

**Age &
Opportunity**

Life is for
Living.

Annual Report 2013

Age & Opportunity
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Chairperson's Statement

I wish to congratulate the staff, supporters and champions of Age & Opportunity for another year of successes and of inspiring people to reach their full potential as they age.

It has been a great pleasure to see the continued growth of large events like Bealtaine, the Go for Life Games and Samhain. I believe that these events continue to be strong not just because of Age & Opportunity's professional approach and dedication but also because of the great care that is taken to make sure that the events are being driven by older people, our needs and our desires as we age. Fourteen counties participated in the Go for Life Games in 2013 which was an event filled with energy and enthusiasm from participants and volunteers alike. The next few years will see Go for Life grow into one of Ireland's most significant amateur sporting events.



Age & Opportunity are looking forward to expanding our accredited offerings across our Education and Training programmes. It has been great to see the development and initial delivery of the new Creative Exchanges, a programme that can make a significant difference to the quality of life for people living in care settings. Creative Exchanges is a programme which can lead to a FETAC / QQI award.

Age & Opportunity continued our closer working with two other age sector organisations – Active Retirement Ireland and Third Age – under the banner of Active Ageing Partnership (AAP), a partnership which we hope will see real improvements for older people in Ireland and for their level of participation in society. All three organisations are also working strategically and at local level with the Age Friendly Ireland programme, and Project Lifecourse from NUI Galway.

Delivering large-scale events, developing education and closer partnerships all form part of our new strategic plan for Age & Opportunity for the coming three years to 2016. During the year, the Board met 7 times, and inter alia, engaged in a strategic planning process. I would like to thank the board members and staff of Age & Opportunity for their contributions to this and the year's other achievements. We have been striving to ensure financial sustainability and I am delighted that we have secured funding from the Atlantic Philanthropies for the coming three years to underpin the type of grassroots development work for which we have become so well-known.

We said goodbye to a number of long-serving staff members this year as part of our voluntary redundancy scheme. We also said farewell to board member Pat Mulvee in July. We thank them all for their hard work and dedication. We are also delighted to welcome new board member Fionnuala Hanrahan.

Thanks again to everyone during 2013 who has continued to inspire people to live healthy and fulfilling lives.

John Hynes, Chairperson

CEO's Statement

As we complete Age & Opportunity's 25th year, we can be rightly proud of everything that we have achieved as well as being enthusiastic about our strategic direction as laid out in our plan for the coming three years.

Having created a significant number of innovative training approaches over the years, our receipt of FETAC / QQI approval brings an assurance of quality to the work that we do. This approach is set to continue into our new strategy as we work with our core facilitators and providers to continue to deliver high-quality facilitation and training. Also, our commitment to addressing the needs of people who are marginalised or socially excluded, with the learning from our Get Vocal experiences, will lead us in new and interesting directions.

The Get Vocal programme with its emphasis on advocacy for older people concluded in 2013. It resulted in local groups being represented on the boards of local development companies, county partnership groups, Local Authority committees and Older Persons' Forums. A significant publication was also produced on the issue of ageing and homelessness.

Our arts and culture strand continues to engage and challenge, providing ways to consider and discuss ageing and the issues of ageing but also to reveal the real lives of older people in Ireland, beyond the stereotypes. Bealtaine has continued to spread internationally with Dawn Choruses in Spain, France, Italy and the UK. Our new Samhain events, exploring the darker side of ageing, are also pushing into difficult yet exciting areas and our work on Azure and Creative Exchanges assert that creative ageing is for everyone, even when their access is hampered by living in care settings or because they are experiencing dementia.

The publication of the Healthy Ireland strategy has validated Age & Opportunity's approach to promoting individual health and wellbeing through physical activity. It is also recognising that the type of community building that Go for Life has engaged with is a vital component of any healthy strategy. Our physical activity and sport strand, through Go for Life, continues to work with a range of stakeholders in the ageing sector across every county in Ireland. We continue to work towards a National Games Festival as the high-point of the Go for Life year and to work with and support a wide variety of groups delivering sport and physical activity into their communities.

Our education and active citizenship strand continues to create ways in which people can continue on a journey of lifelong learning, personal growth and civic engagement. The evaluation of programmes such as The Community Effect is showing the impact that education can have on active citizenship and on the benefit to communities of engaged older citizens. Also, delivering Creative Exchanges is affecting the perceptions and approaches of those who work with older people.

The National Positive Ageing Strategy, which Age & Opportunity has helped to shape, is also reinforcing Age & Opportunity's approach, recognising that the future of ageing in Ireland must ensure that older people's voices continue to be a part of the emerging agenda and to be reflected in both policy and

practice. At an international level, this message is just as valid and the appointment of Helen Campbell as a Vice-President of AGE Platform Europe will help with spreading that message.

