



EXCHANGE HOUSE
National Travellers Service



Annual Review 2013

Chairperson's Report



On behalf of Exchange House National Traveller Service it gives me great pleasure to present our 2013 report.

2013 proved to be another outstanding year for Exchange House National Traveller Service.

The national economic environment continues to prove challenging for many and this is reflected in an increase in demand for our services; whether it be from families struggling with homelessness, young men and women with few employment opportunities or young people needing extra supports in their school education.

Exchange House endeavours to meet these extra requests with the high standards that people have come to expect.

This report will give you a taste of all the achievements the management and staff of Exchange House have accomplished in 2013.

I'd like to take this opportunity to thank those same managers and staff for their tireless dedication to Exchange House and the people we serve.

I'd also like to thank all our funders without whom such vital services would not exist.

Carmel Terry

Chairperson

Family Support Service

Family Support

The family Support Service deliver front-line services to some of the most marginalised Traveller clients in Dublin. The service is the largest for Travellers in the country. The aim of the service is to offer wide-ranging holistic approaches to Travellers who are at risk/in a crisis and in need of help so as to empower them to make decisions and act independently. The Family Support Team runs a Duty/Drop in Service which is open daily (Monday to Friday). The cases that come through are attended to within 48 hours. The family support service does not have a waiting list.

Home Visits / Outreach

Family support staff are rostered both on and off-site to meet client needs. Off-site visits encompass private rented accommodation, council accommodation, halting sites (official and unofficial), hostels, transitional accommodation, homeless agency accommodation, hospitals, schools, crèches, HSE Social Work Offices, courts, Garda stations, local authority offices, Drug Treatment Centres, social welfare offices, residential centres, refuges or any other venue that the client chooses and deems safe to meet.

Domestic Violence Service

Exchange House Domestic Violence Response for children and young people continues to be at the forefront. The team responds to Domestic Violence through counselling, practical and emotional support, group work with women, young people and men. We also provide a court accompaniment

service to clients. Exchange House National Traveller Service will be hosting a Domestic Violence Conference in Dublin, Wood Quay, Dublin City Council in May 2014.

Addiction Service

The Addiction Service continues to address substance misuse in line with the National Drug Strategy. The service aims to support Travellers with addictions and target those who are at risk of becoming involved in substance misuse, applying new knowledge to help improve the lives of those affected by addiction. The Addiction Counsellors take a multi-disciplinary approach and work closely with the social workers, family support workers, education and youth departments, in an effort to help address immediate and long term needs of services users. The service is offered on an outreach and on an in-house basis.

The counsellors work closely with probation, prison, statutory services, local community and voluntary services. The addiction counsellors work from a bio-psycho-social perspective using care and case management protocols. Clients are regularly referred to other services for treatments such as methadone maintenance, detoxification, residential treatment, needle exchange, primary healthcare treatment, sexual health treatment, mental health support, welfare support, or other alternative treatments. In cases where clients are stable and ready to pursue education or gain access to the workforce they are referred to the Community Employment Scheme or the Local Training Initiative in the Education Department at Exchange House. Where clients are not at an appropriate stage of stability they are referred to addiction specific education or stabilization programmes to provide a structure for recovery. They continue to receive support throughout this process.

The addiction counsellors visit prisons regularly. Interagency work and case management with the Prison Service has ensured that our clients receive the best aftercare programmes as possible such as

access to methadone clinics in the relevant areas, assisting with accommodation for the men and women upon release, support after release, access to the Local Training Initiative at Exchange House, access to CE schemes, access to Community Addiction Programmes and family support. In order to maintain our client base within the prisons we visit weekly so we can provide the required level of support.

Alcoholics Anonymous (AA)

AA meetings take place every Monday at 6pm in Exchange House and are open to Travellers and non-Travellers experiencing Alcohol addiction.

Travelling to Wellbeing

The Travelling to Well Being was formally launched in June 2013 and was hosted by Exchange House. Over 70 people were at the launch, including individual Travellers and importantly more than 20 young men from the Traveller community. There were also representatives from Traveller services, mental health services, community organisations, housing, homeless, addiction, churches, HSE, and City and County Councils. Speakers at the launch included Anne Corcoran Samaritans; Colette Linsky Console; Dr. Marina Bowe Genio; Fr Peter McVerry, Peter McVerry Trust & Heydi Foster CEO Exchange House. The staff of the T2WB service also spoke outlining the purpose of the service, provided information on the ethos and works of the service

and ended by giving their contact details.

