



# Sligo Family Resource Centre

## Annual Report 2014

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## Introduction

Sligo Family Resource Centre (FRC) has been in operation since 1995. Based at 49 The Mall, Sligo this FRC is one of 104 FRCs under the FSA Programme based throughout the country.

Mission of Sligo FRC is to:

*support individuals, families and communities without discrimination and in a warm, caring and open environment by identifying changing needs and responding to those needs positively.*

The FRC is currently at the beginning of their three year strategic plan 2015-2017 which is designed to achieve the following objectives all of which are linked to the Túsla Child and Family Agency National Programme Outcomes:

- That individuals, families and groups have access to a range of supports and services that enable and promote participation in society
- That people actively avail of a variety of community-based learning and development opportunities
- That children's holistic development is nourished in a safe, comfortable and fun environment.
- That individuals and families are supported in times of need
- That minority individuals and groups are empowered to participate in their wider community

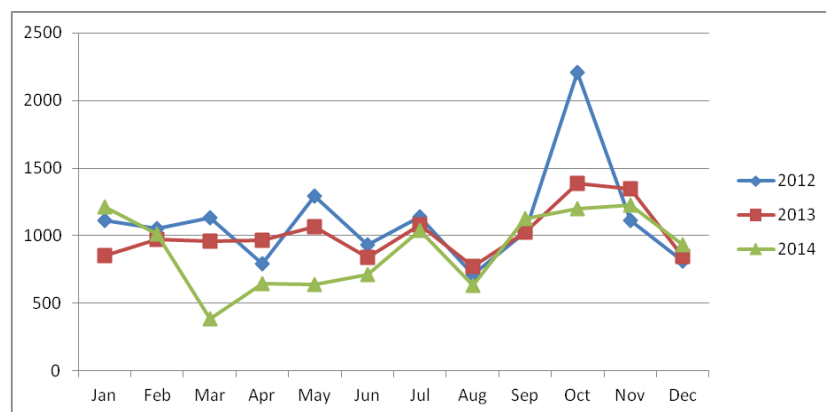
As with other years in the Sligo FRC there were highs and lows. The highlights of the year included the PEACE 3 funding March- September which enabled the development of the Sligo Intercultural Forum and strengthened the work of the Racist Incident Reporting and Support Service, cross border visit to Ballymena and two fun intercultural events, the increase in the work of the Services to Adults with Learning Disabilities with the inclusion of an extra 25 hours and the employment of a new staff member and the increase in hours of an existing member, the recruitment in December of 3 family support workers and a part-time coordinator for the Family Support Service and its expansion into North Leitrim. There was also the great weather for the Summer Camps for 24 very happy children, the festivities around St Patrick's Day and other intercultural events throughout the summer were a great success as well as great fun, The Fleadh came to the FRC in August with fiddle player Brendan Martin (winner of the Fiddler of Dooney 2014) entertaining staff and children. In October the Sligo Intercultural Forum and FRC manager met with Minister Aodhán O' Riordáin, Minister of State at the Department of Justice and Equality and Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht with special responsibility for Equality, New Communities and Culture and in November members of the Board of management and staff visited the Dáil on the invitation of Senator Mark McSharry.

The challenges for 2014 were the issues with the building, the requirement to have the disability cert in order by 2018 and the need to fund-raise for this. We also had to let Deo Laislas Ndakenerwa go when the PEACE 3 funding ended and the struggle to continue with the work that he started in 2013/2014 with the Racist Incident Reporting and Support Service and the Intercultural Forum. On the positive side of all this the board of management and staff did wonderful work in fundraising raising over €2,000 in the Gilooley Hall Cake sale in September, ran in the 10mile Coast to Coast sponsored race also in September and took part in the annual flag day at the end of June. Due to the introduction of new rules in relation to the amalgamation of Community Employment Schemes, Sligo FRC lost the sponsorship to the Sligo Community Childcare Company and the North Connaught Youth and Community Services but we continue to host the participants and they continue to work for us as before.

A statistical analysis of every aspect of Sligo FRC's work is made through the FRC's SPEAK (Strategic Planning Education and Knowledge) recording system annually each year. This annual report is intended to give you a flavour of the various events and activities engaged by the FRC in 2014.

