

Age & Opportunity

Annual Report 2012

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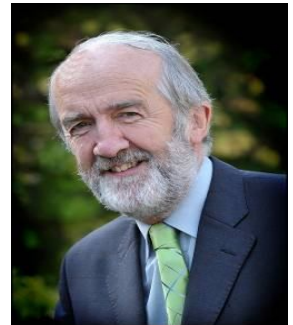
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Chairperson's Statement

Age & Opportunity continued during 2012 to develop innovative approaches to sustaining our work as we continue to meet the challenges inherent in the current economic environment.



A major new initiative was the 'Creating a New Old' conference held during the Bealtaine festival in May, which was held at IMMA. This international conference was attended by almost 150 people with delegates coming from Australia, Canada, Finland, Germany, Netherlands, the UK and Northern Ireland to hear the world-class speakers on the subject of creativity and ageing. We were honoured that President Michael D. Higgins opened the conference and delighted with the response of delegates. As well as working in the arts, delegates also came from backgrounds in education, policy-making, health and ageing. We were very pleased to be able to offer leadership in the field of creativity and ageing in this way as it is one of the most inspiring aspects of the work of Age & Opportunity. We continue to connect with a broad international network in our arts work.

In the area of physical activity and sport we piloted in June a first Go for Life Senior Games. Over 80 people competed in the games from four counties, having come through qualification rounds organised by Local Sports Partnerships and HSE Health Promotion Units. We followed this in November by holding a Games in Kilkenny, which targeted older men, in particular, and involved 60 participants from five counties. There are plans to develop this initiative to more counties in 2013. The games have been conceived of to complement the other work of the Go for Life programme by extending its reach, introducing a competitive element and involving some people who might otherwise not be inclined to get involved.

We have started a process of reassessment of our working models, particularly in education and training exploring more sustainable, social enterprise models of delivery. This is about making all our work more self-sustaining.

Our partnership working continued during the year as we continued to contribute to advocacy work led by Older & Bolder, while also continuing to work closely with colleagues from Active Retirement Ireland and Third Age on our strategic partnership, the title of which is Active Ageing in Partnership.

The year marked a landmark for the Board with the resignations of two Board members who have contributed hugely to the work and to the values of Age & Opportunity. Mamo McDonald and Sylvia Meehan have been crucial contributors to Age & Opportunity for many years and their creativity and generosity of spirit inspired and continues to inspire all of those who have known them. We are glad that both plan to continue to be involved in aspects of our work in different ways. I also wish to welcome new Board member, Paul Murray and want to pay tribute to all my fellow Board members who continued to contribute their time and energy to the work of the Board.

The Board engaged in a strategic planning process at the end of the year and a new strategic plan is in preparation, which will provide direction for the work from 2013. We are all looking forward to the challenge. I want to finish by paying tribute to the CEO, Catherine Rose, and all the staff of Age & Opportunity for their dedication and commitment.

John Hynes, Chairperson, Age & Opportunity

CEO's Statement

Every year we reach tens of thousands of people through the work done by Age & Opportunity and the organisations that partner with us in our programmes. The year 2012 was no exception. During the year we continued the sustained rollout of well-established programmes like the Bealtaine festival and Go for Life and we continued to innovate, all the time rising to the challenges that currently exist within the non-profit sector.

The Bealtaine festival, celebrating creativity and ageing, worked with over 600 partner organisations and, based on returns from these partners, some 115,000 people participated in the festival during May, including people of all ages (mainly over 50). Bealtaine continues to be of interest to arts organisations abroad and to inspire new festivals of creativity and ageing in other countries. This has led to the organisation being at the centre of an engaged network and to our organising an international festival on creativity and ageing in May 2012.

We also started some new projects in the field of arts and culture, notably Samhain, intended to offer something of a counterpart to the celebratory aspects of Bealtaine by exploring some of the ways that creativity promotes resilience in the face of darker aspects of ageing like loss and death.

