as a result of changing attitudes and patterns of social behaviour which have led to major reforms in marriage and family law. The number of them dependent on social assistance has been growing in Belgium, Germany, France Netherlands and the United Kingdom. This reflects the difficulty they face in obtaining child care arrangements which they can afford as well as in finding paid employment. Moreover single parents are heavily represented among those with the worst housing.

The growth in the numbers of single parents and of the unemployed, particularly among young people would suggest that a growing proportion of children are living in or on the margins of poverty.

Migrants and their families are particularly exposed to poverty for a variety of reasons. This is as true of 'established' immigrant communities of non-European origin and other minority ethnic groups as it is of migrant workers in Germany or France or returning migrants in Greece.

In the nineteen sixties and seventies there was evidence of a trend towards the convergence of living standards. Economic growth was more rapid in some of the poorer regions of what is now the Community and interregional migration lightened the burden on some of the poorest regions. More rapid population growth in the poorer regions and fewer opportunities for migration are probably reversing this trend. Moreover, some unemployed migrants are returning home, Greece, for example, has been faced with the repatriation of political refugees from Eastern Europe and Portugal with the return of former

colonial residents. The cities can hardly offer any more employment opportunities to migrants from rural areas and urban unemployment has been growing. In countries with poorly developed social security systems, the urban unemployed can suffer acute hardship away from that measure of security which they previously enjoyed within the rural family structure.

A number of regions of Northern Europe were heavily dependent on older manufacturing industries have become unemployment black spots, with dramatic falls in standards of living. Similarly, in some of the declining cities there are areas with high rates of deprivation. However, the heaviest concentrations of poverty are probably still to be found in the rural areas of those Member States which are least developed. These areas have generally always been poor but whereas in the past this poverty did not lead to a feeling of social alienation the growth of affluent urban living within these same countries is creating a growing contrast by establishing a life style from which the rural population are increasingly aware of being excluded.

The existence of poverty is now more generally acknowledged that it was ten years ago though the terminology to describe it varies between countries. Poverty is a relative concept. Moreover, the very concept of poverty refers to different realities for each Member State. Whereas in some countries the term "poverty" has long been used to denote wide sections of the population ranging from persons with a very modest standard of living to those living in a state of extreme indigence, in others it does not form part of the official vocabulary or is only used to refer to the most dramatic cases. The original six members of the Community and also Denmark experienced a period of unprecedented economic growth during the quarter century following the war. Part of the growing affluence was used to widen and deepen social protection. Poverty came to be regarded as a problem of small minorities or even as a problem of the past. It was only when substantial unemployment re-emerged and the weaknesses in the social protection system became painfully obvious that the existence of 'new poverty' came to be acknowledged. In the United Kingdom with its less generous social insurance system and greater dependence on social assistance, the new poverty made itself apparent much earlier. Quantitatively and qualitatively there is something different about the form poverty has taken in recent years. By contrast, in Greece, Spain, Portugal, Ireland and Southern Italy, with their long-standing problems of under-development, poverty has long been tacitly accepted as an inevitable feature of that under-development rather than identified as a problem which could be treated in its own right.

Poverty has re-emerged as an issue for political debate and for action and concern by charitable institutions. In countries where social assistance is a local government responsibility local authorities have drawn attention to the heavy burden they are forced to carry. Some see poverty as damaging to the social fabric and the root cause of greater crime and breakdowns in law and order and call for the strengthening of system of social protection and stronger preventive action. Others see 'generous' social security systems as a disincentive to work and as a challenge to the traditional family by facilitating single parenthood.

In some countries debate has intensified on how to define and operate an effective minimum income. Also there is increasing recognition of the extent of acute and hidden poverty where people entitled to social assistance do not apply for it and the more visible problem of homelessness.

While unemployment has begun to fall in some Member States, it is still increasing in others. The countries of the Community are faced with major economic and industrial changes associated with the wider adoption of new technologies and greater international competition. The new Member States are gradually adjusting to the changes stimulated by Community membership. The prospect of the single internal market will generate a higher rate of economic growth but unless the Community takes appropriate action and mobilizes its resources more effectively, poverty will continue to exist.

It is in this context that the Second Poverty Programme was launched.

CHAPTER II

ORGANISATION OF SPECIFIC COMMUNITY ACTION TO COMBAT POVERTY

The first poverty programme covered the period 1975-1980 and was authorised in two separate phases by Council Decisions of July 1975 and 12 December 1977. The second programme covering the four years 1985 to 1988 was authorised by the Council Decision of 19 December 1984 with a budget of 25 million ECU¹ in response to a proposal by the Commission of 18 July 1984. This Decision was amended on 22 December 1986 following the accession of Spain and Portugal to provide for an additional budget of 4 million ECU to extend the programme to these two new Member States.

In authorising the second programme the Council acknowledged that the persistence of poverty and uncertainty of employment were incompatible with the aims of the Treaty as specified in Article 2 which specifically mentions balanced expansion and an increase in stability. The Council also recognised that more specific action was required to combat poverty in addition to Community action in the fields of employment and anti-poverty measures associated with the establishment of other Community policies.

Activities under the Programme

The Council authorised the Commission to undertake three types of activity within the programme:

- a) to promote or provide financial assistance for various types of action-research measures
 - designed to test and develop new methods of helping persons beset by or threatened with, poverty in the Community
 - drawn up and carried out as far as possible with the participation of the persons concerned, and
 - of particular interest to the Community in that they are addressed to problems common to several Member States
- b) To promote or provide financial assistance for the dissemination and exchange of knowledge, the coordination and assessment of anti-poverty measures, and the transfer of innovative approaches between Member States
- c) To promote or provide financial assistance for the collection and dissemination on a regular basis of comparable data on poverty in the Community.

¹ In actual fact, since some projects actually began in the second half of 1985, they will continue to be financed until the first half of 1989.

The Council specifically mentioned that both public and private bodies should be eligible for financial assistance. Applications for financial assistance were to be approved by the Member State or States on whose territory the projects were to be carried out. Moreover, where the Commission initiated an action research project or study, again, the agreement of the relevant Member State or States was required.

The Definition of Poverty

The definition laid down by the Decision of the Council of Ministers for the second programme was similar to that laid down for the first.

"The Poor shall be taken to mean persons, families and groups of persons whose resources (material, cultural and social) are so limited as to exclude them from the minimum acceptable way of life in the Member States in which they live".

The second programme incorporated lessons learnt from the experience of the first programme.

1. It had been found that continuity of funding for a period of at least four years was needed for action- research programmes to be established, participation to be fostered and for new methods of helping the poor to be tested and, hopefully, for the experience to be transferred to other Member States.
2. It had been found that each Member State was largely operating a separate programme.
3. It had been found that the objectives of exchange of knowledge and the transfer of innovative approaches could not readily be realised where the action-research projects in different Member States had too wide a variety of objectives, worked with too many different types of client group and used too large a number of methods of intervention.
4. It had been found that machinery for the dissemination of results, the coordination of projects, the exchange of experience and the evaluation of the results needed to be built into the programme from the start if results were to be maximised.

Thus in interpreting the Council's decision of 19 December 1984, the Commission contracted the Institute ISG Sozialforschung und Gesellschaftspolitik, Cologne, to develop an Animation and Dissemination Service for the second programme. The Institute acts as a 'Clearing House' responsible for the coordination and evaluation of the activities undertaken as well as the continuous dissemination of results. The task of evaluation was delegated by the ISG to the Centre for Analysis of Social Policy located at the University of Bath (United Kingdom). A programme coordinator was also appointed.