I would like to acknowledge the support of our major funders in 2013: the Health Service Executive, the Irish Sports Council, the Arts Council, the Atlantic Philanthropies and the Community Foundation for Ireland. Financial sustainability is important to us, those we support and those we work with. We continue to explore ways to ensure our sustainability into the future, without sacrificing the long-term work required to engage other people who are marginalised or socially excluded.

Our programmes could not happen without the support and cooperation of hundreds of partner organisations across the country, such as local authorities, Partnership companies, Education and Training Boards, libraries, Local Sports Partnerships, cultural institutions, health promotion units, Active Retirement groups, Family Resource Centres, care settings, government and public agencies, voluntary and community organisations, NGOs and people who are willing to engage and to organise others to do so. It is these organisations that are at the heart of the Age & Opportunity model and we thank you.

Catherine Rose, Chief Executive Officer

Arts and Culture

Bealtaine

The Bealtaine festival, celebrating creativity as we age, is a month-long nationwide festival of arts and creative activity for, by and about older people. In 2013, it was in its eighteenth year. Bealtaine is a collaborative festival involving all art forms. Age & Opportunity invites participation by partners all around the country, delivers a core programme and promotes the festival through the media. It also brokers innovative relationships across sectors encouraging and facilitating arts organisations to provide increased access to older audiences while encouraging older people to give expression to their experience by engaging in the arts. Thus the festival consists of a core programme curated by the Bealtaine team at Age & Opportunity and a series of local and regional events organised by partners drawn from a range of different sectors.

Bealtaine aims to be both a celebration and to represent a challenge to societal assumptions and stereotypes of what it is like to age in Ireland and highlights the diverse contribution of older Irish people. Bealtaine seeks to engage all older people in the arts, regardless of background, circumstances or ability. Bealtaine also aims to be a resource to the arts community, sharing learning and promoting good practice in engaging with older people and in learning from older artists.

During 2013, the Board reviewed the approach to Bealtaine to take cognisance of the reduced funding available to the festival and to the organisation generally, and a medium-term plan for the festival was developed, which also addressed significant personnel changes that were anticipated in the course of the year. Bealtaine identified cost reductions by leveraging relationships with organisations that could provide direct or in-kind support. Increased use of online registration by Bealtaine organisers also enabled the festival to make it easier for organisers to register their events with it and, thereby, reducing some administration costs.

Bealtaine in Figures	2013
Number of participants (estimate based on feedback from organisers)	118,429
Number of events (estimate based on feedback from organisers)	3,371
Number of organisers	647
Number of counties represented	27 (including Antrim)

Highlights from the 2013 festival programme include:

- **Complaints Choir:** A performance by Ireland's first 'Complaints Choir' in Meeting House Square, Temple Bar, Dublin was organised in collaboration with the Royal Irish Academy of Music and it opened the festival, transforming the nation's moans and groans (which the public had been asked to submit) into song lyrics and into a choral performance
- **Dawn Chorus:** In its fourth year, the Dawn Chorus project involved 22 choirs/choral groups in Ireland, singing at dawn (or thereabouts) on the last weekend in May and, for the first time, also involved choirs from Europe organising Dawn Chorus events which took place in Barcelona, Turin, Carhaix-Plouguer in France and London. This arose from the international networking that Bealtaine has done over many years and, in particular, as a result of the network maintained since Age & Opportunity hosted the international conference 'Creating a New Old' in 2012 and was made possible by preparation of a toolkit 'How to Organise a Dawn Chorus' which was translated into four European languages
- **Wandering Methods:** Organised in collaboration with the Office of Public Works (OPW) and Craftspace (UK), Wandering Methods involved two professional artists working with a small group of local older people using 'slow craft'. Slow craft is about teaching craft skills followed by a prolonged period of practice so that people gain a higher level of expertise that cannot be achieved in a 'class'. For the OPW, the work created is all based on the heritage venue (in this case, Rathfarnham Castle) thereby bringing the details and history of the building to life in new artefacts
- **Bealtaine Theatre Tour:** 'The Man in the Woman's Shoes' written and performed by Mikel Murfi, based on the stories of older people in Sligo, was toured to 18 venues in 2013 and there were four post-show question-and-answer sessions. The play was subsequently nominated for an Irish Times Theatre Award

Bealtaine Organisers	2013
National Cultural Institutions	10
National Arts Organisations	7
Local Authority Arts Offices	19
Local Authority, other	5
Regional Arts Centres	113
Cultural/Heritage Organisation	21
Public Library Branch	129
Retired/Older People's Community Group	200
Care Centre	143
Total	647

Age & Opportunity is fortunate to have such a range of partners in Bealtaine and that so many of them continue to expand their Bealtaine programmes and to deepen the opportunities offered for participation.

