



# The Tharie Times



Newsletter of National Traveller MABS

Issue 12, Autumn 2011

## Introduction

Welcome to the Autumn issue of **The Tharie Times**, 2011.

This issue brings you a variety of interesting news items from details of a pilot micro enterprise project to an interview with a Traveller woman undertaking a PhD in Education.

We also detail the most recent cutbacks in Traveller education and bring news of the newly revised money management programme for Travellers.

Finally we report on the progress of the prison savings scheme operating in Mountjoy Prison.

We hope you enjoy this issue of The Tharie Times and look forward to receiving your views and comments.

Nancy Power  
Nuala Ní Ghabhann  
Coordinators



**Sign the Traveller Ethnicity Petition  
at [www.itmtrav.ie](http://www.itmtrav.ie)**

## Pilot Micro- Enterprise Project

Lending4Change, a US based microfinance/micro-enterprise company has joined with a number of partners in Ireland, including National Traveller MABS. Lending4Change hope to work with marginalised communities in Ireland in establishing a pilot micro enterprise project aimed at the financially excluded.

Currently Lending4Change works in Los Angeles with entrepreneurs with business ideas. Many of the entrepreneurs have been homeless. Participant's stories can be viewed on the Lending4Change website [www.lending4change.com](http://www.lending4change.com).

This pilot micro enterprise project is aimed at people more at risk of financial exclusion, who have business ideas and would like support in establishing such businesses.

Lending4Change brings together and manages a network of support and expertise to the potential entrepreneur and oversees the progress and development of such supports. Supports include business training, technical training, mentoring, use of a website storefront and access to loan opportunities.

National Traveller MABS hopes to support potential entrepreneurs within the Traveller community in participating in this project.

**For more information on this project contact Nuala on [nuala\\_nighabhann@mabs.ie](mailto:nuala_nighabhann@mabs.ie). You can also visit the Lending4Change website -[www.lending4change.com](http://www.lending4change.com).**





## Education cuts – targets those who can least afford it

The strategy for the inclusion of Travellers into the Education system was launched 5 years ago. The Traveller Visiting Teacher, the Resource Teachers for Travellers, and the extra teaching hours for Travellers were all attempts to support this strategy. Additionally, the Senior Traveller Training Centres were an attempt to redress the States past failures to provide an Education to Travellers.



However, a recently published report (2011) by the United Nations on human rights and extreme poverty in Ireland made specific reference to Travellers and Education.

The UN expert, Magdalena Sepúlveda Carmona stated that the strategy for inclusion *“is not sufficient to rectify the serious structural lack of inclusion which leads to the imbalance in access to Education.”*

Attempts to ensure Traveller inclusion in education have been dealt a further blow in the last budget. Austerity measures brought in by the outgoing Government detailed a number of cuts to Traveller specific education supports which appear disproportionate to other cuts.

- Visiting Teachers for Traveller’s have been withdrawn.
- Resource Teachers for Traveller’s have been withdrawn.
- Extra teaching hours for Traveller’s in Post Primary have been withdrawn.
- There will be a phasing out of all Senior Traveller Training Centre’s by June 2012.

- There is to be an end to special Transport arrangements for Traveller Children living within set radius of local school.



The children’s charity, Barnardos stated that; *“The cuts to Traveller-specific services is a short-sighted saving that will cement intergenerational cycles of disadvantage in the Traveller community”.*

Are we are going to repeat that mistake for generations to come? Having a healthy economy is vital but we cannot sacrifice the future of our youth to get there.

## Traveller Pride Awards

The annual Traveller Pride awards celebrate Traveller achievements whilst highlighting some obstacles that exist for Travellers in Irish society. Awards are granted in such areas as Education, Arts & Culture and Enterprise, to name but a few. More details and nomination forms are available at -

[www.itmtrav.ie/news/myview/69](http://www.itmtrav.ie/news/myview/69)

Nominations are accepted from all organisations and individuals. Please feel free to nominate a Traveller who you believe deserves to be acknowledged. Closing date is the 30<sup>th</sup> September 2011.










## **“A Way of Life” - New Traveller Community Education Resource**

A new education resource will soon be available to all money advisors. The soon to be printed **A Way of Life** will support money advisors in facilitating community education money management courses directly with Travellers.

