



the Friday Briefing

The 'Friday Briefing' is an informal series of talks and conversations hosted by Congress, on Friday mornings throughout the year, dealing with topical and workplace issues.

Talks take place in Congress Head Office, unless otherwise indicated, starting at 10.30am, refreshments provided.

Demise of the Community Development Sector - 2002-2015

THE APRIL CONGRESS FRIDAY BRIEFING WILL LOOK AT HOW THE COMMUNITY SECTOR AND PROGRESSIVE FORCES WITHIN THE STATE WERE DEFEATED. THE BRIEFING WILL FOCUS ON THE ROLE AND CONTRIBUTION OF WORKING CLASS ACTIVISM IN DUBLIN AND WILL BE GIVEN BY PATRICIA KELLEHER, RESEARCHER AND PAULINE CONROY, SOCIAL POLICY ANALYST.

In the early 2000s, disbelief and demoralisation spread rapidly through the community, anti-poverty and equality sector as community workers witnessed state interventions aimed to disrupt and erode the work of grassroots community organising. A vibrant community sector had been developing since the mid-1980s, with a state-supported framework that encouraged people to have their say in decisions affecting marginalised rural, working class urban, Traveller and migrant communities.

Warnings of the withdrawal of funding to the sector came as far back as 2002. However, it was not until 2009, that the 180 Community Development Projects (CDPs) that comprised the Community Development Programme were dissolved. Nineteen closed with two weeks' notice and, despite a Labour Court ruling, workers were made redundant without full entitlements. Many were SIPTU members for whom the union is still pursuing the Labour Court sanctioned redundancy claim.

The Combat Poverty Agency (CPA) and the Equality Authority (EA) were also targeted. But no one anticipated what would happen: the total dismantling of the community sector.

The question posed to civil servants was - How was such a strong state-funded community sector silenced and disrupted by the state?



Patricia Kelleher co-founded the research consultancy firm, *kelleherassociates* in 1987 which has a long track record working with the voluntary and statutory sectors.

Her interests include: social class, housing and homelessness, violence against women; and community development and empowerment. Patricia Kelleher has a PhD in Sociology from University College Dublin and was a Research Fellow at the Centre for European Studies, Harvard University.



Pauline Conroy is a social policy analyst and studied at UCD and the London School of Economics. Her research took her to Italy to study the role of women in the underground economy.

She subsequently spent a number of years in the women's equality unit of the European Commission and three years in the management of the EU Third Anti-Poverty Programme. There was no fourth programme. Her most recent publication is *A Bit Different: Disability in Ireland* with Orpen Press 2018.

Friday, 12th April, 2019 at 10.30am
Congress Offices, 31-32 Parnell Square, Dublin 1
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Please confirm your attendance to: eileen.sweeney@ictu.ie