

EXCHANGE HOUSE

National Travellers Service



Annual Review 2011/2012

Chairperson's Report

For some time, Exchange House has recognised the need for a Community Development dimension to its work, where the Traveller community can be facilitated to develop their own responses to their needs. It is anticipated that Exchange House will now be in a position to take a more policy-oriented role in the future.



On behalf of Exchange House National Traveller Service it gives me great pleasure to present our 2011 and 2012 bi-annual report. I am delighted to be able to report significant achievements towards realising our goals.

It is a particular pleasure for me to present my first bi-annual report as chairperson of the Board at Exchange House. The term of office of my predecessor, Pat Bennett, expired on March 2011. I would like to take this opportunity to thank him for his tenacious leadership and I am honoured to have been chosen to follow in his footsteps.

This past two years have seen the organisation expand and provide additional services to some of the most marginalized members of the Traveller community. I am proud to announce that out of hundreds of applications made to the EU Commission's Justice Section, Exchange House National Travellers Service was selected as the only Irish organisation to lead a project under the Daphne III Programme. The project is entitled Sunia Geel; Sunia Geel derives from the Irish Traveller

language, Cant. It translates "take care of yourself", and is viewed as an apt name for what the project aims to achieve - families being valued and supported.

In 2012 The National Traveller Suicide Awareness Project moved to Exchange House from Crosscare and the Traveller to Wellbeing Service was established. The provision of a Suicide Awareness Service and a Mental Health service, with strong links into local community groups, has proven a valuable addition to the Family Support Service. Suicide is a gender and socio-economic inequality and this is highly visible within the Traveller community. The need for a Traveller specific suicide prevention service can be demonstrated by the stark findings in the All Ireland Traveller Health Study. Travellers are inordinately burdened by the issue of suicide with the rate of suicide over six times more than the general population.

For some time, Exchange House has recognised the need for a Community Development dimension to its work, where the Traveller community can be facilitated to develop their own responses to their needs. It is anticipated that Exchange House will now be in a position to take a more policy-oriented role in the future.

I would like to take this opportunity to express our gratitude to those who support our work, to thank the voluntary Board, who have supported me and the organisation. I would also like to thank the CEO Heydi Foster and staff over the past two years who ensure that the work we do makes a difference to the lives of the people we give voice to and serve.

I offer this bi-annual report, with pride. I look forward with great optimism, and a renewed sense of hope, to another eventful year for Exchange House National Traveller Service in 2013.

Carmel Terry

Chairperson

Director's Report

Travellers are better educated, in paid employment and living longer than when we started 33 years ago. The resilience and unique contribution of Travellers is more widely appreciated in the settled community. However, the social problems which remain are considerable. There is still deep seated discrimination against Travellers. We must re-double our efforts otherwise our commitment to social justice and equality rings hollow for those who are the most excluded members of our society.

Heydi Foster
Director



Dear friends,

I am pleased to present our 2011 and 2012 Annual Review of the work of Exchange House National Travellers Service.

This publication sets out to describe the services that we provide and the challenges that we face in a realistic way.

There is a lot of energy, determination, achievement and challenge to our work. Our teams are skilled not only in their area of expertise but also need to act as advocates for their clients in areas where they experience discrimination.

The Family Support Team on a daily basis continue to work with Traveller families to address the chronic issue of poverty and sub-standard living conditions, and work with people to tackle the challenges they face in bringing up children and organising their lives, in unacceptable surroundings. Traveller families forced to live in poverty excluded from appropriate housing and access to labour market is a violation of their human rights. We work with statutory and non-statutory organisations developing systematic approaches in dealing with the diverse needs of our clients. I'm pleased to report that the Exchange House Family Support Service continues to be an open-access service with no waiting lists. It accepts all referrals which are usually seen within 24 hours. 2011 and 2012 continued to see a huge spike in the number of Travellers experiencing addiction and homeless issues. We continue to be a resource to families and individuals experiencing homelessness and those affected by addiction, as well as women and children experiencing domestic violence.

The Youth Service continues to work with young Travellers enabling them to engage with and continue in an education system that often does not appear to understand their culture. The issues continue to be complex, and require a range of strategic and targeted responses. Our After-Schools Programme has demonstrated that when provided with a culturally appropriate intervention and in partnership with their school Traveller children enjoy the benefits of innovative learning experiences and improve their attendance. We are currently working with 13 schools and we continue to draw the lessons from this success to inform mainstream provision as to the gaps that still exist. The after-schools programmes in Labre Park and

Oliver's Park are testament to the success of their approach proving popular with both parents and children alike.

The Education Service continue to provide many different adult education programmes, from one-to-one literacy to third level support courses. We provide adult Travellers with a range of educational opportunities and provide progression routes to further education, training and employment. The needs of our clients are complex and diverse. Some are learning to read and write after being failed by the system. Some have never been to school and some are accessing third level education.

The challenges facing us over the next year include maximising the capacity building that has taken place in the organisation, increasing our policy output to reflect the learning gained from our service users and delivering innovative ways of engaging our service users in our ongoing strategic planning and development.