The Themes

To give coherence to the action research-projects, the Commission, after wide-ranging consultation, selected 8 themes for the projects and specified the types of action which would be given priority for financial assistance. These groups were chosen as particularly vulnerable to poverty. They included the "traditional poor" as well as the "new poor", whose numbers have been rapidly increasing as a result of the recession.

The Commission invited applications through Member States from private or public organizations seeking financial assistance from the Commission to undertake an action-research project on one (or more) of the themes selected by the Commission. The Commission offered to cover 50 percent of actual expenditure or exceptionally 55 percent in particularly underprivileged regions as authorised by the Decision.

The task of making prospective applicants aware of the availability of grants under the programme fell upon Member States and it appears that the publicity given to the programme, and to the dates for submission of project applications, varied widely among them and even within them. As a result of this process, 65 action-research projects were selected and approved from the 10 Member States in September 1985 and February 1986, with the addition of 26 further projects selected from Spain and Portugal during 1987.

The breakdown of the projects by country and by theme is as follows:

	LT	JY	AG	MO	MI	MA	IU	IR	TOTAL
BELGIUM		1			2		2	1	6
DENMARK				1	1				2
GERMANY	3	1		1	1				6
GREECE					4		1	2	7
SPAIN	4	1	2		1	5	1	2	16
FRANCE		1	1	1		1	3		7
IRELAND	1	1		1		1	2	3	9
ITALY	1		2		1	1	2	2	9
LUXEMBOURG		1	1	1					3
NETHERLANDS			1						1
PORTUGAL	1	1	1	1	2	3		1	10
UNITED KINGDOM	2	1	4	3	1	1	1	2	15
TOTAL	12	8	12	9	13	12	12	13	91

KEY: - LT - Long Term Unemployed
 JY - Young Unemployed
 AG - Elderly
 MO - Single Parent Families
 MI - Migrants and Refugees
 MA - Marginals
 IU - Underprivileged in Urban Areas
 IR - Underprivileged in Rural Areas

The number of projects selected from each of the ten Member States varies considerably, ranging from one project in the Netherlands and two in Denmark to fifteen in the United Kingdom and sixteen in Spain. Forty of the ninety-one projects are located in areas where the per capita GNP is less than average.

The programme for the first ten Member States was launched by a general seminar held in February 1986 when the arrangements for and objectives of the Programme were explained. Apart from a few general indications, this report only covers the programmes of these countries, the Spanish and Portuguese projects having only been selected in 1987.

As it fell to governments to select the projects submitted to the Commission, not only were the criteria laid down by the Commission reflected in the choice but inevitably national concerns were also reflected in the choices made. For example, the projects submitted by France tended to reflect the government's priorities at that time, which focused mainly on emergency accommodation, nutrition, training and rehabilitation. On the other hand the Commission's criteria stimulated Greece to develop projects which were unusual to that country, which has little tradition of services varying at the local level. Thus the programme stimulated projects which were innovative for Greece from the outset.

Of the sixty-five initial projects two thirds are entirely new projects and one third are further developments of existing projects. Some projects emerged from earlier research surveys or studies while there were some which sprung from the initiatives of poor people themselves. Only 9 were initiated by local governments or municipalities. The most frequent sponsors were local voluntary and community organizations (19 projects) or associations of volunteers (9 projects) national charitable organizations (8 projects) or coordinating committees of social welfare organizations (5 projects). The remaining projects were sponsored by church-based organizations trade unions or research or educational institutions. For over half of the projects, matching funds came from central government and likewise in over half of the cases local or regional governments contributed funds. At the same time, 28 projects generated part or all of the funds they needed themselves.

Coordination

Eight part-time experts from different Member States have been appointed - to assist the programme coordinator - one for each theme. Their task is to enable projects to cooperate effectively and coherently by ensuring a continuous exchange of experience and methods.

More specifically, they help the project leaders to increase the effectiveness of their activities, develop meaningful collaboration and coordination, set out their results in terms which can be profitably understood by other projects and widely disseminated, and continuously promote the exchange of experiences and the transfer of methods between projects whilst emphasising the European dimension of the programme. Throughout their work is underpinned by visits to the projects, contacts with official agencies and other organizations and arranging two national meetings each year, theme by theme, at the site of one or more projects where the achievements can be seen at first hand and explained in their national contexts, where local officials and related organizations can be contacted and local media and public events organized.

Evaluation

Parallel to the team of coordinators is a team of 10 part-time expert evaluators drawn from different Member States (joined in 1987 by one Spanish and one Portuguese evaluator) who are responsible for monitoring and evaluating the progress and effectiveness of the projects by reference to the overall objectives of the programme and the contexts in which they are operating. The evaluators work in association with a team which coordinates their work, provides technical help and synthesises the results.

Each evaluator works in one Member State, or in two cases more than one. The evaluators regularly visit the projects and help them to prepare and update descriptions of their activities and the context in which they are working. They also support, where they exist, the projects self-evaluation systems which involve keeping records and gathering information including that supplied by the poor themselves and assisting projects in the process of preparing the annual reports required by the Commission. As the local projects are in direct contact with the poor, their self-evaluation can draw directly on first-hand experience.

The evaluators produce regular reports assessing the progress of the projects and their significance for action at national and Community level. This provides a wider perspective for comparing the work carried out under different projects as well as with conventional services outside the programme.

These reports make it possible to evaluate the results of the entire programme for the Community as a whole. They have been important inputs to this interim report and will contribute to the final report required by the Council at the end of the programme.

Dissemination

Finally, the coordination and evaluation functions are linked together by the Animation and Dissemination Service which arranges regular joint workshops bringing together both coordinators and evaluators. In addition it provides an information and communication system for all those involved in measures to combat poverty inside and outside the programme. In 1986 the Service published a volume in English and French containing short descriptions of the projects as initially planned. These descriptions have been updated in a revised edition to be made available in the near future. In addition the Service publishes a monthly Bulletin in English and French for the internal needs of those involved in the programme and a quarterly Bulletin in English, German, French, Greek, Italian and Spanish (Exchanges) for the public. It also maintains a small library of books, journals, reports and videos. It generally acts as a source of information and referral for all participants in the programme and those outside who wish to know about it and supports the transnational meetings. It is also attempting to stimulate television films on poverty in Europe.

Comparable Data on Poverty

A working party was set up by EUROSTAT to establish in what way national statistical institutes are able to provide data on poverty which would be useful to the Commission. The working party is looking into what can be extracted from administrative data and what may be revealed by existing surveys covering the whole population.

As regards administrative data, a partial study has shown that in five of the seven countries scrutinized it would be possible to set up a system of periodical statistical reports on poverty on the basis of this source. The study will have to be continued to find out what is possible in the other Member States and, subsequently, to set up a common structure for the reports to be drawn up.

On the second point, the working party is looking into the possibility of using surveys on family budgets which are common to all the Member States. An experiment carried out initially with Italy and the Netherlands and subsequently extended to Belgium and Denmark consisted of including in the questionnaires used in these surveys additional questions aimed at:

- carrying out a comparative study of the various poverty thresholds;
- defining poverty in terms of figures, either as a percentage of the total population or in the form of data expressing the gravity of the problem;
- obtaining a review of the population in question in the form of general data on households and detailed information on their accommodation, the structure of their expenditure, their geographical distribution, etc.

Findings about the first countries will be available at the end of 1988.

Finally, work is under way, or will be initiated, on looking into other possible sources of information on poverty (other surveys, SESPROS) and new methods of collecting information (panels).

Meanwhile the Antwerp Centre for Social Policy has arranged for data to be collected on a comparable basis for seven countries using five different methods to define poverty. The first method is what the population regards as a minimum income. The second is what individuals regard as an absolute minimum for them. The third is the degree of deprivation in terms as actual consumption and of participation in social life. The fourth is the number of people living on an income below a certain percentage of the average per capita income and the fifth is the number of persons at or below the social assistance level(s) used in each country.

