

## **Grant Programme to support activities for children living in Direct Provision Centres. January 2015**

In February 2014, St Stephen's Green Trust commissioned social researcher, Brian Harvey to undertake a strategic review of its grant making priorities. Children and families in Direct Provision Centres were identified in the Harvey Report as being one of the most vulnerable to poverty in Ireland today.

"Some parts of the new communities are at especial risk (of poverty), such as those in direct provision, the trafficked and the Roma community.....Overall, the most vulnerable category is the asylum-seeker placed in direct provision.....Direct provision may be a contributor to the unusually high number of African children the subject of childcare orders.<sup>1</sup>"

Several national migrant and immigrant organisations have undertaken excellent advocacy and policy work in the past few years to draw attention to the situation of asylum seekers in Direct Provision Centres and that work is ongoing. The Trustees decided to focus grants at a different level. Some soundings were taken from people working with asylum seekers and they identified the lack of access to after school activities or community sporting activities as being particularly problematic.

A Grant Programme was designed to invite applications from local voluntary organisations supporting children and families in family Direct Provision Centres. The Programme sought applications for activities that would take the children out of the Centre, for after school and other activities that would have them interacting with their community and school colleagues.

During the course of implementing the Grant Programme, we revised our criteria to allow applications for in-school extracurricular activities also, although we were quite reluctant to do so. Several enquiries related to situations whereby children from the Direct Provision Centres were unable to avail of the school's participation in swimming classes (usually 6 sessions costing around €30 or €40 in total). These children were left in the classroom while their classmates went swimming. It is important to say that when questioned, some other enquirers stated their local national school would never allow that situation to arise.

One of the biggest obstacles was the need for transport to undertake activities given many of the Direct Provision Centres are in rural and isolated areas. Several applicants used the opportunity of getting access to funds for activities to take an innovative approach to negotiating transport arrangements with other stakeholders. Others focused on activities within walking distance of the Centres.

Applications were received from organisations working in 19 of the family centres and 18 were allocated a grant. The failed application was from an activity-specific organisation which did not have a track record of working with families in that particular Direct Provision Centre.

---

<sup>1</sup> Duncan, Pamela: *Report investigates childcare court cases*. Irish Times, 6th November 2013.

**PO Box 950, Newbridge, Co Kildare**

Telephone/Fax: 045 480666

Email: [info@sstg.ie](mailto:info@sstg.ie)

Website: [www.sstg.ie](http://www.sstg.ie)

780 children will benefit from the €55,960 allocated in grants to 18 organisations. The grants will allow children to participate in swimming lessons, football clubs, dance lessons, gymnastics, athletics and music. The entire grant goes directly on the activities and administration of the grant is facilitated by the local (mostly) volunteer organisations who are supporting families in the Centres. None of the grant is allocated to overheads or expenses for the voluntary organisation administering the grant.

For the November 2014 grant programme, the Trust partnered with the Sisters of Mercy Southern Province Solidarity Trust Fund which donated €24,000 to the Grant Programme for the 10 Direct Provision Centres in their area.

Many of the local organisations supporting asylum seekers reported a dire lack of funding to carry out activities with the children and their families. This grant programme was the first opportunity some had to undertake activities in several years.

Because the grants allocated to organisations will (in general) allow activities between January and June 2015, the Trust decided to seek funding from other partners to allow the Grant Programme to run again in Spring 2015, which would fund activities between July and December 2015. The Trust has committed to running the Grant Programme from its own funds again in Autumn 2015 which will fund activities between January and June 2016.

We currently have €36,000 of the approximately €60,000 needed for the Spring 2015 programme. We expect an application from at least one extra Direct Provision Centre in the next grant round as we have contacted an organisation local to the Montague Direct Provision Centre who said they would support families there.

St Stephen's Green Trust would urge the Department of Justice Working Group on Direct Provision and the Protection Process to consider the information gathered from this Grants Programme in relation to the current situation of children in Direct Provision Centres.

While this information is ad-hoc and anecdotal and was not the primary purpose of the Grants Programme, we consider it relevant to highlight the impact poverty is playing in excluding children from the communities in which they live.

We would be very happy to give an oral presentation on these experiences and information and would be particularly interested in supporting a measure which would allow the Department of Justice to implement a similar scheme or a mechanism which allows children to continue to participate in the life of their community.

