



National Traveller MABS

Unit 2, North Park, North Road, Finglas, Dublin 11
01 864 8510 – www.ntmabs.org



Welcome to the tenth edition of The Tharrie Times and the final one of 2010.

The year has been a busy one for all in MABS and a difficult one economically for the whole country.

NTMABS has participated in many good news stories in 2010. This current newsletter gives a taste of some of the positive projects that both NTMABS and our partners have been involved in.

In this edition, Temitope from NTMABS gives a personal insight into how people can support each other in saving.

We also give a brief summary of the recently published All Ireland Traveller Health Study which had approximately 80% of Travellers living on the island of Ireland participating in.

In addition, we give an update on the upcoming Traveller pride awards, an account of recent community education undertaken in Waterford and a good news story for Travellers living in Ballyfermot, Dublin.

We hope you enjoy our newsletter and all at NTMABS wish you all a very happy and peaceful Christmas.

Nancy & Nuala



Saving Together to help each other

There is no doubt that these are tough times with the recession biting hard and families struggling to cope. One way families can try to keep things together in these difficult times is to consider the idea of the rotating savings club. The rotating savings club is a very popular form of informal saving within some immigrant communities in Ireland.



The clubs are usually composed of a group of individuals who come together and make regular contributions to a common fund. For example, a group of twelve persons may contribute €100 each per month for 12 months. A sum of €1,200 collected each month is then given to one member and this process continues monthly until all members have received €1,200. The process of deciding the recipient is usually by ballot, and is agreed by all based on an individual's need at a particular time of the year. Having received the lump sum, each recipient continues to pay the agreed amount in regular monthly contributions so that all participants are given the opportunity to receive the lump sum.

Members who receive the lump sum last still have to contribute their part from the onset, but may be the first to collect in the next cycle.

The important thing is that the monthly contribution is decided by the members, as the number will determine the overall amount that is gathered. What this means is that the amount of money that recipients get is determined by the amount of people contributing.

The advantages of this type of rotating savings scheme are numerous. For example, one of the most important advantages of this type of saving system, from my own experience, is the way it encourages community interaction. It also respects existing community leadership patterns and decision-making processes. Another major advantage is the mutuality of credit. This is a process by which some individual families (who receive the monthly total early in the cycle) are assured of access to a substantial amount of money before they have even saved up that ample amount. Finally such a rotating savings scheme provides a means of accessing credit without any interest charges.



(continued on next page....)



National Traveller MABS

Unit 2, North Park, North Road, Finglas, Dublin 11
01 864 8510 - www.ntmabs.org

**Continued....**

However, in this type of saving system, there is the possibility of mismanagement or fraud by the main organiser; especially in situations where he or she may misappropriate accumulated contributions. But interestingly, this type of situation, where an organiser mismanages or misappropriates funds, has mainly been found to be non-existent. In the case of the group with which I have been involved over the last seven years, there has never been any occurrence of fraud or misappropriation. However, all participants know each other and the main organiser is a well known, trustworthy person, and a much respected member of the community.

Bearing all the above in mind and because of the inherent advantages of the savings club, I strongly recommend that families in various communities all over Ireland should endeavor to come together to start this unique mode of family support programme. Without any doubt, I believe that if the savings club idea is embraced in different communities, it will certainly help people to avoid moneylenders and illegal means of accessing needed funds. It will also serve as an excellent way for communities to access interest free credit, while also fostering cordial community relations.

Temitope Animashaun (NTMABS)

All Ireland Traveller Health Study
(AITHS)



The All Ireland Traveller Health Study was officially launched by Minister Mary Harney on 2nd September 2010 and was attended by statutory and voluntary organisations from both the Republic of Ireland (ROI) and Northern Ireland. This piece of research was conducted by over 400 Traveller 'peer researchers' (primarily woman) from all over Ireland in conjunction with the coordinating group in the University College Dublin, who were responsible for the collation and dissemination of the data collected.

This study is the first of its kind since the Travellers' Health Status Study conducted in 1986. At this time, Traveller men were living nearly 10 years less than the majority settled male population, while Traveller women were living nearly 12 years less than the majority female settled population.

This piece of research, though, has now shown that while the gap between Traveller women and settled women has decreased marginally from 10 to 11 years, the difference between Traveller men and settled men has increased from 10 to 15 years.

While this study is extensive and covers many different aspects of Traveller health, some of the main findings are as follows:

- Traveller men have four times the mortality rate of the general population, Traveller women have three times the rate.
- Infant mortality rate for Travellers is 3.5 times higher than the majority population – plainly speaking, this means that for every one settled child death, there are four Traveller children deaths.
- 66.3% of families interviewed claim that illicit drug use is a problem within the community
- Barriers for Travellers in accessing adult health services were identified as waiting lists, embarrassment and lack of information, while complete trust in health professionals was at 41% in the ROI which is dramatically lower than the settled population at 82.7%.

These statistics are a frightening reality for over 35,000 Travellers currently living in the ROI. (AITHS, 2010). This study has numerous recommendations in areas such as accommodation, education, culture awareness and obviously, health.

(continued on next page...)

Continued...

