

Evaluation of
Blanchardstown Area Partnership
Millennium Fund
2003-2010



Conor Ryan
Research and Evaluation Officer
January 2011

Table of Contents

Glossary of Terms	2
Executive Summary	6-7
Case Study of Millennium Fund Client	8
Section 1. Background	9
Section 2. Methodology	10-12
Section 3. Introduction	13-14
Section 4. Rationale for the Millennium Partnership Fund	15-17
Section 5. Survey Findings.....	18-27
Section 6. Impact of Withdrawal of Millennium Partnership Fund	28-30
Case Studies of Millennium Fund Clients.....	32
Section 7. Conclusions	33
Bibliography	36
Appendices.....	37-47

Glossary of Terms

BAP	Blanchardstown Area Partnership
CBYI	Community Based Youth Initiatives
CODAN	County Dublin Areas of Need
ED	Electoral Division
EWG	Education Working Group
HSLO	Home School Liaison Officer
LDSIP	Local Development Social Inclusion Programme
MPF	Millennium Partnership Fund
PIB	Planning Implementation Board
RAPID	Revitalising Areas by Planning, Investment and Development

List of Tables, Pie-Charts, and Images.

Table 1 Third Level Educational Attainment in each of Dublin 15's Electoral Division's

Table 2 Breakdown of Educational Attainment for Third Level Persons

Table 3 Status of Survey Respondents Whose Studies Have Finished

Table 4 Status of Survey Respondents Whose Studies Have Not Finished

Pie-Chart 1 Financial Support Respondents Received

Pie-Chart 2 Non-Financial Support Respondents Received

Pie-Chart 3 How person's heard of Millennium Partnership Fund

Pie-Chart 4 Status of former Millennium Partnership Fund clients

Pie-Chart 5 Age Breakdown of Millennium Partnership Fund clients

Pie-Chart 6 Gender of survey respondents

Pie-Chart 6 Level of satisfaction with quality of information provided by BAP's Millennium Partnership Fund administrator

Map 1 Catchment Area of Blanchardstown Area Partnership

Map 2 RAPID in Blanchardstown

Map 3 Millennium Partnership Fund Clients Addresses Geo-Coded by Electoral Division

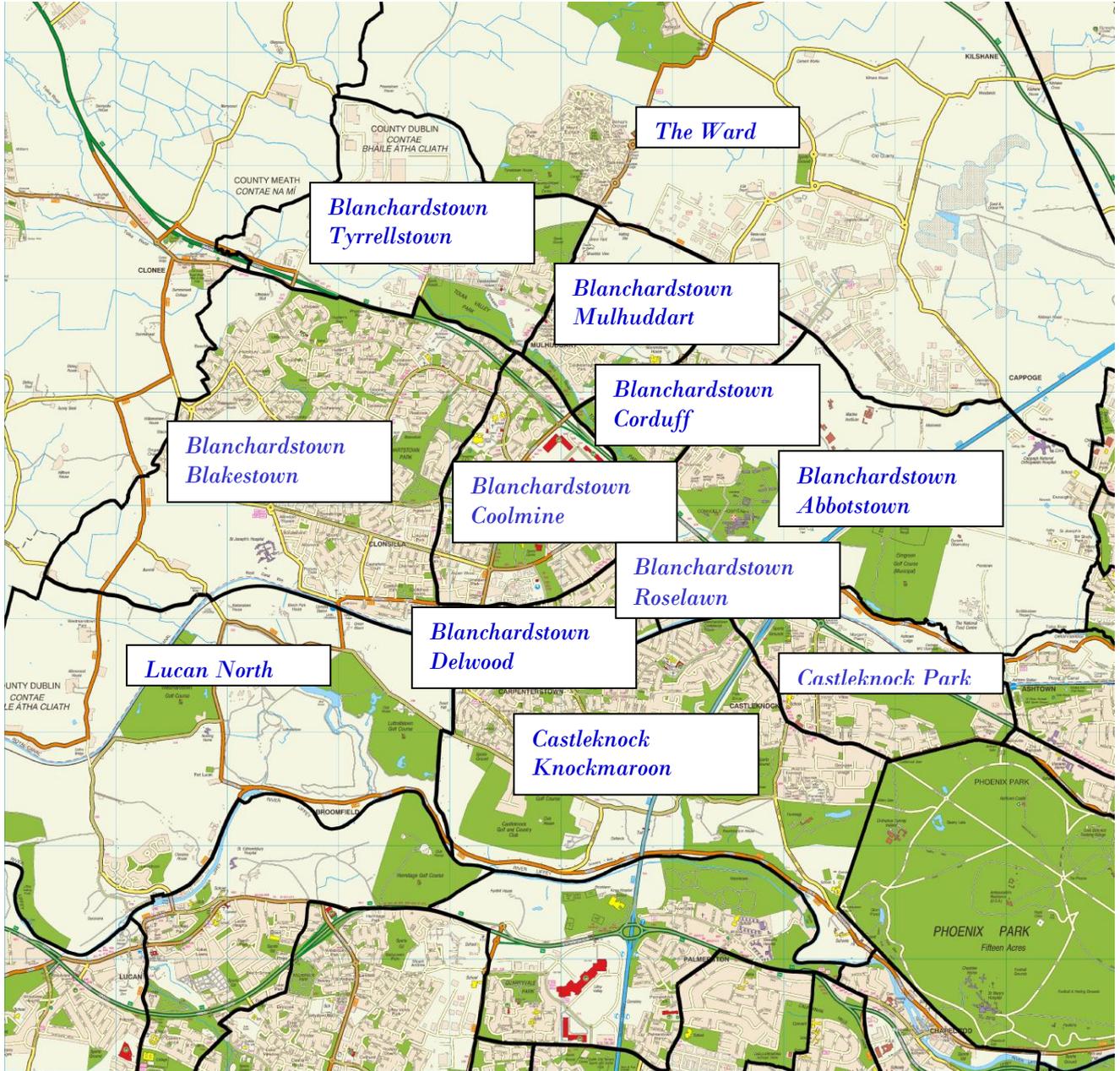
Map 4 Population with No Formal Education or Primary Education Only as a Percent of Population Aged Over 15- Whose Full-Time Education Has Ceased 2006

Map 5 Percentage of the Labour Force Classified as Unemployed across Catchment Area of Blanchardstown Area Partnership

Map 6 Population with Third Level Education as a Percent of Population Aged Over 15 Whose Full-Time Education Has Ceased 2006

Map 1

Catchment Area of Blanchardstown Area Partnership



Executive Summary

Across Dublin 15 there are wide variations in educational attainment. The 2006 Census reveals that **25.1%** of adults in Tyrellstown electoral division for instance have ‘no formal or primary education only’ compared with **3.6%** in Lucan North (See map 4 appendices). In contrast **49.7%** of resident in Abbotstown ED ‘attained a third level qualification’ compared to 12.5% in Tyrrelstown, which is the lowest in Fingal (Map 6 appendices).¹

Successive Clancy reports and journal articles (2001; 2000; 1995; 1988; 1982) highlighted access to higher education among socio-economic groups in Ireland. Data presented in these reports demonstrated that students from lower-socio-economic groups are less likely to complete the Leaving Certificate, achieve lower grades and transfer to third level education than students from other socio-economic groups.

To help counteract this phenomenon the government launched the Millennium Partnership Fund for Disadvantage in September 2000. According to a Higher Education Authority commissioned report (2005, p8). *‘the idea behind the Millennium Fund grew out of experiences some partnership organisations, namely Northside, Finglas and Clondalkin, had with local attempts to boost very low access to third level in their areas’.*

Fleming and Gallagher (2003, p19) note that *‘the Northside Partnership through the*

EU Global Funding Programme, initiated the Higher Education Support Scheme (HESS), which ran from 1994-1999. In 1999 the Department of Education and Science allocated funding for the continuation of the scheme’.

Blanchardstown Area Partnership was granted €663,056 in Millennium Funding from 2003-2010. 341 persons living in Dublin 15 received funding to facilitate access to third level education.

A government decision was made as part of Budget 2009, to discontinue the Millennium Fund from August 2010. The Millennium Fund continued to operate for the 2009-10 academic year; however it will not be available from the 2010-11 academic year onwards.

Blanchardstown Area Partnership conducted a survey of former and existing clients who received supports under the Millennium Partnership Fund to inform a summative evaluation of the scheme.²

Documented information from secondary research including qualitative case studies, annual reports, and administrative databases were also accessed to inform the report. Please refer to pages 10-12 for more information on the research methodology.

¹ A persons probabilities of experiencing unemployment are considerably reduced the higher the level of education attained. The progression from primary education through the education cycle including third level results in a pattern of decreasing risk of unemployment for men and women. The risk of unemployment is significantly higher for a person with only a primary education than for someone who had completed a third level course.

² 109 persons or 32.0% of all clients completed the Millennium Fund survey form. A representative sample of clients was attained by age and gender. Where appropriate the results of the survey are disaggregated between former and existing Millennium Fund clients. A copy of the questionnaire is included in the appendix.

Conclusions

The allocation of funding distribution by POBAL through the Partnership Millennium Fund represented ‘value for money’ to the Irish taxpayer in a Dublin 15 context.

The Millennium Partnership Funding was **efficiently allocated** in accordance with the devised guidelines and criteria.

Students living in ‘disadvantaged communities’ in Dublin 15 were the **primary beneficiaries** of the Millennium Partnership Funding.

Positive progression outcomes in people’s lives were **induced via the Millennium Partnership Fund’** in several ways.

The Millennium Partnership Fund firstly had a **significant impact on the ‘participation and retention rates’** of students from lower socio-economic groupings.

Quantitative data collated via the survey also provides strong evidence of **‘increased labour market participation rates’** and **‘improved overall quality of life’** factors among the former Millennium Fund students.

Further to this the Millennium Partnership Fund also appears to have had an additional **wider positive impact on families living in ‘disadvantaged communities’**.

