

SOUTHSIDE TRAVELLERS

action group

Annual Report (2009)



1985 – 2010: Supporting Travellers
in Dun Laoghaire / Rathdown for 25 Years



The Traveller Life

To travel the long and winding road
To hear the children laugh and play
To listen to stories of long ago
To hear the songs and music flow

The wind in the trees
The ghosts in the breeze
The flame of the campfire burning bright
And the star in the sky with its guiding light

To be back on the road with a heavy load
The feeling of love and a heart of gold

Ellen Connors and Mary McDonagh (2010)

Ten Gypsy Boys in a Hi-ace Van

Ten gypsy boys in a Hi-ace Van
Two in the front
Eight in the back
And Geraldine up on the roof rack

*Anonymous – Participants in Southside Travellers
Youth Programme (2010)*

Table of Contents

Foreword

Director's Introduction

- 1 About Southside Travellers
- 2 Advocacy and Accommodation Programme
- 3 Community Health and Well-Being Programme
- 4 Developing the Potential of Traveller Children and Young People
- 5 Education Programme
- 6 Training and Employment Programme
- 7 Closing Comments and Looking Forward to 2010

Appendix 1: Financial Statement 2009

Appendix 2: Board Members 2009

Appendix 3: Staff 2009

Southside Travellers Action Group
Unit 5 | St. Kieran's Enterprise Centre | Furze Road | Sandyford Industrial Estate | Dublin 18
T: (01) 295 7372
E: info@southsidetravellers.ie
W: www.southsidetravellers.ie

Cover photo of Lizzie Connors participating in the Institute of Art, Design and Technology supported programme to produce a piece of public art to promote awareness of Traveller Culture in Dun Laoghaire / Rathdown (2010) © Southside Travellers Action Group Ltd.

Foreword from our Chairperson



Dogged determination to keep going in the face of many challenges has served Southside Travellers well for 25 years. And the year under review, 2009, proved to be one of the most challenging. Three people who have been key to our development – Goretta Mudzongo, Dominique Howard and Tara Burke – left the organisation for community work elsewhere. At the end of the year, threats of funding cutbacks created uncertainty about our future.

The good news was that we were able to appoint a dynamic new director in the last quarter of 2009: Catherine Morley infused staff and board members with her own energy and enthusiasm to steer a clear path when it seemed as if our existence might be under threat.

Southside Travellers initiated exciting new projects – like the parent and toddler group – in the last three months of 2009 that came to fruition in 2010 and once again, volunteer board members like myself marvelled at the determination of our staff and trainees to keep all our activities going. It is particularly heartening to see how many of our programmes are now managed by members of the Traveller community, a number of them graduates of our programmes over the past three decades. Even when progress seems slow, this proves that Southside Travellers' commitment to community development principles has real results. None of this would be possible without the commitment of board members, staff, all our funders and the many statutory and non-statutory bodies with whom we work. I would like to pay tribute to all of them.

Frances O'Rourke (Chairperson)

Director's Introduction



The report you are about to read covers a year which provided huge challenges to the community and voluntary sector at a national level, and Southside Travellers was no exception. During 2009, the organisation dealt with the impact of a worsening economic climate on a community that is already hugely marginalised; changes to the ways in which community development is funded and to the social inclusion landscape and some huge decisions as to where the organisation should position itself in order to continue to support Travellers to actively participate and take a leadership role in Dun Laoghaire / Rathdown.

This report seeks to chart that really challenging year and to provide an insight into the ways in which we plan to *Build for the Future*. It lays out the key achievements of our programmes and community members and names up our real and practical responses to real life issues facing Travellers in Dun Laoghaire / Rathdown. Southside Travellers Action Group is twenty five years old this year, we trust that the work we do remains relevant. Our new plan focuses us forward, on developing the organisation (and our programme participants' skills) to respond to the new and emerging challenges. Real community development work is never easy. No one document can ever reflect the breadth of work carried out in an organisation like ours and this one is no different. Suffice to say, it provides merely one lens through which to view what is an incredibly complex process which aims to deliver specific services and supports and develop and sustain opportunities for individual and collective growth.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge the work of my colleagues – the 36 people who comprise the Southside Travellers Team, the Board who oversee our work and the funders who provided nearly three quarters of a million euro to our organisation in 2009 - in taking on the challenge of *Building for the Future* with creativity, warmth and energy. We aren't called an **action group** for nothing.

Catherine Morley (Director)

1 About Southside Travellers



Southside Travellers Action Group began life as South Dublin Travellers Support Group (SDTSG) in 1985, when a handful of Travellers and settled people tried to prevent the eviction of a group of Travellers camped beside a church in Foxrock. In those days, much of the work of the SDTSG was focused upon fighting evictions and upon helping families to pick up the pieces after them. Our organisation has grown since then and now employs 38 people (33 of whom are community members) who co-ordinate and staff our six core programmes of work:

- Financial, Operations and Resource Centre Management
- Promoting Awareness of Traveller Culture and Traditions
- Advocacy and Accommodation
- Community Health and Well-Being
- Developing the Potential of Traveller Children and Young People
- Education, Training and Employment Services and Supports

Our work is focused on the Dun Laoghaire / Rathdown area which is home to over 140 Traveller families living in both Traveller Specific and Settled accommodation. We operate within a specific "life cycle" emphasis, and thus, in 2009, we worked with the following groupings within our community:

- Young children and their parents
- Young people (10 – 24)
- Women
- Men
- Lone parents
- Older People (45+)
- The long term unemployed
- Travellers experiencing homelessness
- Travellers experiencing addiction
- Travellers experiencing educational disadvantage/exclusion

- Travellers experiencing health inequalities
- Families on social welfare benefits / low incomes

