



Transgender
Equality
Network
Ireland

TENI's Review
General Assembly 2014

TENI

Transgender Equality Network Ireland (TENI) seeks to improve conditions and advance the rights and equality of trans people and their families. Our vision is an Ireland where trans people are understood, accepted and respected, and can participate fully in all aspects of Irish society.

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Health and Education Manager

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INTRODUCTION

Dear members,

This report provides an overview of TENI's activities from January-September 2014. As you can see, 2014 has been an exciting year so far. Our theme in 2014 is 'Positive Visibility Matters' and we've focused on promoting affirmative representations of our diverse community. As part of this, TENI launched the 'I Am' video, a conversation piece on gender identity and trans experience in Ireland, which was viewed nearly 5,000 times in the first week. In just 9 months, we've also delivered nearly 60 trainings across the country to over 2,000 people in the health, education, employment and human rights sectors.

TENI has been working to improve access to health services for trans people. This year we've seen the expansion of adolescent health services and TENI has increased training delivery to health and mental health professionals across the country.

Gender recognition legislation is progressing and there have been significant developments in this area. The Government has committed to introducing the Bill before the end of the year and TENI staff, Board and volunteers have been actively advocating, lobbying TDs/Senators, informing reports and engaging with the media.

The STAD- Stop Transphobia and Discrimination (STAD) campaign continues to highlight hate crimes and incidents against trans people across the island of Ireland. We launched the 2013 report in Limerick and it received national attention.

TENI continues to be a vibrant and thriving organisation and in 2014 we also welcomed new staff and interns onto the team: Aoife, Gordon, Clodagh and Trevor.

As you can see, we've accomplished a lot but the year's not up. We'll produce the 2014 annual report for the next General Assembly. So, stay tuned. I'd like to thank you all for your ongoing support for TENI.

Broden Giambrone
Chief Executive

SUPPORT

TENI engages in a range of activities aimed at mitigating the extreme sense of isolation, misunderstanding and exclusion felt by many trans people and their families.

Support & Information

TENI has been contacted 625 times since January 1st 2014. This equates to 16 times/week.

The majority of this contact was made by phone (75%). In the last year, contact via email (17%) and social media (5%) has nearly doubled. Office drop-ins and appointments have also increased and now make up 3% of contact.

TENI is contacted by individuals from across the island. Just over half of this contact comes from Leinster (52%), followed by Munster (25%), International (6%), Connaught (5%) and Ulster (4%).

TENI is contacted by individuals from across the age spectrum. The age of those who contact TENI remains largely unknown/undisclosed (63%). However, of those who do share their age, the majority are between 25-44 (15%), followed by those who are 45-64 (10%), 18-24 (10%), under 18 (1%) and over 65 (1%). This signals the ongoing need to explore outreach to both younger and older people.

Most people contacting the organisation do so for general support (42%). This is followed by those seeking information on medical transition (20%), referrals for mental health professionals (15%), crisis situation/intervention (11%), support as a result of hate crimes/discrimination (4%) and other (8%). Seventeen percent of the contact is from families seeking support and information regarding their trans children. The ages of these children range from 12 to 23 with the average age of 16.

Support Groups

Trans peer support groups exist across Ireland and provide vital support to trans people and their families. These groups are the heart of the trans community. There are currently groups operating in Cork, Dublin, Galway, Greystones, Limerick and Waterford. TENI works closely with these groups to build their capacity to deliver support in their communities. To aid our community in reaching these groups, we will launch an interactive support map on our website in the coming months.

In March, the Irish Trans Student Alliance (ITSA) held its first trans training. This newly formed group provides a grassroots network for trans* students, trans* questioning students, their partners and allies. TENI

participated in the first training and co-hosted the community event 'Unicorn with a Cape' with ITSA and the Union of Students Ireland (USI) in March.

In June, the Dublin Peer Support Group, in collaboration with TENI, held the creative mental health promotion event called 'Feeling Good,' as part of Dublin LGBT Pride. This event featured music, theatre, poetry, art and photography from the trans community and our allies. In August, TranSE held a similar event as part of the Waterford Diverse City Festival and brought together individuals from across the Republic.

TransParenCI, the support group for parents and families of trans people, entered its third year and membership has increased dramatically. Three members of this group met with Minister for Social Protection Joan Burton to discuss the age criteria in the upcoming Gender Recognition Bill.

EDUCATION

Trainings

TENI delivers trainings and presentations on key issues facing trans people and their families. We strive to raise awareness of the experiences and needs of the trans community and provide tools and resources to a variety of audiences.

TENI has delivered 59 trainings to 2,105 people since January 1st 2014.