One can conclude therefore that the **Millennium Partnership Fund was an effective intervention.** ³

Despite government reassurances to the contrary the withdrawal of the Millennium Partnership Fund will

undoubtedly have an adverse effect on **‘disadvantaged communities’ in Dublin 15 and elsewhere around Ireland.**

³ Effectiveness is the most important criterion of any public intervention as recognised by evaluation criteria laid down by the European Union.

Case Study of Millennium Partnership Fund Client

“I attended Blakestown Community School and decided to do a 3 year Health, Science and Physiology degree in Sligo IT. It was a very good course, very broad and you can then specialise in one or two subjects.

I decided to concentrate on nutrition and dietetics. Seven of us from my class went to Aberdeen and I am not finishing the third year of a four year course.

It is very costly for a student to live away from home-particularly accommodation. My current placement in London is particularly expensive. The Millennium Fund really helps with the bills and transport, flights and trains. Living away from home had made me more independent but it was difficult at first. In the future I think I would like to work in hospital as a dietician”

Caroline Donegan September 2006

Section 1. Background

The Millennium Partnership Fund (MPF) was administered by area-based partnership companies and community groups around the country. The MPF provided **financial supports** including travel, course and examination fees, books, materials, equipment, childcare, accommodation and subsistence for further and higher education students who are experiencing financial difficulties whilst attending college.

The MPF also typically provided the following kinds of **non-financial supports** to students such as: study supports, including tuition and study skills, provision of information, guidance and mentoring, CV preparation, interview preparation, examination skills, study groups and LES mentoring. Free one-to-one career and course guidance-aptitude testing, career interest profile, was also provided. Every August students who had just received their Leaving Certificate results were offered free confidential advice from qualified career guidance counsellors. Local schools in Dublin 15 publicised this service before the end of term and sent a reminder out to all students when they received the Leaving Certificate results.

The Millennium Partnership Fund was available to persons:

- Aged 17 and over
- Who lived within the Partnership's catchment area ⁴
- Who were one of the Local Development Social Inclusion Programme target groups ⁵
- Who were eligible for the Council or VEC maintenance grant
- Who were on low incomes

From 2003-2010 the Blanchardstown Area Partnership was granted €663,056 in Millennium Partnership Funding via POBAL. A government decision was made as part of Budget 2010 to discontinue the MPF from August 2010 onwards. The MPF continued to operate for the 2009-10 academic year; however it will not be available from the 2010-11 academic year onwards.

⁴ Blanchardstown Area Partnership's original catchment area was the 8 electoral divisions of Abbotstown, Blakestown, Coolmine, Corduff, Delwood, Mulhuddart, Roselawn and Tyrrelstown. In 2009 the Partnership was requested to expand its operational boundaries to include Castleknock-Knockmaroon, Castleknock-Park, Lucan North, The Ward.

⁵ Long-term unemployed, single parents, refugees, asylum seekers, drug mis-users, ex-offenders, Travellers, older persons, people with disabilities, homeless persons, young people at risk, the underemployed, low income families.

Section 2. Methodology

According to the Higher Education Authority (2005, p8) *'the Millennium Fund was intended by its originators to be selective of partnerships and community groups in very disadvantaged areas with strategic approaches to tackling educational access'*.

The following report will explore whether or not this occurred and many other [key evaluation issues](#) ⁶ such as:

Relevance- to what extent the programmes objectives and strategy are still pertinent in relation to the evolving needs and priorities, social and economic both at a local and national level.

Utility/Equity- how the programme's impacts compare with the needs of the target audience.

Efficiency- how economically have the various inputs been converted into outputs and results.

Effectiveness- To what extent have the intervention's impacts contributed to achieving its specific and general objectives.

Deadweight- Effects that would have taken place as a result to fail and target the intended beneficiaries sufficiently well. As a result other individuals who are not included in the target population end up as beneficiaries.

Substitution and displacement are two closely related terms, which are used to describe situations where the effects of a programme on a particular individual are only realised at the expense of other individuals.

In order to discuss these issues in a comprehensive manner the

Blanchardstown Area Partnership administered a [postal and online survey with all 341 individuals](#) who received financial support Millennium Partnership Fund from 2003-2010.

This cohort included clients who may have finished their studies as far back as 2004 /2005 and students who are still at third level education.

The objectives of the survey were as follows:

- To consult with clients who approached and received Millennium Partnership Fund supports from 2003-2010
- To provide this cohort of individuals with an opportunity to provide feedback, regarding the quality of the supports they received
- To assess the balance between the provision of financial and non-financial supports provided under the Millennium Partnership Fund
- To collate evidence about the impact of the Millennium Partnership Fund in supporting participation and retention in further and higher education amongst students from predominantly RAPID communities
- To identify the labour market activity of clients who finished their course of choice
- To identify the impact of the withdrawal of the Millennium Partnership Fund for students who are not finished their course
- To meet Blanchardstown Area Partnership's obligations to consult periodically with its

⁶ A Guide Ex Post and Intermediate Evaluation January 1997 European Commission

target groups, which in turn will inform its new Strategic Area Action Plan 2011-2013

- To draw out any lessons of relevance for the development and implementation of policy at regional or national levels

The decision to pilot an online educational survey was taken in the expectation that this particular approach could increase the response rate over traditional postal surveys, and enable real time data analysis.

While the later aim was achieved the **on-line survey** response rate was disappointingly poor. Considering that the majority of MFP students were aged in their 20s upon registration, and presumably highly computer literate, this outcome was a surprise. It transpired that the **postal survey** was the preferred method through which, respondents registered their views.

110 persons or 32.3% of all clients completed the Millennium Partnership Fund survey form. A representative sample of clients was attained by age and gender. One can be reasonably confident ⁷ that the findings are an accurate reflection of those who chose also not to participate in the survey.

Where appropriate the results of the survey are disaggregated between former and existing MPF clients.

A copy of the questionnaire is included in the appendices.

Documented information from secondary research including qualitative case studies, annual reports, and administrative databases maintained by the Blanchardstown Area Partnership were also accessed to reference and

⁷ 90% confidence level that the responses are accurate with a margin of error of 7.2%

support the final summative evaluation report.

Towards a Working Definition of Progression

Area Development Management Limited (ADM) engaged with ten Area Based Partnership Companies to carry out in-depth case studies to explore the **concept of progression** in different contexts including:

- Movement to and within education and training opportunities
- Developing skills and labour market capacity through Community Employment
- Increasing one's access to the labour market through the Local Employment Service

According to the ADM Ltd synthesised case study (2000, p9) *'the case studies all agreed that progression is an underlying principle of the Local Development Programme but it is an elusive and difficult concept to measure or define'*. The case study further on also states that *'in education, progression is often perceived as movement into a course of study, completion of a number of linked modules or elements leading to recognised achievement, certification or movement onto further study'*(p11).

The former Irish Evaluation Unit commissioned a similar report to specifically examine progression within the context of the European Social Fund. Not surprisingly no consensus as to what was understood to be progression could be ascertained among all the managers, delivery agencies, supervisors, trainers, front line staff interviewed by the Evaluation Unit.

The ESF report defines progression as *‘facilitating access to a higher level of training or education for those who meet an agreed standard and the level of labour market integration achieved as a result of participation in ESF supported programmes’* (1999, i).

Blanchardstown Area Partnerships summative evaluation of the MPF attempted to capture **progression outcomes** ranging from course retention and certification, plus factors such as personal confidence, quality of life issues and labour market status.

Section 3. Introduction



In January 1998 Blanchardstown Area Partnership's Education Working Group (EWG) met for the first occasion. This internal Partnership body was representative of a broad range of educational expertise and stakeholders throughout the Blanchardstown area. Members of the group spoke of the importance of being part of the decision-making process both in agreeing priorities and also in allocating resources.

Formal Education Sector

- Adult Education Organiser
- Department of Education Representative (local inspector)
- Student representative (6th year)
- 1 local primary school principle (presenting the 7 primary school)
- 2 School Principals representing the two-second level schools
- Home School Liaison Officer

Voluntary Sector

- Blanchardstown Youth Services
- Barnardos
- Youthreach

Community Sector

- Greater Blanchardstown Development Project
- WEB Project (Garda Diversion Programme)
- Travellers Support Group
- Member from the Jesuit Order representing local committee concerned with young offenders

- Parent from Corduff
- Parent from Blakestown/Mountview
- Blakestown and Mountview Neighbourhood Youth Project

Business Sector

- Local Employment Service
- I.B.M.

Blanchardstown Partnership

- Education Co-ordinator
- Partnership Board Representative

With the establishment of the EWG, the process began of identifying more clearly the key issues in relation to educational needs in Blanchardstown. A series of meetings were arranged and the group was facilitated to undertake a number of tasks, which included:

- Developing a clear overview of education provision at all levels in the area
- Assessing needs and identifying gaps
- Identifying key issues
- Agreeing priorities for action by the Partnership
- Identifying possible responses/actions
- Agreeing a programme of actions as an overall education strategy

The EWG review of educational provision highlighted concern about the following categories

- Education and long term unemployed
- Early school leavers
- Ex-offenders
- Travellers post primary education
- **Third level support for students**
- Pre-school provision, speech therapy and language development training
- School Attendance/Absenteeism

Over a series of meetings two strands emerged as key pillars of BAP's approach to educational matters

- Prevention of early school leaving
- *Plus third level access for adults*

From 1998-2002 Blanchardstown Area Partnership funded a 3rd level bursaries programme of which 99 residents of Blanchardstown were direct beneficiaries. The MPF came into operation shortly afterwards in 2003 largely modelled on the Higher Education Support Scheme of the Northside Partnership.

Education was also one of the seven strands of Blanchardstown Area Partnership's 2004-2006 Strategic Implementation Plan. This plan recognised the importance of equality of access and how those inequalities, both in education and society at large, contribute to educational disadvantage. A key priority was to target the education and additional supports required for those most at risk. The strand focuses on an inclusive approach and recognised that some are excluded from education due to their cultural background, age, income or disability.