The resource has its origins in a series of community education modules developed by North Galway MABS and Travellers from the local training centre. The modules have been used by various MABS throughout the country. They have proved to be an invaluable resource for local MABS and for NTMABS in championing and structuring Community Education with Travellers.

MABS NDL was instrumental in revising the modules which have now been given the title **A Way of Life**. The project team included Carol Dunne (MABS NDL), Belinda McGreal-Flaherty (North Galway MABS), Dermot Sreenan (National Traveller MABS) and Margaret Deegan (Finglas/Cabra MABS).

**A Way of Life** has 5 modules:

-  Managing Money
-  Control & Budgeting
-  Income Maximisation
-  Saving & Banking
-  Borrowing

The resource will support Money Advisors in imparting the skills and knowledge of managing money and will give Travellers an insight into how MABS can assist clients. The resource is the perfect way for a MABS service to plan for community education with their local Traveller group.

NTMABS would be happy to work with MABS service interested in undertaking Community Education with their local Traveller groups.

Please contact Dermot at 01 8648510 or [dermot\\_sreenan@mabs.ie](mailto:dermot_sreenan@mabs.ie) for further information.



## **Educator, Activist, Student, Traveller, Mother**



*Hannagh McGinley, a young Traveller woman, is pursuing a Phd in Education with NUI Galway. She is being supported by scholarships from the Irish Research Council and Dr. Mary L. Thornton. Below is an extract of her recent interview with National Traveller MABS. A full version of this interview is available at [www.ntmabs.org](http://www.ntmabs.org)*

### ***What inspired you to pursue your studies in education?***

It was during my late teens that I decided to go back to education. I was young and going nowhere fast and I was acutely and painfully aware of this. I really wanted to do something with my life and really needed to do something too for my sanity and survival. For months I was finding it hard to breathe. Later I learned that I was having panic attacks. So for me I guess it was a classic case of hitting rock bottom where the only way was up.



I had no choice but to swim and I knew that having an education would enable me to do something with my life. I loved reading books, thanks to my mother and the generosity of the Saint Vincent de Paul, and I thought it would be just brilliant if I could do something that allowed me to indulge that passion so educational pursuits seemed ideal to me.

I also grew up with a huge sense of injustice and very little acceptance of the status quo and had a compelling desire to challenge and understand the things that enable one child to succeed and see another child end up in prison or on drugs or worse. Thankfully, I never accepted or knew my place and in a fight or flight situation I have discovered that I am the kind of person that will fight. I owe all of those characteristics to my mother as she has never been the kind of person to take what life throws at her lying down.

### ***What needs to change in the education system to make it more inclusive?***

I guess we really need to explore why schools are not inclusive and use that as a starting point. Teacher training really needs to address this and it is a good time to push for these changes to be made as it has never been so incumbent on policy makers to ensure that teachers are prepared to teach in diverse classroom settings.

### ***What would your advice to people working in MABS or organisations assisting Travellers be?***

Understand yourself and be aware of the prejudices and attitudes that you carry and impose, often unknowingly, onto others. Most of the problems encountered by any service provider come from their own lack of awareness and from expecting people to act, think and be as they want them to act, think and be. Take yourself out of the equation or at least be aware of your presence in it.

## **North Circular Road Savings Club**

The Mountjoy Prison savings scheme is currently nearing the end of its 2 year pilot phase. As the numbers of members has continued to grow, it is expected that this club will become a permanent fixture within Mountjoy prison. With a view to attracting new members to the club, Mountjoy Prison included the scheme within its Business Plan for 2011. Their aim in so doing was to increase the number of prisoners saving.

At present, there are 43 members of the club. In May of this year, National Traveller MABS compiled a preliminary report which offered us an opportunity to explore the positive aspects of the scheme with key stakeholders, inclusive of club members.

It also identified issues and made recommendation for improvement. Of the 40% of members surveyed, 56% had no bank or credit union account prior to committal while 82% of these members stated that they would continue to save on release.

One member stated that ***'being a member of credit union has taught me that saving is [...] a worthwhile option...something I wouldn't have considered prior to opening this account'***.

It is evident that this scheme is offering an excellent opportunity for people in prison to begin to plan for their future.



National Traveller MABS recommends that this scheme is replicated in other prisons. To read the full report, please go to [www.ntmabs.org](http://www.ntmabs.org).