

Traveller Visibility Group LTD
2015
Annual Report



**Cork Traveller
Visibility Group Ltd.**

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1. Joint Chairperson/Project Coordinator Report

The year 2015 began with the TVG celebrating its 21st birthday at an event organised by the project which invited the Traveller community, key stake holders and service providers to join us in our celebrations. At the event we launched a DVD produced by Frameworks Films which documents the history of the TVG through interviews with TVG staff and individuals involved in supporting the operations of the project down through the years. Being 21 years in operation is an important milestone that the TVG is very proud to have reached and a testament to the ongoing work of the project in facilitating the development of community development work for the Traveller community in Cork. We would like to acknowledge everyone who has been part of our work since we began in the early 1990's; we recognise that it is through the partnerships that we have formed along the way that have enabled us to be where we are today.



In terms of our work throughout 2015 it is important to note that it has continued to be challenging, and progress can be slow. We have ensured that Travellers have been included and consulted with in all committees that are relevant to Traveller policy; and have worked hard to highlight difficulties that Travellers continue to experience in their access to services. Despite our ongoing efforts and commitment to bringing about change for the Traveller community on a number of levels, we would like to emphasize that the balance of power within society structures is something that is a struggle and can block us from having meaningful influence with decision-making at committee level.

Traveller accommodation is still in particular crisis and more than ever young Travellers are turning to the private rented sector for accommodation. It can be very difficult

for Travellers to make that step into a rented house as they become less of a priority on the local authority housing list. If you identify as a Traveller you are at the risk of experiencing extensive prejudice and discrimination. This forces many young Travellers into lying about their identity as a Traveller for the first time. In some cases they may also have to lie about the size of their family.

As 2015 became a year that represented a growing increase in accommodation difficulties experienced by many across the country nationally, we have and will continue to ensure that Travellers needs are well documented and advocated for so they are not forgotten about in any government plans to address this national problem. Following the fatal Carrickmines tragedy in which a number of Travellers lost their lives, Traveller accommodation has gained more media attention. The TVG also joined a regional working group, made up of representatives from Traveller projects across the region, to work on progressing ways that Traveller accommodation needs can be met. This group put together a work plan towards the end of 2015 and plans to conduct a series of events in 2016 to raise the profile of Traveller accommodation. One of the key actions is the development of a manifesto calling on the new government to follow through on a number of actions including:

- 1- Recognition of Traveller ethnicity by the Irish State
- 2- Create a new, independent, national Traveller accommodation agency
- 3- Reinstate and monitor the National Traveller Accommodation Budget
- 4- Ensure collaborative decision making around Traveller accommodation
- 5- Monitor the 5-year Traveller Accommodation Programmes (TAP's) at national level
- 6- Ensure culturally appropriate options
- 7- Implement recommendations of the NTACC Review of the Traveller Accommodation Act
- 8- Support Traveller nomadism
- 9- Uphold the DoE'S directive around fire and safety checks
- 10- Plan effectively around the needs of Travellers experiencing homelessness

We are looking forward to seeing how the work of the project will progress in this regard.

One success around Traveller accommodation in 2015 was the completion of the group housing scheme for the residents of St Anthony's Park in Knocknaheeny, Cork by Cork City Council. This has undoubtedly contributed to a much better living situation for the families there and TVG encourages ongoing progress of this new scheme particularly with the development of activities to be run from the new community centre on its site.

TVG continues to work closely with the HSE through the Traveller health unit and Social Inclusion. This work continues to be a very positive working relationship and has seen us identify further challenges for the community in their health and well-being particularly in relation to mental health, support for families of children in care and

cardiovascular health. We continue to work together on a number of projects named throughout this report.

This report only gives a flavour of our work in 2015. It can be difficult to capture the volume of work of such a vast project in a short report. Hopefully you will enjoy reading it and continue to support our work in 2016.

Breda O Donoghue
Chairperson

Chrissie O Sullivan
Project co-ordinator

2. History & Background of the Traveller Visibility Group (TVG)

History & Background

The TVG is a Traveller-led Cork based organisation, which works within the philosophy and ethos of the National Community Development Programme. The TVG brings together Travellers and settled people in solidarity, to facilitate community development work within the Travelling Community. The Traveller Visibility Group recognises Travellers as a nomadic ethnic group with its own distinct culture and lifestyle. We were formed in 1992 by a group of Traveller women concerned with the issues facing Travellers in Cork. The absence at that time of any community development work to facilitate Travellers in identifying and addressing these issues was one of concern. Our work is based on the findings of research we commissioned in 1993, which was carried out by the Social Policy and Research Unit of the University College Cork (UCC). This research was published and entitled "Making Travellers Visible, an account of the lived experience of Travellers in Cork; an examination of the services and unmet needs in Cork". Our catchment area is Cork City and the suburban areas near the city.

Mission Statement of the Traveller Visibility Group

To work with Travellers in Cork towards achieving real change and improvement in their lives

Principles of the TVG

- Anti-racist and anti-sexist work practices be implemented in all programmes
- Participation, partnership and empowerment - the core elements of community development
- Starting from where Travellers are at and passing on skills
- Seeing the value of working through a development process with people being as important as completing the task.

Aims of the TVG:

- Continue to promote Travellers as a nomadic ethnic group, with its own distinctive culture and lifestyle.
- Continue to promote Traveller self-determination and empowerment (enabling Travellers to make decisions and work in a collective way to bring about real change in their lives).
- Continue to work for real change and improvement in Travellers' lives including the areas of education, accommodation, health, and employment / work and rights.

- To challenge discrimination and racism against Travellers.
- Continue to ensure the inclusion of Traveller issues and resource the real participation of Travellers in policy decisions and practices that affect their lives.
- Develop a suitable, well-resourced Travellers' Centre and Crèche.
- Develop the TVG's management, administrative and staff structures and procedures.
- Promote mutual understanding, acceptance and support between Travellers and others in Irish Society.
- Develop network links locally, regionally and nationally.
- Carry out research on the circumstances of Travellers in Cork and contribute to national research, which will inform the TVG's work.

