

Age & Opportunity

Annual Report 2011

Age & Opportunity

Marino Institute of Education

Griffith Avenue

Dublin 9

tel: 01 805 7709

email: info@ageandopportunity.ie

web site: www.ageandopportunity.ie

Chairperson’s Statement	3
CEO’s Statement	5
Active Participation	7
Bealtaine	7
Cultural Companions.....	9
Go for Life.....	10
Active Participation / Education and Training	14
Ageing with Confidence and Taking Stock	14
Ageing with Confidence in Figures, 2011.....	14
Community Education Initiative	16
AgeWise	17
Influencing & Enabling Development	18
Get Vocal.....	18
Strategic Partnerships.....	20
Seeking to Influence Policy	21
Corporate Role	23
Communications	23
Fundraising and Diversifying Income Sources	26
Corporate Governance.....	26
Appendices.....	27
Appendix 1: Board Members and Staff 2011.....	27
Appendix 2: Steering Committees	29
Appendix 3: Working Groups 2011.....	30

Chairperson's Statement

It is impossible to review the year, 2011 without referring to the country's challenging economic environment, something that has affected Age & Opportunity both directly and indirectly. So, as well as having our resources reduced, the delivery of our programmes at local level has also been affected by cutbacks experienced by organisations that work in partnership with us (such as local education providers and development companies).

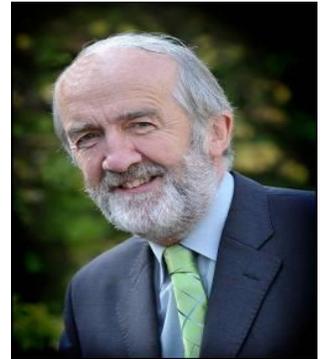
We are addressing the new environment by building on existing partnerships, by changes in the delivery of programmes (such as the roll-out of a new course, Taking Stock, under the Ageing with Confidence banner, which is more economical for local providers to deliver), and we have also made progress in seeking to diversify our sources of income. We are pleased, for example, to have formed a new funding partnership with Bord Gais Foundation in respect of a new project – Cultural Companions.

We continued to play a central role in fostering and contributing to strategic working within the age sector. This included continuing to contribute to the work of the Older & Bolder Alliance, in which we collaborate with seven other NGOs on public policy issues. We took part in a review of the future of the sector with the Atlantic Philanthropies. In the second half of the year, we embarked on a strategic alliance with two other organisations in the age sector (Active Retirement Ireland the Third Age) to explore closer working, especially on programme delivery.

For many of the projects funded under our Get Vocal project, their work reached maturity in the period 2010 to 2011, and an independent evaluation affirmed the value of a community development approach to supporting local networks of older people. Get Vocal projects were also found to have made relatively rapid progress in involving more hard to reach groups in their work.

Amongst the year's initiatives, and informed by the work of the Get Vocal programme, was a focus on the potential of community education to foster active citizenship by older people. We conducted research, consulted with providers of community education, met key decision-makers, and commissioned a new course. The course, to be piloted in early 2012 with eight providers of community education, is designed to fill an identified gap in provision. While many older people are involved in community education, we found that there were virtually no courses specifically focusing on developing their capacity for active citizenship. The new course is designed to complement the existing Ageing with Confidence suite of programmes, by providing, in effect, a next step from a personal development focus to a community or societal focus.

Our longer established programmes like the Bealtaine festival and the Go for Life programme continue to reach very large numbers of people. Go for Life involved nearly 50,000 people in regular physical activity and sport, through its small grant scheme, and peer leadership programme with its network of 1,600 volunteer physical activity leaders, 500 of whom attended an event to mark the programme's tenth anniversary in Dublin in September.



In its 16th year, The Bealtaine arts festival reached some 120,000 people during the month of May, something made possible by the 600 strong Bealtaine networks of organizers, drawn from the arts sector, public libraries, community groups and care centers. While funding within the arts sector has been reduced in recent years, the organization has given priority to continuing to maximize the impact of Bealtaine through collaboration and through attracting in-kind support from a range of bodies.

Our new Bord Gais funded project, Cultural Companions, is at an early stage of development, but has already revealed a great desire for more connection and companionship amongst the over 350 older people who have made contact with us about the programme, some 200 of whom have registered with us.

Throughout all our programmes, the range of organizations that are working with us is striking. These partners are critical to the delivery of these programmes, and I would like to pay tribute to their work to the benefit of older people.

Our inaugural ENGAGE debate, held in February looked at 'Facing the Future with the Voices of Experience', and was designed to bring experience to debates surrounding the country's current difficulties.

The year 2011 has been a very successful one for the organization, which has risen to the challenges it has had to face and is planning for the future. I want to pay tribute to the CEO, Catherine Rose, and all the staff of Age & Opportunity for their dedication and commitment throughout the year.

