



BUILDING INTERCULTURAL COMMUNITIES IN COUNTY DONEGAL

PROJECT REPORT 2019-2020



This project is supported by the EU's PEACE IV Programme, managed by the Special EU Programme Body (SEUPB)



ACRONYMS

BIC	Building Intercultural Communities	ETB	Education and Training Board
BME	Black and Minority Ethnic	EU	European Union
CDP	Community Development Project	IDP	Inishowen Development Partnership
CERD	Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination	LCDC	Local Community Development Committee
CWI	Community Work Ireland	LDC	Local Development Companies
DIP	Donegal Intercultural Platform	LYIT	Letterkenny Institute of Technology
DITI	Donegal Intercultural Training Initiative	MRCI	Migrants Rights Centre Ireland
DLDC	Donegal Local Development CLG	NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
DTP	Donegal Travellers Project	SEUPB	Special EU Programmes Body
DRRP	Donegal Refugee Resettlement Project	PPN	Public Participation Network
ENAR	European Network Against Racism (became INAR Dec. 2020)	UN	United Nations

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

As part of the legacy of the BIC project, a series of high quality Information Boards with definitions of commonly used terms have been prepared to promote anti-racism and interculturalism,

in education and other settings. Copies of these boards will be available at the DTP offices, Letterkenny. We have included these definitions throughout this report.



RACE

There is only one Race – the Human Race.

The European Union rejects theories which attempt to determine the existence of separate human races.



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ABOUT BIC

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“We have a vision of Donegal where culture, diversity and ethnicity are valued and celebrated within connected communities across the county, where prejudice and discrimination have no place on the lips or ears of our residents or our leaders.”

-Siobhan McLaughlin, Manager DTP, BIC

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The Building Intercultural Communities project was established in County Donegal in December 2018 in a unique collaboration between the Donegal Travellers Project and the Donegal Intercultural Platform, and with the support of Peace IV Peace and Reconciliation Fund.

The project, to run for 18 months, was built on the core principles of Community Work; Community Empowerment, Participation, Collectivity, Human Rights and Social Justice.

To steer its course, the Donegal Intercultural Platform set up a 15-member Steering Advisory Group, comprising of members of the Donegal Intercultural Platform Steering Group with some additional members, alongside the newly appointed BIC staff, Francine Blaché-Breen, Billy Banda and Caoimhe Sweeney. The project was managed by DTP Manager, Siobhan McLaughlin.

STRATEGIC GOALS

1. To create the conditions where Black and Ethnic minorities are engaged collectively with the project at every level and participating in programmes and local community relationship building initiatives.
2. To promote, respect, equality and diversity within the county through intercultural training, creative activities and development programmes.
3. To further develop the Donegal Intercultural Platform in the county and co-ordinate services/workshops to BME communities and others as set out in the Peace tender and as issues emerge.
4. To develop tools and skills to address racism in collaboration with appropriate organisations with expertise and knowledge to promote social inclusion and solidarity across BME communities.
5. To develop and network on a cross border basis to build positive relationships and explore culturally appropriate responses to issues affecting BME women's lives.
6. To put in place a management/administration system and partnership between the Donegal Intercultural Platform and Donegal Travellers Project to ensure the delivery of the project in line with good governance and legislation. Donegal Travellers Project will employ and contract staff and expertise as required.

CREATING THE SHAPE OF THE PROJECT

A series of Think Tank seminars, bringing together people involved in intercultural work in Donegal and representatives of the Black & Minority Ethnic communities, helped inform the development and delivery of the Building Intercultural Communities project.

The meetings, facilitated by Rachel Doyle, joint coordinator of Community Work Ireland (CWI), were attended by the BIC steering group, comprising of a voluntary group of 21, among them workers on the Refugee Resettlement Programme, BIC staff, representatives from the Local Development Companies, tutors and volunteers working on building relationships with asylum seekers and refugees.

“After the first day we realised that there was a broad church of different views and opinions, even in our understanding of what is meant by ethnicity, racism and discrimination,” explained Ann Friel, Primary Health Care co-ordinator, Donegal Travellers Project. To reach consensus, the group participated in a two-day residential session at the Inishowen Gateway Hotel in Bunrana and agreed on a statement of BIC's understanding and definition of racism and on the first steps to take towards building intercultural communities in Donegal.

Participants also took part in Liberation and Leadership workshops hosted by Dr Sean Ruth, to gain a deeper understanding of the constructs of oppression.

By the end, the group had consolidated its thinking on how to challenge, address and campaign for a more just Donegal for BME communities, including Traveller and Roma.

“We had all thought about what an intercultural community looks like, what respect and non-discrimination looks like and also what we would do in the face of discrimination.

“The process moved us from a place of reflection to a place of action, to what we would actually do and what the team would be expected to do.”

The impact and influence of these seminars was evident in the evolution of later aspects of the BIC programme – not least in the development of the On-Line training tool and the Community Work in a Changing Ireland course, in collaboration with NUI Maynooth.