It also acknowledged that certain target groups may not access existing provision and are at a great distance from any educational interventions. The education strand placed a strong emphasis on integrated models of intervention by voluntary agencies, the statutory services and the community. It sought to promote complementarity between programmes with the needs of children, parents and the community interlinked. It prioritised preventative programmes, but also included extensive provision for the most marginalised in the community to re-engage with educational services.

Aims of the strand

- To provide intensive supports to those at most risk of early school leaving and their families
- To develop comprehensive models of support at all levels of education within schools, community groups, organisations and social support services, deploying models of integration
- To develop and mainstream models of good practice at all levels of education

Objectives

- To reduce the likelihood of early school leaving
- To improve the attendance rates at school
- To target specific marginalised groups
- To increase the level of additional supports thus maximising the education opportunities for those who need them

Section 4 overleaf will now explore the rationale for the MPF, which will help answer one of the key evaluation issues [around the relevance⁸ of this targeted intervention.](#)

⁸ To what extent the programmes objectives and strategy are still pertinent in relation to the evolving needs and priorities, social and economic both at a local and national level.

Section 4. Rationale for the Millennium Partnership Fund

Inequality and disadvantage regrettably remain a factor in parts of Dublin 15 and Ireland today. Haase and Pratschke developed an index that provides a single measurement of the relative affluence and deprivation for an area. The index takes into consideration the underlying dimensions of deprivation such as social class, education attainment, marital status, demographic and labour market deprivation.

Acknowledging this deprivation the Government funds a locally based RAPID Programme⁹ that targets certain areas of Blanchardstown¹⁰ aimed at improving the quality of life and the opportunities available to residents of the most disadvantaged communities (Map 2 in appendices).

There has been a continuous improvement in the level of education amongst adults in Dublin 15 over the past 4 years. The percentage of persons who reported to have no formal or primary education fell to **10.2%** of the overall population according to Census 2006. This is significantly lower than the Dublin equivalent of **16.7%** or the national figure of **18.9%**.

The percentage of Dublin 15's overall population who have a third level qualification rose to **42.3%**, which is also significantly higher than the national average of **30.5%** and the Dublin average of **38.5%**.

⁹ The RAPID programme, which is administered locally by Fingal County Council covers five main themes (1) Youth Education and Training (2) Health and well-being (3) Crime, Drugs and Anti-Social Behaviour (4) Physical environment and infrastructure (5) Strengthening Communities.

¹⁰ RAPID covers all of the Corduff ED, Wellview and Parslickstown Estates in Tyrellstown ED, Dromheath Estate in Mulhuddart ED and finally Whitestown, Sheepmoor, Fortlawn, Whitechapel estates in Coolmine ED.

However, there are wide variations in educational attainment across Dublin 15. For instance **25.1%** of adults in Tyrellstown ED have no formal or primary education only compared with **3.6%** in Lucan North (Map 4 appendices). **49.7%** of resident in Abbotstown ED attained a third level qualification compared to **12.5%** in Tyrrelstown, which is the lowest in Fingal (Map 6 appendices).

The 2006 Census demonstrates that person's probabilities of experiencing unemployment are considerably reduced the higher the level of education attained. The progression from primary education through the education cycle including third level results in a pattern of decreasing risk of unemployment for men and women. The risk of unemployment is significantly higher for a person with only a primary education than for someone who had completed a third level course (Map 5 appendices).

Utility/Equity

We shall now turn to explore the **utility and equity**¹¹ of the Millennium Partnership Fund scheme. In order to explore and discuss this issue, quantitative and qualitative data collated by the Partnership will be presented as evidence of the MF's outcomes and impacts.

As was previously stated '*the Millennium Fund was intended by its originators to be selective of partnerships/community groups in very disadvantaged areas with strategic approaches to tackling educational access*'.

¹¹ How the programme's impacts compare with the needs of the target audience.

Table 2 provides a detailed breakdown of the percentage of persons who have a third level education across the 12 EDs of Dublin 15, the deprivation score and population figures for these EDs.

In order to assess whether students from the most disadvantaged EDs of Dublin 15- Coolmine, Corduff, Mulhuddart and Tyrrelstown (highlighted by an *) were indeed the actual beneficiaries of the programme the addresses of the MF clients were geo-coded¹² (Map 3 page 31).

The numbers of students for each ED were divided by the population for that ED to arrive at a per head of population average. It is possible to ascertain that 103 students from Coolmine received funding. If this figure is divided by total population for the ED of 10,774 persons you arrive at .00956. In comparison the equivalent for Blakestown ED is .0039. So even though more persons from the Blakestown ED received funding, persons living in Coolmine were 2.45 times more likely to receive funding. Tyrrelstown recorded the highest score of a .0112, followed in turn by Mulhuddart .0072 and Corduff .006.

It was only from 2008 onwards that persons living in 4 EDs of Castleknock Knockmaroon, Castleknock Park, North Lucan and The Ward could apply for a grant. Prior to this persons living in these EDs technically could not register for funding. This would partially explain why so few students from these areas received funding from 2003-2010.

According to educational attainment data collated through the 2006 Census, more women than men had attained a third level qualification across Dublin 15. If the MPF were 'gender proofed' one should expect to find more men than

women as beneficiaries of the programme overall. However, it emerges that 58% of persons who received Millennium Funding according to administrative data sources were women.

¹² The Central Statistics Office website has a software application that automatically geo-codes a postal address across different administrative boundaries including EDs.

Table 1
3rd level educational attainment in each of Dublin 15's Electoral Division's

Electoral Division¹³	Pop 3rd level Education %	Deprivation Score of each ED	Population 2006
Abbotstown	49.7	1.6	4,122
Blakestown	39.4	7.7	32,288
Coolmine *	29.5	-6.1	10,774
Corduff *	19.5	-9.3	4,806
Delwood	45.5	9.5	4,955
Mulhuddart *	33.4	-3.8	2,785
Roselawn	36.2	9.5	1,831
Tyrrelstown *	12.5	-19.8	2,317
Castleknock Knockmaroon	56.0	19.3	17,115
Castleknock Park	53.0	21.2	4,395
North Lucan	58.2	25.0	1,163
The Ward	49.6	12.4	5,181
Total			90,974

Source: GAMMA

Table 2
Breakdown of Educational Attainment for Third Level Persons

ED	Males	Females
Abbotstown	543	634
Blakestown	3,362	3,879
Coolmine *	838	948
Corduff *	247	293
Delwood	736	752
Mulhuddart *	210	243
Roselawn	220	250
Tyrrelstown *	30	43
Castleknock Knockmaroon	2,782	2,966
Castleknock Park	783	714
North Lucan	198	205
The Ward	742	815
Total	10,691	11,742
National	47.7%	52.3%

Source: GAMMA

¹³ The ED's marked with * are the 4 most disadvantaged in Dublin 15..

Section 5 Survey Findings

Balance Between Financial and Non-Financial Supports

Millennium Partnership Fund clients were entitled to claim for several financial supports. The financial support that the greatest number of MPF clients availed of based on the survey responses was ‘transport costs’ (81) followed by ‘books’ (35) and ‘course and examination fees’ (17) (See Pie-Chart 1 overleaf).

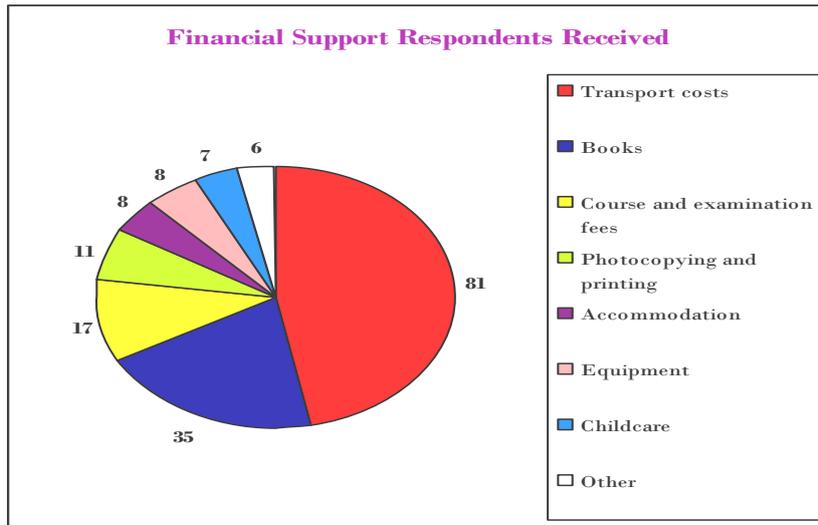
A comparatively low percentage of survey respondents (34%) accessed non-financial supports. Of the cohort who did so, access to laptops and personal computers on campus was most favoured, followed by access to the

college library and career guidance (Pie-Chart 2).

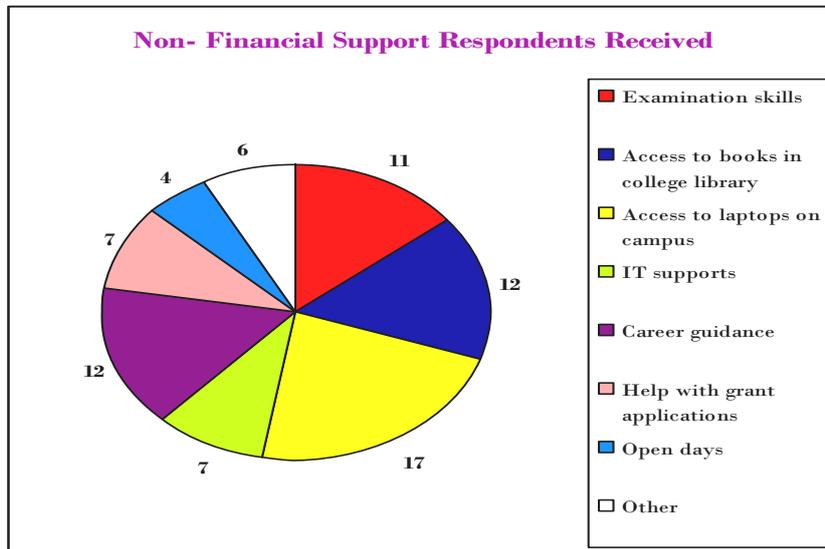
Awareness of Millennium Fund

Just over one half (55%) of respondents indicated that they came to learn about the Millennium Partnership Fund via ‘word of mouth’ from a contact such as a friend, neighbour or a person already on the scheme. 13% discovered about the fund via the Blanchardstown Area Partnership’s ‘website’ and a further 9% through the ‘Local Employment Service / JOBLINK’ (See Pie-Chart 3).

