



Winners of the *Show Racism the Red Card Creative Competition* pictured at the prize giving ceremony in UCD on March 23rd 2010. Pictured with the young winners are Luke Fitzgerald (Ireland Rugby player), Cian O' Sullivan (Dublin SFC) and Ollie Cahill (Shamrock Rovers). The Boards & Voluntary Agencies branch has donated funds to the Intercultural Summer Camp for children aged 12-15years. For more information visit www.theredcard.ie/camp

Boards and Voluntary Agencies Branch launch Harvey Report

The Boards & Voluntary Agencies branch of IMPACT will launch a report on the effects of cuts in the community and voluntary sector on Wednesday 12th May. The report was commissioned by the branch in order to examine the disproportionate effect of budgetary cuts in the sector, which provides a wide range of services to Ireland's most vulnerable people and communities. The launch of the report will take place at 11.30am in Buswells Hotel, Molesworth Street, Dublin.

Our branch commissioned Brian Harvey, an independent social research consultant, to produce the report. Mr. Harvey has written extensively on matters relating to the community and voluntary

sector. The full report will be available on www.impactbva.wordpress.com to download.

There are approximately 6,100 voluntary and community organisations in Ireland, employing an estimated 53,098 people. The estimated value of the sector to the economy is €6.5billion, while state funding is in the order of €1.89billion.

The economic crisis has presented fresh demands on all organisations in the sector, with growing demands on financial support, shelter and food. The sector has also witnessed soaring demand to help people in difficulty with debt and mortgage arrears and people who have lost their jobs.

The report details the effect of how demand for services is soaring while the sector has endured significant reductions in state funding. This, the report says, means that many organisations will fall as they attempt to do more with less and respond to the huge social distress that has followed the economic collapse. The report also highlights the risk of decline in volunteer activity in the sector, as the numbers of professional staff responsible for recruitment, training and retaining volunteers is cut.

The report warns that the ability of the sector to represent those most in need will be sharply reduced and that the civil society voice for a more enlightened social policy will diminish. It marks the greatest risk that the community and voluntary sector, which has been a model of best practice and expertise in so many fields, has ever faced.

Branch motions for change

The Boards & Voluntary Agencies branch passed 13 motions to go forward to approval at the IMPACT biennial conference taking place in Kilkenny on 19th-21st May 2010.

Community & Voluntary Sector

The branch is calling for a review of IMPACT organisation as we feel the current branch structure does not accommodate those working in the community sector.

The branch opposes all attempts to divide workers whether public, private or in the community and voluntary sector. In campaigning for Ireland's public services, the union must continually specify the services delivered through the public and the community and voluntary sector.

In making its case, the BVA branch urges IMPACT to use the report by Brian Harvey prepared for the branch and widely promote and disseminate it.

The branch notes that it is expected that a contraction of 15% will take place in the sector. Many of our members have taken large pay cuts or cuts in their working week and some have lost their jobs. The branch calls for the Central Executive Committee (CEC) to advocate for our members in the sector and for the services provided. We also advocate that action taken in the public sector needs to be extended to the community sector.

The HSE and other bodies have been instructing employers in the community sector to impose public service wage cuts and levies, even though they are not public servants. In our last newsletter, we called for vigilance in the community sector. This is what we meant.

Defending the public sector

In light of cuts to public sector pay and the continuing demonisation of those working in the public sector the branch has a motion bound to cause discussion. While there is much comment about the work and performance of the public sector by all and sundry, public sector workers are restricted from going public about their concerns. They cannot make statements to the media and most are not allowed stand for election.

We appreciate that it might be necessary for some posts to be subject to a bar on political activity but we believe that public sector workers whether in the state civil service or statutory agencies can play a role in politics. We are calling on IMPACT to advocate for the right of all public sector workers to be able to stand for election without having to resign their jobs.

Water charges

The government is planning to spend millions on inserting meters into our houses with a view to making us pay water charges. The branch calls on IMPACT to be part of a campaign to fight against this. 40% of water is lost through neglect of the piping infrastructure during the Celtic Tiger years. They can invest the money allocated for meters into repairing pipes and spare us charges. Workers have lost their jobs, taken pay cuts and levies. Enough is enough!

Membership services

Recognising that IMPACT has 65,000 members, the branch believes this collective strength can be utilised to benefit members. We are calling on IMPACT CEC to convene a meeting of the Membership Services Committee with a view to reviewing and improving services to members with regards to relations to external partners.

Currently the union gives profile within its publications to companies such as Cornmarket and Marsh. We want to ensure that there are real benefits to members engaging with such organisations.

Biennial report

You can see all motions from the branch on www.impactbva.wordpress.com and all motions to the conference in the Biennial Report, which is online at www.impact.ie

Get involved

To find out about getting involved in the IMPACT Boards & Voluntary Agencies branch, contact Branch Secretary Una O' Connor 087 296 9626 or impactbva@gmail.com

Keep informed

Visit the branch website www.impactbva.wordpress.com and see links to many of the employments within the branch. Sign up to the branch E- Bulletin. Send a message to impactbva@gmail.com and put the word 'ebulletin' in the subject heading and we will add your address to the mailing list. Please note that we will not share your information with any third party.