John Hynes

Chairperson, Age & Opportunity

CEO's Statement

Continuing to reach tens of thousands of people through our work in 2011 is a heartening achievement despite the difficult funding and operational environment which currently obtains within the non-profit sector.

The Bealtaine festival increased the numbers of partners organising events to close to 600 during the year and we estimate, based on returns from these partners, that some 120,000 people participated during May. These are likely to include people of all ages and to predominantly consist of people aged over 50. Some would have participated in a series of workshops or events, others in once-off events and they would have done so in a range of organisations from national cultural ones to local community halls. Bealtaine continues to be of interest to arts organisations abroad and to inspire new festivals of creativity and ageing in other countries like Scotland, Canada and Australia. We are planning an international conference for 2012 to bring academics and practitioners in the field together.

Go for Life reached nearly 50,000 people during the year, principally through its grant scheme and its PALs, or peer leadership, programme. There are some 1,600 PALs actively leading regular physical activity amongst older people throughout the country, and it was a great pleasure to welcome 500 of them to an event in September that celebrated their contributions to their communities as volunteers and marked ten years of the programme.

All our work is delivered through collaboration with partners in different sectors – these range from the arts, to sport and physical activity, education and community development. Our programmes rely on well over 1000 organisations for their delivery and reach, and we are fortunate that the work that we do is capable of garnering their support and their commitment.

We have now completed the third year of our three-year strategic plan, in which our work is categorised under the following three headings:

- **Active Participation**
Strengthen programmes promoting participation to encourage active participation by all older people in society
- **Education & Training**
Continue to improve the delivery model and enhance Age & Opportunity's reputation for providing accredited education and training programmes
- **Influencing & Enabling Development**
Contribute to the ageing sector by capturing and disseminating the evidence-based learning of Age & Opportunity and influence the sector through programmes that enable development

We are planning a review in 2012 in which we will examine what has been achieved under that plan, and which will identify the strategic objectives for the next three years.

Commitment and creativity is the hallmark of all of those who work within the organisation and I wish to acknowledge both the staff and the Board members of the organisation, in particular our Chair John Hynes, whose guidance and work on our behalf is very much appreciated.

Finally, we are fortunate in our range of funders, and we very much appreciate that support. They include the Health Service Executive, the Irish Sports Council, the Atlantic Philanthropies, and the Arts Council. This year we welcomed a new funding partner, Bord Gais Foundation, with whom we are working on new project (Cultural Companions).

Catherine Rose

Chief Executive Officer

Active Participation

Bealtaine

The Bealtaine festival, celebrating creativity in older age, is a month-long nationwide festival of arts and creative activity for, by or about older people. In 2011, its sixteenth year, Bealtaine saw a dramatic increase in participation numbers. Estimates for people participating went from 100,000 in 2010 to over 120,000 in 2011. This is due to continued close working with key collaborators and maintaining the momentum of successful initiatives, as well as to increased communications, marketing and distribution of the printed materials leading to more participating organisations. There are now almost 600 partner organisations running more than 3,000 events in 27 counties (including one from Northern Ireland). See below for a list of participating organisations by category.

Some of the highlights of Bealtaine 2011 include:

- Expanding the Dawn Chorus project to over 30 locations nationwide, bringing together choirs and active retirement groups for one unforgettable morning of singing on beaches and waterways around the country
- The establishment of Blow the Dust off Your Trumpet orchestra in Cork Opera House, groups of older musicians returning to public performance after many years
- Hosting 'Prime Years', an international photography exhibition, at the Gallery of Photography, in collaboration with Houston Center for Photography, Texas
- Developing 'Wild Bees' Nest' project at the National Library of Ireland from the 2009 project The Magpie's Nest', run in collaboration with the Irish Traditional Music Archive and the Góilín singing club
- Cultivating a Bealtaine touring strand, touring 'Fruitcake' and 'Here we are again still', the 'Ink' photography exhibition and a curated short film programme
- Instigating a new collaboration between Crafts Council of Ireland and Office of Public Works with the craft exhibition 'A Constant Thread'

A change to the Arts Council funding cycle meant that funding was confirmed later than usual (March), something that presented challenges for scheduling a Maytime festival. In-kind sponsorship further enhanced marketing and promotion of the festival. This took the form of Google Ad Words online sponsorship (worth €10,000), Iarnród Éireann advertising (worth €10,000) and distribution support from a number of other partners (worth €30,985). Promotion included running a national four-week poster campaign with Iarnród Éireann, a local radio advertising campaign for 2 weeks across 16 stations, a Google Ad Words on-line campaign. We worked with the Irish Times to distribute 120,000 programmes. An eBulletin was sent out each week during the festival and Facebook friends could follow Bealtaine and upload images and video. Apart from the News and press coverage on TV, radio and in the national and

local press, Bealtaine also featured prominently in RTE1's Fair City soap opera, a sign that Bealtaine is now part of the mainstream of Irish society.

