

**MLD Ireland AGM**

**Sunday May 26th 2013 1.30pm**

**Castletroy Park Hotel, Dublin Road, Limerick**

**Chairperson’s report 2012- 2013**

##### “If we don’t change we can’t grow and we don’t grow we aren’t really living”

**Looking back**

2012 -2013 was my third term as chairperson of MLD Ireland. During those two and a half years MLD Ireland changed slowly. Step by step moving towards the one big step we will vote on later today .

My first term was a short term. Committee work focused to pave the way to develop MLD Ireland’s first strategic plan. The “Vision Day” facilitated by Ivan Cooper from the Wheel on Friday the 13 th of May 2011 marked the end of that term and the beginning of the process towards our first 5 year plan. 2011-2012, beside the everyday work, the committee’s priority was the support of the development of the 5 year strategic plan. Organising meetings, writing Newsletters and keeping the members involved & updated at every step. Finally writing the 5 year plan.

The Annual General Meeting 2012 started with an >MLD Ireland Day<. The 5 Year Plan was presented and later that day, at the official AGM, with one vote absentee unanimously ratified. 2012 -2013 committee’s brief became implementation. Starting with setting work priorities and creating a one year action plan to enable us to measure our work.

**External challenges and committee solutions**

Challenges started straight away, even before the newly elected committee held their first meeting or before they were able to establish their work priorities:

- MLD Ireland’s Laptop stopped functioning properly.

- Member’s email addresses were drowned in spam and were not working reliably. Consulted Experts could not identify the reasons and direct communication with our internet server’s customer support in India was not an option.The long outstanding decision on a server change was made. A quick research on servers was done and the decision on a new Irish based server “Netlink” taken. A service deal including direct contact and support for less money was achieved. The changeover was timed with the expiration date of our service contract.

- Netlink discovered our domain was not registered to MLD Ireland. They rectified it and our website is now registered under MLD Ireland.

**Committee work**

In October the committee held their first “live meeting”. The new team of six, three old hands plus three newcomers chose a weekend to meet:

\* for induction – roles, expectations, social contract

\* action plan – setting priorities (using results from workshops with members at AGM)

 All subjects discussed were agreed on by consensus. Getting the new work done also ment eliminating existing obstacles.Two reaccuring discussions had taken up time after time of every member meeting in the last three years.

 - The Logo and

- Member personalized email addresses

###### MLD Ireland Logo

We looked at expectations/impacts

1. a clear distinction between members and the Association
2. full control of the Logo by the Association
3. easy recognition as member of the Association

We saw a solution in

* 1. A member logo + Association logo
	2. Yearly renewal: member ID / year / level of membership

After the AGM a membership button had been suggested to the committee. We decided the button was a good compromise to MLD Ireland’s Logo situation.

**MLD Ireland email address for all members:**

We used the same decision making process and decided

The timing was right. We had more volunteers at hand to help members getting familiar with this arrangement. John and Dolores agreed to share the job. Also Julian from Netlink offered free background support.

We had planned to plan, to take the rudder in our hands and start acting, not reacting. This approach found us in new territory. Even the simple planing, including budgeting (inputs-outputs) we had not done before. How to actually write the action plan (outcomes)? what was a Gantt chart? One weekend turned out to be very short. We postphoned discussions to skype meetings .Happy with the decisions made, we informed members, started to organise a GM and put together our first newsletter. However not foreseeable, it first comes always differently and secondly, never as you think!

**Internal challenges and committee solutions**

The committee was challenged on their authority to make decisions. Inspired by the challengers the committee researched their roles in Management/Governance. We discovered that MLD Ireland’s governing documents were lacking structures, conduct of powers, policies and procedures. While on the other hand, by general law, the committee and every member were personally liable.

* + No established rights but heavy duties.
	+ unclear status
	+ members unrealistic expectations with presumptuous/ aloof communication
	+ collapsed Laptop

This combination increased the pressure for the volunteering Committee and resulting in the resignation of two members leaving four people behind with a broken computer, 40 members with enquiries and wishes, disconnected from our website including the members list, a database half finished, a meeting with NCCP scheduled,…………To say it mildly, we were in a dark place.

Daire organised a meeting with a consultant and we agreed for one last attempt to put MLD Ireland before family and training. On a Sunday in Cork we openly and honestly named and faced our problems.It turned out to be our break through. During this problem analysis process the committee realized, that to achieve our goals we need a functioning and resourced organization(see objective tree). The committee decided that our first priority was to build a solid foundation with two Divisions, External and Internal

This year’s work:

1. **External** : Legalization of Association
	1. Enable us to increase resources. Finance and Staff.
	2. Further our impact
2. **Internal** : Everyday work
	1. Organize Website access
	2. Finish Database to decrease and simplify workload and save resources

We planned our work again. We saw light at the end of the tunnel.