We are identifying the factors which we hope will contribute to the sustainability of this work. The recovery framework and approach of the Travelling to Wellbeing project works with the

individual within their cultural, community and societal context valuing their self-knowledge, experience, awareness and skills. This is done alongside identifying the additional resources and tools which the person needs to build resilience and wellbeing. Secondly, the work we do with other services is to inform, educate and support them in expanding their knowledge and capacity to respond adequately and appropriately to the needs of the Traveller community is an important sustainability factor. We are conscious that this work needs to be translated into accountable and transparent referral pathways to services.

The Travelling to Wellbeing Service continues to provide staffing support to the NTSAP.



National Traveller Suicide Awareness Project

In 2013 NTSAP filled the two vacant positions. Both staff members are fully integrated into the Family Support Service Department in Exchange House. The NTSAP website (www.travellersuicide.ie) went live on the 26th of August. The website informs the users of important information and also of the services that are available. There is a memorial

Accessing services

The Family Support Service continues to address the following issues with clients:

| Description | 2012 | 2013 | % +/- |
|---|-------|-------|-------|
| Duty calls / drop-in service | 711 | 751 | +6% |
| Prison visitations | 335 | 353 | -5% |
| Court accompaniment | 126 | 132 | -5% |
| Accommodation issues | 1,003 | 1,342 | +34% |
| Domestic Violence intervention & prevention | 787 | 823 | +5% |
| Addiction counselling & assistance | 964 | 953 | -1% |
| Child protection | 463 | 489 | +6% |
| Children in the care of the HSE | 89 | 103 | +16% |
| Children at risk of going into care | 124 | 144 | +16% |
| Suicidal ideation | 411 | 442 | +8% |
| Self-harm intervention & prevention | 282 | 295 | +5% |
| Physical health assistance | 661 | 691 | +5% |
| Mental health assistance | 766 | 831 | +8% |
| Suicide deaths | 0 | 7 | - |
| Deaths | 3 | 1 | -67% |
| Institutional abuse | 26 | 30 | +15% |
| Auricular Acupuncture | 0 | 124 | |
| Prison Acupuncture | 0 | 32 | -25% |

page, managed by EH, where friends and family can post names of loved ones who have died by suicide. This page will be useful to record data on suicides happening in the community. The NTSAP has committed to holding one mass a year in



memory of the dead. Suicide and Positive Mental Health training was piloted with 12 young men in EH. Training was focused on self-harm and suicide awareness. The modules covered both mental health and suicide topics. Talks from Pieta House and Console were well received.

The NTSAP provided funding support for the play by Michael Collins 'Magpie on the Pylon' in collaboration with the Primary Healthcare Project for Travellers in Longford. NTSAP attended the performance in September and partook in the Q&A discussion with the audience after the play. The key areas the NTSAP will focus on until December is improving and building relationships with Traveller services nationwide.

Mountjoy Medical and Training Unit.

Every Friday the team facilitates a clinic at the Dochas for Traveller women. They are offered practical and/ or emotional support with issues arising within and outside of the prison. The team works with the Probation Officers to develop pre-release plans for clients who will need a lot of support when they leave prison.

Some of the clients we work with have been given TR or did not receive a prison sentence on condition they link with Exchange House. The Family Support Team has facilitated the Domestic Violence group work with women as well as Auricular Acupuncture at the Dochas.

Student Placements

The service facilitated one international student in 2013.