In 2009, as always, the range of issues emerging from our community was as diverse as that community itself and included:

- Poverty and Social Exclusion – broad and specific impacts
- Advocacy
- Addressing the broad ranging discrimination experienced by Travellers
- Accommodation
- Information provision
- Supports to combat literacy issues
- Education
- Employment
- Training
- Accessing mainstream service and support provision

1.1 Inter-Agency Co-Operation in Action....



In addition to operating our core programmes of work, Southside Travellers is an active partner in the local development / social inclusion infrastructure across Dun Laoghaire / Rathdown and our organisation and community members are represented on:

- Dun Laoghaire / Rathdown Strategic Policy Committee (Housing)
- Local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee
- Social Development and Inclusion Committee
- Inter-Agency Steering Group for Travellers
- Dun Laoghaire / Rathdown Drugs Task Force
- Southside Partnership DLR
- Youth at Risk Network
- Anti-Racism and Diversity Network
- Local Education Committee
- Dun Laoghaire / Rathdown County Childcare Committee
- RAPID Community Network

- Traveller Interest Network
- Dun Laoghaire Rathdown Community Forum

Thus, the combination of our programmes and inter-agency work facilitates our community to have a real and active engagement with initiatives, structures and processes both within their local Traveller home places and across the county. During the last number of years, we have seen significant growth in Southside Travellers as a community development organisation funded by government departments and statutory agencies including the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs, FAS, the VEC, Dun Laoghaire / Rathdown County Council, Southside Partnership and the Health Services Executive. In our management of this significant growth, we have proven our capacity - within our community and to our funders - to deliver upon specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and timeframed objectives and goals and to provide real opportunities for Travellers to actively participate in the decisions that affect their quality of life, from accomodation to health, from youth provision to education and training.

1.2 Local, Regional and National Allies and Partners

Throughout 2009, we continued to build on local, regional and national alliances and partnerships in order to achieve our core goals. Thus, we acknowledge the significant support provided by these, who include:

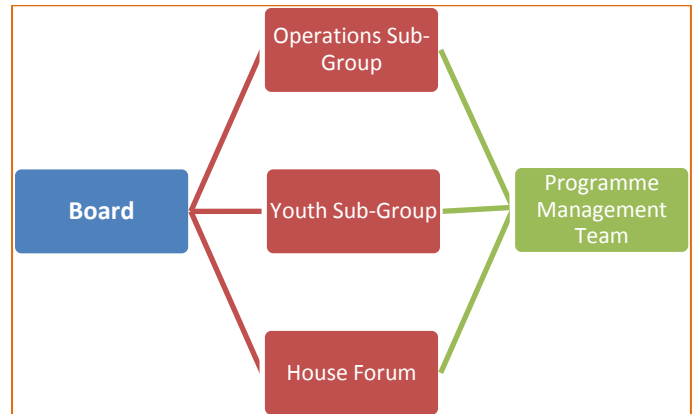
- Dun Laoghaire/Rathdown Co. Council
- Southside Partnership
- Traveller Interest Network
- Integrated Local Community Development Members
- Inter-Agency Steering Group for Travellers
- DLR County Childcare Committee
- Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs
- Health Services Executive
- FAS
- Department of Education and Science
- Dun Laoghaire VEC
- Co. Dublin VEC
- Institute of Art and Technology, Dun Laoghaire
- Institute of Public Administration
- Pavee Point
- Irish Traveller Movement

1.3 2009: A Year of Change and Challenge

2009 was a challenging year for Southside Travellers. We found ourselves saying goodbye to respected staff members , including our Manager, Goretta Mudzongo who departed in September and welcoming our new Director, Catherine

Morley, in October. Within this context, we continued to develop strategies to deal with the changing social inclusion landscape with the operationalisation of the Local and Community Development Programme. In addition, the worsening economic climate meant that as an organisation, we had to put in place measures to deal with newly imposed budget constraints which would allow us to maintain our significant level of community service and support.

Decision Making at Southside Travellers



As this report shows, we took on that challenge and in the last quarter put in place a strategy to maintain and sustain the organisation beyond 2010, through a complete restructuring of the organisation and the development of our *Building for the Future* Strategic Plan. Change is never easy, but as one community member put it *“It’s like having a baby, the first six months is the hardest..”*

1.4 Building for the Future.....



Moving forward into 2010 and beyond, we envision an organisation that continues to develop and grow within a context of real and achievable goals and remains singularly focused upon improving the quality of life of Travellers and on achieving equality of access and outcome for the 140 families we serve.

2 Advocacy and Accommodation Programme

A Message from our Programme Team



As always, responding to issues relating to accommodation and advocating with and on behalf of Travellers living across the county continues to be a significant challenge for our team. In 2009, the role of Advocacy and Accommodation Team leader was sorely missed by the team, but we have continued to work with a significant number of families throughout the county during the year.

Looking forward to 2010, we have developed a specific programme within Southside Travellers new strategic plan *Building for the Future* and our core aims are to standardise the way we hold information on the work we do, establish bi-monthly in-house information sessions and continue our valuable work with the Traveller Housing Unit in Dun Laoghaire Rathdown County Council. Our Director has also been elected by Dun Laoghaire Rathdown Community Forum to represent our interests on the Housing Strategic Policy Committee.

We are looking forward to continuing and expanding the service in 2010 with the continued support from all concerned.

Michelle Murphy, Brigid O'Brien and Lil Connors

Accommodation Team

Introduction

The primary aim of our Accommodation and Advocacy Programme is to work with Traveller families in the Dun Laoghaire / Rathdown area to:

- Provide information on accommodation/housing issues, needs and difficulties;
- To make appropriate referrals to Dun Laoghaire / Rathdown County Council and to provide ongoing advocacy support in relation to these referrals;
- To provide appropriate, relevant and timely information in relation to social welfare entitlements;
- To act as an initial link for Traveller families experiencing accommodation difficulties with other programmes in Southside Travellers;
- To provide a forum for Travellers to develop their responses to issues of concern to them.

