



Report from 'Resisting fracking' sessions at the Grassroots Gathering 2012
Galway 12th-14th October 2012

Contents - Notes from the following workshop sessions:

1. Introduction to the Fracking-Free movement sessions	1
2. Introduction to fracking and campaigns to keep Ireland fracking free	4
3. Divide and Conquer: Forum theatre	6
4. Resisting Fracking - Discussion 1: How can we win?	9
5. Resisting Fracking - Discussion 2: Key questions	14
6. Reaching the mainstream media	17
7. Media skills sharing workshop	21

Images from the venue: Talk about Fracking art exhibition at the gathering – thanks to the engage collective. Timeline on the wall of the main discussion space for the fracking sessions.



1. Introduction to the Fracking-Free movement sessions

Time: 10am-10.45am

Session description: Space for participants to introduce themselves and speak about experiences of their local groups, what they would like to gain from weekend, and confirm the key questions to be discussed in the afternoon. All groups and individuals involved in the movement to keep Ireland fracking free are invited to share their experiences so far.

Facilitator: Fergal Scully (Glúaiseacht for Global Justice) invited people to introduce themselves and raise key discussion questions.

Present: (16 people at start of session)

Note taking: Jerriann, Sian

Introductions

We started with a go round of names in the circle and introductions in which people explained their motivations for joining the session.

People's motivations for coming included;

- interested in stopping fracking/interested as an environmentalist, as an angler;
- looking at fracking from a global justice perspective;
- living in the affected area, setting up new fracking-free group, interest in international development;
- involved in yfoe society in NUIM;
- interest in climate change and global justice;
- long standing interest in ecological issues;
- involvement in environmental groups and interest in climate change;
- concerned about offshore drilling off dingle peninsula;
- interest in natural environment;
- background in ecology and working with green schools on water theme, opportunities to integrate;
- interested in engaging people in Cork;
- interested in discussing how we stop fracking in Ireland;
- working with FoE, want to think about how we can win;
- farmer in N. Leitrim – interested in raising awareness on the scale of what is coming – it needs to be a national issue – it looks like the decision making process is over, no policy development no consultation with public – will be serious to stop it;
- wanting as much information as possible;
- wanting to learn more.

Key questions – suggestions

People offered suggestions of important topics to discuss later in the day:

- How we get the message out?
- How do we engage with public?
- Manipulation tactics that companies use – how to get around their manipulation and spin
- Dealing with the economic arguments – people seeing it as a toss up between economy and environment – but it isn't economical to frack
- Framing it - wider than economy – what kind of society do we want to live in?
- Map of what is already happening – organisations and groups who are active so that people can join them
- Use of language in the campaign / politics in the campaign is huge. For years I thought Sinn Fein was running the campaign in Mayo – shows how the



media can isolate people. About use of language – anti-government language doesn't appeal to farmers. Every group has an agenda – we want fracking stopped. Not some people to get a few more votes and for fracking to go ahead, or for a particular movement to get a few steps ahead and then for fracking to proceed.

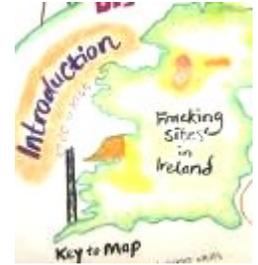
Suggestions submitted before the gathering were also read out:

- How can we win - How can those of us engaging with state processes together with those of us taking radical approaches maximise our collective strength and ensure that the unconventional shale gas industry is stopped in Ireland?
- 'From local to national' – How do we make fracking matter to everyone in Ireland?
- 'Don't forget to tell your neighbours' – How do we build a real grassroots movement of farmers and others who will be most affected?
- How do we take action to resist the 2nd stage of licensing while gaining and keeping mainstream support?

It was agreed to discuss the 'How can we win' together with related points raised about language above directly after lunch, and to decide on the other discussion topics at the start of the second discussion session at 3.45pm.



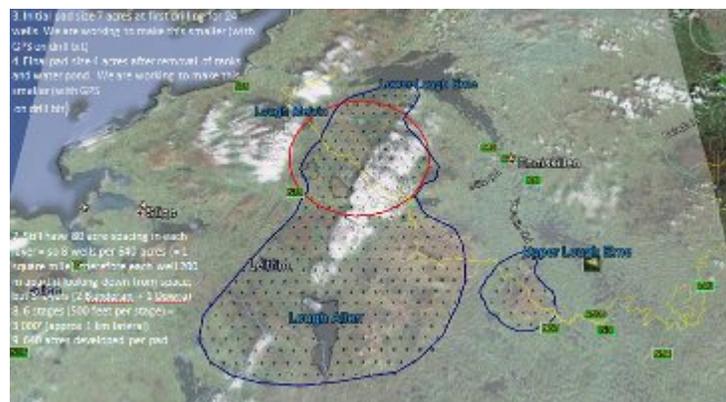
2. Introduction to fracking and campaigns to keep Ireland fracking free



Session description: An update for people not already involved who want to find out more.
 Presenter: Eddie Mitchell gave a presentation on plans to extract gas by hydraulic fracturing in NW Ireland.
 Time: 11.14-12.00
 Present: approximately 25 people

Notes from this presentation:

- It's important to note the differences between conventional gas extraction and unconventional – e.g. Corrib – Five wells to access 1 trillion cubic feet (tcf) of gas. Fracking proposals vary between 3000-9000 wells for between 2-5 tcf of gas. There are different processes completely.
- US now producing 90% of what they consume, Europe is at 30%. US has produced a glut of shale gas. Europe is being strategic. Gas is 60% of energy mix for making electricity in Ireland. We only have an 11hr supply of gas, i.e. no storage in Ireland.
- If fracking does happen in Ireland, it won't mean cheap gas in Ireland. At the moment fracked gas is costing \$16-20 and is headed for \$30-40 – at the moment its just not feasible.
- EnCana's model of a more 'environmentally friendly' well pad – 6 miles by 3 miles across – they are moving towards idea of multiple wells per pad e.g. 9 acre pad with 14 wells.
- 7 acre pads 1 mile apart with 24 wells – that's the scale being proposed in N. Leitrim
- The danger comes from fact that Europe wants the gas. Even if there are only 6million people in Ireland we don't need fracking to use as fuel here – the EU will expect us to provide it
- Which counties are affected: Leitrim, Fermanagh, Roscommon, Sligo, Monaghan, Donegal in the North West (Clare Basin includes other counties not discussed in the presentation)
- Aerial photographic maps of Alberta give an indication of the project scale – but in Ireland they are proposing larger pads further apart.
- In Ireland the companies are interested in fracking at three levels underground, both above and below aquifers
- Mock-up maps of North Leitrim area with pads superimposed (image on right) But this would be a best case scenario – elsewhere in the world the pads are more numerous because of fault lines, houses etc
- Wyoming Water pollution – study. EPA found 3 contamination pathways Dec 2011. US Geological survey research has confirmed the same contamination results. The three pathways are: poor cement casings, through existing faults being opened up, and through sandstones.
- There are 60 million wells already drilled worldwide. Cement is the only barrier to contamination. 1% fail in the 1st year. 50% fail over 30 years. All will fail over time.