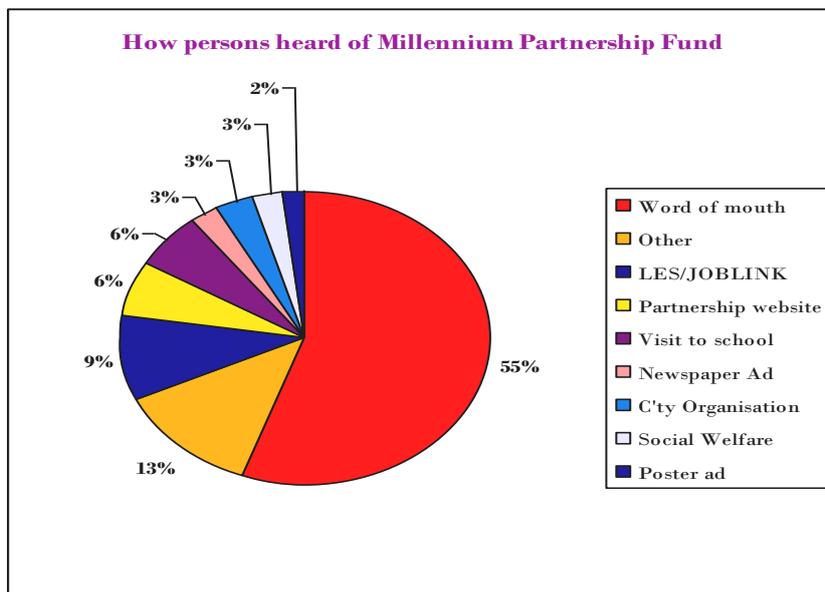
Pie Chart 1



Pie- Chart 2



Pie- Chart 3



*Efficiency¹⁴-Levels of Funding
Allocated to Deprivation Levels*

The Millennium Partnership Funding was allocated in accordance with the guidelines and criteria devised by Area Development Management Ltd (now known as POBAL) and approved by the Department of Education and Science. As a result individuals from disadvantaged communities in Dublin 15 benefitted to a greater extent that persons from the more affluent neighbourhoods.

This was ascertained by geo-coding the addresses of all MPF clients across respective EDs. This data was weighted according to the population levels for these EDs and then compared and contrasted to deprivation/affluence levels and educational attainment levels for these EDs.

“The BAP has been one of a few supports that helped me to achieve what I always wanted!”

The overwhelming majority (**83.33%**) of survey respondents noted that they were ‘very satisfied’ with the quality of the information provided to them by the Millennium Partnership Fund Administrator. A further **15.38%** stated they were ‘satisfied’.

“The administrator was very informative and helped me gain access to VEC grant-filling out forms etc

*Gender Proofing of Millennium
Partnership Fund*

Volume 10 of the 2006 national Census – ‘Education and Qualifications’ demonstrates that more women than men have attained a third level qualification across Dublin 15. Millennium Partnership Fund administrative data reveals that **58.0%** of participants who acquired funding under the programme were women. From a gender proofing angle greater efforts could have been made to actively target more men to register for the MPF.

¹⁴ How economically the various inputs have been converted into outputs and results.

Progression Outcomes Effectiveness-

The 2005 Millennium Partnership Fund national evaluation did not present data on drop out rates, progression or awards gathered. The authors of the report claim that data was not routinely gathered.¹⁵ In conclusion the Higher Education Authority published report (2005, p32) states that *'it is thus difficult to conclude that the Fund has been instrumental in supporting students' retention and progression at college. The amounts of money distributed by some groups are too small to have major decision-making around retention and progression per se'*.

Based on the 59 survey respondents who completed their studies it is now possible to conclude that a significant element of progression and positive changes in people's lives was induced via the Millennium Partnership Fund. In August 2010, the Blanchardstown Area Partnership gathered survey data from past students that enables us explore the overall effectiveness¹⁶ of the MPF.

Matrix table 1 presents evidence about the outcomes¹⁷ and the impacts of the Millennium Fund scheme across Dublin 15.

When asked in what way has finishing your course and obtaining a qualification meet your own needs and/or improved your employment opportunities in the short term in your view- the following are the responses received (Matrix Table 1 on page 22)

¹⁵ Area-Based Partnership Companies were required to fulfil quantitative and qualitative reporting requirements under the 2000-2006 Local Development Social Inclusion Programme. This included the setting of detailed quantitative primary and progress targets for the 3 Measures of the LDSIP, which were submitted for agreement with ADM. In addition Partnerships were also required to participate in research case studies on thematic issues such as 'equality in education'. The Millennium Partnership Fund, however, was not funded via the LDSIP. For this reason monitoring arrangements were not as stringent.

¹⁶ To what extent have the intervention's impacts contributed to achieving its specific and general objectives.

¹⁷ Outcomes can occur for individuals, families, communities, organisations, the environment, policy.

Matrix Table 1

<p>73%</p> <p>Of respondents indicated that their confidence levels has increased as a result of going to third level education</p>	<p>73%</p> <p>Stated their CV had improved as a result of completing the course</p>	<p>63%</p> <p>Reported that it helped them either find work or work experience</p> <p><i>“Helped me achieve my dream of becoming a Beauty Therapist, without the help of the Millennium Partnership, I would have really struggled to get my career. Thank you”</i></p>	<p>51%</p> <p>Noted that the MF had provided them with a career path plan</p> <p><i>“The degree gives me the opportunity to work abroad, not just within Ireland”</i></p>
<p>43%</p> <p>Indicated that it had helped increase their network of friends</p>	<p>35%</p> <p>Suggested that attending college had improved their quality of life</p>	<p>27%</p> <p>Stated that it has improved their level of income</p> <p><i>“I was determined to attend my chosen course but the funding received from Millennium Partnership funding helped to lessen the financial burden on my family and allowed me to concentrate on getting my studies done.”</i></p>	<p>22%</p> <p>Reported it had improved their family life</p> <p><i>“By completing my degree I have really improved my quality of life and increased my career prospects”</i></p>

Impact of Millennium Partnership Fund on Participation and Retention Rates

Phillips and Eustace (2005, p32) note that ‘rates of non-presence vary greatly across the different fields of study. Profession-orientated courses tend to display the highest rates of progression while the lowest progression rates are found among Engineering, Construction and Computer Science courses. At 27%, Computer Science has the highest rate of non-presence across all sectors and levels’

100% of past students who completed the BAP survey indicated that they ‘successfully completed their third level studies’. This finding would suggest that the Millennium Partnership Fund was a very important intervention in supporting students from lower socio-economic groupings complete their studies and attain a third level qualification.

Labour Market Participation

Critically the survey captured data concerning respondents progression patterns towards the labour market since completing their studies. The status of respondents ‘prior to and after finishing their course’ of choice was asked via a multi-choice option menu. The data in pie-chart 4 should be read in conjunction with table 4.

Pie Chart 4 demonstrates that **36%** of respondents (19) reported to have taken up ‘full time open employment’ since completing their studies and a further **29%** or 14 persons indicated that they are now in ‘part-time employment’¹⁸

¹⁸ 13 persons suggested they were in part-time employment prior to starting their course of choice. It was not possible to ascertain whether these same 13 individuals remained in part-time employment throughout their studies and are among the 14 individuals who are now in part-time employment.

“I would not have the job today if I did not complete my course. It has opened many doors for me”

3 other individuals (6%) indicated that they are also ‘attending further education’ presumably to attain a primary degree, Masters Qualification or a PhD.

“I hope to complete a PhD in the future which wouldn’t have been possible without a degree, and after the PhD I hope my job prospects will be really good”

Respondents were also asked in what way did they expect completing their course to affect their employment prospects in the *medium to longer term*.

“I can see already that having completed my course will help me develop and climb my career ladder quicker than those in my company who haven’t a similar qualification”

“Future employment in the area of work I studied. It also makes me employable in foreign countries as I wish to travel with my qualifications”

“Not very much in this economic climate”

“Due to recession and employment embargo in the HSE I am struggling to find full time work, so I am furthering my studies in September 2010”

One of the shortcomings with many evaluation reports is that the outcomes and impacts associated with programmes are solely individualised. In other words some evaluations fail to consider that a programme may also have an indirect impact on the beneficiaries ‘wider family’

or the ‘local community’ in which they live.