Management, Staffing and Programme Focus



In this section of the report we provide an overview of our programme management, staffing and activities. Towards the end of 2009, our organisation underwent significant change in terms of structure and management processes. Within this context, the **Accommodation and Advocacy Programme** moniker emerged, as it more accurately described the work of the programme within the community and the significant role of the programme within the context of the overall organisation. Our new Director took on the role of team leader and together we developed a formal process for information storage and referral processes.

Programme Staffing

In 2009, the programme was staffed by three part-time Community Employment funded workers.

Staff Training and Development

In 2009, as always, we sought to ensure that our team accessed specific and meaningful training, including:

- Information Technology
- Respond Housing Management Programme
- Manual Handling
- Participation in ITM / Pavee Point Networks

- Violence Against Women
- Citizens Information Board Information Providers: Introductory Course
- Community Addiction Studies

In addition, our team participated in a broad range of conferences and seminars (at a local and national level) to further improve their skills and share information on the outcomes of our particular programme of work and represented the views and concerns of Travellers on the Dun Laoghaire / Rathdown Community Forum, The Inter-Agency Steering Group for Travellers and developed a document and instructive DVD (log on to www.southsidetravellers.ie to view the video) outlining how to make a submission for sharing with community and voluntary organisations throughout the country.

Key Programme Outputs (2009)



In 2009, our Programme had the following key outputs:

- Active participation in the Local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee
- Membership and representation on Dun Laoghaire / Rathdown Community and Voluntary Forum
- Participation in ITM Accommodation Working Group
- Support of Dun Laoghaire / Rathdown County Council Estate Management Initiative
- Work on the upgrade of various sites, including Glendruid, which resulted in families

being re-housed to the former Kiltuck site

- Support to families housed by Dun Laoghaire / Rathdown Homeless Unit
- Ongoing liaison with Dun Laoghaire / Rathdown Social Worker for Travellers
- Engagement with successful campaigns for complete site renovation – for example Kilbogget
- Advocacy and support to families with special needs children requesting specific upgrades
- Ongoing advocacy and support for families for completion of Occupational Therapy reports

Moving into 2010

Moving into 2010, we will be prioritising the following areas:

- Supporting the community to actively engage with the Local Authority to improve currently existing Traveller accommodation
- Developing specific supports and advocacy services for Older Travellers
- Working closely with specific sites and families around special needs upgrades
- Early Education (Parent and Toddler) Project

In addition, as we produce this report we are engaged in the final stages of negotiations for funding for an Advocacy position within the organisation and the development of an in-house accommodation advisory group.

3 Community Health and Well-Being Programme



A Message from our Programme Manager

2009 was a productive and challenging year for the Community Health and Well-Being Programme. As you will see from the rest of this section, our focus was, as always, on working in a relevant and culturally appropriate way, whilst ensuring that Traveller families across the county have increased access to primary health care services.

At this point, it is important to acknowledge the significant and challenging work done by our committed team and the support received from various health service providers in achieving this core aim.

Looking forward to 2010, it is clear that resource cuts to both our programme and across the health service will have an impact, we continue however, to be fully committed to the delivery of our programme and are constantly seeking ways to improve our impact. With this in mind, we will be focusing more effort around the needs of parents of young children, older people and those experiencing substance use/misuse issues, whilst maintaining our core outreach and support work.

God Bless

Sally Connors

Community Health and Well-Being Programme Manager

Introduction

It is widely acknowledged that Travellers experience poor health status and significantly greater health inequalities than the majority population in Ireland. The following are just some of the stark realities for Travellers:

- Travellers are statistically far less likely to live beyond middle age (census 2006)
- Life expectancy is approximately 15% less in the Traveller community than the majority population
- Infant mortality is approximately three times the national average
- Travellers are more likely to experience infectious disease, injury through accident and low participation in ante-natal care

As a distinct cultural group, for many Travellers, the structures, processes and approaches of mainstream health service provision raise significant difficulties in terms of equality of access and outcome.



This report provides a detailed overview of the work undertaken by the Community Health and Well-Being Programme of Southside Travellers Action Group in 2009. As with all Traveller health programmes throughout the country, our aim is to act as a first point of contact for Travellers living in Dun Laoghaire / Rathdown with the various primary health care services available throughout the county through outreach, information provision and support. The needs we aim to meet are informed by those identified by our community, the services that are available within the area, the needs of the service providers, and national health issues such as outbreaks of mumps/swine flu.

Operating out of community development principles, our community health workers are designated to specific geographical areas within the county and operate a structured and programmed outreach support service. Thus, our fieldwork is a significant aspect of the work carried out by the programme, it is an integral part of the process that facilitates a two way communication between the H.S.E and our programme. We work in partnership on devising measures to help Travellers access these services more efficiently; our programme helps to raise awareness of the specific needs of Travellers.

Management, Staffing and Programme Focus

In this section of the report we provide an overview of our programme management, staffing and activities. As previously stated, in all our work, we seek to operate from community development principles and our practice – in terms of management

and programme development is informed by these. Thus, we aim to provide an equality driven and family friendly workplace for our team and to ensure, whilst maintaining service and support levels to the community, that the management structures and supports in place take account of the varying levels of skill within the team. Put simply, we see our role as supporting our staff to achieve their potential and develop their skillset and therefore more experienced team members often act as mentors to newer members to ensure that the overall skillset of the team is maintained and enhanced.