- Licensing: 3 phases. See 1960 Act. According to the petroleum lease the lessee has access to land, regardless of who owns it. Underneath the surface belongs to the state. Farmers could be given compensation, but they do not own the mineral rights. About 3% of farmers in Ireland do own the mineral rights – the rest don't.
- We don't know what the IFA will do, or how efforts to buy off farmers will work.

Comments/discussion from listeners

- Should be highlighted that this is a government project. It is our geological survey and government department who tender out land in Ireland to do this. At a certain point the government go silent and it appears to be a fight between communities and the companies – but it remains a government project. Maps are produced by government to invite companies in
- Compulsory purchase orders don't come into play here as companies don't need to buy the land just to lease it – compulsory leasing. The law is under review and needs to be studied.
- Public needs to see these maps and understand the scale, info needs to be shared.



Note: Eddie has provided his presentation which can be sent to anyone who wants to learn more about fracking – email grassrootsgalway@gmail.com for this.



3. Divide and Conquer: Forum theatre

Session description: A participatory theatre piece about how a community becomes divided by the actions of a fracking company which manipulates members of the community in order to push it's own agenda.
 Facilitators: ALá, a personal social and community development organization founded in 2004 who mainly use 'Theatre of the Oppressed' (T.O) methodologies as developmental tools. <http://www.ala-ct.ie>
 Time: 12.00 -13.30

What happened during the play?

The story takes place in a fictional town of Bally where fracking is planned. We meet four characters;

Julie moved to the area 9 years ago runs the successful local co-op which sells local farm produce.

Mary is the local primary school teacher, whose son is a fitter living in Australia, she would like him to come back and work at home.

Jack runs a local haulage business and is a member of the chamber of commerce

Alec is a local politician who wants to send out a 'positive message' about fracking



During the play, a meeting about the fracking plans is called where Julie tries but fails to appeal to her fellow community members about the dangers of fracking. After this she becomes isolated and the community becomes divided. After the play was performed once, the audience were invited to identify who were the 'oppressed' and who were the 'oppressors' in the story. On seeing the play unfold again audience members were invited to call out 'STOP' and step into the role of the oppressed – Julie – if they could see a way in which she could act differently in order to change the outcome.

Initial Audience reactions to the play

- Everyone in the story is oppressed in some way...
- Julie sounds emotional – she needs to be more credible to those people
- Julie doesn't have enough information, evidence
- Julie got isolated

Audience interventions (there were many more than this)

- Julie asks Alec the politician – 'are you aware of this report? Mitchell et al 2005?'
- Julie appeals to Mary and Jack – 'remember yesterday, we were working



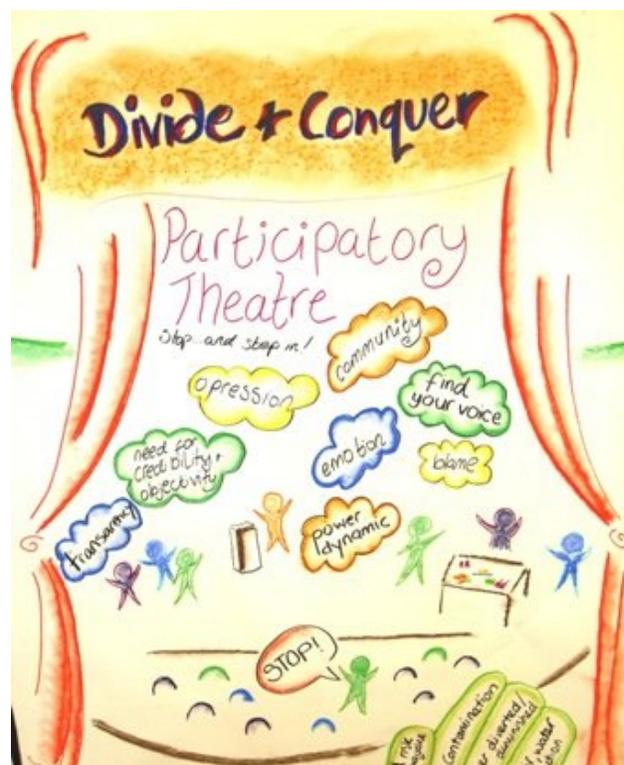
together- planning a trip for children from the school to the co-op...' and tries not to portrayed as a lone dissenter.

- Julie announces another event 'People are coming to give first hand accounts of living with this fracking industry in the US. You should be there' – publically inviting Alec the politician to listen to the visitors.



