



Crosscare is the social care agency of the Catholic Archdiocese of Dublin. It draws its inspiration from the example and teachings of Jesus Christ.

We believe that every person is created in the image and likeness of God. This places responsibility on us to work to the highest possible standards and to treat every person who uses our services and who works for or with us with the utmost respect, courtesy and love.

The Crosscare Community Adult Education Programme reflects the principles of the Crosscare organisation by advocating the value and quality of community adult education. It promotes empowerment, equality, leadership and celebration to help us to "Act Justly, Love Tenderly and Walk Humbly with our God". (Micah 6: 8)

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JUSTICE – A KEY PRINCIPLE UNDERPINNING COMMUNITY ADULT EDUCATION



Community Adult Education's methodology is fuelled by the deeply rooted principles of Participant Centredness, Quality, Equality and Justice. These principles acknowledge the reality of participant's lives and help them to harvest the value of their experiences. They build up their confidence and, in striving for justice, highlight injustices which hinder progress. In this edition of the CEN Newsletter justice is given centre stage.

What is Justice?

In seeking to understand the meaning of justice, words like "fairness", "equality", and "moral rightness" come to mind. In the context of social inclusion, Crosscare's Handbook puts it well where it states that "justice is the key driver of public policy and social change". Therefore, "high quality social support services are universally available to those who need them".

Based on the experience of CEN graduation days, supporting groups such as M.A.I.N., working with Asylum Seekers, or visiting groups who are actively working to transform the lives of local people, it seems clear that the 'key driver' of the collective network's activities is justice. However, one cannot refer to justice unless attention is given to injustices that are experienced by diverse communities. In the context of the Network these include:

- ❖ men living in isolation;
- ❖ refugees struggling with family reunification
- ❖ asylum seekers trapped in a dispersal process; and

participants is a very humbling experience and attending these events has been an honour. This relates to justice because:

- ❖ It values the reality of participants' lives and the injustices experienced in prior educational experiences.
- ❖ It gives voice to participants to express how social/educational barriers impeded progression.
- ❖ It affirms the renewal of personal ownership and self-directedness.
- ❖ Participants have engaged in a process of both personal and pragmatic transformation.

Empowerment – the Network assists and supports participants and new groups to name their realities, to speak of their hopes and to believe

Continued on page 4

In this issue

Editorial on Justice

Family Reunification

Community Links

Brothers are doing it for themselves

CEN Funding Seminar

Graduations on CEN

Come & See

True patriotism
hates injustice in
its own land more
than anywhere else.

Clarence Seward Darrow
(1857-1938)

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FAMILY REUNIFICATION – MEN WITH REFUGEE STATUS AND INTEGRATION



VRC Men's Refugee Group

Male refugee's mental health is suffering due to the length and definition of the family reunification process in the State at present. Men are an often overlooked, under-served group, falling through the cracks in terms of support, leaving them marginalized.

The Vincentian Refugee Centre recently started a men's group that meets once a week in St. Peter's Church, Phibsborough. This group was set up to engage with vulnerable men with refugee status who are living alone. The group's main goal is to tackle loneliness and isolation.

The overriding concern voiced by the men attending the group was regarding family reunification and the health and safety of wives, children and parents in their home countries. The impact of the lengthy wait for a decision and the uncertainty of the situation in their family's countries are having a profoundly negative impact on the men's ability to function in Irish society. Their lives are at a standstill making "integration", however you chose to define it, almost impossible. The mental pressure they are under is enormous, on both sides. The most common question asked is, "What do I tell the people at home?" It is hard for people abroad to understand the nuances and complexities of the Irish immigration system. Some men report that, on calling family members abroad, they feel that they are not believed in their home countries. "Will my wife believe me when I tell her to wait? Or will she leave me?" Indeed, for some men this is already the case. For others the very real possibility of harm occurring to their loved ones has stunted them emotionally, mentally and impaired their physical health. The current waiting time for a decision is approximately 24 months, a decision which could be approved or rejected with no formal appeal.

What do I tell my people at home? Will my wife believe me when I tell her to wait? Or will she leave me?

Men seldom find it easy to discuss their feelings. However, a large percentage of the men affected quickly tell you that they want to cry but cannot as "they have no more tears left to cry". They cannot focus on work or finding a job. They are caught up in politicians' promises of writing letters on their behalf to the Minister for Justice, Equality & Law Reform or handing money to solicitors, which has little to no effect on their application.