 *Here I want to thank this committee. Because only the attitude of honest reexamination kept MLD Ireland going and personally I thank Daire, Meabdh and Monica for the experience, that getting through hard, tough times is possible.I am also very grateful to Ross Duffy. He accompanied us on this journey and through his calm way, his sharp intellect combined with intuition, his unbelievable knowledge and vast experience, he enabled us to get our confidence back. Thank you Ross for taken the time with us. We wish you all the best on your new mission with the International Committee of the Red Cross in the Congo.*

**External work:**

1. We researched possibilities of a solid foundation.
	1. We decided on the change of structure and legalization (Company ltd by Guarantee) as MLD Ireland’s best option.
2. We decided to introduce this idea to the members and ask for their opinion.
3. An EGM was organized.
	1. Each officer researched, designed and presented one part of our proposal.
	2. With the ballot taken 75 % of the members agreed to proceed in preparing this route.
4. A working group was organized and directed.
	1. They researched and compiled the Memorandums and Articles (M&A)
	2. Since April these M&A’s are on MLD Ireland’s website for members to view.

Today’s AGM will make the decision on MLD Ireland’s future direction

**Internal work:**

1. We reviewed our everyday situation.

 The Laptop was broken.

1. Two solutions were identified
	* 1. new Laptop with the old system (Dreamweaver)
		2. New Content Management System (CMS) accessible through any computer.
2. Content Management System (CMS) versa Dream-weaver ( Website program) was researched by the committee
	* 1. short/long term cost and impact were compared
3. The decision for CMS was made but action on it put on hold till after the EGM.
	* 1. four Quotations requested
		2. after the EGM we decided, for NETLINK

All this work was done between the 11th of November and the 17th of January and I think our members did not realise how serious the situation was.

**Committee Work in relation to the 5 Year Plan**

At the MLD Ireland Day Members set their priorities in small working groups. These were summarised by the facilitator and colated later under the goals of the 5 Year Plan . These priorities still formed the base of the Committees Action Plan .

**Develop MLD Ireland**

 **1 . Obtain safe and economic financial background**

with the help of a financial consultant Daire was trained in and MLD Ireland’s account and books got an overhaul and some areas of accounting were newly introduced. Bank problems had to be sorted( e.g . some missing statements 2009/2010 )and signatures needed to be updated. Thank you Daire for giving your time so freely and the AGM financial report shows clearly a difference.

**2. Identify new income streams**

A desk research verified that without legal status it is difficult to successfully apply for funding/donations/ grants or schemes.While preparing our presentation, we came to the conclusion that the legalisation of MLD Ireland to a company ltd by Guarantee will give us the basis to look for external income and resources .

**3. Identify and monitor members organisational skills**

This is now included in our Membership Database in the CMS.

 **Education and Awareness / Advocacy**

1. **Identify key personal**

 We concentrated on the follow up work from 2012 .

 At our meeting with NCCP we identified key persons . e.g. IMO directory , IMO Training Company, Daffodil nurses in the Centres of Exelence .

 Our recommendation for further work: small working group, action plan with Gantt chart

1. **Design a database**

Through our membership with Volunteer Ireland we started recruiting a database designer and by the end of June, an American Librarian, Scott Salvagio, contacted us with an interest to design our database. Dolores, John and Barbara interviewed him and after reference and background checks we agreed to give him the job. He started with listening to our ideas, and then he focused with Dolores on the membership secretary needs. After the summer, we discussed his first layouts and came up with functionalities. In November, Barbara met with him while in Dublin. They went through the final ideas and made a Gantt chart. Due to the computer break down and the setup of the new register, we had to finish the database earlier than planned. Scott agreed and during January, when we both were in USA, we worked hard. Even his wife came in to help. All possible thanks to Skype and internet. At the end of February the database was ready and forms were sent out to MLD Ireland members. With the change to the CMS system the Database’s functionalities had to be adjusted or made compatible. At this point Julian from Netlink started to work with me.

1. **Colaborate with NGO’s**We concentrated on the follow up of 2012 and only the conferences were used to colaboratewith NGO’SILF conference : In January, when the bidding procedure to host the 2014 ILF conference opened, Northern Ireland INNI network contacted Meadbh and we were invited to join their bid. The committee agreed.In February we were contacted by Fáilte Ireland, who offered us full support to bid for the 2014 ILF conference. This program is called Conference Ambassador Support. Failte Ireland wants to promote Ireland as an international conference destiny. We refused the offer, as we had already agreed to co-host with Northern Ireland and we also could not see MLD Ireland’s solid foundation ready to undertake such a big project.Fáilte Ireland has included MLD Ireland now on the eligibility list for the support program opening the way if we want to bid in 2015 for the ILF conference 2016 .

**National Cancer Survivorship Conference**: John Hynes and Mairead O’Connor represented MLD Ireland at the National Cancer Survivorship Conference at Dublin Castle. At our stand the MLD Ireland’s brochures were handed out and advice was given generously

**Lymphoedema Ireland Open Day:** This year we had no official representation but a few therapists attended. John Hynes gave a short, unplanned talk introducing Lymphoedema, MLD and MLD Ireland

**ILF conference:** Meadbh went to France and agreed to represent MLD Ireland. She brought ideas and material back. Due to the urgent changes she was not able to present those. But all materials are available for download on the ILF website.