Audience/facilitator discussion and comments after the interventions

- Jack seemed to sway towards Julie when Julie wasn't openly challenging Alec the politician – better not to be so confrontational?
- Is attacking Alec the politician going to do anything? Would it be better to build alliances and protect the co-op?
- Make Jack do some research into new transport/tourism industry at the lake side – find other options
- Alec is a very smooth operator! I couldn't get a simple yes or no out of him about whether he was aware of the report I cited. Found myself at a loss then!
- Podium vs. audience set up at the fracking meeting didn't work – it set up inequality.
- A lot of ground work would need to be done in a community beforehand to change this podium vs. audience set up – very established format in Ireland
- Presumption of where power lies – that it is accepted that power is located behind the podium – but it may not be
- Our reports vs. their reports – will not work – personal accounts from people who have been through it are needed. Inviting politician publically into events – 'please come and listen to people who have the experience, people who have lived under the whole industry' - take the politician with you to listen. They can never deny that they have gotten the info then. It would look bad for him not to come along if invited. E.g. a tactic communities can use.
- He was dismissing what happens in other places though.
- A genuine community can easily be misrepresented as enemies of the state – very complex, subtle and dangerous. Communities get branded as hippies, lefties and dropouts – this can happen even to conservative farming communities. Companies are sophisticated enough to do this. Need to be hugely careful.
- How do you ensure that communities are not divided?
- There needs to be a specific benefit of engaging with each process. E.g. in Mayo there was a planned meeting where the community was being railroaded. People came with sellotape over their mouths – it was very effective. It was also very hard not to speak. But it shouldn't be taken as a given that every process should be engaged with.
- How did the interventions affect you, Alec? Alec: where people addressed me directly during the meeting that gave me a lot of power. Where people spoke to each other instead of up to the podium it bothered me a lot!
- Perhaps we need a way to get people to state their vested interests at the beginning of a meeting. Get people to state their interests before it starts.
- Primary concern for Alec (the politician) is in maintaining power. We need to recognise/reclaim the authority of the community. Community are the ones who really hold the power in this.





-- Lunch --



Lunch on the Saturday, according to the plate count afterwards 120 people were fed (we think at least 150 attended at some point)

How can we win?

4. Resisting Fracking - Discussion 1: How can we win?

Session description: Discussion on the diversity of tactical approaches that exist within the movement to keep Ireland fracking-free and how they interact. How can those of us engaging with state processes together with those of us taking radical approaches maximise our collective strength and ensure that the unconventional shale gas industry is stopped in Ireland? All groups and individuals involved in the movement to keep Ireland fracking-free are invited to share their perspectives. Campaigners from other movements are also invited to share their experiences of similar dynamics.

Time: 2.30pm -3.30pm (the time for this session was constrained somewhat by a run-over in time in the morning and then a late start back after lunch)

Facilitator: Vicky Donnelly (Galway One World Centre) hosted a whole group discussions to explore these issues.

Present: A very large group gathered for this discussion approx. 40 people. Varied experiences – many newcomers looking to get involved in campaigning on fracking.

Notes from the discussion

To begin the facilitator asked for some opening comments from those involved in fracking campaigning to characterise the discussion /characterise the different tactical approaches in the movement.

Contributions from people involved in fracking campaigning, in order to characterise different tactical approaches existing in the movement;

- The decisions about fracking have been taken out of legislators hands. The process is underway. To win we have to politicize it again and politicians have to debate it publically. If 10% of the public knew 10% of what we know...if we can get debate going it will be stopped.
- To characterise this – we are talking about differences in tactics. Some people in the movement feel that calling for more research is playing into the hands of industry. Some people are calling for an outright ban. If you have to characterise two approaches right now, they could be described as a moderate approach calling for more research, and another perspective calling for a ban.
- It is great that we are here, as in the last few days Fergus O'Dowd (Junior minister in the dept. of energy) announced a public consultation process with the EPA – he announced it at a sustainability conference in DCU in the last few days. Also this week some fracking campaigners made a presentation to the Oireachtas – some people stated they are calling for more research and a ban. Paschal Mooney mentioned the idea of putting the Good Energies Alliance Ireland (GEAI) onto an EPA steering committee. All of a sudden there is a process...?
- This is not correct information about what happened in the Dail. What happened in the Oireachtas presentation was that one person Aedin made a 10 minute opening statement on fracking. The delegation was asked if they would ever accept fracking. We stated that we weren't going to accept this project and that we are looking for a ban. We were asked 'are ye against everything?' We answered by saying – do a strategic analysis, consult with communities and then come back to us. Paschal Mooney made the suggestion – why don't you involve communities in the EPA

consultation process? After Laura Burke of the EPA gave their submission I asked her would she agree to meet with us and she said yes. Nobody said there would be a public consultation or that communities would be consulted.

- Dangerous if we are sending out mixed messages (i.e. calling for more research and for a ban). The recent meeting with Oettinger, the EU Commissioner was delayed. He said there should be no fracking for 5-10 years, but there could be fracking exploration within 2 years. The government has said there is a public consultation process in place and that there will be no fracking until 2015 – but at the same time, the licensing process is going ahead.



The facilitator then opened out the discussion to the whole group. The facilitator asked for contributions from those with experience of other movements also to share their reflections, e.g. Bríd Ni Sheighin and John Monaghan, members of Pobal Chill Chomáin in Mayo who had travelled to share their experiences, and others including members of the local Shell to Sea group in Mayo and Sr. Majella McCarron bringing experience of campaigns in the Niger Delta and Mayo in Ireland.

Contributions from the group

- The fact that licences have already been issued means that the process has already started. Regulation is the only debate going on and the public will be last to know about it. (Person with experience of community campaign against Shell's Corrib gas project in Mayo)
- The EPA is going a study now. Question of the scope of this study. Could allow licences to be revoked. Government could use the EPA study as a reason to revoke licences – to give the government a way out if public opinion is against fracking. (Person involved in Love Leitrim campaign to keep Ireland fracking free)