With key partners, the Irish Museum of Modern Art, Alzheimer Society of Ireland and the Butler Gallery, Kilkenny, we are now coordinating the Azure project, which seeks to involve people with dementia in the life of Museums and Galleries and which is based on a phenomenally successful project at the Museum of Modern Art, New York. Along with our partners, we hosted a seminar in November, which brought people from arts, health and disability sectors together to hear about the project and to learn from international speakers.

Our physical activity programme, Go for Life, reached nearly 40,000 people during the year, principally through its grant scheme and its PALs, or peer leadership, programme. There are some 1,200 PALs actively leading regular physical activity amongst older people throughout the country. As well as introducing a new Senior Games aspect to the programme, which introduces new individuals and groups to the programme, Go for Life continues to roll-out Fitline, thereby reaching people who are not already engaged with local groups.

We have embarked on a process of change, particularly around our education work, both in terms of its content, accreditation and delivery models. Amongst the new courses piloted this year was a course in good governance for voluntary organisations providing care to older people living at home, something we undertook on behalf of the HSE.

We were glad to be able to continue to contribute to policy-making processes and to be represented on national committees such as the NGO Liaison Group on the development of the National Positive Ageing Strategy and the Steering Committee for the European Year of Active Ageing and Solidarity Between Generations. We made written submissions to a varied range of policy-making processes such as the development of the national Dementia Strategy and the establishment of SOLAS. We also addressed an Oireachtas Joint Committee on Environment, Transport, Culture and the Gaeltacht on the subject of arts and disadvantage.

We are grateful for the financial support of our funders, especially our main funders - the HSE, the Irish Sports Council, the Arts Council and the Atlantic Philanthropies, and indeed for their guidance and interest in our work. We also diversified our funding streams this year. Amongst the funders supporting our work in 2012 are the HSE Lottery Fund, the Ireland Funds, and the Community Foundation for Ireland.

We wish to acknowledge the range of organisations that work with us making the delivery and reach of our programmes possible. There are well over 1,000 organisations working with us in our programmes, and we continue to both support them and indeed to learn from them.

Some of them participate in the Steering Groups for our programme areas, and we very much appreciate their input, along with the input of each of the Chairs of these groups.

Finally, I wish to express gratitude on my own behalf and that of the staff for the continued voluntary input by our Board members and our Chair John Hynes. The Board makes the work of Age & Opportunity possible. In that context I wish to add my tribute to the contribution of outgoing Board members Sylvia Meehan and Mamo McDonald whose pioneering contributions to this organisation, and indeed to the cause of ageing, have simply been immeasurable.

Catherine Rose
Chief Executive Officer

Arts and Culture

Bealtaine

The Bealtaine festival, celebrating creativity as we age, is a month-long nationwide festival of arts and creative activity for, by or about older people. In 2012, it was in its seventeenth year. Bealtaine is a collaborative festival involving all art-forms. Age & Opportunity invites participation by partners all around the country to make the festival happen, delivers a core programme and promotes the festival through the media.

Bealtaine aims to be both a celebration and to represent a challenge to societal assumptions and stereotypes of what it is to be ageing in Ireland and highlights the diverse contribution of older Irish people.

As part of the 2012 festival, Age & Opportunity hosted 'Creating a New Old', the first global conference on creative ageing. Attended by almost 150 people, the conference brought leading experts to Dublin from areas like health, culture, education, gerontology and social policy and explored the potential for creative activity to maximise the ability of individuals to maintain dignity and independent living throughout older age. Opening the conference, President Michael D Higgins declared that 'the participants and communities involved in Bealtaine are actively 'creating the new old'. Speakers included Susan Langford, Magic Me (UK), Susan Perlstein, National Centre for Creative Aging, Washington, DC, Anne Basting, Centre on Age & Community, University of Wisconsin, and Liz Lerman, founder of Baltimore's Dance Exchange. The conference was also addressed by Minister Kathleen Lynch and Arts Council Director, Orlaith McBride. The conference was supported by the Arts Council, the Baring Foundation, Fáilte Ireland and the Gruntvig Strand of EU Education funding. This was a flagship event of EY2012: the European Year for Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations.