Partners include ten National Cultural Institutions such as the Irish Museum of Modern Art and the National Library and a further seven national arts organisations also participated. Many County Council Arts Offices have participated in Bealtaine since the inception of the festival. Among the nineteen that participated in 2013, many ran with extensive programmes. These included Donegal (over 80 events in a range of venues from libraries to daycare centres and including a Dawn Chorus at Lough Eske); North & South Tipperary County Councils and Tipperary Libraries (which coordinated Bealtaine events across the county including workshops, film, theatre, exhibitions and music); County Clare (involving free lunchtime concerts by prominent Clare musicians throughout the month and a theme of 'emigration' informing a number of events including a photography exhibition of images of older Irish emigrants living in New York).

Over 130 regional arts and cultural venues participated with many new organisations taking part for the first time. Among those centres that expanded their Bealtaine programme for 2012 were the Model in Sligo, Roscommon Arts Centre and the Butler Gallery, Kilkenny. The Gallery of Photography collaborated with key venues around the country on a project in which people were asked to share old family photography to build a new democratic archive.

As usual, public libraries around the country offered an inspiring range of diverse workshops and events during Bealtaine and some 130 branches were involved. Care centres and hospitals were well-represented among organisers (143 organisers) and their events ranged from one-off events to month-long programmes. The biggest group of organisers was local community groups including Active Retirement Groups (200 organisers).

International links continued to develop during 2013, as Bealtaine maintained its international reputation, with arts professionals from Australia, the UK and Canada visiting during Bealtaine 2013. Bealtaine was also presented at conferences throughout the year in Denmark, the Netherlands, Portugal and Finland.

Funders of Bealtaine 2013 included the Arts Council of Ireland, whose Annual Programming Grant makes the festival possible. The festival also received a Travel & Training Award from the Arts Council. An award from the Irish Presidency of the Council of the European Union allocation to the Arts Council made Dawn Chorus possible. Home Instead sponsored the Bealtaine newspaper. In-kind investment was continued from Dublin Bus; Musgrave retailers, who provided significant distribution of the Bealtaine newspaper through their Centra stores; and Independent Radio Sales, who provided free advertising on a number of stations.

Azure 2013

Following the successful pilot at the Butler Gallery and an international roundtable meeting at IMMA in 2012, the Azure project continued in 2013. The Butler Gallery represented Azure at the Turner Prize during the Derry City of Culture and continues to deliver facilitated sessions. The Azure Steering Group was unsuccessful in an application to the European Fund for Innovation in Dementia (EFID) to fund a capacity building training programme in Ireland. While this was disappointing, it is still the intention of the Steering Group to deliver this training by commissioning the team at the Museum Of Modern Art (MoMA) in New York City. Age & Opportunity will continue to look for funds to establish a pool of expertise in Ireland by offering the MoMA training to museum and gallery curating staff.

Samhain 2013

Following on the successful initial collaboration with the National Museum of Ireland (NMI) and Poetry Ireland in 2012, Age & Opportunity planned a more ambitious Samhain programme this year, particularly in the light of its 25th anniversary. This year, Age & Opportunity provided funding towards Samhain which was supplemented by additional funding from NMI and Poetry Ireland. This allowed the partners to hire a Project Manager (Aimée van Wylick) to oversee the overall production, liaise with the partners and have responsibility for the artistic integrity of the programme.

Samhain 2013 had three main elements: The Samhain Trail, lunchtime performances and the main Samhain concert. The Samhain Trail was produced by a group made up of workshop participants and Cultural Companions who attended a day-long workshop facilitated by NMI and Poetry Ireland resulting in a curated trail of objects from the pre-Christian collection at the museum and accompanied by pieces of poetry.

The main Samhain concert included performances from workshop participants who had worked with composer Elaine Agnew over ten weeks to jointly compose a new piece of music which they performed at the event and a poetry performance produced in collaboration with Pat Boran of Poetry Ireland. It also included performances from the Tonnta Choir conducted by Robbie Blake and singer Nóirín Ní Riain who led the audience on a musical procession through the museum for the finale in the Rotunda where Tonnta sang the Tallis Miserere and finished with the Mozart Dona Nobis Pacem which was sung in a round, filling the rotunda with music.

Stakeholders

A new Arts & Culture Steering Committee was formed in 2013 with representatives from organisations who make up significant arts partners for Age & Opportunity. In terms of the delivery of the 2013 festival, Bealtaine continued a policy of building strategic relationships with partners to share costs and to diversify income sources, especially for the core programme. It also continued to develop relationships with supporters who could provide in-kind support especially with respect to festival marketing, something that has enabled Bealtaine to maintain and extend the festival's reach.

Physical Activity and Sport

Go for Life aims to involve more older adults in all aspects of sport and physical activity more often. The programme operates through three main strands: Small Grant Scheme, Leadership Programme and Targeted Initiatives Programme. There is also a physical activity awareness programme. During 2013, the Go for Life programme directly involved approximately 41,000 people in physical activity and sport. This is made up of those reached through the various strands of the work, principally the grant scheme and the PALs peer leadership programme.