Amongst the development work that has been ongoing in 2011 are plans for an international conference during May 2012 on creativity and ageing, which will bring international academics and practitioners together in Dublin for the first time.

Bealtaine in Figures

Number of participants (estimated based on feedback from organisers)	122,111	20% increase
Number of events (estimated)	3,133	25% increase
Number of organisers	592	15% increase
Number of organisations organising events for the first time	180	23% increase
Number of counties represented	27	7% increase

Coverage	Amounts
National newspaper coverage	1,757 column cms
Local /regional newspaper coverage	11,193 column cms
Television coverage	Featured 11 times on 5 TV channels
Estimated value of print coverage	€171,098
Radio coverage	Featured 37 times on 26 radio stations
Web coverage	188 mentions on 152 different websites
Number of unique visitors during festival	6,983
Number of Bealtaine website pages viewed during festival	16,434

Bealtaine Organisers	
National Cultural Institutions	10
National Arts Organisations	5
Local Authority Arts Offices	19
Other Local Authority departments	1
Regional Arts Centres	104
Cultural/Heritage Organisations	16
Public Library Branches	173
Local Groups	148
Care Centres	116
TOTAL	592

Cultural Companions

Cultural Companions is a new initiative for which funding for a pilot was obtained in 2010, from Bord Gais Foundation. The programme was conceived of as being complementary to the Bealtaine festival (although, unlike Bealtaine, intended to operate year-round), aiming to reach individuals not already in groups. It was conceived as a way of reaching hard-to-reach older people who, with the support of volunteer companions, could be facilitated to participate more in arts and cultural opportunities.

In its pilot phase in 2011, the programme dealt with some 350 enquiries, established a network which over 200 people joined (aged 55 to 89), and garnered a positive response from participants. It was launched in Dublin and Cork. The outcomes from an independent evaluation of the pilot by Anne Gallagher were positive. It was also shortlisted in the Allianz Business to Arts Awards, and also attracted significant national and local media

Go for Life

Go for Life is the national programme for sport and physical activity for older people. In operation since 2001, Go for Life promotes participation in sport and physical activity through its Physical Activity Leadership (PALs) Programme, its allocation of grants to local groups and its targeted initiatives for older people at risk of social exclusion. It is grant-aided by the Irish Sports Council.

During 2011, Go for Life directly reached 48,400 individuals. There are currently 1,600 active PALs (confirmed in research during 2010) working on a regular basis to involve groups of older people to become more active or to attend activities organised by local agencies. A network of trainers and tutors support these leaders and their groups.

The Go for Life Targeted Initiatives Programme continues to target older adults who are not members of social groups or who are from a background of disadvantage:

- Training and supporting PALs based with Respond Social Housing by providing refresher workshops in three existing groups
- Developing FitLine, a volunteer telephone support line (on the model of a smokers' quit-line) to get people more physically active, initially trialled in 2009. This year saw it expanded to include Co. Meath and all Dublin areas, as well as initiated in Co. Cork. Fitline was recognised internationally by NHS, Health Scotland, on behalf of the World Health Organization as an example of good practice in promoting physical activity amongst socially disadvantaged groups and will feature in a publication by WHO in 2012
- Collaborating with the GAA Social Initiative aimed at combating isolation and loneliness among older men. Participating clubs have been encouraged to send retired members to PALs workshops so that they can host physical activity sessions for participants. During 2011, Go for Life also carried out three workshops to enable six clubs in the Cavan Leitrim area to hold a series of 'friendly' games for participants

In addition, a Gym Accessibility Workshop was delivered in Carlow as part of our work to educate staff about how to make their facilities more accessible to older patrons.

Go for Life has established partnerships at national and local level with funding partners as well as with Respond! Housing Association, Special Olympics Ireland, Waterford Institute of Technology, the GAA Social Initiative, local authorities, community development programmes, family resource centres, care centres and local groups of older people.

The allocation of 906 grants under the National Grant Scheme for Sport and Physical Activity for Older People in 2011 brings to €3.6 million the amount granted under this scheme over the past ten years. This money has been distributed in a total of 6,931 grants to groups of older people and has been used to purchase equipment and pursue activity programmes.

Go for Life continued to contribute to research on participation by older people in sport and physical activity, and commissioned jointly with the Irish Sports Council a third research project to provide quantitative data around physical activity levels and attitudes among older adults in Ireland. The report will be published during 2012.

Go for Life held its tenth birthday celebration in the Helix in September attended by 500 PALs from all around the country. A booklet was published, *The Power of 10*, to mark 10 years as a national programme.