FOREWORD BY ANASTASIA CRICKLEY



Anastasia Crickley speaking at the opening of the BIC project

-Chairperson of the Community Work Ireland (CWI) Policy and Practice Subgroup, former Chairperson of the UN Committee for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD), Co-founder of the Migrants Right Centre Ireland

“As someone who had the honour to be associated with the opening of the Building Intercultural Communities Project I’m honoured again to have the opportunity at this time to write a few words by way of foreword to its final project report. This is a time locally nationally and globally which calls out for projects such as this which build solidarity and strengthen links between all who experience racism in all its forms.

As the legacies of colonialism and slavery re-assert themselves yet again with devastating consequences, as migrant workers often undocumented and asylum seekers play frontline roles in protection against the COVID-19 here and elsewhere, and as Anti-

Traveller and Roma racism find new faces in the pandemic, it is clear that racism in all its forms hasn’t gone away. The recent establishment of the Anti-Racism Committee could provide the means for a holistic and integrated Irish response. As a member I will be urging the need for early engagement with the groups representing those subjected to racism and to heed the current calls for action while acknowledging also racism’s complexities and the way it intersects with other oppressions including the oppression of women.

There is much the Committee and others can learn too from this report and the ongoing work by all associated with the project to build a cohesive response to racism in Donegal inclusive of all partners who are key to its success including the local authority and state agencies. I was impressed at the opening at the solidarity between Travellers who have long since been part of Donegal and more recent communities. It was clear then that all had shared and parallel experiences of discrimination but clear now that at least some of these can be

addressed locally and that collective work towards a positive intercultural future is possible and worthwhile. The training and seminars undertaken, the English language classes and the Intercultural events are all evidence and markers on that journey.



Newly appointed Senator Eileen Ní Fhloinn, Board member of Donegal Travellers Project management team.

I hope it does not have to stop here especially as Eileen Flynn a Traveller woman also living in Donegal is appointed to the Senate as the first Traveller member of the Oireachtas, indicating that the impossible can move to the possible then the reality, provided there is clarity of purpose, commitment, consistency, collaboration and capacity for plenty of hard work.”



LAUNCHING THE BIC PROJECT

The International UN Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination provided the perfect launch day for the Building Intercultural Communities Project. Speaking at its launch, veteran Human Rights campaigner, Anastasia Crickley praised the Donegal Travellers Project and

community workers in the county for their long term engagement with the Peace Programme over the past 21 years. “Then as now, racism knows no barriers and

is often well hidden behind good intentions but Article 1 of the UN Convention on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination makes it very clear - racism acts to deny or interfere with the rights of minority ethnic groups & others on the basis of ‘race’, colour or descent, can be either or both on purpose or in effect. “Consciousness-raising and anti-racism training are essential to break down the

barriers to the intercultural Donegal you so laudably seek to create.”

Ms Crickley, who is a former head of the Department of Applied Social Studies at NUI Maynooth, added that Donegal is, and always has been, multicultural, but the county is much more diverse today than when the Peace Programmes began. “Your project is seeking to promote the conditions for an equal and inclusive society. A Donegal at peace with itself and its neighbours, is a significant contribution to that rich diversity.”

Other speakers at the event, chaired by Paul Kernan, Chairperson of the Donegal Intercultural Platform, included local councillor, Paul Canning, Gina McIntyre CEO of the Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB), Francine Blaché-Breen, Community Development and Training Worker, BIC and Thoiba Ahmed, Letterkenny Islamic Association.

RACE

ARE RACES REAL OR NOT?

THE EU RACE DIRECTIVE 2000/43/CE (implemented through the Irish Equality Legislation) states that:

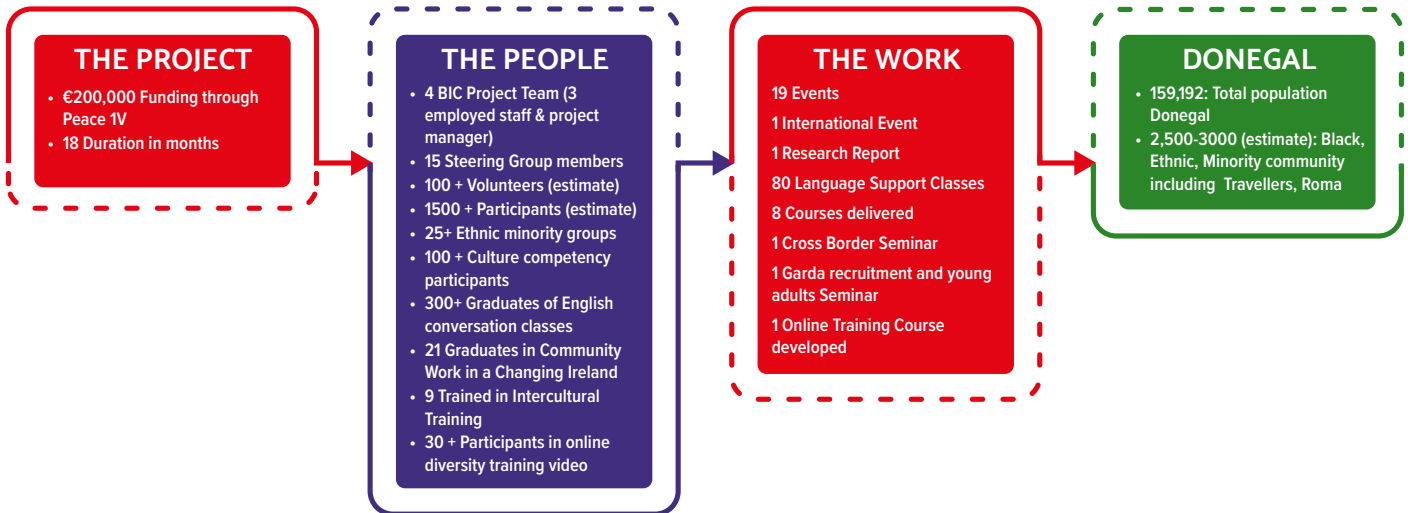
The European Union rejects theories which attempt to determine the existence of separate human races. The use of the term “racial origin” in this directive does not imply an acceptance of such theories.