3. Management and Staffing

List of TVG management 2015:

Chair/ Director	Breda O Donoghue Chair
Director	Chrissie O Sullivan
Director	Daithi Mac a Bhioaire
Director	Jane O Donoghue
Community Work Dept. HSE Rep.	Eleanor Moore
Secretary	Siobhan O'Dowd
Cork City Childcare Rep.	Catherine Sheehan,
Public Health (HSE) Rep.	Cora Williams,
Social Work Dept. UCC	Alistair Christie (joined in 2013)

List of TVG staff 2015:

Project Co-ordinator	Chrissie O'Sullivan
Administrator	Mary Coughlan
TVG Health Coordinator	Ciara Ridge
Men's Health Development Worker	John O Sullivan
Health Development Worker	Caroline Barnard*
Women's Health Development Worker	Breda O Donoghue*
Traveller Community Health Worker	Biddy McDonagh
Traveller Community Health Worker	Jean Donoghue
Traveller Community Health Worker	Nora Cash
Traveller Community Health Worker	Elizabeth McGrath
Community Drugs and Alcohol worker	Anne Jordan*
Drugs and Alcohol Family Support	Joan Nolan*
Childcare Manager	Deirdre Cotter (mat leave was covered by Susan Mannion)
Childcare Team Leader	Susan Mannion
Childcare Worker	GemmaLewsley
Childcare Worker	Steven O'Keefe

(*This position is a job share)

Community Employment Scheme:

Administration	Margaret Bernadette McCarthy
Receptionist	Margaret McCarthy
Caretaker	Vacant
Community Development Worker	Tom O'Sullivan
Childcare Assistant	Charlene McCarthy
	Martina Loveridge
	Paige O'Sullivan

4. Administration, Community Employment & Tus

Administration

Mary Coughlan (Project Administrator)

The administration in TVG is repetitive in that the paying of salaries, bills, Collector General is similar from year to year. Periodic Returns to the Pobal, HSE and other funders is ongoing. The Audit at the end of the year confirms that the administration of grants is carried out in a correct, honest and efficient manner.

In 2014 and 2015 I worked on upgrading our internal information systems. One of these systems is a Cloud computing package which is proving very beneficial to the organisation.

I always try to pass on my skills to a Traveller on a Community Employment scheme. To this end Margaret Bernadette McCarthy has been on a CE scheme learning how the administration of TVG is carried out since 2012. Margaret's CE scheme finished in July 2015 and because she had put in such a great effort and proved herself to be very capable and efficient, Margaret was offered a 10 hour contract in Administration. I was particularly delighted that TVG was in a position to offer Margaret employment because, not only does it support my work as Project Administrator, it has created another employment opportunity for a member of the Traveller community.

Community Employment & Tus

Community Employment

Although a number of positions were not filled, we continued to provide 10 CE placements to people in the Traveller community in 2015. CE workers are an excellent addition to the team as they are strategically placed within each section of the organisation so they can support the day to day running of the overall project and also take up training opportunities in their personal interest areas. These have included Childcare Assistants, Administration Assistants, Receptionist, Care Taker, Community Development Worker and House Keeping.

CE placements can have duration of 3 years per participant which can be very beneficial to the participant as well as the organisation. This can give adequate time to building of skill sets and preparation for the workplace.

In 2015 the following CE participants included:

Margaret Bernadette McCarthy	Administration
Margaret McCarthy	Receptionist
Vacant	House Keeping
Vacant	Care Taker
Tom O'Sullivan	Community Development Worker
Charlene McCarthy	Childcare Assistant
Martina Loveridge	Childcare Assistant
Paige O'Sullivan	Childcare Assistant

Some of these have since completed their placements and have moved on to other employment opportunities. They continue to access the TVG for support regularly.

Tus

We also continued to work in conjunction with the Cork City Partnership to provide employment opportunities and placements for those accessing the Tus programme locally. We provided 2 placements in 2015 including Cleaner and Care Taker. We hope to expand on these opportunities in 2016 and look forward to supporting more Tus participants.

Margaret Bernadette McCarthy (Administrator - part time)

I am working in TVG with the last 3 years on a CE scheme. I first started working in reception for a few months answering the phone and opening the door and taking minutes in the staff Meetings. While I was on reception in TVG I started to meet new people coming in every day and I really enjoyed working on reception because I got to know more people from the community and from different places. After a few months doing reception, a placement in admin came up and I was notified about it so I applied for the place and I got it. I then started working in admin with Mary. When I started off in admin I slowly started learning more and more about it.

When I was in secondary school I did business studies and at that time I did not realise how important that it would be for anyone to learn it until I did admin. I really enjoy working with Mary and she has taught me so much about it and now I am able to do a lot of things that I never thought I could do by myself. I worked with Mary for about two and a half years and then eventually my CE scheme was coming to an end I really did not want to finish up because there was so much more that I wanted to learn and I was only starting to get into the job. Mary told me that she would bring it to TVG management about taking me on for a contract for 10 hours over two days a week. I was so delighted to hear that but still was not sure if it was possible. A week past and it had gone to management. Mary then got back to me and told me that it was

approved and I was so happy that my time in TVG was not ending. I am the first girl in the Traveller community in TVG that has been given a contract like this in admin. I am pleased that there are positions like this which help Travellers get into employment. Some Traveller women are expected to do other things like get married, have a family and stay at home. I hope to be in this role for a long time to come. It is reassuring that places like this support travellers in their lives.

5. Childcare Programme

Deirdre Cotter (Crèche Manager)



Since 2007 the TVG Goras Community Crèche has been in operation, offering affordable and high quality childcare to children from the Traveller Community. We have since opened our service up to children from the settled community so we now provide a place for children from diverse backgrounds to play and learn together in a safe environment where every child and their family are celebrated and welcomed. We still have a strong foundation in celebrating the unique Traveller culture.