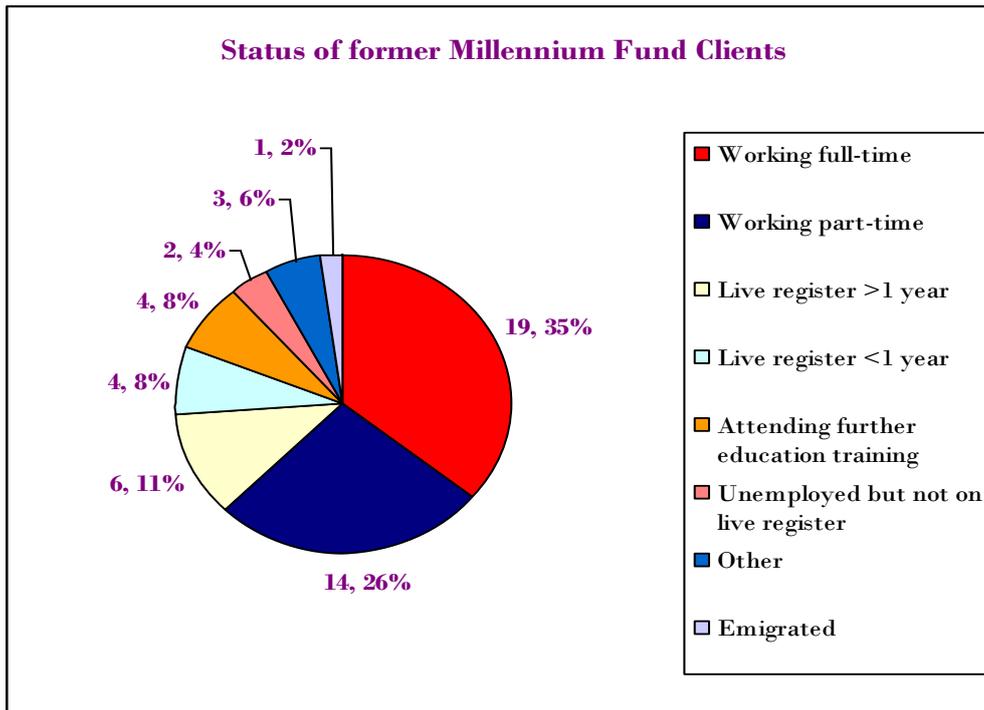
As the average household occupancy rate in Dublin 15 is 3.1 persons (Ryan 2009) the impact of the Millennium Partnership Fund intervention is potentially far greater than one might initially consider. At least 1,057 persons could feasibly be direct and indirect beneficiaries.¹⁹

Blanchardstown Area Partnership’s survey also captured some evidence that the MPF grant had a positive impact on ‘families living in disadvantaged communities’. 7 fewer respondents who have finished their studies indicated they were now ‘living in low income family units’²⁰ and 21 young adults have also ‘moved out of the family home to gain independence’.

¹⁹ 341 households X 3.1 persons average occupancy rate= 1,057 persons

²⁰ Target groups of the Local Community Development Programme

Pie-Chart 4



**Table 3
Status of Survey Respondents Whose Studies Have Finished**

	Before Starting Course	After Finishing Course	Net Change
Student living at home	29	8	-21
Working full time	1	19	+18
Working part time	13	14	+1
Seasonally employed	4	0	-4
Community employment	1	0	-1
Attending further education training	1	4	+3
Signing on live register > 12 months	3	6	+3
Signing on live register < 12 months	2	4	+2
Unemployed but not on live register	1	2	+1
Low Income Family Unit	13	6	-7
Other	2	3	+1
Emigrated		1	1
Total	100%	100%	

One of the clear oversights in the 2005 national evaluation was that it did not capture quantitative data and evidence regarding 'intermediate outcomes'.

When the **2009/2010 cohort of MPF clients were** asked in what way has starting your course met your own needs and/or improved your employment opportunities in the short term in your view, the following outcomes were captured. (Please refer to Matrix table 2 on page 28)

50 of the 51 students (94%) who started out studying in more recent years with the support of the MPF are still in college. This additional data set gives further credence to the

earlier finding that the MPF was a very important intervention in supporting students from lower socio-economic groupings 'remain on in third level education for longer time periods' than were they not to have received a grant in the first instance.

Because many of the later survey respondents are due to transfer into the 2nd, 3rd or final year of their course is it not possible to provide a 'pre and post' Millennium Partnership Fund scenario although the question was asked.

However, it is possible to conclude at this moment in time that less persons are 'signing on the live register' or 'living in low income families'.

Matrix Table 2

15.0%	12.6%	11.5%	11.5%
Of respondents indicated that their confidence levels has increased as a result of going to third level education	Noted that the MF had provided them with a career path plan	Reported that it helped them either find work or work experience	Suggested that attending college had improved their quality of life
10.0%	8.0%	8.0%	5.8%
Stated their CV had improved as a result of attending the course	Indicated that attending college had helped increase their network of friends	Stated that it has improved their level of income	Reported it had improved their family life

Table 4 Status of Survey Respondents Whose Studies Have Not Finished

Status of Respondents	Before	Now
Student living at home	20	-
Working full time	0	1
Working part time	3	4
Seasonally employed	1	1
Community employment	1	1
Attending further education training	10	6
Signing on live register > 12 months	6	1
Signing on live register < 12 months	1	1
Unemployed but not on live register	2	2
Low Income Family Unit	12	6
Other	2	-
Not applicable		25
Total	100%	100%

Section 6 Impact of withdrawal of Millennium Partnership Fund on communities across Dublin 15

It is difficult to determine the exact impact of the withdrawal of the Millennium Partnership Fund.

Batt O’Keeffe, Minister, Department of Education and Science spoke in the Dail (see overleaf) about the range of supports such as a means-tested student maintenance grant and a Student Assistance Fund that apparently will be available to future third level students.

What is certain is that not all of the 2009/2010 MPF students will qualify for grants next year. Students who are attending Post Leaving Certificate courses at faculties such as the Liberties, Dunboyne, Colaiste Ide, Crumlin etc, will not have fees paid by VEC in 2010/2011 or access to any other fund. This will therefore be a major problem for people living in RAPID areas.

Part time college students do not qualify. Foreign nationals who are more likely to live outside of the RAPID area many of whom availed of the Millennium Partnership Fund in more recent years will also be more likely to miss out.

Of the cohort of MPF survey respondents, who are not yet finished third level a quarter (24.5%) indicated that they will ‘have to get a student loan’ as a result of the withdrawal of the MPF. A further 11.3% stated that they would ‘not be able to complete the final year of their course’. 54.7% suggested that withdrawal of the schemes will ‘financially stretch them and their family’.

According to data extracted from the Blanchardstown Area Partnership’s Millennium Partnership Fund administrative records 28% of all students in Dublin 15 who received funding started out attending a PLC between 2003-2010. All else being equal 28% of future school leavers will not be able to access the Student Assistance Fund or have their books and travel covered while attending third level.

Students who are now leaving school who ordinarily would have been able to apply for the MPF will also lose out. If this is projected forward several years it would amount to several thousand persons across persons living the catchment area of the 52 Local Development Companies.

Arthur Morgan (Louth, Sinn Fein) (28th January 2010)

To ask the Minister for Education and Science if he will reverse the budget decision to abolish funding to the millennium partnership fund

Batt O’Keeffe (Minister, Department of Education and Science; Cork North West, Fianna Fail) (28th January 2010)

“The Deputy will recall that measures had to be taken in the budget to safeguard the future payment of income supports in the welfare system by reducing the levels of payments. Similarly, the withdrawal of the Millennium Partnership Fund was considered necessary to ensure that the system is not extended beyond what current resources will allow. The Millennium Partnership Fund, introduced by the Government from 2000, was disbursed by local partnership companies in disadvantaged area, mostly in the form of small grants to individual students to cover costs of items such as books and travel. Most students in receipt of support from the fund will continue to qualify for the means-tested student maintenance grant and many will benefit from the substantially higher special rate of grant. In addition, the Student Assistance Fund, administered by access officers in individual academic institutions, will continue to be available to meet costs in hardship cases for items such as books and travel at third level”

Deadweight ²¹

Previously it was pointed out that the Millennium Partnership Funding was allocated in accordance with the guidelines and criteria. As a result individuals from disadvantaged communities benefitted to a greater extent that persons from some of the more affluent neighbourhoods of Dublin 15. A summative evaluation should, however, also explore issues relating to deadweight and substitution effect. In relation to the later **almost one third (32%)** of individuals who have completed their third level studies indicated that they ‘**would not have been able to register for their course**’ of choice had they not received the MPF.

“I could not have attended college or be where I am today, had it not been for the Millennium Partnership”

60% suggested that they ‘**still would have registered for the course**’ had they not received funding. Although the majority suggest that they would have attended third level education having to pay for their own transport, books, this would have impacted negatively on many of them in terms of ‘achieving lower grades’ and being ‘forced to take out student loans thus getting into debt’ based on additional qualitative data gathered.

“I was determined to attend my chosen course but the funding received from Millennium Partnership funding helped to lessen the financial burden on my family and allowed me to concentrate on getting my studies done”

