

# A Review of Cork Community Television July 2023



Coimisiún  
na Meán

NEXUS



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Final Report

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## **Acronyms**

CBO:	Community Based Organisation
CBSS:	Community Broadcasting Support Scheme (of the BAI)
CCMH:	Cork Community media Hub (or: the Hub)
CCTV	Cork Community Television
CESCA:	Cork Equality and Sustainable Community Alliance
CnM:	Coimisiún na Meán
CTA:	Community Television Association
CTV:	Community television
DCTV:	Dublin Community Television
EPG:	electronic programme guide
ETB:	Education and Training Board
LCYP:	Local Creative Youth Partnerships
NGO:	Non-governmental organisation
SLD:	Sectoral Learning and Development (of the BAI)
VOD:	Video on Demand

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## 1. Introduction

This report is part of a larger research process commissioned by the Broadcasting Authority of Ireland (BAI)<sup>1</sup> in early 2023. The output includes three reports and a number of annexes. This report focuses specifically on Cork Community Television (CCTv). A second report covers Dublin Community Television (DCTV). The main report includes a general synthesis of both, describes the methodology used, and examines the community television sector in Ireland as a whole, drawing overall conclusions and putting forward recommendations for the future.

The overall process was designed, with the agreement of the research Steering Group, as strategic in nature, exploring the past, current and future dynamics of the community television sector. Within this wider context, and pursuant to Section 72 (6) of the 2009 Broadcasting Act concerning community content provision contracts (known more generally as community television), the research addresses three specific questions. These are:

- a) To what extent are community television channels facilitating their target communities in actively participating in the compilation and transmission of programmes?*
- b) To what extent do the target groups view the broadcasting service transmitting these services?*
- c) What is the opinion of the target group on the quality of the programmes and does it specifically address their interests?*

This report continues in **Section 2** with a short history of CCTv. This is needed because some insight into the origins of community television is critical to understanding its dynamics, the forms that it takes, the benefits it generates, and the needs of the sector. When most people first encounter community television they, understandably, perceive it as essentially a sub-sector of media, with a focus on local or community level production. This fundamentally misunderstands the sector, and has led over the years to some mismatches between the regulation and support structures that have sought to govern and support community television.

In fact, the founders and activists for community television have always seen it first and foremost as contributing to community development and empowerment, to be achieved through the medium of television as its primary tool. Hence, community development principles are inscribed not just into the content produced, but into its open and democratic structures, and into its participative production processes. An exploration of the history of the individual channels and of the sector in Ireland, and indeed elsewhere, is thus an essential prerequisite to understanding the goals, dynamics and needs of the sector.

The subsequent sections examine in some detail the questions posed in the legislation: **Section 3** looks at community participation; **Section 4** explores issues of viewership, relevance and content quality. **Section 5** then examines the benefits generated by CCTv using a Community Media Social Benefit Framework. Conclusions are drawn in **Section 6**.

Annexes contain a partial list of organisations collaborating with CCTv, detailed comments from the survey completed, and a set of *CTV Stories* in Cork, offering practical insights into the unique characteristics of CTV that differentiate it from its mainstream counterparts.

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<sup>1</sup> Now subsumed into Coimisiún na Meán (CnaM)

## 2. A Brief History of CCTv

### The Community Mobilising

Community television emerged in Cork City from an overlap between media and community development, its founding members active in both the community voluntary sector and in community video and media. The enabling legislation was in place since 2001, and for some time these groups were exploring how this could be used to develop a sustainable vehicle for the use of video and television to empower individuals and communities in Cork. The key organisation driving this was, and remains, Frameworks Films, a small video production company established in 1999 and dedicated to community development. Frameworks Films responded to the initial Call for Interest from the BCI in 2002, and began building support with individuals from various community organisations such as Mayfield Employment Action Project, Gurrabraher Outreach Project, Avondu Community Development and individuals from the HSE Community Work Department.

In 2003, a *Community Media Forum* was established under the *Cork Community Forum* of the Cork City Partnership with a view to encouraging community media of various kinds. A seminar on Community Media was held in Connolly Hall in 2003, generating a lot of interest. Community television achieved a significant milestone, with the support of the Cork 2005 European Capital of Culture, when a dozen short documentaries were produced by Frameworks Films working with a variety of community and statutory groups. A Pilot Week of Community Television was broadcast in Cork City from 31<sup>st</sup> October – 6<sup>th</sup> November 2005 on the local cable carrier, Chorus. The Pilot Week programming was repeated twice at the request of Chorus due to popular demand.

Following this, a wider group convened, comprising mainly those involved in the Pilot Week, from both community organisations and community media, with the specific goal of pursuing a license for a community television channel for Cork City and County. A Board of Management was formed to steer the initial development of the station (many of whom are still involved). The name *Cork Community Television* was agreed, the acronym being CCTv. CCTv was registered as a Company Limited by Guarantee in May 2007. Its mission is to: “enable communities to make, manage and broadcast television programming to reflect the interests, activities and concerns of these communities, in order to effect positive social change.” Its goals include facilitating the production and broadcast of programmes, providing equipment training and resources, providing training, and encouraging membership to participate in governance and the development of the channel.

Membership was open to not-for-profit community and voluntary groups and individuals in Cork City and County, who agree the aims and objectives of Cork Community Television. They elect the voluntary Board of Management. Annual membership fees were set at €25 for an organisation or €10 for an individual. From the start, the goal was less to maximise membership than to build a group of committed organisations and volunteers who would take the station forward. By 2008, these had grown to over 20, with a nine member voluntary Board. Frameworks Films provided CCTv with office space and administrative support at the outset, and some initial funding, when in December 2006, CCTv applied to the BAI for a *Community Content Contract* to cover “Cork City and its environs”, with the intention of extending to the county when it could gain access to transmission. It proposed a mix of in-house productions, member-produced content, and relevant content sourced externally. The license was provisionally awarded in March 2007, enabling CCTv to begin preparations and build its resources. In the meantime a needs assessment was carried out, under Section 40 of

the Act,<sup>2</sup> which also offered an opportunity to raise awareness about the station and to develop programme ideas. In May 2009 CCTv signed the contract with the BAI, to be in place for 10 years up to 2019 (since extended).

CCTv was kept occupied developing policy, administrative procedures, governance structures, and securing resources for the office and transmission, all on a voluntary basis. They negotiated with UPC (that had taken over Chorus, and has since been rebranded as Virgin Media), to which the must-carry obligation applied. Through their previous experience and contacts with Chorus, they secured a portacabin at the transmission head-end in Churchfield in the north of Cork City, which they have retained since. Modest development funding from Cork City Council enabled the purchase of the play-out server and transmission equipment, and these were installed in the portacabin along with a small desk and computer for administrative use.

Separately, the grant covered rent for an office in Faraday Court on the Old Blackrock Road in Cork and the employment of a Development Co-ordinator for six months. There were also short-term contracts in areas such as broadcast engineering and graphic design. When funding was discontinued, those on the short-term contracts joined a growing list of committed volunteers. Small grants, from Age & Opportunity, the HSE and through the Arts Office of Cork City Council, allowed workshops to take place exploring programme content. An application was submitted to Pobal for funding through the Community Services Programme, but this was unsuccessful.

By 2009 CCTv was ready to launch, and went on air in May 2009 on the UPC cable on Channel 803. The channel was officially launched by Eamon Ryan T.D., Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources, on Friday 30<sup>th</sup> April 2010 in Cork City Hall.

## **Two Phases of Development**

Below CCTv's growth and development is divided into two phases. These are differentiated not by the type of output produced (though CCTv's own productions were mainly early on), but rather the type of model envisaged as viable, in the long term, for a community channel in Cork.

In essence, Phase 1 is characterised by a *broadcasting-only* model, adopted by the Board as the only feasible avenue open to the all-volunteer channel; but one that, after a decade, had reached its limits. Phase 2 has seen the launch of a new, more ambitious, but unavoidably riskier, model, building towards a multi-functional and integrated *Community Media Hub*, seen in recent years and in the light of a decade's experience, as offering the best opportunity to form the basis of long-term sustainability.

### **Phase 1: 2009 - 2019**

The original plans for CCTv, as we have seen, were to develop and equip a studio for its own productions, to employ staff, and to offer a space for people to engage with the channel and with producing their own content. As with DCTV, the possibility of employing staff through a community employment or social enterprise scheme was put on indefinite hold with the national suspension of the schemes; and it also encountered immediate difficulties in securing capital funding, and a means to cover core costs. CCTv itself applied for funding under successive early rounds of the Sound &

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<sup>2</sup> *A Needs Assessment of Community Television in Cork: Section 40 Assessment*. Mary Mulcahy and Seán Ó Siochrú. August 2008

Vision Scheme, and members with production skills and experience produced several programmes, with grants totalling €172,000 in the early years.<sup>3</sup>

Within a short period it was decided that the main focus – with some exceptions (see further on) - would have to be on enabling and supporting CCTV members, rather than CCTV itself, to produce programmes, with Sound and Vision support; and that the station would focus on delivering the broadcasting function. The decision by the Board to focus its limited resources on broadcasting and support operations was in part a practical one, influenced by the fact that the Sound and Vision scheme, under its rules, could cover only the cost of actual productions, and not costs associated with running a broadcasting channel. Furthermore, CCTV was committed to seeing the full grant used by community producers, ensuring that high quality content, with professional equipment and experienced producers, was produced, that would maintain the interest of viewers. CCTV never relinquished its ultimate goals, however, of securing and equipping its own studio in Cork City and to create a community television space for the city.

Thus, from the very beginning, CCTV found it difficult to secure even the minimum amount of core funding required to sustain this narrow approach. CCTV was relying (and continues to rely) on a small number of remarkably committed long-term volunteers, often supported by short-term volunteers, many of whom were active from the beginning. These volunteers carry out management and administration tasks (including the legal requirements and BAI reporting); they support training and productions, and have sustained the technical aspects of scheduling and broadcasting at the head-end for over a decade, including supporting the Website and streaming (originally established with BAI funding). The high level of voluntary hands-on effort by Board members meant that the Board could devote less time to overall governance issues, and more to running the day to day activities.

Modest payments to some have occasionally been possible, with funding from BAI (sometimes via CTA) projects, though these involve additional work. A small production fee from successful applicants has recently allowed an annual payment of about €2,400 to be paid to a CCTV member, to co-ordinate applications to the Sound and Vision rounds and to support implementation by community producers, compile BAI compliance reports, and undertake administrative tasks including responding to emails, assisting with programme scheduling and maintaining the programme library online. This by no means covers the amount of time involved, as on average she spends six to seven hours a week completing these tasks.<sup>4</sup>

At the same time, and despite the difficulties, the achievements of CCTV were considerable. With support from the Sound and Vision scheme and other modest grants, CCTV itself was producing, and encouraging members to produce, a large and varied volume of original content, including innovative and quality programmes. Throughout the period, CCTV managed to maintain broadcasting every day, from 2.00pm to 10:00 pm, and, in later years, through a live streaming capacity. Ultimately, this meant it could deliver benefits to its members and to the wider Cork community – the diversity of content and the benefits are described in later sections.