- There is a need to respect the different speeds of a local campaign, and a national campaign. We have to respect each other's different speeds. (Person with experience of Niger delta and Corrib campaigns)
- The more angle and approaches we have the better the strength of our campaign. Both community and national campaigns are needed (Interested person based in Cork)
- About finding a way not to have a campaign represented by one voice or one action – to have our many voices, and diverse voices. A classic division – those who have lost faith in dealing with government departments, and those who seek to go through all democratic processes. Need to have as many different voices as possible. The nature of community is that it is many different groups doing different types of activity. Important not to exclude voices or fight for supremacy. (Person involved in campaigning to keep Ireland fracking free)
- The local and national aspects are important, and the economic aspects are important. People's eyes glaze over when you go into the minutiae of what fracking involves (too technical). 10% of the information is all people need. Many of us neglect the economic side. Keep economics in view (Person with experience of the community campaign against Shell's Corrib gas project)
- [To share our experience of 12 years of campaigning in Mayo] – we didn't start off in two camps. It's very important that we respect each other and different groups. As regards following democratic process – we have always done that, followed the process. BUT – the gas would be in, if direct action hadn't taken place. For certain without direct action we would have failed. You are forcing the EPA and An Bord Pleanála to work hard and it does delay it. So many oral hearings we went through. But if when the Rosspoint five went to jail, if we didn't block trucks, the work would be done. If the work is done then there would be no point talking to committees. (Brid Ni Sheighin, experience of the community campaign against Shell's Corrib gas project)
- It's a catch 22. The more you give to Oral hearings and submissions, the more it comes back to kick you in the face. By working so hard making submissions, asking questions – we made the Corrib project less challengeable in law. Law is a process of boxes being ticked. But by being as effective as we were, it can be counterproductive. (Person with experience of the community campaign against Shell's Corrib gas project)
- It's not simply a question of one approach or the other, but about if we do take all approaches, how do we work together? (Person with experience of campaigning against Shell's Corrib gas project)
- We need a meeting between people in the North West and people in Clare, to discuss economic issues (Person involved in campaigning to keep Ireland fracking free)
- We need to look at unifying issues and helping groups to communicate (interested person)
- Strong parallels with the Niger delta experience. In the Niger delta the economic deal was very poor.
- If we agree that everyone should follow their own strategies that suit them. If we do this I think there are two stumbling blocks to be overcome; 1. People who follow state processes will be given primacy in the media – this creates issues in the campaign. 2. People following radical approaches will feel stopped by more moderate people. (Person involved in campaigning against Shell's Corrib gas project)

At this point, a person involved in the fracking campaigns offered a reframing of the discussion;

- The language of 'moderate' and 'radical' groups – these boxes don't exist. In No Fracking Ireland (example of one group) – all avenues have been tried, campaigners have been involved at all levels of engaging with government – resulting in fact that 5 county councils have called for a ban. So it is not radical to call for a ban. But now – a disjointing in the campaign. It would be good for people in the North West and Clare and across the border to discuss. I agree that we can't spend all our energy on internal stuff. But it's important for all the people who have worked hard around Ireland

(e.g. in getting the County council bans) not to be left behind now, not to be left out of the official processes, just because someone like Paschal Mooney doesn't seem them as part of "the credible anti-frackers".

The facilitator asked the group to consider this (i.e. about the potential for select groups to be picked out and presented as "credible anti-frackers" and others to be left behind.) How do we speak to that?

Responses from the group:

- There will be an attempt to divide people by the media – that's a given. The interesting question is whether people go along with that. How it is handled. Can be a chance to use a 'good cop, bad cop' strategy which can work well. (Interested person involved in other movements)
- There is no real division. There are personalities. It is clear that engagement in government process in not going to stop it. By engaging we might expose flaws, or we might tick boxes – BUT – process can expose to the public what is going on, and can engage the public. In the Dáil committee people didn't know anything about fracking. Government-process actions are important to educate the public. (Person involved in the movement to keep Ireland fracking free)



At this point the facilitator asked – how do you deal with it when some portions of campaigners are marginalised?

Contributions from the group:

- Don't expect good publicity. We were branded as IRA and all kinds of things. You have to accept that that is going to happen. Other people have to not believe it – it's not true. It's just that the media is working for the government. (Brid Ni Sheighin, experience of the community campaign against Shell's Corrib gas project)
- I am interested because of the potential for oil drilling of Dingle. If the media won't be on your side then how do you publicise? (Person interested from Clare)
- Whatever how many different camps of anti-frackers there are – there is none of ye "credible". [Marginalising some portions] - that's only the start. If there is half a dozen "credible" activists today – or even one today – they will do something along the line to upset a minister or local government person. The only way they can remain "credible" (in the eyes of media and government) will be [if they don't try to do anything effective.] The darling of government today could be the opposite in 6 months time. [Government/politicians] They'll turn on you and use you.

Make sure you use them more than they use you! (Person involved in the community campaign against Shell's Corrib gas project in Mayo)

- What seems important to me is: not to believe everything you hear about each other. Don't believe rumours! Keeping lines of communication open is vital. I believe it is still open to be won. Fergus O'Dowd is probably lying about there being a public consultation process about fracking open now. This can be won by public pressure. (Person interested in Dublin)
- The template for the state dealing with communities and business interests is being written in North Mayo. The template is also being written in Mayo for the Gardaí to use fear factor to intimidate people. I feel that what happens in North Mayo will determine what happens with fracking. (Person involved in the community campaign against Shell's Corrib gas project in Mayo)



At this point there was not further time for discussion – the facilitator thanked everyone for participating and closed the session for a tea break.

5. Resisting Fracking - Discussion 2: Key questions

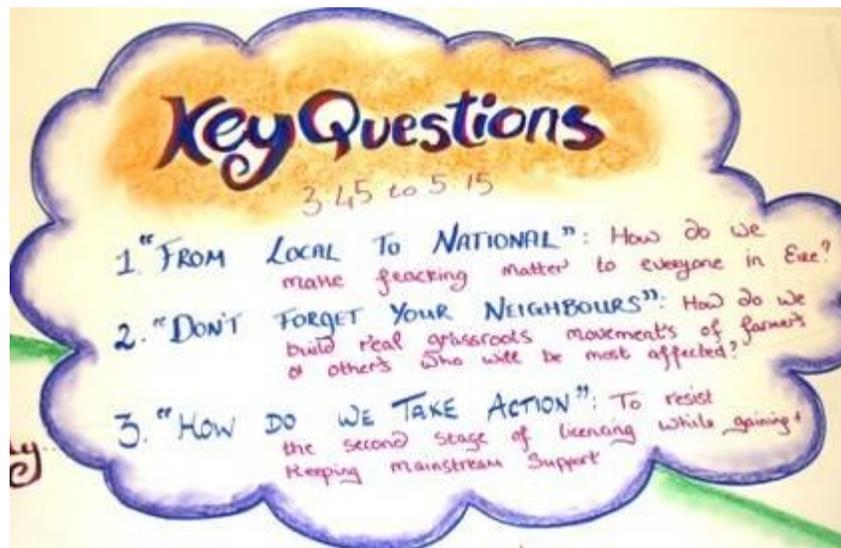
Session description: Groups and individuals involved in the movement to keep Ireland fracking free, and activists from other movements to share their experiences. Three discussion questions were proposed on in advance of the weekend; 1. 'From local to national' – How do we make fracking matter to everyone in Ireland? 2. 'Don't forget to tell your neighbours' – How do we build a real grassroots movement of farmers and others who will be most affected? 3. How do we take action to resist the 2nd stage of licensing while gaining and keeping mainstream support?

