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# ANNUAL Activity Report 2020



Transgender  
Equality  
Network  
Ireland



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**MISSION STATEMENT:**

**Vision:**

**Our vision is a world where all people, regardless of gender identity or expression, enjoy full acceptance, equality and human rights.**

**Mission:**

**Our mission is to advance the rights and equality, and improve the lives of trans people and their families.**

**STAFF**

Éirénne Carroll	<b>Chief Executive Officer</b>
Gordon Grehan	<b>Operations Manager</b>
Vanessa Lacey	<b>Health &amp; Education Manager</b>
Keeva Lilith Carroll	<b>National Community Development Officer</b>
Hannah Solley	<b>Family Resource &amp; Education Officer</b>
Steven Harris	<b>Administration Officer</b>
Andy Martin	<b>Interim National Community Development Officer</b>
(Resigned November 2020)	

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

Sara R. Phillips	<b>Chair</b>
Cearbhall Turraoin	<b>Vice Chair</b>
Sam Blanckensee	<b>Finance Director</b>
Aoife Martin	
Ollie Bell	
Lynne Tracey	
Dani O'Connor	
Denise Breen	
Ben Power	
Alexis Riva	
Delroy Mpofo	
Alex Lawson	
Veronica Victor	(resigned October 2020)
Rowan Golden	(resigned October 2020)

**CEO FOREWORD**

To the community across Ireland, I am proud to be here and begin working alongside you for the advancement of transgender equality. As you will read on in this report you will see how TENI has continued to work tirelessly for our rights, and striven to provide support during a year of unprecedented challenges. The virus has caused challenges that none of us could foresee, and it has taken from us the ability to come together to celebrate, reflect, and advocate. For many of you this year has added pressures to your life, such as dealing with unsupportive housing, employment insecurity, or a halted healthcare system. This year has caused undue stress to mount and yet your resilience is still on display. As we continue on, I can say unequivocally that TENI will continue to stand alongside you, and continue to advocate and support you as we navigate this challenge and look forward hopefully to a time when we can hug, laugh and march together again.

As I write to you for the first time I would like to cast our vision to the future. A future that our Strategic Plan envisions as a world where all people regardless of gender identity or expression, enjoy full acceptance, equality and human rights. I believe this world, this Ireland is possible. To fight for you, and alongside you to achieve this goal I would also like to promise the following for the next year. First and foremost, I want to know you and meet you. As we head into 2021, I look forward to traveling across the country and seeing many of you in person. I look forward to hearing your stories, and learning how I and TENI can better support you and your dreams for Ireland. I look forward to working alongside you in regional projects, campaigns and events and sharing your stories widely to challenge societal stigma and build inclusion. In the next year I want to see TENI empowering our community like never before. I believe empowerment projects that help community members share their stories in multiple forms will allow more people to speak up, and speak out. From designing zines, to creating art, to writing opinion editorials I believe we have the skills in our community and TENI will support you in sharing those stories or helping you build those skills. Our organisation will also come alongside you to support you in your schools, workplaces and community groups. Our training and advocacy will focus on the regional challenges, and build ways for inclusion whether you live in an urban centre or a rural community. TENI will continue to expand the work and support we give so that no matter where you live you feel direct support, have access to TENI resources and know we are advocating for the specific

challenges you face. I believe as we move forward TENI will be more community driven than ever before.

As I look to the future I believe the work of our Strategic Plan will also position us to continue to see amendments passed to the Gender Recognition Act and we are doggedly focused on the inclusion of non-binary identities and the right to self-identify for under 16s. We will continue to leverage our partnerships with the HSE to see a world class healthcare system as the end goal. That means we will continue to work toward the acceptance of an informed-consent model that depathologises trans identities and gives greater freedom to access and use healthcare on our terms, not on the terms of those that would seek to gatekeep us. Most importantly we will build collaborative networks and partnerships that see trans rights, and trans inclusion positioned across national debates. We will work to extinguish exclusionary beliefs and ideologies, and we will work to make sure the trans people can live life to the fullest. Most importantly as we go forward we will continue to advocate for the most marginalised among us. TENI will always believe if one of us is not equal, none of us are equal. I look forward to what 2021 will bring, in the midst of the challenges we face we will stand resilient and we will continue to endure and shine!

**Éirénne Carroll**  
**TENI CEO**



## THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

2020 has certainly been a year of change in so many ways for TENI and the trans community. We have continued the great work to stabilise our organisation, reset the clock and reconnect with community, developing bold plans to achieve our goals. The Board has worked to overcome the issues arising from 2019 and continues to ensure that this will be completed by the end of 2020. But Covid-19 has impacted upon all our lives and our lived realities are very different to that which we looked forward to in January. In March, TENI took the decision to ask all staff to work from home and we closed our office. However, this has not restricted the work we can do. We were quick to set up on-line mechanisms to provide support to the community and our support groups.

Both Staff and Board worked hard through March to June, reaching out to hear the community's voice and ideas. In July, TENI launched a new and ambitious 3-year strategic plan. This was developed with the assistance of Rethink Ireland and consultant Sinead Gibney. Our sincerest thanks to Aisling Redmond, Amy Power of Rethink Ireland and Sinead Gibney for facilitating and ensuring this important work was focused and reflected the needs of our community. In July we also looked back at the momentous moment in trans history, the enactment of Gender Recognition in 2015, with a live broadcast with GCN, hosted by the wonderful Alexis Riva. A huge thanks must go to Lisa Connell and Katie Donohoe and the Team at GCN for making this happen.

Unbelievably, in healthcare, we find ourselves in an even more difficult situation than at the end of 2019. The waiting lists continue to grow and the backlog identified in 2019 remains an issue. There has been little advance on the HSE proposals and recommendations from the Healthcare committee commissioned by Minister Simon Harris and chaired by Dr Síobhain Ní Bhrian, which both Vanessa Lacey and I were members of.

In July, we also announced the appointment of a new CEO, Éirene Carroll. Éirene's appointment continues the work to reimagine what TENI can be for our community. She brings extensive experience in community organisation and operations. We will ensure that she has the tools necessary to achieve our ambitious goals and look forward to supporting her vision for a bright, unified organisation and community.

