

Our Annual Report

2022





The management guru Charles Handy, who grew up in a rectory in Kildare, recently addressed a group of charity leaders in Dublin. Much wisdom was passed on, but the meeting was memorable for one particular piece of advice. Handy suggested that every charity writes a strategic plan every couple of years. Once the plan is completed the leader of the charity should throw it in the bin. Whether Handy was referring to valuing the journey more than the end result or remaining open to sudden change is unclear. What is clear is that this story has been particularly apt over the past few years: 2020 provided such a sudden disruption to carefully curated plans in the form of Covid.

With the legacy of the pandemic still with us, 2022 provided another. The war in Ukraine and the increased cost of living disrupted all of our projects in some way but we adapted our response. We began a new partnership with Cairde in the area of health inclusion for Ukrainians using a community development approach. We worked alongside local faith communities and health agencies in the north inner city with their responses.

The number of international protection applicants increased significantly with the demands on local communities, particularly the faith communities we partner with, increasing. Our longstanding work in supporting those living with and affected by HIV saw new pressures as the challenges of Covid segued into the cost of living crisis with housing difficulties ever present for many.

Meanwhile, disruption is somewhat normalised for many of those impacted by our fundraising supports in Zimbabwe as the Matilda Project remains a consistent source of hope as food poverty and HIV are addressed.

The term 'adaptability' may be overused and inappropriate in summing up the

stories in this annual report and the work of our dedicated staff and volunteers. What is more accurate is to reflect on the consistent reality of being with those we have the privilege to serve in the course of our work, whatever another year may hold. Now to find the nearest bin in anticipation of what the next year will bring!

— Richard Carson

"I know I can trust you with anything. I wouldn't have had anyone else there with me today."

It is important to us to give the clients' voice in this annual report: you will see quotes from them throughout these pages.

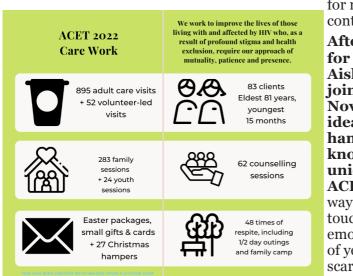


We in ACET work with people living with and affected by HIV. We are supervised, funded and monitored by the HSE.

One of the main values in care work is to remember — something that we did very intently as we gazed over the past 30 years of our work for ACET's 30th anniversary.

Remembering 2022, there was certainly some initial shaking off of "lockdown cobwebs" — emerging from the lockdown and into some level of a new normal was something that both staff and clients faced. Our care work happily, yet cautiously, took more of the usual face-to-face form, navigating the indoor spaces and places once again through the changing societal restrictions. We continued to use technology that served us well throughout the lockdown, such as phone calls, texts and Zoom, especially as everyone individually found their own level of comfort outside of their home or even their bedroom. There was plenty of recovered joy in being together that had been confined in the previous year.

Stepping into a freer space for our care work meant we had the opportunity to refresh our referral process for new clients: individuals living with HIV with specific HIV-related needs and gaps in supports. We liaised with medical social workers and associated agencies to let them know about our specific capacity



for new referrals, and will continue to welcome them.

After Olivia Corbett left for maternity leave, Aishling McCormack joined the care team in November which was the ideal timing — Christmas hampers — for getting to know care clients and the unique rhythm of how ACET works. What better way than seeing the personal touch of both practical and emotional support at a time of year when hope can be scarce?



Other core values of our care work are listening well and showing up. In 2022, here is some of what we came across:

• Physical and medical impacts: Delayed treatments and appointments due



to lockdown, as well as hospital over-crowding are just some of the challenges in accessing medical care for ongoing and chronic health needs. Thankfully HIV clinic access and supports have run well which has made medication adherence and testing straightforward.