I would like to thank the staff of Exchange House for the level of their ongoing commitment. Our job is not glamorous, it can sometimes be challenging and thankless, but it is because of their relentless commitment, passion and dedication to the Traveller community that Exchange House is the place of excellence it is.

A special thanks to all our funders for their support and commitment. I also would like to express my gratitude to the Christian Brothers for continuing to provide a home for Exchange House and more importantly for supporting individual and Traveller families.

Family Support Service

Exchange House's Family Support Service provides front-line services to some of the most marginalised members of the Traveller community. The goal of the service is to provide a comprehensive, multi-disciplinary, holistic approach to vulnerable Travellers and to empower them to make decisions and act independently. Services include: Social Work, Family Support, Crisis Intervention, Domestic Violence, Mental Health and Suicide, Addiction Outreach/Counselling, Homeless Services, Prison Services and Community Development.

Family Support

The Family Support Team continues to operate a Duty/Drop in Service which runs daily (Monday to Friday). There is no waiting list and referrals are seen within 24 hours. Referrals have been received from Exchange House's Education and Youth Services, schools, the HSE, hospitals, Community Welfare Officers (CWOs), Public Healthcare Nurses (PHNs), women's refuges, the Probation Services, the Irish Prison Service, solicitors, voluntary organisations, local authorities and youth agencies, as well as self referrals. A national phone information service is also provided in response to telephone inquiries in relation to people and service providers all over Ireland.

Home Visits

Most of the work with people involves outreach and home visits. Clients have been visited in their own accommodation which might be private rented, council, homeless, transitional, official and unofficial halting sites, as well as drug treatment centres, hospitals, nursing homes or prisons. Many of our clients have experienced institutional bullying. Some have problems with literacy, lack confidence and are unsure of themselves when faced with the bureaucratic process. We have supported clients and helped them to make informed choices. Our service regularly attended meetings with people and other statutory and non-statutory agencies and we also accompanied them to various appointments as part of advocating for them.

Domestic Violence Service

The Family Support Team responds to Domestic Violence in a number of ways. Domestic Violence support is provided in the form of individual counselling, practical and emotional support, support group work with women and children,

providing information around legal issues and options and assisting them with safety planning and court accompaniment.

Exchange House Domestic Violence Response for Children and Young People continues to be at the forefront of ensuring their safety and protection. This continues to be addressed through puppet shows, one-to-one interviews and "staying safe" programmes. In 2011, 119 children were reached through this programme, and in 2012, 140 children benefited from the service.



Addiction Service

Exchange House's Addiction Response aims to discover, share and apply new knowledge and to help improve the lives of those affected by addiction. The service operates a multi-disciplinary approach and has worked closely with Exchange House's Education Service, Youth Service, Social Workers and Family Support Workers in their bid to help address clients' immediate and long term needs. The service is offered on an outreach and on an in-house basis. The addiction service worked closely with the Probation Service, statutory services, local communities and the Irish Prison Service. An Addiction Counsellor and an Exchange House Social Worker run a clinic every Friday at the Dochas Women's Prison.

Accessing services

We saw a huge rise in numbers of Travellers accessing our service. We continue to address the following issues:

Description	2011	2012	% +/-
Duty calls / drop-in service	642	711	+11%
Telephone inquiries	1,797	2,373	+32%
Prison visitations	372	335	-10%
Court accompaniment	110	126	+14%
Accommodation issues	899	1,003	+11%
Domestic Violence intervention & prevention	940	787	-16%
Addiction counselling & assistance	878	964	+10%
Child welfare issues	281	361	+28%
Child protection	295	463	+57%
Childcare issues	104	107	+3%
Children in the care of the HSE	45	89	+98%
Children at risk of going into care	109	124	+14%
Suicidal ideation	369	411	+11%
Self-harm intervention & prevention	237	282	+19%
Physical health assistance	660	661	-
Mental health assistance	703	766	+9%
Legal assistance	613	465	-24%
Child education assistance	104	173	+66%
Social Welfare assistance	460	419	-9%
Community Welfare assistance	250	270	+8%
Prostitution	51	26	-49%
Institutional abuse	45	30	-33%
Habitual residency	28	21	-25%

Auricular Acupuncture Service

In 2012, the Family Support Team completed training with the National Acupuncture Detoxification Association to provide Auricular Acupuncture for clients with addictions or those experiencing high levels of anxiety. This treatment, which concentrates on five specific points on the ear, is regarded as one of the most effective forms of treatment for management of stress and addiction. Benefits of the treatment include a reduction of cravings or withdrawal symptoms for substances such as alcohol, drugs and cigarettes, marked relaxation, pain relief, improved sleeping patterns and a feeling of well-being. Clients attend for weekly treatment on an individual and group basis. This treatment is a mobile service and can also be delivered on home/ outreach visits.

Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) Meetings

AA meetings take place every Monday at 6pm in Exchange House and are open to Travellers and non-Travellers experiencing alcohol addiction. Two open meetings were held in Exchange House annually and provide valuable information for family members and staff about AA. Exchange House is now featured in the AA Directory.