Bealtaine in Figures

Number of participants (estimated based on feedback from organisers)	115,724
Number of events (estimated)	3,756 (20% increase)
Number of organisers	675 (14% increase)
Number of counties represented	27

Some of the highlights from the core Bealtaine programme included:

- **Dawn Chorus** - in 24 sites around Ireland.
- **Wandering Methods** – Building on the existing collaboration with the Crafts Council of Ireland, and the Office of Public Works, this project also involved Craftspace from the UK, which involved an exploration of ‘slow craft’ at Rathfarnham Castle leading to an exhibition.
- **As I roved out** - Building on two previous projects with the National Library of Ireland, the project brought together older traditional singers to research and develop new songs based on the theme of roving and travelling.
- **Theatre Tours** - Tour of two theatre performances (two UK award-winning shows) and the photographic exhibition ‘Ink’ In 2012.
- **Tour of Care Homes** – Working closely with four care settings, music and theatre performances were provided and an independent evaluation by the Irish Centre for Social Gerontology will provide recommendations for creativity in healthcare settings.

Coverage	Amounts
National newspaper coverage	1,285 column cms
Local /regional newspaper coverage	8,803 column cms
Television coverage	Featured 3 times on three TV channels
Estimated value of print coverage	€193,639
Radio coverage	Featured 36 times on 18 radio stations
Web coverage	296 mentions on 178 websites
Number of unique visitors during festival	7,450
Number of Bealtaine website pages viewed during festival	28,731
Number of countries where web visits originated	64

Promotion of Bealtaine included a six-month national PR campaign targeting national, regional and local media resulting in significant coverage. Bealtaine negotiated new in-kind sponsorship in 2012 with Musgraves for delivery and distribution of the Bealtaine newspaper through its Centra stores. This enabled direct distribution of 56,000 Bealtaine newspapers to event organisers and distribution by Musgraves of 90,000. As in previous years, the festival was supported by a four-week poster campaign from Iarnród Éireann.

Bealtaine also hosted three regional ‘Town Hall Gatherings’ in December and January, where organisers and artists presented examples of successful events and processes from previous Bealtaine festivals. The Gatherings also facilitated new partnerships and provided support for organisers to develop ideas for their individual Bealtaine programmes. Some 120 organisers attended, representing Local Authority Arts Officers, Libraries, Active Retirement Associations, Housing Associations and Nursing Homes.

Bealtaine Organisers	
National Cultural Institutions	9
National Arts Organisations	8
Local Authority Arts Offices	19
Other Local Authority departments	4
Regional Arts Centres	97
Cultural/Heritage Organisations	17
Public Library Branches	157
Local Groups	212
Care Centres	152
TOTAL	675

Bealtaine has continued to provide consultancy services to support festivals abroad. These include Scotland (‘Luminate’) and New South Wales, Australia. Presentations were made in Durham University’s think-tank on creative ageing and at conferences in Manchester (the Baring Foundation), Cork (CREATE Ireland), and Canberra (Arts and Health Australia).

Cultural Companions

Funded by Bord Gais, Cultural Companions, continued to provide opportunities for people to attend cultural events with the support of companions. Much of the focus of 2012 was the preparation of a toolkit to share the learning from the project and work in Cork and other areas outside Dublin to spread the project.

Azure

Age & Opportunity coordinated a new project, Azure, to explore a model of providing meaningful arts opportunities for people with dementia and their carers. The other partners were the Butler Gallery, Kilkenny, the Irish Museum of Modern Art (IMMA) and the Alzheimer Society of Ireland. Advice was

provided by New York's Museum of Modern Art whose Meet Me at MoMA project provided a model for the project.