Throughout this phase, CCTV also built and maintained positive interactions with Cork City Council, developing close relationships with managers involved especially in the social life of the city. Indeed,

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<sup>3</sup> This is about one tenth of the total funding secured by DCTV, which took a different strategic approach to productions.

<sup>4</sup> The research was provided with a detailed breakdown.



this relationship, which yielded some small grants, was critical to the continuation of CCTV through difficult periods.

But the running of the station depended (and still depends) on this small group of skilled volunteers, a situation that the Board came to believe could not, in the long term, secure a sustainable future. The absence of an office space for administration was a further source of frustration, relieved only for a short period when a room was secured in Farranferris College, Northside Community Enterprises.

In 2017, the Community Broadcasting Support Scheme (CBSS) funded CCTV to commission an external consultant to write a report to assess their situation and needs.<sup>5</sup> It concluded as follows:

“CCTV is currently operating on an entirely voluntary basis and with limited organisational capacity to pursue its current objectives or to respond to opportunities which might present themselves. ... [T]he essential crux of CCTV’s problem at this moment in time is that it currently lacks the resources to pursue further resources. ... While it is clear that a number of core Board members/volunteers have devoted large amounts of their own time and resources to getting CCTV to this point, it is unrealistic to expect significant additional commitment at this stage. Therefore having some level of paid staffing is crucial to the future growth and sustainability of the organisation. In addition, the broadcasting equipment requires upgrading and the premises currently being used is inadequate to meet the needs of the organisation...”

The report calculated that, specifically for 2018, just under €50,000 would be required for CCTV to achieve its minimal goals, covering a part-time staff position, rent and essential equipment upgrade. CCTV’s play-out equipment was in serious need of an upgrade and trying to finance this became a major focus for the Board for some time. The equipment, assisted with small grants from CTA and mainly through volunteer work, was replaced, enabling transmission to continue although some on-going problems remained with the supplier company for several years.

The situation facing the Board was stark: they could continue on as they were, going from crisis to crisis and relying on essentially the same group of volunteers, but in the knowledge eventually that this would force closure; or they could reconceptualise the basis of community television in Cork, extend its remit to cover new areas, and so hopefully attract new sources of funding, and motivate new volunteers through offering an opportunity to participate in a wider set of media activities.

### ***Phase 2: Cork Community Media Hub***

By 2019, the CCTV Board was convinced that the existing structural arrangements and resources available were insufficient to sustain the channel and secure a future. In November 2019, the CCTV members decided at an AGM to explore the idea of creating a *Community Media Hub* for Cork, that could engage in a wider range of activities, some of which were underway in different guises and some of which would be new.

Initially, it was hoped that an ongoing engagement with the BAI, that yielded an Action Plan for Community Media, might identify a new source of core funding that was considered essential to underpinning this new model, but this proved not to be possible. The Action Plan did, however,

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<sup>5</sup> Dr Aisling Moroney 2017 *Cork Community Television: Description and Funding Needs*.

commit the BAI to engaging with the appropriate Department regarding the possibility of community media benefiting from the Community Services Programme. (see Main Report.)

The goal was to create a social enterprise that could engage in a wider range of activities and enable the generation of further income from training and other services. The new Hub will bring together a variety of activities including media production, documenting events, broadcasting, streaming, training, media literacy and archiving, all with a community focus. A key objective was to structure this in a manner that could generate additional income and contribute to the sustainability of all the activities, including CCTV.

A consultant, Ken Germaine, was engaged to look at the institutional challenges and suggest possible solutions. His report proposed that a central, structure should be created, under which other activities, including productions, training and support activities, could be brought together, using in some cases Service Level Agreements. It was proposed that the simplest way forward was to establish a new entity into which the activities of CCTV itself would be integrated.

The *Cork Community Media Hub* (CCMH) was incorporated as a company limited by guarantee in October 2020, with a small number of Founding Directors and Board in place while the structures were evolving. The aim is to build an institutional membership of community development organisations. It would have a small number of staff, to undertake the work of CCTV as it was originally envisaged and achieve the wider goals, expanding towards the evolving media environment into additional media literacy (an area of considerable experience already) and digital-media support.

Despite delays caused by restrictions associated by the Covid pandemic,<sup>6</sup> several steps are underway to achieve this.

A key one is the new project enabled by the 2023 Round of the Social Benefit Sound & Vision scheme, designed specifically for community media (see main report). Working with eight members of CESCA (Cork Equality and Sustainable Community Alliance) – a network of community development and environmental organisations in Cork – the €75,000 grant is enabling CCTV, for a period of 12 months, to open an ‘Access Studio’ and to train and support each of these organisations to produce output in areas of direct interest and relevance to them. CCTV has worked with many of them before, but this takes the collaboration to a new level, one that is designed from the outset to be sustained into the future. It is also hoped that this project will provide the springboard for developing a new Hub/CCTV studio that can be sustained after the project is completed.

At the same time, through the BAI’s sectoral development grant to the CTA, CCTV (as part of the Hub) will run a volunteer recruitment campaign, linking it to the above project. Two to three members of each of the participating CESCA organisation will be offered induction training, and provided with guidelines, in areas such as remote scheduling, programming and supporting broadcasting.

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<sup>6</sup> Covid almost saw cable broadcasting cease altogether. Access to the Virgin Media portacabin had always been limited to a few volunteers who hold key-cards. During the pandemic, Virgin imposed further restrictions at their Churchfield site, blocking access to the portacabin containing the play-out system and the administration computer. A volunteer developed remote access to CCTV’s system which meant they were able to continue broadcasting throughout the pandemic.

Support has also been forthcoming to improve the technical side. BAI provided a grant in 2021 to assist in developing CCTV's video-on-demand (VOD), developing a pilot service on the CCTV Website<sup>7</sup> (see <https://corkcommunitytv.ie/on-demand-video/>). At present, the pilot offers a selection of just 14 programmes but it is expected that volunteers, with appropriate training, will expand that number hugely in coming months. Live streaming continues on the CCTV Home page (see <https://corkcommunitytv.ie/> from 2:00pm to 10:00 pm), and the play-out system continues to feed the Virgin Media cable system (though the technology will soon need replacement).

CCTV/the Hub is in negotiation with Cork City Council for some time, seeking a more secure premises for a studio and member space. The willingness is there, though finding a suitable and affordable premises is proving difficult so far. Strong relationships developed with the local council, as well as with educational institutions, have been maintained over the years, and occasional project-based funding has enabled targeted content production.

A good example of collaboration, and one that points towards the future, is with the Cork *Local Creative Youth Partnerships* (LCYP), located within the *Cork Education and Training Board* (ETB). In 2022, LCYP and CCTV member Frameworks Films, implemented a pilot project to develop a video-based project working with young people. In 2023, this has grown into a partnership between LCYP and the Hub, that is also engaging YouthReach projects in Cork, to form a *Youth Media Group*. Training and ongoing support is being delivered to interested young people in video production; they will be supported in filming, and then work in editing workshops to produce short programmes on topics of their choosing. Dissemination will not simply be through broadcasting on cable (though that is eagerly anticipated by participants) but also through social media and live-streaming, processes that participants will also receive training in. Overall, this is seen as an empowerment project that includes capacity building and extensive on-the-ground media literacy development. Such combined projects and collaborations between members, the Hub and external institutions are seen as typical of the approach taken by the Hub.

## CCTv Outputs

Since its foundation, CCTV has broadcast a huge variety of programmes, some – mainly in the early years – produced by the station itself, but mostly produced by others.

It has successfully encouraged and enabled, through the Sound and Vision scheme, the production and broadcasting of a diversity of community content. In successive rounds, members, as community producers (including CCTV itself), have secured over €2.1 million in Sound and Vision funding since the start of the scheme. A total of 91 applications have been submitted to the Scheme, of which about 60 were successful, an average of about €35,000 each.

CCTv own Sound and Vision funded content, most produced in the years immediately following launch, comprised the following, all coproduced with local organisations:

- *Corklore*, a three part series on the evolution of Cork districts over the years including Blackpool, Bishopstown and Mahon; with the Northside Folklore Project, the Bishopstown Senior Social Centre and Mahon Community Development Project.
- *I Went Down to the North Infirmary*; with the Northside Folklore Project
- *Natural Traditions*; with the Community Midwives Association

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<sup>7</sup> This is part of, and coordinated with, a wider discussion within CTA about having a single VOD service for community television in Ireland.

- *Set in Stone*; with the Cork Stonemasons Association
- *Allihies Copper Mines*, with a local resident group
- *Discover Cork*, with the Schools Heritage Project.
- A joint CCTV DCTV and P5TV collaboration, the *Community in a Studio* project, yielded eight studio-based programmes: *Cork Today* (4 x 30 min programmes coproduced with Nasc – The Irish Immigrant Support Centre); and *Moving Age* (4 x 30 min programmes coproduced with older people’s organisations).

CCTV has also been the only broadcaster to cover many key events in Cork City. Broadcasting live, CCTV covered the general election count from Cork City Hall in 2011, deploying a large team of volunteers live (see Story 10) and also covered the local elections in 2014 and 2019. The 2011 Saint Patrick’s Day Festival also went out live. In partnership with Cork City FC, selected football matches were broadcast; as were, for several years, the highlights of Cork City Marathon. CCTV also broadcast Arts TV, a series of short programmes on arts events happening in Cork City and County.

The annual Mother Jones Festival has also benefited from CCTV coverage most years.<sup>8</sup> During Covid, this was particularly valuable as the organisers were unable to hold an in-person festival and the entire event moved onto CCTV. Programmes were produced in advance specifically for the festival, and several of the lectures were filmed and broadcast. Because the festival is typically attended by an American as well as an Irish audience, the capacity of CCTV to live stream its content was particularly effective in reaching a global audience.

Most of CCTV output has come from community producers, however.