Facilitator: Laurence Cox hosted parallel discussion groups, feeding into a whole group discussion. Dr Laurence Cox (NUI Maynooth) has been researching social movements for 20 years and runs a dedicated MA programme for organisers and community educators.

Time: 3.45-5.30

Present: approx 30 people, some experienced fracking campaigners but mainly those interested in becoming involved in campaigns around fracking.

At the beginning of the session the facilitator proposed splitting into three smaller discussion groups to discuss the three proposed questions. The group agreed with this and formed three separate circles. After 20-25 minutes the group came back together and a rapporteur for each group provided some feedback on each topic.



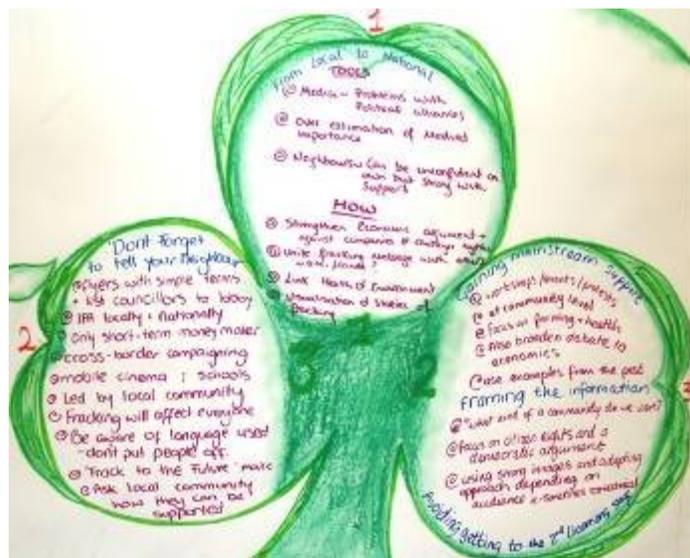
Feedback from small group discussions:

Group 1: 'From local to national' – How do we make fracking matter to everyone in Ireland?

In this group we discussed Tools and Messages.

Messages:

- Economic arguments came across strong – emphasise revenue and jobs – people are aware of cooption
- Discussed how diluting our message by linking to other campaigns – would not be helpful e.g. GM and flouridation
- The need to emphasise that we won't get all the cheap gas and jobs they say we will.



- Visualisation of industrialisation - Need to get across the visual impacts with images and stories of fracked areas. This can also explain economic side.
- Message that other countries have banned it
- Aarhus Convention message
- Stop talking about it like it just a leirim issue
- Environmental impact will damage the economy
- Term 'fracking' – need to use 'unconventional or shale gas extraction' term as technologies will change

Tools:

- Focus too much on media, overestimate importance of media. Political alliances of media.
- Gasland on TV? – local screenings more important
- People are cautious of speaking out – if they see their neighbours doing so, they will.
- Talk to people! Spread more understanding of the rich, the IMF and companies taking advantage of people

Group 2: 'Don't forget to tell your neighbours' – How do we build a real grassroots movement of farmers and others who will be most affected?

In this group we discussed;

- Outreach to farmers
- Clare Fracking Concerned – simply fliers with risks to animals
- The IFA in west Clare seemed to be against fracking – but the IFA nationally have not taken any stance
- Highlight that it is only a short term money-maker – agriculture is long term
- Cross-border organising is difficult
- In areas where people are unaware – use a mobile cinema
- Campaign needs to be led by local communities but emphasise that it will affect everyone
- Need to be fliering marts and farmers markets
- Tools we already have; Use short animation, Short letters to local newspapers, Leitrim post cards showing visual impacts
- Be careful with language. Concerned locals rather than protestors or campaigners
- Idea for a film clip ' Frack to the Future' – boy racer in a souped up tractor goes to the future where his farm has been turned into a well pad
- Frame as a democracy issue, not a technical issue, or question of expertise. Images and stories – use them!

Group 3: How do we take action to resist the 2nd stage of licensing while gaining and keeping mainstream support?

- Background to this question
- 1st stage of licensing process has happened, now and EPA report has been commissioned and the 2nd phase licences will be granted after this. 2nd phase means exploration. Difficult for government to withdraw 2nd stage – is a very serious thing if this happens
- We are not sure exactly when this will happen (companies can apply for the licences between Nov 2012 and Feb 2013, but government can not grant them until EPA research has been completed 18 months from now..?) Gov. could do test well before then.
- How to resist the 2nd stage?
- Actions we can take now: more talks, debates in universities around the country, encourage public support, inform community groups
- Example from the past – anti-nuclear movement in the US -> created mass grassroots movement of citizens in the early 1970s. Mass occupations and demonstrations. Result was – the Diablo power plant was built but the debate was changed – no new plants were built for 20 years. Is that kind of grassroots strategy possible in Ireland?
- Actions we can take if 2nd stage is issued? - We decided to focus on action we can take now instead as we don't want it to get to the stage of these licences! => rest of time we used to discuss how does the fracking-free movement gain mainstream public support.

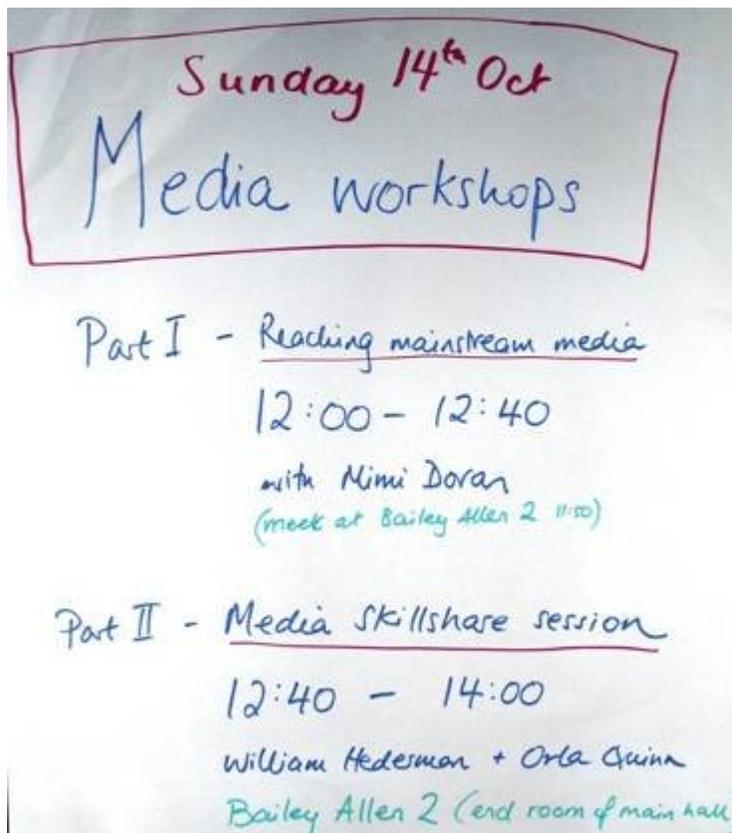
How do we gain mainstream public support?