Towards the end of 2009, our organisation underwent significant change in terms of structure and management processes. Within this context, the **Community Health and Well-Being Programme** moniker emerged, as it more accurately described the work of the programme within the community and the significant role of the programme within the context of the overall organisation.

Programme Structure

In 2009, the programme achieved maximum staffing levels and was augmented by two additional staff members funded through our community employment scheme (focusing on drugs awareness, information and referral). Each community health worker carried out a minimum of 4 hours per week outreach (totalling 40 hours outreach provided). In addition, particular workers with particular and focused skills work closely with community members experiencing domestic violence and homelessness.

Staff Training and Development



In 2009, as always, we sought to ensure that our team were supported to access specific and meaningful training. All community health workers have received Fetac level 3 in various modules. To this end, staff completed the following training programmes:

- Computer literacy level 3
- Mental health
- Drug/ alcohol awareness
- Sexual health
- Ageing with confidence
- Cancer awareness
- Women's health
- Men's health
- Child health
- Domestic violence
- Culture awareness
- Disability
- Relaxation /community addiction
- Child safety awareness

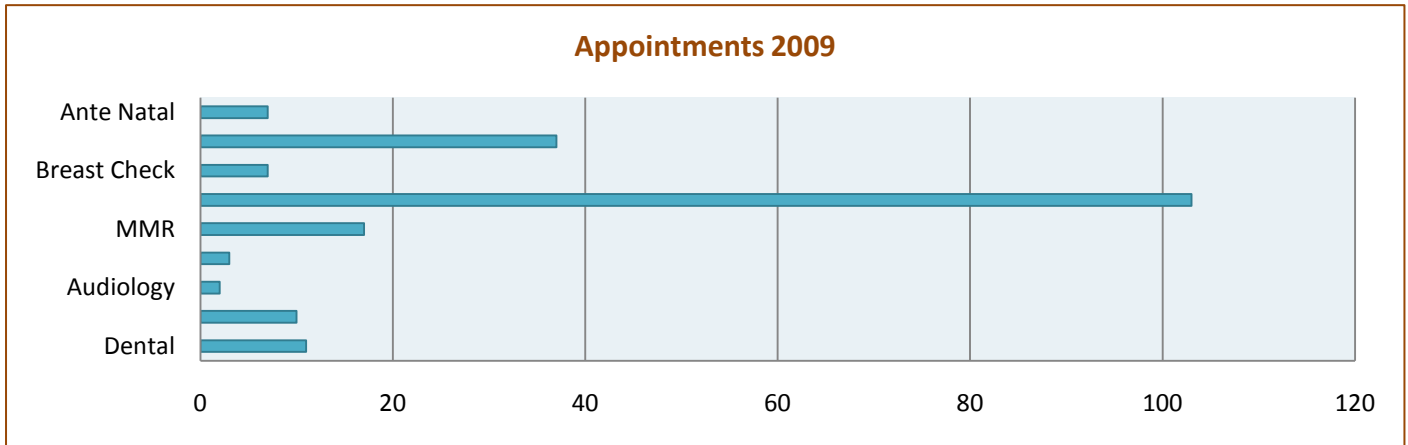
In addition, our team participated in a broad range of conferences and seminars (at a local and national level) to further improve their skills and share information on the outcomes of our particular programme of work.

Key Programme Outputs (2009)

As stated in our plan for 2009, the work of 2009 focused on supporting Traveller families to access:

- Childrens' vaccinations
- Audiology services
- Women's Health services
- Hospital appointments
- Breast check
- General public health services
- Opticians and ophthalmic services
- Community care services for older people

- Access to drugs information and referral services and supports (users and their families)
- Other
 - Particular developmental assessments for children
 - Physiotherapy
 - Occupational therapy assessments and services



In addition, we provide a series of in-house supports including information, advice and referral and the provision of a no-cost counselling service in the centre two mornings per week. Finally, we also actively engage with Traveller MABS to provide additional support to community members as requested or required.

Whilst the focus of this work is to increase access and support the community to overcome barriers to accessing services, an additional and key element of this work is when the community health workers use the outcomes of their outreach to inform the design, development and delivery of mainstream health service provision.



Men's Development Programme

Over the years, it has proved challenging to actively engage Traveller men in the programme. In 2009, however, we moved forward on this challenge and started to put in place an event/activities focused programme on a monthly basis. In 2009, we held a 10 week men's fitness programme, 4 men's open evenings and provided driver theory test support to younger men in order to activate this group. We envisage continuing to develop this programme in 2010.

Counselling service

Mental health issues are addressed by C.H.W'S working within the Travelling community on a regular basis. We currently have a service available 2 mornings a week Tuesday and Thursday from 10.30a.m to 1.00p.m. These are an invaluable resource to have for the local community who are able to access this service in our centre. Our programme and the counsellors are able to refer clients where necessary to other services like the community addiction team/family support. It is important for the community that a positive approach to mental health is also encouraged by the C.H.W'S. the diagram below shows participation in this service.

Community Addiction Team

The community addiction team provides an invaluable resource to our programme. The CHW'S are able to refer clients from the community through outreach. The team can then do supportive work in a safe environment through meditation, massage, acupuncture and physical activity programmes for example.

Disability Supports

Community health link workers visit families with members who are disabled. The C.H.W'S then link in with the accommodation team and other services to ensure that the families are receiving the benefits that they are entitled to in order to help the person with the disability to have the best quality of life possible. The numbers who have received information provided by our programme are listed above.