Go for Life in Figures, 2011

Total Go for Life Participants across all programmes	48,800
Total Number of Events directly organised by Go for Life	109



Some 48,800 people participated in the Go for Life programme in 2011, made up of those reached through the various strands of the work, principally the grant scheme and the PALs peer leadership programme. There were over 100 events organised directly by the Go for Life office (in addition to those organised by local PALs or local groups receiving grants). The breakdown of participants per programme strand is given below.

Grant Scheme

Go for Life Summary 2011 – Participation	No. Of Grants	Total Participants
Older People's groups funded by National Grant Scheme	906 grants	30,000

Ongoing Peer Leadership (PALs)

Go for Life Summary 2011 – Participation	No. Of Events	Total Participants
Based on Active PALs, 1,650	Each PAL works in an ongoing way with an average of 10 people	16,500

Participation – Leadership and Targeted Initiatives

Go for Life Summary 2011 – Participation	No. Of Events	Total Participants
PALs workshops and Support for Sportsfests	86	1,722
Targeted Initiatives (New RESPOND PALs, Fitline, GAA Social Initiative, Accessibility Workshops, Leisure)	7	178
Presentations to groups	16	400

Go for Life works with a range of partners like Respond Housing, grant-aids hundreds of local groups and has 47 core partners who collaborate in delivering the programme, consisting of all the country's Local Sports Partnerships (32) and the Health Promotion Units of the Health Services Executive (17). These are listed below.

Go for Life – Core Partners	
Local Sports Partnerships:	HSE Health Promotion:
Carlow Local Sports Partnership	Health Service Executive, West
Cavan Local Sports Partnership	Health Service Executive, South
Clare Sports Partnership	Health Service Executive, South
Co. Cork Sports Partnership	Health Service Executive, West
Cork City Sports Partnership	Health Service Executive, Dublin North
Donegal Sports Partnership	Health Service Executive, Dublin Mid-Leinster
Dublin City Sports Network & CoisCeim Broadreach	Health Service Executive, West
Dun Laoghaire - Rathdown County Council	Health Service Executive, South
Fingal Sports Partnership	Health Service Executive, South
South Dublin Sports Partnership	Health Service Executive, West
Galway City Local Sports Partnership	Health Service Executive, Dublin North East
Co. Galway Sports Partnership	Health Service Executive, Dublin North East
Kerry Local Sports Partnership	Health Service Executive, Dublin North East
Kildare Sports Partnership	Health Service Executive, Dublin Mid-Leinster
Kilkenny Recreation and Sports Partnership	Health Service Executive, West
Laois Sports Partnership	Health Service Executive, West
Leitrim Sports Partnership	Health Service Executive, Dublin Mid-Leinster
Co. Limerick Local Sports Partnership	
Limerick City Sports Partnership	
Longford Sports Partnership	
Louth Sports Partnerships	
Mayo Sports Partnership	
Meath Local Sports Partnership	
Monaghan Local Sports Partnership	
Offaly Sports Partnership	
Roscommon Sports Partnership	
Sligo Sports and Recreation Partnership	
North Tipperary Sports Partnership	
South Tipperary Sports Partnership	
Waterford Sports Partnership	
Westmeath Sports Partnership	
Wicklow Sports Partnership	

Active Participation / Education and Training

Ageing with Confidence and Taking Stock

The Ageing with Confidence programme is about enhancing the development of individuals by providing education for health, by developing life skills and by promoting positive mental health and self-confidence, thus leading to a better quality of life. Within the Ageing with Confidence programme there is now a complementary course called Taking Stock. One practical difference between the two courses is that Ageing with Confidence is required to be delivered by 2 facilitators, whereas Taking Stock can be delivered by one. The Taking Stock course was developed to address requests for a course that could be delivered by one facilitator, and hence be less expensive and more sustainable.

The programme comprises of facilitator training by Age & Opportunity organised in conjunction with local partners, such as VECs and local development companies, followed by delivery to groups of older people by the locally-based facilitators over an 8-week course. Local courses are funded by the local partner.

Sixteen Ageing with Confidence courses were delivered in 2011 to approximately 236 older people, a further 6 Taking Stock courses were delivered to approximately 66 people (total 302). Age & Opportunity delivered a facilitator training course for Clare Local Development Company training 11 facilitators in total. This was the second round of facilitator training provided in Clare. Support & Supervision Days are now held in both Dublin and Galway and two such Support Days were held in 2011.

Ageing with Confidence in Figures, 2011

Ageing with Confidence and Taking Stock courses	2010	2011
Total number of courses delivered by new and existing facilitators	23	22
Number of counties participating in workshops	7	8
Total attendees (approx)	297	302
Location		
Clare (1), Dublin (6), Galway (4), Kildare (1), Laois (4), Meath (2), Westmeath (1), Wexford (3)		

Taking Stock was launched in April 2011, following pilots in Dublin and Athy. The focus of this course is on positive ageing, planning and local networking. Thirty-three of the existing Ageing with Confidence facilitators were trained to deliver the course. Six courses were delivered in 3 counties (Dublin, Galway, and Laois), with 66 older people participating.