It is often assumed that racism exists because of the presence of different “races” coming in contact with each other. However, there is absolutely no basis for thinking in terms of “races”; the notion has been disproved in genetics, biology, anthropology, geography, and all of the sciences.

“Races” are then not real but created and made real - by racialising people through historical ideological processes in society, involving the subordination of some groups over others. This means that it is not the existence of “races” which allows racism to exist, but the persistence of the political construct of whiteness, which is at the heart of the system of racism, which continues to create and recreate “races”.



BIC BY NUMBERS



“I think it[BIC] will have long terms benefits for both the new and old Donegal.” -Paddy Doherty, *Peace Partnership Secretary, and chief officer, of the Donegal Local Community Development Committee (LCDC)*

The Building Intercultural Communities Project received grant aid of just over €200,000 from the EU’s PEACE 1V Programme for Northern Ireland and the Border Counties through the Special EU Programmes Body.

Paddy Doherty, Peace Partnership Secretary and Chief Officer of the Donegal Local Community Development Committee (DLCDC), described the project as a natural evolution to the work that had been ongoing under previous social inclusion programmes. And he said the Donegal Travellers Project, which tendered for the contract with the Donegal Intercultural Platform, were deserved winners of the contract.

“They have an excellent track record and experience within the ethnic and intercultural area. They are an organisation that is here for the long term, and as far as we were concerned, this funding complemented their existing work.

“It’s great to have an organisation with the capacity to deliver work of this nature in the county,” he said.

He added that the legacy of the BIC Project would be an increased knowledge and awareness from the ‘local’ Donegal community of these new communities in their midst and a greater interaction with each other.

“I think it will have long terms benefits for both the new and old Donegal,” he said.

With Peace Plus now out for public consultation he said that the LCDC and Peace Partnership will be considering projects of a similar nature.

“The Special EU Programmes Body (SEUB) are also delighted with the results [of this project] so we certainly will have an open ear when we are making submissions about what will be included in the next Programme.”



Special EU Programmes Body
Foras Um Chláir Speisialta An AE
Boord O Owre Ocht UE Projects

“In my 20 years here, I haven’t seen a project as effective in terms of results. I think it was funding effectively spent to achieve goals of interculturalism and bringing people together who are isolated and not included. For inclusion, diversity, for the common ground for sustainable development the project was very effective and I would like to see more.”

-Kathryn Daily, *Steering Group, BIC*



BIC RESPONSE TO COVID-19 CRISIS

The work of the Building Intercultural Communities (BIC) Project in promoting participation, building supports and engaging with Black Minority and Ethnic communities, including Traveller and Roma, has proved vital in protecting vulnerable groups during the Covid-19 pandemic.

The main focus of the BIC project and Donegal Travellers Project (DTP) was in the widespread circulation of information on symptoms, handwashing and social distancing messages, through the use of posters, social media and site visits.

A comprehensive series of information videos, featuring members of the BME communities, was uploaded to the Intercultural Donegal and DTP Facebook pages and websites in over 20 languages, including Mandarin, Polish, Arabic, Bangladeshi and Chinese. These have been widely shared, not just in Ireland but internationally.

The significant data base of address and telephone contacts built up in the lifetime of the BIC project, is also facilitating key workers in communicating via text and WhatsApp messages in different languages and relaying key health messages and updates.



Public Health Nurse for Travellers with the HSE, Ita Ward delivering Covid-19 public health message on the eve of her retirement.

BIC has also been able to identify and access help for the most vulnerable members of the BME community, some of whom are undocumented and living in overcrowded conditions on no income.

“The project created the conditions for BME communities who were at risk of marginalisation or being outside the messaging to be included and protected and ensured that their health and well-being was considered by the state and on a county level by the Covid-19 committee,” explains BIC

Manager, Siobhan McLaughlin.

Living conditions have contributed to increased risks for Donegal BME communities, including Travellers and Roma.

The BIC Project lobbied Government to conduct an urgent review of the living conditions of asylum seekers in Emergency Temporary Accommodation and called on them to identify locally based facilities for self-isolation.