Prison Service

Exchange House offered outreach services to Mountjoy, Wheatfield, St Patrick's, Cloverhill, Castlereagh and Portlaoise Prisons. Every Friday the team facilitated a clinic at the Dochas for Traveller women. Prisoners availing of the services are offered practical and/or emotional support with issues arising within and outside of the prison. The team worked collaboratively with the Probation

and Irish Prison Services to address clients' needs in a holistic manner.

In 2011 the Family Support Service facilitated an Art Programme in collaboration with the Irish Prison Services. The classes provided a therapeutic environment for the client group to relax and relieve their anxiety through art. In 2011 & 2012, the Family Support Service facilitated Domestic Violence Groups for men and women in the prisons as part of the Sunia Geel Project. Each group consisted of 7-8 members of the Traveller community and was a great success.

Travelling to Wellbeing

Exchange House National Traveller Service received funding from GENIO in 2012 to establish a Mental Health Service and the Travelling to Well Being project came about. The Travelling to Wellbeing project is a partnership between Exchange House and three local Traveller projects namely; Offaly Traveller Movement, West Cork Traveller and Travellers of North Cork. The team comprises of 4 professionals; 3 Mental Health Social Workers and 1 Mental Health Family Support Worker with expertise in Art Therapy. The service will develop a culturally appropriate recovery model using a community development approach. In developing the service we will address inequalities by working with Travellers and service providers to deepen their understanding, improve referral pathways and aid recovery.



National Traveller Suicide Awareness Project

Following a successful tendering process, the National Traveller Suicide Awareness Project (NTSAP) moved to Exchange House, National Traveller Service in October 2012. The NTSAP was established in 2006 and was hosted by Crosscare. The aim of the service is to develop culturally appropriate plans to address the issue of suicide within the Traveller community. The project is funded through the National Office of Suicide Prevention (NOSP) and was hosted by Crosscare. The NTSAP works closely with Traveller communities and services. The service acts as a resource to local and national Traveller organisations in relation to suicide related services and assisting to overcome any cultural barriers in accessing services. The NTSAP promote the development of local initiatives which support suicide prevention, intervention and postvention. The move of the NTSAP to Exchange House will support the NTSAP's continued growth and success in raising suicide awareness in the Traveller community and reducing the suicide rate among the population.



Training

The Family Support Team offers training in Best Practice in working with Travellers experiencing Domestic Violence, Addiction Best Practice and The Parents Plus Programme. Specifically tailored Parents Plus Programmes have been run with individuals and families in their homes, at Exchange House and in the Dochas Women's Prison. Participants' feedback indicates increased awareness, confidence and improved parenting skills. This service is available on a continuous basis and is integrated into care plans particularly with regard to child protection and child welfare.

Student Placements

The service facilitated two Transition Year Work Experience students, two Social Care and one Social Work students in 2011.

EU Projects

Sunia Geel

The Family Support Service had the main responsibility for running the *Sunia Geel* Project, both at home and with our partner colleagues in Europe. The majority of staff worked in all aspects of the project.

Compass

The Family Support Service assisted in working with our European partners in developing the project to assist young Travellers return to education or enter the labour market.

Tactics

This project is centred around intergenerational learning. The Family Support Service worked closely with the Youth Service to develop new games and tools for the project.

Tandem Now

The aim of *Tandem Now* is to provide a mentorship programme for young people, providing them with training, support, information, and guidance on their chosen career path. The Family Support Service assisted the Education Service in the project.

Youth Service

Exchange House Traveller Youth Service is the main provider of Youth Services to the Traveller Community in the greater Dublin area. We provide a service to 200-250 young people in our catchment area. The Youth Service provides a range of activities designed to give young people positive opportunities to support their social and personal education. The main focus of these programmes is to enhance their personal educational and community development skills.

Highlights

- ✦ The recording of the second volume of our Young Girls Music Group's CD "Not a Girl, Not Yet a Woman"
- ✦ The Local Community Gardaí visiting our young people and giving them an information session about bike safety and the dangers and consequences of becoming involved in anti-social behaviour. This link with the Local Community Gardaí and Exchange House Young People enabled us to set up a soccer match between the Gardaí and the Exchange House Soccer Team.
- ✦ The Exchange House Soccer Team entered a competition for the charity *Sudden Adult Death Syndrome* to play against the prestigious Ballymun United. There were 34 participants from Exchange House, making up 2 teams and substitutes. Exchange House was victorious. All proceeds were given to the charity.
- ✦ CDYSB published a short book entitled "Youth Works" with a number of stories from our young people included which detailed their journeys with the Youth Service and how we have helped them achieve their goals.
- ✦ Ballymun Pride of Place Awards which brought the community together. This cross community diversity programme was part of the Youth Service continuous effort to break down barriers and strengthen communications with the young people and Gardaí from the North and South of Ireland.

Stay-in-School Programme

The Stay-In-Schools Programme works with young people, their parents and their schools to promote attendance and progression through the education system. The Youth Service works directly with the young person, visiting and calling schools to check attendance figures and maintains contact with parents to "check in" and offer support. The Youth Service worked with 13 schools including St Joseph's, Ballymun, St John's College,



Ballyfermot and St. Dominic's, Ballyfermot. Attendance rates have risen to 90% and ALL of the young people who were due to sit state exams sat them. As a part of this project we nominated our young people who successfully completed their exams for the Exchange House National Educational Achievement Award every October.