Total participants across all Go for Life strands	41,000
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Small Grant Scheme

In 2013, the Small Grant Scheme was in its thirteenth year. The amount allocated was €298,555 and it brings the total amount allocated under this scheme since 2001 to €4,209,325. A record number of grants were processed and allocated to groups in all 26 counties by a sub-committee established by the Go for Life Steering Committee. There were 1,009 grants allocated in 2013 and they will be used to purchase equipment and pursue activity programmes. Grant allocations were announced by Minister Michael Ring, Minister of State for Tourism and Sport, at the end of November. An evaluation of the impact of the scheme is conducted annually. The grant scheme will benefit 27,000 people, and so this represents an investment of €11 per person. Furthermore, previous research suggests that this investment will be subsidised by the vast majority of the participants themselves.

National Grant Scheme 2013	No. of Grants	Total Participants
Older groups funded by National Grant Scheme	1,009	27,000

Leadership Programme

Under Go for Life's unique model of peer leadership/active citizenship, approximately 2,000 Physical Activity Leaders (or PALs) have been trained over the last 13 years and approximately 1,200 of them are currently working on an ongoing basis to involve groups of older people to become more active. There are trainers and tutors nationwide supporting these leaders and their groups. During 2013, there were 58 workshops for PALs (including training for new PALs, refresher workshops for existing PALs and workshops for Community PALs). These figures below do not take into account Go for Life-inspired activities organised by local agencies such as Sportsfests organised by Local Sports Partnerships or Local Authorities.

Ongoing Physical Activity Leadership (PALs) 2013	No. of Events	Total Participants
Based on having trained 2,000 PALs of whom 1,200 are estimated to be active	Each PAL works in an ongoing way with an average of 10 people	12,000

Targeted Initiatives Programme

Through the Go for Life Targeted Initiatives Programme, Age & Opportunity continues to target older adults who are not members of social groups or who are at risk of social isolation. This includes the Fitline Project, which aims to support individuals who are not members of groups, to get more active using telephone support. At the end of 2013, there were 235 people registered with the service. Fitline ran a number of events to support mentors during 2013 and there are 11 active mentors. During 2013, a new information system was introduced to streamline the Fitline process. Go for Life also worked with a group of residents from Respond! Housing supported by Waterford Sports Partnership who attended a dance workshop and participated in the Go for Life Games in Dublin in June. Go for Life also contributed to an initiative designed to train health workers from within the Traveller community to lead walks with older Travellers. This was organised by Wexford Sports Partnership with South Wexford Traveller Community Health Programme and it also involved the Irish Heart Foundation.

Building on the two competitive events held in 2012 (in Dublin and Kilkenny), another Go for Life Games was held in June in the DCU sports complex and supported by HSE Lottery funds. In 2013, the numbers attending were 180 people, which was more than double the numbers that attended the Dublin event in 2012. Participants representing Carlow, Cork, South Dublin, Dublin City, Fingal, Dun Laoghaire/Rathdown, Kildare, Kilkenny, Meath, Waterford, Wexford and Wicklow had come through qualification rounds organised by the Local Sports Partnerships and HSE Health Promotion Offices in these areas. Go for Life had supported 19 workshops and qualification events in the lead up to the June Games. There are plans to further develop the Games building up to inclusion of 30 areas in 2015 with qualifiers at province level.

Participation – Leadership and Targeted Initiatives 2013	Events	Participants
PALs training	37	140
PALs Dance (existing PALs)	10	246
Community PALs (new)	9	73
Refresher workshops for PALs	2	57
Sportsfests Supported by GfL	6	442
Games	20 (includes qualifiers and workshops)	767
Fitline	5 workshops 1,000+ phone calls	235
Total		2,008

Awareness and Research

The annual Go for Life newsletter was published in the winter of 2013 and a DVD about the 2013 Games was produced for promotional purposes. Posters, leaflets and factsheets continued to be distributed. Eight Go for Life activity sessions were held in Wicklow as part of the Irish Times Healthy Towns initiative and seven public awareness presentations were made by core Go for Life staff and tutors.

Go for Life staff worked with academics from Waterford Institute of Technology, University College Cork, University of Ulster and Dublin City University and, with those partners, made a successful funding application to CARDI. The research, to be published in 2014, will examine the relationship between physical activity and health status in older adults in Ireland, north and south.

Stakeholders

The Go for Life Steering Committee includes representatives of other organisations in the age-sector as well as academics and medical/technical practitioners in the field of sport and physical activity. Go for Life also works closely with a range of partners especially within the Health Service Executive and the network of Local Sports Partnerships who are crucial to the programme's development and delivery. Partnerships have been established at national and local level with funding partners as well as general collaborators. Other organisations with which Go for Life has formed collaborative partnerships include Respond Housing Association, Waterford Institute of Technology, the GAA Social Initiative, local authorities, local development organisations, Family Resource Centres, care centres and local groups of

older people. These partnerships enable the delivery of the Go for Life programme nationally and locally.

