

Introduction

2010 was the European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion. Nationally and at European level this brought many opportunities for the Network; however 2010 was also a year which witnessed the deepening of the harsh effects of the economic and social crisis facing Ireland, and many of our European partners. 2010 was also the 20th anniversary of the European Anti Poverty Network in Ireland.

Despite the gloomy economic backdrop, EAPN Ireland sought to use the European Year to establish an enhanced awareness of poverty issues and to strengthen the demand for effective national and European policy measures aimed at creating a more equal and cohesive Europe. The European Year also provided an opportunity to further develop membership participation, and, in conjunction with other NGOs and community organisations, to build a wider presence amongst those involved in social justice and equality issues. EAPN Ireland also focused on actions to safeguard the most marginalised within a national context of economic crisis that brought cutbacks to services and reductions to the incomes of poorer families. 2010 also saw the deeper embedding of EAPN Ireland's commitment to securing meaningful participation opportunities for those experiencing poverty and the groups that work with them.

During this period EAPN Ireland continued to implement its 18 month Strategic Framework and Implementation Plan, *Real Lives, Powering Change*. The Strategic Framework and Implementation Plan outlined the EAPN Ireland strategy, in preparation for, and during 2010 European Year Against poverty and Social Exclusion. This Strategic Framework sets out EAPN Ireland's ambition to create a new dynamic for change in Ireland and in Europe, informed by the direct experiences of those living in poverty. Addressing the root causes of poverty and inequality in Irish society is the analysis informing the strategy.

The adoption of a specific poverty target within the Europe 2020 Strategy for Smart, Sustainable and Inclusive Growth was a key achievement for the Network. The Network engaged in a campaign to secure the target at national and European level, and will continue to fight for its realisation in the years to come.

The Year also proved a key opportunity to reach out to EAPN Ireland members across Ireland, the Network engaged in a wide range of regional activities and events, including working with the Community Workers' Cooperative and the Community Platform in the implementation of the programme of regional events under government's national programme for the Year.

During 2010 EAPN Ireland was in the last year of its three year funding contract with the Department of Community, Equality and Gaeltacht Affairs. In addition to the substantial European Commission funded project, the Network secured a number of smaller scale project and grants.

This annual report represents a summary of the Networks activities in 2010. The main part of this work report is broken down into three sections. The initial section details EAPN Ireland's activities to provide information to people experiencing poverty and groups that work with them to facilitate engagement with the European Social Agenda. The second section examines activities to empower people who experience poverty and the groups that work with them to collectively progress anti

poverty and social inclusion policy. While the final sections addresses activities aimed at strengthening the Networks capacity to realise its objectives and goals.



1: Provide information to people experiencing poverty and groups that work with them to facilitate engagement with the European Social Agenda

A key objective of EAPN Ireland is to provide information to people experiencing poverty and groups that work with them to facilitate engagement with the European Social Agenda. EAPN Ireland strives to provide quality information and analysis through information tools, publications and training initiatives.

EAPN Ireland Flash

The monthly Flash e-newsletter has nearly 1500 subscribers. The Flash is used by a variety of stakeholders to disseminate information in Ireland. The Flash is widely identified as a key output of the Network. EAPN Ireland has received very positive feedback from members and others on the new look, feel and distribution of the Flash. In 2010 11 editions of the Flash were circulated through the EAPN Ireland distribution lists.

Information Briefings

EAPN Ireland provides members with detailed briefings on European developments of relevance to their work. The objective of these briefings is to highlight important initiatives and to provide analysis of EU developments, as well as practice in other EU Member States. Briefings seek to respond specifically to the interests and concerns of EAPN Ireland members.

During 2010 EAPN Ireland produced four briefings:

1. Responses to the **Economic Crisis** – A synopsis of discussions from a TASC Round Table.
2. EAPN Ireland Briefing on the Future of the **EU Social Inclusion Strategy** - To update members and others on the development of the EU Inclusion Strategy and the current changes proposed as part of Europe 2020 Strategy.
3. Briefing for Oireachtas Members on **Poverty 25% Reduction Target**: The briefing was circulated to all Oireachtas members to inform them about the Commission's proposal for an EU poverty reduction target.
4. Europe **2020 Strategy** and Targets: This briefing updated members on the current state of play on the Europe 2020 Strategy, the poverty target and the proposed Platform Against Poverty.