Prison Service

Exchange House offers outreach work to Mountjoy, Wheatfield, St Patrick's, Cloverhill, Castlerea and Portlaoise Prisons. There is a good collaboration between Exchange House and the Medical and Training Unit within Mountjoy prison. A large number of referrals are received from the Probation and Irish Prison Services to address the clients' needs. A 12 Step Programme was facilitated in

Youth Service

Highlights

- ♥ Balloon Launch: This was part of an 8 week programme which was spent highlighting the dangers of Cyber Bullying and texting whilst driving
- ♥ Traveller Pride Week: a group in Ballymun were asked to come up with an idea to compliment a handmade paper wedding dress. They chose to do a “mock wedding cake” which was then displayed in a shop window for Traveller Pride Week in Ballymun Shopping Centre.
- ♥ Cross Boarder Diversity Programme: this programme was ran with young men and guards from either side of the border. This involved regular matches that promoted diversity.
- ♥ Mental Health, Suicide and Drug Awareness Programme: this was the first time young men and fathers had actively volunteered to take part in a programme around these issues. Due to success we hope to run this on all sites.
- ♥ Glendalough Summer Specialised Residential: 15 young people were targeted and brought on a residential trip to Wicklow.

Stay-in-School Programme

The Stay-In-Schools Programme works with young people, their parents and their schools to promote attendance and progression through the education system. The Youth Service works directly with the young person, liaising with schools to check attendance figures and maintains contact with parents to “check in” and offer support. Last year



the Youth Service worked with 13 schools including St Joseph’s, Ballymun, St John’s College, Ballyfermot and St. Dominic’s, Ballyfermot. Statistics have shown attendance has risen to 90% and all of the young people who were due to sit state exams completed them. As a part of the Stay in Schools Programme we nominated our young people who successfully completed their exams for the Exchange House National Educational Achievement Award every October.

AfterSchool Programmes

The After Schools programmes based in St. Oliver’s Park, Clondalkin and Labre Park, Ballyfermot continues to run on a daily basis offering essential support to over 50 young people ages 4-16. They offer homework assistance, literacy support and I.T. skills. Personal development is achieved by programmes such as healthy eating programmes, music and creative arts. The co-ordinators also link in with the local schools and acts as liaison for parents and teachers.

Education Away Programme

The Educational Away Programme aims to develop a positive and proactive working relationship with the young people who are selected to take part in these programmes. The selection process to identify the young people who take part in these programmes is done in consultation with Youth Workers, parents, Social Workers, teachers and other relevant agencies who work with young people. The activities such as outdoor adventure, leadership training and team building are designed to encourage and support the young person in their personal development through the Critical Social Education Model. These programmes are specifically designed to suit the target group. We were not able to offer an “away trip” this year however residential to Wicklow and camping trips in the Curragh were organised due to low funding.

Summer 2013

Our Summer Programmes run for 6 weeks in July and August. Young people from all the sites we work with in the previous year are offered places on the programmes. The programmes provide fun and educational visits to such places as the exciting Dublinia, National Museum of Ireland, Dublin Castle, The Viking Splash Tour, Clara Lara Fun Park, The Botanic Gardens, The Rock of Dunmase Causey Farm, Leinster House and Glasnevin cemetery.

In addition to our summer programmes, this year incorporated a four day residential trip with 11 young people to Glendalough. Activities here included hillwalking, gold hunting, creative arts, ghost stories and night walks.

The projects were a huge success and thoroughly enjoyed by everyone.

Comhairle na nÓg

Another ongoing and very positive output is the participation of our young people in Comhairle na nÓg. This is done on a voluntary basis and the young people attend meetings and training every two weeks. These meetings are held in Dublin City Hall council chambers. Comhairle na nÓg gives young people a voice and we feel this is vital in the lives of our young people. Not only does it benefit them but it benefits their schools and communities. In 2013 2 young people attended Dail na nOg and were elected to their local Comhairle.

National Quality Standards Framework for Youth Work

The Youth Service became involved in the National Quality Standards Framework for Youth Work (NQS) which has been implemented by the Office for the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs. The aim of the NQS is to establish standards in the practice and provision of youth work in Ireland. The NQS has given the youth service a chance to review, reflect and assess all the programmes we provide. It also gave us a chance to review our work on a more formal basis through one to one supervision.