Three workshops were piloted during May by the Butler Gallery with people with dementia and their carers. Staff from other Azure partner organisations acted as observers of the sessions in order to inform an evaluation, which Age & Opportunity wrote and published in November in time for a jointly organised seminar. This was hosted by IMMA and was attended by participants from a range of interested arts and health organisations. Presentations were made by a MoMA representative, a representative of the Norwegian Museum of Science & Technology which has replicated the Meet me at MOMA model, and from the facilitator of the Butler Gallery events. A small grant was secured from The Ireland Funds to enable this work. The steering group plans to continue to meet in 2013 to take the work forward.

Engage Debate and Samhain

In February, some 90 people attended Age & Opportunity's second Engage debate at the Royal Irish Academy. Its theme, 'An Aisling for our Age: Dreaming of a Better Future' was inspired by President of Ireland, Michael D Higgins' inaugural speech in which he said "Every age, after all, must have its own Aisling and dream of a better, kinder, happier, shared world". Journalist and broadcaster Rachael English chaired the evening, which was a mix of lively discussion and new perspectives. The contributors to the discussion included Roisin Boyd, Eamon Morrissey, Helena Sheehan, Jim Lockhart and Chris Donoghue and Lindsey Earner-Byrne.

Samhain, the Irish for November, is a traditional Celtic harvest festival and was a time to prepare for the winter's hardship. Age & Opportunity's Samhain event was developed with the National Museum of Ireland and Poetry Ireland to celebrate the ancient Celtic festival of Samhain and to explore the rhythms of life and death through the creative arts. Age & Opportunity has promoted the Bealtaine Festival for 17 years celebrating creativity and new beginnings as we age and Samhain was intended to facilitate exploring aspects of the darker side of ageing including death, resilience, healing and forgiveness. For the inaugural Samhain event, Age & Opportunity partnered with The National Museum of Ireland and Poetry Ireland to present an event at sundown on 1 November which featured poets Maurice Harmon and Anne Le Marquand Hartigan with musicians Paul Roe and Michael Holohan. In the run up to the event, the National Museum hosted a series of workshops where a group of sixteen older people worked with composer Elaine Agnew to create a piece of music to end the event.

Partnership JDIFF

Age & Opportunity collaborated with the Jameson Dublin International Film Festival to bring an outreach aspect to the 2012 festival to ten care homes in the Dublin area.

Physical Activity and Sport

During 2012, the Go for Life programme directly involved approximately 39,023 people in physical activity and sport. This is 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.

These figures do not take into account Go for Life inspired activities organised by local agencies such as Sportsfests organized by Local Sports Partnerships or Local Authorities. Go for Life's unique model of peer leadership/active citizenship has now trained 1,850 Physical Activity Leaders (or PALs) over the last ten years and approximately 1,200 of them are currently working on an ongoing basis to involve groups of older people to become more active. There are trainers and tutors nationwide supporting these leaders and their groups. Through the Go for Life Targeted Initiatives Programme, we continue to target older adults who are not members of social groups or who are from a background of disadvantage. This includes the Fitline Project, which aims to support individuals to get more active using telephone support.

Collaboration is a hallmark of Age & Opportunity's operating model and work ethic and so it is integral to how Go for Life approaches its work. Partnerships have been established at national and local level with funding partners as well as general collaborators. Other organisations with which Go for Life has formed collaborative partnerships include Respond! Housing Association, Waterford Institute of Technology, the GAA Social Initiative, local authorities, local development organisations, family resource centres, care centres and local groups of older people. These partnerships enable the delivery of the Go for Life programme nationally and locally.

The allocation of grants under the National Grant Scheme for Sport and Physical Activity for Older People in 2012 brings to almost €4 million the amount granted under this scheme over the past nine years. This money has been distributed in a total of 7,799 grants to groups of older people and has been used to purchase equipment and pursue activity programmes.