**Membership support**

1. **Produce and provide a yearly updated printable memberlist**
	1. Through the CMS our printable Memberlist is updated automaticly on a daily basis
2. **Maintain the existing Membership register**
	1. a working analysis showed, that Membership secretary and Webcontent manager spent their time primarily on maintenance and organisation of the register. Computer problems interupted continuity of work and the build up of a back log increased stress.

When the computer crashed we realised that the computer was like MLD ireland’s office. It held all of our information and it was our only cost free access to the MLD Ireland website and this made our work totally dependent on a functioning Laptop.

1. **The Content Management System (CMS):**

 The CMS is a hugebenefit for the membership. It saves resources, especially time. It is easy to work with, a bit like an email program. Any computer literate person can do the job. It operates from any computer or Laptop. Our Website and register are stored and saved on the server. With a password, the content is accessible and can be changed.

Now our Database functionality is also coordinated with the CMS. Reports are done automaticly i.e. insurance:

**Before** : The membership secretary had to check each month the membership spreadsheet for expiring insurance. When a member’s insurance was expired, the secretary would send an email reminder / ring / send reminder. The member would have to be taken off the register by deleting the name on the website list, then inform the member. When the status changed, the secretary had to fill in changes to the spreadsheet and write name and address back into the register on the website.

**Now**:the CMS system picks up the date, automated reminders are sent 4 and 2 weeks before expiry. After expiring, a two week notice of deletion from the register is automatically sent out. Two weeks later, deletion from the register plus information of the fact is notified to the member. At status change, all the membership secretary does is update the datafile.The computer will reactivate the member and the members details reappear on the list again .

 **b. Further benefits**

* the member listings rotate in a timed rhythm, giving everyone the opportunity to be the first name on the page once in a while.
* You also can now write a 500 word profile about your work. It will appear directly under your name.
* The barcode beside your name makes it possible for I-phone users to scan your address directly into their phone.
* You, the member, create the password to access the members area. It is stored no where. If you forget it, you are asked to create a new one.

**National Cancer Control Programme (NCCP):** In November we had our second meeting with Terry Hanan and Fidelma McHale. In a short review we heard, that since our last meeting, Lymphoedema has now been considered to be included in the cancer guidelines.We discussed lymphoedema training options for GPs and were informed about NCCP channels to GP’s and oncology nurses We discussed the possibilities to use those channels for promoting the MLD method, it’s benefits and where it is available. We got names and addresses to contact for further connection. When I recently looked up the HSE website I was able to find information on Lymphoedema under Health from A-Z.

**The new Website .**

I could probably write a book about our website. Julian and I worked very hard to keep the set date for going live and besides all of the stress, I learned so much, thanks to Julian’s patience.

The membership area was revamped, updated and new articles installed. We will also keep the existing/and new reports in this area. Other pages of the website were re-designed, re-written and updated. Julian did the designing. I hope you appreciate the little extras, a scroll on the news feed, highlighted Question and Answers and much more. He also wrote all technical explanations “how to set up your email on your computer” John and I did the updating and re-writing and Daire did the proof reading - checking consumer friendliness. Even though it’s only been functioning a short time, our Analysis keys are working. We have more contacts with questions and lots of people were /are interested in the reseach and of course 8 people interested in membership.

*John had resigned from his secretary job earlier in November. At that time he did not come back to his formal position, but when I asked him for help, John was always willing to jump in and usually did a great deal more. Since March John did come back as webcontent manager. I am so glad to have him back. He also acts as minute taker, proof reader. A big thank you to John. Through him I learned that members can help very effectively with our work but don’t necessarily needto be a committee member.*

 **Summary of the year**

This year of challenges and learning is behind us today. We did not only get through the year, but with hard work we were able to cover most of the priorities set out by our members. Through the new CMS with the Database and reporting functions and Daire’s renewed books, we established a solid foundation for the internal work. With our proposal to structural, legal change we laid the ground work for our external solid foundation. I want to thank my fellow committee members for all the enthusiasm and passion, for the endurance and the courage. I also want to take the opportunity to thank Dolores, without her sharing her experience and giving her time freely, the database would not be what it is now. Thank you all.

I want to finish my report with a quote from Gilda Radnerthat summarises my years as MLD Ireland’s chairperson.

**”I wanted a perfect ending. Now I’ve learned, the hard way, that some poems don’t rhyme, and some stories don’t have a clear beginning, middle, and end. Life is about not knowing, having to change, Taking the moment and making the best of it, without knowing what’s going to happen next. Delicious Ambiguity**”

*My Appeal to all members:*

*Get Involved! There are many ways you can help* (quoting Mark Victor Hansen)

“[Don't wait until everything is just right. It will never be perfect. There will always be challenges, obstacles and less than perfect conditions. So what. Get started now. With each step you take, you will grow stronger and stronger, more and more skilled, more and more self-confident and more and more successful.](http://thinkexist.com/quotation/don-t_wait_until_everything_is_just_right-it_will/295163.html)’

Thanks for listening

Barbara Mutschler-Hild

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Chairperson MLD Ireland 2012/2013