- Workshops
- Create events e.g. go to the energy conference next week, protesting outside and/or attending inside, or Pat Rabbitte in Galway soon...
- Make the issue broader – Ireland's resources? And co-ordinate between different counties
- Regular community meetings and events – so that it becomes part of people's identity
- Basic education and consciousness raising
- Bring the 'Divide and Conquer' play around the country at a community level?
- Awareness raising at a local level without marginalising yourself
- What language to use?? = what kind of society do we want? What kind of community do we want?
- Using positive framing – makes it harder to marginalise people e.g. Keeping Ireland fracking free symbol
- Focus on farming and health
- Ask – What kind of Ireland do I want to live in?
- Draw on history – What is Ireland in 2016? (Reflecting on 100 years since 1916). Do you allow foreign companies to control Ireland. Foreign occupation of Leitrim would be necessary to implement fracking plans...
- Most important thing is to prevent it getting to the test fracking stage – this will involve a huge security presence – a very different situation.
- Tap into rhetoric of grassroots democracy => 'People were not consulted'. Everyone in Ireland agrees that we want to live in a democracy – we want a democracy where citizens rights are respected
- Could also focus on water and access to clean water as a global issue.
- Important to know – if people want to get involved NOW – what can I do? What can a person do now? (Need to give people a way into getting involved, give people things they can do)
- Need to inform community groups – send DVDs
- Need to inform journalists/media – how to do this?
- 3 short films are being made at present
- Overall conclusion from this group: Important to frame this with democracy arguments – argument for CITIZENS RIGHTS – that won't put people off. This is empowering and harder to challenge/marginalise. This means that fracking is not technical or 'just for experts' – people defer to experts, but citizens rights are for everyone.

Comments from whole group after the feedback;

- People need to see those maps (maps showing their counties and the scale of the fracking plans) and river basin maps of the Shannon basin
- Presentations are available for people to give (on their own initiative). Very clear that the whole industry is the problem – it's a multifaceted problem, not just a water pollution problem. Research has already been done in the US – we don't need to do it again in Ireland. We want a ban because we already have the evidence.
- We could create a toolkit of images and presentations and be trained up in how to deliver it at a local level – training session to get the tone and style of the presentation right
- The tone and content depends on the audience – e.g. farmers vs. a Dublin urban audience.





6. Reaching the mainstream media

Session description: A presentation focused on reaching the mainstream media by Mimi Doran. Mimi gave a presentation for c. 50 minutes followed by a few minutes for questions and answers from the group.

Presenter: Mimi Doran is a communications practitioner and media lecturer with an interest in social justice and has provided strategic planning, communications strategies and media training to a variety of businesses and organisations.

Time: 12.00 -12.50am Sunday 14th October 2012

Present: approximately 15 people

Notes from Mimi's presentation

Where do we get our media messages from? Mimi showed us pictures of the most recent presidential election candidates (Michael D, Gay Mitchell, Mary Davis etc) and asked people in the group to call out what they knew about each candidate. What messages do we remember about these people? – We have never met them and don't really know them - All our messages come from the media. As activists we need to watch TV and use media - it is how everyone gets their info.

Mimi explained her background - PR campaigns she was involved include, the transition from punt-euro, a 32 county PR campaign, Chernobyl children's project, rape tape case offering advice to Shell to Sea, lobbying government to put Chinese on the curriculum. These kind of campaigns are called 360 degree programming – involving everything to change public opinion – all medium used, everything from billboards to fliers – everything, and 32 public relations officers in 32 counties. This is important – if we look at how organisations such as the GAA, IFA, ICA work – we can see that for successful PR campaigning we need to be active in 32 counties

How do we transmit a message?

Flowchart showing a pathway, from KEY MESSAGES -> sender -> this gets ENCODED -> message in the media -> decoded -> receiver ----> influences thinking and public opinion.

You keep your message the same, but change the delivery/encoding for different audiences.

Journalism is not the same as running a PR campaign. Writing an article or two and getting opinion pieces published is not a PR campaign – these are just one offs – a campaign is planned and sustained in order to influence public opinion. Example of a very successful campaign – €350 000 was paid for a guy to do PR for NAMA. Now it is the wealthiest property company in the whole world.

The media can be used for the public interest – if we know how to work it. 60% of the Guardian comes from PR companies. You can compete with these PR companies. You can build a PR campaign, but you must get to know the skills and know how the industry works. Could get training in how to run a PR campaign.

Slides on how media work –

- Levels: national and provincial levels,
- different forms: press, radio/TV and internet/new media
- to: audience

Re. fracking – if it's about elections, you could start spreading rumours that you are going to run candidates (i.e. to convince politicians they are under threat and need to get behind the issue)

You have to learn how to make news. Many groups send press releases with no news in them.

Case study – St. Michael's estate.

St. Michael's estate has 12 blocks of flats in Dublin, severe deprivation, no services. Proposed to be regenerated by 'experts'. 20.5 million was spent on reports and plans. 127 new houses were then built through Public Private Partnership (PPP). But then PPP fell through and rest of community left with no houses. Very clear demand – they want the government to pay the building of houses.

Media people from the community emerged based on their talents – spokespeople should be news junkies, need to be suitable for the role. Need to match the job to people's talents.

They built a website. A campaign website needs a big engine – can hold a lot of documents, video, photos, etc. need to be easy to navigate in 2-3 clicks. Needs to be fast. A good website is very important – it gives you total control of the information.