A new initiative in 2012 was the Go for Life Games piloted in June in the DCU sports complex and supported by HSE Lottery funds. Over 80 people competed in the games, representing Dublin, Meath, Kildare and Wicklow, having come through qualification rounds, organised by the Local Sports Partnerships and HSE Health Promotion Offices in their various counties. Building on the experience of this, in November 2012, a Go for Life Games event was held in Kilkenny supported by Jumpstart – a Community Foundation initiative aiming to get older men more active. Following a series of introductory workshops held by Go for Life, the Local Sports Partnerships in Kilkenny, Carlow, Wexford, Waterford and South Tipperary trained players in three games and each sent a team of 12 men to compete. These Games were significant in the numbers of men that were reached through the initiative as Go for Life events are usually attended by a majority of women.

Comprehensive evaluations of both Games events were carried out to inform future development.

Go for Life in Figures, 2012

Total Go for Life Participants across all Go for Life strands	39,000
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In total, 39,000 people participated in the Go for Life programme in 2012.

Grant Scheme, 2012

Participation	No. of Grants	Total Participants
Older People's groups funded by National Grant Scheme	876 (average no. Per group 33)	25,300

Ongoing Peer Leadership (PALs), 2012

Go for Life Summary 2012 – Participation	No. of Events	Total Participants
Based on Active PALs research estimate of 1,200 (out of a total 1,850)	Each PAL works in an ongoing way with an average of 10 people	12,000

Participation – Leadership and Targeted Initiatives, 2012

Go for Life Summary 2012 – Participation	Events	Participants	Total Participants
Leadership Programme	97	1,181	
Targeted Initiatives (Includes Fitline, Jumpstart workshops and Games, Accessibility Workshops Leisure Centres)	10 events 1,200 phone calls	306	
Total			1,400

Education and Active Citizenship

During 2012, Age & Opportunity set out to expand its capacity to deliver education, training and consultancy services, building on existing Age & Opportunity courses and initiatives such as AgeWise, Ageing with Confidence and Taking Stock, and on the experience gained of working to promote a capacity for advocacy through the Get Vocal Project and the community education initiative. This is part of a strategy intended to achieve greater sustainability for the organization by developing skills in education, training and consultancy opportunities that are income-generating.

This new direction is informed by:

- existing work (such as Get Vocal and the Community Education Initiative)
- our research showing a lack of local education opportunities specifically targeting older people other than hobby-learning,
- the fact that education is the principal means of building capacity of older people for critical thinking, active citizenship and collective action, and has been a key enabler of progress within successful Get Vocal projects.

Work commenced on making all our work more self-sustaining and in particular we focused on development and marketing of training and consultancy. This involved some re-skilling/training, and reassignment of roles and negotiation with new and potential partners relative to new delivery models for 2013. A number of new trainings were adapted and delivered for other age-sector organisations and statutory bodies. We are working to provide an arc of training opportunities, representing a possible continuum for individuals from personal development to leadership for advocacy. In addition, we will target other voluntary organizations, service providers and others working with older people to offer them supports to facilitate their working with older people in ways that are ethical and empowering.

New Education Initiatives

A range of education initiatives were developed to meet identified needs and piloted. These included:

- capacity-building for volunteer outreach and development officers of Active Retirement Ireland,
- attitudes and equality training for volunteers with the Third Age Advocacy Initiative (with the Equality Studies Dept, UCD),
- an age-friendly business workshop for small businesses taking part in the Age-friendly counties initiative,
- good governance for providers of home care services (developed at the request of the HSE) aimed at improving the quality of their services to older people.

We also secured funding from the Community Foundation to develop a unique training in creativity for Activities personnel within long-term care (both public and private providers), something that is not otherwise available. Its ultimate aim is to improve quality of life of long-term care residents by training Activities Coordinators to facilitate arts/cultural engagement and it will build on our experience in the past of delivering Creative Exchanges.

The area of education, lifelong learning and approaches to consultancy and mentoring is an area that will continue to expand under our new strategic plan.

In the rest of this section, we report on delivery of well-established Age & Opportunity education programmes – Ageing with Confidence, Taking Stock, AgeWise, and the more recently developed Community Effect, and also on our capacity-building programme, Get Vocal.

Ageing with Confidence

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. 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.