I want to say a heartfelt thanks to all our staff, Éirene, Vanessa, Gordon, Hannah, Keeva, and Steven and those who ably stood in when we needed support, Andy, Rowan and Noah. The passion, imagination and drive, you have brought to your work in these difficult circumstances, has been phenomenal and yet there is always so much more to do. Thank you.

TENI Board of Directors remains a voluntary part of organisation. With 14 Directors in 2020, we have

extended our diversity, age profile and key skill sets. With the resignation of a number of individuals, we will need to identify further experienced Board members that can enhance the knowledge base and improve the governance of the organisation. This work will continue into 2021.

I want to thank all our Board members for the support they have given to the organisation throughout 2020 and especially in supporting the staff when called upon. We must acknowledge that the Board is a voluntary function of the organisation and every Director provides their time freely and engages in the work passionately. However, in December, we will see current members Dani O'Connor, Ben Power and Alex Lawson step down from the Board. I want to thank them for all their dedication, all 3 have given their time for over 6 years, serving in many committees and Board positions and voluntarily working on many campaigns. From my own perspective, I wish to thank them all for their support and counsel to me as Chair.

TENI has made a decision not to hold an Annual Assembly of Members this year and as such elections to the Board will be postponed to 2021.

Our Board of Directors will continue to work to ensure corporate governance, oversee the strategy and correct the mistakes of the past. We must ensure that our organisation advance the rights and equality, and improve the lives of trans people and their families. In order to achieve our goals we also need community to engage with TENI. We were formed by the Community, we work for the whole Community and we must hear and listen to your voices. TENI is your organisation. In these times of uncertainty, we must be united more than ever.

**Sara R Phillips**  
TENI Chair



I want to express massive gratitude to you all for your support and patience over the last year and I can assure you that we will keep fighting on your behalf, there will always be obstacles in our lives but we are more than resilient enough to sail over them.

**Vanessa Lacey**  
Health & Education Manager

## HEALTHCARE

Although developments in recent times can be often hard to understand and navigate, we in TENI work tirelessly to ensure that you feel supported. It has indeed been a tough year for us all since our last Annual Report in 2019. Sub-standard trans related healthcare, no school policy for trans students and then we were all hit with a Pandemic, it really has been a difficult period in all of our lives. These situations have posed the TENI Health and Education Department with many challenges but with the incredible support, skill and tenacity from our volunteers and the exceptional Hannah Solley we have surfed that wave. Of course we have succumbed a number of times but we never give up.

### Highlights of the Year:

It has been a year now since I returned to TENI after a very informative spell in Social Prescribing and this opportunity provided many new skills and insights related to non-medical healthcare and the importance of understanding the holistic needs of people.

Our full-day training 'Foundation Level Training in Trans Healthcare' was delivered over 30 times in 2019-20 in addition to GIST. The one-day training is essential for us in TENI to develop relationships with service providers and provide an understanding that the trans community needs a service that's based on International Best

Practice and we will continue to advocate for our human right to healthcare.

This past year also heralded in TENI's new Education and Family Support Officer Hannah Solley. Hannah has made enormous positive changes in the lives of our families and young people since she entered the doors of TENI and it is a privilege to work with her.

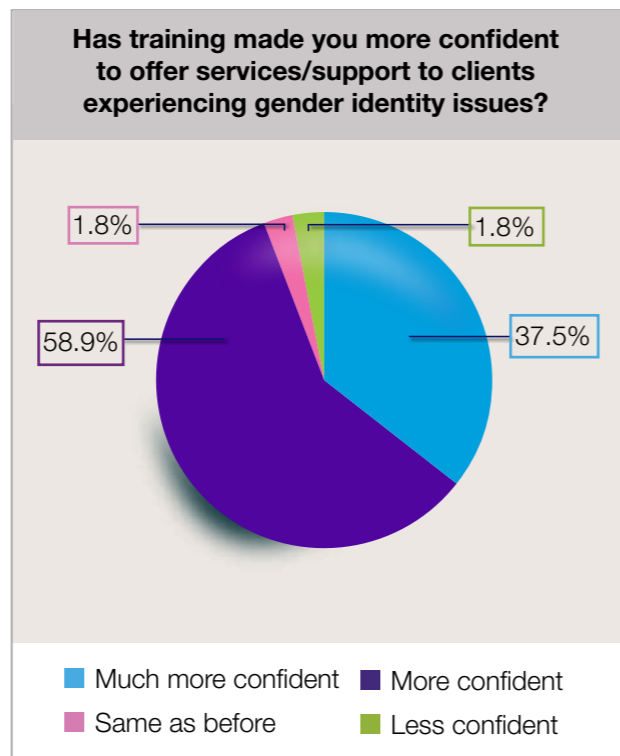
### Challenges and Achievements:

I suppose I better speak about the issue that has impacted on all of our lives over the last 9 months or so...COVID-19! This has created many challenges for us all but we are in the process of adapting our work everyday to ensure we provide first-class services to trans people and their families. Unfortunately, I had to postpone GIST 2020 until May 2021 at the earliest and we already had 45 healthcare workers registered and ready to go for November. I am hopeful that we can get back on track with these vital trainings next year. I had to cancel my one-day training bookings, which was also very disappointing. However, on a good news front, I have now adapted all the one-day trainings to 2 half-day ones, which has been promoted through the HSE Communications system on the 21st of September. I have received nearly 70 emails from HSE staff requesting this training and I am now fully booked for training until March 2021. There is always a way!!

In terms of support for the TransParenCI and Transformers groups, again Hannah has been doing phenomenal work along with our incredible volunteers. We adapted all our supports online and specifically offered weekly supports to the Transformers group from March to August. It was such a personal joy for me to facilitate those groups. I got a great insight into the needs of the young trans people during this time and I am very grateful to them for sharing their experiences. I was a little concerned coming to the end of 'lockdown' that it was essential to be more creative in the manner in which we provided support, as I was aware online support did not work for all. So we decided to explore a new initiative and our 'walk-and-talk' support groups emerged. We piloted these workshops in Waterford and the feedback was very positive, although I was aware that I may have overstepped the mark in walking the legs off our Transformers (sorry folks!!). I am thrilled to say that we have now rolled out this initiative in our groups in Dublin (thanks again Hannah), Cork (thanks John), Waterford, and I am aware that Kerry are up and at it also. We cannot emphasise how much we appreciate our TransParenCI and Transformers volunteers, without them we could not do our work. I would also like to welcome the new Cavan and Monaghan TransParenCI and Transformers into our family and it is so encouraging to see this grow and flourish, especially in a pandemic! We hope to have many more new and creative ideas for 2021 for families and young people and Covid-19 won't stop us!