Here are some of our developments from the past year:

- This was our second year providing the ECCE programme to five children, two of whom are from the Traveller Community, participating.
- Ongoing FETAC level 5 training in childcare by one of our Community Employment staff.
- This year has been a busy one with a great participation from families of the Traveller community, especially in our afternoon sessions. At present we provide care for 12 families from the Traveller Community and 12 families from the Settled Community. The families from the Settled Community vary from Irish, African, Polish, Lithuanian and Russian families.
- We took part in the Graffiti Theatres Beag (Building Early Arts Group) project which was a great success with all families taking part. This project explores the endless possibilities of play, art, imagination, creativity and imagination in the under threes.
- We took part in various fundraising initiatives which are aimed at helping children become active citizens through encouraging them to stand up for their

peers. These would include National Pyjama Day and Barnardos Sponsored Toddle.

- Ongoing Siolta training (The National Framework for Early Childhood Education)
- Ongoing Aistear training (The Early Childhood Curriculum Framework)
- The implementation of Aistear throughout our policies, procedures, and weekly themes.
- Community employment opportunities and training to members of the Traveller Community.
- The crèche had their annual outing to the Glen Resource Centre in May 2015, as part of the Fun day with the Mayfield/Glen Network which we have now transferred to. This proved to be a huge success with a large number of participants from both the families and members of the wider TVG staff. We also had a fun day at Christmas with a Santa visit and the children singing songs.
- We continue to enjoy a strong professional relationship with other services and members of the Traveller community through outreach and also our participation in the 0-3 network and the Anti-bias network.
- We have joined the new Childcare CE scheme, Old Youghal Road Superscheme, which enables people to participate on a Community Employment scheme for three years and provides childcare training at either FETAC level 5 or 6 to participants. This will enable people to leave their scheme with a full qualification and three years' work experience in a childcare setting which will fully equip them for full time employment.
- We also participated in the Jobsbridge scheme and had a qualified intern with us on a full time basis for nine months, we would to be in a position to offer this person paid employment at the end of his internship.
- All members of staff received Traveller Cultural Awareness Training and Child Protection Training.
- One member of full time staff and one member of Community Employment staff completed the Buntus Start Programme. This programme encourages physical movement in the early years setting to counter act the growing problem of childhood obesity.
- We received money under the Capital Funding 2015 to refurbish our back garden area.



Over the coming year we are hoping to:

- To run the ECCE programme again to a larger number of participants.
- To enter the Job-Bridge Programme again and have a qualified intern work with us on a full time basis.
- To employ participants from the TUS programme.
- To support the Community Employment staff who are currently with us to further their education.
- To have more people come on board through the CE scheme.
- We hope to begin a Parent/Toddler group within the setting to members of both the Traveller and Settled Community.

Obstacles we continue to experience include:

- Funding is always an issue for us and if we are successful in our application for Capital funding we are hoping to refurbish the back yard area.
- New legislation means that CE participants cannot make up part of the child: adult ratios so we will need to find funding for a Childcare Assistant or reduce the number of families we can cater to.
- The number of children from the Traveller Community who use the service in the morning time has dropped and through outreach we hope to entice people from the community back into TVG to avail of either the crèche or the Pre-school.







6. TVG health Development Programme

Ciara Ridge (TVG Traveller Health Coordinator)

In 2015 the Health Team in TVG continued to progress and develop initiatives to support the health of the Traveller community in Cork. The team, which is made up of 7 workers and I as the TVG Health Coordinator, continued to work to encourage the Traveller Community to become ever focused on ways of improving their health status. The 3 Community Health Development Workers, whose focus is to build capacity with the groups of people they are working with in the community, continued to support families around accommodation, education and training and to advocate on their behalf to service providers. Their participation at committee level encouraged further advocacy on behalf of Travellers and helped to ensure a platform for Travellers to be heard. Committee involvement continued to include participation at Estate Management meetings, Interagency meetings, Traveller Culture Awareness Training (TCAT), the All Ireland Traveller Health Study (AITHS) regional meeting which is focused on addressing the findings of the study, the Horse Forum meeting for Cork City, as well as a number of small steering group meetings for pieces of work we have been evolving in the city.

Each of the 3 Community Health Development Workers has particular focuses in their work including Traveller Men's development, Traveller Women's development, Traveller accommodation development and case work. It is important to highlight that the work of the development workers at committee level, as well as the day to day work of providing outreach support to families and developmental group work, has enabled us to reach the community and to work to respond to their needs on a number of levels.

In terms of the 4 Traveller Community Health Workers, who each work part time with a focus on engaging the community around Primary Health Care, also continued to consolidate their roles in the community during 2015. By regularly networking with health services and providing information to the community, they have further established a strong rapport and trust with families. This has been invaluable to the TVG across all areas of its project work including the Health Programme, the Drugs and Alcohol Project and the Crèche. Their ability to mobilise the community and organise health initiatives and programmes throughout the year has encouraged Travellers locally to be interested in health from a variety of angles. Their work continued to include health workshop sessions, gym and swim sessions, walking groups and Sexual Health, Cook It and Being Well programmes being run. As well as this, their insight has been useful to many service providers who are trying to access the Traveller community.

An important part of the health workers work in 2015 included them developing a programme and challenge for themselves as workers around the Glycaemic Index Diet. Their interest in this diet, and the fact that they wanted to be able to "practice what they preach" (so to speak) with their community, led them to research this diet and put

together a 6 week plan which consisted of them committing to this diet, along with basic exercise and weekly weigh-ins to determine weight loss and note improvements in overall health and well-being. Another aim of this challenge was to put together an information session or pack which could be delivered to the Traveller community given observations and needs that the Health Workers had identified with the families they are supporting. Overall, the challenge went well and was evaluated by the women within the project. They are continuing to bring work on ways of bring this information to the community.

The Health Workers also took part in training with the Irish Asthma Society, along with other Health Workers from the Traveller projects in the region. This training has given them good grounding in terms of the particulars relating to Asthma incidents in Ireland and provided them with key information on the condition and ways that they can support their community, who experience high rates of Asthma, around it.

As a team in TVG we would like to acknowledge Biddy McDonagh, Traveller Community Health Worker, who in 2015 became sick and had to take extended leave from the work and the project. We thank her for the contributions she made in 2015 and look forward to her returning to work with us in 2016.