## Information and Services

Sligo FRC welcomes any member of the community to avail of its programmes and services and/or to find out more about other services or opportunities in Sligo. Below is an indication of the footfall in the FRC over the past three years. It peaked in 2012 with 13,333 people and dropped to one of its lowest in 2014 to 10,773 for reasons outlined above.



**Information** is provided through a selection of leaflets, fliers, posters and websites at the front office. Staff can respond to a range of queries through the bank of knowledge built up in “the front office”.

**Administrative support** such as design work, photocopying and printing, a parenting book loan service etc is also available at the Centre.

The **Family Room** provides respite for busy parents and carers who can drop in to comfortable facilities for a bit of time out and a cup of tea. Children can play or read and adults can meet to chat or feed a baby. The **Outdoor Garden/Play area** offers excellent play opportunities and a good meeting point for parents, particularly those who have attended groups or **Footprints Crèche**. Rooms for **Access** hosted 139 visits by 48 families with 37 children. These families can avail of all the facilities outlined as part of these visits.

**Meeting rooms** at the Centre are available for hire at subsidised rates to facilitate community groups and organisations to meet. In 2014, 489 room hire sessions took place at the Centre for meeting or training purposes by the following organisations:

Adoptive Parents Group  
 Danú birth parents support group  
 Al Anon Evening Group (Mon)  
 Al Anon Evening Group (Tues)  
 Art Active Age  
 Parent & Toddler Group  
 Access Visits  
 Sewing class  
 La Léche League  
 HSE Child and Family Services (SAM) meetings  
 Sligo Intercultural Forum

My Baby and Me  
 Shared Voices  
 Upcycling class  
 SEED Project  
 Mentoring Group  
 ETB Child Development  
 Walking Group  
 Cooking on a Budget and household management  
 Computers for beginners  
 Security course  
 Sligo Sling Group

Administrative staff record the numbers accessing the FRC for any service on an annual basis. During 2014, there were 10,773 visits to the FRC recorded. These figures do not include the outreach work carried out by the FRC in family support and support to adults with learning disabilities.

## Community based education, training and social integration opportunities

Sligo FRC works with Sligo Education and Training Board to provide a variety of training opportunities in the community. During the year, 91 parents/carers/grandparents and 115 toddlers attended 37 sessions of the **Parent and Toddler Drama** with Deirdre Gaule in the FRC, a programme of music and drama to develop toddlers' language and movement. While in Caltragh Community Centre, on Friday mornings, 54 parents/carers/grandparents and 70 toddlers attended 29 Parent and Toddler Drama sessions with Deirdre.

Associated with the drama group is the annual Christmas party with Santa and his helpers in December and the summer picnic which took place in Doorley Park this year.

The **Monday Walking Group** which is led by Alex Street, continued on a regular basis during 2014. 29 adults availed of the support and companionship of other walkers throughout the year.

The **Adoptive Parents Group** met only once during 2014 but it was enough to organise their annual Summer social gatherings in Lough Key Forrest Park in July which was well attended. Sligo FRC organised a seminar run by Mary O' Connor for Adoptive and Foster parents in the Sligo Education Centre in February attended by 32 adoptive and foster parents as well as social workers working in the area of adoption and fostering.

The **Birth Parent Support Group** met 6 times in 2014 at the Centre, facilitated by the Sligo FRC manager. Women from as far as Galway, Mayo, Donegal, Monaghan and a woman home on holidays from abroad as well as women from Sligo attended in 2014. New mothers continue to join this group which has been running now since 2005.

Over the year 17 women attended the **Sewing/Upcycling Classes** with Anne Culkin. The FRC introduced a new class **Cooking on an Budget with Household Management** which was attended by 7 women. These classes were about developing skills among women of diverse backgrounds, from Globe House and Sligo's settled community. Both of these were funded by Sligo ETB.

Sligo FRC ran two **Summer Camps** during July for 24 children aged 4-6 years. The children were recruited from the Sligo community including Globe House, to facilitate integration during the programme. The children had a magnificent week of trips to Calry Pet Farm, the garda station, Fire Station, Doorly Park and Centre based activities including arts and crafts, messy play, face-painting and music and dance.