Publications

During 2010 EAPN Ireland produced a number of publications.

1. EAPN Ireland Book '**Ireland and the European Social Inclusion Strategy**: Lessons Learned and the Road Ahead'. The book was launched by Minister Pat Carey TD on 1st July. Since then over 500 copies have been disseminated widely to policy makers at national and EU level, to local and national community organisations, academic institutions, libraries, etc. The book included chapters from policy makers, academics, representatives from government departments, representatives from community organisations and an MEP.
2. **Training for Trainers** Manual: Understanding and Influencing the European Social Policy: A training manual for community organisations working against poverty and social exclusion.

This manual was developed through updating previous EAPN Ireland briefings and integrating them with training resources so that the information could be to be passed in an accessible manner with groups in the community and voluntary sector. This manual was the basis for a joint EAPN Ireland and Northern Ireland Anti-Poverty Network Training for Trainers event which took place in Belfast in October.

3. Report from **Building Social Europe Conference**, February 2010.
4. With the Community Workers' Cooperative, and in association with the Community Platform, EAPN Ireland published the Final Report of the 2010 European Year against Poverty and Social Exclusion **Regional Seminars**

EAPN Ireland Review

During 2010 EAPN Ireland published two editions of its Magazine, the EAPN Ireland review,

- **It's Time to End Poverty** (February 2010): The publication includes a broad range of articles and submissions from a variety of local, national and European stakeholders on the 2010 Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion.
- **Poverty: Issues and Policy Briefing** (November 2010), this briefing sets out overall policy developments and specifically focuses on older people, rural poverty, lone parents and the minimum wage. The Review was published to accompany a series of skills seminars coordinated by EAPN Ireland in late 2010.

The network circulated three editions of the EAPN (Europe) poverty mag:

- MAG 1/2010 - Will 2010 mark a turning point for Social Europe?
- MAG 2/2010 - Migration: a question of survival
- MAG 3/2010 - EU 2020 Strategy: will it have an impact on poverty?

Videos

During 2010 EAPN Ireland undertook a number of video projects, and incorporated a video resource page into its website.

Poor Can't Pay Campaign

In association with the Poor Can't Pay Campaign, and under the auspices of the Ireland in Social Europe Project, EAPN Ireland produced and launched two videos in the Autumn of 2010.

- This first video shows people from various walks of life that are living in poverty or at risk of poverty and are affected heavily by government cuts. Firstly, we see a baby, living at risk of poverty, who growing up will regularly go without a decent meal for 24 hours. This highlights the plight of the 187,000 children at risk of poverty. Secondly, we are shown a clip of Marie, who recently became homeless and is living off €100 a week in emergency accommodation. Finally, we are introduced to John, 72, in an effort emphasise the dire situation many elderly people are forced to live in.
- The second video is shot in very much the same style as the first video and again attempts to put a human face to poverty statistics and the suffering faced by many. In this video we are introduced to Conor, a 21 year old graduate, on Jobseeker's Allowance. We are then shown Anne, one of 325,000 disabled people in Ireland. Finally, we see Rajam, a shop worker earning the minimum wage.

What has the EU done for People in Poverty?

For the February 2010 conference, EAPN Ireland produced a video with former delegates to the European People Experiencing Poverty Meetings entitled: 'What has the EU done for People in Poverty?'

Website and social media

The EAPN Ireland website is a key resource for organisations, individuals and institutional stakeholders who wish to learn more about the European Union and its policy processes. Following a successful re-launch in 2009, EAPN Ireland narrowed its policy focus section to include key areas in which the organisation has demonstrable expertise. It acts as a hub for information and analysis on social policy developments in Ireland and in the European Union. The site now attracts an average of 3,500 unique visitors every month.