The work of the health team is depicted in more detail throughout each staff members input in this report. It is important to note that although a lot of positive things have taken place this year, our work continues to be challenging and we are always trying to break new ground for the Traveller community. We have a number of plans for 2016, including building on an accommodation strategy which identifies planned ways of responding to Traveller accommodation in Cork, building on relationships with local councillors and politicians to facilitate our advocacy work and conducting a health needs assessment with the community to evaluate our work and to ensure we are responding in the best ways possible. With on-going support and hard work of the staff in the health team, together with all staff in TVG, I am sure that 2016 will see many further contributions in securing positive health outcomes for Travellers.

Community Development Workers:

John O Sullivan Traveller (Traveller Men's Development Worker)

Health Information Workshops

A health Evening was provided to Traveller men that involved inviting in services such as Alcoholics Anonymous, the Irish Cancer Society and the Irish Heart foundation. Information was shared with Traveller men and referrals were made to GP's in some instances. We also provided massage therapy on the night and completed an assessment of health programme needs with Traveller men. We followed this with a BBQ which all the men enjoyed.



All Ireland Traveller Health Study (2010) Focus Groups

Two workshops were held with men from the Mahon and Spring Lane areas to discuss what has happened for them in Cork relating to the findings and recommendations of the study since its launch 2010. These workshops were very structured and detailed with interactive learning, photochat and presentations.



Gym and Fitness Groups

The Southside men's group completed 8 weeks of "Body-Pump Boot camp" and this involved circuit training, boxer size and weights. The group really enjoyed this and are looking forward to participating again in 2016. They still continue to participate in indoor soccer on a weekly basis in Ballyphehane Community Centre.

The Straight Road men's group completed a 6 week fitness programme in Leisureworld, Churchfield. Teen gym was also run in Leisureworld, Churchfield with young Traveller

boys mainly from the Spring Lane and Blackpool areas for up to 6 weeks and was also co-facilitated by Traveller male leaders.

It is important to note that gym and fitness activities continue to be a good way of engaging with Traveller men. As Traveller Men's Development Worker I try to balance these activities with some basic information sessions around health to keep men engaged but also to try to inform them of ways that they can stay on top of their health needs where possible.

Cork City Marathon Team Relay Event

TVG had a team participate in the relay event of the Cork City Marathon 2015. Through the dire rain conditions the men completed the marathon in a respectable 3 hours and 20 minutes. Prior to marathon the men would have engaged in jogging group sessions for 6 weeks.



Community Employment and Student Placements

In 2015 I agreed to take a Cork Institute of Technology student on placement for 20 weeks. The individual took on to shadow the work of the Men's Development Worker and take on appropriate duties as and when required. The student placement also involved me providing weekly supervision and group work with the participant. This man has since gone on to register as a Cork Education Training Board tutor who co-facilitates with our Traveller men's groups. An important point to note is that he is also a Traveller so it is great to have him on board with Traveller development work in Cork. In 2015, I also agreed to take on and supervise a Community Employment worker on 19 hours per week as part of the Health Team. This involves ensuring the worker gets to shadow men's development work, youth work; carries out appropriate tasks and is provided with supervision on a bi-weekly basis. I also supported this placement to participate in the CAN Traveller Community Leadership Programme which he was

involved in and it was great to see that he completed the certificate programme. The graduation ceremony will take place for this in early 2016 and I am looking forward to celebrating this occasion with him and other Travellers locally who completed the programme. I feel that it is big deal to have Travellers complete such a programme which is recognised at Third Level Education status through University College Cork.

Accommodation

Traveller men and I have continued our involvement with the LTACC accommodation committee work in 2015 by attending the bi-monthly meetings. Traveller men have also regularly attended Councillors meetings held by TVG to discuss accommodation issues with elected Councillors and they have attended their local clinics to seek representations. I was also a part of the Cork delegation that attended the national LTACC conference in Dublin Castle in November 2015. At this conference it was decided by the Traveller groups across the country to withdraw from the conference and our involvement in local LTACC's until a series of national meetings were held to plan a way forward in light of the tragedies in Carrickmines.



Cena Culturally Appropriate Homes Involvement

Cena is a national Traveller housing agency which was formally launched at the ITM AGM in September 2015. I have participated in the national development meetings and was part of the working group that developed a growth plan for Cena until 2020. Two new developments have been committed to in Offaly and Galway. I have since been approached by Cena to be the national Chairperson for this agency which I gladly accepted and am looking forward to Chairing in 2016.

Literacy Classes

The north side literacy group completed 20 weeks of Fetac level 2 literacy modules in 2015. Participation was very good among the group with men stating that they enjoy the learning environment in a Traveller project with their Traveller peers. Portfolios for each student were compiled and sent to Fetac for accreditation.

There were 8 men from the Mahon area who participated in Fetac level 2 literacy classes on a weekly basis for 8 weeks. This was the first time the men participated in literacy programmes with the TVG and they really enjoyed the group. Hopefully I can build on this in 2016 with them.



Education work with Traveller men's groups in Cork Prison

In 2015, we met with a group of 9 Traveller men on a weekly basis. This work included building their skills around literacy, providing information sessions on mental health, horses, Traveller culture, holding an All Ireland Traveller Health Study (2010) table quiz, and sessions on the Traveller Links Programme.

Travellers in the Prison Initiative

I am part of a national committee that was set up to look at the recommendations of the report by the Irish Penal Reform Trust on Travellers in the Irish Prison System. Two posts have been funded through the St. Stevens Green Trust that works nationally to implement recommendations where possible.

Horses

The TVG, with the support of the Irish Horse Welfare Trust, secured funding to run a subsidised microchip and passport clinic in Cork city. Traveller horse owners would

avail of a reduced €20 fee to chip and passport their horses. This would make horse owners compliant with new regulations regarding horse ownership and make it easier for men to secure grazing lands for their horses. Since 2013, the TVG have been part of a working group, made up of a number of key stakeholders, to look at Horse initiatives with Traveller horse owners. We compiled a detailed proposal for a horse project with an education unit and sent this to the Department of Environment via Cork City Council seeking funding. We in TVG have visited the Tralee (Kerry), Dunsink, Fettercain and Cherry Orchard (Dublin) horse projects with Traveller men in Cork.