The Donegal Travellers Project has also been working with Donegal County Council to provide adequate sanitation and accommodation facilities at the county’s Traveller halting sites, group housing schemes and families living on the roadside.

Since the outbreak of the virus, DTP Community Health Care workers have been in constant contact with members of the Traveller community, promoting best practice with regard to the virus, and providing families with emergency supports.



A DAY AT THE BEACH

New friendships were forged on a sunny summer’s day on Porthaw Beach near Buncrana when the community gathered to welcome newly arrived Syrian families to County Donegal. The ‘Meet and Greet’ Day Out in the Sun, organised by the Donegal Refugee Resettlement Project and the Inishowen Development Partnership, was supported by the Building Intercultural Communities (BIC) Project to welcome newly-arrived Syrian refugee families to the towns of Buncrana and Letterkenny.

Alongside beach-related activities and a scrumptious barbecue, families had an opportunity to meet other members of Donegal’s Syrian community and pick up some invaluable advice. “Finding out even basic information like where to buy certain foods and how to access transport and language classes can be difficult if you don’t speak the language. This is what makes days like this so valuable,” explained Billy Banda, Community Links Worker, BIC.

CULTURE

Culture is a word for the ‘way of life’ of groups of people. These groups are distinguished by a set of unspoken norms that shape beliefs, habits, patterns of thinking, behaviours, styles of communication and expression. Culture is an evolving and changing reality, not something fixed nor immutable.

DONEGAL INTERCULTURAL PLATFORM: PROMOTING INCLUSION, EQUALITY AND HUMAN RIGHTS



Paul Kernan at the Culture Crossroads Cafe.

The Donegal Intercultural Platform (DIP) is a voluntary Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO) formed in 2009 to create a more inclusive, welcoming and anti-racist society through building inclusion and equality, promoting human rights and opposing discrimination and racism.

The Platform began as Port na Fáilte in partnership with Donegal County Council PEACE Partnership in 2010, to offer a safe and welcoming space to meet, and provide advocacy and training as well as information about activities and services for BME communities living in Donegal.

Following the closure of Port na Fáilte in 2012, a steering group of 15 people, from 11 different ethnic backgrounds, with representation on various bodies, and including representatives of the BME communities and Travellers, was established to continue the core elements of the work.

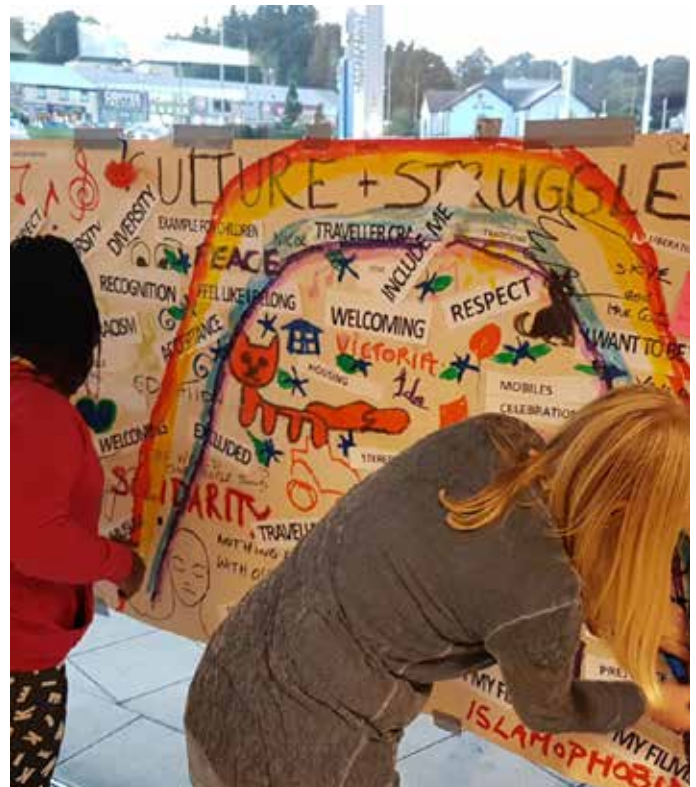
Partnering with the Donegal Travellers Project for funding through the various Peace programmes, the DIP has spearheaded a range of English language, health, education, arts and training initiatives.

“Diversity in Donegal reflects the trends nationally. We provide a platform for people from all different ethnicities, religious viewpoints, nationalities & cultures so that when they come to Donegal there is an organisation established to meet the interests and needs of these communities,” explained Chairperson of the Donegal Intercultural Platform, Paul Kernan.

The partnership with DTP culminated with the Building Intercultural Communities project last year. Donegal Intercultural Platform established an effective steering advisory group for the project, which became critical to its success. This steering group, made up of members of the BME communities, Travellers and community volunteers, met regularly, participated in training and acted in an advisory capacity for the project, focusing on its effective implementation. The next goal of the Donegal Intercultural Platform is to move from being a voluntary association to formally establishing itself as an incorporated body with a governing board, representative of the minority communities.