The history and social context of the campaign – people in employment were given grants to move out. Government created a ghetto of lone parents and families in difficulty. No maintenance provided. State created the situation.

Community actions included

- started using the web
- monitoring media coverage
- putting forward informed, articulate people to speak
- getting local coverage
- protesting – using colourful, theatrical methods, noise, children involved. You have to create TV images
- using the seasonal calendar; paddy's day, xmas etc. They reenacted a funeral in Dublin city centre on Blooms day which got Sky news coverage – even shown in China!
- Involving theatre and arts groups

- Spokespeople on television...

Television

- When deciding where to put your energies – remember that television is the most TRUSTED medium.
- In television debates – think about policy vs. experience. A lot of politicians your campaign might be up against in a TV debate have facts and figures, but no actual experience of the issue. Counter this with experiential knowledge – people like listening to this. Example from the St. Michael's estate campaign – Rita Fagan – rare example of a working class woman's voice being heard on a TV debate. Hugely successful.
- Women in the flats also became more assertive with visiting TV crews – started refusing to let people into the flat to take stereotypical images of deprivation – instead they chose where filming would take place.
- You don't go on radio or TV to answer questions or to talk to Vincent Browne or Pat Kenny. You go on TV because you have a message for the audience.
- Your campaign spokespeople need to built up reputation as experts on the issue. Get practice on local radio before national media and TV
- Put a lot of resources into TV as this has the most impact
- You need to get seen again, not just once. I hear a farmer from Leitrim and Dr. something on radio – they were brilliant but I've never heard them again. Need to be back on there again and again.

Evaluation

You must evaluate your PR campaign. Treat each aspect of your PR campaign as a small project and see what each small project does e.g. projects we had; website, a protest, an art exhibition, a book documenting the community case against PPP.

Monitor the news and evaluate the sources of each news item – is the message about your issue coming from your group/campaign? Or from the company? From the government? From another source? List everything and get a breakdown of who is getting printed/air time on the issue.

How will you know you have succeeded. St. Michael's estate got 7.8 million to build their homes – that was their success. Decide what will measure your success.

Questions and Answers after the presentation

Q - How do you make sure you are asked back into radio and TV?

Mimi – send faxes to radio and press – send info to all radio with a biog which says I speak on the following issues, and have been on these shows before (give details) – i.e. if she has been on these shows before she must be good. Do local radio to practice. Do PR training – not journalism training. Get PR contacts – e.g. . Kay Sheehy is person you need to talk to get onto Pat Kenny. Send physical faxes alongside email – always do both. And then phone call – but all of this would be covered in PR training – you need PR training, delivered on location e.g. In Mayo or sligo or wherever your group is based. You need that training, really important.

Q – is there anywhere I can get an idea of a timeline for a PR campaign?

Mimi – build your timeline from Jan – Dec – pick out all the key dates, valentines, paddy's day, sports events, electric picnic etc – and plan to release info at specific times for good reasons. You need a strategic

plan for your campaign before you can build a PR campaign to suit it. Strategic plan – who is going to do what and by when. Once you have your strategic plan, then build PR campaign, then establish relationships. People talk about the 50:50 relationship with a journalist. – so that they can trust you totally that you will give them correct information. With this relationship - Contacting them doesn't always have to be with a press release – it can be to point out some new information that has come to light, ask them have they seen this yet etc.

7. Media skills sharing workshop

Session description: A workshop to share experience, identify needs and develop skill networks that campaign groups can draw upon in future to work with and create media. Groups and individuals involved in the movement to keep Ireland fracking free, and campaigners from other movements, are invited to share their experiences of reaching and working with media.

Facilitators: William Hederman and Orla Quinn. Apologies from Margaret Gillan.

Margaret Gillan has worked with Community Media Network for the past 16 years to support groups in developing their capacity to use media. William Hederman is a journalist and campaigner. Orla Quinn has worked as facilitator of development workshops for Comhlámh, Development Perspectives and Trócaire and as Campaigns Officer with Trócaire, working on issues ranging from Climate Change to country specific issues, e.g. Palestine.

Time: 12:55 -14.00

Present: approximately 20 people

Notes from the workshop

The facilitators hosted an introduction round where everyone introduced themselves and a little bit about their background or what they are hoping to get out of the media skill share. In this introduction round some issues were raised as being things people wanted to talk about in the workshop.

Issues raised in the intro round;

- involved in a fracking campaign - how to get letters published? Have had quite negative experiences of media so far in trying to highlight concerns about fracking. Have written a lot of letters to the Irish times in response to articles and gotten nothing in. Other bad experiences, Today fm did an interview with Greg palast when he visited Ireland did a tour talking about fracking – but they cut the interview. Compared to what was said in the presentation this morning – I've had quite negative experiences. When inaccurate article written - how do we call them on their bullshit? There has been an idea to get a half page ad in the IT – it costs 10,000 for a half page ad, or 25,000 for a full page ad. How much use would that be? I'd like feedback on how useful that would be.
- Involved in a pro-choice campaign. Our actions so far have been in response to PR campaigns – all reactionary so far. How do you strategically plan?
- Involved in a fracking campaign – there is a lots of misinformation and misquoting of events going on in the media. Tried to get some articles published but I'm new to all of this.
- Involved in sustainable forestry campaign – problem that our press releases go unnoticed while Irish Environmental Network seems to represent us in the media – seems to be easy for them to get things published.

The facilitators started by asking what medium do we use – and asked us to stick stickers beside the medium we sue ourselves (e.g. TV, radio, internet etc). We broke into four small groups of four or five people. Each group discussed the same question – What tactics have worked and what lessons have we learned? i.e. in our campaigns what has worked for us? What has not worked? After ten minutes all the groups came back together and gave some feedback on what has worked for them.

Feedback from media skill share groups

Feedback from Group 1:

What has not worked?

- sending letters to the editor of IT in response to Ronan McGreevy who has been writing about fracking with a lot of errors in his articles – can't get our responses published.

What has worked?