- Mental health and emotional support needs: De-isolation, suicides, anxiety, depression and the impact of historical traumas re-emerging during the lockdown. Helping to build connections, resources and anchors within each person's world is an ongoing work.
- Drug use, debt and intimidation: We've seen an increase in these over the past year; we rely on valuable interagency advice.
- Housing and accommodation: Increase in homelessness or housing right injustices along with lack of privacy and safety in accommodation, especially for families in homelessness. Access to clinics, schools and other crucial supports are some of the related concerns.
- HIV adherence and status: Conversations around status disclosure, privacy in medical scenarios or with medication taking. Shame and stigma around status is still an ongoing conversation.
- Bereavement, grief and loss: Much loss during the pandemic was not properly mourned. As well as the loss of a beloved client this year, there were anniversaries of loved ones and other hidden griefs such as the loss of independence, relationships, or opportunities.
- Need for respite, time to breathe: Changes of scenery and moving away from home spaces have been so vital this year. This has given us privacy and safety to talk in many cases, but also just to access a different space and perhaps some peace for those we support. There were half-day outings throughout the year and a specific partnership with Dublin Family Outreach provided family camp respite to several families in July.















- Employment and education opportunities: Increasing employment opportunities are a positive for many individuals, especially younger clients.
- The trauma of the pandemic and lockdown: This is something we're still uncovering: the isolation and traumas within households during that time had less support or options. The emerging impacts are something we are still exploring.

"I'm not sure how to be a person anymore after all this. I feel like I'm missing pieces of myself and can't escape this bad feeling. I just need to talk it all out. Thank you for listening."

- Worries for the future: The cost of living (especially fuel, food, bills) was a concern overall; equally many conversations around the fear of ageing.
- **Plans for the future**: Looking at possibilities, new opportunities and brushing off some old projects and ideas pre-Covid, with hope and hesitancy.



• Reflections on 30 years: Sitting and remembering with clients who have known ACET for much of those 30 years: the laughs, the losses, the funerals, the births, the trips to Cavan Centre, the different homes and places. The care people who showed up for them when they needed it or the times when ACET got it wrong (yes, it does happen). Remembering agencies and organisations who also played valuable roles over the years, naming people who were life-changers. And

especially reflecting on the HIV and AIDS story in Irish communities and families, then and now — all of the changes and all of the hopes for the future.

The ACET care team are so honoured to be invited to countless homes, grave sites, hospital wards, consultation rooms and many special occasions. Thank you to all of our clients for trusting us with your stories and yourselves these past 30 years.

ACET care team are (left to right) Hansi Chisnall, Olivia Corbett and Aishling McCormack.









ACET Care

The Christmas hamper project was a month into my time with ACET. This was an excellent opportunity to learn more about the people I work with and see another aspect of how ACET supports these families, as well as introduce myself to clients I did not meet during my first month. It also allowed me to brush up on my knowledge of Dublin's geography and discover new areas and hidden gems.

An anonymous client profile is created and people generously offer to provide a hamper for each one. Items donated include practical household supplies, non-perishable food, fluffy socks, Christmas treats, vouchers and small, thoughtful presents. To keep the families' identities anonymous, we number the hampers and use client initials.

anonymous, we number the hampers and use client initials while communicating with each other. That was my biggest challenge as I was still only coming to grips with everyone's names. I often felt dizzy going through all the initials, new addresses and the number of members in each family.



Much hard work goes into the hampers: it's not just delivering them on the day. All hands were on deck from staff, including some of the colleagues' partners, and even a colleague's pastor offered to volunteer their time to help. Delivery days were busy, to say the least. On my way to a client's house, what seemed like a sturdy bag began to rip and items started falling. Thankfully, a kind stranger stopped to offer grocery bags from the boot of her car. Another client made the most of delivery day when Richard and I visited: before we knew it, we had our shoes off, standing on chairs and tables, fitting in light bulbs for her. On a different day, Terrie and I video-called a client to let them know we were outside their home; she was also outside her home. We soon

realised that we had the correct street name but the wrong housing estate.

Families were so happy and appreciative when we arrived. We were welcomed with open arms, cups of tea and chocolate. We shared some laughs, and it was also an opportunity to provide space and emotional support for difficulties that naturally come up for our clients as Christmas approaches.

"I want to thank you for all ACET has done for us this year and now with this hamper. It means the world, it really does. I was really looking forward to it, especially this year."