Go for Life was represented in 2013 on the Dublin City Sports Network, the Get Ireland Walking Steering Group and the working group for Active and Healthy Ageing.

Education and Active Citizenship

During 2013, Age & Opportunity's sustainability strategy continued to focus on developing skills in education, training and consultancy that can generate income. This capitalises on existing Age & Opportunity courses and initiatives and on the experience gained of working with different partners and audiences.

There was an emphasis on reviewing and quality assurance of existing courses and delivery methods during 2013 and Age & Opportunity carried out a number of reviews of existing courses and delivery models to achieve the following:

- Two programmes were validated by QQI (Quality & Qualifications Ireland) on the National Framework of Qualifications: 'Leading Together' (which will be one of the core courses of the three-year 'Get Engaged' project that is part of the Atlantic Philanthropies-proposed funding for 2014); and 'Creative Exchanges' (which trains people working in care centres to facilitate creative engagement by residents and clients)
- Two courses were submitted for QQI validation with a focus on facilitation/training skills ('Train the Trainer'; and 'Group Facilitation and Assessing Learning') as a quality assurance measure relative to the existing panel of facilitators
- Age & Opportunity's capacity to deliver training in-house at its offices was increased by obtaining and upgrading an appropriate room and 'The Community Effect' course was delivered in-house in the revamped training facility
- Existing courses and their resource materials were reviewed and updated. Age & Opportunity also provided two facilitator support days; one in Dublin and the other in Ennis

The model of delivery of courses needed review in order to achieve the required level of quality assurance standards; to become financially more sustainable; and to be able to roll-out the new three-year 'Get Engaged' project in 2014. An operational plan to address quality assurance issues as part of the organisation's support to both providers and facilitators was developed. This has involved engaging facilitators across the range of courses in the process of consultation around this issue. From that process, it is hoped to put in place a new quality-approved panel of facilitators who have demonstrated that they deliver high-quality facilitation and training. This will be the panel to deliver courses within the 'Get Engaged' project.

New courses on which work focused during the year were 'Leading Together', 'Creative Exchanges' and two courses proposed for the workplace ('AgeWise Workplace Programme for Managers' and an 'AgeWise Workplace Programme for Employees'):

- Following FETAC accreditation, 'Creative Exchanges' was piloted and an evaluation process was put in place carried out by University of Ulster. Sixteen people participated in the pilot course in the autumn which was delivered at the Irish Museum of Modern Art (IMMA). The ultimate aim of this course is to improve quality of life for long-term care residents and it builds on the

experience of delivering the arts-in-care project in the past. The development and piloting of the course is being funded by the Community Foundation for Ireland and it will be rolled out more widely during 2014

- 'Leading Together' was developed and accredited
- Development started on new courses focused on the workplace, aiming to create a workplace which is recognised as a great place to work for all ages, raise awareness of the benefits of an intergenerational workforce and promote the value of older people within the workplace
- In addition, work is being developed on a personal development course for older people with intellectual disability in response to several requests from agencies working in this area

Age & Opportunity provided consultancy to some local authorities. Fingal was prominent among them, where it resulted in a range of training being offered to older people, including bespoke training, 'Having Your Say'; 'The Community Effect' run with the Baldoyle Men's Shed Project; and a motivational talk on Taking Stock of Your Life given at the AGM of the Fingal Older People's Forum. There was also consultation in relation to Skerries Age Friendly Town.

Age & Opportunity continued to deliver well-established education programmes – Ageing with Confidence, Taking Stock, AgeWise, the Community Effect. As is the case with all Age & Opportunity courses delivered by external facilitators following the model pursued to date, the figures for the ultimate number of participants in courses is dependent on returns from facilitators, which are not always completed.

Ageing with Confidence courses	2013
Total number of courses delivered by new and existing facilitators	20
Number of counties participating in workshops	5
Total attendees (approx)	238
Location: Clare, Dublin, Galway, Meath, Wicklow	

The Community Effect	2013
Total number of courses delivered	5
Number of counties participating in courses	3
Total attendees (approx)	55
Location: Dublin, Wexford & Kildare	

Taking Stock (delivered to Trainers)	2013
Total number of courses delivered	4
Number of counties participating in courses	1
Total attendees (approx)	49 Trainers who will in turn impact on a larger number of participants
Location: Cork, Limerick	

Creative Exchanges	2013
Pilot programme completed in Nov 2013	1
Total attendees (approx)	16
Location: Dublin	

AgeWise	2013
Workshops	15
Talks	2
Total	17
Attendance	approx.
	261
6 Counties: Cork, Dublin, Galway, Mayo, Meath & Kerry	

Get Vocal

The Get Vocal programme aims to strengthen the voices of older people to enable their contribution to Irish society and to articulate and address their needs, issues and aspirations. Funded by the Atlantic Philanthropies, Get Vocal was in its final year in 2013. Most grantees concluded their funded activities in late 2012 or early 2013. The remaining grantees concluded their activities in the course of 2013.