“The BIC Project is very vital. Because I am working on the ground, I know what is happening and I can react, like for example if I see someone going from housing into homelessness. But people are only starting to get to know us and trust us. The break in continuity when this project ends is going to have a huge impact among the BME communities because no other organisation is working as closely with them.”

-Billy Banda, Community Links Worker, BIC and former co-chair of Intercultural Platform



INTERCULTURALISM

WHAT IS INTERCULTURALISM?

Interculturalism is about interaction, understanding, respect and equal opportunity. It is about ensuring that cultural diversity is acknowledged and catered for. It is about inclusion for minority ethnic groups by design and planning, not as a default or add on. It further acknowledges that people should have the freedom to keep alive, enhance, and share their cultural heritage.

Interculturalism recognises the experience of inequality and the struggle for justice and equality by minority ethnic groups. It promotes inclusion, interaction, collaboration and exchange between people of different cultures, ethnicities or religions and creates the conditions to develop understanding, respect and equality of outcome. It is about inclusion by design, taking steps to address and acknowledge the history for many ethnic communities who have experienced discrimination, inequality or marginalisation.



Different cultures, ethnic or religious groups living in the same territory



Difference has a positive connotation



Open relations with exchange with each other and the majority population



The cultures or ways of life of minority groups are valued, respected, and recognised in their own merit



The recognition that ethnic diversity can enrich society



Racism is a recognised issue that has to be eradicated. This approach implies the development of policies that promote interaction, understanding and integration among and between different cultures and ethnic groups

DONEGAL TRAVELLERS PROJECT: CHALLENGING RACISM AND DISCRIMINATION FOR 24 YEARS



The Donegal Travellers Project, the largest NGO in County Donegal, is an independent, locally based community development organisation. It has been working for and with the Traveller Community and more recently the Roma community in Donegal for 24 years.

Established in 1996, the organisation has supported Travellers to articulate their identity, to organise collectively and to work towards the realisation of their rights. The Project has a staff team of 22 people working in a range of areas including health, education, youth, and accommodation.

The organisation challenges racism and discrimination against the Traveller and Roma communities wherever it is encountered and also works to address discrimination at the institutional level.

DTP is recognised as the key provider of training in Intercultural Awareness and Intercultural Competence in the county and has collaborated with the Intercultural Platform in the provision of bespoke training to staff teams, boards of management and both community and private sector organisations on anti-racism, interculturalism and human rights based approaches to inclusion. Uniquely, the DTP led the initiative to establish the Building Intercultural Communities project, preparing the funding application. The organisation also managed and carried out the day to day administrative work for the duration of the project.

“Nowhere else in the country has it happened that a Traveller organisation has looked at building intercultural communities with all minority ethnic communities, including Traveller and Roma,” said Siobhan McLaughlin, BIC Project Manager and manager of the DTP.

“The project could not have been delivered in the way it was delivered without the management and management systems of DTP. This is because of the history of DTP in addressing all the issues that impact on minority communities.”

“Since its foundation the Donegal Travellers Project identified the need to build solidarity with other ethnic minority groups and the wider community, in terms of racism and discrimination. We are massively proud that we have engaged in this work and that we have now given other ethnic minority groups a chance of taking up this work, of taking ownership now. It is their responsibility to take it from here”

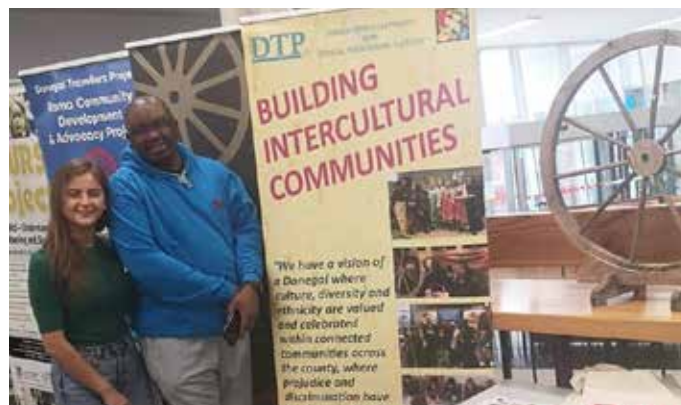
-Hugh Friel, Men’s Health and Development Worker, Donegal Travellers Project



SOCIAL INCLUSION WEEK

Caoimhe Sweeney, Project Worker and Billy Banda, Community Links Worker, BIC teamed up with the Donegal Travellers Project at the launch of Social Inclusion Week in Letterkenny Public

Services Centre. Announcing a series of events to mark the week, Donegal County Council’s Chief Executive, Seamus Neely said that Social Inclusion Week gave everyone the opportunity “to promote and highlight the positive work that the public and community sectors are doing to reduce discrimination, poverty and social exclusion and to reflect on the challenges faced by vulnerable members of our community”.



BIC Staff, Caoimhe Sweeney and Billy Banda promoting Social Inclusion Week.





Siobhan and Kate welcome guests to Culture Night.

CULTURE NIGHT

The first Tamil short film made in Ireland and shot in County Donegal was screened during Culture Night 2019 in Letterkenny. Over 50 people from multiple ethnic and religious backgrounds, turned out at Letterkenny's Century Cinema Complex for the special screening of Sakura Pooka, directed by Sai Sankar, a member of the Tamil Indian community in Donegal.