During 2010 a number of resource pages were added to the website, including a page on Tax in Ireland and the EU, and a section on social policy milestones, as well as updating the pages on understanding poverty to address issues of inequality as it relates to poverty and social exclusion

During the reporting period EAPN Ireland developed its Facebook, Twitter and You Tube capacity. EAPN Ireland leverages these social media to connect with and reach out to new audiences and to engage with the online NGO and policy community. EAPN Ireland's Facebook page now has 655 fans, up from 226 in 2009. In 2010 EAPN Ireland had 683 followers on Twitter, up from 125 in 2009.

During 2010 EAPN Ireland built the profile of its Blog, On the Line: Conversations about Poverty in Ireland in Europe, publishing 7 blog articles from a diverse range of contributors on subjects such as housing, rural poverty, activation, and one parent families.

Media

In accordance with specific objectives set out in its strategic plan, EAPN Ireland has made a concerted effort to raise the profile of the organisation and its network in the local and national media. In 2010 EAPN Ireland generated considerable coverage around its press releases and press engagement. EAPN Ireland also recognises that the proliferation of online news sources means that communications outreach should extend beyond traditional news media. EAPN Ireland has made a concerted effort to reach out to online news sources and had considerable success in that regard.

In 2010 EAPN Ireland issued 12 press releases. These and previous press releases are available for download and comment on the EAPN Ireland website.

- January 2010: Challenges Ahead for Ireland as Spanish Presidency Launches 2010 European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion
- February 2010: No Return to 'boom and bust' Economics says EAPN Ireland
- February 2010: Future Strategy for the European Union Cannot Repeat Mistakes of the Past
- February 2010: Action Needed to Prevent Reversal of Progress on Poverty
- March 2010: Prove We're 'Stronger in Europe' By Supporting EU Poverty Target
- March 2010: EAPN Ireland Calls on Government to Back Target to Cut Poverty by 25%
- April 2010: Roadmap for Future of EU Risks Failure if Poverty Targets Are Dropped
- May 2010: Cork-Based Forum an Opportunity for People Experiencing Poverty to Influence Government Policy

- June 2010: Poor and marginalised increasingly silenced as impact of recession takes hold
- June 2010 : A Good Day for Europe but Much to Do at Home as Poverty Target Agreed
- November 2010: EU Flagship Platform against Poverty and Social Exclusion published Thursday 16th December.
- December 2010: Budget 2011 – Government needs to publish a detailed poverty impact report

Print media coverage of EAPN Ireland included Politico, Irish Examiner, Irish Times, Irish Examiner, People's Voice, Irish Independent.

EAPN Ireland has secured broadcast interviews on the following radio stations: Newstalk, Q102 FM, i105-107 FM, FM 104, 98 FM, South Dublin FM, Dublin Community Radio, 2FM, 4fm, Highland radio, Galway Bay fm, LMFm, Dundalk community radio, Red fm, East coast radio, Clare FM, Kildare FM, Waterford FM, Red FM. EAPN Ireland has also secured coverage on a number of blogs and online sources.



2: Empower people who experience poverty and the groups that work with them to collectively progress anti poverty and social inclusion policy

Supporting anti-poverty groups to engage with the Irish and European anti-poverty and social inclusion agenda has been a key focus of EAPN Ireland's work. EAPN Ireland has sought to support anti-poverty groups, as well as those who experience poverty to affect policy and practice and to make a real difference in the lives of those who experience poverty in Ireland.

EAPN Ireland's strategy is to work directly with people who experience poverty and the groups that work with them at a local level in order to facilitate direct participation in national and European policy structures. EAPN Ireland adopts a facilitative training approach, and actively encourages direct involvement and ongoing engagement both within EAPN Ireland and broader processes. EAPN Ireland engagement with people who experience poverty and the groups that work with them, directly informs our policy submissions and publications.

National Events

In February 2010 EAPN Ireland hosted an **international Conference Building a Social Europe**. This conference was attended by over 200 participants, many from other EU Member States and representing a broad range of sectors and groups. The Conference launched EAPN's proposals for a legacy for the 2010 European Year and was addressed by national and international speakers as well as having workshops on a range of issues.