Training healthcare professionals is a key component of TENI's education portfolio. This is led by Health and Education Manager Vanessa Lacey. Sixteen percent of training was delivered to the HSE with 350 staff taking part in these trainings. A further 18% of trainings were delivered to 425 individuals working in the health sphere, such as social care students.

TENI also provides trainings to staff and students in second and third level education. Eighteen percent of our awareness trainings were delivered in schools and universities across Ireland. In September alone, TENI supported five young people to successfully transition in secondary school.

TENI also delivered trainings to a wide variety of organisations and services such as trade unions, An Garda Síochána and LGBT/Human rights groups. The majority of these trainings were delivered in Dublin (57%) but there have also been trainings delivered in Carlow, Cork, Dundalk, Galway, Kilkenny, Limerick, Portlaoise, Tipperary and Waterford.



Positive Visibility Matters

The key to change is awareness. The theme of this year's education campaign is 'Positive Visibility Matters' and TENI actively engages with print and broadcast media to encourage good and nuanced representation of the trans community. This year TENI produced Trans Media Guidelines to support journalists to write about or represent trans people in respectful ways. The result of this has been over 15 print articles in high traffic media sources (e.g. Irish Times), several radio interviews and two appearances on national television.

TENI also worked closely with a national broadcaster (TV3) to produce a documentary on trans issues in Ireland. My Transgender Journey was the first documentary of its kind and aired on 16th April. It provided an up-close and personal account of three trans individuals as they searched for a sense of their own identity, strived for acceptance and continued to battle against their own government to be recognised in their true gender. In the initial broadcast there was an average of 105,000 viewers. The documentary was aired a second time in May on 3e and rated an average of 14,000 viewers.





There was a special screening of *My Transgender Journey* as part of GAZE LGBT Film Festival in August. This was followed by a panel discussion including the documentary's producer Cat Steel; Sam and Louise who were featured in the film; and Chief Executive Broden Giambrone, who discussed the importance of trans visibility. The event was sold-out.



In August, TENI launched the short-film 'I Am' by award winning team Anna Rodgers and Zlata Filipovic. This was a conversational piece which explored gender identity and transgender experience. The film is featured on TENI's YouTube channel and has been viewed nearly 6,000 times. The film was also featured in local magazine *Hot Press* and has been circulated to politicians and policy-makers.

EMPLOYMENT

Employment is a pressing issue in the trans community and TENI works to promote respectful and supportive workplaces. In September, TENI and GLEN jointly organised the seminar 'Creating Transgender Inclusive Workplaces.' This was the first time that Irish companies met to discuss how to support trans employees. TENI also published the Transgender in the Workplace leaflet to provide guidance to employers on how to support a trans employee. We are now in the process of organising a second printing of the leaflet.

TENI participated on the Advisory Committee of BeLonG To's 'Stand Up at Work' campaign and TENI Chief Executive Broden Giambrore spoke at the launch of the campaign video in May.



HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

Access to healthcare is a critical issue for trans people and their families and it's vital that services are holistic and respectful to diverse identities. TENI sits on the HSE led Transgender Health Working Group (THWG), which was formed in 2011, and includes key people from the HSE, TENI and GLEN. This working group strives to promote best-practice transgender health initiatives and is currently working on a draft model of care consultation paper to be circulated to professional bodies. TENI Health and Education Manager Vanessa Lacey provides awareness trainings to health professionals and equips them with the tools and resources to better serve trans people and their families (See 'Education').

In addition to supporting the development of better services for trans adults, TENI has undertaken significant work in promoting health services that address the needs of trans adolescents. Historically there has been no HSE service that caters to this population. Over the course of 2013 and 2014, TENI's Health and Education Manager Vanessa Lacey worked closely with paediatric endocrinologists to develop services for adolescent trans people. In April, an important training was delivered by Prof Dr Peggy Cohen-Kettenis and Dr Daniel Klink to HSE staff. This service is now available by referral.

ADVOCACY

TENI strives to achieve full rights and equality for trans people and their families. We work to promote the inclusion and integration of trans people in Irish society. Advocacy is a cornerstone of our work and we actively engage with politicians and policy-makers to instigate political and legislative change.

Gender Recognition Legislation

In 2014, there was significant progress in the area of Gender Recognition Legislation.