Money Advice Budgeting Service (MABS)

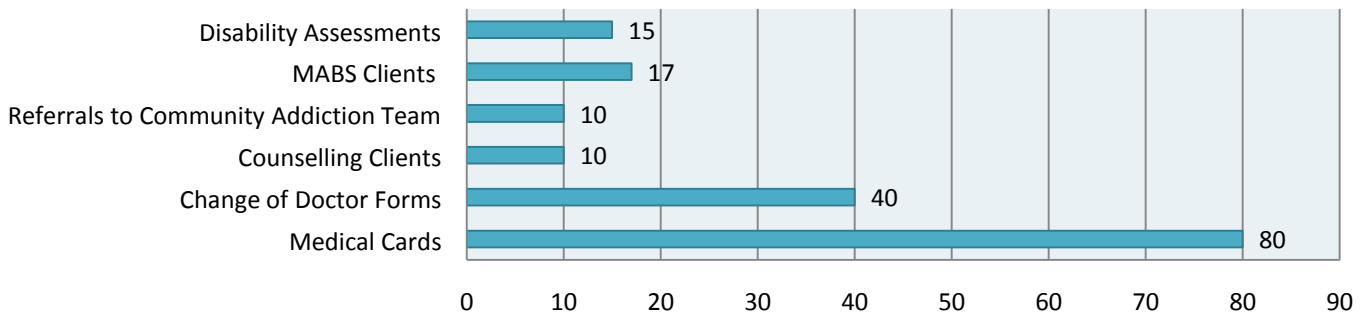
There has been a significant increase in families availing of the service provided by MABS given the current economic climate, the response of our community to a one to one, confidential and supportive service and the quality of staff working with us. Our programme works closely with Dun Laoghaire MABS and they provide outreach to the centre for one to one support. We would envisage continuing to develop this element of our programme.



Development of Older Peoples' Programme

Towards the end of 2009, we also sought to move on developing our Older Peoples' programme and held an Older Peoples' Activation Event. Again, this development work is continuing into 2010 and we are actively seeking funding to employ an Older People's Advocate to work with the programme.

Referrals, Forms and Additional Supports



Moving into 2010

Moving into 2010, we envisage continuing with the core programmes of work outlined throughout this report with some notable additions, namely:

- Parent and Toddler
- Older Peoples Group
- Community Relaxation Sessions
- Community Chew and Chat
- Supporting Estate Management

The rationale behind these developments is simple as it is our view that the more opportunities we provide for community members to actively engage with our programme, the more opportunities will emerge for real and measurable impact on the health status of our community.

Of course, we face challenges, not least of which is the reduction in programme resourcing and the cuts across the health sector in general. Again, it is important that we re-iterate our commitment to the continued development of our programme in 2010.

4 Developing the Potential of Traveller Children and Young People



A Message from our Programme Manager

2009 was a very busy year in the Children and Young People's Programme. The first quarter was taken up with an Evaluation of the Youth Service (It's the Bestest!) which was a valuable piece of research looking at the Youth Service's journey so far and enabling us to further improve and build on the existing service. Following on from this, we worked hard at implementing the recommendations and continue to do so.

Within the programme team, staff began the process of revisiting Youth Policies and Procedures, Staff Training and Development and Programme Planning. All of this work is ongoing and should put us in good stead for the future. The team implemented a number of new initiatives in 2009 including targeted Programmes for specific ages and genders and with the support of our funders were able to run these programmes ensuring that were culturally appropriate whilst also maintaining a developmental youth work approach.

Weekly and seasonal programmes were run which are detailed in the report and of course the Summer Projects and Christmas Activities as always were a big hit!

We are looking forward to continuing and expanding the service in 2010 with the continued support from staff, funders, children, young people and their families.

Alison Corr

Children and Young Peoples' Programme Manager

Introduction

With the broad aim of *Building Traveller Youth self confidence by creating a strong Traveller Youth Service to support and empower individual Traveller Young People through culturally appropriate activities* and operating under the strategic Aims of Southside Travellers Action Group, the objectives of the Youth service are:

- To establish and develop relationships with young Travellers
- To provide both educational and fun activities for Travellers in the Dun Laoghaire Rathdown County area
- To promote integration between Travellers and settled community
- To provide a service that supports and helps Traveller young people to combat barriers they face on a daily basis
- To provide a forum for young Travellers to develop their responses to issues of concern to them.

The Youth service provides a broad activities and educationally based Programme to approximately 128 young Travellers (6-18+ years) and in addition, staff provide one-to-one support to young people and families experiencing particular difficulties for example in relation to education or peer relationships. The young people who attend the service are also encouraged and supported to identify programme elements they would like to see included.

This report provides a detailed overview of the work undertaken by the Children and Young People's Programme of Southside Travellers Action Group in 2009. Our aim is to provide a Youth Service for young Travellers living in the Dun Laoghaire / Rathdown area through direct youth work programmes, outreach in the community and information provision and support. The needs we aim to meet are informed by the young people in our community and youth specific issues which the Youth Team incorporate into Programmes such as Mental Health Awareness, Anti-Bullying, Peer relationships.

Our programme works from Youth Work Principles and covers the whole county of Dun Laoghaire Rathdown. As well as direct youth work provision, due to the wide geographical remit of the area, a significant proportion of our work is outreach to the families. This includes giving parents and children direct programme information and information from the integrated programmes in Southside Travellers Action Group detailed in section 2.2

Management, Staffing and Programme Focus



In this section of the report we provide an overview of our programme management, staffing and activities. As previously stated, in all our work, we seek to operate from youth work principles and our practice – in terms of management and programme development - is informed by these. Thus, we aim to provide an equality driven and family friendly workplace for our team and to ensure, whilst maintaining service and support levels to the community, that the management structures and supports in place take account of the varying levels of skill within the team. Put simply, we see our role as supporting our staff to achieve their potential and develop their skillset and therefore more experienced team members often act as mentors to newer members to ensure that the overall skillset of the team is maintained and enhanced.