The Cork Horse Initiative Working Group contracted Lesley Jones, a well established equine professional in the East of Ireland, to compile research and a report into the needs of Traveller horse owners both men and youth in Cork in the summer of 2015. Part of this included; contact days meeting families and providing classes on equine education for Traveller youth. In 2016, we are hoping to secure funding to run education initiatives with Traveller male youth to create responsible and knowable horse owners and work on recommendations from Lesley Jones report.



Tom O'Sullivan (CE Scheme Community Development Worker)

I started in TVG in September 2014 on a CE scheme working as part of the health team and working with the men's development worker around men's groups. When I first started I did not know what to expect but as time went on I started to pick it up and also started to enjoy it. Before I came to TVG I was participating in the men's group on the south side off the city. So at the start of 2015, the CAN Leadership programme came up as something to support me in building my community development knowledge and skills. I took part in the programme and I really enjoy my time on the course. Through that time that I was on the course I was still helping the men's development worker with groups such as men's gym and swim and fitness plans and the reading and writing classes. I also then started a group of my own with the young men from Spring Lane halting site and we played soccer weekly. This course ran for six weeks in the Glen resource centre and some of the young men still play up there today.

I also attended training days throughout the year and I attend the horse project and initiative meeting. From the time I started in TVG I have really enjoyed it and hopefully I can go on to UCC and get a diploma in the future. I would like to become a men's development worker one day too. As 2016 upon us, I feel that TVG are giving me a bigger role and involving me more in groups outside of the ones running in the office. They are sending me to lots more training days and maybe that will give me more of a chance to start more groups by myself.

Caroline Vasseur- Barnard (Health Development Worker - Job Share)

My name is Caroline Barnard and I have worked as a generic health development worker with the TVG since 2007. My work involves supporting Traveller women, men, and youth's access to health, statutory and voluntary services in a wide range of areas such as health services, accommodation and related facilities, training, education and employment, social welfare entitlements, youth programs, and child and family support services. I have been representing the TVG on the city wide Traveller Youth workers' forum since 2012. Since 2013, I have also been involved in supporting the residents of the Spring Lane site through the strategy for better living conditions, in partnership with Cork Traveller Women's Network. In September 2015, the TVG board of management extended my role to provide a more sustained one on one and family advocacy support service in response to an increasing number of self-referrals and referrals to the project for specific support.

Case Work

Generic advocacy work has built up extensively throughout 2015. I have worked with 20 families and individuals on a wide variety of issues, ranging from accommodation

support and representation, advocacy work with child and family services, support with social welfare entitlements and appeals, access to legal aid, and advocacy work with families living on unauthorised halting sites or in homelessness. There has been a notable increase project-wide in the number of Travellers in homelessness seeking help in accessing accommodation.

Our aim for 2016 is ultimately to see more Travellers come to the TVG to access support when needed, however we sincerely hope that the numbers of Travellers affected by homelessness and substandard living conditions will diminish with the help of strong government policies and funding to address the general housing and Traveller accommodation crisis.

Spring Lane site community strategy

There have been some positive developments in 2015, in response to the urgent need for emergency temporary works to address the urgent health and safety concerns on Spring Lane: there is now an upgraded and safer supply of electricity on Spring Lane, and some attempts to begin stabilising the dangerous earthen cliffs that surround the site have been made. There have also been important delays, in particular with the formulation of long-term plans by Cork City Council to alleviate overcrowding on site and deliver additional units of Traveller specific accommodation for the 30 families living without basic services on the site periphery.

For the residents, the TVG and Cork Traveller Women's Network, this has meant that we have had to sustain our awareness campaign for better living conditions on Spring Lane and build support locally and nationally. We have worked closely with Respond!, the voluntary housing agency to support its needs assessment with the residents on site and have supported the plans that arose from this assessment as part of our campaign. We have also received invaluable support from UCC's law department, the Children's Rights Alliance, and the UCC Child Law Clinic who are working on a number of projects with us and have recently assigned a PHD Law student to support the human rights strand of the campaign.

In June 2015, as part of Traveller Pride Week we launched Spring Lane Site: 26 years of hardship, a documentary film produced by Frameworks featuring residents and key supporters of the campaign. We will continue to support the residents of Spring Lane with their accommodation campaign throughout 2016, with a particular focus on the impact of the living conditions on the health and the right of the 100 or more children who live on the site. We will also continue to liaise with Respond! and Cork City Council to ensure that the formulation of a plan for the regeneration and build of Spring Lane

is given the impetus it deserves, while working at building up public awareness of the situation and build support to put an end to the accommodation crisis on the site.



Spring Lane site residents at the polling station in Ballyvolane.

Traveller Men's Work

Throughout 2015 I continued to build on my previous work with men by supporting participation into a variety of projects including the Leadership programme, the Spring Lane site documentary film and individual support around accommodation needs. In the second half of 2015, I partnered with the TVG's drugs and alcohol support worker to co-facilitate a weekly group involving 10 men from Spring Lane through health activities and one on one meetings to explore needs and devise individual programs. This work is due to carry through 2016 and is currently being reviewed in the context of a wider local approach to supporting Traveller men's needs.

In 2016, I would like to dedicate **time** to **continue** some of the one on one work undertaken with Traveller men last year **and to focus on that** connection and rapport building **with individual people**. I am also looking forward to liaising more closely with other Traveller men's development **workers and services in an effort** to better coordinate our work and assess **the impact different initiatives and services have** on Traveller men's health and life opportunities.

Youth summer programs

As part of my involvement as TVG representative on the Traveller Youth Workers forum in Cork, I worked closely with the team of Foroige youth workers in the Glen to plan a 6 weeks summer program of activities for 10 to 18 yrs old children on Spring Lane. In addition to this program the TVG health team coordinated and facilitated 3 day trips with each group (10-12 yr, 13-15 yr and 16-18 yr) to Zippit high ropes park (Farran woods), Black water sports centre, and Supernova. This partnership with Foroige, the Glen also enabled us to refer a number of children from Spring Lane to weekly youth groups in Autumn and for individual support during school hours.