### GIST

The objective of GIST is to help HSE healthcare professionals to provide safe and accessible national and regional services to trans people and their families. GIST is funded by HSE and aimed at their staff to ensure that the focus is on upskilling in the needs of our community and is essential for developing regional services for trans people. In November 2019, we had 83 participants which included the HSE National Lead on Mental Health Dr. Siobhan Ni Bhriain and Deputy Chief Medical Officer Dr. Colette Bonner. The GIST team included extremely skilled health professionals from many areas of trans healthcare both nationally and internationally, with 3 of the team travelling from outside Ireland. Our approach is to ensure we provide peer-



reviewed, evidence based, trans-related information to healthcare staff to enable them to further develop services at all levels and regions in the HSE.

The participants included many different disciplines from various regions, and selection of participants was vital to ensure that the healthcare professionals that attended were currently providing a service to trans people. The content of the training focused on a variety of clinical insights balanced with trans perspectives throughout, to ensure that participants understood the importance of putting the trans person in the centre of care. The evaluation highlighted the experiences of the participants over the 3 days of GIST and outcomes were very favourable. Additionally, the GIST conference highlighted that the HSE needs to focus on integrating trans healthcare in all areas and regions rather than centralising and specialising. Further, we learned from feedback that all HSE Psychotherapists should be upskilled to meet the needs of trans clients and the HSE should ensure this as well.

**Vanessa**  
*Health & Education Manager*



What a whirlwind of a year! I have loved every minute of my first year with TENI, it has been busy and fulfilling as well as somewhat challenging with the current circumstances we all find ourselves in.

**Hannah Solley,**  
*Family Support & Education Officer*

### EDUCATION

I have facilitated close to 30 trainings for primary and post primary schools, third level institutes, health and wellbeing teams and youth organisations, and I have presented at two conferences. All of this continues to help spread awareness and normalise gender diversity whilst also showing how necessary this work is within school communities, both primary and secondary.

In January I was delighted to help coordinate the start up of a new set of TransParenCI and Transformer support groups in Dublin city centre. This group was formed to alleviate some of the pressure of the North Dublin group which has grown so much, and also to accommodate those families who couldn't access that group. We had good attendance in the two short months that we were able to hold meetings but since March all of our groups have been postponed for in person meetings due to Covid-19.

I am very proud to say that as an organisation, TENI has continued to support our community throughout the pandemic. We have held support group meetings online during lockdown and beyond. Our very own Vanessa Lacey generously supported our young people in Transformers every week for several months, whilst our facilitators for the parent and family member group, TransParenCI, held meetings every four to six weeks.

I conducted a survey to gauge how our services met the needs of our families and young people, and the

results were overwhelming positive with 98 percent of respondents saying that they felt supported and that they received the level of support they needed.

Since August we have organised therapeutic walk and talks for our support groups, these have taken place in Dublin, Waterford and Cork. We wanted to find a creative way to meet in person whilst adhering to current government guidelines and this is the idea that we came up with. It is really important that our community feels connected especially in these uncertain times.

I am continuing to support schools and facilitate trainings, although for the moment these are being held virtually. It is unusual not to be travelling around the country and not being able to see everyone's faces during a presentation but I am delighted to be able to continue my work in any way that I can and therefore I am happy to adapt to whatever life is throwing at us. It is great to see that where there is a will, there is a way! The exciting news that I would like to end on, is the announcement that a new set of TransParenCI and Transformer support groups will be commencing at the end of October in the Cavan / Monaghan area. This will mean that we have 12 support groups in six regions around the country. This makes me extra proud to be a part of team TENI!

**Hannah Solley,**  
*Family Support & Education Officer*

POST-PRIMARY SCHOOL EXPERIENCES

The Post-primary School Experiences of Transgender and Gender Diverse Youth in Ireland (2020)

In 2020 we completed some exceptional research. It was inspiring to see the research outcomes in partnership with University of Limerick and Dr. Ruari McBride. The findings highlighted the challenges that many in our younger community endure in post-primary Irish schools and spoke to the voices of young trans and gender diverse participants who felt marginalised within their schools. The sense of marginalisation was linked to (a) the lack of discussion about gender identity, (b) the absence of representation of TGD (Trans and Gender-Diverse) people, and (c) a lack of LGBTI+ supportive spaces. These factors contributed to a sense of shame about their gender identity given that trans issues were not validated by any manner of means in the school environment. Subsequently, TGD young students decided to repress their identity which consequently impacted negatively on self-esteem issues and minority stress, and ultimately school retention.



Overarching this report are the key recommendations relating to future directions in the school system and include: the establishment of a working group with key stakeholders; development of gender identity and gender expression policy for all Irish schools; and explicit inclusion of gender identity in schools, which includes teacher pre and post-service training and

inclusion of trans people in the school curriculum. If these goals are addressed it would potentially meet the needs of young people in schools and contribute to them feeling comfortable in their school environment, which consequently will contribute to them actualising their full potential. We shall maintain our advocate work with all levels of schooling in Ireland.