It was followed by the Donegal premiere of Gaza, directed by Irish filmmakers, Garry Keane and Andrew McConnell and introduced by Palestinian, Fadl Mustapha, a Support Worker for the Donegal Refugee Resettlement Programme.

ART IN ACTION PROJECT REPORT LAUNCH

Culture Night 2019 also heralded the launch of the Intercultural Art in Action research project, undertaken by the Donegal Intercultural Platform. This initiative, coordinated by artist, Bernadette Hopkins, engaged with over 200 people from BME communities during its consultation processes in an exploration of how BME communities can access the Arts, express themselves through art and have it reflect their identity as communities living in Donegal. As part of the consultation & engagement process, the Platform hosted and supported a range of events including an 'Inter-Culture' Night, Café Arabia, a Mother Language Celebration, events around International Women's Day, workshops with the Syrian community and a Culture Crossroads Day. Research in the form of conversation and engagement took place during these events.

Its findings and recommendations were presented in the project report which was launched on Culture Night at Century Cinema Letterkenny. The report called for a number of actions to develop and nurture diverse arts and cultural practice among the Black & Minority Ethnic communities in the county.

These included engagement with existing cultural and arts institutions and organisations, the provision of safe creative spaces and assistance in the development of skills. The BME communities also expressed a strong desire to participate in existing cultural events and programmes and projects. "People are coming here from other countries and having

different journeys and we wanted to incapsulate that," explained Bernadette Hopkins on the night.

This project was actively supported by Donegal County Council Arts Officer, Traolach Ó Fionnáin and jointly resourced by Donegal County Council, Mayo County Council and South Dublin County Council.



COMMUNITY ARTS PROJECT

"The art processes we did, transcended language"

-Kathryn Daily, Steering Group BIC and participant in the Women's Intercultural Arts Project

EVERY Wednesday morning for five weeks a group of women from different cultures and backgrounds gathered in the Regional Cultural Arts Centre for a unique exploration of creativity through art.

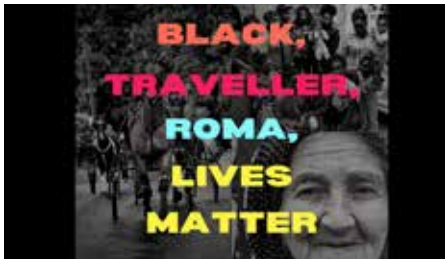
The project, facilitated by artist Ailbhe Hines, explored different art techniques to find a common language of expression. One of the participants, US born, Kathryn Daily, a member of the BIC Steering Group, said that the process transcended language. "Art was a language in itself and it made it accessible to people who didn't have a common language."

The group has continued to meet up since the course ended. "We felt we had got to the point where we identified common ground and were bonding outside of art so we have continued to get together for coffee and conversation. This course created the conditions to build positive relationships between communities."



PREJUDICE

Prejudice is the act of prejudging a person or group of people based on ideas you have about them due to them being a member/members of a particular group.



BECOMING DIVERSE-AWARE

“The message is that diversity is a positive thing and delivers so many positive benefits to Donegal.”

- Hugh Friel, Men’s Health and Development Worker, DTP

An online Diversity Aware training programme, tailored for the community and the workplace, is one of the lasting legacies of the BIC Project. Developed with the assistance of Joanne Sweeney, CEO, Digital Training Institute, the “Introduction to Diversity in the Your Community and Workplace” toolkit is designed to empower individuals and employers to acknowledge and understand diversity in the community and in the workplace.

It comprises of a short online programme that takes approximately 45 minutes to complete and covers topics such as diversity, ethnicity, interculturalism, asylum seekers and refugees, Travellers, Roma and respecting diversity on social media.

The series of information videos, featuring up to 30 people from Donegal’s Black, Minority, Ethnic communities, including Traveller and Roma, illustrates how building a diverse and inclusive workplace makes good business sense for an employer and enriches communities. Available for free on the Donegal Travellers Project website, participants will receive a DiversityAware course certificate on completion.

The Training Programme was launched by the BIC Project at a special event at the Letterkenny Community Centre football pitch on 19 July where those in attendance stood in solidarity with all those experiencing racism and exclusion around the world, and spelled out the words Black, Traveller, Roma Lives Matter for a drone photograph.



“Just to say I’ve completed your Diverse Aware training course, and found it excellent. Racism in all its forms is a scourge on our society, and even those of us who think we have a good level of awareness need to constantly remind ourselves about these issues and address the unconscious bias that so easily creeps in. I’m a Methodist Church regional leader, and have recommended the ministers I oversee in the Republic of Ireland to undertake your course also.”

-Rev Dr Stephen Skuce, Methodist Church regional leader

“I did the online training yesterday and thought it was really good. I have recommended it to the Fermanagh Early intervention Hub and the Migrant Centre NI.”