In 2012, 28 new Facilitators were trained in Wicklow and Kilkenny and four support days were held for existing Facilitators (two in Dublin and two in Galway). As is the case with all Age & Opportunity programmes delivered by external facilitators, our figures for the ultimate number of participants in courses is dependent on returns from Facilitators, which are not always completed. Our returns for 2012 suggest that 257 people participated in Ageing with Confidence courses delivered by external facilitators in 2012.

An independent evaluation of an Ageing with Confidence course found that it improved participants' quality of life on a recognised quality of life scale. The evaluation was of a course delivered in June 2012 and assessed the experience of the course and its quality of life impact on participants. The research included a recognised quality of life questionnaire administered before the course began and again 1-3 months after it ended. As well as being positive about the course content and delivery, the evaluation found an improvement in the quality of life scores of the participants in the follow-up survey. A range of benefits were identified with the most frequently cited being more positive and confident and meeting, talking, and sharing ideas with people.

Ageing with Confidence courses	2012
Total number of courses delivered by new and existing facilitators	21
Number of counties participating in workshops	7
Total attendees (approx)	257
Location: Clare, Dublin, Galway, Kildare, Kilkenny, Meath, Wexford	

Taking Stock

Taking Stock was developed out of the experience of delivering Ageing with Confidence, and is designed to be capable of delivery by one facilitator. Facilitators are trained by Age & Opportunity in conjunction with a local partners. In 2012, a new Facilitator training took place in Clare in which 11 new Facilitators were trained. Tracking delivery by Facilitators that have already been trained continues to be a challenging process for Age & Opportunity. We have been notified of two additional Taking Stock courses delivered by independent Facilitators during 2012.

Community Education Initiative – Community Effect

By the end of 2011, the development of a new course was in progress to address an identified gap for approaches that develop a capacity for contributing to communities, to collective advocacy and to leadership. Sixteen facilitators were recruited to help develop and pilot the course, which Age & Opportunity commissioned CAN (Community Action Network) to do. The sixteen facilitators were nominated by eight local agencies that had been identified through consultation and research in being especially interested in promoting more active citizenship amongst older groups. Partners included VECs, Local Development Organisations, a Family Resource Centre and a Community Group.

Facilitator training was organised from Dec 2011 to March 2012 and ran concurrently with delivery of the new programme to some 100 older participants in the eight sites.

The course was perceived by the facilitators and providers to have been very successful and a follow-up evaluation confirmed this later in the year. The evaluation was carried out by the Irish Centre for Social Gerontology with the older participants 3-5 months after they completed the course. The evaluation showed that the vast majority (96%) found it interesting or very interesting; the vast majority felt it made them more aware of issues in the wider community (89%); and two-thirds said they had become more involved in their community as a result.

Called 'On TRACK – Turning Retirement into Active Citizenship' during the pilot, the course was renamed and branded 'The Community Effect' by year end and is available in the eight pilot sites. It was launched with a publicity event outside the Dail in December, along with a research report which had been conducted with participants in Get Vocal projects and which identified the following four outcomes from involvement by older people in training/education: personal growth, active ageing and increased social interaction, civic engagement and greater political awareness and engagement. For some, the impact of education had been 'truly transformative' and an appetite has been developed for further educational opportunities

Community Effect, 2012

Participation	Sites	Participants
Pilot Phase (called 'On TRACK')	Artane, north Dublin; Clare;	98

	Dunlaoghaire/Rathdown; Co Galway; Kildare; Longford; Waterford; Wexford.	
Courses subsequent to the Pilot	Clare; Wexford; Kildare	50

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, 28 workshops and 6 talks were delivered to around 600 participants mainly from statutory and voluntary bodies.

AgeWise in Figures

	2012
Workshops	28
Talks	6
Total	34
Attendance	approx. 600
9 Counties: Cork, Dublin, Galway, Kilkenny, Kildare, Louth, Mayo, Monaghan, and Wicklow	

Get Vocal

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

In 2012, Age & Opportunity continued to support Get Vocal grantees from earlier phases of the programme while pursuing the strategic direction of later phases focusing on the voices of groups at risk of exclusion. The earlier phases involved the establishment of county networks of older people working in a community development way and supported by local development agencies.