Lastly work is in progress to assemble for the numbers of people and percentages of population who may be classed as poor in the Member States of the Community.

CHAPTER III

A DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTION-RESEARCH PROJECT

The action-research projects illustrate the general philosophy of the programme, i.e. that poverty is a complex multifaceted phenomenon on which requires integrated measures. Integration means that the various institutions concerned work in a coordinated manner so as to tackle jointly the problems of those in difficulty as well as those connected with their environment.

This descriptions refers to the sixty-five projects selected and approved in September 1985 and February 1986.

Single Parent Families

There are eight projects concerned with one-parent families. Three are in the United Kingdom and one each in Denmark, Germany, France, Ireland and Luxembourg. Government, central or local, is providing matching funds for four projects and the others are raising their own funds. Two are wholly new projects or initiatives, five are associated with or affiliated to long-established organizations of which two operate on a national scale. Four of the projects aim to help all single parent families but the target of the Danish project is the psychological and physical development of children of single parents. The other three projects are more selective. Both the Bolton (United Kingdom) and Luxembourg projects are concerned with single parenthood caused by family violence, while the French project is restricted to mothers receiving the special cash grant for single parents for the first time, and thus provides help both for pregnant mothers and mothers with only one child. The aim of this project is to prevent the mothers becoming long term dependents on this source of income which is only, payable from the first month of pregnancy up to the child's third birthday. The target group inevitably influences the type of facilities needed and the primary focus of the work. Thus the projects assisting victims of family violence maintain shelters where the mother and their children can be given immediate accomodation, provide counselling services and try to secure longer term accomodation. The shelter at Bolton depends largely upon the work of volunteers. The older of these projects (Luxembourg) has been extended to include an information service and a centre for vocational training and recreation. The main emphasis of the French project is on education and training -including work experience- so that the mothers will eventually be able to support themselves. A statistical survey of recipients of this one parent family benefit is now being carried out.

The project run by the British national organization for one-parent families aims essentially to decentralise its activities by developing local self-help groups which can also press for improvements in local services. Special efforts are made to involve immigrant mothers in the project. The method used is to start by establishing short training courses in selected cities. A manual is given to each participant on the course with sections on social security benefits, legal aid, housing, tax, family

law, care facilities for children, the law on nationality and immigration and a section on how to complain. A creche is organized for children during the course and free meals are provided. A local guide to facilities for one-parent families is prepared and distributed at a follow-up meeting three months after the course.

The other four projects provide local services for all one-parent families. One of them in Bristol (United Kingdom) is entirely a self-help organization which provides a creche, training on welfare rights and advice on housing and promotes educational and training activities. It has a course in Caribbean Studies, a writers group, a photography group, workshops in computer studies, a woodwork course and a mechanics course. The crucial fact is that women are in charge of their own education: they decide what to learn and who their teachers will be.

The project also works with volunteer and statutory agencies to change policy and practice in the housing field to prevent single parent families being put in unsuitable accommodation such as bed & breakfast, hotels or housing where rents are likely to rise.

The German project in Düsseldorf has a substantial paid staff and makes extensive use of self-help groups. It provides an information centre on welfare rights, housing and local services and advice on children's education and family conflicts. It also operates a programme of group meetings for mothers and children to counter social isolation and discuss the problems of adaptation to single parenthood. It aims to coordinate and improve local services and remove barriers to them and particularly to secure an extension of child care arrangements for mothers at work.

Similarly the Dublin Project provides a drop-in centre and play group, advice on welfare rights and individual counselling and arranges outings for parents and children. It has recently organized a group on women's health. It has the ambitious aim of creating a resource centre staffed and run by one-parent families which it will leave behind as a going concern at the end of the project. The project also campaigns to create a better public image of one-parent families and to improve local services - particularly the housing offered to one-parent families by the local authority.

The Copenhagen project originated entirely with volunteers and later recruited paid staff. It provides activity workshops, drop-in centres, individual counselling and discussion groups and arranges holidays and cultural events for children. It has recently bought a holiday home where mothers can recuperate. It places particular emphasis on providing an intensive 16-week residential training course for 10 single parents at a time which aims to prepare mothers for full educational courses. It also works to increase public and political understanding of the situation of single parents with the aim of improving legislation as it affects single parents. The common feature of the projects is that they all aim to counter social isolation, they are all concerned with improving access to local services, particularly social security services, and they are all concerned in one way or another with housing and child-care arrangements for single mothers.

Where they differ is in the intensity of their education and training activities. The French, Danish and Luxembourg projects provide or arrange particularly intensive training with the aim of enabling mothers to support themselves from full-time work - in the case of the Copenhagen project, after taking a full educational course.

At the first meeting of the project leaders, the questions discussed included relations with statutory services, organisational structures, working methods and volunteer-professional relationships. The crucial importance of the cost and availability of child-care arrangements was identified as a common issue, which, along with the terms on which financial support was provided, determined how far full-time work was a practicable option for women with limited skills and qualifications. At the second meeting the main subject discussed was housing. It was found that, in all the countries represented, becoming a single parent nearly always leads to poorer housing. The meeting asserted the right of single parents to decent housing suitable for children in an acceptable area and at a price they could afford.

Long-Term-Unemployed

There are seven projects on the long-term-unemployed, three in Germany, two in the United Kingdom and one each in Ireland and Italy. Two of them (one of those in Germany and the Italian project) are run by church-based organisations which fund part of their activities. The funding of most of the other projects comes partly or wholly from central or local government.

The project in Wolverhampton was a joint initiative of the polytechnic and the local authority. Four of the projects (two in Germany and two in the United Kingdom) were initiatives of local community associations. All are managed or designed to be managed largely by the unemployed. The projects in Belfast and Derry are an initiative started by a trade union and an organisation of the unemployed.

The Italian project is aimed at a particular group of the unemployed - those in extreme poverty in Milan, most of them immigrants from the South and most of them having never had work or completed school. Among the target group there is considerable illiteracy and problems of drugs, alcohol and criminality. The central aim of the project is to provide education and training so that this socially marginalised group can find employment. Thus the project provides basic educational courses and vocational training for both children and adults and seeks to find jobs for those who have been taken the courses. This involves overcoming local cultural prejudices. A very high pupil/teacher rate is needed for this work and social support for the families concerned.

Educational courses are also at the centre of the Wolverhampton (U.K.) project. The aim is to overcome the social isolation of the unemployed, enhance their confidence and give them greater political influence. The unemployed are visited at home and formed into groups which settle their initial study programme with the polytechnic. Several of them have gone on to set up self-help and drop-in centres for the unemployed in their neighbourhood. In this way a local network of groups of unemployed has been created. These groups send representatives to the project's steering committee chaired by the local authority.

Training and constructive use of the enforced leisure of the unemployed are the core of the large project at Bielefeld (Germany) based on the Centre for the Unemployed. The aim is to encourage self-help. The centre offers counselling services, discussion groups and leisure activities but also provides training in woodwork and metalwork and has self-managed knitting and painting-on-silk groups. It has a photograph-laboratory and an enamelling room. To help the unemployed make their money go further there is a second-hand clothing market, facilities for shoe repairs and carpentry, washing machines and a food store. Contact is established between the unemployed and other inhabitants of the city.

The large projects run by a church-based organization in Hannover, Munich and Recklinghausen are also based on self-help and self-management. For example, the Hannover Centre for the unemployed has a shop and swap cooperative and the Recklinghausen project recycles usable materials. There are counselling services and discussion groups. The aim is for the unemployed to develop their own activities. The fundamental goal is to raise awareness of the problem of poverty within the community.