*Orla O'Neill*  
*Grants & Development Director*  
*15<sup>th</sup> January 2015*

## SSGT Direct Provision Centre Grants November 2014

	Local organisation	Centre	Grant	No of Children
1	Wallaroo Playschool Child and Family Project	Ashbourne House Glounthane Cork	3,300	20
2	Integration and Support Unit	Atlantic House Tramore	900	26
3	Killarney Asylum Seekers Initiative	Atlas House Killarney	960	12
4	Integrate Carrick	Bridgewater House Carrick on Suir	1,400	19
5	Clonakilty Friends of Asylum Seekers	Clonakilty Lodge Cork	2,600	49
6	Croi na Gaillimhe	Eglinton Salthill Galway	5,200	58
7	Cultur	Mosney Accommodation Centre	6,500	76
8	Diversity Sligo	Globe House Centre Sligo	2,200	29
9	Killarney Asylum Seekers Initiative	Drishane Castle Millstreet	2,650	79
10	Cork City Partnership	Kinsale Road Accommodation Centre Cork	3,400	30
11	Monaghan Immigrant Support Group	St Patricks Accommodation Centre Monaghan	5,500	75
12	Newbridge Asylum Seekers Support Group	Eyre Powell Newbridge Kildare	1,600	33
13	Integration and Support Unit	Ocean View House Tramore	1,400	27
14	South Dublin County Partnership	Tower Accommodation Centre Clondalkin	2,800	55
15	Mayo Intercultural Action	The Old Convent Ballyhaunis Mayo	2,300	68
16	Tralee International Resource Centre	Johnston Marina Hotel Tralee	3,000	24
17	Waterford Immigration Network	Birchwood House Waterford	4,000	31
18	Westmeath Community Development Ltd	Athlone Accommodation Centre	6,250	70
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>55,960</b>	<b>781 will benefit</b>

## About St Stephen's Green Trust:

**St Stephen's Green Trust is a charitable foundation which respects human dignity and is committed to identifying and responding to issues of social injustice in Ireland.**

St Stephen's Green Trust is a registered charity (CHY10449). It was incorporated as a company limited by guarantee on 1<sup>st</sup> January 2008 under a Memorandum of Association which established the objects and powers of the charitable company and it is governed under its Articles of Association.

The Trust was set up in 1992 under a deed of trust and support from Porticus, the family foundation of the Dutch family, the Brenninkmeyers. They decided to use the Trust as a vehicle to support organisations working across Ireland. They remain a key funder.

Since 2003, the Trust has established relationships with three other donors, the Daughters of the Cross of Liege, the Discalced Carmelites and the Oblate Fathers. In 2014, the Mercy Solidarity Trust (Southern Province) became a funding partner in one of the Trust Programmes supporting asylum-seeking families in Direct Provision Centres.

The Trustees made grants of €450,700 to beneficiaries in 2014, compared to €307,000 in 2013. This 47% increase was a result of the Porticus donation increasing from €250,000 to €400,000. Annual Reports with financial information are published on our website.

Between 2014 and 2018, Trustees have agreed six primary aims to give effect to the mission of responding to particular inequalities which exist in Ireland.

1. Support the development and leadership capacity of Traveller men.
2. Support strategies which improve the lives and life chances of prisoners / ex-prisoners and their families.
3. Support strategies to improve the lives of asylum-seeker children and families in direct provision hostels.
4. Continue to manage the Darndale Belcamp Grant Programme.
5. Be flexible in funding so the Trust can support organisations seeking to address the root causes of inequalities in Ireland, particularly as they relate to areas of particular interest to St Stephen's Green Trust. This will include broader approaches to rethinking the framework for engagement between the State and civil society so that user voice and social analysis of root causes will contribute to an evidential approach to policy development.
6. Support new thinking and approaches to the problem of homelessness in Ireland, with a particular focus on tackling homelessness outside of Dublin.

A number of related aims support the primary aims.

7. Collaboration with other Trusts, Foundations and organisations to enhance our ability to achieve our primary aims.
8. Share knowledge in a strategic way which drives the impact of our grantees' work.
9. Continue to improve our granting practice and ensure grant programmes are relevant, challenging and make an impact in the grants focus areas.
10. Be an exemplar charitable foundation which reaches a high level of governance and upholds our stated values and commitment to the people with whom we work.