**Computers for Beginners** was held in the FRC in the Spring of 2014 with funding from the Sligo LEADER partnership through the Benefit4 Programme. 4 sessions took place, attended by 4 adults.

Sligo FRC took part in the **St Patrick's Day Parade** for the second time in 2014 providing an opportunity to promote and highlight the Centre's work. There was a flurry of activity during the weeks prior to the parade pulling together our banners, posters and decorating prams and buggies.

## Family Support Service Including Footprints Drop-in Crèche

The **Family Support Service** is provided in the homes of families in Sligo town and the surrounding county, as far as and including Co Leitrim. The length or extent of support depends on the needs of families, it can

be a short time, e.g. helping a mum after the birth of a baby, or long term, e.g. supporting a family who are not coping due to bereavement, addiction or learning difficulties. Support is frequently provided in the form of practical household management, parenting skills, budgeting, nutrition, childcare and homework support.

Three part-time Family Support Workers funded by the CFA and four CE staff funded by the DSP supported 42 families in 2014. The Family Support Workers support families at all levels of the Hardiker scale while the CE participants support those at levels 1 and 2. In December 2014, we received funding from Túsla to recruit and employ three more workers – these include two family support workers (17.5 hours/week) and a family support service co-ordinator (16 hours/week). They are now working with a family in Manorhamilton, north Leitrim.

Referrals to the service were made by the Social Work Team in Sligo, Carrick on Shannon and Tubbercurry, social work adult with learning disability; public health nurses; Meithal, counsellor for special needs; Community Rehabilitation and Recovery Service; Autism Services; Early Intervention Team; Sligo General Hospital; HSE Psychology Dept; Molloway House; HSE Service Allocation Meetings (SAM) Foróige and Home Youth Liaison Service.

The Family Support service, including Footprints crèche (below) is funded by the Túsla Child and Family Agency, Pobal and Dept of Social Protection.

**Footprints Crèche** is a service open to all families in Sligo and the surrounding area. It provides sessional care for up to 10 children up to 6 years of age on a once off or continuous agreed basis to facilitate parents to attend appointments, training, counselling etc.

Last year 134 children from 104 families used the crèche. Of the families attending 27% were from ethnic/cultural minority backgrounds, 12% lone parents, 76% were in receipt of a social welfare payment. Footprints has a high staff: child ratio and is affordable with 3 bands of payment based on ability to pay. Staff have built strong links over the years with key referral agencies to ensure families with particular needs can access the crèche service.

### **Services to Adult with a Learning Disability**

In this service we have six support workers, working twenty hours/week; twenty five hours/week, twelve and a half hours/week, seven and a half hours/week, six hours/week and five hours/week giving 76 hours of

Sligo FRC now has six part-time support workers on varying hours and one part-time co-ordinator working in this Service. The one-to-one support to four adults with learning disabilities living in the community is in the form of addressing issues such as healthy eating and lifestyles, managing a household, managing a budget, personal hygiene and self care while the drop-in Thursday lunchtime club give adults with a learning disability somewhere warm and friendly to go.

The Coffee Dock café based at Markievicz House, provided training opportunities in a social enterprise for 18 adults with a learning disability in 2014.

### **Working with Cultural Minorities**

The Mentoring project involves the training of local community volunteers to mentor people who currently live in Globe House. This was set up in late 2012 and continued into 2014. In 2014 there residents of Globe House met volunteers and shared a meal together in the FRC.

Sligo FRC continues to be actively involved in the work of Diversity Sligo which is a group made up of volunteers and professionals to support asylum seekers living in Globe House.

## **Racist Indecent Reporting and Support Service**

This service was established in 2013 and continued to be well supported by other agencies in Sligo including the HSE, Gardaí, ETB, Sligo Education Centre, Sligo Borough Council, Sligo IT, Sligo General Hospital, Domestic Violence Advocacy Service, Sligo Rape Crisis Centre, Lifestart Sligo, Sligo Social Services, Sligo LEADER Partnership, Diversity Sligo, Aremoja, Sligo/Leitrim Filipino Association, Sligo Kurdish Community and Sligo Travellers Support Group.