In 2013, Age & Opportunity commissioned a publication to capture the experience of Get Vocal and some of the key issues that emerged from it about how to get people involved in influencing developments at a local level. It will be launched at a seminar in 2014.

Get Vocal Grantees	2013
County	Grantee
Dublin	Southside Travellers Action Group
Wexford	Wexford Local Development
Wicklow	Co. Wicklow Partnership Network for Older People

The above were the last three recipients of the Get Vocal Grant Scheme. During 2013, a number of grantees aimed to embed their projects within ongoing work programmes. For example,:

- The County Wexford Age Equality Network has secured representation on the board of Wexford Local Development Company and has secured funding for a post to deliver the Get Vocal action plan for 2014
- The County Wicklow Partnership Network for Older People has secured representation on the board of the Co. Wicklow Partnership and prepared a 2014 action plan and has been funded to expand its Ambassador project
- Older Travellers who participated in the project of Southside Travellers Action Group now have two participants on the board of management of Southside Travellers
- West Training and Development, Galway, continued to develop capacity for advocacy among residents of care homes in 2013 based on the model funded by Get Vocal and a further eight care homes participated in 2013
- The 050 Network, Cavan (Breffni Integrated) has secured four places on the Older Person's Forum Executive established by the local authority and they plan to extend the use of the Age Friendly toolkit they developed for doing age-friendly audits
- In Limerick, with support from PAUL Partnership, a citywide Older People's Forum has been established and is working with multiple stakeholders

The Simon Communities of Ireland published their Get Vocal-funded research into the experience of older homeless people: 'Homelessness, Ageing and Dying' in 2013.

Influencing Public Policy

Age & Opportunity aims to influence and to contribute to the development of the sector through all of its work. This was a significant year for policy in the sector with the publication of the National Positive Ageing Strategy and 'Healthy Ireland – A Framework for Improved Health and Wellbeing', two national, cross-sectoral strategies for improving quality of life.

Active Ageing in Partnership

Age & Opportunity continued closer working with two other age sector organisations – Active Retirement Ireland and Third Age – under the banner of the Active Ageing Partnership (AAP). These three organisations all work in the area of promoting participation by older people in society. All three are also working strategically and at local level with the Age Friendly Ireland programme. During 2013, Maurice O'Connell was recruited as programme director for AAP, which is now based at Age & Opportunity's offices. Partners made joint submissions on policy issues under the AAP umbrella. Arrangements were put on a more formal footing by the end of the year in the form of Memorandums of Understanding:

- AAP MOU among its constituent partners
- MOU between AAP and Age Friendly Ireland

Collaboration on Programmes

Go for Life and Bealtaine work with local groups of older people on the ground as well as partnering with national organisations in sport, physical activity and the arts. Get Vocal has worked with local groups, particularly through the local and community development sector.

Through the year, the organisation continued to strengthen its existing networks of partners and to develop new ones, working with an estimate of over 1,000 partner organisations. Age & Opportunity remains attentive to the reform agenda which its public partners are part of and the reduced resources that have become a factor in partnership work, particularly in the rollout of its education initiatives.

External Committees & Events

The organisation contributes to the development of work within the sector in a number of ways. Committees and bodies on which the organisation was represented during the year included: AGE Platform Europe, with Helen Campbell being elected in October to the role of Vice-President; the Irish Sports Council's Get Ireland Walking initiative; the Business to Arts' Arts Development Working Group; and the Human Rights and Older People Working Group convened by the Alzheimer Society of Ireland. A full list of committees is in Appendix 3.

Age & Opportunity also spoke at a number of events during the year, such as: the ForAge International Conference 'The Future of Learning for Older People in Europe'; the EU Summit on Active and Healthy Ageing; the National Lesbian and Gay Federation national conference on poverty, social exclusion &

multiple disadvantage among LGBT people, and the COST Action TU1204 event 'People Friendly Cities in a Data Rich World'.