The large centre for the unemployed in Dortmund provides counselling on legal, financial and social questions and facilities for discussion and ensure activities in close cooperation with those concerned. There are separate groups for older employees, women, one-parent families and specific occupational groups. A wide range of self-help activities has been developed. The projects aims to make local people more aware of the plight of the unemployed, influence political decision-making and initiate action for the unemployed on a regional basis. For example, a concerted campaign led to the unemployed and other recipients of social assistance obtaining the right to use public transport and other public facilities free of charge.

The Dublin project, which is run entirely by the unemployed, is at an earlier stage of development. It has an Advice Centre and a 'Drop-in' Centre and provides adult education, leisure and recreational activities. It aims to give the unemployed opportunities to plan and take decisions about their own lives. The political aim is to make the general public more conscious of the effects of unemployment, organize the unemployed into a unified pressure group and influence political decision makers.

The Belfast and Derry projects aim ultimately at job creation and to change public perception of the unemployed. The first stage of the project is research, which is already completed. Surveys of 4000 unemployed in Belfast and nearly 900 in Derry have been undertaken to ascertain their job history, health, education, training, income and perceptions of poverty. The Derry project aims to facilitate self-activity, Community action and popular planning, produces a newsletter for the unemployed, contributes to a weekly radio programme on unemployment and publicates the facilities and services available at the Centre for the Unemployed. The Belfast project will offer 30-day training courses in running small businesses followed by more specialist courses in such subjects as product development and marketing. The final stage will be to launch a number of business projects for which definite markets have been established. Meanwhile the Centre for the Unemployed offers advice services, an outreach service for those threatened with redundancy and arranges courses on a variety of subjects and holidays for children. The Youth cooperative has a Musician's Workshop and a Drop-in Restaurant.

Thus all the projects aim to build up the potential of individuals for employment and some go further and attempt to create jobs. At the same time they aim meanwhile in various ways to combat social isolation, restore self-confidence and overcome feelings of apathy and insecurity. Moreover the projects build up contact with relevant agencies including the media and generally represent the interests of the unemployed. The transnational meetings discussed the important role of participation, how projects could assess progress and cost-effectiveness and the extent to which self-help could be fostered by, for example, the exchange of skills and 'do it yourself' money-saving activities as well as the development of new business.

YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT

The six projects relating to youth unemployment are located in the following countries : Belgium, Germany, France, Ireland, Luxembourg and the United Kingdom. Three of them existed before the second European programme. Three form part of a larger organization. Five projects are cofinanced by central, regional and/or local government. The sixth is financed by the association which originated the project. Three projects are also partly self-financing.

The French project is situated in a rural area while the others are in urban areas : one small town (Sligo in Ireland) and four large conurbations (Whitley Bay near Newcastle, UK, Charleroi in Belgium, Luxembourg City and Mainz in Germany).

With the exception of the Belgian project, which depends on the Centre Public d'Aide Sociale de Charleroi, which is the public institution responsible for local social policy, the projects depend on associations jointly set up by various institutions : in Ireland, the project is the result of collaboration between local voluntary organizations, government institutions (the national labour department, the national employment agency, the vocational training department) and specially qualified people (law, accountancy, management, production techniques). In Germany, the SPAZ centre is the result of collaboration between the municipality of Mainz and the Labour and Employment Office of that city. In Luxembourg the project encompasses several associations responsible for different aspects of the action undertaken.

The projects all relate to young unemployed people but the age brackets for the target group vary : 16-25 in Sligo, 18-30 in Charleroi, 20-40 in Sarabel. The number of people affected also varies.

The young people to whom the projects relate have a very low level of training. Many have left school very early, others have spent some time in prison or are on remand and others again have been treated for drug addiction but essentially most of them are having to cope with the problems of being unemployed.

The young people are recruited through institutional channels or by more informal means. The project managers all have contacts with various institutions which refer young people in difficulty to them : youth clubs, schools, prisons, social workers, parishes, unemployment benefit offices, etc. Some projects have also set up structures directly slanted towards young people, e.g. the "Maison des Jeunes" in Luxembourg, the "Base" in Whitley Bay (UK). Lastly, informal channels are also used effectively : itinerant social workers, contact with families, etc. Several projects have explored specific ways of contacting girls.

Those working on the projects are for the most part paid a salary. They are mainly social workers, animators, education specialists, etc. Each project has a permanent guidance team, which in some cases calls in help from outside, more particularly for the purposes of technical training. One project is being conducted with the collaboration of an assessor (Luxembourg). Voluntary workers are involved in all the projects.

The project located in Charleroi in Belgium provides reception and animation services for young people, training workshops and "social enterprise".

The aim is to put the young people back to work by providing them with opportunities for learning vocational and social and interrelational skills. The work is paid and provides entitlement to social protection.

The German project, which is supported by the municipality of Mainz and the employment office, has dual objectives : establishment of counselling services to provide assistance and information on all aspects of the lives of the young long-term unemployed and promotion of job-creation in the services, ecology and small-scale industrial sectors.

In Luxembourg, the aim of the major project "Inter-Actions Faubourg" is to set up three new reception centres in addition to the one already in operation. Furthermore, the process of putting the young people back to work is carried out in several stages : the first entails attending a course at a building workshop where, under the guidance of an animator, the young people can learn perseverance, punctuality and teamwork.

The second stage provides an opportunity for young people to be employed in a site-clearing firm where they work under the authority of a foreman-instructor. The firm is competitive and operates as an ordinary firm on the market without any sort of subsidy. The task of the foreman is both to ensure productivity and to provide social guidance. The third stage provides an opportunity for young people to perform temporary work outside. For a short period of time they therefore have to face up to the real problems of integration into working life. They may return after this temporary work to stage 2, leave again, etc. The aim is that, once stabilized, the young people will be taken on by firms outside the project.

In Ireland and the United Kingdom, the projects are organized around centres for unemployed young people : day centre in Ireland, young people's employment advice centre in the UK. Young people meet here for various activities, advice and training. They are encouraged and guided in their employment initiatives.

The French project is different from the others. Its aim is to set up a reception centre in a rural area for a small number of young people in difficulty. Accommodation and work are provided in the framework of an agricultural holding. Social guidance is provided by a team of animators.

Leaving aside their differences, all these projects adopt a multidimensional approach to the difficulties encountered by their target group. In addition to providing training in genuine skills, they also provide considerable assistance on the psychological and social levels, help to impart skills in dealing with everyday life and promote leisure and social activities. These activities are for the most part conceived and organized by the young people themselves with a view to learning how to succeed in the light of what they learn from the project.

The projects all provide for the establishment or development of reception centres. In the case of the French project, the reception centre and the work and training centre are one and the same place. In this way the young people can meet and organize and manage their own activities. They also enable the animators to make contact with the young people and maintain lasting connections with them.

Training workshops are also offered by almost all the projects even if the training is not considered sufficient to ensure the structuring of the personality. It can nonetheless ensure relative economic stability.

In all cases, the projects set out to promote contact between young unemployed people and other people, to avoid the development of ghettos for such young people, who often tend to become withdrawn or to reject others. It was for this reason that the "Base" (Whitley Bay) decided against snooker and darts, which although very popular pastimes amongst young males, automatically exclude girls.

Vocational guidance is also provided and advice and counselling given on how to behave at an interview, how to reply to an advertisement, etc. Lastly, several projects (Sligo, Sarabel, Spaz, Whitley Bay) also provide training in alternative solutions : cooperatives, collectives, creation and management of small individual firms, etc.

After an initial meeting at which those in charge of projects mainly got to know each other, a second meeting took place in Luxembourg to discuss the matter of target groups. The difficulty of attracting girls and integrating them in the activities was a constant problem common to all projects. It emerged that the selection of young people on the basis of their motivation and abilities had to be avoided if those who are more affected by social problems are also to progress. Occupational integration has therefore to be accompanied by major "socializing" activities.