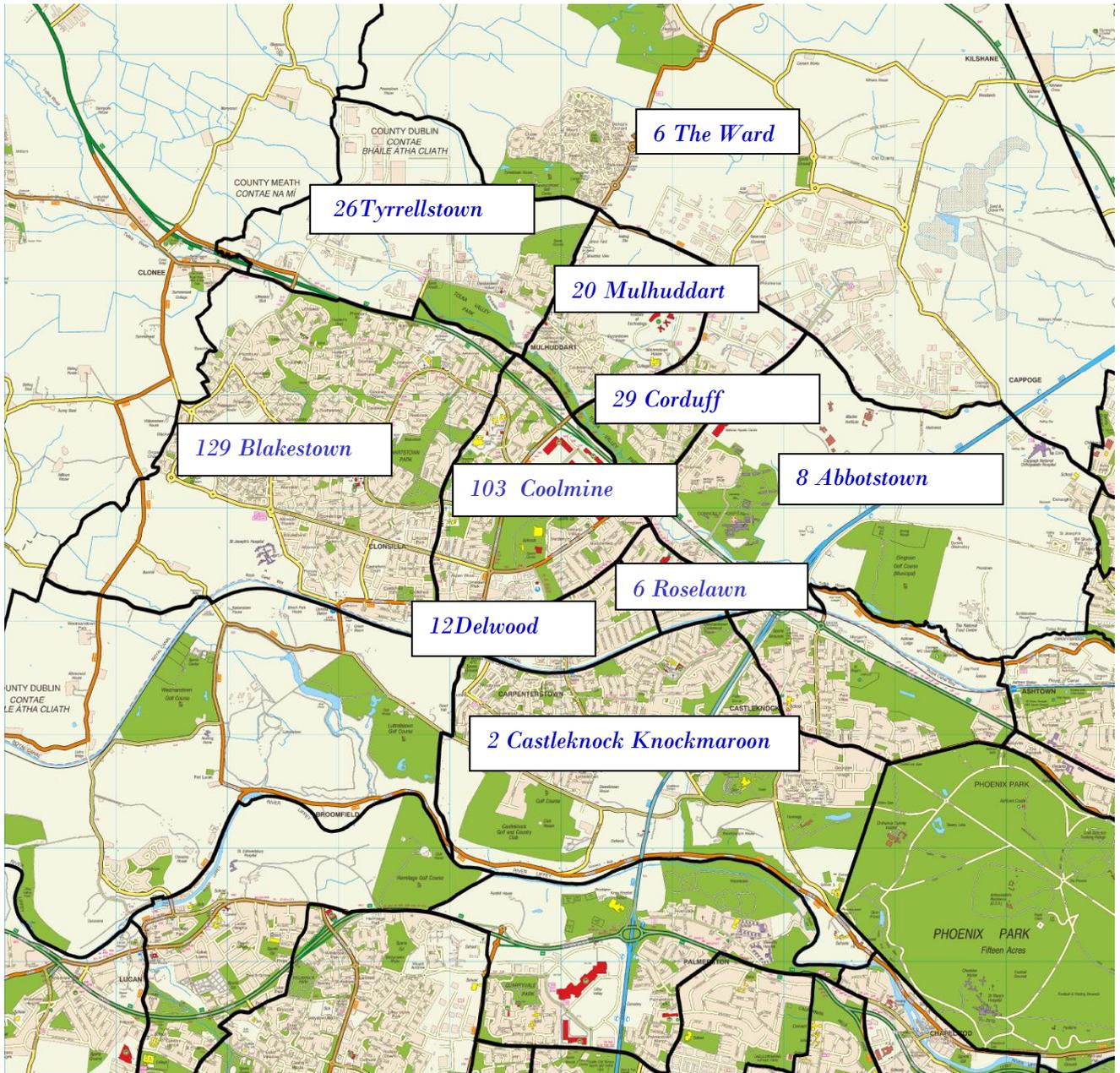
“I received access and government grants during third level. If I had not received the funding I don’t think I would have achieved the grade I did”

“I would have had to take out a loan, which would have taken me considerable time to repay”

²¹ Effects that would have taken place as a result to fail and target the intended beneficiaries sufficiently well. As a result other individuals who are not included in the target population end up as beneficiaries.

Map 3

Millennium Partnership Fund Clients Addresses Geo-Coded by Electoral Division



MAP Source: Ordnance Survey Ireland/Government of Ireland Licence Number NE 00002907

Case Studies of Millennium Partnership Fund Clients

Elvedina Sadagic September 2006

“I have just finished a four-year degree course in International Business and Languages in Dublin Institute of Technology. I attended Hartstown Community School. I was with the Millennium Fund for three years.

There was less pressure to take on a part-time job and more time to study. I was in Germany for one year as part of the course and the Millennium Fund was a great help there as well.

I am working in finance-I am happy with my position and what I achieved. Finishing at College opened many doors and makes it easier to fund your feet in the work-place”

Anne Turner September 2006

“The idea of going back to college was always on the back burner. I was working part-time in the Vocational Education Centre and actually went to mock interviews set up by the Adult Education Service last May. I met with the Access Officer from Dublin City University.

I am now doing a three year-degree course in Education and Training in DCU- the course is brilliant- I could get a job eventually working with education and training for adults. This is the first full-time degree of this type.

I would not have been able to manage with the Millennium Fun. It has given me the freedom to study at home and is a great help with books and other costs”

Section 7 Conclusions

The allocation of funding distribution by POBAL through the Millennium Partnership Fund represented ‘value for money’ to the Irish taxpayer in a Dublin 15 context.

The Millennium Partnership Funding was efficiently allocated in accordance with the devised guidelines and criteria.

Students living in ‘disadvantaged communities’ in Dublin 15 were the primary beneficiaries of the Millennium Partnership Fund.

Positive progression outcomes in people’s lives were induced via the Millennium Partnership Fund’ in several ways.

The Millennium Partnership Fund firstly had a significant impact on the ‘participation and retention rates’ of students from lower socio-economic groupings.

Quantitative data collated via the survey also provides strong evidence of ‘increased labour market participation rates’ and ‘improved overall quality of life’ factors among the former Millennium Partnership Fund students.

Further to this the Millennium Partnership Fund also appears to have had an additional wider positive impact on families living in ‘disadvantaged communities’.

One can conclude therefore that the Millennium Partnership Fund was an effective intervention.²²

Finally despite government reassurances to the contrary the withdrawal of the Millennium Partnership Fund will

undoubtedly have an adverse effect on ‘disadvantaged communities’ in Dublin 15 and elsewhere around Ireland.

²² Effectiveness is the most important criterion of any public intervention as recognised by evaluation criteria laid down by the European Union.

Select Quotes of MPF participants

“The BAP has been one of a few supports that helped me to achieve what I always wanted!”

“Give me the foundations to life-long career”

“Better chance of a better job”

“Furthered my chances of following my career path of adult guidance”

“Further employment in the area of work I studied. It also make me employable in foreign countries as I wish to travel with my qualifications”

“Find a job that I like and that pays well”

“It has giving me more confidence and it has made me want to get a job”

“I’m qualified to pursue a career in the area as well as pursue maters and further studies”

“Paying for transport costs made things easier and took away the need of making sure to get the right ticket etc”

“The administrator was very informative and helped me gain access to VEC grant-filling out forms”

“I can see already that having completed my course will help me develop and climb my career ladder quicker than those in my company who haven’t a similar qualification”

“I would have really struggled to complete the course without the help of the Millennium Fund”

“I was determined to attend my chosen course but the funding received from Millennium Partnership funding helped to lesson the financial burden on my family and allowed me to concentrate on getting my studies done.”

“I could not have attended college or be where I am today, had it not been for the Millennium Partnership

“It would have affected my college commitments as I would have to work more hours during my college year”

“The staff at the Blanchardstown Area Partnership were always very professional, helpful and friendly”

“I would have still registered, however, it would have been very difficult to get to and from without the help of the monthly bus pass”

“Due to recession and employment embargo in the HSE I am struggling to find full-time work, so I am furthering my studies in September 2010!”

“Due to the recession I cannot get a job”

“Not very much in this economic climate”

“I have had difficulty of finding work in relation to my qualifications for my studies”

Bibliography

Area Development Management (2000) Insights No. 13 Case Study *Challenges to Progression*. Dublin: ADM Ltd.

Central Statistics Office Volume 10 of the 2006 national Census – ‘*Education and Qualifications*’ Dublin: Central Statistics Office

Clancy, P. (2001) *College Entry in Focus: A Fourth National Survey of Access to Higher Education*. Dublin: Higher Education Authority.

Clancy, P. (1995) *Access to College: Patterns of Continuity and Change*. Dublin: Higher Education Authority.

Clancy, P. (1988) *Who Goes to College?* Dublin: Higher Education Authority.

Clancy, P. (1982) *Participation in Higher Education*. Dublin: Higher Education Authority.

Clancy, P. and Wall, J. (2000) *Social Background of Higher Education Entrants*. Dublin: Higher Education Authority. Commission on the Points System. (1999) Report on the Commission on the Points System. Dublin: Stationary Office

ESF Programme Evaluation Unit (1999) *Progression and the European Social Fund*. Dublin.

Evaluation EU Expenditure Programmes *A Guide Ex post and Intermediate evaluation* (1997), Brussels: European Commission.

Fleming, T and Gallagher, A. (2003) *Power, Privilege and Points The Choices and Challenges of Third Level Access in Dublin*. Dublin: Dublin Employment Pact.

Mooney, O et al. (2010) *A Study of Progression in Irish Higher Education*. Dublin: Higher Education Authority.

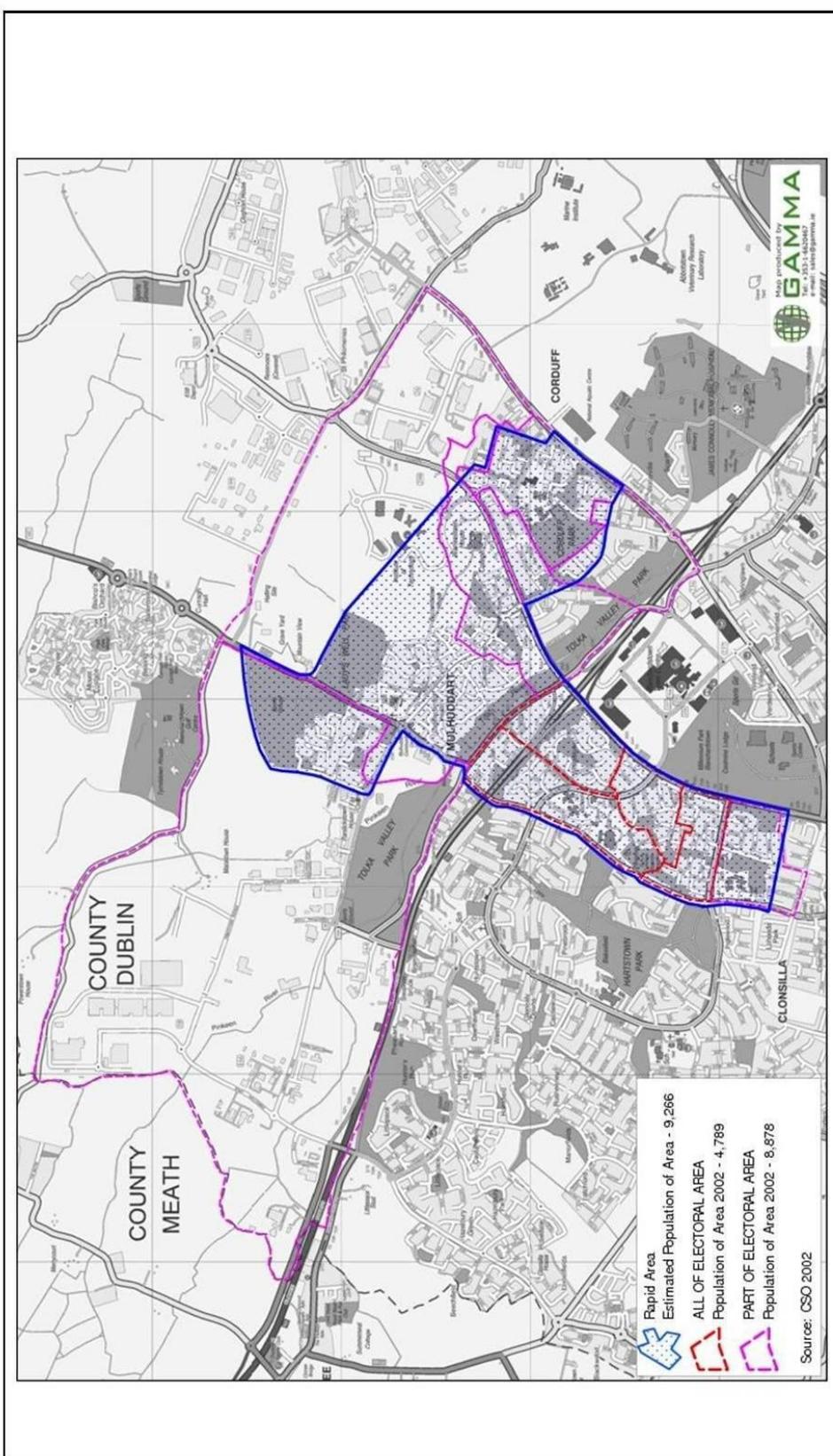
Phillips and Eustace, A. (2005) *Evaluation of the Millennium Partnership Fund for Disadvantage*. Dublin: Higher Education Authority.