-Louise Nethercott, Good Relations Officer, The Migrant Centre NI



RINGING IN THE NEW YEAR, BANGLADESHI STYLE

Bangladeshi New Year celebrations offered a unique glimpse into

Bangladeshi traditions with singing, performances, special foods and family time at the Regional Cultural Centre in Letterkenny. People wore traditional red and white colour[ed] outfits and women decorated their hair with flowers. Delicious traditional food was served, followed by cultural performances from Donegal’s Bengali and Indian communities. This intercultural event was attended by representatives from a range of BME communities as well as Syrian families and members of the Traveller community.



MEET AZIZA HADIBAN

“I am really thirsty to learn, maybe because I stopped my education at an early age and now I have a chance to do something special.”

Syrian refugee, Aziza Hadiban, jumped at the chance to sign up for the BIC Community Work in a Changing Ireland course.

“I am really thirsty to learn, maybe because I stopped my education at an early age and now I have a chance to do something special. Because of the challenges I faced to get here, I want to be able to help others like me. I like to work with people and share my experiences.”

For the three years before Aziza and her family finally fled war-torn Raqqa in northern Syria, they were living in fear.

“We had no quality of life, we couldn’t go outside, We were all the time afraid that the children would be kidnapped so we just stay at home.”

Eventually, she and her husband and three sons made the difficult decision to leave their close knit family and community behind and flee to Europe. After several failed attempts, the family escaped to Turkey and then Greece, crossing the sea in a plastic boat. For five months they lived in appalling conditions in a refugee camp, eventually leaving there and moving from camp to camp, while sleeping in forests and on street pavements.

“They (the children) did not know what was happening. We tried to be strong and patient in front of them but we are crumbling. I felt like this was the end of our life.”

They arrived in Ireland on 8 December, 2017, and were placed in a refugee centre in Kildare before being relocated to Donegal. “At first it was very hard. We had nothing to do. I just sit and look out the window.”



Aziza made new friends when she enrolled in English classes with Donegal ETB. She learned about the BIC project at the Family Resource Centre in Stranorlar and attending the Cross Border Women’s Seminar last November as well as a number of other intercultural events.

“I don’t like to stay home. We feel we are in a new community and we just want to get used to it and become familiar with the people.”

Aziza tries not to look too far into the future.

“You worry about your children, how they will be in a new culture, but we are fighters. We keep fighting. My dream always is to see my children successful, to get a good education and find a good job. If we live safely, that is enough.”



Aziza Alhadiban (right) with Sally Mooney (left), Family Support Worker at the Finn Valley Resource Centre.



REFUGEES

A Refugee is anyone who leaves their country because they feel they are in danger of persecution for reasons of race, nationality, political opinion, religion or membership of a secular or other distinct social group.



NEW COMMUNITY WORKERS FROM TRAVELLER AND BME COMMUNITIES

21 people from the BME communities in Donegal, including Travellers, will graduate with a certificate in community work when they have completed an intense Level 7 Module with NUI Maynooth. Hosted by NUI Maynooth, the Community Work in a Changing Ireland course offered those involved in community work in Donegal, particularly from the BME communities, an opportunity to acquire a 3rd level qualification.

The course came about as a result of concerns across the BIC Project, including among the steering group, about the lack of presence of minority communities in the spaces that were funded to work with them.

Run over seven weekends, among the lecturers were some of the country’s leading lights in Community Development work, including Anastasia Crickley, former chair of the UN Committee for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, Oonagh McArdle, Academic Lead from the Dept of Applied Social Studies, NUI Maynooth and Marianne O’Shea, lecturer and coordinator of the Master in Community & Youth Work programme at NUI Maynooth.

Helen Lowry, Deputy director of the Migrant Rights Centre, Ireland, (MRCI) was a guest lecturer on racism and discrimination. The course, resourced by the BIC project, required a minimum of 100 tuition hours from each participant. As part of the terms of participation each student offered 100 hours of voluntary community work as a contribution to the future development of Donegal Intercultural Platform as a direct contribution to building positive relations – an outcome central to the PEACE IV objectives. This course will increase the opportunity for civil participation by these communities in democracy. It has been rescheduled for completion between September and November 2020.

MEET UCHENNA ALUM

“This Community Work in a Changing Ireland course has given me confidence and purpose. It has made a difference to my emotional stability”

Father of four, Uchenna Alum (59) from Nigeria moved to Donegal six years ago to be reunited with his family after ten years of separation.

“It was very hard at first. It was a different culture, a different climate. Everything was against me. Integration was tough but it was my spouse and children who kept me going.”

Participating in the Community Work in a Changing Ireland course has not only given him confidence, but has increased his awareness and understanding of the opportunities and challenges of living in a multicultural society.



“It was a great opportunity for me to learn a lot about what is going on. Knowledge is never lost and this has added to my knowledge.

“It was also an opportunity to meet other people, I have really enjoyed it. Based on what I have seen and experienced, I believe it helps with integration.

“The course has given me purpose and confidence has increased my knowledge about what is happening.

How else can we integrate if we don’t know anything about the cultures around us. Also, you can only effect positive change in the system by being a participant.