More recent work focuses smaller projects on issues of diversity and of capacity-building for groups at risk of marginalization, in some cases using innovative approaches that have emerged from earlier phases of Get Vocal.

Get Vocal Grantees, 2012

County Networks

County	Grantee	County	Grantee
Cavan	Cavan 050/ Breffni Integrated	Limerick	PAUL Partnership
Dublin	CPLN Partnership	Wexford	Wexford Local Development
Kildare	Older Voices Kildare	Wicklow	Wicklow Network of Older People
Leitrim	Leitrim Development Company		

Addressing Diversity Risk of Marginalisation

County	Grantee	County	Grantee
Dublin	Travellers - Southside Partnership	Galway	LGBT Diversity
Carlow	CRISP – Carlow Rural Information Services Project jointly working with older people living in care and in the community	Galway	COPE – residents of Melody Court working with residents of public authority housing
Cork	Dunmanway Family Resource Centre – intergenerational project	Kerry	Kilorglin Family Resource Centre working with an isolated rural community
Galway	West Training - Residents of Care settings	Mayo	Kilmovee Family Resource Centre – working with an isolated rural community
		Waterford	Respond – working with older men in supported housing

A series of meetings were convened with grantees in 2012 to identify the legacies of the projects and to identify possibilities for sustainability.

Influencing Public Policy

Age & Opportunity aims to influence and to contribute to the development of the sector through all of its work.

Strategic Partnership of NGOs

Age & Opportunity continued 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 future sustainability of the sector.

Collaboration on Programmes

Go for Life and Bealtaine 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.

The organisation continued to strengthen its existing networks of partners and to develop new ones, working with an estimate of over 1,000 partner organisations annually, although the funding situation for many of our partners continues to be challenging and the rollout of our education initiatives, in particular, is affected by these funding restrictions. This year, Bealtaine worked with over 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 800 local groups. Our education and active citizenship work is carried out 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.

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

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. Work done by Older & Bolder in 2012 included:

- contributing to the development of the National Positive Ageing Strategy

- continuing 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, which included a graffiti PR project inspired by Bealtaine.

External Committees

The organisation contributes to the development of work within the sector in a number of ways. Committees on which we were represented during the year included the NGO National Liaison Group established relative to the National Positive Ageing Strategy, and the Steering Committee for the European Year for Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations. We are also represented on the Ageing Well Network's NGO Forum.

At a European level, we continue to be represented on the Age-Platform Expert Group on Stereotyping.

We also contributed to DCU's Age-Friendly University Steering Group, to Dublin City Sports Network's Sports Advisory Group, to the judging panel for the Nursing Homes Ireland Carers of the Year award, to Fingal Age Friendly County Alliance, and to a research steering group established by Active Retirement Ireland.

Staff also spoke at a number of different public fora.

Submissions to Public Policy

Key formal submissions made in 2012 were as follows:

- Dept of the Education: Establishment of a new Further Education and Training Authority, SOLAS;
- Oireachtas Joint Committee on Environment, Transport, Culture and the Gaeltacht (concerning arts and disadvantage) – written and oral presentation;
- Department of Health: Dementia Strategy;
- The Arts Council: Arts and Disability Strategy.

Age & Opportunity also contributed to representations made by Older & Bolder such as their submission to the Department of Health on the operation of the Fair Deal.

Corporate

Communications

The Communications Team continued in 2012 to enhance both internal and external communications for the organisation. The team was responsible for the Bealtaine programme, as well as continuing to reach more people regularly by email through the EngAGE eNewsletter. The team also mounted stands at the ARI Trade Show in Dublin and the Mature Living Exhibition in Castlebar.