Launch of **EAPN Ireland book** 'Ireland and the European Social Inclusion Strategy: Lessons Learned and the Road Ahead' which marked the EAPN Ireland 20th Anniversary celebrations. The Book was launched by Minister Pat Carey TD on 1st July. The launch was attended by over 50 representatives from community and voluntary organisations, policy makers and Proinsias de Rossa MEP who contributed to the book.

Training for Trainers event in Belfast on 12-13 October organised jointly between EAPN Ireland and the Northern Ireland Anti-Poverty Network. Seven participants from all over the island of Ireland and representing a range of organisations took part and have undertaken to carry out a training activity in their own community. The new EAPN training manual Understanding and Influencing the European Social Policy, was the basis for delivering this training.

A preparation meeting for the **Social Inclusion Forum** held on 16th November. Involving 25 participants and was organised jointly by EAPN Ireland and the Community Workers' Cooperative to support people to participate more fully in the Social Inclusion Forum on 17th November in the National Convention Centre. The participants were mainly drawn from those people with a direct experience of poverty and social exclusion who attended the 2010 regional seminars earlier in the year. EAPN Ireland also made an input at the SIF and supported the input of someone representing those from communities with a direct experience.

Regional Events

Three Activation regional events

The activation regional events were organised by the Irish National Organisation of the Unemployed as part of the Ireland in Social Europe Awareness project and took place in Dundalk, Galway and Cork. The regional meetings were with service providers who were presented with feedback from four focus groups which took place in 2009 mainly with people who were unemployed or on labour market programmes and then discussed the issues and responses.

2010 European Year regional consultation workshops

Four Regional consultation workshops were organised with the Community Workers' Cooperative, in association with the Community Platform as part of the Government's 2010 European Year programme. The aim of the workshops was to highlight progress in addressing poverty and social exclusion and provide a forum for people experiencing the issues and those representing them to engage directly with service providers. Following a request from organizations in the North West a fifth 2010 Regional Seminar took place in September in Letterkenny. The report from the seminars provided input for the Social Inclusion Forum.

Skills Seminars

Events entitled 'Influencing European Policy and Obtaining Funding for Community and Voluntary Organisations' were organized in Waterford, Castlebar and Dublin and were attended by approximately 80 participants. Inputs were from EAPN Ireland, the European Commission on the new EU NGO connect website, the European Parliament, the Irish Regions Office to the EU and also one MEP at the first two events and two in Dublin. Feedback was generally very positive with a greater demand for information on accessing funding from the EU. This series of events was funded by the Communicating Europe Initiative, with support from the European Parliament Office in Ireland

Training for People Experiencing Poverty

Working with the Vincentian Partnership for Social Justice EAPN Ireland organised one full day thematic training sessions for people experiencing poverty on income. This training was the third of a series, the first two on services and activation having taken place at the end of 2009. The training focused on the relevant policy structure at national and European levels and opportunities to become further involved in influencing these structures in the context of the 2010 European Year against Poverty and Social Exclusion.

European Meeting of People Experiencing Poverty

Since 2002 Meetings of People Experiencing Poverty and Social Exclusion have been taking place in Brussels as part of the European Social Inclusion Strategy. This is the one formal opportunity for people experiencing the issues to provide an input to the Strategy, the aim of which is 'to make a decisive impact on poverty by 2010', and to engage directly with decision makers.

The meetings are hosted by the Member State holding the EU Presidency and are organised and facilitated by the European Anti-Poverty Network (EAPN) with support from the European Commission

In 2010 The 9th Meeting of People Experiencing Poverty (PEP) was hosted by the Spanish Presidency and was attended by four Irish delegates, along with the delegation coordinator, Kay Lynch. Before going to Brussels the delegates took part in three preparation meetings including one with representatives from the Social Inclusion Division.

Firstly, at the 9th Meeting the initial findings of a research on the impact of EU Meetings was presented and discussed. Secondly, there was an exchange between the delegates and the members of the European Parliament. Thirdly the delegations of people experiencing poverty discussed the research and presented their 10 year Action Plans for fighting against poverty. The delegates did this by reflecting on the proposals which came from previous meetings. It was hoped that the ideas that emerged from that exercise would be taken up in the final declaration from the 2010 European Year for Combating poverty and social exclusion.