STRATEGIC PLAN LAUNCH



In 2020 the TENI Staff, Board and Community came together to refocus our vision for the future. As such we proudly released our Strategic Plan which envisions a world where all people regardless of gender identity or expression, enjoy full acceptance, equality and human rights. I believe this world, this Ireland is possible. This vision is close to my heart, and at the centre of my vision of the work of TENI in 2021. To fight for you, and alongside you to achieve this goal I would also like to promise the following for the next year. First and foremost, I want to know you and meet you. As we head into 2021 I look forward to traveling across the country and seeing many of you in person. I look forward to hearing your stories, and learning how I and TENI can better support you and your dreams for Ireland. I look forward to working alongside you in regional projects, campaigns and events and sharing your stories widely to challenge societal stigma and build inclusion. In the next year I want to see TENI

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**Éirénne Carroll**  
TENI CEO



TENI launches its Strategic plan on Facebook Live



Tranvisible project - Activists from Spain, Hungary Germany & Ireland



Andy & Gordon at the launch of the GAA LGBT diversity policy

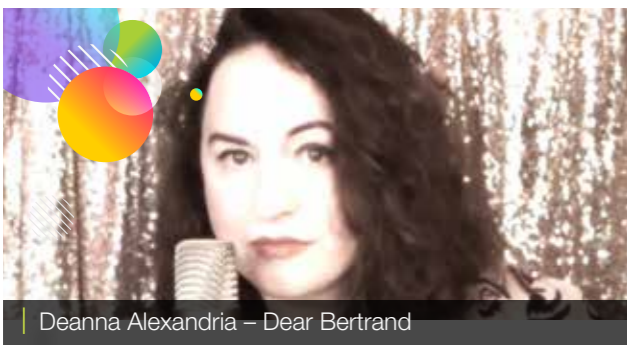


GENDER RECOGNITION MEMORIES

In 2015, after 22 years of campaigning and many court cases by Dr Lydia Foy and years of lobbying, debating and media appearances by the trans community and its allies, Ireland enacted a progressive and world leading Gender Recognition Act. A simple act which allowed the individual to access gender recognition by a simple administrative process. But it was not fully inclusive. 16 and 17 years had onerous criteria,

including court approval, to access recognition. The act excludes Non-Binary identities and those under 16. However, it was still a phenomenal achievement. In the last 5 years 632 individuals had availed of the act.

In July 2020, TENI and GCN brought a celebration to social media and YouTube in remembrance of 5 years since the passing of the Act on the 15th of July. Dr Foy, Michael Farrell from FLAC, former TENI CEO Broden Giambrone, activists from BelongTo, Colm O’Gorman from Amnesty among many others, joined our host Alexis Riva on the evening. There were many wonderful celebrations of music and memories. The final surprise was for Alexis to announce the TENI new CEO – Eirénne Carroll. A huge amount of gratitude must go to Lisa Connell and Katie Donohoe from GCN, who made it all possible and TENI Board member Alexis Riva, who brightened up our screens and hosted a wonderful evening of memories.



Deanna Alexandria – Dear Bertrand



Host Alexis Riva



Broden Giambrone - Former TENI CEO



Cearbhall Turraoin – TENI Vice Chair



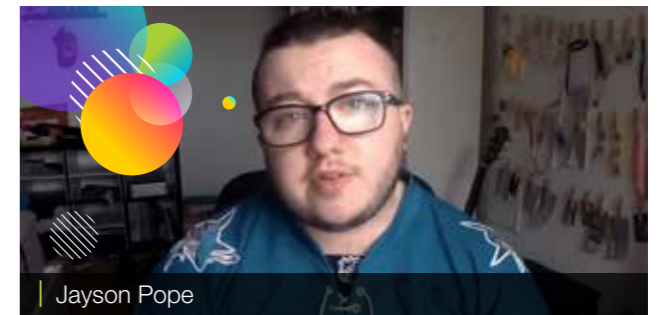
Sam Blanckensee



Dr Lydia Foy with Alexis Riva



Lisa Connell – GCN



Jayson Pope



Kevin Humphries – former Minister for State, Employment and Social Protection



Veda & Lady K



Noah Halpin – This is Me Healthcare campaign



Wallis Bird



### TRANS FLAGS AND TRANS AWARENESS WEEK



To begin marking Trans Awareness week Éirénne worked alongside Dublin Pride, the Dublin City Council, and Dublin City Parks to see transgender flags raised across the city to mark the week. It was the first time Dublin has raised the flag and was monumental in recognising trans people in this city and across Ireland. It was also important because unfortunately this year we saw 350 trans and gender diverse people murdered globally, the highest number in years. This sign of solidarity by the city continues to advocate for trans rights, and celebrate our resilient and beautiful community even in a time when we can not physically gather to remember and celebrate.

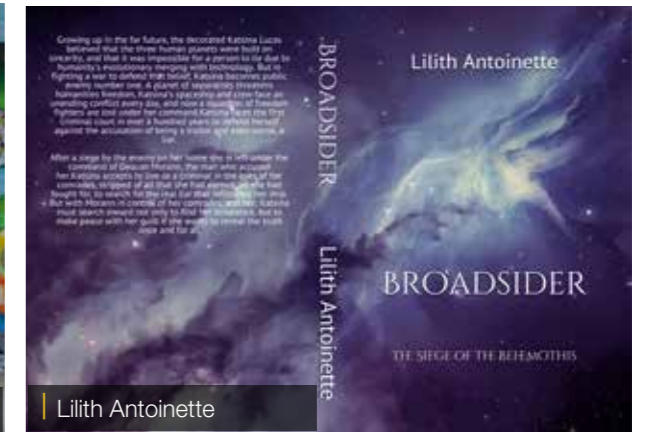
The rest of the week TENI provided many virtual opportunities for the community to come together, to connect, remember and celebrate our community. On November 16th, Andy Martin hosted a Trans Life Panel with multiple members of the community. It was a chance for the community to share about different journeys, and chat about life hacks. November 18th,

Éirénne Carroll hosted the Transmute art show and was joined by artists that had a chance to showcase their art that reflected their journey, and celebrated the community. Trans Day of Remembrance was marked on Friday, November 20th with a virtual candlelight vigil in which Sara Phillips, Aoife Martin, Andy Martin and Éirénne Carroll all participated in. Finally we ended the week with a good bit of craic when we hosted a virtual community trivia party that had performances by Avoca Reaction and comedy by Felix O'Connor.