Areas such as mother and child services, men's health issues, primary health care deliverance, amongst others, are discussed at length throughout this report. The All Ireland Traveller Health study can be downloaded from the Department of Health and Children at:

http://www.dohc.ie/publications/traveller_health_study.html

It can also be accessed through Pavee Point's dedicated website, Our Geels, at:

<http://pavee.ie/ourgeels/>

Traveller Pride Awards 2010

The Traveller Pride Awards will officially launch Traveller Pride week, **December 6th – 10th 2010**. The Awards are a positive celebration of the achievements of Travellers.

National Traveller MABS along with The Irish Traveller Movement, Pavee Point, Mincéirs Whiden, The National Association of Travellers' Centres, Exchange House National Traveller Service, The Parish of the Travelling People, and The National Traveller Women's Forum, have worked together to build on the success of last year's first awards ceremony.

On Thursday the 2nd December 2010, President McAleese shall be in attendance at the Traveller Pride Awards to present the lifetime achievement award.

The Traveller Pride Awards will take place in the Button Factory, Temple Bar, from 1.30pm to 3.00pm. There will be a host of guest presenters along with Anne Cassins, who will once again, be our master of ceremonies. Traveller pride awards focus on the achievements of Travellers. It celebrates these achievements and the Traveller Community's contribution to Irish Society.

Whilst highlighting the achievements of Travellers, the Traveller Pride Awards also illustrates some of the existing obstacles such as prejudices and discrimination which sadly still remain in Ireland.

The award categories covered at the event are broad, ranging from Sport, Youth, Education, Culture, Music, to Enterprise & Employment, Community, and the Breakthrough project.

The Breakthrough project is one where the judges wish to award a team project which has explored new territory in terms of developments and tackling issues which need to be dealt with.



This year, for the first time, there will be a Lifetime Achievement Award, presented along with the overall winner's prize. The overall prize winner is selected from the existing category winners, whilst the Lifetime Achievement Award will be for someone whose life's work has contributed greatly towards Traveller pride.

The Traveller Pride Awards 2010 promises to be a special occasion. If you are interested in attending we would recommend that people contact Damien Walshe at ITM, dwalsheitm@gmail.com or phone 01-6796577.

Traveller Pride Week, formerly known as Traveller Focus Week, is a week of events to highlight Traveller culture, achievements, and issues. There will be a week of events happening both in Dublin city and around the country and more details can be found at:

www.travellerprideweek.ie



National Traveller MABS

Unit 2, North Park, North Road, Finglas, Dublin 11
01 864 8510 - www.ntmabs.org



Our new website –
www.ntmabs.org
is now live!!

Please check it out for the
most up to date
information.

**Waterford Primary Health Care
Workers Complete Money
Management Program**



On Monday the 8th of November 2010 in Ballybeg Parish Centre, Anna Walsh the coordinator of Waterford MABS, presented certificates to the participants from the local Primary Health Care project that had successfully completed the four week Money Management course.

Louise O'Brien, the local money advisor, who had facilitated the learning, was also present. Louise *'felt the course was a great success and was enjoyed both by the participants and myself.'*

The coordinator of the Primary Health Care project, Emma Maguire said that the women felt the course was very practical and that it ranked as one of the most popular and useful courses they had completed in their first full year of the Primary health care project.

A photographer from the local newspaper – Waterford News & Star - was there to photograph the presentation and a group picture will appear shortly in that paper.



Pictured Left to Right: Front; Margaret O'Reilly, Julia McInerney, Anna Walsh (MABS), Breda Delaney, Brigid Delaney Quilligan, Back; Olive O'Reilly, Kathleen Delaney, Emma Maguire (PHC Coordinator) Louise O'Brien (MABS)

This type of community education serves two purposes. It establishes a good relationship between the outreach workers of the Primary Health Care team and MABS, and it passes on essential skills required for money management.

Financial inclusion – a good news story



Up until May 2010, people living in Labre Park- a Traveller specific group housing scheme in Ballyfermot, Dublin, - could not join their local credit union as the site did not officially exist within the common bond.

This issue was brought to the attention of National Traveller MABS by residents of Labre Park, the local Traveller support group, and COMAC MABS many years ago. The resident's main argument was that they lived, shopped and schooled their children locally in Ballyfermot, so why were they not able to join the local Credit Union?

After several years of advocating for this change, National Traveller MABS, in conjunction with COMAC MABS, successfully campaigned to Ballyfermot Credit Union to make the necessary adjustments to their rules and regulations. In June of this year, Labre Park was officially included within the common bond of the local Credit Union. One of the main priorities within the three year strategic plan of National Traveller MABS is to ***work with internal and external bodies to promote equality and diversity within financial services'***.

Following the success of the Labre Park campaign, National Traveller MABS contacted credit unions all over Ireland with Traveller specific accommodation located in their area. Over 130 services were targeted in order to ensure that Traveller sites were either within the local Credit Union common bond, neighbouring common bonds or neither.

To date, there have been over 80 responses. This data collected from the enquiry will go a long way in highlighting any further Traveller specific accommodation sites that are currently being excluded from local Credit Union financial services.