 $- {\it Aishling\ McCormack, Adult\ Care\ Worker}$



ACET Care: Quilt Group and Counselling

Finally the Quilt Group was able to get together in the autumn of 2022. It's almost impossible to put words on how it felt for all of us. We had seen each other occasionally during doorstep one-on-ones but to actually be together and back to quilting was the realisation of what we dreamed of for over two years. Before we even started to create we just spent time hugging each other over and over again. It was just what we needed.



Our first few meetings were given over to catching up with each other before we began planning our next steps. The quilt we had started before the pandemic was called Footprints in the Sky, so we had lots of discussion on trying to complete it as it still needed so much work.

Autumn for the Quilt Group also means planning the annual Friends Remembering Friends ceremony. It takes many hours and discussion, so quilting takes a back seat during the planning. In 2022, Friends marked 30 years. We implemented many changes which were welcome additions and the ceremony was very well received.

So back to work for the Quilt Group: it has been busy but continues to inspire all of us who take part to keep going and look to what will come for us in 2023 when we will celebrate 30 years of quilting in the community.

Terrie Colman-Black

Counselling, Support and Supervision

Previous years we have considered key words to express what is happening therapeutically and in off line supervision with our staff partners and clients, as we hold space and bear witness. In 2022 the word that seemed to be most germane is 'Pause'. The return to "normal" life following the pandemic seems more manic, busier and every bit as traumatic as before, so the ACET refrain of Beginning Middle End Rest rather than Beginning Middle End Next seems apposite.

Teaching ourselves and others to stop, to ground, to anchor and to drop down into the body and breathe if only for 30 seconds are resources that are just as essential now as before.

ACET counsellor Vivienne Morrow-Murtagh works with some of our clients, from ages 18 up to mid 60s. Care worker Hansi Chisnall is also fully accredited with the Irish Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy and has counselling sessions with clients. - Vivienne Morrow Murtaah

Terrie Colman-Black (left) & Vivienne Morrow **Murtagh** (*right*) are founders of ACET Ireland.





Matilda Project

The Matilda Project is a project of ACET Ireland, set up in 2001 as a response to HIV in Zimbabwe. We help fund home-based care, food packs and support groups for adults living with HIV.

2022 kicked off in a Covid surge, the highest number of cases since Covid started, although with far fewer deaths. About half the population of Zimbabwe had had one vaccine by February 2022.

Replacing or overhauling the project's Land Cruiser

was top of the agenda for 2022 and occupied a lot of the year. It was finally returned to Willard mid-October with almost everything replaced. This pushed the year's budget to an unusually high level, with 2 grants given to cover most of the parts and work (€22,480 and €3,457). Total cost of the overhaul was USD \$29,674.

There was a surplus in the account at the start of the year to pay for the vehicle upgrade. Most of this was used instead to get a geophysical survey,



drill a borehole and install a solar-powered pump at Lushumbe Primary which had no drinking water. Another \$1300 built a single-roomed home for a child who has lost both parents and is living with HIV herself. The shelter she and her siblings shared with their grandparents till then didn't have four walls. Now they are safer and warmer in winter.

Monthly food packs to all 125 under 18s living with HIV or those who have lost both parents to HIV (100) continued through the year, along with school fees to 25 primary and 27 secondary students who could not afford to pay.

A growing focus for 2022 was on finding ways for school leavers to make a living in the villages without having to join the illegal miners in abandoned and unsafe mines, or emigrate.

Twelve young men took a six-month carpentry course. Matilda bought the tools for each one (\$150 each) and paid the monthly allowance of the carpentry trainer, \$100/month. The lessons ran from April to November with mid-winter break.





Matilda Project

Thirteen dress-makers completed their 18-month training in dressdesign and sewing, with basic business training.

The first school leaver to begin a small

Income Generating Project (IGP) at

home raising chicks for sale to be eaten ("broilers") had some sickness in his first batch of 50 chicks. Two other broilers IGPs got going as well.

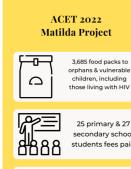
The maize crop failed but some excess left over from 2021's good harvest was distributed by volunteers to neighbours in need. Combined with shocking price rises in

commodities, with cooking

oil worst hit, food security was badly stressed. The price of oil more than doubled in the year to January 2022, reaching 400 Zim dollars. By May Willard was struggling to find enough food for the monthly food packs. Maize meal and cooking oil were both in short supply.