At the 2010 AGM EAPN Ireland adopted a motion calling on the Government and state agencies to demonstrate their commitment to good governance and accountability by adopting and implementing a code of practice on accountability to stakeholders for commitments they have made. At a minimum this must involve regular feedback to those involved in all levels of consultation. Key to this commitment is the Government's ongoing support for an effective community sector at local and national level and the necessary supports to enable people experiencing poverty to participate at all levels.

Policy Submissions

A key objective of EAPN Ireland is to bring the voice of those who experiencing poverty to European and national policy debates, drawing on direct engagement with people experiencing poverty and EAPN Ireland members during the reporting period EAPN Ireland developed a number of policy submissions.

- EAPN Ireland Submission to European Commission Working Document "Consultations on the Future EU 2020 Strategy"
- Contribution to EU level review of Meetings of People Experiencing Poverty
- Letter to MEPs on Employment and Social Affairs Committee regarding an Framework Directive on Minimum Income
- EAPN (Ireland) contribution to the Community and Voluntary Pillar input on the national poverty target and the submission to the National Reform Programme as part of the Europe 2020 Strategy.
- EAPN (Europe) submission on the EU Platform against Poverty as part of the Europe 2020 Strategy.
- EAPN (Europe) update on the impact of the European Crisis

During 2010 a key focus for the Network was the development of the Europe 2020 Agenda, and in particular the development of the European target to lift 20 million people out of poverty by 2020. In April EAPN Ireland had a series of meetings with opposition spokespersons briefing them on the importance of the poverty target. Meetings were held in May and early June with Ministers Pat Carey TD and Mary White TD to discuss the Europe 2020 Strategy and specifically the Commission

proposal for an EU poverty reduction target and a European Platform against Poverty. A presentation was also made in early June in the Oireachtas audio-visual room to members of the Dail and Seanad on poverty reduction. Ten key members of the Oireachtas from a cross section of parties attended this presentation.



3: Strengthen the Network's capacity to realise its objectives and goals

As a Network with a wide variety of members, a key priority for EAPN Ireland is to maximise the potential of the Network through its members, and to develop strategic alliances with partner organisations. EAPN Ireland is governed by an Annual General Meeting which elects the Board. The Board in turn elects officers who oversee the day to day management of the organisation. In 2010 EAPN Ireland had three sub-groups, concerned with: administration and finance, employment policy and the 2010 Year. EAPN Ireland strives to implement best practice in all aspects of governance and membership development. EAPN Ireland continues to develop and implement a range of financial, human resource and management policies to ensure the best possible standard in governance practice.

Membership and participation

EAPN Ireland has a wide ranging membership which includes local, regional and national organisations concerned with the fight against poverty and social exclusion. Other stakeholders, including individuals, academics, political actors and state actors, have joined the network as associate members, without voting rights. In 2010 EAPN Ireland had 260 members across 25 counties in Ireland,

During the reporting period two hard copy mailings were circulated to members which included the EAPN Ireland publication on building public support, the EAPN Ireland Book, marking the 20th anniversary of the Network, a notice of the EAPN conference on 19 February 2010, as well as an edition of the European Network News (economic crisis).

Board and Governance

During 2010 the EAPN Ireland Board met eight times, and undertook and completed a full governance review in April 2010, the 2010 AGM adopted a special resolution updating and revising the Articles and Memorandum of Understanding. The board was supported by an Administration and Personnel sub-committee, and in the second half of 2010 by two sub-committees. The EAPN Ireland board elected in July 2010 is:

- Alwiye Xyusein (Vice-Chair), Akidwa
- Ann Irwin, Community Workers Coop
- Anne Speed, SIPTU
- Candy Murphy (Social Inclusion), One Family
- Damien Peelo (Treasurer), Irish Traveller Movement
- Kay Lynch (PEP Coordinator), Northside Community Law Centre
- Patrick Burke, Simon Communities of Ireland
- Patrick Nulty (Vice Chair), Focus Ireland
- Peter Herrmann (Vice Treasurer), European Social Organizational and Science Consultancy
- Philip O'Connor (Chair) (Employment), Dublin Employment Pact
- Sheila Simmons, Irish Association Older People
- Siobhan Madden, Banulacht
- Tess Murphy, Longford Women's Link

Governance Review

In April 2010 EAPN Ireland completed a full governance review of the network, and presented a specific solutions to the AGM in 2010 proposed a series of changes to the Articles and Memorandum of Understanding. The governance review also undertook a full review of the policy and procedures of the Network and proposed a series of structural changes, which were subsequently adopted by the board, including the adoption of a personnel sub-committee and a finance sub-committee.