By the end of 2014, 48 racist incidents were reported to the Service.

In 2014 the focus of this work was the support of the Sligo Intercultural Forum. 42 people from 28 different nationalities took part in four weeks capacity training (2 evenings/week). There was one cross-border visit to Ballymena attended by staff of the FRC and members of SIF. Sligo FRC and SIF organised two cultural events one in the Avalon Centre on St Patrick's Day and one in the Gilooley Hall on 02 July. Over 200 people including children attended each event. The PEACE 3 funding ended at the end of September and there was a closing ceremony which was well attended by local people from the minority as well as the majority population.

In February, the work of the Service was presented at the visit to Sligo of representatives from the US Embassy who were guests of the Sligo PEACE III partnership. Board member, Nike Ogun presented the Sligo Intercultural Forum.

## **Representation and Inter-agency Initiatives**

Sligo FRC is represented on a range of committees and boards in Sligo in order to represent the needs of the families and to bring about policy and practice changes which it is hoped will improve the lives of families. Some of this work involves presenting views and developing policies, at other times it involves creating new joint projects and initiatives. During 2014, Sligo FRC was involved in the following committees/groups:

### **Regional and National Organisations**

- FRC Regional Network
- FRC National Forum
- FRC Administrators Network
- FRC Co-ordinators' Regional Network
- Early Childcare Ireland

### **Local Organisations**

- Sligo County Childcare Committee
- Sligo Community Childcare company Ltd
- Diversity Sligo
- Disability Network
- HSE Service Allocation Meetings
- North Sligo Youth and Community Service
- Sligo ETB
- St Attracta's Adoption Agency
- Túsla Child and Family Agency
- Dyslexia Association Sligo
- Alive to Thrive
- Sligo Leader Partnership
- Education Working Group
- Training Links
- Public Partnership Network

## **Voluntary Board of Directors and Staff Team**

Sligo FRC is managed by a voluntary board of directors who oversee the work of the Centre and strategically guide the services. A number of full and part-time staff are employed to manage and

implement the work and ensure services are provided to the highest standard. Sixteen staff are employed through a CE training scheme.

**Chairperson:** Ruth Campbell  
**Vice Chairperson:** Sonya Coffey  
**Treasurer:** Lucia Macari  
**Secretary:** Pauric Cuffee

**Directors:** Deirdre Gaule, Martina Kilgallon,  
 Mary Waters Chris Davis, Bernie Davey, Nike  
 Ogun, Don Watts, Margaret O' Connor

The voluntary board of management comprised 12 volunteers in 2014. The executive sub-group meets for employment/staff matters or specific issues. Sub-groups of 2-3 board members are established for specific, short term pieces of work in order to share the load and they've proved to be effective.

### **Staff Team**

Elizabeth King	Manager (job sharing)
Catherine McGlinchey	Manager (job sharing) and Mentoring support worker (7 hours/week)
Cathy McGowan	Administrator
Charlotte Bussmann	Family Support Childcare Co-coordinator
Bridie Walsh	FÁS Supervisor (job sharing)
Sarah Cleasby	FÁS Supervisor (job sharing)
Rose McCrann	Footprints Crèche Supervisor
Fiona Brennan	Coordinator of Services for Adults with Learning Disabilities (14 hours/week)
Deo Ladislav Ndakenerwa	Coordinator Racist Incidents Reporting and Support Service (left in Sept)
Sue Coleman	Home Support Worker (25 hrs/week)
Colette Sheerin	Home Support Worker (20 hrs/week)
Karen Casey	Home Support Worker (10 hrs/week) and Coffee Dock supervisor (10 hours/week)
Ann Boyd	Social Club Leader (7.5 hrs/week)
Maureen Scanlon	Social Club Leader (5 hrs/week)
Amy Gerrity	Transition Support Worker (20 hrs/week)
Ann McPadden	Support Worker (6 hrs/week)
Esther Mooney	Support Worker (25 hours/week)
Patricia Coleman	Support Worker (12.5 hours/week)
Marion Roycroft	Coffee Dock supervisor (25 hours/week)

We moved over the administration (4), home support workers (3) and caretakers (2) participants to the North Connaught Youth and Community Service at the beginning of August.