AfterSchool Programmes

The After Schools programmes based in St. Oliver's Park, Clondalkin and Labre Park, Ballyfermot continues to run on a daily basis offering essential support to over 50 young people aged 4-16. They offer homework assistance, literacy support, IT skills and personal development which are done through cookery, music and art. The co-ordinators also link in with the local schools and acts as liaison for parents and teachers.



Education Away Programme

The Educational Away Programme aims to develop a positive and proactive working relationship with the young people who are selected to take part in these programmes. The selection process to identify the young people who take part in these programmes is done in consultation with Youth Workers, parents, Social Workers, teachers and other relevant agencies who work with young people. The activities are designed to encourage and support the young person in their personal development through the Critical Social Education Model. These programmes are specifically designed to suit the target group. In 2011 eight young boys and their Youth Workers visited France.

attend meetings and training every two weeks. Comhairle na nÓg gives young people a voice and we feel this is vital in the lives of our young people. Not only does it benefit them but it benefits their schools and communities.

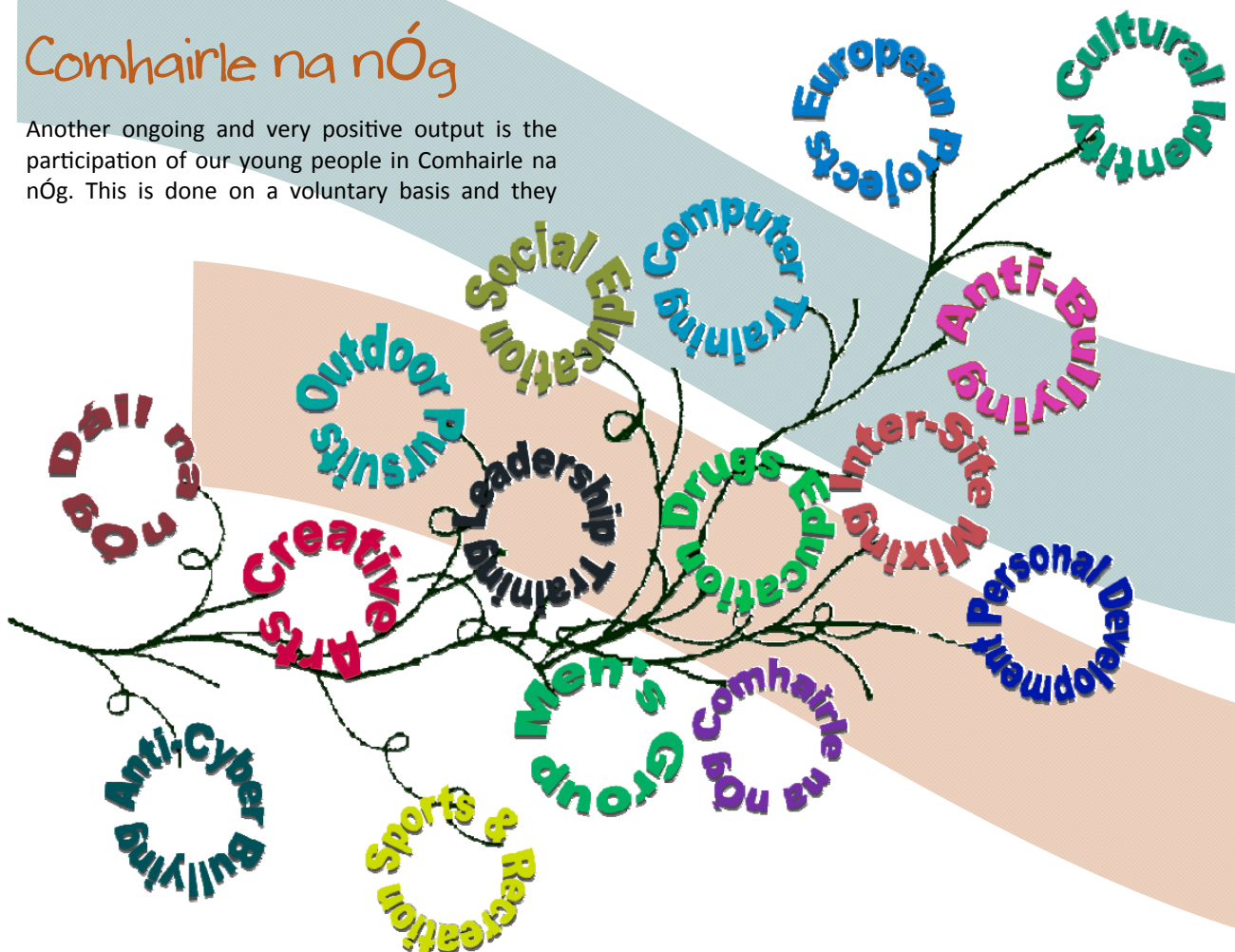
Summer Programmes

Our Summer Programmes run for 6 weeks in July and August. Young people from all the sites we work with in the previous year are offered places on the programmes. The programmes provided fun and educational visits to such places as the exciting Tayto Park, Clara Lara, the National History Museum, the Carlingford Adventure Centre and the Viking Splash tour.