In 2011 another new course 'Assertiveness Skills for Older People' was developed and will be piloted with groups of older people in Meath and Dublin in early 2012.

The delivery rate for Ageing with Confidence courses combined with those for Taking Stock is almost identical to that for 2010, despite a very difficult funding environment for local partners.

Partners providing Ageing with Confidence/Taking Stock Courses, 2011

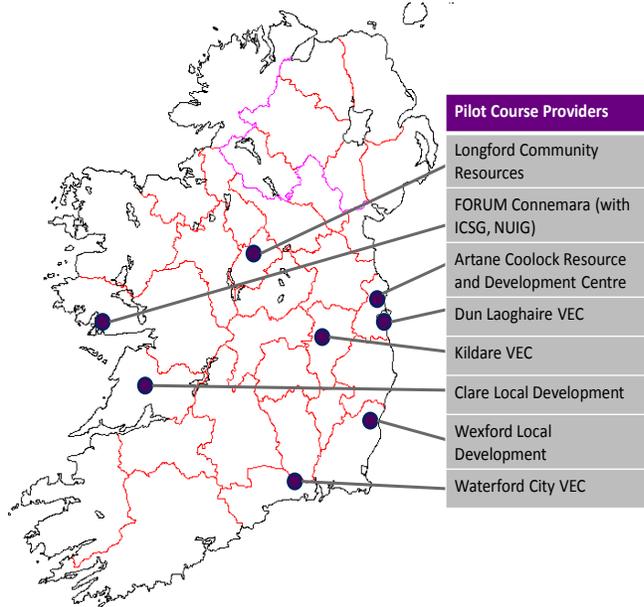
Clare Local Development Company
Galway City Partnership
Irish Centre for Social Gerontology
Laois Partnership Company
Meath Partnership
Outhouse Community Resource Centre
Tearmann Eanna Teo
Tolka Area Partnership
Westmeath Community Development
Wexford Local Development

Community Education Initiative

With support from Atlantic Philanthropies we carried out extensive research and consultation with

providers of community education focusing on participation by older people. The research showed that social outcomes for older participants in community education were high, while civic outcomes were less obvious, and that there were few opportunities to older people to participate in local courses other than IT and hobby-learning (outside the Ageing with Confidence and Get Vocal programmes). The process led to our identification of the need for a new course that would focus on active citizenship and on creating an opportunity for people to move on from a focus on the personal to a focus on the community, and which would build on the Ageing with Confidence programme and also on work done under the Get Vocal programme. In 2011, we commenced a pilot new course (its working

On Track Pilot Course Providers



title: On TRACK – turning retirement into active citizenship) to help people to develop confidence and skills in contributing to and working for change in their communities.

The course complements Age & Opportunity's other education initiatives, offering an opportunity to develop an arc of opportunities to facilitate people to move from personal growth to community engagement, and afterwards (if they choose) to leadership. It will be developed to reflect the needs and experiences of those taking part in the pilot who will be able to shape its content.

This course is being developed with CAN (Community Action Network), and is being piloted with eight partners across the country: Clare Local Development, Artane Coolock Resource and Development Centre, Dun Laoghaire VEC, FORUM Connemara (with the Irish Centre for Social Gerontology, NUI Galway), Kildare VEC, Longford Community Resources, Waterford City VEC, Wexford Local Development. Some 100 people will participate in the programme in the eight sites. There are plans for an independent evaluation of its impact in 2012.

Influencing & Enabling Development

AgeWise

AgeWise workshops aim to raise awareness of attitudes to ageing and older people among organisations whose work affects the lives of older people and to encourage action on how ageism may be countered within organisations and workplaces. Over the course of the year, 11 workshops and 10 talks were delivered to around 850 participants from statutory and voluntary bodies. Along with the Equality Studies Centre, Dept of Social Justice, UCD, Age & Opportunity also tendered successfully to undertake training of volunteers under the National Advocacy Programme Alliance.

AgeWise in Figures

Events	2011
Workshops	11
Talks	10
Total	21
Attendance	approx. 851
8 Counties: Cavan, Cork, Dublin, Galway, Kildare, Mayo, Sligo, and Wicklow	

Participants by organisation type	2011
HSE	18
Other Statutory	104
Community/Voluntary Organisations	564
Education, including 3 rd level	165
Total	851

Influencing & Enabling Development

Get Vocal

The Get Vocal programme is funded by the Atlantic Philanthropies and aims to strengthen the voices of older people, and to enable their contribution to Irish society and to articulate and address their needs, issues and aspirations.