Key moments in the progression of Gender Recognition Legislation:

- In January, the Joint Committee on Education and Social Protection published the Report on the General Scheme of the Gender Recognition Bill 2013.
- In February, Amnesty International launched the ground-breaking report, *The state decides who I am: lack of legal recognition for transgender people in Europe*. TENI Chair Sara R. Phillips spoke at the European launch in Copenhagen and TENI Office Assistant Ben Power spoke at the Dublin launch.
- In March, The Seanad Public Consultation Committee (SPCC) invited organisations to put forward written submissions on key priorities and challenges facing Ireland in complying with its obligations under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR). This was in advance of the Irish Government formally presenting Ireland's Fourth Periodic Report under the ICCPR to the United Nations' Human Rights Committee in July. TENI took the opportunity to submit the report, *Human Rights Violations in Ireland on the Basis of Gender Identity and Intersex Status*.
- In April, TENI partnered with GLEN to host the EU Elections – LGBT Hustings event which brought together candidates running in the Dublin constituency for the EU Parliament elections to discuss how they could promote LGBT equality at the European level. Gender recognition was discussed by all candidates.
- In May, TENI Chief Executive Broden Giambrone addressed the Seanad Public Consultation Committee on the subject of lowering the minimum age for Gender Recognition. This was the first time that members of the trans community were invited to address Senators in the Seanad.
- On the 9th of May, the Education and Social Protection Committee's report that was published in January was publicly debated in Dáil Eireann by TDs and the Minister for Social Protection. This was the first time that gender recognition was formally debated in the Dáil and also witnessed the first recorded use of the term 'cisgender' in this forum. Members of TENI and the transgender community were in the public gallery to witness this momentous occasion.
- On June 17th, the Minister for Social Protection published the Revised General Scheme of the Gender Recognition Bill following Cabinet approval. The revised scheme included several significant changes to the proposed Bill, including the removal of the Sports clause (which would have severely hindered trans people's participation in sports) and provided a pathway for legal recognition for 16 and 17 years olds. The Minister also clarified and re-iterated that the legislation would include intersex affected individuals and that the medical criteria would not include a diagnosis.
- On 24th July, the UN Human Rights Committee issued their concluding observations on Ireland's compliance with the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR). A 'Shadow Report' of human rights issues in Ireland was compiled by the Irish Council of Civil Liberties (ICCL), in association with TENI and a number of partners. This was submitted to the UN Human Rights Committee in advance of the hearings. In their concluding statements, the Committee explicitly raised issues with the new Heads of a Gender Recognition Bill. In particular, the Committee expressed concern regarding the single requirement which would force married trans people to get divorced in order to have their gender recognised. TENI participated in a press conference hosted by ICCL and spoke of the need for legislation that is inclusive and human rights-based.
- In August, the Equality Authority launched their detailed Observations on the Revised Scheme of the Gender Recognition Bill 2014. TENI's Chief Executive Broden Giambrone joined Betty Purcell, Acting Chair of the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission to launch the report. The report made strong and robust legal arguments for further revising the Bill to ensure that the legislation that is introduced will protect the rights, dignity and family life of trans people.
- In September, the Government committed to introducing the Gender Recognition Bill before the end of the year.



STAD

TENI published the 2013 STAD: Stop Transphobia and Discrimination in Ireland Report in June 2014 in Limerick in partnership with the University of Limerick's Hate and Hostility Research Group. In August, TENI returned to Limerick to present on the report as part of Limerick Pride. The event included LGBT community members and Gardaí representatives.

The STAD campaign has continued into 2014. Since January 1st, there have been 41 reports to STAD. The campaign is ongoing and we are continuously encouraging individuals to report hate crimes and incidents based on gender identity or expression.

TENI is working closely with the Gardaí to develop resources to aid them in supporting trans people. TENI intern Clodagh Leonard played a pivotal role in this work.



COMMUNICATIONS

In April, TENI welcomed TENI's Office and Communications Officer Aoife O'Driscoll. Aoife has been hard at work raising TENI's public profile, liaising with media and writing articles. This has included the production of 35 e-newsletters and press releases since January.

The focus of this year's communications campaign is gender recognition legislation. In September, TENI participated in a media training to help individuals engage with the media and effectively communicate TENI's messages.

TENI believes that effective organisational communication is key to staying connected with members and keeping people informed of TENI's activities. TENI engages in a variety of communications activities*.

- **Website (<http://www.teni.ie/>)**
- **TENI E-Newsletters & Press Releases – 35 since Jan 1, 2014.**
- **Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/TransEquality>) – 5,022 likes.**
- **Twitter (@TENI-Tweets) – 4,921 tweets with 3,118 followers.**
- **YouTube (<http://www.youtube.com/transgenderequality>) – 147 subscribers.**
- **LinkedIn (Transgender Equality Network Ireland) – 500+ connections.**

***All figures as of September 30th 2014.**

TENI would like to thank our funders for their financial support. We are also grateful for the ongoing support of the trans community and their families, friends and allies.



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