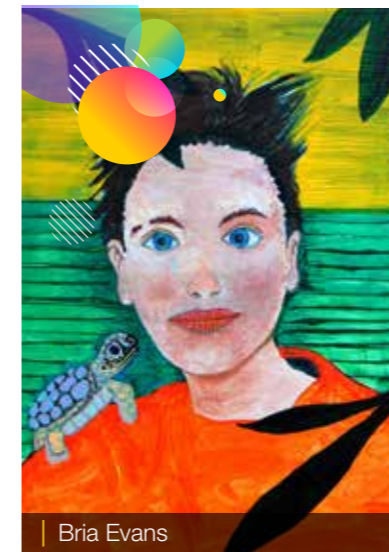
### TRANS MUTE ART SHOW



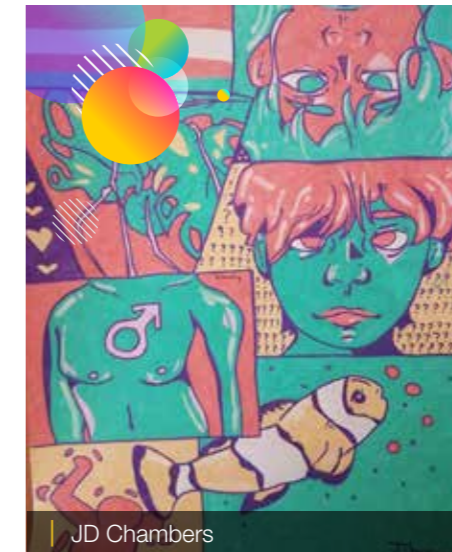
Bria Evans



Lilith Antoinette



Bria Evans



JD Chambers



Lilith Antoinette



Sinéad Keogh



Joe/Perseus



Benjamin Foley



**TRANS MENTAL HEALTH WEEK 2020**  
REMEMBERING, CELEBRATING, CONNECTING

**MONDAY NOVEMBER 16 @ 7:00PM**  
**TRANS LIFE PANEL**  
Join us as we chat life hacks, challenges, and ways to care for yourself.  
Hosted by Andy Martin

**WEDNESDAY NOVEMBER 18 @ 7:00PM**  
**TRANZ MUTE ART SHOW**  
We will showcase art from our community and hear from the artists on what inspired them.  
Hosted by Éirénne Carroll

**FRIDAY NOVEMBER 20 @ 7:00PM**  
**TRANS DAY OF REMEMBRANCE**  
Join us for our Candlelight Vigil and memorial that honours those lost across the globe, and looks with hope to a better tomorrow.

**SATURDAY NOVEMBER 21 @ 7:00PM**  
**COMMUNITY ZOOM PARTY**  
A bit of craic, a bit of retro, fully our community! Join us for a party that allows us to be ourselves, laugh, dance, and connect.  
HOSTED BY AVOCA REACTION

Transgender Equality Network Ireland

## OPERATIONS REPORT



Well, it's been a funny old year.

The last twelve months have taught us great lessons in how to adapt to change and the vital importance of connection in difficult times.

Our 'Empowering Trans Learning in Ireland', a collaboration with the Ulex Project, a training organisation based in Spain, came to an end in December 2019. Nine staff members, board members and support group facilitators attended training courses at Ulex. This project was funded by Erasmus+.

Our work on the TransVisible project continues through 2020. This project is an EU funded collaboration between five different organisations across Europe. The project's goal is to provide resources to employers, civil society organisations, support services and recruitment professionals that will support and encourage them to make employment more accessible to trans women and trans feminine people.

Speaking of assisting trans women to reach their potential in the workforce, 2020 was the first year of our SuperWoman project. The goal of SuperWoman is to upskill participants and help their professional and personal development. TENI was awarded a Mná na hÉireann grant to run this programme, funded by ReThink Ireland and Bank of America.

I am very proud that I represent TENI on An Garda Síochána's Diversity & Integration Oversight Committee and on the G.A.A's Gender Diversity Working

Group. It is incredibly encouraging to see two Irish institutions taking steps to be trans inclusive.

One of the most fulfilling aspects of my job is education. Over the last twelve months I was privileged to deliver Trans 101 training to Dress for Success, Galway Mayo Institute of Technology, Sligo Institute of Technology, Letterkenny Institute of Technology, the National Treasury Management Agency, Bus Eireann, the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland, Trinity College Dublin social care students, Hubspot and many more.

I always say that policies are crucial for organisations to be trans inclusive and this year I have worked on policies with the Central Bank, the National Treasury Management Agency, Mary Immaculate College Limerick, the G.A.A. and others.

I am lucky to work with people who are passionate and driven to make positive change. I am especially lucky to manage Andy, Lilith and Steven, who are just deadly, to be honest.

We're learning and adapting as we get through these strange times together, and I am excited about TENI's future. One of the highlights of my year was being part of creating TENI's new three-year strategic plan. It was great to hear how passionate our community is about TENI. It reinforced my belief that TENI is vital and that we have a hugely important role in advocating for Ireland's trans community.

I am looking forward to seeing what 2021 has up its sleeve for us!

**Gordon Grehan**  
*Operations Manager*

## COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT



Unfortunately, in keeping with current level 5 restrictions, groups are unable to meet again just yet.

Coming into the winter, there are real concerns for the community and their mental health.

In November, as part of our Trans Mental Health Week, we will be running events online that will focus on practical community experience and knowledge, expression through art & media, remembrance of those we have lost, and a celebration of our community.

**Andy Martin,**  
*Interim National Community Development Officer*

The community support TENI offers is always important, but it has never been more so.

For many in our community, the pandemic has caused disruption and upheaval to not only their lives and livelihood, but their transitions, healthcare, and spaces to be themselves.

Offering support to our peer support groups, and providing individual support has been a huge priority this year.

In March, we quickly moved to help the trans peer support groups across the country to run online. Zoom peer support groups have, particularly during the first national lockdown, been very successful and have brought a number of changes (both positive and negative) to group engagement.

Many groups have found more people who usually would be unable to attend the groups in person because of distance to travel or a fear of attending, were now able to attend and that numbers had grown. On the flipside of that, as people are now attending from home, they're not always able to discuss many sensitive issues comfortably.

Coming out of the summer, we had begun to work towards groups meeting in person safely and in line with restrictions, with some groups holding socially distanced walks and outdoor social events and with plans to rent larger spaces for potential indoor events.



This year has been an unprecedented one for the trans community with a global pandemic severely curtailing the community's ability to come together. While the full benefits have yet to be made the year started off on a high note with continual development of the community space which bodes well for 2021 where hopefully we can once again come together and support each other

through peer support, social gatherings, clubs and events. As part of developing the space concentration focussed on accessibility with the installation of a loop system for the deaf and hard of hearing. Noise cancelling headphones and stim toys were also made available for neurodiverse people and those with sensory needs.