Comhairle na nÓg

Another ongoing and very positive output is the participation of our young people in Comhairle na nÓg. This is done on a voluntary basis and they

Frontline Services



National Quality Standards Framework for Youth Work (NQSF)

The Youth Service became involved in the National Quality Standards Framework for Youth Work (NQSF) which has been implemented by the Office for the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs. The aim of the NQSF is to establish standards in the practice and provision of youth work in Ireland. The NQSF has given the youth service a chance to review, reflect and assess all the programmes we provide. It also gave us a chance to review our work on a more formal basis through one to one supervision.

EU Projects

Catch the Spirit

In partnership with Exchange House's Education Service and the EU, four boys from the Youth Service travelled to Innsbruck, Austria, for the *Catch the Spirit* project. They met 15 other young people from the partner countries to gather the raw materials to be used to develop a DVD about poverty and social exclusion. This DVD would go on to be used as a training tool in youth, community and educational settings.

Sunia Geel

The Youth Service developed a child friendly response to raising awareness of Domestic Violence. This was done in the form of a puppet show.

Compass

The Youth Service developed a curriculum for the entire project and training programme for the "Urban Orienteering Race".

Tactics

This project is centred around intergenerational learning. The Youth Service has begun a needs analysis of older Travellers who were interviewed

about their childhood games.

Tandem Now

The aim of *Tandem Now* is to provide a mentorship programme for young people, providing them with training, support, information, and guidance on their chosen career path.

Face-to-face stats

Below are the numbers of face-to-face contacts the youth service have made in 2011 & 2012

2011	Jan-Apr	895
	May-Jun	292
	Jul-Aug	407
	Sep-Dec	782
2012	Jan-Apr	1,356
	May-Jun	738
	Jul-Aug	363
	Sep-Dec	1,104
Total		5,937

Catchment

Our catchment area include St. Oliver's Park/ Bridgeview and the greater Clondalkin area, Labre Park/Kylemore Grove and the greater Ballyfermot area, St. Margaret's Park/Carton Estate and the greater Ballymun area and Family Support Service referrals .

Education Service

The Education Department operates as a FETAC accredited centre of education and training for members of the Traveller community. The ethos of the service is to promote the value of formal education and provide a service of quality. People come with a diversity of educational needs to avail of our service. We provide opportunities for youths and adults in basic education, IT training and accessing further education and employment. We also worked with people who are seeking information and support in accessing further education or training. We offer guidance and support to any member of the Traveller community who is seeking advice in relation to education. We are supported in this department by the City of Dublin VEC who provides us with tutor hours.

Department of Social Protection Community Employment Scheme

There are two distinct strands that the Community Employment Scheme offers to the Traveller community. Firstly, the learners on the project have, many for the first time, the opportunity to access formal education. They engage in literacy programmes, training and work experience. They have achieved FETAC certification in many subjects including Communications, Maths, Art & Design, Computers/IT, Personal Effectiveness, First Aid, Food & Nutrition and Work Experience. The second strand focuses on work experience. This provides support to the core staff of Exchange House in delivering front line services to the community in the areas of Family Support (including accommodation, domestic violence and addiction), Youth Service and Education Services. People on work experience in Education Service also provide literacy support to their lower skilled peers.

CE Scheme Learners - 18-55 yr olds	
2011	24
2012	24
Total Individuals	43

FÁS Local Training Initiative

The Local Training Initiative (LTI) has both male and female learners. All are engaged in Education

programmes. The programme provides a safe learning environment for many people who have previously had negative experiences of formal education; some, indeed, have had no experience of formal education. The success of the course is reflected by educational achievements attained by the learners. The LTI learners have gained FETAC certification in a range of subjects including Communications, Maths, Computers/IT, Food & Nutrition, Manual Handling and First Aid. The majority of the learners go on to further education and training. The LTI programme provides learners with educational opportunities they previously missed out on.

LTI Learners - 16-55 yr olds	
2011	16
2012	15
Total Individuals	26



Adult Basic Education Service

We provide a one-to-one literacy service for people who are not engaged in programmes and need to develop their skills in the areas of reading, writing, spelling and numeracy. We take referrals and requests for literacy from individuals and from external services such as other Traveller organisations, homeless agencies, the Irish Prison & Probation Services, and other educational organisations.

Information Service

The Education Service provided an information service nationally to individuals and organisations who wish to identify progression routes to further education and employment. We also offer intercultural education and information on the Traveller community in general and the issues they experience to various interested groups and service providers. This has proven to be a positive learning experience for the groups who have received the information training.

The Exchange House National Educational Achievement Award

Exchange House National Educational Achievement Award has been presented to over 400 people since it began. The award was presented to members of the Traveller community who had completed the Junior Certificate, G.C.S.E.s, the Leaving Certificate, A-Levels or a Third Level course. This is a national event which is held annually. The award acknowledges the achievement of the recipients highlights role models from the Traveller community in the area of formal education and is proactive in acknowledging the benefits that education

The Exchange House National Educational Achievement Award		
	2011	2012
Junior Cert / GCSEs	55	59
Leaving Cert / A-Levels	34	40
3rd Level	5	7
Totals	94	106

brings to the lives of people, the community and society in general.