In May the Home Based Care (HBC) volunteers from Ward 16 celebrated 21



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660 people living with HIV cared for by Home Based Care volunteers

25 primary & 27 secondary school students fees paid

3,685 food packs to

children, including



188 Home Based Care Volunteers given 5 kg of seed in appreciation for their work

This has been created using images from Flaticon.com



vears since Willard and Modester first trained them in the care of people dying of AIDS. The first HBC volunteers in Ward 15, where Gulati is located, were trained a year later in 2002; they celebrated 20 years of HBC.

Modester baked cakes for the celebrations. They are an astonishing group of people who deserve enormous respect. Many have continued the HBC work ever since.



Matilda Project

In what turns out to have been a timely move we facilitated Ephias, a stroke victim who had lost his speech and the use of both legs and one arm, to move from Tshelanyemba to live with his daughter in Bulawayo. He passed away in April 2023 after a very happy year with her family, being well cared for and loved.

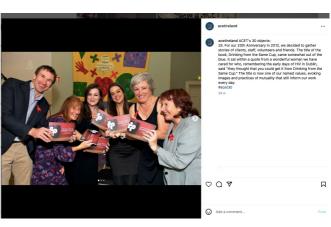
As always Matilda Project has nestled under the ACET umbrella, supported and encouraged by Richard and Lynn. Thank you! And thank you to the board for your work and interest.

- Wendy Phillips, Matilda Project

#ACET30

Throughout November we marked our 30th year by using 30 objects to tell part of our story on social media.

You can still visit our Facebook page or Instagram to look back over those 30 pieces of ACET life, which included an original logo, an HIV test kit and Terrie's table.







Another thing we did for our 30th year was launch a new website: please visit www.acet.ie where you will find referral forms, links to donate or sign up to our newsletter, and other ACET news. Thank you to **Dreamsedge Studios** for all your help and such a fantastic design.



The year 2022 was broadly marked with the footprint of the Covid-19 pandemic. Due to a successful vaccination campaign, things improved in terms of serious cases and deaths. This has led to some constraining protective measures to be progressively relaxed. But the pandemic didn't end that year: its shadow kept hovering all around, still affecting many areas of life. And, if on the one hand the improvement of the situation of Covid was good news, on the other pre-

COVID-19 Public Health Advice Continue to practise good hand and respiratory hygiene by: -Washing and sanitising hands regularly -Coughing/ sneezing into your elbow #LayerUp #ForUsAll gov.ie/covid19 hse.ie/covid19

After the acute phase of the Covid-19 pandemic in the previous two years, 2022 can be seen as the beginning of a transition year, where things were moving towards a new phase with a strong impression that people will have to get used to living with Covid-19 for quite a significant time. The impact of Covid-19 on service provision was so deep that going back to the pre-pandemic level could

existing health inequalities remained and kept affecting vulnerable migrants.

Approach

When working with migrant communities, it is necessary to maintain a level of presence and interaction with migrants, so as to seize presenting opportunities and use them to positively impact on their health. Continuous interaction makes it possible to get first hand knowledge of issues that are, directly or indirectly, affecting migrant health. It also helps devise tailored interventions and support that take into account prevalent concerns of communities.

Information provision and support

not be envisaged in the short term.

The Covid pandemic highlighted the importance of accessing good healthrelated information to help people make up their mind on issues like vaccination. Accurate information empowers people to make the right choices - essential for protecting and improving community health.

An important part of our work consisted of providing relevant information on issues impacting migrant health. But this alone is insufficient; it must be coupled with addressing misinformation and providing customised support to those who may need it.

Tackling misinformation on health

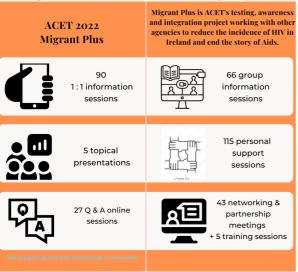
Social media, and the internet in general, have made it easy for people to access abundant information on various topics. The downside is that misleading information is also accessible to vulnerable people. Contradictory information is confusing to many.