Among the community producers, by far the most prolific has been Frameworks Films,<sup>9</sup> established in 1999 and the main driving force behind CTV in Cork. By 2022 it had produced over 90 separate productions, many with several episodes, including the twelve produced during the Community Television pilot in 2005. Many received funding – a total of 22 from the Sound and Vision scheme – and many were also self-funded. Almost all were produced in direct partnership with community organisations; and a large majority of almost 70 produced since the initial Cork pilot community television week were broadcast on CCTV. Frameworks Films recorded, and continues to record, numerous public events and demonstrations, and its small team has become a familiar sight at these. Much of this footage has ended up on CCTV, incorporated into various productions. For Frameworks Films, Sound and Vision funding has enabled them to complete more ambitious productions and, crucially, allowed them the time to engage communities for a longer period and more intensively in the process.<sup>10</sup>

CCTV has supported other independent producers. In one case, a community radio producer, Grey Heron Media based in Limerick, has been able to move into community television, initially in collaboration with Frameworks Films, and to develop a strongly participative and community oriented approach.

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<sup>8</sup> See <https://www.corkcity.ie/en/a-city-remembers-cork-1920-to-1923/cultural-events/the-spirit-of-mother-jones-festival/>

<sup>9</sup> See <https://frameworksfilms.com/>

<sup>10</sup> CCTV noted that the Sound and Vision Scheme had, after some time, refined its budget criteria to allow for the large time commitment required to fully engage communities in pre-production, production and post-production activities.



During the Covid pandemic, CCTV broadcast information from the World Health Organisation as well as from Cork City Council, disseminating information on the community response.

A regular on CCTV schedules is a selected set of international content, aimed at offering alternative news to Cork audiences, such as *Democracy Now*, *Real News* and programmes from *Deep Dish TV*<sup>11</sup> in the United States. CCTV also broadcasts programmes from NVTV in Belfast and DCTV in Dublin.

Other external content comes from public institutions. CCTV has broadcast material from the *Be Media Smart* campaign run by Media Literacy Ireland; material from Cork County Council such as a Water Safety campaign video; and Cork City Council's *Lifelong Learning Festival*, the *Lord Mayor's Community and Voluntary Awards*, *Heritage Week*, *Culture Night* as well as commemorative events as part of the *Decade of Centenaries*.

Finally, worth mentioning also is CCTV's Notice-Board service, streaming and on cable during the non-programmes hours. Envisaged from the outset as a means to attract people to the channel as well as a source of information, via the Website and cable, it has provided a range of information from the community voluntary sector and from Cork City and County Councils. However, this service has been suspended for some time due to technical challenges, and it is hoped to resume them soon.

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It is impossible to quantify precisely the volume of original output hours produced by, enabled by, and broadcast by CCTV since its foundation, or even to categorise them by the type of production, themes covered, or producer. Certainly, it runs into several hundred programmes and hours, and associated with many individual programmes would be unused footage, of people and events. This body of work has an undoubted value as social and cultural history, much of it capturing often neglected facets of life in Cork.

CCTV has long sought to archive these in a systematic manner but the cost has, so far, prevented them from doing so. Four applications were submitted between 2010 and 2020 by Frameworks Films to the BAI's archiving scheme, part of Sound and Vision, to preserve and organise this content. A company limited by guarantee was registered to develop these applications, and partnerships were developed with UCC as consultants and the City and County Council archivists, and linked to the Digital Repository of Ireland. However, all applications were unsuccessful.

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<sup>11</sup> See respectively <https://www.democracynow.org/>, <https://therealnews.com/> and <https://archive.org/details/deepdishtv>

### 3. Community Participation

The Broadcasting Act 2009 refers to the extent to which the local community or community of interest is “facilitated in the active participation by it in the compilation and transmission of the programme material and supplied pursuant to a community content provision contract.” The Steering Group for this research agreed that the issue of community participation should be interpreted in the broadest possible manner.

#### Participation in CCTv

The above short history demonstrates that community television emerged in Cork not as a sub-sector of media, but rather as a component of a wider community and voluntary sector. All key actors were committed first to empowering their communities, and to utilising video and television as a means to do this. This has been the case throughout its history, and it is these goals that have animated and enabled the huge level of voluntary commitment devoted to keeping community television alive in Cork, often through difficult times.

Thus, it is less a matter of enabling, than of broadening and deepening, community participation – it has been there from the start and is a core part of the dynamics of CCTv. As a membership-based non-profit organisation, individuals or organisations in Cork City and County have only to pay a modest fee, and to agree with the objectives, to become involved and have an equal say in running the station. Although membership exceeded 50 at one point, expanding the numbers has never been a priority – in part because properly servicing a membership takes significant resources – but volunteer committees were formed early on in the areas of content development (i.e. identifying, reviewing and gaining access to content) and in programming (compiling and scheduling programmes, and enabling them to be broadcast). Yet after an initial period of strong participation, these tasks have tended to settle, as noted earlier, on a small number of long-term volunteers, occasionally supported by others.

Broadening and deepening the participation of new organisations and individuals, and especially outside the city boundaries and into the county, has faced many challenges. In 2016, The CBSS scheme funded a study to review community engagement in CCTv. The report,<sup>12</sup> aptly titled *Keep it on my Radar*, came to the following conclusion.

“The key finding of the Review was that CCTv provides a unique, invaluable service to community groups in Cork, providing a platform for the broadcasting of programmes by and about communities. Communities that engaged with CCTv found the process beneficial and empowering and this engagement enabled them to gain a higher profile for the groups and their issues. However significant issues emerged in relation to levels of awareness of CCTv and the services it provides, and much work needs to be done to put it on the radar of the community sector in Cork and to keep it there.” (page 1)

The report showed that, lacking an outreach or advertising budget, the main means by which people and community organisations became aware of CCTv was through direct contact with those centrally involved in it, and/or by word of mouth. The outcome of engagement with the channel was generally rated very highly, and the report found that a key factor in this positive assessment was the

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<sup>12</sup> *Keep it on my Radar! Cork Community TV: A Review of Community Engagement with CCTv*, Orla Egan Independent Consultant. June 2016

democratic and community development ethos of the channel, including the participation in committees and other activities.

“This was seen as particularly important for excluded or marginalised communities and for those whose voices are often unheard; CCTV is seen as providing an opportunity for vulnerable people to have a voice in the community.” (page 7)

However, an issue was that after an initial interaction CCTV “went ‘off the radar’; This would point to the need to keep CCTV ‘on the radar’ of community groups on a regular basis and to build on previous positive engagements.” (page 6)

The question arises here regarding the nature of that initial interaction between CCTV and a community organisation, and in what direction it could, in principle, go in the future. Mostly, such interaction centres around a joint production between CCTV or a community producer, and its broadcast on CCTV’s channel. In terms of participation, engaging with the production and dissemination process is far more important and brings greater benefits to community organisations, than participating in CCTV governance and activity.

### **Participation in media production and dissemination**

Thus, CCTV has enabled the participation of numerous members and non-member organisations in the process of media production and dissemination.

In the first place, it is offering community, and some statutory, organisations a platform to showcase and broadcast their content. CCTV can claim considerable success here. Over the years, CCTV estimates that it has broadcast programmes that have been produced, co-produced or provided by over a hundred community organisations. The range of such organisations is enormous: Annex 1 contains a representative selection of 62 such organisations, and their diversity is clear in terms of themes and target groups addressed, many covering issues of disadvantage and exclusion.

For the majority of these organisations, participation involved far more than simply having their programmes broadcast on television.

As noted earlier, a key characteristic of community television in general is the nature and depth of its relationship with the communities that it serves. All CCTV productions, and those of community producers such as Frameworks Films and Grey Heron Media, have developed deeply collaborative production processes, potentially at all stages. The idea for the programme usually comes directly from the community organisation; and the first engagement with the community producer is detailed pre-production planning and discussions about what it is to achieve for the community or organisation, and the structure it will take. During production, the partner organisations can provide outreach to the target community and often source archive material, and in some cases members of the community are trained to directly engage in the production process itself. Post-production, including editing, is usually guided directly by the community organisation to shape the kind of output they require, and again training in editing is sometimes part of the process. The community is also engaged fully in the planning and executing the process of dissemination and of reaching audiences (see below). The extent to which a partner organisation seeks to become involved will vary, with some choosing to go the whole way and to learn how to produce programmes for themselves (such as the case of Youth Media Group of the Cork LCYP mentioned above).

A key conclusion of the *Keep it on my Radar* report was that CCTV was not in a position to sustain these relationships, built up during production collaboration with these organisations; that it lacked the resources needed to maintain ongoing outreach or to offer services, such as a studio, or meeting space, through which the interaction and interest could be nurtured. Thus, after the completion of a shared activity, there is little CCTV can offer to even those organisations explicitly expressing an interest in building further the relationship and continuing with community television activities. In short, the potential cumulative impact of these partnerships to build a broader community television sector, in which a growing number of organisations choose to engage at different levels in community television, is not being realised.

One activity does deserve a mention in this context, again, funded by the BAI. Working through CTA, CCTV has organised a Community Television Festival in 2014, 2015, 2018, 2020 and 2022 in Cork City (alternating with DCTV in Dublin), and this has offered at least a minimal opportunity to keep some of the above group informed and to sustain their interest. However, in some respects, these events also underscore the absence of opportunities for community organisations to re-engage concretely with a community television sector in Cork.



## 4. Viewership, Relevance and Content Quality

The large volume of community television content produced was highlighted earlier. Of central interest to this research, again arising from the Broadcasting Act 2009, are the questions of how these programmes can be accessed, their relevance to the target audiences, and their quality. These are addressed below.

### Viewer Access

Community television, unlike public service or commercial channels, does not judge success solely, or even primarily, by audience size. Enabling participation in media, outlined in previous sections, is as likely, and in some cases more likely, to generate benefits among the target community and members. At the same time, building up an audience, often targeting specific groups, is important to CCTV members and community producers. From its launch, CCTV has been able to offer access to a range of content, including its own productions, but mainly from a large number of community producers, in several ways and across platforms.

### *Cable, Live Streaming and VOD*

CCTV broadcasts on Virgin Media's cable system, with the electronic programme guide (EPG) number of channel 803. This covers most of Cork City and some surrounding areas, though specific data on the number of houses passed, and on subscriptions, has not been forthcoming from Virgin Media.

What we do know is that CCTV has been broadcasting consistently between 2:00 pm and 10:00 pm every day since its launch. Furthermore, in the last few years all broadcast content has been simultaneously live-streamed from their Website, and programmes are promoted through Twitter. A VOD service is also available on the Website, free of charge, though currently only a limited selection of programmes is offered. In principle, the CCTV service is thus available to watch by all those who have a broadband connection, and those with a subscription for cable television from Virgin Media.

From its foundation, CCTV has aspired to reach all of Cork County. While the limited reach of the Virgin Media network is an immediate constraint on this, the more recent provision of streaming at least partially makes up for this, though this is limited by the absence of a quality broadband internet connection in parts of the County, and of course the cost. For this reason CCTV has argued for some time that its signal should be available on the national Saorview digital broadcast facilities. However, attempts to further this have been blocked by the high fees levied by RTÉ,<sup>13</sup> which runs the network. It is understood that these fees are calculated as a proportion of the cost of establishing and running the entire network, rather than of the marginal cost of adding another channel.

