

Men in Childcare Annual Report 2014

Meetings of the Network committee

Meetings took place both formally and informally during the year, taking the opportunity provided to meet and discuss the Network around other events; 16/4, 7/6 & 22/7. Also made use of phone, email and social media to maintain regular contact.

Networking events: 14/4 Cork, 7/6 Cork, 2/10 Waterford

In July the Network held a review following the completion of on the 3 year plan 2011-14 and future direction as a group. The [review document](#) captured the work and the challenges and a follow up report documented some key areas for exploration.

Social media

Facebook as of December 2014

Likes: 8,000 likes up from 6,853 in Dec 2013

Engaged: 4,172 people; incl commenting, sharing or liking posts

Reach: 30,000 post reaches in week leading up to Christmas

Twitter was first established in the middle of 2012, primarily as a means of accessing information. Currently we have 432 followers and have sent in excess of 8,000 tweets

Pinterest was established towards the end of 2013 as another social media option and as a means of accessing content for our Facebook page. We have as of Dec 2014 - 86 followers and 11boards, which have had 517 pins and 337 likes.

Blog: We also have a blog which is currently underused.

Networking

There was a European Network meeting in Poland on 24th & 25th September. Although we were not in a position to attend, an outcome of the meeting was to establish a European Facebook Page to raise the profile of MIC. We pointed out that this action had already been taken at the 2010 Euro Meeting in Dublin and that the page Ireland had established had been working in that capacity since that date. This was accepted and a new admin was appointed from Norway. The position is open to others who would like to get involved.

An unexpected outcome of the Administrator position was that we needed to look at when people, particularly people we do not know, or have never met personally, come onboard. Effectively the page could be taken over if a person is given an Admin role, in that they have the power to remove others or change any of the settings on the page. As a result MIC Ireland committee as the originators of the page, took the decision to develop a policy to ensure the page integrity. The draft policy is still being worked on.

David Wright who attended the conference on behalf of the Southampton network published an account of the meeting which gave a good sense of the event;
<http://www.scribd.com/doc/245083599/European-Conference-Krakow-Oct-2014-Report>

Student supports 2011-2014

We had 24 requests on facebook and 25 via email requesting various levels of support from students looking for stats and reading lists to tutors seeking resources.

Damien Walshe spoke about the Network and our role to a group of 18 FETAC 6 students in Waterford in January 2014.

In an effort to assist students with research an email contact list was developed during the year which has 26 men working in the sector, from across the country. This is only circulated when students are specifically looking for male interviewees.

Employment supports

During the year we received 20 employment related queries via social media, email and phone. These varied from men needing support with a specific issue, to publicising vacancies and requests for career advice.

Policy, Public relations and media work

The network received 13 requests via email in this category during the year, we also received 33 via private message on facebook, and the overwhelming number of posts directly to our page wall, also comes under this category. This can number up to a dozen per week.

David King who is a member of Montessori Alliance and has been very supportive of our Network, wrote a number of blogs during the year, one of which caught the public attention on how parents react to his role as a man in childcare. This got a huge reaction via social media and David was also interviewed By RTE's Ryan Tubridy on his radio 2 show.

David'd blog entitled Negative reaction to a Positive thing is at the following link;

<http://www.montessorialliance.ie/2014/03/negative-reaction-to-a-positive-thing-david-king/>

Association of Childhood Professionals Annual conference was held on 7th June 2014. MIC were happy to support the ongoing development and professionalism in the sector. A number of men attended the event and MIC have worked to encourage men to join their local ACP branches which are opening now across the country. More info on ACP at

<http://www.acpireland.com/>

In September we were asked via the Men's Development Network, on behalf of Trinity College, to help identify some dad's of preschool children who would be interested in participating in a focus group on their experiences of parenting. Whilst this was considered outside our normal focus, we participated to the extent of publicising the research and passing the info on directly to men that we knew.

Family Leave Bill Seminar 25th Sept 2014. We were asked to participate in the following seminar and were originally asked to consider making a presentation. Details of the seminar available [here](#).

Mick Kenny featured in Irish Independent Article in November:

<http://www.independent.ie/business/irish/how-the-recession-moved-us-closer-to-gender-balance-30784452.html>

November 2014. Despite the very successful participation of the MIC team in November in 2103, where men grow a moustache for the cancer charity, it was decided, given the work commitments of the Network, that we would not have a team this year, but we did promote it weekly through social media, and in particular the Australian Males in ECE page run by Greg Harvey.

Peoples conversation is a participatory forum aimed at exploring how we as Irish citizens see our society developing in the future. MIC felt it was very important to recognise and promote the caring work that men in the ECE sector do, but also to recognise the caring work of dads and men in general. As such we accepted an invitation to be part of the process and attended the first consultation in Dublin looking at the early years sector on 16th November 2014, and hope to participate further in 2015. More details at <http://peoplesconversation.ie/>

Administration

MIC have been using dropbox as a method of storing information that is accessible to all the committee. This also applies to our other mediums including Facebook, Email, Twitter, Blog etc. However as 2014 progressed it became necessary to revisit the Dropbox solution as it was nearing capacity and would have costed money to expand. Eventually it was decided to move all folders to the gdrive via google, which offers far more significant storage but the same features as Dropbox.

MIC Ireland has been supported administratively by Waterford County Childcare Committee since 2006, including our banking. This however ceased in 2014 as the committee was disbanded and a new company was established. MIC now banks independently and as a consequence policies and procedures will have to be developed to ensure transparency and financial accountability.