In 2011, Age & Opportunity continued to support Get Vocal grantees from earlier phases of the programme, namely phase 1 (in which county networks of older people were mainly supported, working in a community development way), while pursuing the strategic direction of phase 2 by focusing on the voices of more excluded older people, including older men, people in residential care and older Travellers. All Grantees were invited to a gathering in October.

Get Vocal Grantees, 2011

County	Grantee	County	Grantee
Cavan	Cavan 050	Kildare	Older Voices Kildare
Cork	Ballyphehane/Togher	Limerick	PAUL Partnership Limerick
Donegal	Voices of Older People Donegal	Kildare	Respond Housing Association
Dublin	Southside Travellers	Wexford	Wexford Local Development
Dublin	CPLN Partnership	Wicklow	Wicklow Network of Older People
Dublin	Tolka Area Partnership	Kerry	Kerry Connecting
Dublin	Canal Community Partnership	National	GLEN, Gay and Lesbian Equality Network

Some Get Vocal projects demonstrate mobilization of significant numbers of people. For example, there were 400 attendees of a cross-border forum organized by the Cavan network, 237 people attended a meeting organized by the Wicklow network; The Wexford network represents some 33 groups, the Wicklow network some 40 groups, and 23 groups are involved in Leitrim.

During 2011, and in pursuance of its strategy of focusing on more marginalized groups of older people, research funded by Get Vocal was published by GLEN, the Gay and Lesbian Equality Network, on the experience of older gay, lesbian and transgender people.

Age & Opportunity supported development of media skills by Get Vocal Groups by securing funding for media training (attended by 21 people) and leading to six groups directing short films about their work.

An independent evaluation of Get Vocal for the period 2010 – 2011 by social researcher Brian Harvey found that many of the Get Vocal projects were coming to maturity and that the programme was 'fundamentally sound'. Through its community development approach Get Vocal projects were found to be successful in:

- Developing the capacity for leadership of the people involved in the county networks, such that they are 'led by older people themselves;'
- Contributing significantly to national campaigns (such as the Older & Bolder campaigns to protect the State Pension and on the General Election);
- Demonstrating innovation in inclusion of some marginalized groups (isolated men, Kildare; people in care, Galway);
- Using training to develop a network of older people in an area of 'low social capital' (Leitrim).

Strategic Partnerships

Age & Opportunity aims to influence and to contribute to the development of the sector through all of its work. Go for Life and Bealtaine, for example, work with local groups of older people on the ground as well as partnering with national organisations in sport, physical fitness and the arts, respectively; Get Vocal works with local groups particularly through the local development sector.

Older & Bolder Campaign

Contributing to the processes of improving public policies on ageing issues, Age & Opportunity plays an active role in Older & Bolder, the alliance of national organisations in the age sector. Amongst the work done by Older & Bolder in 2011 was

- Delivering a campaign in the run-up to the General Election, 2011 (with five key priority areas targeted)
- representing the position of older people at a UN Hearing on Ireland's human rights record under the Universal Periodic Review in Geneva
- contributing to the development of the National Positive Ageing Strategy
- the launch of a year-long campaign focusing on policies designed to support people to live at home for as long as possible (the Make Home Work campaign), accompanied by consultation with groups around the country

Strategic Partnership of NGOs

Age & Opportunity commenced closer working with two other age sector organisations – Active Retirement Ireland and Third Age – all three working in the area of promoting participation by older people. The partners are exploring more formalised joint working on programmes, and at future sustainability of the sector.

Commission on Ageing

Age & Opportunity hosted a Commission on Ageing funded by Atlantic Philanthropies and designed to advise them about the future of the age sector in Ireland, which completed its work during summer 2011.

Collaboration on Programmes

The organisation continued to strengthen its existing networks of partners and to develop new ones, working with an estimate of over 1,000 partner organisation annually. This year, Bealtaine worked with almost 600 organisations in mounting the festival, including national cultural institutions, public libraries, care centres, regional arts centres and local authorities. Go for Life is delivered through the country-wide network of Health Promotion Units at the HSE and Local Sports Partnerships and its grant scheme reaches over 700 local groups. The Ageing with Confidence programme and the Get Vocal programme work especially with the local development sector, including Partnership companies and

VECs, and this is a growing area of collaboration, something that continued as part of the Community Education initiative

Gatherings of partners involved in delivery of Go for Life, Bealtaine, Get Vocal and community education took place in the course of the year

Age & Opportunity is also contributing to the National Advocacy Programme Alliance (administered by Third Age and Health Service Executive), and the Ageing Well Network.

Seeking to Influence Policy

National Positive Ageing Strategy (NPAS)

The organisation contributes to the development of the NPAS in a number of ways, including collaborating with Older & Bolder, and representation on a Liaison Group intended to facilitate the exchange of information and views between the NGOs and the cross-departmental Steering Group established to develop the Strategy.

EU2012 – European Year for Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations

Age & Opportunity is actively contributing to the steering group for the year.