Student Placement

The Education Service provides a work placement for those studying education within the department. Students offer their literacy support to learners on a one to one basis. This provides one to one literacy support to people who have never had the opportunity to access formal education and who left school at an early age. Students come from a range of institutions including St Patricks Teaching College, Champlain College, and Marino Institute of Technology. The Education Service has also had students from across the globe including Slovakia and the United States of America in 2011 and 2012.

In 2011 there were 4 students on placement; in 2012 this doubled to another 8 students.

Exchange House Learners Training and Certification

	FETAC Level	2011	2012
Mathematics	3	31	32
Communications	3	34	17
Communications	4	2	3
Security Guarding	4	18	18
Food & Nutrition	3	19	20
Art & Design	3	39	37
Craft & Textiles	3	19	22
Personal Effectiveness	3	32	30
Job Seeking & Interview Skills	n/a	40	36
Intensive Literacy Support	n/a	47	46
Manual Handling	n/a	47	47
Totals		328	279

EU Projects

Catch the Spirit

In partnership with Exchange House's Youth Service and the EU, four boys from the Youth Service travelled to Innsbruck, Austria, for the *Catch the Spirit* project. They met 15 other young people from the partner countries to gather the raw materials to be used to develop a DVD about poverty and social exclusion. This DVD would go on to be used as a training tool in youth, community and educational settings.

Sunia Geel

The Education Service assisted in the development of various training product for service providers in the area of Domestic Violence.

Compass

The CE Scheme worked closely with the Youth Service to develop and run the "Urban Orienteering Race".

Tactics

This project is centred around intergenerational learning. The Education Service worked with older Travellers who were interviewed about their childhood games.

Tandem Now

The aim of *Tandem Now* is to provide a mentorship programme for young people, providing them with training, support, information, and guidance on their chosen career path. The Education Service is spearheading this project in the Exchange House.

Educational Queries

In addition to providing part-time education courses five days a week the Education Service answered **517** phone enquiries in 2011 & 2012 from agencies and individuals requesting information about us and other education programmes.

Query	Organisation	Number of call		Totals
		2011	2012	
Basic Literacy Information and Provision	Coolmine	6	0	6
	Dept. Social Protection	10	15	25
	Dochas Probation	6	2	8
	Dublin City Council	15	15	30
	FÁS	60	80	140
	Glenview	1	0	1
	Holles St. Hospital	5	2	7
	House First	1	4	5
	HSE Social Workers	27	12	39
	Merchant's Quay	12	10	22
	NALA	0	2	2
	Salvation Army	2	0	2
	Self-referrals	20	25	45
	Totals	165	167	332
Places on Programme	Dept. Social Protection	11	12	23
	Self-referrals	40	52	92
	Totals	51	64	115

		2011	2012	
Info on Education Service	Other Training Centres	12	7	19
	Self-referrals	9	11	20
	Totals	21	18	39
Inter-cultural Training & Information	BBC	2	0	2
	Church of Ireland	2	1	3
	C.o.I. Teacher Training	8	0	8
	Focus Ireland	2	2	4
	Irish Foster Care Assoc.	0	1	1
	Totals	14	4	18
Advice on Culturally appropriate procedures	HSE Social Workers	4	0	4
	The Rotunda Hospital	5	4	9
	Totals	9	4	13



European Union Projects

Exchange House National Travellers Service partnered with 14 different organisations from 9 different countries - Austria, Germany, Greece, Italy, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia, Spain and Turkey and worked on 5 distinct projects.

Sunia Geel

In 2011 & 2012 Exchange House National Traveller Service commenced an innovative project, *Sunia Geel*. The project aimed to prevent and reduce the extent and impact of domestic violence in the Traveller community in Ireland. *Sunia Geel* is Cant (the indigenous language of Irish Travellers) for 'take care of yourself'.

Sunia Geel was part of an EU funded project, Daphne III, which addresses the experience of domestic violence in ethnic minority groups across Europe. Exchange House was the lead partner in the *Sunia Geel* Daphne III Domestic Violence Project with partners from Germany, Austria, Romania and Greece. The prevalence of domestic violence within minority groups and barriers to resolving it was *Sunia Geel's* focus. The project responded to the call to contribute towards the protection of women and children against all forms of violence. The project's goal was to achieve a strategic framework for developing protective environments that are transferable between different cultural, geographic and national contexts. Addressing domestic violence within minority groups provides the key unifying theme of the project. This provided a rich source of commonality of issues and approaches across the project partners. However, beyond such similarities it was expected that there would be differences and diversity that stimulates questioning, learning and innovation. A key benefit of this transnational project was to frame innovative solutions based upon experience of working with minority groups and in a range of cultural contexts.

Part of the project involved facilitating group work, information sharing seminars and training.