Face-to-face stats

Below are the numbers of face-to-face contacts the youth service have made in 2012 & 2013

| | | |
|-------------------------------|---------|--------------|
| 2012 (3,561) | Jan-Apr | 1,356 |
| | May-Jun | 738 |
| | Jul-Aug | 363 |
| | Sep-Dec | 1,104 |
| 2013 (4,131) | Jan-Apr | 1,546 |
| | May-Jun | 929 |
| | Jul-Aug | 526 |
| | Sep-Dec | 1,127 |
| Total | | 7,689 |



Education Service

Service Overview

The Education Department operates as a FETAC accredited centre of education and training for members of the Traveller community. The ethos of the service is to promote the value of formal education and provide a service of quality. People come with diverse educational needs to avail of our service. We provide opportunities for adults in basic education, IT training and accessing further education and employment. We are working with increasing numbers of people, who are returning to education to improve their literacy skills. Some learners want to be more involved in their children's education, some for their own personal enrichment and are seeking employment & further education. We also worked with people who wish to access further education or training. We offer guidance and support to any member of the Traveller community who is seeking advice in relation to education. We are supported in this department by the City of Dublin Educational Training Board (CDETB), who provides us with tutor hours.

SOLAS Local Training Initiative

The Local Training Initiative (LTI) has both male and female learners. All are engaged in Education programmes. The programme provides a safe learning environment for many people who have previously had negative experiences of formal education; some, indeed, have had no experience of formal education. The success of the course is reflected by educational achievements attained by the learners. The LTI learners have gained FETAC certification in a range of subjects including Communications, Maths, Computers/IT, Food & Nutrition, Manual Handling and First Aid. The

majority of the learners go on to further education and training. The LTI programme provides learners with educational opportunities they previously missed out on. The programme ranges from pre-literate to Level 4.

| Education Service Learners | |
|-----------------------------------|-----------|
| CE | 24 |
| LTI | 15 |
| Adult Basic Education | 14 |
| Total Individuals | 53 |

Department of Social Protection Community Employment Scheme

There are two distinct strands that the Community Employment Scheme offers to the learners. Firstly, the learners on the project have, many for the first time, the opportunity to access formal education. They engage in literacy programmes, training and work experience. They have achieved FETAC certification in many subjects including Communications, Maths, Art & Design, Computers/IT, Personal Effectiveness, First Aid, Food & Nutrition and Work Experience. The second strand

focuses on work experience. This provides support to the core staff of Exchange House in delivering front line services to the community in the areas of Family Support (including accommodation, domestic violence and addiction), Youth Service and Education services. People on work experience in Education Service also provide literacy support to their lower skilled peers.

Adult Basic Education Service

We provide a one-to-one literacy service for people who are not engaged in programmes and need to develop their skills in the areas of reading, writing, spelling and numeracy. We take referrals and requests for literacy from individuals and from external services such as other Traveller organisations, homeless agencies, the Irish Prison & Probation Services, and other educational organisations. Each of the learners who we work with on a one to one basis needs a lot of support. We design individual learning plans for them based on their needs and their strengths. This has been found to encourage people and provide them with a strong foundation for moving forwards with personal or academic goals.

Intercultural Education

We also offer intercultural education and information on the Traveller community in general and the issues they experience, to various interested groups and service providers. This has proven to be a positive learning experience for the groups who have received the information training.

Information Service & Third Level Access

The Education Service provided an information service nationally to individuals and organisations who wish to identify progression routes to further education and employment. This information & support service will facilitate school leavers and mature students.

The Exchange House National Educational Achievement

Exchange House National Educational Achievement Award has been presented to over 500 people since it began in 2008. The award is presented to members of the Traveller community who had completed the Junior Certificate, G.C.S.E.s, the Leaving Certificate, A-Levels or a Third Level course. This is a national event which is held annually. The award acknowledges the achievement of the recipients highlights role models from the Traveller community in the area of formal education and is proactive in acknowledging the benefits that education brings to the lives of people, the community and society in general.

| The Exchange House National Educational Achievement Award | |
|---|-----------|
| | 2013 |
| Junior Cert / GCSEs | 34 |
| Leaving Cert / A-Levels | 36 |
| 3rd Level | 5 |
| Totals | 75 |

Student Placement

The Education Service provides a work placement for those studying education within the department. Students offer their literacy support to learners on a one to one basis. This provides one to one literacy support to people who have never had the opportunity to access formal education and who left school at an early age. Students come from a range of institutions including Champlain College and Marino Institute of Technology. The Education Service has also had students from across the globe including Slovakia and the United States of America in 2012 and 2013. We have 10 student placements in 2013