Submissions to Public Policy

Key formal submissions made in 2011 were as follows:

- to the Health Information and Quality Authority (HIQA) Standardising Patient Referral Information: A Draft National Template for Consultation (January)
- Submission to the Dept of Health & Children on “Your Health is Your Wealth”: a Policy Framework for a Healthier Ireland 2012-2020 (September)
- Submission to the Alignment of Local Government and Local Development functions and programmes (December)

Age & Opportunity also supported Older & Bolder’s submission to the Government Consultation on the United Nation’s Periodic Review of Ireland’s Human Rights Record (June).

An academic poster presentation of NUIG's Bealtaine festival
Evaluation research findings was also created in-house and displayed at an international research
conference in November.

Corporate Role

Communications

Age & Opportunity established a new Communications Team in 2011 with the responsibility for enhancing both internal and external communications for the organisations. The team created new flyers aimed at an older audience as well as producing a Bealtaine programme, a commemorative ten-year Go for Life publication as well as building on the work achieved in 2010, such as producing more EngAGE eNewsletters and producing reprints of the 'Well into Older Age' publication and the leaflet for organisers.

Internal communications and information were improved in 2011 with the further development and 'cleaning' on the database of Age & Opportunity contacts. Go for Life significantly increased the level of data stored on the database and plans were begun to deepen the amount of Bealtaine information that is held. We began our VantAGE project, creating a space for older voices and opinions on YouTube. The first strand on this is 'A Moment to Save Ireland', asking older people to give their ideas on ways in which we can create or improve an Ireland that is hungry for new ideas.

Age & Opportunity events in 2011 included the inaugural EngAge debate, which took place in the Royal Irish Academy in February. Chaired by author and broadcaster John Quinn, the debate 'Facing the Future: Voices of Experience' heard from John Lonergan, Margaret MacCurtain and John Coolahan. Age & Opportunity, having mailed all members of the new Oireachtas in the spring, also hosted a July briefing session in the Oireachtas press room, inviting members to hear from John Hynes, Catherine Rose, Prof Tom Scharf of NUI Galway and Patricia Conboy of Older & Bolder.

Following direct contact with key local service providers, such as all local authority managers, meetings took place with local authority, VECs and Partnership company staff around the country to listen to their needs and to discuss Age & Opportunity programmes. Age & Opportunity also took a stand with the European Commission's tent at the Ploughing Championships and at the WHO conference on Age Friendly Cities held in Dublin, sharing it with ARI and Third Age.

Age & Opportunity also produced EngAGE TV, a series of six half-hour programmes produced with Dublin Community Television (DCTV) as part of the Broadcasting Authority's Sound and Vision Scheme. The programmes showcased Go for Life activities as well as Bealtaine happenings and other Age & Opportunity programmes.

In 2011, Age & Opportunity dealt with 465 requests for information from the public, working out at an average of 39 per month. Visitors to the website came to 28,742.

Programme-specific communications include:

- **Bealtaine** partnered with the Irish Times, distributing the festival programme along with the newspaper. This led to a distribution of 120,000 programmes which was supplemented by a

distribution via our other partners so that 150,000 were distributed during the year. Iarnród Éireann also displayed posters again this year at their stations. This year also saw the beginning of a Twitter feed for the festival to supplement the Facebook, YouTube and web presence of the festival. A number of other materials for Bealtaine were also produced in-house: exhibition panels for Constant Thread in Rathfarnham Castle and posters for touring play Fruitcake. The logo was updated with the new tagline 'creativity as we age'.

- **Go for Life** celebrated ten years as a national programme by hosting a major event in the Helix for 500 of its active PALs. Age & Opportunity produced 'The Power of 10' a commemorative publication featuring the comments and views of PALs around the country. This was distributed to those who attended on the day and other PALs. The event was covered on RTÉ Radio's DriveTime and an image of the Minister at the event featured in three of the national papers. This was followed by features in a number of the regional papers in the weeks to follow featuring the local voices of PALs. Go for Life also produced a DVD of exercises from the EngAGE TV series. FitLine flyers were produced in-house to support that programme. A revamp of the Go for Life leaflets and posters were also created to update the signature images.
- **Ageing with Confidence** produced a facilitators' newsletter for 2011, giving details of new courses and partner organisations. A new flyer for Taking Stock was also produced.