Because of that confusion, good health-related information may not be well received unless misinformation is tackled at the same time. This is particularly true for migrant communities as they are often inundated with well-presented misleading information. The scale of this phenomenon came to light at the height of the pandemic.

This is why Migrant Plus takes time to tackle, deconstruct, and dispel misinformation on health. This is done through sensitive and respectful interactions: one-to-one or group meetings.

HIV testing

The Covid-19 pandemic had a significant impact on HIV testing activities. HIV testing demand drastically decreased during the pandemic. Covid-19 had a lasting impact on service provision and on the attitude of people from migrant background towards HIV: the urgency of tackling HIV spread was no longer



adequately perceived. People had other priorities in their lives such as housing or the cost of living. A deep reflection is needed to adjust strategies currently being used or maybe explore new initiatives.

Our main activities in this area consisted of keeping HIV on migrant agendas or in conversations, raising or maintaining the awareness about HIV, tackling stigma, encouraging people to protect themselves and to get tested.



Mental health

Many migrants are highly exposed to mental ill health but for various reasons this is often overlooked. Issues such as depression, anxiety, anger, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) are common among vulnerable migrants. Unfortunately due to the lack of awareness, the high value attributed to resilience, cultural differences or linguistic barriers, a number of people affected do not access the dedicated mental health services. The main obstacles seem to be cultural, linguistic and lack of awareness.

Information access is key to raising migrant awareness about mental health. We use an interactive information provision approach which helps respond to practical issues and support people with specific concerns. Information provision is also complemented with signposting to indicate the best place people can find help.

Partnership and Networking

The visibility of Migrant Plus has increased and there some opportunities where we were invited to share our views and experiences on working with migrants on health-related matters.

We attended various meetings and training including the COVID-19 Vaccine Migrant Community Network; Health Responses for Ukrainian Refugees; Taking Action to overcome HIV Stigma and Discrimination; HIV Ireland, Working with Ukrainian and Russian Interprets, PEFI meetings, and Community HIV Testing.

Outcomes Summary

Some of the outcomes of Migrant Plus for 2022:

- -Providing information, tackling misinformation, and supporting people remained key activities for the project.
- -Migrant Plus is increasingly perceived by the targeted communities as a knowledgeable and reliable source of information on health and has increased its visibility.
- -We have maintained our position as one the voices of migrant communities, particularly on matters affecting their health. This means more opportunities to share our views and experience.

-Yvon Luky, Migrant Plus project





Partnerships

HIV Ireland: HIV

Ireland Thanks to the support of Gilead Sciences and their "Zeroing in on HIV" fund, we began a new partnership in 2022 with HIV Ireland. Community HIV testing is a key activity in allowing all those living with HIV to access treatment. The funding will allow HIV Ireland roll out a testing van that can be used in various settings for health supports. As a part of this ACET were

delighted to welcome Chipo Harper to our team to explore and build up the testing opportunities among communities of migrant background.



Our partnership with the Talbot Centre continued in 2022. Bernie McDonnell has been using her many years of experience in the area of drug education to support local project workers, teachers,

parents and young people in building capacity in this important area.

Dublin City Interfaith Forum



Dublin City Interfaith Forum Also based in the North East Inner City is our partnership with Dublin City Interfaith Forum. This includes supporting leaders of local faith communities out of the challenges of Covid

where health information and the sustainability of the communities themselves have been contexts for challenge.

North East Inner City



All of the partnerships above have some connection to the Department of the Taoiseach's NEIC initiative. Richard

Carson sits on the Enhancing Policing Sub Group as a representative of the North Inner City Community Coalition.

Staff Training

Our staff took part in various Continuous Professional Development activities during the year. As well as training in counselling and addiction, many staff completed core components of suicide prevention and drug treatment responses. Also, Richard Carson completed his postgraduate certificate in Theology, Ministry and Mission at St Hild College in England. All his assignments were based on ACET's work in the north east inner city of Dublin.