- letters to LOCAL newspapers
- staging actions/creating events
- sharing experiential learning. One person had experience of being rolled out as a speaker on lone parenting – to speak from personal experience. Was then asked by an anti-poverty organisation to write letters and to respond newspaper articles – these were printed. But I'm not trained at all – would like to be trained.
- Giving them a personal story seems to work
- Getting people on the ground to tell their personal stories of what is happening to them, explain their experiences – pulling on the heart strings
- Identifying the people to speak – good example is Rita Fagan for St. Michael's estate – the reason she is getting on so well is because people identify her as a 'real' person -> she is impactful.
- Matching up an academic speaker with a 'real person' speaker like Rita Fagan – and give both training – this is what the European Anti-Poverty Network has been doing very successfully – take real people with direct experiences of the issues and give them media training. But who are the 'real' people experiencing the fracking issue in Ireland? – need speakers from the US?
- Speaking to people directly face to face – by fliering in the street – very positive experience of getting the message out,

IDEAS: for fracking campaign – get people over from the US to tell personal stories, avoid the technical stuff – make it less complicated. Get local newspapers to write articles about the visit – the event of the talk – need these events to be happening. Use money to get these people over – not on ad in Irish times. Use the people who have felt it.

Feedback from group 2:

What hasn't worked:

- Print media – what gets printed is limited, from experts. Has own spin put on it, about what kind of protest/event it e.g. "dirty hippies" stereotypes rather than going into the issues
- Big business controlling media
- Social media, doesn't create deeper understanding. A lot of the time it's just people agreeing with certain words. Just getting snippets.

What has worked

- talking to people face to face
- plays, theatre, events
- young people spreading stuff by social media

Feedback from group 3:

What has worked

- having a website with background info

- developing a pundit person – ‘expert’ person. Can be good, but becoming a go to person– other option is getting lots of people to write in instead
- making alliances with similar campaigns e.g. a mental health campaign, we made alliance with a wheelchair campaign, promoted each other’s stuff
- there is no magic bullet, you need print, video and radio. But video is very powerful – e.g. Margareta D’Arcy’s film on the experience of wheelchair users in Galway. Video can be used as a tool if well made...

Feedback from Group 4

What has worked and not worked

- Social media is effective for established groups
- Social media gives the illusion of lots of activity – but how committed are people really?
- Events pages disappear after the event – all contacts disappear
- Email lists are great for getting info out, but no idea of the impact or who reads them
- To students, pre-lecture talks have been great for getting news out
- Idea of using song – e.g. pre-lecture ?
- Regional PROs crucial for any campaign
- Idea to use quick short videos rather than articles
- When sending photos, learned that photographers have to be part of the National Union of Journalists (NUJ)
- Learned that a press list is released once per year and to get it and use it.
- Consensus decision making affects how we do media – have to start earlier to get agreement, time to send things back to be proofed
- Using platforms like broadsheet.ie, indymedia, journal.ie and the village has worked, e.g. it put pressure on the Irish Times to correct the numbers reported of people who attended a recent pro-choice protest because the correct figure was published online in these other sources...

Comments after the feedback

- Seems that all groups found some agreement that we need a plurality of tools e.g. websites, leaflets, sending info out to people...
- Seems that all groups found difficulties with mainstream media – can feel like a brick wall
- Note that broadsheet.ie, journal.ie etc are not alternative or independent media – just alternative platforms...
- Using alternative platforms or independent media, or getting stories out ourselves in other ways (websites, YouTube etc) -> can get people talking about it. This has value in its own right. Also it means that mainstream media are sometimes forced to take notice and cover it.

Short whole group feedback on the idea to take out an ad in the Irish times for €25 000: How to better spend €25000? Five ideas of ways to spend a fraction of this for a fracking campaign - included:

- Hire and pay a PRO person to work for a year, or to work part-time
- Training for 32 PRO/spokespeople in 32 counties for all-Ireland PR campaign
- Hire a part-time media consultant/ trainer/person with PR contacts
- Buy Facebook ads – if you pay €400 you can get more coverage for events etc, one person had experience of using Facebook ads for an event it seemed useful
- Bring speakers over from the US to speak about their direct experience of the fracking industry – only need a few hundred euro to do this.
- Spend it on building a really good website for the campaign

Further discussion of how the visiting speaker idea for the fracking free movement would work:

- One idea above has already been tried – we had Jessica Ernst come over to speak. But how do you get coverage of this?
- IDEA: bring Jessica or similar speaker over, team her up with a local activist here, and match up with a suitable academic from Ireland – give training to both – do PR about the visit. Host events and invite media to cover the event. In case they don't come –make sure to film the talk and put it online. Spread it on the website of the campaign

Discussion of fracking campaign websites

- Money could be spent on making a website
- Having a bad website sometimes worse than having none....
- Could pay someone 1000-2000 euro to create a very good website – can hold all info and be easy to navigate, engaging etc
- Need a good website – as we need a reference source for the campaign – should be the place where journalists can get sources for all the info you publish, so that they can see that each fact is backed up by a credible source
- A good website can be a go to source for media
- Leaflets, Facebook, twitter – all need to link back to a well referenced website
- Currently c. 3 fracking websites, none good enough for our purpose
- The best one, Frackingfreeireland.org one has a lot of useful info but very hard to navigate
- What do you do if existing website are not good enough? I.e. not user friendly?
- Can have different websites co-existing, but there needs to be a main go-to source

Discussion of Community Media

- One person has experience of community radio
- Ger hoping to set up a community radio station in Galway
- People have some experience of being on local radio – e.g. Midlands 103 has a green programme with David Leonard on Tuesdays at 7.30pm – but local radio is different to community radio...
- One experience - You really remember people you hear on community radio
- Community radio is a very under-utilised resource
- Very often community radio stations will be sympathetic to your campaign or issue, and there will be much less distortion of what you say than on local radio or national radio
- Community radio is less daunting and a good place to practice you skills
- There are 25-30 community radio stations around the country and 3-4 community TV stations around the country – you can use them. They are not same as local radio stations.
- See CRAOL.IE – network of community radio stations in Ireland.
- Also see Margaret Gillan's details for someone to contact who made be able to advise on how to use community media
- Also don't forget community level media around you – the parish newsletter! – Love Leitrim has a lot of success with this.

Action points from the session

- Idea to create a list of all alternative and sympathetic-to-social-justice media outlets
- Create email list for participants in this workshop – ask questions to this list and share ideas
- Contact Margaret and William – use the knowledge available in the group
- Write up report from workshop on grassroots website. (END OF REPORT)

Thank you all the volunteers who facilitated and to Laura Hedda and Sandy for the graphic recording throughout the sessions!