Exchange House Learners Training and Certification

| | FETAC Level | LTI 2013 | CE 2013 |
|--------------------------------|--------------------|-----------------|----------------|
| Mathematics | 3 | 10 | 0 |
| Communications | 3 | 13 | 3 |
| Communications | 4 | 0 | 8 |
| Security Guarding | 4 | 18 | 18 |
| Food & Nutrition | 3 | 10 | 3 |
| Art & Design | 3 | 12 | 0 |
| Craft & Textiles | 3 | 0 | 6 |
| Personal Effectiveness | 3 | 11 | 0 |
| Word Processing | 4 | 0 | 19 |
| Information Technology | 3 | 12 | 3 |
| Train the Trainer | 6 | 2 | 8 |
| HACCP & Catering | 4 | 0 | 2 |
| HACCP & Catering | 5 | 0 | 2 |
| Caring for the Elderly | 5 | 0 | 1 |
| Job Seeking & Interview Skills | n/a | 0 | 24 |
| Intensive Literacy Support | n/a | 2 | 0 |
| Manual Handling | n/a | 0 | 16 |
| NALA Training | n/a | 3 | 0 |
| Totals | | 93 | 113 |

European Union Projects

Exchange House National Travellers Service partnered with 14 different organisations from 9 different countries - Austria, Germany, Greece, Italy, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia, Spain and Turkey and worked on 5 distinct projects.

Sunia Geel

In 2013 the Exchange House National Traveller Service lead project *Sunia Geel* was completed. The project aimed to prevent and reduce the extent and impact of domestic violence in the Traveller community in Ireland. *Sunia Geel* is Cant (the indigenous language of Irish Travellers) for 'take care of yourself'.



Sunia Geel was part of an EU funded project, Daphne III, which

addresses the experience of domestic violence in ethnic minority groups across Europe. Exchange House was the lead partner in the *Sunia Geel* Daphne III Domestic Violence Project with partners from Germany, Austria, Romania and Greece. The prevalence of domestic violence within minority groups and barriers to resolving it was *Sunia Geel's* focus. The project responded to the call to contribute towards the protection of women and children against all forms of violence. The project's goal was to achieve a strategic framework for developing protective environments that are transferable between different cultural, geographic and national contexts. Addressing domestic violence within minority groups provides the key unifying theme of the project. This provided a rich source of commonality of issues and approaches across the project partners. However, beyond such similarities it was expected that there would be differences and diversity that stimulates questioning, learning and innovation. A key benefit of this transnational project was to frame innovative solutions based upon experience of working with minority groups and in a range of cultural contexts.

Part of the project involved facilitating group work, information sharing seminars and training.

Sunia Geel 2

Exchange House were fortunate to be awarded another round of funding for a continuation of the *Sunia Geel Project* with *Sunia Geel 2*!

This project, running from Mar 2013 to Feb 2015, is a continuation of the work completed in *Sunia Geel* with added focuses.

Sunia Geel derives from the Irish Traveller language, Cant. It translates "take care of yourself", and is viewed as an apt name for what *Sunia Geel 2* aims to achieve: families being valued and supported.

The goal of this project is to provide a framework to reduce violence against women and children of marginalised ethnic communities and ensure that their needs for safety and support are met.

Target groups include:

- Sinti and Roma in Romania and Italy;
- Muslim migrants in Germany, Austria, Italy and Romania;
- And Travellers in Ireland

The Project will provide an increased understanding of the needs of service users, thus creating the possibility of an improved response. It is critical

that women are empowered to make informed and safe choices for themselves and their



SUNIA GEEL 2

children. The incidence of domestic violence and intra-family violence will be reduced by promoting a zero tolerance approach within marginalised communities and amongst those delivering social services to ethnic minorities.

The main objectives of the project are:

1. To develop a deeper more evidenced based understanding of the needs of service users



- from minority groups in relation to professional service provision;
2. To empower women and children by increasing their skills base to help them make informed choices for a better future;
 3. To build the capacity of marginalised communities and service providers to initiate and promote change within their own environments that will enable them to address the issue of domestic violence and uphold the rights of women and children;

To respond to women and children experiencing domestic violence by providing emotional and practical support in a culturally appropriate way.