Programme Management

Towards the end of 2009, our organisation underwent significant change in terms of structure and management processes. Within this context, the **Children and Young People's Programme** moniker emerged, as it more accurately described the work of the programme within the community and the significant role of the programme within the context of the overall organisation.

Programme Staffing

In 2009, the programme maintained the previous level of staff members, who held the following positions:

- Programme Manager
- Assistant Co-ordinator (inc. Focus on Traveller Culture Awareness Training)
- Four youth workers
- Parent Support Worker
- Education Support Worker

Staff Training and Development



In 2009, as always, we sought to ensure that our team were supported to access specific and meaningful training. All youth workers have completed Child Protection Training and in 2009 staff completed the following training programmes:

- Computer literacy level 4
 - Crosscare Mental Health and Suicide Awareness Training for Young People
 - Paediatric First Aid
 - Child Protection Training- Refresher Training
 - Speak Easy Sexual Health Training
- Anti-Bullying Training -Barnardos

In addition, our team participated in a broad range of conferences and seminars (at a local and national level) to further improve their skills and share information on the outcomes of our particular programme of work.

Key Programme Outputs (2009)



The work of 2009 focused on providing planned Programmes to Traveller Young People:

- Focus Groups with Young People for Evaluation
 - Open Evenings –age specific
 - Girls Group
 - Handball
 - Cooking Programme with focus on Healthy Eating
 - Healthy Minds Programme
- DJ Workshop
 - Masks for World Refugee Day
 - Tapoiri Wagon for ATD 17th October UN Eradication of Poverty Day

- Summer Projects
- Halloween Activity
- Christmas Activities
- Equestrian Programme- Education and practice based
- Other – including:
 - Support around education for Early School Leavers
 - Traveller Culture Awareness Presentations to local Schools and Agencies
 - Initial consultation and evaluation around drugs misuse affecting young people

In addition, we provide a series of in-house supports including information, advice and referral.



Whilst the focus of our work is to provide planned youth work programmes, an additional and key element of this work is when the youth workers use the outcomes of their practice to inform the design, development and delivery of mainstream youth service provision.

Garda Social Placement Programme

The Garda Social Placement Programme continued in 2009 whereby student Guards complete a two-week social placement within the youth service. This initiative has been very successful in providing a space for young Travellers and the Guards to build a positive relationship through youth work principles.

Sallynoggin College Placements

The Youth Service has a continued relationship with Sallynoggin College whereby students attending the Social Care Programme and newly formed Youth Work Course complete their practical work placement in Southside Travellers. We had 2 students in 2009 who were an asset to the Youth Work Team during their time here and we will continue to foster this relationship with the college.

Traveller Culture Awareness Training

Traveller Culture Awareness Training is delivered to local schools and statutory agencies in the area by our Team Members. A number of sessions were delivered in 2009 and going forward this aspect of the work will be further developed and expanded when our two staff members complete their Fetac Level 6 Training for Trainers course.

ATD Fourth World

The Youth Service has build a strong link with this international organisation and in 2009 created a Traveller Wagon and spoke on issues affecting Young people on 17th October for the UN Eradication of Poverty Day.

Moving into 2010

Moving into 2010, we envisage continuing with the core programmes of work outlined throughout this report with some notable additions, namely:

- Early Education (Parent and Toddler) Project
- Over 18's Group
- Parents Group
- Partnership Programme- Probation and Children and Young People's Programme
- Community Nights

The rationale behind these developments is simple, as it is our view that the more opportunities we provide for young community members to actively engage with our programme, the more opportunities will emerge for real.

Of course, we face challenges, indeed sometimes it can be challenging to implement all the changes we would like to in a timely manner but it is important that we re-iterate our commitment to the continued development of our programme in 2010.

5 Education Programme



A Message from our Programme Manager

The Education programme in Southside Travellers has, for many years, been pivotal to the work of the organisation. Not only do we provide second chance education for a group of women who come to us, mainly, with no formal educational qualifications, the programme has also been the starting point for the progression of many of our current employees. These graduates not only manage what is now a major player in the social inclusion infrastructure of Dun Laoghaire / Rathdown, but also – and perhaps more importantly – act as role models to their families. This modelling may be seen as the key outcome of our programme with women telling us that their achievements form a benchmark in their homes and communities.

In 2009, with funding from FAS and the support of tutors from Dun Laoghaire and Co. Dublin VEC's, we had fourteen women participating on the programme. Below, we highlight just some of their achievements. As we write this report, the Programme faces significant challenges, but we are strong and resilient and will continue to support women to achieve their educational potential – go to our website (www.southsidetravellers.ie) where you will hear the women themselves speak about the importance of the programme.

Carol Connors

Education Programme Manager

Participant Profile

Our participants are Traveller women living around Dun Laoghaire / Rathdown who, more often than not, have no previous formal educational qualifications – this is not the case for some, who come to us with Intermediate/Junior Certificate. In the main, their most recent occupations are self-defined as *housewife* and they are considered the primary carer for their children. In many cases, coming to our programme is the first time participants have actively engaged with education with their earlier experiences of early school leaving. In terms of age profile, our participants come from all age groups, but are mainly over 25. As a result of their previous educational experiences, many of our participants come with not only specific challenges around literacy and numeracy, but also with issues relating to their experiences of exclusion as Irish Traveller women, personal confidence and development. It is our view, that our programme should provide opportunities for participants to grow personally, in terms of their own social analysis and at an educational level.

Challenges our Participants Face

As is evident, women participating in our programme face a number of specific and additional challenges once they have engaged with our programme. Many of these are linked to the health, accommodation and cultural barriers experienced by Travellers in general. Significantly, the lack of affordable, accessible and high quality childcare is also a significant issue for participants. Even against the backdrop of these challenges, the achievements and engagement of participants show their commitment to the process of improving their education, as the rest of this section will highlight.