This year also saw the building of relationships with other community groups and organisations in order to work together for the betterment of the community as a whole. One such organisation has been The Stairlings Collective where we have worked on two fantastic and inspirational projects that bookended both ends of the year. In February, in conjunction with the Herstory project a series of photographic portraits were commissioned focussing on trans women and non-binary trans feminine people. The purpose was to create an exhibition that would show a positive representation of the trans community and develop relations within the trans community. This resulted in the portraits being projected onto the courtyard of Collins Barracks and the GPO, both buildings of massive historical significance.

In November after a successful funding application from Create, TENI and The Stairlings have developed and begun recording an exciting new podcast and archival series where for the first time elders and other prominent members of the trans community in Ireland will be interviewed, their voices and stories heard and an intergenerational dialogue facilitated on the topics of trans history and culture in Ireland. The intention is that this will become a wonderful resource for young and old alike and work to preserve our history and culture for generations to come.

This year also saw the inaugural 'We Only Want The Earth' programme of awards, exhibitions and events where in conjunction with A4 Sounds studios, Gender RIP, The Arts Council, Create and TENI a professional artist in residence and exhibition was created for a transgender, non-binary or gender nonconforming artist. This resulted in the creation of an amazing audiovisual work of art by Mexican-American artist and trans woman Imogen Hinojosa entitled Liturgia which was broadcast online in June of this year. The scheme has also been renewed for 2021 which will create a

wonderful opportunity for another trans artist going forward.

In terms of community support, this year also began on a high when the Dublin Trans Peer Support group (TPSG) were nominated for a GALA award for Community Organisation of the Year. This also coincided with the 15th anniversary of the support group, a fantastic achievement! The ongoing Covid crisis situation has also meant innovation and TENI worked with many adult trans peer support groups around the country to ensure that they could continue to operate. As a result we provided a professional ZOOM account for support groups as well as training which has meant the continuation of vital peer support for groups around the country. As well as this the Trans Groups Alliance reconvened and have met a number of times this year. This alliance is the coming together of TPSG, Trans Greystones, Trans Kerry, Gossip Galway, Gender Rebels Cork, TransParenCI, Trans Clonmel and our newest member Trans Waterford to discuss areas of common interest and foster links with the community on a national scale.

This year also saw the creation of a brand new adult peer support group in Waterford which despite the restrictions has launched and proven popular in the Waterford area. Community discussions took place over a number of months which resulted in the formation of a steering committee, a team of facilitators from the trans community, the creation of a terms of reference for the group and social media presence. The group is meeting monthly online but intends to meet once a month in the Waterford and South Tipperary youth service building in 2021.

The pandemic has of course been a challenge for the community in terms of mental health. To that end TENI in partnership with therapist Aoife Ryan conducted a look after yourself and your relationships workshop for the trans community which took place in June. The workshop included a presentation on resilience, self care and communication with the trans community and community discussion afterwards. TENI also commissioned research on the mental health of the trans community during Covid. In this research it was discovered that 80% of respondents who attended online support groups felt it had a positive impact on their mental health.

Although this year was a difficult one for many reasons I'm personally glad and proud of what has been achieved in my role as community development officer this year. In terms of personal highlights there are no individual moments that stand out but the fostering and developing of relationships and partnerships with community groups and other organisations has meant that together we have done so much that otherwise

would not have been possible given the circumstances. I want to give a special thanks to all the volunteers in the various support groups and community organisations that have done such amazing work over the past year.

**Keeva Lilith Carroll,**  
*National Community Development Officer*

ADMINISTRATION & SUPPORT



As an administrator, my work in TENI involves all the usual things one might assume but it also comes with the important role of being the first person someone might open up to about their struggles. To be in the position of supporting someone at such a crucial time in their life is a real privilege and it is, without question, the most rewarding part of my job.

**Steven Harris,**  
*Administrative Officer*

When people reach out to TENI, we are often their very first point of contact. We hear from people all over Ireland and internationally who need support, information, and sometimes just a compassionate ear to hear them and validate their feelings. Maybe it's someone who's just realised they're trans; maybe they are a parent or family member whose loved one has just expressed their trans identity for the first time; maybe they are a teacher or a support worker calling on behalf of a young person, and maybe they are looking to move to Ireland to have a better, safer life. Whatever their story is, we are here to listen, to support, and to signpost them to the appropriate services to meet their

needs. With Covid-19 playing a big role in everyone's lives, this year has been particularly challenging for us as an organisation and as a community. So many people are struggling with the effects the lockdown has had on our day-to-day lives. Today, our services are more important than ever, and we are dedicated to supporting our community and continuing to provide the best support possible to those in need.

THE GALAS LGBT AWARDS

In February, the National LGBT Federation hosted the annual GALAS awards in the Mansion House, Dublin. Many TENI staff and Board members had been long listed for the awards, recognising the great work the organisation does. Congratulations to Board member Alexis Riva who won the LGBT+ Digital Change Maker Award and our Chair, Sara R Phillips who won the LGBT+ Role Model Award. Dr Lydia Foy joined 30 members of the trans community and TENI in a wonderful evening celebration.



A CALL FOR IRISH SOLIDARITY

For decades the transgender community has advocated, marched, and fought for equality, and inclusion. This fight has never once wavered in supporting movements that garner equality for all marginalised communities. Our work, our fight, our campaigns, have all been underscored by two things, intersectionality and solidarity. The transgender community has always worked in advancing the equal rights and acceptance of all without discrimination. For decades the work of the transgender community was tied to working in wider acceptance of queer people, even when our rights were never mentioned, nor advanced. For decades members of the transgender community marched in Pride, stood for women's equality, all while our rights were left off the table. Internationally, women such as Marsha P. Johnson and others, marched, shouted and demanded gay rights, while every step of the way recognition of transgender identities and the inclusion of transgender rights were

left behind. Here in Ireland the transgender community has continued to show that spirit of solidarity. Members of our community have worked along intersectional lines supporting campaigns that aimed for increasing women's rights, and the wider rights of the lesbian, bisexual and gay communities. Transgender people were active in campaigns in 2015 and 2016 that saw the passing of Marriage Equality in Ireland, and in the repeal of the 8th Amendment. Never have transgender people sought to diminish the rights, or acceptance of others.