Ryan, C. (2009) *Socio Economic Profile of Dublin 15, Blanchardstown Area Partnership*.

Ryan, C. (2004a) *Evaluation of the 3rd Level Bursaries Programme, Blanchardstown Area Partnership*.

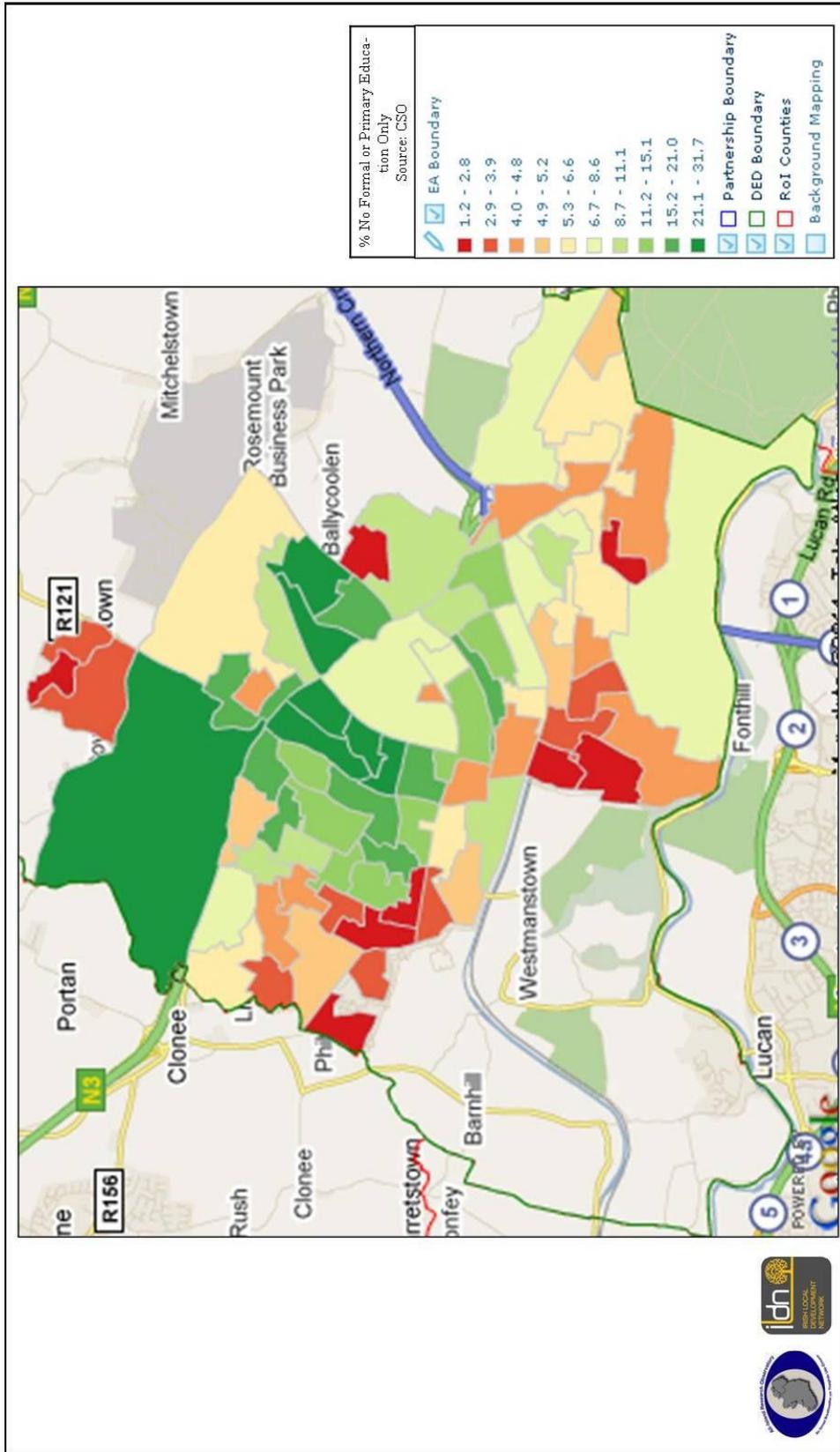
Ryan, C. (2004b) *Equality in Education A Case Study, Blanchardstown Area Partnership*.