Communications in figures

Bealtaine materials	Bealtaine Programme	170,000
	Posters	3,000
	Bealtaine Email Newsletters	200
Go for Life materials	Go for Life Ten Year Publication	10,000
	Go for Life 3-DL leaflet	2,000
	Go for Life Stay Active DVD	2,000
	FitLine flyers	2,500
Education & Training materials	Age & Opportunity flyer for older people	2,000
Information requests from the public	General Information requests	465
	Go for Life information requests	
Main Website	Visitors to Age & Opportunity website	28,742
Bealtaine Website	Visitors to Bealtaine website	20,220

Fundraising and Diversifying Income Sources

The year was another in a cycle of difficult funding years that has seen public sector agencies having to reduce their granting amounts to all their clients. Age & Opportunity has actively pursued funding possibilities from other sources during 2011 and has gained funding from the following sources:

- HSE Lottery Fund: Funding obtained for (1) a theatre touring circuit for Bealtaine, and (2) to run a pilot Go for Life Senior Games, both to take place in 2012
- Board Gays Foundation: Following the completion of the Cultural Companions pilot, funding has been obtained for a second year, facilitating people to attend cultural and arts events
- Community Foundation Ireland: Funding obtained to develop and evaluate an arts training course for Activities Coordinators working in residential care centres
- In-kind support was also secured during Bealtaine from Iarnród Éireann, Dublin Bus and Google (ad words) and from organisations who distributed our programme via their networks

Corporate Governance

Board Meetings were held seven times during 2011. Ita Mangan joined the Board in January 2011. John Kincaid and Brian Scanlon resigned in March 2011.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Board Members and Staff 2011

Board Members

John Hynes (Chair)

Mary Kelly

John Kincaid (retired March)

Ita Mangan (joined January)

Mamo McDonald (Honorary President)

Sylvia Meehan

Pat Mulvey

Helen O'Donoghue

Brian Scanlon (retired March)

Age & Opportunity Staff Members

Danielle Byrne, Administrator* (on leave since June)

Helen Campbell, Director of Programme Planning and Corporate Learning (since February)

Kate Carbery, Database Coordinator* (returned from leave in April)

Marianna Cullen, Editorial/PR Assistant*

Patricia Dawson, Go For Life Senior Training and Education Officer*

Michael Foley, Director of Communications (since November)

Sue Guildea, Go For Life Administrator*

Louise Halloran, Research & Policy Coordinator/Get Vocal Coordinator*

Mary Harkin, Director of Go For Life Programme*

Fiona Holohan, Administrator* (job share)

Ann Leahy, Assistant CEO

Terry Lehane, Administrator* (job share – retired December)

Paul Maher, Director of Education & Resources

Rebecca McLaughlin, Bealtaine Coordinator*

Ciaran McKinney, Director of Fundraising & National Development

Lasarine O'Carroll, Financial Comptroller*

Margaret Roe, P.A. to the Chief Executive/Office Manager/HR Administrator

Catherine Rose, Chief Executive

Sue Russell, Director of Ageing with Confidence*

Aleksandra Szymbara, Bealtaine Assistant/Ageing with Confidence Assistant (since January)

June Welsh, Information Administrator*

Note: * indicates a part-time position

Contracted Personnel include (all freelance and part-time):

Dominic Campbell, Artistic Director, Bealtaine

Emma Connors, Programme Manager, Cultural Companions

Martina Mullin, Go for Life Researcher

Appendix 2: Steering Committees

Go for Life Steering Committee

Robert Grier (Chair)

Emma Jane Clarke: Programme Executive, Irish Sports Council

Owen Curran: Executive Committee Member, Irish Senior Citizen's Parliament

Mary Daly: Active Retirement Ireland

John Hynes: Board Member Age & Opportunity

Dr Michael Loftus: Member, National Council on Ageing and Older People

Dr Niamh Murphy: Department of Exercise, Health & Sport Science, WIT

HSE Representative: Dr Ailis Brosnan

Catherine Rose CEO, Age & Opportunity

Get Vocal Steering Committee

John Brady, Retired Senior Civil Servant

Jack Horgan, (formerly FÁS)

John Hynes, Chair, Age & Opportunity Board

Dr Phyllis Murphy, School of Social Justice, University College, Dublin (Chair)

Catherine Rose, CEO, Age & Opportunity

Dr Kieran Walsh, Researcher, Irish Centre for Social Gerontology, NUI Galway

Aidan Warner, Principal Community Worker, HSE South

Appendix 3: Working Groups 2011

Ageing with Confidence Working Group

The Ageing with Confidence Steering Committee evolved into the Ageing with Confidence Working Group in 2011. Its members include:

Mary Kelly (Age & Opportunity Board member)

Mary McDermott

Helen Power

Eilish Redmond

Catherine Rose (CEO, Age & Opportunity)

Sue Russell (Director, Ageing with Confidence)

Bealtaine Working Group

The Bealtaine Steering Committee disbanded at the end of the Festival 2010 following a facilitated process of re-evaluation of Bealtaine.

Instead, a number of working groups were created to focus on specific areas of Bealtaine activities – i.e. fundraising, long term strategy, conference and international network, targeted arts practice - arts and health, arts and Alzheimer's, etc.

To date groups have been, or are being, formed for;

- The International Conference
- Cultural Companions
- Alzheimer's work with Galleries (new project)