



ACET News

November

Thank you for your interest in our work!

In this newsletter you will read of ACET's response to two pandemics and the challenges facing those on the margins. We also have news about our Christmas hampers and some hopefully helpful tips around minding our own mental health.

Thank you for being part of our story.

We want to thank you for your ongoing support in these challenging times.

Right now, the World Health Organisation recognises two pandemics in the world and our staff are working on both.

The lessons we have learned over almost 30 years on HIV are also true for Covid-19. Pandemics impact those most marginalised by society and the stories in this newsletter illustrate how we are responding.

We would love you to join us in addressing these challenges. Your donations, however small, will help our dedicated and highly experienced team walk alongside the individuals, families and communities we serve. From emotional support to practical needs to making health inclusion a reality, your donations will be a lasting legacy at this crucial phase of the pandemic. Please consider beginning a monthly donation or a once-off gift.

Thank you for your support which allows us to carry out our projects every day. Will you join us as we seek to improve the lives of those living with HIV?

A donation of :

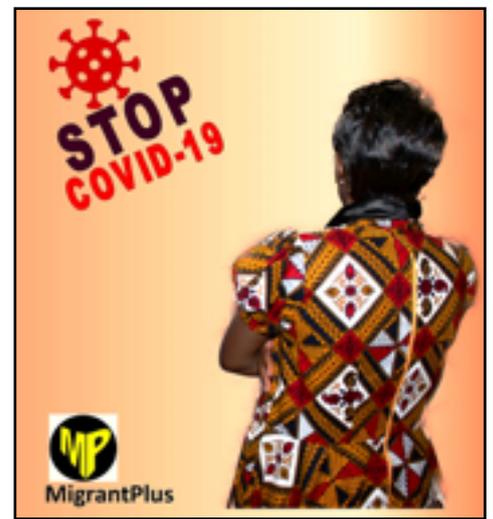
- €20 will help us provide ongoing help with housing or other issues where bureaucracy and illiteracy pose particular challenges.
- €50 will help us provide supports across multiple generations to a family in Dublin impacted by drugs, HIV and Covid-19.
- €100 allows us to train and provide follow-up supports on engaging with HIV and Covid-19 to a church leader in Ireland, thereby impacting hundreds of congregants.
- €250 or more enables us to claim a CHY refund from Revenue thereby increasing the impact and amount of the donation.

Life in the Margins: Zena's Story

In times of trouble, we need to keep in mind that people living on the margins of the society are usually more vulnerable and often the worst affected. The Covid-19 pandemic has highlighted, and in some cases exacerbated, inequalities in our societies.

The other day I spoke to Zena (*name has been changed*). She is a single mother in her forties, with four children, aged 6, 8, 11 and 15. As an office cleaner, she works hard to make ends meet and take care of her children. Most of her connections are with her community fellows, almost all originating from the same geographical region in Africa. They speak mutually intelligible native languages and share many cultural practices. Unfortunately, these fellows live far apart, scattered all over the city. Her English is not very good, so she has very few bonds in the area where she lives. To access services, she uses her older children as interpreters, which is not the ideal when it comes to some sensitive adult issues.

Covid-19 has made life more difficult. With all the restrictions, she is no longer working and welfare subsidies are not enough to live on. Socially she feels isolated, with the impression of living in a virtual world, for which she is not prepared. She is really missing the supportive warmth of her friends, community and church. She has a condition that requires regular medication, but now a number of health issues are being dealt with over the phone or online. Recently, her prescription was sent directly to the pharmacist. At the collection of her medicines she was surprised to learn that her prescription didn't include an expected drug.



In these Covid-related difficult times, let's all remember that marginalised people need our attention and tailored support. They also need our prayers.

— Yvon Luky, Migrant Plus, luky@acet.ie

In the midst of the challenges that Zena faces, Luky is providing the translation of information, not just into English but across the cultural codes which inform the diverse understandings of health, pandemics and more which we all hold. He is supporting her key community leaders, such as her faith leader so as to drive a sustainable change for the broader community.

Unmasking ACET Hampers 2020: *For the first time ever, we will be adding masks and hand sanitiser to our Christmas hampers.*



The masks all ready for the hampers.

Since March, Terrie Colman-Black, co-founder of ACET Ireland, has been sewing face masks from fabric used for some of the AIDS memorial quilts. Terrie has been leading our quilt group since 1993 but this is the first autumn they haven't met in person to sew together. This year, we will be adding Terrie's face masks to our Christmas hampers.

Like everyone in Ireland this year, ACET has had to adapt and change how we do what we do: supporting people who are affected by HIV. Some things have changed – where we meet, how we connect – but the important things haven't. Even though we are back in Level 5 of Covid-19 guidelines, we are still committed to our relationships with those in our care, listening, laughing, lamenting, being there with them.

For us, each year ends on a very positive care piece: a December visit and check in with people to see how they are coming into what is often a troubled time. At the same time we bring them a hamper provided specifically for them by one of our supporters.