Programme Overview



Our Education Programme takes place five mornings per week in our Resource Centre in Sandyford. With support from FAS and tutors from Dun Laoghaire VEC and Co. Dublin VEC, we deliver FETAC accredited modules from levels three to five in:

- Information Technology
- Computer Literacy
- Communications
- Preparation for Work

- Childcare
- Art and Design

- Living in a Diverse Society
- Video Expression
- Personal and Inter-Personal Skills
- Maths

We also provide literacy and numeracy support for those requiring additional support.

Additional Inputs



In 2009, participants took part in a series of additional programmes, designed to build their educational/personal development, inform and impact upon their capacity to more actively engage as citizens of the county and to move forward from the programme. These included:

- Healthy Eating Programme (8 weeks)
- Drugs Awareness
- Womens' Experience of Domestic Violence
- Information relating to womens' health issues
- Certified Child Protection Training

- Mental good health
- Child Development
- Voting Procedures and Registration
- *Making a Submission*
- *Improving Information for Travellers living in Dun Laoghaire / Rathdown*

In addition, participants are encouraged to enrol their children in our children and young people's programme, participate in meetings to develop their representational skills.

Participation in Conferences/Seminars

Many of our participants come to us with no formal community development experience and thus we encourage them to actively represent the issues facing Travellers. In 2009, programme participants to part in:



- A conference organised by the Citywide Drugs Programme on Mental Health and Suicide in the Traveller Community
- Southside Partnership's Programme on Diversity across the county
- Community Development training organised by the Community Platform
- The development of the Traveller Accommodation Plan – including formal inputs on the issues the plan should address to Councillors in Dun Laoghaire / Rathdown

Key Programme Outputs (2009)

In 2009, our participants submitted portfolios and achieved the following accreditations:

- Art and Design (7 students)
- Computer Literacy (8 students)
- Personal and Interpersonal Skills (8 students)
- Preparation for Work (10 students)
- Communications (3 students)

Given the nature and structure of the Programme, women submitted other modules for accreditation outside of the timeframe for this report – these achievements will be noted in our 2010 report.

Moving into 2010

Moving into 2010, the challenges are many, not least the changes in the entitlement of participants to a small allowance to facilitate their participation in the programme. We have since launched a campaign – locally and nationally – to call on government to re-assess the impact of these on equality of access and outcome in Education for Travellers.

6 Employment and Training Programme



A Message from our Programme Manager

2009 saw the completion of the first full year of our employment and training programme which is supported almost exclusively by the FAS Community Employment Scheme. During the last year, our sixteen participants have taken on a number of key roles within the organisation and have added significant value to the already existing human resources available to the organisation.

In tandem with providing real work for our programme participants, we have also sought to ensure that we provide meaningful, employment focused training opportunities to support their progression into full-time employment. We also see a key part of our role as supporting participants who are attempting to access mainstream employment opportunities and enter the formal labour market. The economic downturn has had a significant impact on our success in this area, although we continue to endeavour to provide this type of additional and focused support.

Given that our programme is relatively new, 2009 was primarily focused upon building the core elements of the programme and supporting participants into the central roles they play within the organisation.

Geraldine McDonagh

Employment and Training Programme (Resource Centre) Manager

Participant Profile

Participants in our Employment and Training Programme are primarily Traveller women and men in their early twenties right up to their fifties. We also have participants from the settled community. For most of our younger participants, significant challenges in achievement, opportunity and access to education have meant that their employment prospects are limited and thus the opportunity to work and train within an environment such as that provided in Southside Travellers gives them an understanding of the workplace and access to training opportunities which, it is hoped, will support them to move on. For our older participants, the same can be said – with the addition of the impact of long-term unemployment. All participants are, by necessity, eligible for participation in the FAS Community Employment Scheme.

Participant Roles



Programme participants play a number of key roles in our organisation, where they are supported to develop their skills, competencies and confidence. These roles are pivotal to the operation of our Resource Centre and a number of our core programmes, including:

- 1 Minibus driver
- 2 Youth workers
- 3 Community accommodation workers
- 1 Education (Parent Support) worker
- 2 Community links workers: Drugs/Alcohol
- 1 Administration
- 1 Technical Support (Tech Guru)
- 2 Receptionists
- 2 Centre Caretakers

Within these roles, participants receive ongoing developmental supervision from our Employment and Training Programme (Resource Centre) Manager and the other Programme Managers from their respective programmes.

Dun Laoghaire / Rathdown Traveller Drugs Initiative

One of our key achievements of 2009 was the establishment (with Dun Laoghaire / Rathdown Drugs Task Force) of our Traveller Drugs Initiative. Through this piece of work – linked with our community health programme – we implemented a community needs analysis around specific services and supports required by our community to deal with their concerns related to drug

awareness and addiction. As a result, the inter-agency steering group was established and will, through 2010, seek to develop structures and supports for families and individuals throughout the county.

Training and Employment Supports Provided



Within the context of the roles played by participants, a full and varied training programme was provided in 2009, this included:

- Information Technology
 - Literacy and Numeracy
 - Security / Caretaking
 - DIY/Maintenance
 - Addiction Studies
- Child Protection
 - Manual Handling
 - Training for Trainers
 - Suicide Prevention
 - Respond Housing Certificate
 - Violence Against Women
 - Healthy Eating

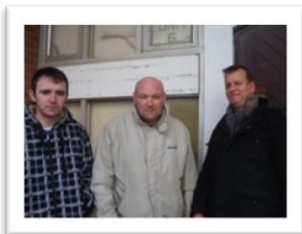


In addition, in-house job-seeking supports were also provided, such as:

- Career guidance
- CV Preparation
- Interview Preparation

Towards the end of 2009, we prepared an application to formalise this service by requesting funding from the FAS Special Initiative for Travellers to employ a part-time Employment Facilitator.