Now, unfortunately, we see a rise in discriminatory organisations and vocal transgender exclusionary activists using Twitter and divisive antics to attempt to drive a wedge in queer communities between transgender people and fracture our support from feminists. For our decades of solidarity, some seek to repay our community with a call for division based on falsities and bigotry. Let us say unequivocally that the statements of newly launched organisations that seek to defend biology or fight gender identity and expression do

not represent the wider LGBTI+ community nor feminists in Ireland. More importantly, they are not organisations at all, they have no governance, no accountability, and are simply Twitter accounts.

The vitriol and disinformation these accounts and people share does not represent the beliefs of the legitimate organisations and signers of this letter, and together we repudiate their beliefs, and call for an end in giving airtime to their despicable brand of harassment.

In Ireland we exist as a strong coalition of intersectional solidarity. As LGBTI+ and feminist organisations we stand together, we march together, we advocate together. We will not allow transphobia to grow and our history of work together will only continue to propel us to a more equal future for all marginalised people.

We call on media, and politicians to no longer provide legitimate representation for those that share bigoted beliefs, that are aligned with far right ideologies and seek nothing but harm and division. These fringe internet accounts stand against affirmative medical care of transgender people, and they stand against the right to self-identification of transgender people in this country. In summation they stand against trans, women's and gay rights by aligning themselves with far right tropes and stances. They have attacked LGBTI+ education in school, attacked anti-bullying campaigns, and attacked access to medical services. They stand to remove equality, and cause a legacy of damaging discrimination. In particular, the road to Gender Recognition was long and public, and we in the trans community are thankful for the support of the many who stood by our side. We are thankful to the wider gay, lesbian and bisexual communities that marched and worked alongside of us for legal recognition. We are thankful for the feminists that saw, and still see, trans women as their sisters and use their voice to speak for equality. We are thankful our community was given a chance to present our case to the country, and that we secured so much support for inclusion and legal recognition. A legal battle, that to remind all, was started by Dr. Lydia Foy in 1992 for legal recognition and bodily autonomy. A twenty three year public debate and case for recognition. The basis of the argument is that all people, regardless of gender should have access to legal recognition, and should be treated as the best authority on their body. The transgender community along with the many supporters and signers of this letter will not stand by and allow toxic voices to continue to spread disinformation that seeks to restrict bodily autonomy, and equality.

As a trans community we are tired, tired of the hate, and the discrimination levied against us at every turn. Transgender people across Ireland seek to live a full,

healthy, and included life. We would call on those that are standing in support with us to continue to use your voice to stand for bodily autonomy, a better medical care system, and full inclusion in society for trans and gender expansive people. We would ask that you do not engage with those that seek to simply project false information, or hateful words. Please do not use your voice to engage with people that are bad faith actors. Instead take time to share why transgender rights matter, how transgender rights make society better, and how equality means a fuller and healthier life for all. Use your voice to call on the media to accurately portray trans people, and for lawmakers to value our lives. Use your voice as an ally to speak for inclusion, to speak for acceptance, and to speak for a better life for transgender people. Be visibly proud to support your trans friends, family and colleagues.

It is time as a society and as a queer, feminist, radical community we no longer allow bigotry to blossom. In no uncertain terms we agree that trans lives matter, trans people should be given full rights, and trans people should be included fully in society. Trans people are our friends, neighbours, colleagues, classmates and loved ones. We will not allow anyone to promote hate, to trade in bigotry, or to attack legislation, education and programs that affirm transgender, nonbinary, and intersex people. We stand boldly against the rise of exclusionary rhetoric, and name it for what it is, harassment and transphobia. It is not based in truth, it comes with no claims in fact, and is a dog whistle to bigots. We know that by and large these false narratives are not native to the queer and feminist communities of Ireland. These ideas are representative of outsiders that have not worked, laboured, or known the trans community in Ireland. These fringe groups have not been in the trenches for equality. They do not understand nor appreciate that together we built a radical and inclusive coalition for equality.

This radical and inclusive coalition denounces their platforms of disinformation. We reject their inaccurate science. We reject their aims, goals, and campaign for discrimination. Ireland is better when it is diverse and equal. Our diversity and equality has been showcased by our coalition of trans, queer, and feminist leaders who in their unity have won tremendous legislative victories that have improved the lives of gay and lesbian couples, women's rights, and transgender recognition. Our unity, and our work will not stop. Our focus is now on strengthening our resolve, turning away hate, and continuing to support the trans and gender expansive community members from those that would seek to harm them. We will not be bullied, we will not be silenced, and we will not allow transgender rights to be maligned. We move forward with hope and unity for a better world, and a better Ireland.

### Together in #IrishSolidariT with:

#### Organisations:

**Transgender Equality Network of Ireland (TENI)**  
**BelongTo**  
**National Women's Council of Ireland**  
**National LGBT Federation**  
**LGBT Ireland (NXF)**  
**Amnesty International**  
**Bi+ Ireland Network**  
**ShoutOut**  
**Gay Health Network**  
**GCN**  
**LINC**  
**Gay Project**  
**Intersex Ireland**  
**Trans & Intersex Pride**  
**Outhouse**  
**Sporting Pride**  
**Le Chéile**  
**BRÓD West Cork**  
**Cork Trans Network**  
**Irish Network Against Racism (INAR)**  
**Migrant Rights Centre Ireland (MRCI)**  
**Migrants and Ethnic Minorities for Reproductive Justice(MERJ Ireland)**  
**Abortion Rights Campaign**  
**AMCH! LGBT+ Galway**  
**Sex Workers Alliance Ireland**  
**This Is Me Campaign**  
**Dublin Lesbian Line**  
**Movement of Asylum Seekers in Ireland (MASI)**  
**Outcomers**  
**Labour LGBT**  
**Irish Penal Reform Trust (IPRT)**  
**INTO LGBT+ Teachers' Group**

#### Individuals:

Éirénne Carroll, CEO TENI  
 Sara R Phillips  
 Vanessa Lacey  
 Lilith Carroll  
 Noah Halpin  
 Ailbhe Smyth