Compass

Collaboration on Modern(ising) Policies And Systematic Strategies in Life Long Learning

Exchange House National Travellers Service was selected as the Irish organisation to work in partnership with five other organisations across

Europe on **Compass**, a Leonardo de Vinci Education and Culture EU project.

COMPASS

Pathways to career management skills

Exchange House, as part of The Compass project worked with disadvantaged Traveller youth, national training agencies, educational institutes, employers organisations and career guidance experts to design and implement an innovative training programme which will create educational and employment options for the youth involved.

Exchange House researched and will soon publish a report on the current situation for Traveller youths who want to enter further education or the labour market as part of the first stage of Compass.

Partnership countries for Compass are Austria, Germany, Greece, Slovakia and Turkey.

The Compass project finished in 2013

Tactics

In October 2011 Verein Multikulturell started the international project "TACTICS – Lifelong Games" together with partner organisations from Germany, Ireland, Italy, Lithuania, Spain and Turkey. The project is under the EU's Education and Culture Lifelong Learning Programme GRUNDTVIG. 342 proposals were submitted for this programme and TACTICS was successful in its application. The programme focuses on games, remembered from their

childhood, by elderly people, especially migrants and members of



TACTICS
lifelong games

ethnic minorities. This group of people will share their knowledge for the collection of a gamebox for seniors. After national and cultural adaptations, the games will be tested in all partner countries – with the help of the target group.

Due to demographic changes, 40 percent of all European citizens are now 55 years of age and older. In 2020, it is expected that about 60 percent of all European citizens will be 55 years and older. Thanks to medical progress, most seniors enjoy a longer, healthy and active life. But a considerable number of people in this age group are faced with various illnesses and disabilities. Most of them are cared for at home, with the majority being cared for by a family member or other volunteers who themselves are 50 years and older themselves.

These Carers who look after their relatives need support to handle the daily challenges they face, such as space for their own recreation and free time to manage their own necessary duties. Games support intergenerational learning, especially in the family circle, and make visits from friends and volunteers much more enjoyable and offer the necessary space for the Carers – TACTICS

offers enjoyable solutions for the care of the elderly in Europe.

In addition, by offering games with low language requirements, TACTICS helps elderly people to establish new contacts, and for the family this means an additional stimulus for intergenerational communication. In care facilities, communication is enhanced between the different cultures, the residents and the visiting volunteers and the danger of social isolation is reduced.

The culture of game playing in Europe functions as a low-threshold access to Life-Long-Learning. Skills, both existing and those acquired informally, are further developed by game playing.

Collecting those games remembered from childhood, within various cultures and their cultural background, TACTICS contributes to the preservation and development of an historic treasure from different parts of Europe.

The training of Carers, within the frame of TACTICS, empowers them care for their elderly ward for a longer period of time by reducing the risk of burnout.

The partners will have a total of three meetings together throughout the project's life span where they will plan, share information, design training, and evaluate the progress of the work.

As partner 6, Exchange House are working on the evaluation section of the project and will gather feedback from all of the other partners. This feedback shows partners what aspects of the project are going well and what areas may need improvement in order for the project to be a success. The feedback is presented in the form of a report and provided to all partners after each meeting.

Tandem Now

The aim of *Tandem Now* is to provide a mentorship programme for young people, providing them with

training,
support,
information,
and guidance
on their
chosen
career path.