Sunia Geel Activities 2011

200 people - Domestic Violence Conference, Dublin

63 people - 6 Domestic Violence Training Sessions

63 women - Family Support

49 women - Domestic Violence Counselling

48 children - Group Work Sessions

30 groups - Domestic Violence Women's Groups

24 people - Seminars with Service Providers

24 people - Seminars with Service Users

19 people - 2 In-house Domestic Violence Training

11 men - 5 Domestic Violence Men's Seminars

Sunia Geel Activities 2012

150 people - Domestic Violence Conference, Stuttgart, Germany

120 people - 12 Domestic Violence Training Sessions

70 women - Family Support

52 women - Domestic Violence Counselling

40 people - Seminars with Service Providers

40 men - 5 Domestic Violence Men's Seminars

38 groups - Seminars with Women's Groups

34 children - 2 Group Work Sessions

24 people - 4 Domestic Violence Seminars

4 families - Domestic Violence Research



Compass

Collaboration on Modern(ising) Policies And Systematic Strategies in Life Long Learning

Exchange House National Travellers Service was selected as the Irish organisation to work in partnership with five other organisations across Europe on **Compass**, a Leonardo de Vinci Education and Culture EU project.

Exchange House, as part of The Compass project worked with disadvantaged Traveller youth, national training agencies, educational institutes, employers organisations and career guidance experts to design and implement an innovative training programme which will create educational and employment options for the youth involved.

Exchange House researched and will soon publish a report on the current situation for Traveller youths who want to enter further education or the labour market as part of the first stage of Compass.

Partnership countries for Compass are Austria, Germany, Greece, Slovakia and Turkey.

The Compass project took place over 2011 and 2012.

Catch the Spirit

Exchange House National Travellers Service was selected as a partner in the EU Youth in Action - *Catch the Spirit Project*. The youth exchange took place in Innsbruck, Austria. The other partners were organisations from Austria, Slovakia and Germany. The theme of the project was *Poverty and Social Exclusion* and a DVD was produced by the youths taking part and they launched it at a special event in Exchange House in May 2011. Five Traveller youngsters worked on the project in Exchange House and brought their work to Austria. This work was included in the final DVD which is being used as a training tool for young people in different settings. Twenty young people, from the four countries, took part in the project and they are all from minority backgrounds.

Tactics

In October 2011 Verein Multikulturell started the international project "**TACTICS – Lifelong Games**" together with partner organisations from Germany, Ireland, Italy, Lithuania, Spain and Turkey. The project is under the EU's Education and Culture Lifelong Learning Programme GRUNDTVIG. 342 proposals were submitted for this programme and TACTICS was successful in its application. The programme focuses on games, remembered from their childhood, by elderly people, especially migrants and members of ethnic minorities. This group of people will share their knowledge for the collection of a gamebox for seniors. After national and cultural adaptations, the games will be tested in all partner countries – with the help of the target group.

Due to demographic changes, 40 percent of all European citizens are now 55 years of age and older. In 2020, it is expected that about 60 percent of all European citizens will be 55 years and older. Thanks to medical progress, most seniors enjoy a longer, healthy and active life. But a considerable number of people in this age group are faced with various illnesses and disabilities. Most of them are cared for at home, with the majority being cared for by a family member or other volunteers who themselves are 50 years and older themselves.

These Carers who look after their relatives need support to handle the daily challenges they face, such as space for their own recreation and free time to manage their own necessary duties. Games support intergenerational learning, especially in the family circle, and make visits from friends and volunteers much more enjoyable and offer the necessary space for the Carers – TACTICS offers enjoyable solutions for the care of the elderly in Europe.

In addition, by offering games with low language requirements, TACTICS helps elderly people to establish new contacts, and for the family this

means an additional stimulus for intergenerational communication. In care facilities, communication is enhanced between the different cultures, the residents and the visiting volunteers and the danger of social isolation is reduced.

The culture of game playing in Europe functions as a low-threshold access to Life-Long-Learning. Skills, both existing and those acquired informally, are further developed by game playing.

Collecting those games remembered from childhood, within various cultures and their cultural background, TACTICS contributes to the preservation and development of an historic treasure from different parts of Europe.

The training of Carers, within the frame of TACTICS, empowers them care for their elderly ward for a longer period of time by reducing the risk of burnout.

Tandem Now

The aim of *Tandem Now* is to provide a mentorship programme for young people, providing them with training, support, information, and guidance on their chosen career path.