Submissions to Public Policy

Key written submissions made in 2013 were as follows:

- Submission on older people and human rights to AGE-Platform for inclusion in report to the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights
- Submission on Public Libraries and Older People to Local Government Management Agency
- Submission on Physical Activity and Older People to Health & Wellbeing Programme, Dept. of Health
- Submission on Engagement by Older Groups to the Department of Environment, Community and Local Government Working Group on Citizen Engagement with Local Government (prepared by Age & Opportunity on behalf of the partners in AAP)
- Submission on the Implementation of the National Positive Ageing Strategy to the Department of Health (prepared by Age & Opportunity on behalf of the partners in AAP)

Corporate Matters

Communications

During the first half of the year, Age & Opportunity sought branding advice as it has long been an issue that, while certain programmes are well-recognised and have a good brand presence, others do not, and the Age & Opportunity brand itself is little-known. This began a process of clearing out the proliferation of brands that had built up over the years. Age & Opportunity, using a new marque, is now the primary brand, while still holding on to two brands which have built significant brand equity: Bealtaine and Go for Life. As part of this process, it also found a way of re-telling its story in a context that moves beyond an 'official' description into one which addresses the core of what Age & Opportunity does: it inspires people.

This process allowed for the creation of a number of branded items such as exhibition stands, pens, training folders, notebooks but it also led to significant changes in approach in Age & Opportunity's digital presence, creating a new website with a contemporary look and feel but with content that clearly addresses what different audiences require from the organisation.

The organisation had a presence at eight different national events during the year, such as the ARI Trade Show, the launch of the National Positive Ageing Strategy and Respond Housing Association's national conference. It also spoke at a number of events such as the EU Summit on Active and Healthy Ageing and the COST Action TU1204 event 'People Friendly Cities in a Data Rich World'.

As this was the 25th anniversary of the establishment of Age & Opportunity, two projects began that will mark this milestone. The first is the 'Life is for Living' book which is interviewing a number of inspiring older Irish people about their own lives and those who have inspired them. This book is due to be launched in April 2014. The second is two bursaries: the Life is for Living Bursary and the VoltAge Bursary. Life is for Living was a bursary for an individual to fulfil a dream or ambition. VoltAge is to support a group of older people to make a difference in their community. To assist with this work, a PR company was engaged to promote the work, between September and November.

With the departure of the Information Officer, the organisation discontinued its dedicated information function in July. During the first half of the year, 158 queries were dealt with. The organisation also had volunteer support for its social media for three months, and it consolidated much of its video work into one channel, in keeping with the clearer brand approach the organisation is taking.

Age & Opportunity also began a process in 2013 of developing a better CRM (Customer Relationship Management) process to better communicate with people who engage in its education and training. An initial pilot system was developed with in-kind assistance from ORACLE, which was tested during the year when the organisation did significant communications with potential customers for AgeWise across the public and NGO sectors. It is expected that this will prove useful as new educational activities are brought on stream in the coming years.

Communications in Figures	2013
Age & Opportunity Website page views	100,818
Posts on Age & Opportunity Facebook	653
Age & Opportunity Facebook Follows	552
Age & Opportunity Twitter Follows	575
Articles on other people's websites	257
Print articles (excluding Bealtaine)	49
Broadcast interviews	40
EngAge eNewsletters delivered	24,591

- Bealtaine partnered with Musgraves, distributing the festival newspaper through Centra shops. This led to an overall distribution of 75,000 programmes. Home Instead also gave direct financial support to the production of the programme and the following radio stations provided free advertising through IRS: Clarefm, Northern Sound, Radio Nova, Sunshine and Shannonside. Dublin Bus displayed posters again this year on busses. A 'how-to' guide for setting up a Dawn Chorus was also produced, with support from the Irish Presidency of the Council of the European Union
- Go for Life was supported to publish 5,000 Flyers for the FitLine programme. Go for Life produced its annual Winter 2013 newsletter and produced a DVD about the 2013 Games. The general Go for Life information leaflet and poster were updated
- The Education and Active Citizenship strand of work was supported with flyers, and a research report on Education for Active Citizenship was published. New flyer leaflets and posters were prepared as courses were rolled out

Fundraising and Diversifying Income Sources

Age & Opportunity made two proposals to the Atlantic Philanthropies during the year which were both successful – one related to Age & Opportunity's education work; the other was a joint proposal between the organisation, Active Retirement Ireland and Third Age, as AAP. The first is an intensive community education project focusing on building capacity for engagement in local decision-making fora (working closely with the Age Friendly Ireland programme) based on Age & Opportunity's existing education courses, particularly 'The Community Effect'. The second will involve an intensive programme of

engagement by the existing partners in AAP in some key local areas to coordinate efforts for maximum impact by local groups of older people.

Significant funding was also received from The Community Foundation for Ireland to help with the development of a new course, Creative Exchanges, a programme that gives Activities Coordinators in care settings the skills and confidence they need to provide high-quality creative activity. This course was piloted in October/November 2013. This was the first delivery of a programme that can lead to a FETAC / QQI award at Level 6. Age & Opportunity is looking forward to expanding its accredited offerings across its Education and Training programmes with a view to becoming more self-sustaining in the area of training and consultancy.