While CCTV content is thus accessible in principle, almost no figures are available on how many members, or how many people in general, view CCTV on cable or streaming.<sup>14</sup> In general, CCTV will disseminate a press release for new programmes, picked up by local media, and the community organisations will also promote it.

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<sup>13</sup> Under the Broadcasting Act 2009 a subsidiary of RTÉ called 2rn built and operates the two national multi-plexes on which Saorview is run.

<sup>14</sup> Some programmes are available on YouTube. For instance, the Sound and Vision funded programme *Cork Through the Barracks* received over 10,300 views. See <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ADPmZOm8X8U>

### *Reaching audiences by other means*

However, CCTV and most other community producers, notable Frameworks Films, have pursued additional ways to reach audiences, especially in those communities and areas of Cork that have been involved in the productions. As noted earlier, the community producer and the partnering community organisation collaborate in developing a dissemination process for the output. An important feature of this, in most cases, is to organise a launch event for the target community, before the programme is broadcast, something that happens with all CCTV and Framework Films productions. These are publicised among the relevant groups and can attract large numbers of participants. They also always include a Question and Answers component afterwards, that in some cases can raise potential follow-on activities.

These screening and events are often held within a local community, and sometimes repeated; and can also achieve a significant audience by associating with another event. In 2022, for example, a Frameworks Films production about the Quay Coop in Cork (a multi-purpose centre for marginalised communities going for over 40 years), was launched at the Cork Indie Film Festival to an audience of several hundred.

A point about these screenings is that they are targeted at the community itself, and watching these professionally produced films, and knowing they are also being broadcast, can have a significant beneficial impact on the community itself.

It is worth mentioning that many community organisations circulate the content they have generated among their own membership, as a way of informing them of activities and in a few cases to provide training or information on specific issues (such as media literacy). The audience may also be potential donors and the public in general, and the content used to raise funds and secure volunteers or resources.

### **Content Relevance**

This research conducted an online survey to examine the opinion of members regarding whether the content produced “specifically addresses the interests of their community”, as required in the Broadcasting Act 2009. The responses of CCTV members are presented below. The survey focused on a targeted list of active members (most of whom were also interviewed), and received a total of 25 responses. It was not possible to identify and include a wider group of CCTV viewers since CCTV had deliberately narrowed its membership list in recent years. However, existing members would all be very familiar with CCTV output and most would also have engaged in the process side, and can offer insights into the types of programmes considered relevant.

The survey posed the question, concerning the relevance of content, as follows:

*“CCTV broadcasts programmes on a variety of themes, grouped below under a number of headings. To what extent is each of these relevant and interesting to your organisation and/or your community?”*

The table below ranks them in order of relevance.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> The four responses were: *Very relevant; Somewhat relevant; Slightly relevant; Not relevant*. A score of 100% would indicate that all respondents regarded the theme as *Very Relevant*; and a score of 0% would indicate that all respondents regarded it as *Not Relevant*.

**Table 1: Relevance of CCTV Content Themes (N=25)**

Programme Theme	Relevance (max = 100%)
Community development activities & projects	86%
Music, arts and culture	86%
History and heritage	80%
Older people	75%
Migration and new communities	69%
Media literacy	66%
Disability and able-bodied	62%
Traveller community	61%
Children and young people	59%
News from communities around the world	53%
Alternative global news	51%
Local sports	43%
Environment and climate change	26%

It should be noted that the question was posed in terms of relevance to “your organisation and/or your community” and not relevance to all CCTV members and all Cork residents.

The theme of *local sports* is considered by respondents as least relevant. At the other end, *community development activities and projects, music, arts and culture* along with and (somewhat lower) *history and heritage* are considered most relevant.

A little below these, specific

themes, the highest being *older people* and *migration and new communities*, most of them topical, are judged to have varying degrees of relevance.

Respondents were also offered an opportunity to suggest additional themes that CCTV could cover (See Annex 2). Specific suggestions comprised: *climate issues; youth voices; LGBTQIA and Queer identity; Romania Culture*. Some also focused on *citizens’ information content* e.g. *legal rights or first aid; local film-making; and new Cork citizens, including immigrants and refugees*.

Several comments, a couple of them longer, highlighted the need for local politics and current affairs coverage, including on local governance issues:

“...some sort of local news in which communities and their organisations could actively participate in selecting and even reporting on the issues, is badly needed.”

and

“local news reports say on a daily basis about happenings in Cork. Likewise some studio discussion programmes involving communities and their concerns. It would also be relevant to include happenings at Cork City Hall council meetings... Information and discussion helps to remove fake-news and evils such as racism and discrimination.”

## Content Quality

The Broadcasting Act 2009 also requires a survey regarding “the quality of the programme material”.

For community television, the *quality* of media outputs is a particularly complex issue, given the strong emphasis, highlighted above, on the *production process* as well as on the output itself. Thus the quality of the process of production – to which those who simply view the output would have only limited access – is extremely important and must be assessed on criteria quite distinct from those used for assessing output.

Those targeted for this survey were mostly involved in the production of CCTV outputs in some manner, and hence can reasonably be expected to have informed opinions on quality, including

evidence from the output itself regarding whether the production process was participatory and empowering.

The questions posed reflected this complexity. Members were asked to indicate the extent to which they agree with a set of statements.<sup>16</sup> The responses are presented in descending order.

**Table 2: CCTv Members' views on key features (N=25)**

Statement	Level of Agreement Max = 100%
"CCTv should also be about fun and experimentation."	93%
"The process of making community TV programmes is as important as the final product"	86%
"Community participation at all stages is central to community television"	86%
"CCTv brings a unique approach to its programme making and its scheduling"	81%
"CCTv covers topics that other media somewhat neglect "	76%
"CCTv disseminates programmes that are of interest to me"	68%
"CCTv programmes in general have good production values"	68%
"The overall quality of CCTv broadcasting is high"	66%
"Not all CCTv programmes are made by television professionals, and our appreciation of them is different."	61%

The three areas of strongest agreement among members all revolve around process: That it should be *fun and experimental*; that *production is as important as product*; and that *community participation is vital*.

This is followed by its *unique approach*, and *coverage of neglected issues*.

Nevertheless content quality and production values score quite highly, perhaps taking into account that they are not all produced by professionals.

Overall, this can be considered as a strong endorsement, from this group, for the quality of content, the themes covered, and the production process deployed by CCTv. A number of suggestions, some lengthy, were offered about how CCTv could improve its activities and content. These are reproduced fully in Annex 2, with key points paraphrased here:

Overall, this can be considered as a strong endorsement, from this group, for the quality of content, the themes covered, and the production process deployed by CCTv. A number of suggestions, some lengthy, were offered about how CCTv could improve its activities and content. These are reproduced fully in Annex 2, with key points paraphrased here:

- Open a CCTv studio, for its own productions and for communities/groups to make theirs (2).
- Offer media training and applied learning through making programmes for CCTv, to create a network of providers (e.g. with Cork ETB Community Education, Further Education etc.). (2)
- Make CCTv transmission more accessible to people.
- Create a social media presence on major platforms, to target certain communities.
- Contact film and media courses in the Colleges of Further Education in Cork City and County and UCC, to bring in new volunteers and communities for programmes.
- Launch a new campaign to inform community groups about the use of the Notice Board facility.
- Be more proactive in seeking out programmes that are different to mainstream TV.
- Explain things differently in CCTv, mentoring people to try new things; exercise, nature programmes, walks, visits to towns, streets, how to use computers etc.: "slow television" that shows people what to do, gets behind how things are done and promotes inclusion and critique.

<sup>16</sup> The options were: *Strongly agree*; *Agree Somewhat*; *Neutral*; *Disagree somewhat*; or *Strongly Disagree*. A score of 100% means that all respondents strongly agree with the statement; and a score of zero would mean that all strongly disagree.



Many of the above suggestions explicitly recognise that acting on the suggestions would demand additional sources of funding.

## 5. Generating Benefits

CCTv set out to: “enable communities to make, manage and broadcast television programming to reflect the interests, activities and concerns of these communities, in order to effect positive social change.”

An assessment of the benefits generated should not be attempted in isolation from the wider set of community television actors, in particular the community content producers (among which CCTv can also number itself), for which CCTv provides the key broadcasting and dissemination function. While community video producers pre-existed CCTv, and continue to pursue work in parallel with and separately from CCTv, the existence of CCTv has enabled the sector to receive funding from the Sound and Vision and other schemes; and offered the opportunity to broadcast (albeit with the limitations outlined earlier) via a mainstream provider, as well as to live-stream. To be seen on the television is perceived as a key value among community organisations and their clients and is often a major motivating factor behind many community television productions.

Yet assessing the extent to which community television is “effecting positive social change” is by no means straightforward. For that reason the BAI, working in collaboration with the community media sector, developed a Community Media Social Benefit Framework,<sup>17</sup> and an associated evaluation methodology. This is designed to facilitate the generation of evidence of these benefits and to some degree to quantify, or at least describe, these benefits. Certain components of that methodology have been applied in this research, including the production of qualitative CTV Stories.

The Framework defines the Social Benefit of community media as follows:

“Benefits to individuals or collective actors in the community that enhance their lives socially, culturally or economically, or in terms of development, empowerment and/or well-being, that otherwise would not have come about.”

Six types of social benefit that community media can generate are then specified, each with a set of indicators. Below, a preliminary and approximate attempt is made to assess which of these six types are most relevant to CCTv, based on the indicators. First, the CTV activities that can reasonably be assumed to have generated these benefits, and the type, are quickly reviewed:

Social benefits are likely to have been generated through the following:

- *Getting a message out:* Numerous community groups and some statutory bodies – numbering about 100 and most working in areas and on themes of disadvantage - have deployed the medium of video and television to disseminate information and a story, chosen by them, to audiences in Cork and sometimes further afield. While audience size has most likely been modest compared to mainstream television channels, they have also managed to reach their target groups by other means, and to stimulate discussion around the issues raised. Often, the issues covered have been neglected by mainstream media.
- *Celebrating and reinforcing identity and place:* The goal of some productions is less about information dissemination than it is about celebrating and reinforcing a sense of identity among a given community. Many productions have succeeded in this.

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<sup>17</sup> The basic Framework is in an Annex to the main report of this research, and further documentation can be downloaded here: <http://www.bai.ie/en/download/134920>

- *Partnering in media production:* Almost all of the community partners have engaged, to differing degrees, in the various stages of media production, from pre-production, to production, post-production and dissemination. For a small number, this involved learning valuable skills that can be used in future production or elsewhere; but for a majority it is also a process of developing hands-on media literacy, through learning how media is produced and demystifying the process.