Map 2 RAPID

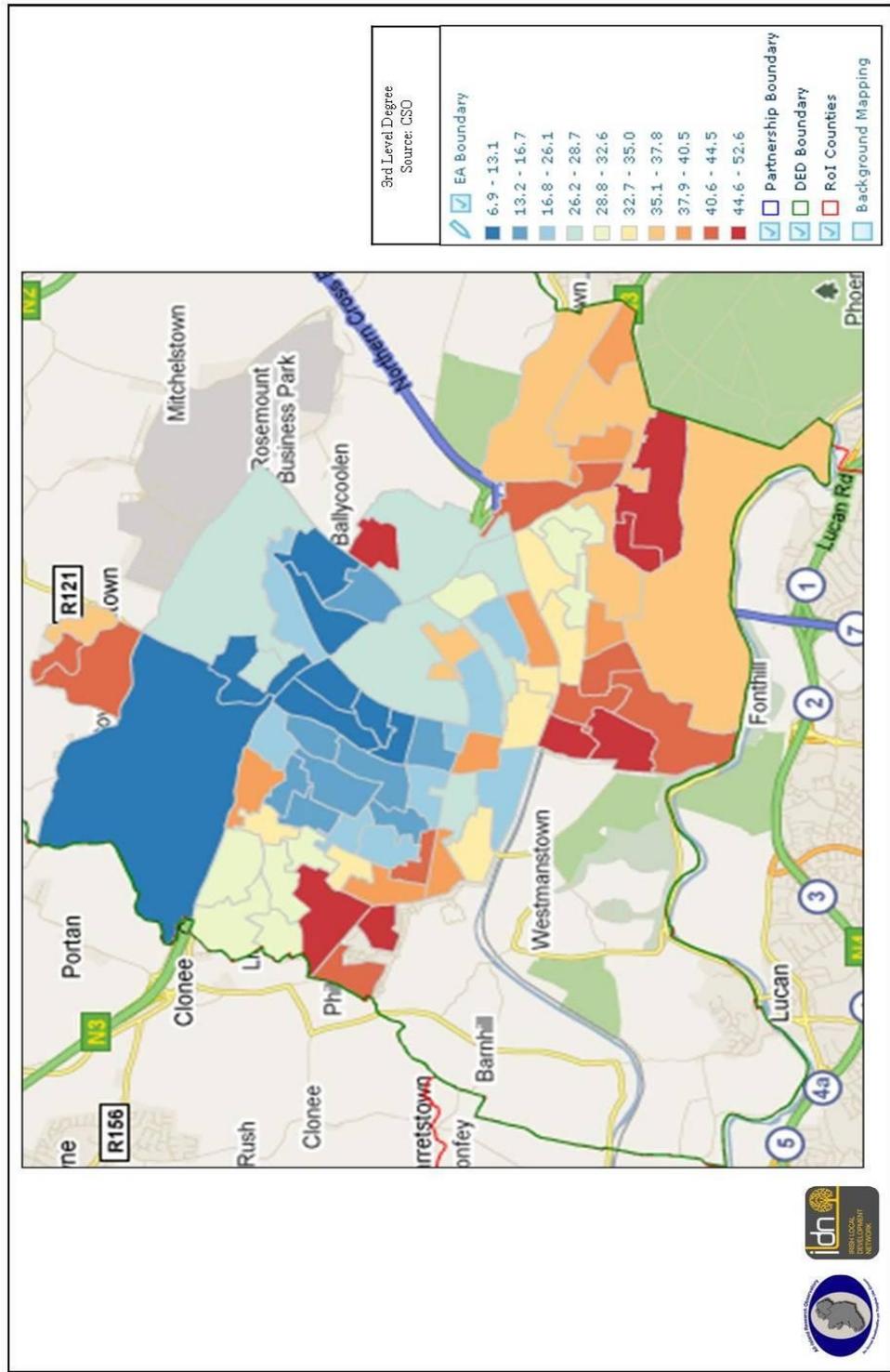


Blanchardstown Area Partnership

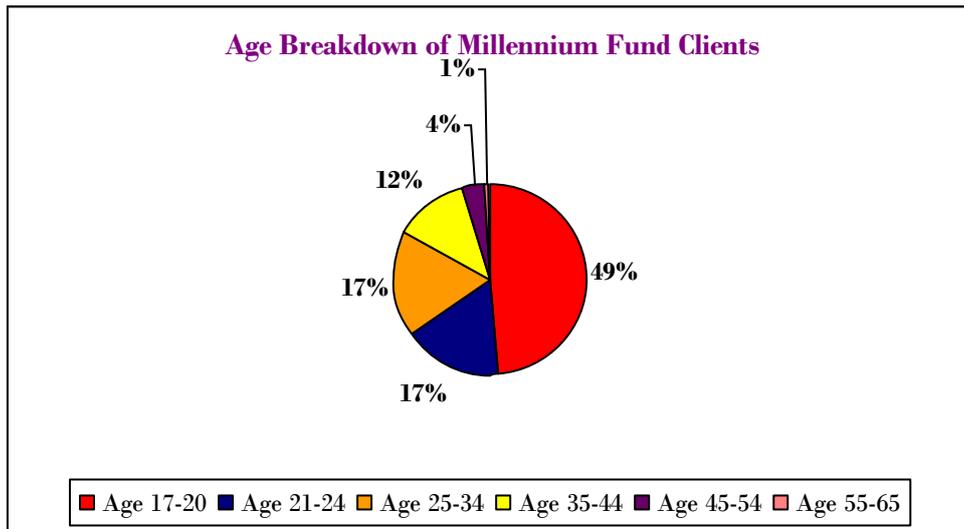
Map 4 Population with No Formal Education or Primary Education Only as a Percent of Population Aged Over 15 - Whose Full-Time Education Has Ceased -2006



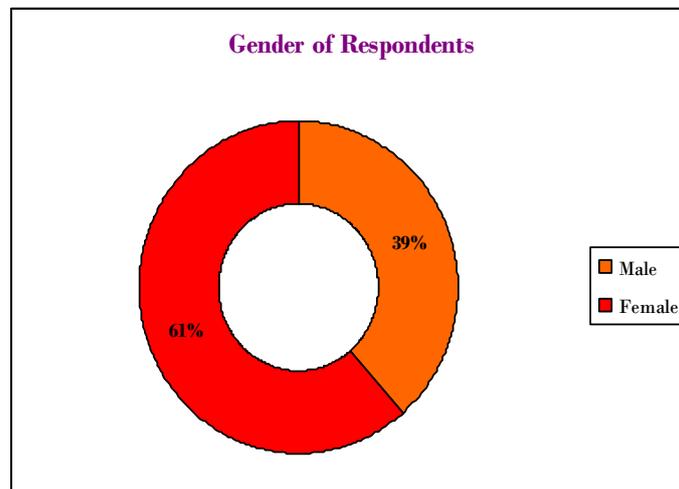
Map 6 Population with a 3rd Level Degree



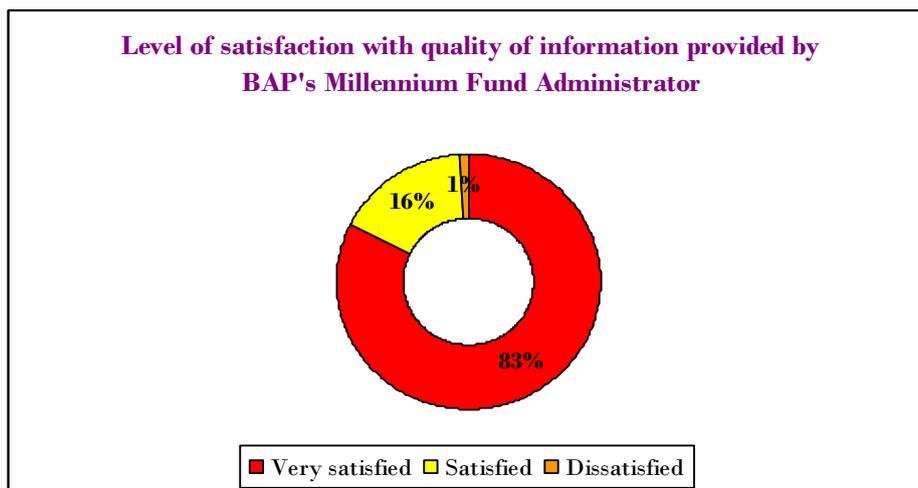
Pie-Chart 5



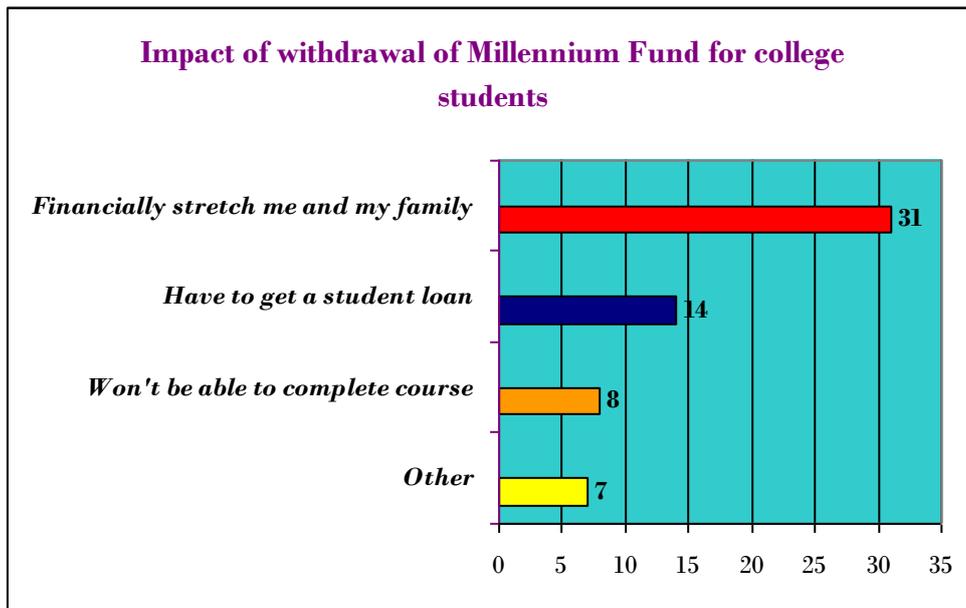
Pie-Chart 6



Pie-Chart 7



Bar Chart 1



QUESTIONNAIRE

Question 1

How did you come to learn about the Partnership's Millennium Fund?

Tick as appropriate

- Partnership's website
- LES/ JOBLINK
- Social Welfare
- FAS
- A Community Organisation
- Word of mouth
- Poster advertisement
- Newspaper advertisement
- Blanchardstown Centre for the Unemployed / Mobile Information Unit
- Visit to school
- Other

Question 2

Which of the following *financial supports* under the Millennium Fund did you receive a contribution toward? Tick as appropriate

- Transport costs
- Accommodation
- Books
- Photocopying and printing
- Equipment
- Childcare
- Course and examination fees
- Fieldtrip
- Other

Question 3

Did you avail of any of the following *non-financial supports*?

Tick as appropriate

- Yes
- No

If you responded Yes please choose from the following

- Career guidance
- Open days
- Study groups
- Access to books in college library
- Laptop and computers on college campus
- LES Mentoring
- Help with grant applications
- I.T. supports
- Examination skills

Question 4

Before commencing your course, which of the following best described your circumstances? Tick as appropriate

- Employed full time
- Employed part time
- Self-employed
- Seasonally employed
- Community Employment
- Full time jobs initiative
- Attending further education/training
- Signing on Live register more than 12 months
- Live register less than 12 months
- Unemployed but not on live register
- Student living at home with parents
- Low Income Family Disadvantaged Women/Man
- Other

Question 5

In what way did the availability of Millennium Partnership funding affect your decision to attend the course of your choice?

- I would not have been able to register for the course had I not received funding
- I still would have registered for the course even had I not received funding
- Other

Please comment

Question 6

Did you complete your course? Tick as appropriate

- Yes
- No
- Still ongoing

If your course is not yet finished please ignore question 8 and answer question 7 *if it* applies to your set of circumstances.

Question 7

How will the withdrawal of funding by the government of Millennium Fund Scheme for the 2010/2011 academic year impact on you?
Tick as appropriate

- I won't be able to complete the final year of the course
- I will have to get a student loan
- It make financially stretch me and my family
- Other

Please comment

Question 8

Which of the following best describes your circumstances *now*? Tick as appropriate if you have finished your course

- Employed full time
- Employed part time
- Self-employed
- Seasonally employed
- Community Employment
- Full time jobs initiative
- Attending further education/training
- Signing on Live register more than 12 months
- Live register less than 12 months
- Unemployed but not on live register
- Student living at home with parents
- Low Income Family Disadvantaged Women/Man
- Emigrated
- Other

Question 9

In what way has finishing your course and obtaining a qualification meet your own needs and/or improved your employment opportunities in the short term in your view?

- Helped increase my confidence levels
- Helped increase my network of friends
- Improved my CV
- Career path plan
- Helped me get work
- Helped me get work experience
- Improved my family life
- Improved my quality of life
- Improved my level of income
- Other

Please comment

Question 10

In what way do you expect completing your course to affect your employment prospects in the medium to longer term?

Please
comment

Question 11

How satisfied were you with the quality of the information provided to you by the Millennium's Administrator in relation to the scheme? Tick as appropriate

Very satisfied Satisfied Somewhat Dissatisfied Dissatisfied

Please comment

Question 12

Tick as appropriate

Gender

- Male
- Female

Age group

- 17-20
- 21-24
- 25-34
- 35-44
- 45-54

Any other comments

Thank you for having completed this questionnaire.

Free post envelope provided