Age & Opportunity directed resources toward income generation through direct sales. Primarily through offering AgeWise workshops to individuals and groups, training facilitators to deliver programmes like Taking Stock and providing facilitation and consultation services to organisations, it generated income that could then be invested into the development of other educational opportunities. Coming from that work, the organisation has piloted a CRM (Customer Relationship Management) process during the first half of the year. It is now strengthening its internal information and resource network. The library is being established as a centralised information source and the archiving of its rich materials has begun. Better access to information resources leads to improved decision-making, better cross-departmental working and ultimately improves the evidence-based capabilities of the organisation.

Corporate Governance

Having regard to the current and future sustainability of the organisation, the Board decided to offer voluntary redundancy to staff and seven staff applied and left during 2013. One board member, Pat Mulvee, resigned from his position in 2013 and a new board member, Fionnuala Hanrahan and Catherine Marshall took up positions.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Board Members and Staff 2013

Board Members

John Hynes (Chair)

Fionnuala Hanrahan (joined in July 2013)

Mary Kelly

Catherine Marshall (joined in November 2013)

Paul Murray

Ita Mangan

Pat Mulvey (resigned July 2013)

Helen O'Donoghue

Seven board meetings were held in 2013 and the AGM was held in April.

Age & Opportunity Staff Members

Full-time Staff

Catherine Rose: CEO

Margaret Roe: PA to the Chief Executive/Office Manager/HR Manager

Ciaran McKinney: Programme Manager, Arts & Culture

Michael Foley: Public Affairs Manager

Seán Dillon: Social Enterprise Manager (began in October)

Aleksandra Szymbara: Information and PR Coordinator

Joyce Dunne: Work Programme Co-ordinator

Paul Maher: Director of Education and Training/Get Vocal Manager (voluntary redundancy)

Part-time Staff

Danielle Byrne: Senior Administrator

Kim Chew: Administrator

Patricia Dawson: Senior Training and Education Officer (voluntary redundancy)

Ciara Dawson:	Go for Life Administrator
Richard Farrell:	Go for Life National Development Officer
Helen Campbell:	Programme Manager, Education and Training
Kate Carbery:	Database Coordinator (voluntary redundancy)
Marianna Cullen:	Editorial and PR Assistant (voluntary redundancy)
Sue Guildea:	Assistant Programme Manager, Go for life
Louise Halloran:	Policy Assistant (resigned January)
Mary Harkin:	Programme Manager, Go for Life
Fiona Holohan:	Senior Administrator
Ann Leahy:	Policy Manager (voluntary redundancy)
Catherine Lonergan:	Administrator (completed contract)
Rebecca McLaughlin:	Arts Officer and Bealtaine Coordinator
Lasarine O'Carroll:	Financial Controller
Sue Russell:	Trainer/Facilitator (voluntary redundancy)
Katia Rush-Hall:	Administrator (completed contract)
June Welsh:	Information Administrator (voluntary redundancy)

Intern Team

Patrick Kavanagh

Samantha Norris

Sinéad Byrne

Appendix 2: Steering Committees

Go for Life Steering Committee

Robert Grier	Chairperson
Emma Jane Clarke:	Programme Executive, Irish Sports Council
Owen Curran:	Executive Committee Member, Irish Senior Citizens Parliament
Tony McCarthy:	Active Retirement Ireland
John Hynes:	Chairperson, Age & Opportunity
Dr Mick Loftus	GP and former President of the GAA
John Kerrane:	Former lecturer, School of Health & Human Performance, DCU
Dr Ailis Brosnan:	HSE Representative
Catherine Rose:	CEO, Age & Opportunity

Arts & Culture Steering Committee

Catherine Marshall:	Chairperson
Helen O'Donoghue:	Senior Curator & Head of Education & Community Programmes, Irish Museum of Modern Art
Ann McCarthy:	Representing the Association of Local Authority Arts Officers
Helen Walsh:	Representing the Library Association of Ireland
Patrick Fox:	Director of Create
Lorraine Comer:	Head of Education, National Museum of Ireland
Catherine Rose:	CEO, Age & Opportunity
Ciarán McKinney:	Programme Manager, Arts & Culture, Age & Opportunity

Appendix 3: Working Committees on which Age & Opportunity is represented

Committees	Organisation
AGE EU: Social Inclusion Expert Group (SIEG): Executive Council Member/Vice-President	AGE Platform Europe
Human Rights Working Group	Active Ageing Partnership
Dementia Friendly Communities	The Alzheimer Society of Ireland
Building Capacity for EU funds	Immigrant Council of Ireland
Arts Development Working Group	Business to Arts
Community Foundation Grants Panel	Community Foundation for Ireland
Dublin City Sports Network	Dublin City Council
Fingal Age Friendly Alliance	Fingal County Council
Get Ireland Active	HSE
Get Ireland Walking	ISC National Trails Office
Loneliness Initiative	Ageing Well Network
National Working Group Active and Healthy Ageing Programme	Ageing Well Network
NGO Forum	Age Friendly Ireland