Drawing on these general considerations, as well as on the small number of CCTV Stories (see Annex 3), the table below attempts to score CCTV on the indicators of each of the six social benefits identified in the Community Media Social Benefit Framework. Indicators are given provisional scores:

- **A score of 0** indicates there is *no evidence the CCTV generated benefits in this area*; to:
- **A score of 5** indicates there is reasonable evidence that *significant social benefit was generated for its target group in this area*.

While this is a crude measurement, based on largely qualitative research and experience, it nevertheless offers a reasonable summary pending further work on this in the future.

**Table 3: Social Benefits generated by CCTV and CTV in Cork.**

Social Benefits	Indicators of Social Benefits of each Type	Score 0-5	Comment
1. <u>Individuals</u> , especially minorities and those marginalised, are <u>growing in confidence and creativity</u> and/or <u>reinforcing a sense of belonging</u> , directly from engaging with the station.	SB1 is being achieved through... 1.1. <b>placements</b> from community organisations working with marginalised/disadvantaged people 1.2. <b>station volunteers</b> making programmes and in administration and support 1.3. <b>training</b> of marginalised/disadvantaged individuals; and taking in interns from external entities 1.4. <b>isolated or marginalised individuals</b> viewing programmes addressing their interests	1 2 4 3	CCTV itself lacks facilities to take on placements; but community producers do.  CCTV has a strong group of volunteers, though few are from marginalised groups  People from marginalised groups are trained and participate in many productions, e.g. media literacy Cable viewer figures are probably low, but local launches and other means were also used
2. <u>Individuals are enhancing their employment prospects</u> , through gaining skills and confidence, reinforcing community identity	SB 2 is being achieved through... 2.1. <b>media training</b> that enhances vocational prospects 2.2. <b>volunteer</b> opportunities that enhance employment prospects through personal development and skills acquisition 2.3. <b>staff</b> experience and training that enhance their vocational prospects	2 2 0	Some community producers provide vocational training to groups Several volunteers have gone on to produce their own work or contributed to other productions CCTV has had (until very recently) no paid staff.
3. <u>Community members are informed and aware</u> of what is happening around their community	SB3 is achieved through the use by community members of information broadcast, in the form of... 3.1. regular bulletins of <b>everyday information</b> such as traffic, weather events etc. 3.2. specific <b>social bulletins</b> such as death notices, social events, etc.	0 4	CCTV coverage of local and national elections & other events; a bulletin

	3.3. <b>transactional information services</b> such as Job Search or Marketplace delivered free or at low-cost	0	board was operational, now suspended
4. Community members are <u>responding more effectively to issues</u> —local to global—because they have access to diverse viewpoints and to more and better information	SB 4 is achieved through the station: 4.1. <b>producing/broadcasting content</b> and format that addresses local to global issues, with diverse views presented in a balanced and constructive format, in studio and outside broadcasting 4.2. <b>providing facilities and resources</b> for volunteers to do the same, covering issues of local interest and concern 4.3. <b>referencing local advocacy groups</b> when reporting on news items 4.4. <b>actively engaging in the community</b> through projects, advocacy and interactions on issues of local interest and concern	2  2  0  4	CCTv has no studio of its own, but facilitates many community producers; it has brought in external content to enhance diversity of views  Frameworks Films as a community producer covers local events at the request of communities, sometimes at no cost CCTv has no resources to do local news Through community screenings, CCTv and community producers actively support local issues
5. <u>Collective actors (CBOs, NGOs etc.)</u> are facilitated, and reinforced in their capacity <u>to achieve their goals</u>	SB5 is achieved through the station... 5.1 providing <b>airtime</b> to local CBOs to discuss and present their work, issues and requests to the public 5.2 facilitating <b>CBOs to produce</b> dedicated regular slots or entire programmes, including training and facilities 5.3 <b>actively collaborating</b> , beyond broadcasting, with collective actors for advocacy and joint work on issues relating to social benefit	3  2  0	Up to 100 CBOs and local institutions have had productions aired, though it has not been possible to follow-up A few regular community partners have had multiple training-related programmes, such as Mahon CDP, broadcast. CCTv itself does not have the outreach resources to collaborate with CBOs on other issues
6. The community <u>sense of identity and cohesiveness is enhanced</u> through interaction and collective action	SB6 is achieved through the station... 6.1. bringing <b>diverse community groups into interactive programmes</b> to discuss local issues, including dealing with conflicts and tensions 6.2. helping to <b>mobilise community members</b> around issues of concern locally, for collective action, advocacy, etc. in an inclusive manner	3  2	Some groups, such as Independent Living, have been facilitated to engage in debates on key issues  CTV has facilitated the recording of events, and offered the footage back

The above exercise does not intend to draw firm conclusions; and aggregating the scores would serve little purpose as the judgements are qualitative in nature. Rather, it is illustrative, pointing to areas of strength of the particular model of community television developed by CCTv.

## 6. Conclusions

### **CCTv's model of community television**

Soon after launch, CCTv had to set aside, at least for a time, its ambitious plans to build a studio and offer significant training and support activities to members and marginalised groups. For a period, it managed to produce some programmes of its own, mostly funded by Sound and Vision, but never achieved the milestone of a permanent office and studio. Instead, the CCTv Board and members decided to focus on its broadcasting activities, and on supporting in whatever way they could other community broadcasters.

The model that has emerged in this context has been almost entirely volunteer-based. CCTv has had to, and been able to, rely on a core groups of volunteers, most of whom have been present since the beginning, supplemented by short-term volunteers as required. A wide range of tasks, some of them highly skilled, must be executed to run a broadcasting station and ensure the signal is available, to comply with the media regulator's requirements, to maintain and administer a membership-based registered company including the annual audits, and to support transparency for members and a level of participation in governance. CCTv has been very fortunate – bearing in mind that most people attracted to it are from a community development background rather than a media one – in having access to these volunteers, including among them experts in video production, transmission play-out, administration, as well as community development.

Other factors have enabled it to keep going.

Over the years, CCTv has built up positive relations with Cork City Council, and with several educational institutions in the city and county. These have resulted in several co-productions, often working with young people, coverage of elections and other Council activities. They have also covered social and cultural events, often with live broadcasting. This has led to some additional, albeit occasional and relatively modest, grants, that have been vital to the survival of CCTv and to its continuing technical capacity to deliver a signal and improve its Web presence. The BAI, often through the CTA, has also offered some support, in terms of building capacity, enhancing technical capabilities, and promoting community television through the CTV Festival.

In recent years, a small payment has been possible, indirectly through the Sound & Vision scheme, to supplement the volunteer support for community producers; which has in turn enabled them over the years to secure over €2 million from the Sound and Vision scheme and produce a huge range of original and high quality programmes. Community content producers are keenly aware of the value of the Sound and Vision scheme to the sector.

Over the years, CCTv and community producers have enabled over 100 organisations, mostly community based but also statutory, to develop ideas for, participate in production, and ultimately broadcast and disseminate information about themselves and their activities, including training activities and media literacy capacity building.

Yet this model, in the long-term, is not sustainable, and has worked up to now thanks only to a fortuitous level of determination and dedication of a small group of people. To maintain even the current, minimal, level of activity, CCTv requires a resourced office, basic staff, and sufficient funding to enable it to improve and replace its equipment. It is simply too dependent on volunteers and on occasional grants that often require a lot of work to secure.

## Future Potential

There is also strong evidence that CCTV could achieve a lot more, in terms of social benefits generated particularly for disadvantaged communities, if it could develop the model to a new level. A consultant report in 2016, found that CCTV provides a “unique, invaluable service to community groups in Cork”. Communities found the process of engaging with CCTV to be beneficial and empowering. The evidence of this research concurs with these findings.

However, that report, and this research, also concluded that a lot more could be achieved. A key shortcoming is that CCTV, due to its lack of staff and resources, is unable to follow-up and sustain the relationships it, and some key community producers, have developed, through partnering in programme production and dissemination.

*Developing and sustaining the relationship between community television and these community organisations (both area based and communities of interest) could, it is reasonable to conclude, very significantly multiply the social benefits being generated by community television in Cork.*

This it would do by enabling them to develop to whatever level they wish in terms of media literacy, skills and participation, and to articulate and disseminate the issues, views and stories that concern them.

The Board and members of CCTV believe that the way forward is through building a *Cork Community Media Hub* into which CCTV broadcasting would be subsumed as an integral part. A set of additional activities would offer an added value that could realise the full potential of this approach. The Hub sees a number of factors as critical: The capacity to offer training and support to community organisations; the ability to co-produce programmes with these communities, including on issues of local governance and service development (increasingly needed as communities come under pressure in the context of migration, homelessness, and the spread of false news); and the development of a space where many communities, and statutory support services, can meet and exchange, and build the sector together. CCTV and its members believe that these will reinforce each other, encourage new generations of volunteers, and attract funding to the sector.

The current Social Benefit Sound and Vision Scheme project is seen as a first step in this, building closer relations with a group of community organisational members of CESCA. A parallel project to expand the volunteer base goes hand in hand with that.

The other advantage of the idea of the Hub is that it broadens the focus beyond television, to a more holistic and realistic understanding of community media in current media dynamics. A key part of its activities would be to develop into the media spaces that people of all ages and in all communities are moving into, going beyond VOD and streaming to include social media skills and tools more broadly. The experience of CCTV and its community producers in the area of media literacy, opened to all digital media literacy, is a positive asset in moving in this direction.



## Annexes:

### Annex 1: Community and Arts Organisations broadcasting on CCTV

The following is an incomplete list of Community, Arts and Statutory organisations in Cork City and County that have had programmes broadcast on Cork Community TV. No systematic record has been kept but the total number is estimated by the channel to well exceed 100. For a majority of these, the content has been produced in association with a community producer or CCTV itself.