MIGRANTS

There are ten projects which relate to migrants : second generation migrants, refugees and returning migrants. Four of them are in Greece, two in Belgium, one in Denmark, one in Germany, one in Italy and one in the United Kingdom. Nine projects relate to large towns or their suburbs. Only one is located in a rural area.

Six of the projects are cofinanced by central, regional or local government. Two are financed by religious organizations and two by the benevolent organizations on which they depend.

Only one project existed before the second programme. Seven depend on larger organizations : public bodies such as the public social assistance centre in Liège or the national social assistance organization in Greece, religious organizations as in Berlin and Athens, or humanitarian organizations as in Copenhagen and London etc. Three projects call on the services of voluntary workers.

The target group varies greatly from one project to another. Three work more particularly with children, five focus on "returning migrants", mainly Greeks who have returned or wish to return to their country of origin after a period of emigration abroad.

The projects in Liège, Ahanes in Greece and London concentrate their activities on children (children of Sicilian immigrants, repatriated refugees and immigrants from Bangladesh respectively). These children have to be helped to overcome their linguistic and educational difficulties and to become socially integrated through familiarization with the environment and psychological guidance.

In Brussels, one project relates to Aramaean refugees from Turkey and Syria. A team of social workers helps to solve their administrative and legal problems and assert their rights. The team also works in the field of occupational integration by motivating the refugees, helping them to learn French and to find employment. Potential employers are sought, training is organized in certain trades (leather-cutting, jewelery) and advice provided in various forms.

In Denmark, the project provides assistance in technical and vocational training fields.

The projects relating to returning migrants differ depending on whether those concerned wish to return to their country of origin or have already returned.

The German project relates to Greeks who wish to return to their native country. Contacts are organized between them and the Greek regions to which they are to return. Advice and assistance is provided particularly as regards customs regulations, the employment market and employment opportunities in Greece, the education system, vocational training, etc. Furthermore, four Greek projects are intended for Greeks returning from Western Europe or the Socialist countries. These projects propose activities designed to enable these categories to become integrated into the local community. Health problems (particularly mental health) are also addressed by some projects.

In Italy, the project located in Lombardy seeks to promote the integration of immigrants of various nationalities (Ethiopians, refugees from El Salvador and Guatemala, Egyptians, refugees from Sri Lanka and the Philippines and Europeans). Apart from providing immediate assistance for families, the project involves language teachers dealing regularly with these foreigners by providing them with audiovisual systems to assist their teaching. In addition, information geared to the foreigners is dispensed on employment, health and legal aspects.

An initial transnational meeting of those in charge of the projects relating to migrants revealed in particular the value of working in a way which takes account of the fact that the immigrants belong both to their country of origin and their host country. At a second meeting, deliberations focused on strategies for the overall promotion of action to assist migrants and refugees as well as the conditions regarding integration on the labour market. In this connection, emphasis was laid on the backing which can be provided by solidarity between those who have succeeded and new arrivals as well as on both the value and difficulties of migrants' setting up on their own.

INTEGRATED ACTION IN URBAN AREAS

There are eleven "integrated urban action projects" - three in France, two in Ireland, two in Belgium, two in Italy, one in the United Kingdom and one in Greece. The eleven projects are cofinanced mainly by government departments (central, regional or local) but five are also partly self-financing (one of them by means of private donations). Five projects existed before the second European programme. Five are affiliated to or associated with major long-established organizations. Two of them depend on a research organization. One project depends on the local social services department. Four of them make considerable use of voluntary services.

Although the target group and the activities undertaken vary greatly according to the project, most of them fall in line with a community-based approach.

The "Porte Verte" project in Brussels focuses on a target group covering both Belgian nationals (elderly people and underprivileged families) and North African and Asian immigrants. The project endeavours to apply a comprehensive approach to the needs of the population: improvement of housing conditions through a specific decentralized service; opening up of foreign communities to other communities in the area by means of integrated activities in the surrounding school and socio-educational environment; reception at a day centre and social restaurant.

Another Belgian project is located in Antwerp, Ghent and Brussels. It has set up workshops for the poorest Dutch-speaking population of certain deprived areas and provides information and advice concerning their habitat. Furthermore, an important part of the project concerns detailed research and assessment work.

In Greece, the aim of the project is to bring about the renovation of the quarter inhabited by Greek refugees from Asia Minor with the active involvement of the inhabitants. The population is organized in committees by group of houses so as to ensure that the specific nature of the quarter is preserved. This scheme is intended as a pilot scheme for the city of Thebes and for Greece in General. It is intended to show what can be done to combat the delapidation of a town centre whilst avoiding demolition and the building of monotonous accommodation.

The three French projects are located in the Nord, which is a region suffering from industrial decline. In Lens, the APSA works to help the homeless. The aim is to give a new social role to those living on the margins of society. Volunteer workers are permanently available to receive and listen to people in difficulty. Basic primary assistance (meals and accommodation) is organized by voluntary workers and permanent staff at two hostels and three reception centres. Workshops offer waste recuperation and recycling activities.

The collective preventive action scheme at the "Centre Communal d'Action Sociale" of Tourcoing is directed at the long-term unemployed, young people in difficulty, migrants, single parents and people not covered by existing schemes. Itinerant teams use modern means of communication and expression (video, computers, etc.) to contact these categories.

Also in France, a team from the "Centre Alma Gare" in Roubaix is studying the nutritional habits of underprivileged sections of the population and tries to inculcate new habits : shopping, diet, food preparation.

The Liberties project in Dublin has been long established. It is directed at marginals, the elderly, the homeless and "families at risk". The aim is to encourage these people to meet and discuss their problems together and to help them to take measures to combat their poverty. Another project in Tallaght has developed a small local information centre directed mainly at the unemployed. It supports local employment initiatives and advises those receiving social assistance of their rights.

In Italy, the Campania project is based on the creation of cooperatives as alternatives to unemployment and marginalization. The project is located in two different regions : in the Sele area a village destroyed by the 1980 earthquake is being rebuilt with the involvement of the population. Clothing cooperatives providing work for girls have formed an association to set up a services centre for their output. In the Guglianese area, a social centre for drug-addicts and the mentally ill offers animation activities and social and economic reintegration services. One or two cooperatives are to be set up at a later date.

The second Italian project is also located in two different places: in Bari the civic centre is being opened up to various activities of interest not only to specific groups (the handicapped and the elderly) as is the case at present but also their families, friends, neighbours, etc. Another aspect of this project is an effort to combat juvenile delinquency in liaison with institutions dealing with them, more specifically schools. In L'Aquila, the project is working to rehabilitate a group of mental patients from the psychiatric hospital.

In the United Kingdom, the Newham Parents Centre in the old port of London seeks to involve, help and advise parents as regards the education of their children. Workers cooperatives and parents networks have been set up to cater for children and adults needing special help: schools, training, vocational guidance, job-creation, etc.

Several non-mutually exclusive strategies can be discerned in these projects. One primary strategy aims at breaking down the isolation of marginals so that they can jointly discuss their problems and join forces in trying to combat their poverty by helping each other and asserting their rights, etc. In some cases, this aim is pursued by setting up meeting places and opportunities for contact. In other cases, action is more therapeutic in nature where "occupational" activities are offered allowing those concerned to relearn the rhythms of social life, routine living and regular employment. A second strategy consists in making the unemployable employable. This may involve training but in most cases will entail intermediary activities between training and preparation for employment. A third strategy consists in creating activities for those in danger of always remaining outside the employment market. The creation of "ordinary" jobs such as those of cooperatives is one solution; the creation of "intermediary" activities is another.