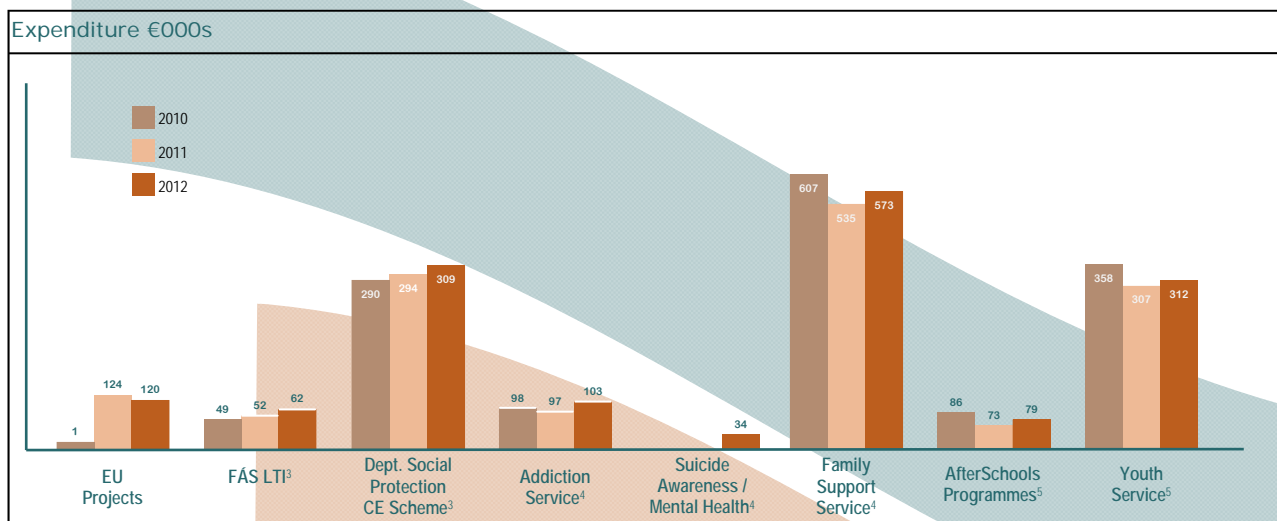
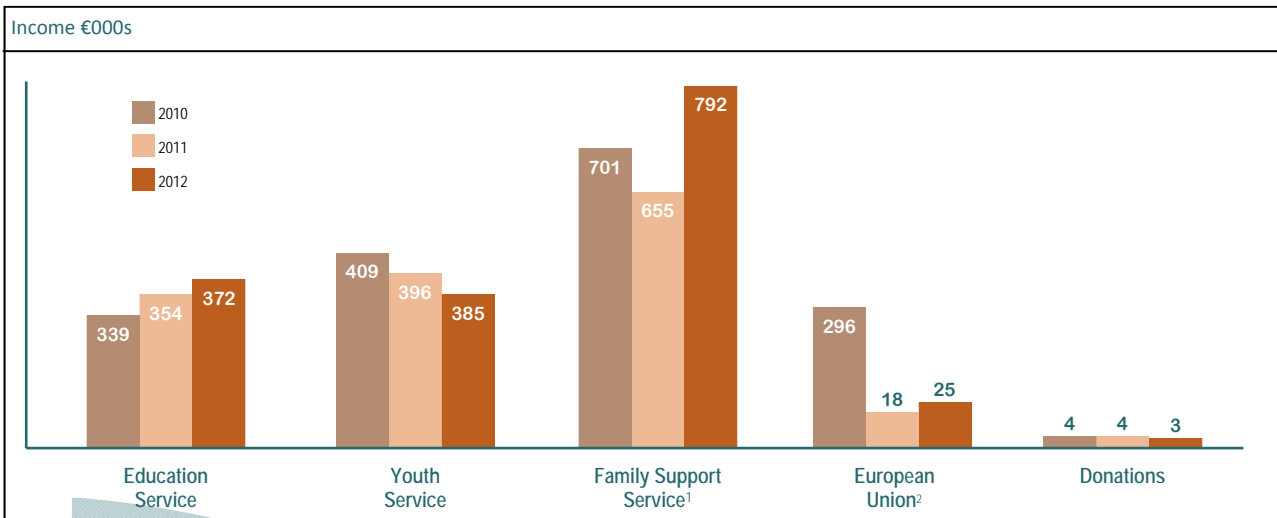
The training is focused on blended mentoring which encompasses both face-to-face and online sessions. *Tandem Now* promotes technological developments in mentoring and the use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) to improve career opportunities for ethnic minority groups.

This project includes partner countries from Austria, Spain, Italy, Greece, Germany, and Ireland. The partners will have a total of three meetings together throughout the project's life span where they will plan, share information, design training, and evaluate the progress of the work.

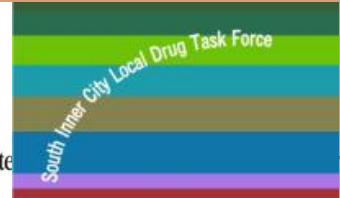
As partner 6, Exchange House are working on the evaluation section of the project and will gather feedback from all of the other partners. This feedback shows partners what aspects of the project are going well and what areas may need improvement in order for the project to be a success. The feedback is presented in the form of a report and provided to all partners after each meeting.



Income and Expenditure



1. Increase in funding in 2012 for National Travellers Suicide Awareness Project and the Travelling to Wellbeing Project
2. EU funding in 2010 is set aside for the Sunia Geel Domestic Violence Project 2011-2013
3. The FÁS LTI and Dept. Social Protection CE Scheme expenditure is drawn from the income for the Education Service
4. The Addiction Service, Suicide Awareness/Mental Health and Family Support Service expenditure is drawn from the income for the Family Support Service
5. The AfterSchools Programmes and Youth Service expenditure is drawn from the income for the Youth Service



EXCHANGE HOUSE

National Travellers Service

61 Great Strand Street
Dublin 1
Ireland

tel: +353 1 872 1094

fax: +353 1 872 1118

email: info@exchangehouse.ie

web: www.exchangehouse.ie