### **Student:**

Ailysa Waller was a student on placement for 12 weeks from Sligo IT studying Social Care. She was involved with the women's fitness classes, children's art, shared reading and library in Globe House and is putting together a newsletter for DS at present.

Ramona Dowdigan BSc in Public Health and Health Promotion Rahmona is working in the library in GH and has a walking group from there on a Wed morning – attendance varies from 0-4 women but she is happy to continue with it for the present.

Keeba Cham did a one week placement and did the preparations for the St Patrick's Day parade.

### **FÁS Community Employment Scheme Participants (2013/2014), 19.5hrs/week**

**Administration and** Alex Streete, Rita Finan, Cecile Lamy, Eileen

**Childcare and Home  
Support Workers**

Michelle Cohn, Natasha Mulligan, Geraldine  
Ryan, Kate McCarthy, Maureen Scanlon, Frank  
Ludwig, Anita Murrin, Danielle Mullin, Sarah  
Ward, Martina Foley, Tina Meehan,

**Caretaker/Cleaner**

John McLoughlin, Richard Deignan

Five childcare CE staff were moved from being employed by Sligo FRC to the employment of the Sligo County Childcare Company Ltd. in December 2013 and in August 2014 the administration, reception, caretaker and home support staff moved into the employment of the North Connaught Youth and Community Services. The two job sharing CE supervisors also moved to NCYCS. They are all still housed in the Sligo FRC and continue to work for the FRC.

**Trip to the Dail** – took place on 19 November – 3 board members and 4 staff attended – enjoyed by all!

**Minister Aodhán O Riordán's visit 17 October 2014:** Catherine attended the launch of the SEED project in the Sligo Park with the Minister. Liz met the minister for discussion as part of a group from Diversity Sligo and also organised for him to meet with the Sligo Intercultural Forum.

**Training undertaken by staff**

Training undertaken by all staff included:

CE participants induction

ASSIST training

Capacity Building for people from a cultural or ethnic minority

Caring for children with additional needs

Child Development

Child Protection Training

Childcare Education and Plan

Communication

Community Development – an introduction

Cultural competency training

Early childcare Education

Fire Prevention Training

Food Hygiene

Induction to Family Support and footprints crèche

Literacy and Numeracy for 0-3 year olds

Manual Handling

Occupational first Aid

Subsidiary Protection Training

Summer-camp leader training skills

**Sourcing Funding**

AS can be seen by the number of application for funding submitted - not including reports for FSA (SPEAK and Progress Report) and Service Level Agreement meetings with the HSE an enormous amount of time is



dedicated to sourcing funding each year - not all of it successful.

Community Employment Scheme for 2014-2015 – (this year we lost our CE scheme to the Sligo community childcare company Limited and North Connaught Youth and community Services due to changes at national level in this programme whereby we had to amalgamate with other local CE sponsors.)

European Refugee Fund (€78,000) unsuccessful

Community Foundation of Ireland (€5,000) unsuccessful

Katherine Howard Foundation – in collaboration with Sligo FRC, Lifestart and Sligo Education Centre (€20,000) successful – received: €3,000

Parents Plus in collaboration with other 5 FRCs and 2 Lifestarts in Sligo/Leitrim unsuccessful

ECB hours 20 home management 20 community development 20 creative studies - successful

PEACE III Tender: to continue RIRS project – successful

PEACE III small grants: to run the integration project for 6 months (unsuccessful)

Fund for Ireland: to run a community mothers /parenting programme (unsuccessful)

National Lottery: to continue Mentoring Project (successful)

National Lottery: to fund a worker to collate racist incidents (unsuccessful)

Grow it Yourself: for the FRC garden (unsuccessful)

Grow it Yourself: for Diversity Sligo (unsuccessful)

Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (with the other 3 Co. Sligo based FRCs,) did not submit as the as lead agency in this consortium pulled out prior to submission

Sligo County childcare committee – for parent and toddler group in Caltragh – successful

Comparative figures of service users from 2014 are about the same as 2013 despite the building being closed to groups for four weeks early in the year and the substantial cuts to funding from all our major funders (i.e. Tusla Child and Family Agency and DSP).