The first meeting of those in charge of planning integrated urban action schemes was devoted to the social development of urban areas. It revealed the value of a scheme which deals with all the problems of a population group on the territory where it lives including its relationship with other sections of the population. The scheme is operated in a coordinated manner with all those involved (education, the courts, the police, housing authorities, etc.).

The second meeting focused on poverty and local economic development. The development of human resources and the exploitation of the resources of the area were major aspects of the subject discussed. In this connection, it became clear that self-help arrangements or professional assistance were needed in order to make known the opportunities offered by the laws relating to the setting up of businesses. Another guideline was defined in the light of the prospective changes in the rules governing the granting of finance from the European Social Fund and the major increase forecast in the budget of the latter. It was hoped that the geographical areas considered eligible by the ESF would be extended to those conurbations which are becoming underdeveloped. A call was also made for a part of finance from the Fund to be allocated to innovative schemes providing a link between unemployment and work promoted by initiatives and with the involvement of the marginals themselves.

The third meeting provided an opportunity to work on the rehabilitation of old urban areas and ways of "remotivating" their inhabitants.

MARGINALS

The three projects belonging to this category are located in three major European cities and are all addressed to the same typically urban problem : that of the homeless. The "Compagnons d'Emmaus" project is in Paris, that of the "Simon Community" in Dublin and the "Bayswater Hotel Homelessness" project in London.

The projects relate to various categories of homeless people: down-and-outs and tramps, those without accommodation or those in bed and breakfast accommodation. The public covered by these projects includes, in variable proportions depending on the project and the context in which it is conducted, "normal" households who due to their economic circumstances are unable to obtain suitable housing as well as fringe categories classed as psycho-socially disturbed or suffering from other more serious types of marginalization. Furthermore, not only are those concerned affected by what

are called "traditional" problems but their position is exacerbated or newly caused by the shortage of housing (particularly subsidized), persistent unemployment and reduced or unreliable incomes. The number of "social cases" caused by these situations is rising. The number of people affected by the lack of housing is increasing. Many of them are placed in cheap hotels on the housing black market or transferred to poor flats or local authority shelters for the homeless where they have to live in degrading conditions.

Although the working conditions of the projects are specific, an action profile can be discerned from the following: initial action takes the form of immediate placing in inadequate accommodation or help in seeking (or applying for) satisfactory housing. The second action entails promoting access to social entitlements by means of appropriate campaigns particularly with a view to raising public awareness. By aiming at the reintegration of the homeless as citizens with equal rights. This type of action combats their social isolation and deprivation of rights. Lastly, the third action focuses on access to productive activity (employment or other form of occupation) which may include the setting up of community work teams and their use as a means of social readaptation.

The "Compagnons d'Emmaus" project in Paris aims at setting up a reception, work and services centre in Paris for people living in extremely difficult situations. It caters for both single people and couples and even families. The reception centre provides accommodation for three to six months in a community environment. It has a capacity of 60 beds. The used clothing and paper collection workshop serves the needs of the reception centre's clothing service and supplies an outside sales outlet. The community restaurant provides meals for those in difficulty and is also used to provide training and readaptation for work for those at the Centre. Even if the Centre reflects the general thinking of the Emmaus movement, the aim of the project is not to set up a new community of that type or a "precommunal living centre". Those who come to the Centre are in fact housed for a limited period with a view to their social readaptation and reintegration. A further consideration makes the project different from the other Emmaus centres: use of a socio-educational team of professional paid social workers to steer and monitor the integration process.

The Simon Community project in Dublin has much in common with the Emmaus Community project in Paris. The project is directed at those categories who have to sleep rough or in totally unacceptable conditions. Something between 200 and 300 people sleep in the open in Dublin and an even higher number have to share accommodation with friends or sleep in derelict houses. The project is intended not only to provide accommodation for those who have none but also to provide work for them and carry out a survey of this section of the population with a view to developing effective social reintegration methods.

Initially, the project is directed chiefly at those living at three existing centres belonging to the Simon Community but those in charge of the project plan to open two other centres at a later stage so as to cater for a greater number of people. The work provided is paid and consists in recycling bottles, cutting firewood and making kennels. This helps to combat boredom and provides the participants with a regular working routine as well as enabling them to save. Besides this practical work, the project is carrying out a survey to :

- a) study the current and previous occupational skills of those living at the community;
- b) identify their preferences as regards a job;

- c) explore the employment prospects of those who have had training;
- d) assemble and study the results of other employment projects;
- e) draw up two pilot employment projects.

The programme makes provision for devoting the last six months to the assessment of the experiment, particularly as regards jobs obtained by participants outside the centre. In order to carry out this project, the Simon Community will also call on the services of paid staff, more particularly a researcher, a full-time organizer and a part-time assistant for the entire duration of the project. The project will use a planned approach to the problem of the homeless, which has never been done in Ireland. The pilot projects themselves will be launched with the participation of the target group and the success of the work projects, in terms of placements, will be closely monitored.

The Bayswater Hotel project for the homeless is located in an area of London. It is directed at the needs of a very large population (more than 1 000 families) who, having no fixed abode, are placed in cheap bed and breakfast accommodation by the local authorities. Those who are in this situation - most of whom are unemployed or on a very low income - live in constant uncertainty and isolation. Considered by the local authorities as "temporaries" although they may have been living in this way for a number of years, they have difficulty in finding doctors and schools prepared to accept them. The fact that they pay relatively high amounts for their hotel rooms makes them dependent on social assistance and often impels them not to accept any employment offered to them. Some of the families living in Bayswater are from ethnic minorities and the discrimination and disadvantage they already face is compounded by their housing situation. The aim of this project is to make available to these people a centre where they can come at any time for immediate appropriate assistance. The services offered include information on housing, social benefits, rights and entitlements and access to medical, social and educational services. Cooking and laundry facilities are to be placed at their disposal. As regards children, there are plans to set up a nursery and a place where they can play. The long-term objectives of the project are to change the policy on housing. The project employs "advisory" workers, one person for administrative information and one research worker. The aims of the project include entrusting the management of the centre to those who rely on its services.

From the point of view of management, it should be pointed out that the Paris and Dublin projects, whilst having an organization of their own, form part of two larger organizations which have been in operation for a long time. The London project, by contrast, came about one year before the European programme in liaison with other organizations dealing with the problem of the homeless.

THE ELDERLY

Despite the changes which have taken place over in the composition of the poorest section of the population over the last ten years, it is the elderly who are still most at risk as regards poverty. Nine of the projects under the Community programme focus in one way or another on the needs of this category for whom social isolation and health problems are burdens in addition to their economic difficulties.

Four of the nine projects are in the United Kingdom, two in Italy and one each in France, the Netherlands and Luxembourg. The projects are fairly well distributed between urban and rural areas, small villages and large towns such as Rome and Amsterdam. The number of people covered by the projects varies greatly depending on the characteristics of the scheme: the projects which provide individual assistance for those with problems have a relatively low number of users (the Centre de Vie Rurale of Poitiers will provide accommodation for 15 people) whereas those projects which entail social reintegration activities, promotion for self-help activities or efforts to combat the isolation of the elderly are directed at a fairly broad public (Age Concern Lancashire for example covers 66 districts the total population of which amounts to 60 300). Simply calculating the number of beneficiaries under the projects serves no purpose unless account is taken of the specific problems which they are trying to resolve. It should be noted however that five of the nine projects focus on a fairly broad target population, three on a limited population and one on a small number of people.

As regards the definition of the project users, it is interesting to note that three projects are directed at people over 60-65 years of age considering them as "elderly", which may be understood in the case of those in retirement but which raises some doubts in other cases.

