

## **The Future is OPEN for One Parent Families in the Southern Border counties**

### **Successful Leadership and Active Citizenship project indicates brighter future for lone parents**

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OPEN, the national network of lone parent self-help groups in the Republic of Ireland today (*Wednesday 28 May*) hosted a seminar at the Hillgrove Hotel in Monaghan – OPENING UP OPENING OUT, The Future is OPEN for One-parent Families – as a celebration of a successful lone parent support programme which the organisation managed in the 6 Southern Border counties. Paraic Duffy, Director General, GAA was guest speaker at the event.

OPEN has been working with lone parent groups in the southern Border counties of Donegal, Sligo, Leitrim, Monaghan, Cavan and Louth in recent years and has delivered a programme, Opening Up Opening Out, which encompassed the development and delivery of two key training programmes: Leadership and Active Citizenship. This project is part financed by the European Union through the EU Programme for Peace and Reconciliation managed for the Special EU Programmes Body by Border Action.

Speaking at the launch, Frances Byrne, CEO, OPEN, said ‘Opening Up Opening Out has been a very successful initiative for OPEN and for those who participated in the programme. Without the support of Border Action programmes like this could not happen and we are grateful to them for their support. This initiative clearly shows the way forward for lone parents in the Border counties and it is hoped that our work in the area can continue’.

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ACTION, a lone parent group in Cavan, piloted a Housing and Accommodation project under the scheme. Jenny Chetty, Project Co-Ordinator, ACTION, said ‘We aimed to improve the relationship between lone parent tenants in Local Authority Housing with their Authority representatives and I’m happy to say that this project has been successful’. Local Housing Authority representatives in Cavan, at a recent Housing and Accommodation Seminar, presented to lone parents a comprehensive explanation on the requirements for Local Authority Housing and outlined the various options available at different levels of the economic scale. ‘Cavan Town Council, ‘ Jenny Chetty added, ‘have been gracious in attending to a few very urgent cases in Cavan town which showed their co-operation with the lone parents on this project as well as creating a sense of confidence that lone parents were not the forgotten tenants on a miscellaneous list’.

Other programmes run under OPEN’s Opening Up Opening Out initiative included:

- A Services for Lone Parents project in Donegal Penninsula.
- A Dochas ‘Unlocking Your Potential’ programme in Monaghan town.

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The Opening Up, Opening Out project is part financed by the European Union through the EU Programme for Peace and Reconciliation managed for the Special EU Programmes Body by Border Action/Peace II project.