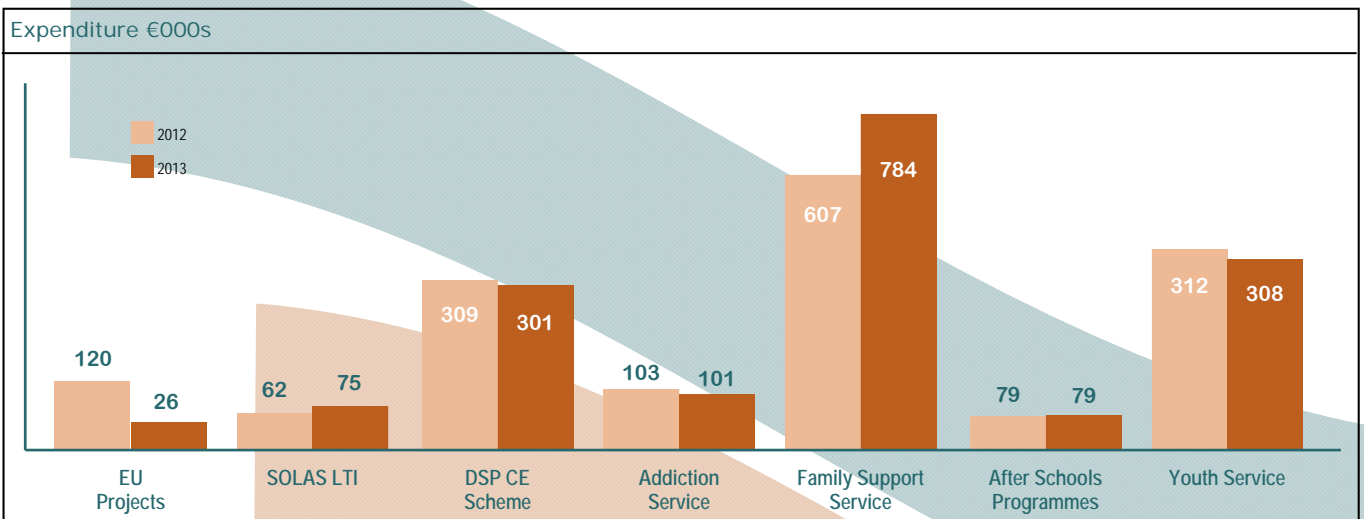
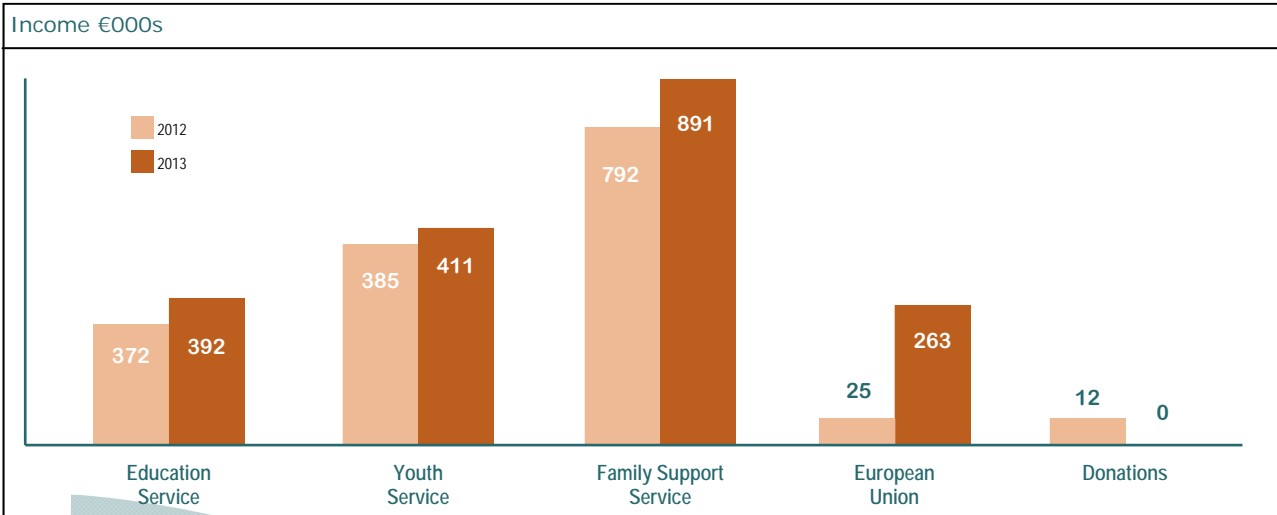
The training
is focused on

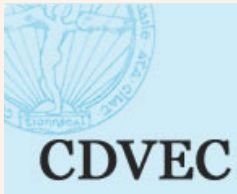
blended mentoring which encompasses both face-to-face and online sessions. *Tandem Now* promotes technological developments in mentoring and the use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) to improve career opportunities for ethnic minority groups.

This project includes partner countries from Austria, Spain, Italy, Greece, Germany, and Ireland.



Income and Expenditure





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