This year will be the same, but just as we've changed how we meet people – relying much more on phone calls and video chats – we have to change how we do hampers for the safety of our clients and staff.

For a hamper profile or more information, please email the office, dublin@acet.ie or call Lynn on 087 97 44836.

It's a family affair: Ian Black helping cut out masks for the hampers.



Hamper changes outlined on page 3.

Continuing Care: as the effects of Covid-19 continue, we see clients experiencing less fear, more isolation



It's the small things: bringing a bit of beauty.



We are grateful for spaces of beauty outside where we can meet.

The last number of months have been challenging. It is hard not to feel like the days have all blurred together as we find ourselves entering into another season.

The shift from remote working to meeting with clients face to face has had its joys and complexities as we try and safeguard each another and continue to be 'with' one another. Currently, our new normal has become a hybrid working model of both remote and face to face work, in the outdoors as much as possible (another challenge during the winter months!). This has required a new layer of being creative with logistics, flexibility and gratitude for every moment that we can continue our work in the physical presence of each client.

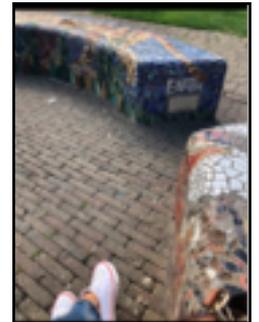
Care work has continued but there has been such loss while we socially distance through trauma, grief, depression, anxiety, indifference, anger and hopelessness — all of which have been incredibly difficult. Our focus of support and care for each client continues as we navigate again through greater restrictions. This time around there is a lesser feeling of fear, but more of detachment and isolation.

Our focus is to support clients to stay safe and well: this includes care plans which look at an entire spectrum of mental and physical health, ensuring basic needs are being met. Much of this work has been in areas of housing and security, food and medication deliveries and identifying a support system.

There have been some enormous challenges in the past months and we anticipate more to come. While it would not be realistic that the memories made during this time would be the happiest or the most positive, our hope is that the memories will include consistent support, personal resilience and uncompromised care.

“Every day makes a memory: these days are no different.”

- an ACET client



If you would like to donate a hamper to an ACET client this year: we have some changes

What is the same:

We will provide you with an individual or family profile and a basic list of the hamper's contents. You can provide a hamper on your own or you can join with your family, another family or small group.

What is different:

Rather than you shopping and delivering your hamper to an agreed place, ACET staff will shop for and assemble the hampers. We ask instead that you make a donation: €50 for a single or couple hamper and €100 for a family hamper.

As so many people are challenged financially this year, we also welcome smaller donations that we will put toward a hamper. We will still send you a client profile and hamper contents list.

If you are interested and would be willing to provide your phone number, we can give you a text with a photo once the hamper is delivered.

Hamper donations can be made at www.acet.ie/give or via bank details on page 4.



Staying Healthy During a Pandemic: *minding our minds*



Are you feeling overwhelmed or anxious? Maybe your days are filled with stress and too many things to think about or do. Perhaps one day is the same as another and you feel like you have nothing to hope for, with not enough to do and too much time to think.

In a recent staff meeting ACET counsellor Vivienne Morrow-Murtagh shared six questions that we should ask ourselves each day:

1. Who am I planning to connect with today?
2. How do I plan to physically move today?
3. How do I plan to get out into the fresh air?
4. What am I grateful for today?
5. What will I do to create beauty and be creative?
6. What will I let go of today?

If you suffer a panic attack, here is a **TIP** to help you cope:

Temperature: put your hands into cold water;

Intense exercise: do some jumping jacks, go for a run, shake your hands — remember intense exercise means something different to everybody;

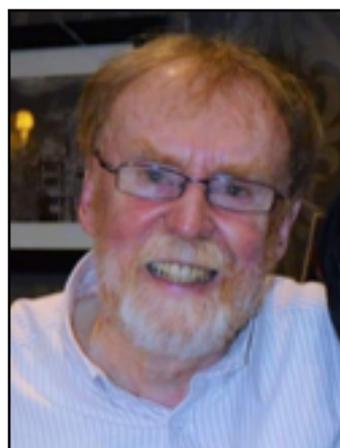
Pace your breathing: focus on slow, deep breaths.

If you think you may need something more, help is out there:

Pieta House In crisis: freephone 1850 247 257 or text HELP to 51444
For therapy enquiries: 0818 111 126

Samaritans Call 116 123 (no charge)

For a list of counsellors in your area, contact the Irish Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy <https://iacp.ie/page> or 01 230 35 36.



North Inner City News

We were sad to hear that Fergus McCabe has died. He was the most prominent community activist in the North East Inner City for decades. Fergus negotiated the Gregory Deal with Charlie Haughey in 1982 and campaigned for more funding for the National Drugs Strategy including the Emerging Needs funds of 2006 which funded our two careworkers' posts. He was up until recently, when he became ill, the community representative on the North East Inner City board. We will miss Fergus's encouraging words, profound wisdom and willingness to have a laugh and we pass on our condolences to his family.

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