Women's Health

Due to my more intensive work with Traveller men's groups in the past 8 years, in 2015 I had plans to do more direct work with women and with the support of the TVG Health Team Coordinator, I set up a Couch to 5 K running program for women in Spring 2015, with three running sessions a week, using the beautiful Mardyke walk along the river Lee as our main route. Interest and participation were fantastic in the first few weeks, with close to 30 participants in the first 2 weeks of training. Unfortunately as the warmer summer months came, the motivation amongst the group dropped drastically, leaving a core group of 4 who continued to train from May to July and almost reached the target of running 30 minutes without stopping. Running is an area that interests me because it is accessible to most people, it is free and progress and health benefits are quickly gained when using a gentle and safe training program.

I hope that in future the TVG will encourage more Travellers to take up running as a free and easy fitness activity, and I would certainly like to be involved in any health and fitness initiatives that are set up with and for Traveller women.

Breda O'Donoghue (Women's Health Development Worker)

I work in TVG part time (14hrs) Job share. My role is to work with Traveller women around health and education development. My work includes advocacy work, group, and and one to one support to families around accommodation issues.

Farranree Traveller Women's Group

The Farranree women's group was set up on 2002 and it has 13 members. It has done various different health activities over the years such as health screenings, workshops on health education and accommodation. In 2015 one of the members of the group took on a lead role and is now facilitating the group on a weekly basis. The group has become very active around addressing the accommodation crisis in the city. In 2016 the group plans to become more involved with other issues such as health and accommodation.

In 2015 12 participants completed a 20 week Fetac level 3 course in Personal Effectiveness and Maths. The course is set to continue in 2016 so that the group can complete a full module.



Committee Work

I attend the Local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee (LTACC). This committee consists of Traveller representatives, local councillors, and city officials and it meets bi-monthly to discuss accommodation issues around the city.

I also attend the Higher Level Interagency Committee and this consists of representatives from health, education, youth, employment, and accommodation. It also has representatives from both the Traveller organisations in the city and it is chaired by a Government Minister. In 2015 the TVG held a number of meetings with local councillors and members of the Traveller community to try to address the accommodation issues across the city. These meetings give Travellers the opportunity to meet their local representatives in their area and become familiar with who will be representing them at a local level. I look forward to building on these relationships with local councillors in 2016.

Traveller Culture Awareness Training

I am also Traveller Culture Awareness trainer outside of my roles within TVG and in 2015 I delivered Traveller culture awareness to a number of agencies including mental health services, probation services, the education board and Cork City Council.



Traveller Community Health Workers (TCHW)

Jean O'Donoghue (15 Hours)

Biddy McDonagh (17.5 Hours)

Nora Cash (15 Hours)

Elizabeth McGrath (22.5 hours)

Jean O'Donoghue (TCHW)

Like the other TCHW's I have been working in TVG for over 5 years now. I have worked mainly on the north side of the city in Farranree, Fairhill, Churchfield and Knocknaheeny. Most of my work has included regular outreach to families in these areas and working with services to ensure these families' health needs are supported in the best way possible. Besides working closely with the other TCHW's on the various projects already mentioned throughout 2015, I facilitate a women's group of 9 women, aged between 18 to 50 years, in the Fairhill area. This group have continued to be active over the past year with much of the emphasis on exercise and keeping fit through walking activities, attending gym classes and health information sessions and participating in the annual Cork Women's Mini Marathon. Due to the ongoing commitment of this group I nominated 2 of the members to represent the TVG on the regional Southern Traveller Health Network for the coming 2 years. I intend to work closely with them to ensure that they feedback information from this regional group to the wider community in which they live in, as well as amongst staff within the TVG. I am pleased that this opportunity has come up for members of this women's group because it has given them a chance to learn more about health and to become stronger leaders for their community.

In 2016 I am planning to continue to build on the linkages that I have made with sexual health services. In the later part of 2015 we had the opportunity to facilitate some information sessions to a number of women's groups around the topic and a number of requests were made by the women to do more work in the area. I would also like to expand on my work in the Knocknaheeny and I hope that the TVG will become more involved with work to support the families living in this area through the new community centre available on St Anthony's Park group housing scheme. Lastly, I intend to continue to develop and create more health based initiatives with the other TCHW's and roll these out to the community.

Nora Cash (TCHW)

My name is Nora Cash and I work as a Traveller Community Health Worker in the TVG. My role is to link with Traveller families and link the families to services, as well as services to families. I provide one to one support and outreach support to the Traveller community. In 2015 I set up a parenting programme for Traveller parents in TVG which was attended by both Traveller men and women and facilitated by the YMCA through the "Are We There Yet" programme. It was an enjoyable course and feedback from those who took part was good.

I started a 6 week walking group with women across a number of womens groups and followed this by a 6 week teen swim and gym group for young Traveller girls from Spring Lane. I also organised obesity awareness sessions to the community and focused

on the topic of diabetes in the delivery of information in this regard. I also worked very closely with the other health workers to provide workshops to the community around cancer awareness and national screening programmes including Breast Check and Cervical Check.

Biddy McDonagh and myself delivered a workshop to the families in Meelagh Group Housing Scheme in Mahon around the All Ireland Traveller Health Study (2010), and Jean O'Donoghue and I did the same to a group of young girls in Fairhill, to explore what they felt has happened/ has not happened since the launch of the findings from this study. I also worked closely with Caroline Barnard in 2015 around youth trips over the summer break and attended a number of trips with her and youth from the site including a day trip to Black Water Valley Sports Centre.

I was also involved in putting together a workshop for Traveller Pride Week in TVG whereby I organised for Katie O'Donoghue to come to TVG and make traditional paper flowers and to show young Travellers the way that Travellers use to traditionally make flowers to sell.

I continued to work closely with the other health workers in 2015 and we took part in training with National Traveller Mabs in Cork around household budgeting. This led to us being asked to participate in a DVD for their organisation to promote ways that money advisors can support members of the Traveller community in their work. We got to attend the launch of this DVD in Dublin and speak at the event.

I look forward to working on rolling out the information I obtained from training with the Irish Asthma Society I trained in with other health workers in the region this year in 2016. I am also hoping to work closely with Census Enumerators in the 2016 Census to ensure that Travellers are included.