Income and Expenditure Year Ending 31 December 2021		2022	2021	2020
		€	€	€
Income	ACET Matilda Total	282,222 <u>159,597</u> 441,819	276,079 <u>134,605</u> 410,684	487,383 <u>146,272</u> 633,655
Expenditure	ACET Matilda Total	(279,879) (178,646) (458,525)	(276,931) (128,754) (405,685)	(452,757) (132,852) (585,609)
Surplus/ Deficit	ACET Matilda Total	2,343 (19,049) (16,706)	852) <u>5,851</u> 4,999	34,626 <u>13,420</u> 48,046
Accumulated surplus brought forward		100,555	95,556	47,510
Accumulated surplus carried forward		83,849	100,555	95,556

ACET and Matilda Project Balance Sheet 31 December 2022					
	2022	2021			
	€	€			
Current Assets					
Debtors Cash at bank and in hand	9,320 <u>178,008</u> 187,328	1,171 <u>127,375</u> 128,546			
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	(103,971)	(27,991)			
Net Current Assets	83,357	<u>100,555</u>			
Total Assets less current liabilities	<u>84,341</u>	<u>100,555</u>			
Creditors: amounts falling due after more than one year	(492)	_			
Reserves	83,849	100,555			

Another challenging year has passed and another occasion to thank our staff, volunteers and funders has come. All of the projects and activities you can read about in this annual report are not merely lists of outputs and outcomes. Rather they are deeply relational acts of support and hope where so many difficulties continue to manifest after the Covid pandemic. Working in a clinical setting I have the opportunity to observe the impact of anxiety among many of the patients we care for. Acopia is a word we are increasingly using. It describes the inability to cope with the activities of daily living. Rather than acopia being a stigmatising reality, it must be understood in the context of a world of wealth — where there are ample resources to overcome these challenges. It is in these settings that ACET's work continues to thrive. The steady and patient work of being with people, sharing an abundant hope through listening and responding, whether at kitchen tables in inner city Dublin, in conversation after

- Prof Sam McConkey, Chairperson

We would like to acknowledge the ACET Board of Trustees:

church meetings in the outskirts of the city or in the offer of food parcels in rural Zimbabwe remains the heart of ACET's work.

Samuel McConkey - Chair

Rev. Philip McKinley (appointed 4/4/2023)

Karen Thompson (Secretary)

Rev. Abigail Sines (resigned 31/8/2022)

Juliet Amamure

Antoin MacCarthaigh

Dr Ebun Joseph

ACET's purpose: the advancement of community welfare including the relief of those in need because of youth, age, ill-health, or disability and the promotion of health, including the prevention or relief of sickness, disease or human suffering. We do this by providing care support to those affected by HIV and training, awareness and testing work to those that have been marginalised by society, including through partnerships responding to addiction and social exclusion.

We offer this to individuals, families and communities both here in Ireland and with fundraising and capacity building support to Zimbabwe.

ACET Ireland is fully compliant with the Charities Governance Code.

We are very grateful, as always, to all those who gave regularly or through one-off donations or fundraising events. Many thanks, also, to all our volunteers, trustees, and members for their valuable contributions throughout the year.

We appreciate the support of: HSE Social Inclusion in CHO 9; North Inner City Drugs and Alcohol Task Force; Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth; Gilead Science; RTE Does Comic Relief; the HSE National Lottery Fund; Tusla, Child & Family Agency; Dublin City Council; the North East Inner City Initiative; CDYSB; acet UK and ACET NI; Google; Hayden Brown; Pricewaterhouse Coopers; Vox; Rialto Community Drugs Team; the GUIDE Clinic; the Mater Misericordiae Clinic; Beaumont Hospital; HIV Ireland; Positive Now; Sexual Health Centre Cork; Sexual Health West; GOSHH Limerick; European AIDS Treatment Group; the Drugs/HIV Helpline; Acts of Compassion Projects; Recovery Academy Ireland; Talbot Centre; Depaul; Dublin City Interfaith Forum; Praise Tabernacle Church; Trinity Church Network; Redeemed Christian Church of God; Dundrum Methodist Church; Mercy Christian Fellowship; Christ City Church; Connections Church Dublin; Adelaide Road Presbyterian Church; Lucan Presbyterian Church plus all the other churches that we have had the

opportunity to collaborate & work with; and Discovery Gospel Choir.

"You've been a proper support to us through the hard times and I don't take that lightly."













This annual report has been created using images from Freepik on Flaticon.com.

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Bank details:

Donations can be made directly from our website or through bank transfer.