Psychologists working with refugees express an enthusiasm in the work of the men's group and refer men to it. Yet to feel that they have made their voices heard would help the mental health of these men much more. The centre's personnel agenda is not

to advocate for fast-tracking applications, as there is little that can be done, but rather to give them an opportunity that allows them to feel they have done and said all they can and be in a stronger position to make a life for themselves in this country.

The Minister for Integration's office must, if it has not done so already, factor in these challenges to integration. Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) enshrines the right to family life. That right is the foundation block of Ireland's constitution (Article 41) and is worth quoting in full: "The State recognises the Family as the natural primary and fundamental unit group of Society, and as a moral institution possessing inalienable and imprescriptible rights, antecedent and superior to all positive law".

I was offered a second chance at life here but what kind of a chance? I am alone here.

For these men, there is no number of English lessons, job opportunities or incentives that can compete with access to one's own family, a right that the majority of Irish citizens take for granted. One of the men attending the group summed up the situation quite simply, "I was offered a second chance at life here in this country, at first I was happy, but what kind of a second chance? I am alone here."

Matt Byrne, Outreach Worker, Vincentian Refugee Centre, Phibsborough.
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COMMUNITY LINKS

Jesuit Refugee Service

The Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) Ireland is refocusing its work and resources into developing services and activities for asylum seekers in Direct Provision centres. Taking into account significant movements of the target population away from the Inner City and a more restrictive funding environment, JRS Ireland has decided to bring the Community Links Integration Project to a close.

On behalf of the Crosscare Community Education Programme and its Network, I wish to take the opportunity to congratulate Ruth Diaz on her excellent management of the Community Links project and the wonderful work carried out by its volunteers.

The closure of Community Links is a great loss to the participants and to the Crosscare Network

However, the closure of Community Links is also a great loss to both the participants they had served and indeed to us in the Crosscare Network. Ruth, a dynamic worker will be a great loss to us all. On behalf of the Network, we wish Ruth the very best in her future life.


An Tobar Deansrath

Last year, Sr. Maria who developed the Deansrath Women's Centre in An Tobar was appointed Provincial for the order of F.C.J. In keeping with the model of leadership exemplified by Sr. Maria, the women who developed from having participated in Personal Development Courses continued to try and coordinate the project on a part-time basis.

This they achieved since Sr. Maria's departure. However, due to capacity issues – a division between work children coupled with the coordination of An Tobar, the voluntary Board of Management has decided to close the project. The women have to be commended for the efforts they put in to continue to serve their own community in the manner that they themselves were served.

I wish each and everyone of them the best of luck in the future and truly acknowledge their commitment to An Tobar.

Killinarden Family Resource Centre (FRC)

 Collette Dowling from the Killinarden FRC attended a Writer's Club in the Peoples University about two years ago. She attended all the sessions in spite of the difficulty of being a wheelchair user.


Her commitment to her Writer's Club was undaunted even by cold and windy nights not to mention the distance from the Luas stop. It is a great tribute to Collette that Maeve Binchy has invited her to another workshop. Here's one of Collette's poems:

Maeve Binchy Writer's Club

Here I am in College
At the age of 57
Maeve Binchy Writer's Club,
I feel like I'm in Heaven
First night in the lecture hall
Maeve's words rang through and through
They made me think I could write a book,
Maybe even two.
Home I rushed, down I sat
Now where shall I begin?
I soon found out for every one page I wrote
10 went in the bin
Don't give up, I told myself
Each class gave me inspiration
Now the 20 weeks are up
It's time for graduation

By Collette Dowling

BROTHERS ARE DOING IT FOR THEMSELVES

 **M.A.I.N. (Men Alone in No-man's-land)** is a response by a number of men to what we see as the lack of social networks and support for men in Inner City Dublin. These men can feel extremely vulnerable and lack the capabilities to identify the means to overcome their social and economic exclusion.

Well-documented research shows that cultural factors in relation to the socialisation of boys and men can create barriers to vulnerable men preventing them from seeking help and social support in times of trouble. This highlights the old stereotype of the 'tough lonely man who works hard and suffers in silence'. This can lead to multi-dimensional isolation and social exclusion, resulting in a poorer quality of life.