Elizabeth McGrath (TCHW)

My name is Elizabeth McGrath and I work as a Traveller Community Health Worker in TVG. I have been working here for five years. I work as part of a team of four, we each work with families in different areas of the city, I work with Traveller families in the south side such as Straight Road halting site, Hazel Wood Grove group housing estate, Togher, Ballyphehane, Wilton, Douglas and Rochestown. My work involves regular outreach to these families to identify their health needs and work out ways to support them as a health worker. I also link with services regularly to act as a link between Travellers and services, to provide information to Travellers and encourage them to gain access to health services.

Togher Women's Group

I have continued to run the Togher women's group with the last five years. This group consists of ten women from Togher, Wilton, Douglas, Hazel Wood Grove and

Ballyphehane. This group meets weekly for two hours per evening and I see this group as a group of women who like to get together weekly to have time to themselves, to socialise with each other and who are also interested in their health and well-being. Quarterly within this group we have a "planning session" where we decide as a group what we will do for the next coming months. I think this works well because it gives the women an opportunity to have some input into the group and it gives me time to plan ahead for the group. As a health worker, I bring in health professionals monthly to the group as part of their well-being. Some work the group has been involved this year includes:

- Nutrition and making healthy food choices (group prepared and cooked homemade chicken nuggets) also went through food pyramid and healthy food discussion.
- Four weeks of aromatherapy home remedies and relaxation sessions. I got in a tutor called Debbie Moriarty who is qualified in aromatherapy to come to the group to teach them how to prepare home remedies from aromatherapy oils, and also natural face creams like cleansers and moisturisers. I met with Debbie a few times to discuss what it was we were looking for and put a plan in place for the four weeks, we also went to purchase the oils together. The women really enjoyed this and found it very beneficial as we also learned the natural oils that were suitable for asthma, eczema and common colds and flues. As part of the four weeks Debbie also showed the women some relaxation and mindfulness techniques.
- We also did a project for 6 weeks around domestic violence, with Mags O Sullivan from the Cork Traveller Women's Network where we, as a group, wanted to highlight the issue. We invited a member of the STHN to tell us about their book "Rings of hope" that they launched last year; why they put the book together and how they went about it. We also invited someone from the sexual violence centre to meet the group and introduce their work and where they are based. Lastly, we met as a group to discuss how we could further work on this topic and we contacted Leanne McDonagh to support us with this over 6 weeks. She was very helpful and supportive to the group. As part of the project we decided we would each design a "Get Away Bag" where we had a discussion about what a person who was a victim of domestic violence might need to get away and what their emergency essentials would be. Leanne helped us with the design and layout of the bags. She suggested that we paste pictures of the essentials on the front of canvas bags and that we all take a photo of ourselves holding words of encouragement and also pasted them onto the bags. The bags turned out great and we hope to display our work to the community this year.



Other work carried out by the group was walking, flower arranging, health evening i.e. a cardio vascular nurse, Irish Cancer society, Nutritionist.



Other Areas of Work

- I have continued to support other TCHWs in their work such as supporting Nora with a parenting course in TVG. When Nora said she was running a parenting course, I asked if I could sit in because I was planning an obesity workshop for the community and I wanted some ideas from these young parents of what kind of information they were looking for. Myself and Nora gathered information around obesity, healthy food choices, sugar contents in soft drinks and foods etc. We also borrowed a large food pyramid and its contents from Health promotion for this workshop.
- Bidy ran a six week walking group in Meelagh, Mahon and as I did a walking leadership course the year before she asked if I could support her with this and lead the group.
- I continue to support families on the Straight Road halting site. I do regular outreach to the site and keep in contact with the residents in supporting them around residents meetings and local accommodation meetings. I also support

them with health mornings where health checks and health information are provided such as breast check, cervical checks, diabetes, weight management etc.

- I also took part in a 3 step short video clip with National Traveller Mabs where we worked with our local Mabs gathering information of their service, and used their premises to shoot the clip, it was about how we work with Mabs in sharing information and advice on household budgeting within the community.
- It came to my attention that young Traveller children in the Fairhill area came across a bag of unused needles in their local area. I was speaking to some parents who had concerns about this and I arranged to meet with the local drugs and alcohol project to do a workshop with the young kids. After meeting with the drugs worker I explained that although the kids were young it was important to make them aware and that they were informed of what to do in a similar situation. They were very supportive and we set a date and time for the workshop; we also decided that we would make it a fun experience and not frighten them too much. The session started with some general information, and then they did an exercise where they had to be detectives and find the drugs waste in pictures and the session ended with the kids doing a role play of what to do if they came across anything again. I found this very good because the kids had to make up the role play themselves of which they did a great job.



Events and Activities

- Took part in celebrating and organising events for Traveller Pride week in work.
- I worked with the other TCHWs to promote the cork horse project where we invited traveller children from schools to attend an information session.
- Flower arranging
- Health morning Meelagh, Togher and Straight rd.

- Coffee morning for homeless services TVG.

Training

- Acupuncture training - I did a acupuncture course that ran in TVG, where I was certified, shortly after the training I got insured I'm planning on holding a drop in acupuncture service to the community in TVG for 6 weeks.
- Asthma training - I took part in asthma training with local and regional TCHWs. All the health workers then delivered a workshop on Asthma to TVG staff and we continue to bring this awareness to the community.

I enjoy my work as a Traveller Community Health Worker; I enjoy working with the community and seeing new ideas developing within the community. I can also see some changes within the community around them making healthier choices. I will continue to provide health care information to the community and support and promote our culture, and to help Travellers gain access to health services.

7. Drugs and Alcohol

Ann Jordan (Drugs and Alcohol Support Worker)

Joan Nolan (Drugs and Alcohol Family Support Worker)

The TVG Traveller Support Project on Drugs and Alcohol is funded by the HSE Local Drugs Task Force. The TVG has 2 part-time Project Workers, Ann Jordan and Joan Nolan. Ann does 1-1 addiction work and Joan does 1-1 family support. The central vision of the project is that we:

"Offer an accessible and visible service to the Cork Traveller Community, that is both confidential and culturally appropriate".