1. Ballinvreena Community Complex
2. Ballyphehane/Togher Community Development Project
3. Barrack St Community Group
4. Bishopstown Senior Social Centre
5. Blackpool Historical Society
6. Brothers of Charity Caritas Training Centre
7. Club Ceoil Ballyphehane
8. Community Midwives Association
9. Community Women's Education Initiative
10. Cope Foundation
11. Cork Anti-war Campaign
12. Cork Centre for Independent Living
13. Cork Chapter of the Igbo Union of Ireland
14. Cork City Ballet
15. Cork City Council
16. Cork City FC
17. Cork City Library
18. Cork Council of Trade Unions
19. Cork Environmental Forum
20. Cork Ex-Boxers Association
21. Cork Folk Festival
22. Cork Gay Community Development Company
23. Cork Jazz Festival
24. Cork LGBT Archive
25. Cork Life Centre
26. Cork Opera House
27. Cork Printmakers
28. Cork Stonemasons
29. Cork Traveller Women's Network
30. Cork Urban Skateboard Project
31. Crawford Art Gallery
32. Doneraile Heritage Group
33. Everyman Palace
34. Ford Ex-Workers Group
35. Glucksman Gallery
36. Graffiti Theatre Company
37. Gurranabraher Community Centre
38. Gurranabraher/Churchfield Outreach Project
39. Limerick Council of Trade Unions
40. Limerick International Brigades Memorial Trust
41. Linc
42. Mahon CDP
43. Mahon Intergenerational Project
44. Mayfield Employment Action Project
45. Media Literacy Ireland
46. Meitheal Mara
47. Mother Jones Festival Committee
48. Muskerry Gaeltacht
49. Nagle Community College
50. Nasc – Irish Immigrant Support Centre
51. Northside Folklore Project
52. Ringmahon Rangers
53. Schools Heritage Project
54. Shandon Area History Group
55. Social Housing Development Company
56. Special Olympics
57. The Quay Co-op
58. Togher Family Centre
59. Traveller Visibility Group
60. Triskel Arts Centre
61. Westgate Foundation
62. Youth Work Ireland

## Annex 2: Members Comments in CCTV Survey

**Survey Question 1:** Respondents were offered an opportunity to suggest additional themes that CCTV could cover. All are reproduced below, in no particular order. .

Queer identity, Romania Culture, Health and Wellbeing
Gender, Diversity and Women's issues
Current affairs / local politics
A focus on local government and decision making
News and current affairs on RTÉ fail to report properly on local issues, which are actually of national importance. Their 'parachuting in' approach produces bland, decontextualised reporting. Proper resources would be needed, but some sort of local news in which communities and their organisations could actively participate in selecting and even reporting on the issues, is badly needed.
Programme on Climate issues.
Youth Voices - Youth participation
LGBTQIA
I would welcome local news reports say on a daily basis about happenings in Cork. Likewise some studio discussion programmes involving communities and their concerns. It would also be relevant to include happenings at Cork City Hall council meetings. We need to hear more from the new Cork citizens, whether immigrants, refugees or people coming here to work from other countries. The story of communities, history of sports clubs, voluntary organisations and great events in the Cork area should be developed. All politics may be local but much news is also local and is even more important in the new global world. Information and discussion helps to remove fake news and evils such as racism and discrimination. I think Community TV could play a really essential role in developing a sense of identity in community and between communities and dispel negative perceptions of issues and events.
Local filmmaking, but that probably comes under the arts.
Public information campaigns: Citizens' information type programmes Legal rights First aid

**Survey Question 2:** A number of suggestions, some lengthy, were offered about how CCTV could improve its activities and content.

The following suggestions were put forward by the survey respondents

Highlight positive Community news
Improvements would require increased resources such as more trained up to produce content by groups
I think the participation /inclusion and valuing all voices element is crucial
Studio and staff to facilitate more production and more frequent/up to date..
More direct community access in the making of programmes could bring about a better sense of buy in.
It always comes back to money, but CCTV should provide a studio, ideally locally but at least one centrally, where communities and interest groups could be supported to make their own programmes, always within the empowerment ethos of the station.
Access is the biggest issue. CCTV continues to not be accessible to many people. This is primarily a transmission issue.
A social media presence on platforms like Facebook, Instagram and Twitter would target communities. To contact the film and media courses in the Colleges of Further Education in Cork City and County and University College Cork to bring in new volunteers and communities for

programmes. To have a presence at film festivals in Cork City and County so film makers can send and upload their programmes on CCTV and therefore giving more content for CCTV and also the other community stations. A room/ building in the city to have as a centre for CCTV for interviews, recording programmes and general information to the general public. A push/ new market campaign to inform community groups about the use of the notice board.

I think a lot of community based organisations don't know about Cork Community TV and would love to have their work showcased. I think that having more access to media training and applied learning through making programmes for Cork Community TV would be helpful to create a network of providers (e.g. linking with Cork ETB Community Education, Further Education, back to work skills and youth services)

If CCTV in Ireland had the resources and investment and received practical financial support from the State, it could do a lot more to be very relevant, interesting and challenging !

CCTV should perhaps be more proactive in seeking out programmes which are different from mainstream TV output. The Fíorsceal series on TG4 is a case in point. I hear and see material in that series that I see nowhere else. I would like to see it prepare, utilise and promote educational programmes to help young and old get to grips with modern technology, such as computers, mobile phones and various apps. Simple straightforward practical series which people could work with.

Community programme making working with people in communities would assist many people to have their voices heard. It could work with minorities of all kinds to listen to their views and ensure they are heard in the wider body politic. It could show how TV programmes are made, provide background views, research, ideas, inviting young and old to come in and take part.

The point here is that Community TV can take the time to explain things differently and mentor and encourage people to try stuff whether it be exercise, nature programmes, walks, visits to towns, streets. Coverage of sport from behind the scenes. It can be a fly on the wall and it does not have to depend on instant gratification and colour. Many of the most watched programmes involve "simple" stuff such as gardening, how to do it, what to use, what to plant, identify shrubs, weeds, trees, birds, insects... It has been described as "slow television" which shows people what to do, gets behind how things are done and promotes inclusion and questions. It could give people skills and confidence. Why not use some of the better adult education courses and broadcast them. Look at hobbies and encourage people to participate by showing them how to do what is required.

I would like to see CCTV promote the history of communities , listen to the folklore, hold interviews with elderly people living in communities to tell their stories. Talk and interview local authors, singers, actors, teachers, nurses.....the everyday stuff. TV should be immersed in the activities so that people act naturally and are open rather than the soap opera material with canned laughter which permeates much mainstream TV coverage. It could be a counterpoint to Facebook, Instagram, Twitter etc. CCTV should encourage assimilation of knowledge, increase empathy with neighbours, strangers, between groups, between young and old.....

This CAN be achieved! CCTV if resourced properly could achieve all this and develop a more human way of looking at life, events and happenings and give people time to look, listen, question, learn and enjoy. That would be some achievement and worthwhile doing! And if it worked with the voluntary section it could be done for a fraction of the cost of mainstream TV which appeals more and more to big blockbuster stuff, big names and huge promotion of questionable and boring material to ensure advertising revenue. CCTV should be provided with an opportunity to show what it can achieve as it has a vast potential to be very relevant to many people as society becomes more complex and online rather than real.

Train a core group of people in technical skills that can work in multiple programmes, not just those relevant to their particular part of Cork

## Annex 3: Stories from Cork Community Television<sup>18</sup>

### Story 8: *Four Stories of Blackpool*

Eddie Noonan and Emma Bowell, Producers, Frameworks Films

#### Summary

This story covers four separate documentaries, all based in Blackpool. Collaborating closely with local folklore organisations, and spread over a number of years, Frameworks Films produced these with the communities, recording their stories and history, for broadcast on CCTV. Two were funded by Sound and Vision and the volunteer input, especially locally, was huge. The community participated at every stage.

#### Community Issue Addressed

Blackpool is an old industrial suburb on the northside of Cork city, once famous for its brewing, distilling and manufacturing. Although part of the city, many of the older residents still regarded it as a village within a city. In the early 1990s some members of the Blackpool Historical Society became interested in recording their stories, initially in a book and subsequently in a documentary that was later broadcast on Cork Community TV, called *The Lives and Times of Blackpool*. They felt it was important to record these stories about life in Blackpool because it had begun to change dramatically from when they were younger and they wanted to preserve those memories.

One of the factories featured in this documentary and where many people from Blackpool worked was called the Sunbeam and this became the subject of a separate short documentary for the Cork WideScreen project as part of Cork 2005 European Capital of Culture. This was produced with the Northside Folklore Project, some members of which then got involved in a subsequent project called *Blackpool – Old heart, New face* in 2008, which was made following some major infrastructural changes in Blackpool – a new national road and a large shopping centre and retail park which many felt had changed the area dramatically.

Later, one of the members of the Blackpool Historical Society wrote a book about the men from Blackpool who fought in the First World War and the group then collaborated with Frameworks Films to produce a documentary, called *Blackpool to the Front* (2018), based on some of the stories in the book. So, although there were several different issues addressed in these productions, all had one thing in common: a desire to tell the stories of the Blackpool community by members of that community.

#### Programme Content

*The Lives and Times of Blackpool* is a 90minute documentary which covers topics such as growing up in Blackpool, school days, street games, work, leisure time, sports, politics and

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<sup>18</sup> The Story numbering begins with the seven DCTV Stories, and continues here starting with number 8.

religion. It features a wide range of older people from the Blackpool area, many of whom are no longer alive.

*Sunbeam* is a 20 minute documentary detailing what it was like to work in the Sunbeam factory in Cork through interviews with ex-workers. The impact of the closure of the factory is also explored as is the dramatic fire which saw the iconic building finally brought to the ground.

*Blackpool – Old Heart, New Face* is a 30 minute documentary which gets the views of residents and businesses in Blackpool about some of the recent changes in the village and asks how people would like to see it develop in the future. Members of the newer communities living in Blackpool were also invited to give their opinions. This programme was produced with members of the Northside Folklore Project and was funded by Sound & Vision.

*Blackpool to the Front* is an 80minute documentary about the men from Blackpool who fought in the First World War and was produced to mark the centenary of the ending of the war. In the documentary a group of older people from Blackpool travel to the Western Front to see where their relatives fought and died. They reflect on the consequences of war and explore how those who fought were remembered, locally, nationally and internationally, particularly in the context of a changing Ireland. Sapling trees from a forest in Northern France where the last man from Blackpool died (a week before the end of the war) were brought back to Cork and planted in Blackpool.

### **How the community participates**

Four different groups were involved in these productions (some participating in more than one) and the process of how the community participated is the same. In each case a working group was formed with the community organisation involved to develop the application and to secure funding (two of these were Sound & Vision funded projects). This group would stay involved right the way through the production until the final dissemination. In all cases members of the wider community would then participate, either by agreeing to be interviewed in the documentary or by finding archive material or by participating in the production crew, where training would be provided. This was particularly the case with the Northside Folklore Project members who were very interested in developing new skills and learning how to use the cameras. Some were used to doing audio interviews as part of their own research work but filming was a new area for them. The community would participate again at the end of each production, promoting the screenings and broadcast on Community TV.

### **Output dissemination**

Each of these four documentaries was broadcast on Cork Community TV, including several repeat broadcasts over the years.