Another observation may be made as regards the characteristics of those addressed by the projects. More precisely the question may be asked as to what criterion is used to determine whether these people and families are to be regarded as poor. It is not easy to say to what extent the reason which led to these projects being included in the Community Programme is the fact that they relate to elderly people, to poor people or to people who are elderly and poor. This is a fairly important question because it has a number of implications: a definition of poverty (does old age invariably imply poverty? and, furthermore, what consideration should be given to the non-economic aspects of poverty?), a problem of the methodology of social work (should there be action projects reserved exclusively for the poor?) and lastly a problem as regards the general strategy of the programme (measures to combat poverty go hand-in-hand with efforts to improve the quality of life of the community).

The projects are generally situated in a context where the result of demographic and economic trends is that the number of people who are both vulnerable and elderly is growing. The main problems which the projects are intended to confront are :

- a) poor housing or accommodation;
- b) inadequate or non-existent incomes;
- c) non-use or inadequacy of social assistance;
- d) difficulties in obtaining health care;
- e) material insecurity and social isolation;
- f) failure to assert rights.

Some projects tackle the phenomena concerned from an overall standpoint which refers to the social processes in which the individual situations occur. Other projects aim more at preventing poverty and developing the autonomy of the elderly as well as their integration into the Community in which they live.

The activities conducted under the projects can be classified as follows :

- a) search for and experimentation with various methods of avoiding the institutionalization of the elderly ("CREL" - Rome, "Aide-Senior" - Luxembourg);
- b) measures with regard to existing housing to improve or prolong its inhabitability or implementation of alternative non-institutional solutions ("Entraide Sociale" - Poitiers, "Take-Care" - Caerffili);
- c) improvement of home care services, development of community integration and social reintegration ("ACAP" - Rome, "South Glamorgan Care for the Elderly" - Cardiff);
- d) intergenerational action, based on various methods, designed to give elderly people new roles in relation to other generation groups ("Nederlandse Federatie Bejaardenbeleid" - The Hague);
- e) development of health education, self-help and promotion of access to relevant social entitlements ("Beth Johnson Foundation" - Stoke-on-Trent, "Age Concern" - Lancashire).

The action programme of each project is clearly far more detailed. It is perhaps worthwhile recalling the most salient characteristics:

The aim of the "CREL" project in Rome is to tackle the poverty and isolation of the elderly by developing forms of solidarity between the elderly, voluntary workers, part-time workers and young unemployed social workers. Furthermore, and this is particularly worthy of note, the scale and impact of the experiment will increase thanks to the participation in the project of one of the three most important workers trade unions.

The Luxembourg "Aide Familiale-Aide Senior" project is organizing a meeting centre in a rural environment where people can meet in the day to carry out certain tasks of daily life together. At the same place, household appliances are available for washing, ironing, repairs, etc. with the assistance of elderly people. The voluntary workers involved in the project provide regular assistance for elderly people who, despite handicaps of varying severity, continue to live in their family environment.

By contrast, "Entraide Sociale Poitevine" focuses on a small group of people of rural origin who have had a long past of social isolation and for whom it is difficult to contemplate a return to a non-protected environment. The project provides for the setting up of a reception centre for these people so as to bring them together and employ them for crop-growing, gardening and small-scale stock-rearing whilst integrating them into village life.

The main aim of the "Take Care" project of the Wales Council for Voluntary Action consists in developing local structures to promote the establishment of cooperatives with the maximum participation of the long-term unemployed. The second aim is the organization of a service for the upkeep and repair of housing intended for the elderly, whether owners or tenants, who live on such limited resources that they cannot afford this type of expense.

The "ACAP" project in Rome is intended not only to avoid the unnecessary hospitalization of old people but to develop the reintegration into their own environment of people placed in hospices by organizing home-based services for 200 people. The project also organizes activities in hospital for the chronically ill where many old people are more or less abandoned.

"South Glamorgan Care for the Elderly" offers a care service for the elderly leaving hospital thus avoiding readmissions caused by the difficulties encountered by those living alone when they return to their homes.

The Dutch project has come up with an original way of helping retired people play a useful role in society : it organizes a sort of exchange for the supply and demand for services which retired people can offer free of charge on the basis of their vocational abilities.

The project of the "Beth Johnson Foundation" has, as a whole, one aim : health education. It applies several methods of maintaining and increasing old people's awareness of the need to care for themselves.

"Age Concern Lancashire" sets out to help old people and local benevolent associations to develop services to cover local needs.

In conclusion, it should be pointed out that several projects draw on the labour of old people themselves by applying a very useful self-help method.

INTEGRATED SCHEMES IN RURAL AREAS

The category "Integrated Action in Rural Areas" encompasses ten projects in five countries : three in Ireland, two each in Greece, Italy and the United Kingdom and one in Belgium.

It should first be pointed out that all the projects set out to tackle an "overall" situation of poverty in which the material and economic components are closely linked to those of a cultural and social nature. It should also be noted that in most cases the poverty addressed by the projects goes beyond the situation of a few poor families or groups. It concerns the living conditions of the social community as a whole. It therefore does not entail action geared to a certain number of poor people living in a social environment which is not poor but a far broader and more comprehensive effort to transform the circumstances which define poverty.

It is clear that each local situation is the result of specific factors and that each project is therefore different from the next. Nonetheless a number of characteristics common to poverty situations in the rural environment can be identified :

a) structural economic weakness as shown by an absence of significant economic activity. This situation may ensue from the recent recession of a traditional activity (even industrial). Lack of investment prolongs the economic recession giving rise to many cases of unemployment and inadequate incomes for a large section of the population;

b) demographic destructuring and its direct consequence in the form of a large exodus of the local population, especially its more dynamic sections (giving rise in turn to non-deployment of resources and a decline in activity); the generation imbalance (overpopulation of old people) is accompanied by the presence of young people who, finding it more and more difficult to find work in towns, remain unemployed in their rural environment;

c) decline in social dynamism and cultural levels leading to low self-esteem, apathy, lack of initiative (resulting in some case in widespread alcoholism and lethargy amongst some sections of the population); the gradual loss of some dimensions of cultural identity, traditional skills and trades together, in some cases, with other problems of a psychological or social nature (uprooting of young people, isolation of the elderly, etc.);

d) lack of infrastructures and socio-cultural underdevelopment deriving from inadequate (and, in some cases, non-existent) public transport, social, health and housing services. Weakening of community life accompanied in many cases by the disappearance of traditional socializing centres;

e) absence of means of participation or political expression thus preventing the local community from playing a role in the decision-making networks.

Given this context, all the projects adopt, in proportions which vary according to their specific nature and that of the local situation, an action profile which includes :

a) on the socio-political level, methods which involve the local population in the promotion of the social, economic and cultural activities in their area; fostering of interaction between various groups, local authorities and institutions so as to influence local, regional and national policies in such a way as to end the marginalization of the disadvantaged rural areas;

b) on the economic level, identification of resources which can be used to develop the area on the basis of its specific potential and the exploitation of these resources through the establishment of cooperatives or collective undertakings involving the local population in decision-making and management whilst devoting special attention to the most marginalized;

c) on the cultural level, promotion of the positive aspects of local culture (creativity, communications, social contact, solidarity) and the fostering of corresponding activities (traditional arts and culture, enhancement of natural and archaeological sites, etc.), thus contributing to a strengthening of the values of the local community;

d) on the level of services and infrastructure, community-based improvement and innovation, within the social services fields, of information and advice, transport and communications, with systems and costs adapted to local characteristics and potential.

Most of the projects carry out detailed surveys of the areas concerned, identifying and assembling data on the population, activities, resources and potential of the areas concerned.