The idea for M.A.I.N evolved from a chance meeting between three men in a Dublin City pub in February 2006. We didn't really know each other except in passing. The one night, we just started talking. We discovered we had at least three things in common. We were unemployed at the time, living alone in private rented accommodation and were all over forty.

... tough lonely man who works hard and suffers in silence ...

At first we met once a week in a coffee shop. When the coffee shop got to be a bit expensive we decided to meet in our own flats. We felt that if we were serious about addressing the real issues in any meaningful way we need to become part of the Community Development Network. We agreed the next step in the process was to come up with a suitable name for the group.

The Name

We wanted to appeal to the target group, be user friendly attract attention and describe where we were coming from. With this in mind we asked ourselves three basic questions: "Who were we?" "What were we?" and "Where were we?"

"Who were we?" "What were we?" and "Where were we?"

Who were we?

MEN – what? We were living in relative isolation. Somehow, somewhere we had become detached from the wider community.

ALONE – Where? We looked at this from the point of view of our situation in relation to mainstream society. All three of us had to stop working on health grounds. We felt stuck between the boundaries of service provision. We were wounded men, who found themselves in a zone devoid of any tangible support system, except each other. We felt we were

IN NO-MAN'S LAND – The dictionary definition for this term is "a land between two boundaries, an unoccupied zone between opposing forces, an unclaimed piece of ground, an ambiguous area of activity or thought" (Collins 1979:999) We see it as a place of refuge, a place where battle weary men go to get out of the storm and regroup.

our inaugural meeting of M.A.I.N in the Red House on the 18th May 2006

We held our inaugural meeting of M.A.I.N in the Red House on the 18th May 2006 and have continued to get support from Crosscare since that time.

Our study on socially excluded males entitled "Own Goals & Penalties" was launched in the Mansion House on the 16th May 2008. This research was supported by Dublin Inner City Partnership and conducted by Tomas de Bruin and Ed Du Vivier. As a result of the Research process M.A.I.N set up the "Stepping Stones Project" to main continuity for our male participants.

On the 29th February, 2008, participants on the course received a Crosscare Certificate of Attendance – a recognition of the process the men had undertaken – this was followed by lunch with Conor Hickey, the Director of Crosscare and Marie Keegan.

CEN Graduations



▲ Members from An Sli...

▲ Residents of Hatch Hall



◀ Deansrath

Crumlin ▶

Come & See

◀ Members from An Sli visit Rosemary Dwyer, the Coordinator in Lusk to observe work with the elderly in receipt of Computer Training



CEN Funding Seminar

CEN Held a Funding Seminar in February to provide members with relevant information regarding funding. The Seminar was delivered by Marie Mulvihill of D8CEC and Pat Morrissey CDVEC. Based on the information given, CEN produced a comprehensive booklet for members of the Network.



Continued from Page 1

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that their hopes should be realised in their society.

- ❖ M.A.I.N., through the support of Crosscare and the Dublin Inner City Partnership produced a social analysis of men living in isolation in Dublin's inner city. This study is called *Home Goals & Penalties*.
- ❖ Vincentian Refugee Centre has given a voice to refugee men struggling with family reunification.
- ❖ Inter-agency collaboration between Community Links and Crosscare works to empower asylum seekers struggle within the dispersal process.
- ❖ Other groups on the Network empower elderly people, living in isolation, to engage with their communities. They also support them in upskilling.

Leadership – Many groups on the Network have brought participants through from personal development courses and upskilling to give voluntarily or to work professionally in the very centres which were open and willing to walk with them through the rediscovery of their essential giftedness.

- ❖ With an emphasis on inclusion and consultation, centres on the Network provide participants with a wonderful model of leadership.
- ❖ Over time, participants have had an opportunity to practice this leadership. This action in and of itself shows the value of working collectively.

Equality – With Justice "as a key driver", equality is lived by having open access to all those who wish to engage in Community Adult Education. It is also a significant goal as it, too, demands that inequalities be highlighted.

- ❖ Networking with other groups, Crosscare provides qualitative data about the value of this genre of education and the necessity for adequate resources.
- ❖ Members of the Crosscare Network act as advocates when equality of participation is undermined for adults who wish to engage with their centres.

At the end of this Academic Year, each group on the Network is to be congratulated for being the embodiment of Justice for all those they serve. I wish each and every one of you a restful and fun summer recess.