Legacy Framework

In January 2010 the board of EAPN Ireland decided to establish a group to examine and promote key legacies for the 2010 European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion. The role of the group was threefold:

1. Define and progress EAPN Ireland's desired legacies for the 2010 European Year
2. Address the strategic objectives of the network in the next 3-5 years, in the context of realizing the potential of the legacy of the Year
3. Consider the positioning and sustainability of the Network, in order to maximize its impact during that period

The group is comprised of five members of the EAPN Ireland board, with five external experts: Niall Crowley (Chair of Group); Philip O'Connor (EAPN Ireland board); Declan Jones (EAPN Ireland board); Louise Richardson (EAPN Ireland board); Candy Murphy (EAPN Ireland board); Siobhan Madden (EAPN Ireland board); Gerry Mangan; Helen Johnson; and Anna Lee. The group met three times from March to May 2010. The staff of EAPN Ireland met with Niall Crowley after the second meeting of the group.

The groups presented a Legacy Framework, which was discussed and adopted by the board in May 2010.

Staffing and human resources

During 2010 the EAPN Ireland had a staff team of four. Two staff funded through core funding, and two employed under the auspices of the Ireland in Social European Project. The staff were Anna Visser (Director), Paul Ginnell (Policy and Support Worker), Helen McHugh (Administrator), and Mark Byrne (Communications Worker). Aiden Lloyd replaced the EAPN Ireland director during her maternity leave in the second half of 2010. Aine Walsh replaced Mark Byrne for a three month period at the end of 2010. The Administrator and Communications position came to an end at the end of 2010, with the end of the European project.

EAPN Ireland members and volunteers are active in all aspect of the work. EAPN Ireland is grateful for the contribution of skilled and dedicated interns including Roisin Traynor and Aine Walsh.

European Network

As the Irish link to the European Anti Poverty Network in Brussels, EAPN Ireland links to the European Network through its Executive Committee, Working Groups, General Assembly and seminars.

In addition to the ongoing engagement of the Network, a number of individuals play a key role in ensuring that EAPN Ireland plays a leading role in the European Network:

- Candy Murphy, Social Inclusion Working Group
- Philip O'Connor, Employment Working Group
- Kay Lynch, PEP Coordinator
- Paul Ginnell, Structural Funds Working Group
- Louise Richardson, Executive Committee (replaced by Anna Visser in late 2010)
- Anna Visser, Sustainable Finance Working Group

Networking and Alliances

During the reporting period EAPN Ireland continued to develop strong alliances and partnerships with leading organisations in Ireland. EAPN Ireland is an active member of the Community Platform, and its steering group, and engages actively in all its activities including in this period the campaign for an equitable tax system in the run up to Budget 2011. EAPN Ireland is a member of the Steering Group of the Equality and Rights Alliance (ERA), ERA is a coalition of society groups seeking to ensure the promotion and enhancement of human rights, equality and social justice in Ireland. During the reporting period EAPN Ireland participated in the Poor Can't Pay campaign. EAPN Ireland is a member of the Staffing Sub-Group and Central Group of the Irish Traveller Movement. In addition EAPN Ireland continued to actively contribute to European Network against Racism Ireland, 17 October Committee, the Social Policy Network and the Community Employer's Forum.

EAPN Ireland was invited to make contributions to a variety of external events during the reporting period including to: the Easter European Aid and Development Network, Cork City Partnership, Cavan County Council Social inclusion week, Pobal Rural Poverty Conference, RESPOND, Pobal, NUI Galway, and NorDubCo.

In addition in this period EAPN Ireland, staff volunteers and members participated in a wide range of events and activities.