The films were also shown in various locations in the community such as the Blackpool Community Centre and The Reel Cinema in Blackpool. Some went on to be screened at other venues such as Cork City Hall and internationally at festivals. Tapes and DVDs were produced and several hundreds of these were distributed in the local community and shown in local schools. *Blackpool to the Front* is also available on the CCTv the VOD website.

### **Promoting Community Television in the community**

A wide number of people participated in all of these productions and each would be made aware of Community TV at whatever stage they became involved. When the productions were subsequently broadcast on Cork Community TV, there was great excitement about appearing on the television and friends and family were all tuned in. Both of the organisations also promoted the broadcasts through all their own channels, including various social media channels. The Northside Folklore Project is an initiative of University College Cork and they would also have disseminated information about the broadcasts on Cork Community TV.

### **Outcome for the community**

The first documentary *The Lives and Times of Blackpool* was very popular in the community as it was made before video became much more accessible and so it was still quite rare for local people to see themselves on the big and small screen telling their own stories. The Blackpool Historical Society was able to sell so many copies of the documentary that it raised enough funds for them to publish a second book on the area.

All of the subsequent documentaries also proved to be popular and demand was high to get copies. For those who participated directly in the making of these productions, there were new skills learnt but also an opportunity to discuss and debate local issues, as in the piece about future developments for Blackpool.

### **Social benefits generated**

These are drawn from the Social Benefits Framework:

*SB1 Individuals, especially minorities and those marginalized, are growing in confidence and creativity and/or reinforcing a sense of belonging, directly from engaging with the station*

Many older people living in the community watched programmes which addressed their interests and validated their sense of community.

*SB2 Individuals are enhancing their employment prospects, through gaining skills and confidence reinforcing community identity*

Media training was provided to participants, some of whom were able to use these skills in their work.

*SB5 Collective actors are facilitated and reinforced in their capacity to achieve their goals*

Both the Blackpool Historical Society and the Northside Folklore Project were able to achieve their goals through their involvement with the station. This included enabling them to present their work, which involves recording and disseminating local history and folklore.

*SB6 The community sense of identity and cohesiveness is enhanced through interaction and collective action.*

In *Blackpool – Old Heart, New Face* topics which had divided the community such as the new road and shopping centre were discussed and debated with members of the community. The wider community had an opportunity to hear other viewpoints being expressed and sometimes opposing viewpoints. Through working on this production, the community involved had the opportunity to discuss local issues and for some this also led to a stronger feeling of community identity.



Members of the Northside Folklore Project filming *Blackpool – Old Heart, New Face*



Members of the Blackpool Historical Society collecting trees from the Foret de Mormal in France to plant in Blackpool.

## Story 9: *An Muileann* (2020)

**Anne-Marie Green, Producer**

### Summary

*An Muileann* (Irish for The Mill) is driven by local amateur historians, seeking to capture disappearing knowledge about a segment of Cork County's rural past. Filmed in 2019/20, funded by Sound and Vision, the half-hour documentary tells the story of three mills in a once thriving, quasi-industrial landscape. The water-powered mills deliberately resonate with the current energy crisis and the potential of hydro-power. The production, including community screening, is also intended to contribute to community-building, especially of new arrivals, and to reduce the isolation of some older people who feature in the programmes and some of whom worked in these mills.

### Community issue(s) addressed:

For younger people and those not brought up in rural Ireland there is little awareness of a very different landscape in the past. Rural populations were considerably bigger, there was a lot of industry and many people were actively employed in all kinds of work, much of it for export. West Cork had mining which fed the international market as well as butter and fish production which was exported to other parts of Ireland and to the UK.

This history and heritage has largely disappeared. The project was driven by local amateur historians and people involved in renovating mills in West Cork who were concerned that this knowledge would be lost to the community and future generations. Since the demise of the Mizen Journal which was produced for many years by the Mizen Archaeological and Historical Society there is a need for local history to be recorded in this area.

The programme idea came from within the community. A number of people including current and past owners as well as those interested in local history wanted to see the preservation of the mills documented for the community. Of particular interest was recording the memories of some of the older members of the community who still recall the mills when they were working. Most of the elderly residents are now in their mid to late 80s. This oral history brings the stories of buildings alive. It also gave older members of the community a sense of belonging, of importance as custodians of important knowledge about their own community.

### Programme Content/genre

This documentary looks at three mills in West Cork- a small grain and wool mill at Coosheen near Schull, a five-storey mill near Clonakilty and a working turbine mill near Rosscarbery. We meet the current owners as well as older residents who remember the mills when they were working. Dr. Colin Rynne from the Department of Archaeology in University College Cork, who is Ireland's leading authority on water power, gives us an insight into the development of milling in Ireland.

The duration of the documentary is 30'22." It was filmed and edited over 2019/2020. The original budget was €20,604 with a grant from the Sound and Vision Fund of €19,100. The final cost of producing the film was in excess of €21k as further work needed to be done to comply with requirements for archiving the film with the IFI. High speed SSD cards were also purchased.

There were four strands to the narrative structure:

1. *An exploration of Ireland's hidden industrial heritage:* Through interviews with Dr. Rynne in locations around West Cork he points out the significance of landmarks relating to our industrial past. For example, Copper Point near Schull tells us of the wealthy international trade in copper that emanated from the area. Overgrown flax ponds are a remnant of the links with the flourishing linen trade in Northern Ireland.
2. *The restoration of the mills at Coosheen and Castlevue:* With access to dozens of photographs, amateur video and archive documents, including original leases and newspaper illustrations, we trace the preservation and rebuilding of these centuries old buildings. Interviews with the current owners and families explore the historical and personal connections to these buildings and the way of life they represent.
3. *The memories of an older generation of the mill and other industries in the local area:* There are few people who would remember working mills. We have found some who recall visiting and indeed working there. Through their memories of the buildings we reveal a different way of life that has all but disappeared. Ireland's rural industrial activity has declined with increased centralisation in urban areas. With it has disappeared self-sufficient communities around the country.
4. *The lessons from our industrial past for the future:* There is a central thread of water powering industry through the centuries. This water power represented necessity as the mother of invention. Ireland lacked coal and therefore had to come up with an alternative. As we now search for a reliable and consistent source of green energy for a sustainable future the film asks if the ancient principles of mill power can provide a solution. Gavin Harte, well-known environmentalist and son of Derek Harte who restored Coosheen Mill, explores the possibility of combining the old with the technological new to answer the pressing questions of creating sustainable power in the face of climate change.

### **Community participation:**

The communities were co-participants in the making of the film. For the most part they did not have filmmaking experience but what they did have and wanted to contribute was local knowledge. Some people took on the task of doing academic research about their local mill. Others took on the task of tracking down local people who had particular knowledge of the building and the local industry. Others engaged with the wider community acting as researchers and found additional strands of storytelling that they wished to be included in the documentary. They sourced archive material including photographs and original property documents. Their guidance was central in dictating the direction the documentary would take.

What makes the film different from mainstream programming is that this is a hyperlocal story. It may have universal lessons in terms of potential sources of alternative energy but in a commercially driven television environment it would never be shown by a national broadcaster. National commercial or public service broadcasting is made for a national audience. The stories told are influenced by viewership figures, ratings, advertising and current trends.

Films such as *An Muileann* would only see the light of day on community television. Community television allows for material to be broadcast that might only appeal to a small audience. It is the variety of material that can be shown that allows it to cater to multiple small audiences.

### **Dissemination & Broadcasting:**

The programme premiered on Cork community television on 7<sup>th</sup> March 2023. It is also available on demand at <https://corkcommunitytv.ie/on-demand-video/> and also on Vimeo [https://vimeo.com/806315622?embedded=true&source=vimeo\\_logo&owner=169248369](https://vimeo.com/806315622?embedded=true&source=vimeo_logo&owner=169248369).

From the start, an intention of this project was always to organise community screenings so as to bring the film directly back to the communities involved in making it. The first community screening will take place in Clonakilty on Thursday, the 4<sup>th</sup> of May 2023. This has been organised through the local branch of Duchas. Clonakilty is the closest town to Castlevew Mill and would also be accessible from Glandore. The film will be screened and afterwards there will be a Q&A with the audience. Dr Colin Rynne from the Archaeology apartment in UCC will be available to discuss the history of milling in general. Joe O’Leary, whose family have owned Castlevew Mill for centuries and who has single-handedly brought the turbine mechanism back into working order, will speak about his ambitious renovation project.

It is anticipated that there will be a screening in Schull as well as at a meeting of Mills and Millers of Ireland.

### **Outcome for the community:**

The principal benefit to the community is in discovering more about their own hidden past. This is achieved particularly through community screenings, through discussions of the issues raised and through dissemination of further information and links to the documentary online which can be passed on to other members of the community. The film raises the issue of potentially re-invigorating hydro power in Ireland as an alternative energy source in a debate that is relevant to ongoing concerns about climate change and energy security. Older people in the community who could be described as somewhat isolated and marginalised are important characters in the making of the film as their contributions are central to bringing the history of these buildings alive.

One of the benefits to the community is the mill owners’ commitment to making these buildings accessible to the public. Joe O’Leary from Castlevew Mill, who has been restoring the derelict mill for many years, was inspired by the film project to seek funding for his work. He is passionate about spreading knowledge about the mill and its connection to local history, and succeeded in securing funding for its restoration. His ambition is for it to be a place for local groups (school/history) to come and learn about their history and to use the mill as a space for community events.

Local residents who have seen the film have expressed pride in their collective history and an interest in learning more about what they share with others in the community.



## Story 10: Cork Elections 2011 Live

**Audrey O'Mahony and Emma Bowell**

### Summary:

CCTv decided in 2011 to broadcast live the General Election counts, in two Cork constituencies, complete with extensive interviews with a large number and range of candidates. Later productions covered the 2016 general elections, and 2014 and 2019 local elections, though not all were live. The production had no budget, and involved the mobilisation of numerous volunteers, developing unique skills, and contributed to citizens' understanding of the electoral processes. It was considered a great success, but replication solely on a volunteer basis would be difficult.

### Community issue addressed

In 2011, at a Cork Community TV Board meeting, the role for Community TV in active citizenship/ local democracy was discussed. The Board also explored future programming and, as the General Election was coming up, it decided to broadcast full coverage of the live count from Cork City Hall. Part of the reason for this was that mainstream media coverage tended to show just short snippets from the count centre. We decided to provide on-going coverage of the counts of the two city constituencies, with regular updates from the county. We also wanted to broadcast interviews with a large number of local candidates and not just the most well-known. We believe that CCTv has a role to play in showcasing local democracy at work. We wanted to encourage active citizenship, and in particular to highlight the fact that every vote counts.

**Note:** The General Election count was also filmed in 2016 and the local elections were covered in 2014 and 2019, though these were not all live broadcasts.