The aim of the two Greek projects is to assist the development of the entire area of the regions in which they operate, one (Anogia) laying emphasis on the three existing cooperatives and stockfarming and the other (Ikaria) by means of a scheme to promote tourism, the exploitation of granite deposits and the development of fisheries. Besides economic activity, they are applying measures for the development of the community and local culture. The Belgian "VZW Interleuven Opbouwwerk" project focuses mainly on the problems of the labour market, housing, public transport and the isolation of the elderly and tries to promote the active involvement of those concerned.

The two Italian projects are located in two regions which both have problems of great poverty but with different historical and cultural backgrounds : the North-East of Italy and the Palermo hinterland. The projects set out to intensify social and economic initiatives designed to halt emigration, develop the economy by renewed exploitation of local resources and strengthen the identity and cultural life of the community as a whole.

The British project in West Glamorgan has to tackle the problems of a region where the traditional industries are in decline : a community development programme has been launched based on self-help and mutual assistance. The other British project is located in Northern Ireland. The project uses community-development methods to find solutions for problems of economic underdevelopment. A procedure of consultation with the local authorities and government bodies is in progress; various investment alternatives in agriculture, tourism and fisheries are now being planned.

In Ireland, which is a largely agricultural country, there are three projects. That of Inishowen focuses on combating youth unemployment and the isolation of the elderly. It also entails more general action for the social and cultural development of the region as a whole. The Letterfrack project directly concerns the entire population rather than one or more strictly defined groups. It encourages and promotes the development of the fundamental resources of the community by involving the latter in planning and management. The aim of the third project (Louisburgh) is to reorganize the councils of the three existing communities so as to adopt an integrated approach to the development of the region. The main activity under the project is a "resources centre" as a focus for the community initiatives of the area and to house the offices of all the voluntar.

CHAPTER V

THE EUROPEAN DIMENSION

As demonstrated earlier in this report the Programme has an underlying philosophy which is being proselitised, developed and applied throughout the Community. This philosophy was built into the Council's decision. It starts from the premise that poverty is not just a matter of money or of opening up access to traditional services but of social and cultural exclusion. Thus the programme seeks to combat isolation, alienation and social rejection, reintegrate the poor into the wider society and stimulate the poor to make their own decisions. It therefore promotes particular methods of work which are community-based, responsive to the needs felt by the poor themselves and aimed at developing the confidence of poor individuals and poor groups to assert their rights in a competitive society.

This philosophy and the consequential method of work with the poor is not only new but revolutionary for some Member States. In those countries the programme has stimulated projects incorporating ideas and approaches which elsewhere have had more than fifty years to evolve. This leap of half a century in the evolution of social action is the most important aspect of the European Dimension of the Programme. Moreover, its impact has not been limited to countries where virtually all earlier services have been of a traditional kind. The opportunity to participate in the programme has stimulated several long-established charitable organizations elsewhere to re-think the rationale for their work and accept and implement what, for them, is a wholly new approach. Moreover in the less developed parts of the Community there are experiments with new ways of providing services which attempt to avoid the damaging effects of patterns of services which have developed elsewhere. There may be important lessons from the experience for the more developed countries.

The European Dimension also operates on a second level. It encourages public and private agencies throughout the Community to come together and work together to solve a common problem. It creates partnerships for both economic and social development though the impact of local action is limited where the underlying causes of poverty are located at the national level. It involves the sharing of common resources, i.e. both money and skills, and the development of projects which work in parallel, pooling and learning from mutual experience but bound together by the common philosophy and common objectives set out above. It builds upon the the obligation of the Community to reintegrate those who are currently living in a situation of rejection and exclusion.

In practice, the built-in systems of coordination, evaluation and dissemination have ensured that the different projects work together as a team, exchanging experiences and visits, analysing common problems, and both learning and teaching about different approaches to working with the poor. The practice of holding meetings on the various themes twice a year at the site of one of the projects, if somewhat artificial and strained at first, has now developed its own dynamics and the initiative for further common action now comes from the projects themselves rather than only from the persons appointed by the Commission to stimulate cooperation. Moreover the regular circulation of a monthly Bulletin documenting wider policy developments proposed or initiated in Member States helps to promote awareness of a genuinely European movement to combat poverty. The projects are thus put in their economic and social contexts (both local and national) while the poverty programme represents a form of partnership between local

action and Community action. The agenda for the bi-annual meetings is often decided in close cooperation with the member projects themselves and the host project sometimes provides opportunities for links with other local projects to counter poverty, with local service-providers, political decision-makers and the media. Project members have taken the initiative of circulating papers at transnational meetings describing not only their work but the national situation of the target groups, national policies as they affect this target group and the problems which remain.

Papers have, for example, been circulated on the role of voluntary workers, the role of cooperatives in rural development and involvement of the unemployed.

Secondly exchange meetings and collaboration have now developed over and above anything provided for or subsidised by the programme. Some of these exchange meetings are not restricted to project workers but include members of the target groups themselves. Moreover some project workers are themselves members of the target group concerned. For example, there have been reciprocal visits between young unemployed in Luxembourg and Charleroi. Long-term unemployed people from Wolverhampton have visited Dortmund and vice versa. Comparable exchanges took place between Bielefeld and Dublin. On the integrated urban action theme, there have been visits between French projects, between a Greek and a French project and between an Irish and an Italian project. Three projects in three different countries are planning to launch a joint magazine for children. Exchanges of methods and strategies on the vulnerability of the elderly in relation to hospital authorities have taken place between a Welsh project and an Italian project on the approach to an elderly in the media between an English project and an Italian project and the on targeting of services for the elderly between an English project and a Luxembourg project. English and Luxembourg projects are jointly developing procedures for monitoring single-parent families. There have been similar links in specialised fields between English projects, between a Luxembourg and a French project and between an Irish and an English project. Projects in Berlin and Athens are collaborating on accompanying migrants returning to Greece and two projects, one in Italy and one in Belgium, have jointly organized a summer camp for children.

Further to this, the transnational meetings have been used to establish and strengthen links with national experts and academics, officials, church federations, national voluntary organizations, politicians (local, national and European), relevant international organizations and the media by inviting them to attempt as observers or as speakers, inviting them to attempt at reception or arranging press conferences at the end of meetings. Most of the transnational meetings have been covered by press, radio and/or television. All this has helped to make this Community initiative better understood by those with influence in their own country or at European level and to bring the plight of the poor once more to the attention of the public in general.

One concrete result of all this activity has been to create the links from which further transfrontier transfers of experience, know-how, methods and practices can grow. There has been a continuous development and exchanges of approaches as projects learn from each other and identify particular aspects or practices which could potentially be applied in their own country. This has led to many interesting experiences which have been incorporated into national policies after being reported and commented on in national conferences of professional associations, church, organizations, voluntary organizations and academic conferences. It may well never be possible to point to a particular approach followed in projects not financed by the Community as having had its origin in the collaborative learning process established by the Community. Inevitably ideas which have come about in this

way may need substantial modification and adaptation if they are to be applied in a different national context. At all events, it is still too early in the programme to expect many such ideas to be applied in depth. What is however beyond doubt is that the European dimension of the programme has developed strong roots and is rapidly growing in a variety of different ways - even more than was expected at the outset.

Thus the European dimension has operated on three levels. Firstly it has transferred new ideas and approaches to some Member States and to traditional charitable organizations in older Member States. Secondly it has created a European Community of practitioners and researchers dedicated to work with the poor and on the problems of the poor and begun to form a European Community if not yet of the poor, at least for the poor. Thirdly, it has developed the exchange of experience of specific problems. Most important of all it has helped to create an awareness that the problem of poverty, like the problems of agricultural and industrial policy, economic development, the environment and social security, is not merely a national concern but one which must be seen and acted upon in the context of the Community as a whole.