Ailsa Spindler  
 Rita Wild  
 Lynne Tracey  
 Aoife Martin (she/her)  
 Denise Breen (she/her)  
 Ben Power (he/him)  
 Leighton Gray (they/them)  
 Tina Kehoe (she/her), Mother  
 Taryn De Vere (she/her), Quare Media  
 Andrew Galvin (he/him)  
 Audrey Beattie, Human Being & Mother  
 Mary Doolin-Murphy, Mother  
 Ronan Burke  
 Hannah Solley  
 Fiona O'Rourke, Mother  
 Brian Farrell, Dad  
 Loretta O'Reilly, Mother  
 Aleks Mooney (he/him)  
 Declan Walshe, Father  
 John Fleming  
 April Bracken  
 Simon Coulter  
 Dani O'Connor (he/she)  
 Jen O'Shea (she/her)  
 Siobhan Thomas (she/her)  
 Vicki Marchant (she/her), Mother  
 Muiris Mahon, Father  
 Maureen Mahon, Mother  
 Lisa Brinkman  
 Sam Blanckensee (they/he)  
 Dr. Chrissy Dislis (she/her, Parent  
 Mark Holland  
 Dr. Stuart Neilson (he/him), Parent  
 Donnacha O Mesra, Dad  
 Pierce O Meara (he/him)  
 Ollie Bell (they/them)  
 Aideen Kelliher  
 John Teahan  
 Remus Teahan  
 Micah Neilson (he/him)  
 Nyree Fitzpatrick (she/her), Mother  
 Joe Donohoe (he/him), Father  
 Jo Ellen Donohoe, Family  
 Tom Donohoe, Family  
 Conny Donohoe (she/her), Family  
 John Mansfield (he/him)  
 Geraldine Brown (she/her)  
 Linda Kavanagh  
 Fern Higgins Atkinson  
 Cecelia Gavigan (she/her)  
 Seán Hegarty (he/him)  
 Jana Lyons (she/her)  
 Niall Callan (he/him)  
 Ciara Fagan (she/her)  
 David Mooney (he/him)  
 Ronan Hickey (he/him)  
 Jean Louise McCarthy (she/her)  
 Linda Quigley (she/her)  
 Brew Mbirka (he/him)  
 Anne Marie Lillis (she/her)  
 Meadhbh Murphy (she/her)  
 Hazel Buckley-Gallagher (she/her)  
 Eileen Gamble (she/her)  
 Brian Hughes (he/him)  
 Myles Corcoran (he/him)  
 Elaine Deinum, Mother  
 Jerome Deinum, Father  
 Liz O'donovan  
 Pamela Drumgoole (she/her)

### MNÁ NÁ HEIREANN – SUPERWOMEN PROJECT

The first year of the Superwomen – encouraging trans women into the workplace, project kicked off earlier in the year. We had to reconstruct the project to adapt for the impact of Covid-19. Our consultants, Big Picture Consultancy, have redeveloped the program to host online courses and the first year’s program is about to move into the mentoring stage. The initial reactions of participants look very positive and while the numbers have reduced from the early interest, everyone is encouraged by the outcomes. In January 2021, TENI will put another call out for participants for year 2 of the project. Keep an eye out on all our social media outlets and in the support groups to sign up for this wonderful initiative, supported by Rethink Ireland.



TENI Board 2020



Gordon & Vanessa at NOSP Connecting for Life Conference in January



TENI attends Winter Pride Ollie Bell, Rowan Golden, Steven Harris and Aoife Martin



**TENI Health Trainings**  
OCTOBER 13  
Vanessa Lacey (Health & Education Manager) has adapted Foundations in Transgender Awareness Training into an online format. Trainings with healthcare providers are booked through March 2021!

Trans Healthcare trainings go online

#### TRANS PEER SUPPORT GROUPS ONLINE

Trans Peer Support Groups around the country are running online. For details, get in touch with keeva@teni.ie



TENI switches Support groups

#### FAMILY SUPPORT GROUPS ONLINE

Our TransParenCI family support groups are running online. For details contact Hannah at hannah@teni.ie.



TENI switches Support groups

#### Transgender Inclusion in the Workplace: a personal story

Join Denise Breen and Gordon Grehan of Transgender Equality Network Ireland as they address transgender inclusion in Ireland.

Denise transitioned some years ago and has experienced first-hand the challenges that trans and non-binary people face in Ireland. She will share her personal story and speak about about her own experience of supportive and inclusive workplaces.

Denise is Director at TENI and has been working as a Project Manager in the engineering and construction sector for over thirty-five years. She has worked for the ESB, Ansp, Acas, IBM Group, Google and Amazon Web Services.

Gordon is TENI Operations Manager and will introduce us to some of the key issues currently facing the trans and non-binary community in Ireland.

Tues, 22 Oct @ 12pm REGISTER NOW

EVERYONE WELCOME



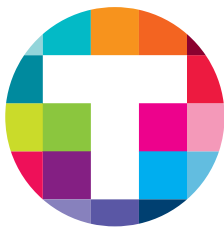
Inclusion in the workplace



TENI creates socially distanced 'Walk and Talk' events for our TransparenCI support groups



TENI offers online Resilience Courses



Transgender  
Equality  
Network  
Ireland

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

TENI's work is only possible through the dedication of all our staff, Board Directors, our members, volunteers, activists, allies and partner organisations who strive to secure trans rights and equality in Ireland. Thank you all for your support.

We would not be able to do the work that we do without the generous financial support of our funders. We gratefully acknowledge the support of the HSE, National Office of Suicide Prevention, Sigrid Rausing, Social Innovation Fund – Mná na hÉireann, Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission, EU – Leargas, and The Healthy Ireland Fund.



SIGRID RAUSING TRUST



Coimisiún na hÉireann um Chearta  
an Duine agus Comhionannas  
Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte  
Health Service Executive



SOCIAL  
INNOVATION  
FUND  
Sustaining great ideas

BANK OF AMERICA



Rialtas na hÉireann  
Government of Ireland

ciste na  
gcuntas díomhaoin  
the dormant  
accounts fund



National Office  
for Suicide  
Prevention



Transgender  
Equality  
Network  
Ireland