### Programme Content

We commenced broadcasting at 2pm on Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> February 2011 and continued on until 4am on Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> 2011 when the count was suspended. We returned the next day at 9am and broadcast until the count ended at 2pm. The programme content was a mixture of the election counts, interviews with candidates, pieces to camera with updates and continuously updated graphics.

### How the community participates

There was no budget to cover the cost of this production so it was all done on a voluntary basis. We did have to have public liability insurance, and this was paid for by CCTv. There was a core team of volunteers from CCTv, some of whom had previous experience of working on this type of event for a local television channel and there were also other volunteers recruited specifically for the production. A total of 22 volunteers worked on the production. The roles included: Director, Production Assistant, Presenters, Sound Operators, Graphics, Floor Manager, Camera Operators, Vision-mixer, Broadcast Engineer and Transport.

Some of these roles had several people in rotation as it was a long shoot. Other people volunteered from local colleges. These were students in film and television production from St Johns College and journalism students from Griffith College. There was a Lecturer in Economics from Cork Institute of Technology (now Munster Technological University) who provided some of the analysis.

It involved a lot of preparatory work, including research into all candidates' biographies and the background to each constituency. One of the volunteers also generated graphics (prepared in advance) to show count results and candidate names as they appeared on screen during interviews.

There were also detailed technical rehearsals as this would be CCTV's first live broadcast and it was an ambitious one. Two people were on site in CCTV's transmission centre in Churchfield ensuring that the signal was being received and that the programme was being broadcast live. Technicians from UPC (now Virgin Media) were also involved in the preparation. CCTV's Broadcast Engineer worked closely with them to ensure that there was a good transmission link between City Hall and CCTV's base in Churchfield, which required line of sight between the two buildings. All equipment required for the production had been donated by UPC, Cork Film Services, Well Lane Productions and Frameworks Films and this was all set up the day before the election count and tested.

CCTV set up its base on the balcony in City Hall, alongside all the established media, the first time that CCTV had such a public presence. It generated a lot of curiosity but there was general support from other media to see a new broadcaster operating in the city.

During the count the community participated through interviews, in particular the independent candidates who were representing their local communities and who didn't have a large party machine backing them. These people were particularly pleased to be getting the same air space as the more prominent national party candidates.

The community participated through the volunteers, who devoted huge time and effort to it. The volunteers all felt a sense of contributing to their community through this production.

It was a major production for CCTV, though it was recognised that it would be difficult to replicate it on a continuous basis in such a voluntary fashion.

### **Output Dissemination**

The programme was broadcast on Channel 803 on UPC (now Virgin Media) and was also livestreamed via the CCTV website. People watching the broadcast were tweeting about it and at one stage CCTV was even trending on Twitter.

A press release was sent to local media to inform them about the broadcast and this was published in local newspapers, thereby also informing the local media about Community Television. CCTV also used Twitter to inform people in advance and during the election count. Contacting the colleges to recruit volunteers also involved informing people about Community Television and there was quite a lot of interest generated in this way. Then, during the election count itself, CCTV was visibly promoted in City Hall with publicity material, such as a pop-up and with the CCTV logo on the microphone etc. All the candidates interviewed were also informed about the channel and this was a good way to raise awareness with them about CCTV.

### **Outcome for the community**

First and foremost the continuous live broadcast of the election count provided much more detailed information to the community than they would usually get and generated a greater sense of connection to the political system. People could really see local democracy in action but also how

every vote counts, particularly in our proportional representation system. People enjoyed seeing more local candidates and getting to hear some quite detailed interviews about what they stood for.

For the members of CCTV they felt they had achieved their aim of using Community Television to help promote active citizenship and also it engendered a strong sense of identity amongst the volunteers of being part of a station.

### **The Social Benefits Generated**

*Individuals are enhancing the employment prospects...*

Students from St Johns and Griffith College were able to put theory into practice in a live setting. They learned to work as part of a team, gaining valuable experience from people with years of experience. There was a sense of passing on skills to a younger generation, particularly in dealing with the pressure of live broadcasting. It also enabled the students to hone their interview and their technical skills. It helped to increase the confidence of the presenters and all of the technical team. There was a good sense of camaraderie and enthusiasm amongst the group.

*Community members are informed and aware*

People got comprehensive information on the counts as they developed. They were more aware of who all the candidates were, what they stood for and their reaction to the unfolding political developments. Whilst concentrating on the local aspect the audience was also kept up to date with the broad national picture.

*Community members are responding more effectively to issues*

Enabling all candidates to participate ensured a diversity of viewpoints. Global topics such as the environment were also addressed.

### **Photos: Volunteers from CCTV filming the 2016 General Election**







## Story 11: *Me and The Media*

Viv Sadd and Emma Bowell

### Summary:

*Me and the Media* was a five part education video on media literacy, a collaboration between Frameworks Films and Mahon CDP. It involved an intergenerational group from Mahon, a working class area of Cork, who undertook formal learning in media literacy, and ended up producing their own content. It was motivated by the often negative picture of Mahon projected by mainstream media, and for participants and the community, built confidence, enhanced an understanding of the media as well as practical skills, and enabled them to project their own stories.

### Community Issue Addressed

The community issue addressed was how you can form a relationship with the media apart from just being a consumer of media. Mahon, a community on the southside of Cork city, typically labelled as disadvantaged, was used to being in the news for all the wrong reasons. The stories in the media were generally associated with criminality, around drugs or violence for example. This had created a sense of helplessness and angst amongst some in the community. Staff and volunteers at Mahon Community Development project were keen to gain a greater understanding of how the media works and potentially to see how they could create their own media to counterbalance the one-sided portrayal of their community. They had worked previously with Frameworks Films on a number of productions and had recently done some media production training with an Inter-generational group and so they sat down to discuss ideas for a Sound & Vision application for Cork Community Television. This became the production *Me and The Media*..

### Programme Content

*Me and the Media* was a five part educational series on media literacy. The series followed an intergenerational group from Mahon in Cork as they learned about media literacy and also about how to create their own media. Each of the first four programmes consisted of the group from Mahon learning about



one of four modules on media literacy. This took place in a classroom setting and used participatory education methodologies. Once the group completed the media literacy



course, they then developed the script for the fifth and final episode in the series, which was to be a programme about media literacy for use in other communities.

The group decided to film a series of scenes that would be typical of life in any community and then to show how the media is involved in each of those scenarios. The group then filmed and edited this final episode.

The episodes were titled as follows:

- Episode One: Introduction to Media Literacy Concepts
- Episode Two: Text & Subtext and the Language of Persuasion
- Episode Three: Deconstructing Media Messages
- Episode Four: Creating Media
- Episode Five: Me and the Media

### **How the community participated**

The staff and volunteers of Mahon CDP participated in the discussions that led to the idea for the programmes and they were also involved in the final episode. Some members of the Intergenerational group volunteered to participate in the programme series i.e. to be filmed in the classroom setting receiving the information about media literacy and participating in discussions. Others participated in the various scenes that were filmed for the final episode, some people acting in the scenes which gave a sense of what it felt like to be in front of the camera.

Others became part of the production team, learning how to use the camera and microphones. The group had decided to conduct some vox-pops in a local shopping centre and this involved devising the questions and also conducting the interviews. People from the local community and further afield participated in these vox-pops, answering a series of questions and giving their opinions on images produced by the group. Finally some of the group participated in editing the final series for broadcast on Cork Community TV.

### **Output dissemination**



The series was broadcast on Cork Community Television and streamed live via the CCTV website. It has been re-broadcast on a number of occasions since it was first produced.

There was an idea to try and replace some of the American material used in the educational modules with Irish content so that it could be made more relevant for an Irish audience. There were also

some discussions with an e-learning organisation to see how the material could be used in



educational settings. However, funding was not sourced to take these ideas beyond the initial discussion stage.

Mahon CDP also promoted the series and CCTv on its Facebook page, which has over a thousand followers.

All of those involved in this project, whether through filming, supporting the project from Mahon CDP or taking part in some of the vox-pops in Mahon shopping centre, got to hear about Cork Community TV. Mahon CDP has a large group of local people who use its services and many of these came to hear about Cork Community TV because of this project.

### **Outcome for the community**

The feedback from everyone participating in the series was very positive and there was a great deal of learning for everyone. It was good to be able to focus on media over the course of the project. The discussions were very thought-provoking and some of the myths around media were debated. There was also a greater understanding of the role that individuals can have in terms of how you analyse media messages and then having the confidence to create your own media.

Ultimately there was a feeling of empowerment that even members of a disadvantaged community could produce their own media and tell the story of their own community. The aspiration was that this group would be able to build on these skills with a view to making more content for Cork Community TV. However, because there was no immediate follow on, some of the group had dissipated by the time that Frameworks was able to collaborate on another project with Mahon CDP. The view of Viv Sadd, the project co-ordinator from Mahon CDP, is as follows:

“For continuity, there needs to be additional funding following it to make it sustainable, because otherwise you’re just relying on goodwill and goodwill is not enough. So for sustainability and to really embed the community, and particularly a disadvantaged community like ours, into producing or co-producing work with yourselves that will go on Community TV ...then there needs to be a lot more resourcing around it and a lot more – not adhoc things like this – but will you involve us in a five year programme and then you can really develop skills. And we would have it as a standalone thing in the CDP then, rather than a peripheral thing which still



has value but which is just a one-off thing.”

However despite this, there were some concrete social benefits generated by the project.

### **Social benefits generated**

These are based on the Social Benefit Framework, in italics.

*SB1 – Individuals, especially minorities and those marginalized, are growing in confidence and creativity and/or reinforcing a sense of belonging, directly from engaging with the Station*

A group of young and older people from a marginalized community in Cork grew in confidence in their understanding of how the media works and created their own media literacy programme (Episode 5).

*SB4 Community members are responding more effectively to issues – local to global – because they have access to diverse viewpoints and to more and better information*

Those who participated were exposed to a wide and diverse range of views about the media and were then able to use that information to create their own piece about media literacy. The audience who watched the series on Cork Community TV also had an opportunity to learn about media literacy through the programme content.

*SB6 The community sense of identity and cohesiveness is enhanced through interaction and collective action*

The staff and volunteers of Mahon CDP had many discussions at the outset of this project about their community and about how it is perceived in the media. The group that participated in the filming of the series developed a strong working relationship and the fact that this was an Intergenerational group added an extra dimension. Because of the participatory nature of the educational modules and the discussions that ensued, there was a deeper understanding of different generational viewpoints, thereby leading to a greater community cohesiveness by the end of the project. Several members who participated in the series recalled being stopped by people both in the local Mahon area and in Cork City and being recognised from their appearance ‘on the telly.’