We had 5 Goals in our work plan in 2015. The following information describes our work in 2015, under these 5 goals.

Goal 1: To Identify & target client group:

A) We engaged in **outreach work to community members** across the city on an ongoing basis.

B) We also engaged in **service outreach** to identify and target client group and increase referral.

Goal 2: To be an individual support to Travellers dealing with drug & Alcohol related issues:

In the 1-1 addiction work, that Ann Jordan does, she uses keyworking, care planning and case management. When people start doing 1-1 work with Ann, they get information about confidentiality and about what is involved in recovery. The project uses the term 'client' or 'service users' for every person who uses the project. On starting 1-1 work, forms have to be filled out, with some personal questions, so that a clear picture develops of what is happening in the person's life. Care plans are developed to help the client reduce the harm they are doing to themselves, and to others. Clients get help filling out the forms (initial assessments, and HRB forms) and they start to learn about their addiction, and how to challenge it.

Ann met 23 people for 1-1 work in 2015. Each person, Ann meets, has their own file, and case notes are written up for each client. Ann attends case management monthly so she can be best informed on how to work through the care plans. This support work also involves liaising with numerous services and agencies to support the client work.

Goal 3: To be a Support to Concerned Persons dealing with drug & alcohol related issues:

Joan Nolan is the Family Support worker. Joan uses keyworking, care planning and case management with her clients. Joan also uses the 5 Step Method to further support the family members. Clients get information about confidentiality and what family support can mean. 17 people were referred to the family support project in 2015 and 11 engaged in family support work. 5 clients completed the 5 Step Method programme, and 5 people engaged in other activities organised by the project. Needs assessments were completed with 9 clients and care plans were then developed with these clients. As with the 1-1 addiction work, the family members also get case files and case notes are completed for each person. Joan attends case management on a monthly basis and liaises with other services when necessary.

Goal 4: To engage in Drug and Alcohol Education & Prevention work with Travellers

This project has been developing a Service User Plan with the Local Drugs Task Force. Joan and Ann participated in Traveller information events such as Men's Health night, Health evenings and met with Traveller groups to raise awareness of the project and build relationships across the community.

Goal 5: To increase Traveller participation in D&A services

To support clients and /or their engagement in other Drug & Alcohol services Ann linked with the following services/ agencies:

- CLDATF : The Glen, Gurranabraher, Glanmire, Post Release
- Accommodation : Simon Community (Millhouse, Addiction and Housing Team, Shelter staff), St Vincent de Paul, Wellsprings
- Tier 4 : CuanMhuireBruree and Farnanes, Coolmine, Tabor (Renewal and Tabor Lodge)
- Tier 3 Heron House, Arbour House
- Prison supports: Cork Alliance, Cork Prison, Limerick Prison, Arbour Hill (including probation, and mental health), Cork Probation Service, Churchfield community trust
- Legal : solicitors,
- Traveller organisations/ networks : STHN, CTWN, TVG, WCTC, KTDP, ITM, Pavee Point, Exchange House, Tipperary Traveller Project, Healthy Minds

To support clients and/ or the development of the family support work Joan linked with:

- TVG, STHN, Pavee Point, CTWN, DAISH, Healthy Minds
- Arbour House and Heron House

- CLDATF Development Worker, CBDI - Hillgrove, Ballincollig, Mahon, Glen and YWIC
- TULSA, Springboard, Barnardos, Le Cheile, Pieta House,
- HSE Traveller Mental Health Project, Edel House, MnaFeasa,
- An Garda Siochanna,
- Cork City Partnership- Community Outreach Drugs Workers
- National Family Support Network & local family support groups
- CCC-Traveller Engagement Officer.

This project organised two Mindfulness Training courses during 2015 and we used Art Therapy in both parts of the project with clients. Ann worked alongside Caroline Vasseur, a TVG Health Development worker to implement a Men's Programme. 17 Sessions were held and 10 men engaged.

During 2015 both Joan and Ann completed training to strengthen their work. Joan did training in the Strengthening Families Programme, Case Management and Service User Involvement Training. Ann did training in SAOR and Seeking Safety. Ann is continuing her training in addiction counselling.

As part of the TVG staff team, the Drugs Project team participated in staff meetings & health team meetings and in-house supervision. They attended the Traveller Drug Network meetings in Pavee Point. They contributed to the TVG policy review meetings. They attended the local city Councillors meetings. Joan and Ann developed a volunteer position and recruited a volunteer. They attended the TVG 21st celebration and Traveller Pride Week 2015.

They participated in various events organised by STHN, CTWN and other campaign events. They organised funding an event for CDAM. They contributed to policy submissions (Joint Policing Committee Report, Report to TYNF) and to student research.

Rachel Coffey (Volunteer with the TVG Drugs and Alcohol Project)

I have been doing volunteer work here at the TVG since January 2016. I am involved in the Drugs and Alcohol Project. I find the work really interesting and I am gaining a lot of experience from doing this position. What I have been doing mainly is building on the mindfulness session that we hold each week in TVG. I have done the TCAT training, acupuncture training and have completed the MBRS mindfulness course. I have also been shadowing meetings and attending several events including Pavee Point networks, voting information and treatment centre visits. I have also organised a trip to an event

in Dublin and I did a preparation morning with the group that went. I am hoping to do more training and attend more events in the future.

Overall, I find the project a pleasure to be part of and the staff are all so nice. I have learnt so much in the short period of time here and I really appreciate all the experience I have gained. The work the project does is amazing within the community and the work around supporting ethnicity for Travellers is so powerful.

8. Acknowledgments

TVG would like to acknowledge the support we get from:

- Health Services Executive South particularly through the Traveller Health Unit and North Lee Community Work Department
- Department of Social, Community and Family Affairs
- Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform through EOCP funding
- Cork Local Drugs Task Force
- Cork City Council
- Cork City partnership
- Cork City ETB
- Pobal
- University College Cork
- Volunteers and Student Placements

We would also like to acknowledge the continued support from the Irish Traveller Movement and Pavee Point throughout the year.