Participation in Conferences/Seminars



As part of our ongoing work to support Travellers and their allies to actively represent the issues facing Travellers in Dun Laoghaire Rathdown, programme participants attended a number of conferences and seminars, including:

- A conference organised by the Citywide Drugs Programme on Mental Health and Suicide in the Traveller Community
 - Southside Partnership's Programme on Diversity across the county
 - Community Development training organised by the Community Platform
- The development of the Traveller Accommodation Plan – including formal inputs on the issues the plan should address to Councillors in Dun Laoghaire / Rathdown

Moving into 2010

Moving into 2010, we have clearly defined roles and clear training and development pathways in place for our participants, a small number will complete their time with us and as we go to print, two are applying for third level education. We look forward to the challenges 2010 will bring and to establishing, in a more formal and structured way, the types of real and meaningful employment and training supports required by our current and new participants.

7 Closing Comments and Looking forward to 2010

This report has attempted to reflect the core achievements and outcomes of the work of Southside Travellers Action Group in 2009. It was a year of huge change and challenge, locally and nationally and as an organisation, we saw the real impact of these changes on real people's lives. Towards the end of the year, we engaged in a root and branch review, which led to a complete restructuring of the organisation and the development of our new strategy *Building for the Future*. The future is nothing without the past and clearly, we would not have been in a position to design, develop and implement such radical changes without the knowledge or resources of the significant achievements of previous years.

Moving forward, we hope to take the lessons of the past and allow them to inform the future, to take the organisation on the next leg of its journey towards developing an Ireland where **the human and civil rights, dignity, hopes and distinct cultural identity of Travellers are acknowledged and respected**. Even against the backdrop of reductions in funding, changes to the social inclusion infrastructure and the economic downturn, Southside Travellers Action Group remains committed to this vision and to its core values of **Traveller Leadership and Participation, Equality and Advocacy and Partnership and Accountability**.

Appendix 1: Financial Statement (2009)

Southside Travellers Action Group Limited
(Company Limited by Guarantee and not having a Share Capital)

Income	2009 (€)	2008 (€)
HSE (East Coast Area)	147,597	161,421
Dept. Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs	110,016	132,00
Leargas	-	1,945
Southside Partnership (DLR)	11,700	26,000
Local Drugs Task Force	-	5,000
FAS	277,710	104,961
Dun Laoghaire VEC	156,476	152,994
Dun Laoghaire / Rathdown County Council	9,264	428
Sundry Income	1,841	3,781
Bank Interest	-	104
	714,634	588,634

Expenditure	2009 (€)	2008 (€)
Wages	569,975	414,464
Pension Contribution	3,373	13,650
Audit Fees	1,824	1,088
Bank Charges	1,472	2,847
Consultancy	4,807	11,943
Rent / Rates	22,954	21,751
Travel and Subsistence	14,242	13,620
Utilities	9,561	6,285
Telephone	7,847	6,708
Post, Print and Stationary	18,590	10,770
Insurance	5,751	7,663
Training	20,372	19,681
Programme Activities	24,293	31,413
Publication	1,000	1,767
Motor Expense	2,417	1,129
Repairs	525	10,835
Sundry	5,521	8,573
Increase in Provision for Deferred Expenditure	2,611	4,992
Petty Cash	230	1,185
	717,365	590,364

On behalf of the board

Frances O'Rourke
Director



Frank Lyons
Francis Lyons
Director

Appendix 2: Board Members (2009)

Francis O'Rourke	(Chair)
Margaret O'Leary	(Vice Chair)
Mary McDonagh	(Community Member)
Alice Binchy	(Secretary)
Frank Lyons	(Treasurer)
Ann O'Brien	(Community Representative)
Niall Sexton	(Southside Partnership DLR)
Dominique Howard	(Dun Laoghaire CIS)
Noreen Kavanagh	(Community Representative)
Breda Connors	(Community Representative)
Carol Connors	(Staff Representative)

Appendix 3: Staff (2009)

PROGRAMME	ROLES	STAFF MEMBER
Finance, Administration and Resource Centre Management	Manager	Goretti Mudzongo (to July 2009)
	Director	Catherine Morley (from October 2009)
	Finance and Administration Programme Manager	Trevor Stewart
	Education Programme Manager	Carol Connors
	Resource Centre Manager	Geraldine McDonagh (Employment and Training Supports)
	Receptionists	Paula Connors
	Tech Guru	Anne-Marie Connors
	Buildings Maintenance	Gerry McEoghan
	Caretaker	John Cox / Mark Doyle / James Moorehouse
		Michael Connors
Accommodation and Advocacy	Accommodation Team	Bridget O'Brien
		Michelle Murphy
		Lil Connors
Community Health and Well-Being	Programme Manager	Sally Connors
	Assistant Programme Manager	Trish Cranny
	Primary Health Care Workers	Alice Berry / Nanny Connors / Winnie Reilly / Nora Sherlock
		Mary O'Brien / Karen Grendon / Nan Connors / Sally Doran
	Drugs Outreach Worker	Ann O'Brien Graham McGarry
Children and Young People	Programme Manager	Alison Corr
	Assistant Programme Manager	Geraldine Dunne (Cultural Awareness Training)
	Youth Workers	Margaret O'Brien / Mary O'Brien / Ms Connors / Catriona Doyle
	Parent Support Workers	Kitty Connors
		Margaret McDonagh
	Parent and Toddler Group Facilitator Mini-Bus Driver	Margaret (Mooley) Doyle Frank Cahill