Internal and external communications and information continued to improve in 2012 with the further development and 'cleaning' of the database of Age & Opportunity contacts. We continued our VantAGE project, creating a space for older voices and opinions on YouTube. Press coverage included TV appearances, press coverage and coverage on websites as well as specific coverage of Bealtaine, which, as already noted, totaled 1,285 column cms (national press) and 8,803 cms (local/regional press) and 18 radio stations.

We continued with a social media campaign on Facebook for Age & Opportunity and also separately for the Bealtaine festival.

Age & Opportunity events in 2012 included the second EngAge debate, which took place in the Royal Irish Academy in February and instituted a new public event, Samhain, in November with the National Museum of Ireland and Poetry Ireland.

In 2012, Age & Opportunity dealt with approximately 400 requests for information from the public, working out at an average of 33 per month. The Age & Opportunity web site had over 30,000 visitors during the year.

Programme-specific communications include:

- **Bealtaine** partnered with Musgraves, distributing the festival newspaper through Centra shops. This led to an overall distribution of 146,000 programmes. Iarnród Éireann also displayed posters again this year at their stations. A number of other materials for Bealtaine were also produced, including material for the Creating a New Old conference in May;
- **Go for Life** was supported to publish 5,000 Flyers for the Fitline programme, 5,000 Go for Life Factsheets and an annual newsletter of 40,000 copies;
- **Education and Active Citizenship:** This strand of the work was supported with flyers and research reports on Education for Active Citizenship were published.

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 of their clients. Age & Opportunity has actively pursued funding possibilities from other sources during 2012 and has gained funding from the following sources:

- The Baring Foundation – a contribution to the Bealtaine CANO (Creating a New Old) conference;
- Community Foundation (Jumpstart) – Go for Life pilot games targeting men, Kilkenny;
- The Ireland Funds: Azure
- European Year of Active Ageing and Solidarity Between Generations – Go for Life Senior Games Pilot, Dublin
- Arts Council Travel and Training Grant
- In-kind support was also secured during Bealtaine from Iarnród Éireann and Google (ad words) and from Musgrave's who distributed our programme via their CENTRA supermarket network.
- HSE Dublin North East Lottery Fund supported the development of Fitline and the Azure pilot.

As already noted above, work commenced in 2012 on making all our work more self-sustaining and, in particular, we focused on development and marketing of training and consultancy.

Corporate Governance

Board Meetings were held eight times and the AGM was held in May. Long-standing Board members Mamo McDonald and Sylvia Meehan retired in May. A new Board member, Paul Murray, joined in December.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Board Members and Staff 2012

Board Members

John Hynes (Chair)

Mary Kelly

Paul Murray (joined December)

Ita Mangan

Mamo McDonald (resigned May)

Sylvia Meehan (resigned May)

Pat Mulvey

Helen O'Donoghue

Age & Opportunity Staff Members

Danielle Byrne, Administrator*

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

Kate Carbery, Database Coordinator*

Marianna Cullen, Editorial/PR Assistant*

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

Michael Foley, Director of Communications

Sue Guildea, Go For Life Administrator*

Louise Halloran, Research & Policy Coordinator/Get Vocal Coordinator* (on maternity leave from May)

Mary Harkin, Director of Go For Life Programme*

Fiona Holohan, Administrator*

Ann Leahy, Assistant CEO*

Paul Maher, Director of Education & Resources

Rebecca McLaughlin, Bealtaine Coordinator*

Ciaran McKinney, Director of Development

Lasarine O'Carroll, Financial Comptroller*

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

Catherine Rose, Chief Executive

Sue Russell, Education *

Aleksandra Szymbara, Bealtaine Assistant/Ageing with Confidence Assistant

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 Research

Appendix 2: Steering/Working 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

Bealtaine Working Group (Creating a New Old Conference)

Agnes Aylward,

Andy Cullen,

Mary Doherty, Red Dog

Mamo McDonald, Hon President, Age & Opportunity

Tony O'Dalaigh,

Helen O'Donoghue, IMMA

Louise Richardson