“This course was about participation. People can see it’s a wonderful community, when they see the black folks mixing with the white folks, they become more confident, and then it helps people feel more welcome and at home.” Uchenna sees Ireland as his home and despite struggling to find employment, he remains positive.

“This course has made a difference to my emotional stability until I get something good.

“I know I will find the right job when somebody needs my services.”

MULTICULTURALISM

Multiculturalism recognises different cultures and ethnicities. Communities may live alongside one another, but each cultural or ethnic group does not necessarily have engaging interactions with each other. It emphasises the need for tolerance and better community relations rather than acknowledging the need to change attitudes, structures and practices of the majority population.



BREAKING THE SILENCE ON HATE CRIME

“We needed to send a clear message that racism and hate have no place in our communities and that our society should be inclusive of all.” -Siobhan McLaughlin, Manager, DTP, BIC

Almost 2,000 signatures were collected in just three hours in locations across Letterkenny and Co Donegal in a Love not Hate campaign, calling for the introduction of Hate Crime legislation. The Donegal Travellers Project, the Building Intercultural Communities Project and the Donegal Intercultural Platform came together on International Human Rights’ Day as part of a nationwide drive to break the silence on hate crime, encourage people to report it and find effective ways to address all forms of racism and prejudice. The campaign called for the immediate introduction of long overdue Hate Crime legislation to protect people from various minorities in Ireland who are perceived to be different because of their skin colour, religion, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender,



identity, age and different physical or mental abilities.

In the media build-up to the day, stories flagging the event were published in the local press and BIC workers, Francine Blaché- Breen and Billy Banda were interviewed on Highland Radio about the need for Hate Crime legislation.

On the day, workers at information stalls in LYIT, Letterkenny Shopping Centre, An Grianán Theatre and Letterkenny Public Services Centre, collected signatures on the Love Not Hate petition.

The campaign, initiated by the European Network Against Racism (ENAR) Ireland was also promoted by Student Councils in the second level colleges of Errigal and St Eunan’s and by the Donegal Youth Service.

Enacting Hate Crime Legislation would ensure that Ireland was in harmony with most countries in the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe, the EU and EFTA countries and would help Ireland meet its European Union and International obligations.

BIC and DTP Manager, Siobhan McLaughlin described the event as a highlight of the BIC project.

“To be able to collect almost 2,000 signatures in a three hour space of time in dreadful weather tells us that hearts are open in Donegal and as a county we are taking steps to embrace diversity. “We needed to send a clear message that racism and hate have no place in our communities and that our society should be inclusive of all.”



MOTHER LANGUAGE DAY

The Donegal Intercultural Platform has teamed up with the Bangladeshi Community in Donegal for the past two years to celebrate International Mother Language Day, with the support of BIC.

Upwards on 12 different languages are celebrated on the day at the Regional Cultural Centre in Letterkenny, which draws large crowds and includes film, speeches, conversation, poetry, song and dance. Ethnicities in attendance have included Bengali, Russian, Irish, Polish, Sudanese, African, Korean, American and Spanish.



ROMA

The term ‘Roma’ used at the Council of Europe refers to Roma, Sinti, Kale and related groups in Europe, including Travellers and the Eastern Groups (Dom and Lom) and covers the wide diversity of the groups concerned, including those who identify themselves as Gypsies.



DONEGAL GOES TO THE UN

“We brought the issues and challenges of BME’s, including Travellers and Roma, in Donegal to a bigger stage, and we put Donegal on the map as a county in Ireland that is listening to and

responding to these voices.” -Siobhan McLaughlin, Manager, Donegal Travellers Project.

HOW Donegal lives up to its responsibilities towards Travellers, Roma, Black & Minority Ethnic communities came under international scrutiny last December when representatives from the county presented their findings to the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination at the United Nations in Geneva.

It was a unique opportunity for an Irish regional NGO to present lived-realities of people in its region on an international stage, explained Siobhan McLaughlin, Manager of DTP and BIC projects. She was accompanied by Hugh Friel, Men’s Health and Development Worker, DTP, as part of a delegation of Irish NGO’s, and the Irish Human Rights’ Commission. The hearings were also attended by Paul Kernan, Chairperson of Donegal Intercultural Platform (DIP).



Hugh Friel from DTP in Geneva



Siobhan McLaughlin and Hugh Friel in Geneva

Donegal’s submission, prepared by the DTP, followed intense consultation with over 50 members of the BME community, including Travellers and Roma, in a facilitated workshop in Letterkenny.

It addressed such issues as participative democracy, housing & accommodation, education, health & well- being and interculturalism. It also highlighted experiences of discrimination, hate speech and racism, significant gaps in support for people trying to navigate the system and a lack of resources to address inclusion. It called on CERD to recommend that the Irish State make available resources and supports to address racism and discrimination at a county level.

It also called for all state-run and state-funded programmes that delivered on social inclusion and equality, to participate in intercultural awareness training and non-discriminatory practice and to directly target the needs and interests of Traveller, Roma and BME communities in the delivery of their programmes.

The UN committee heard submissions from Irish NGO’s including the Donegal delegation. The Donegal representatives answered questions from rapporteurs about access to transport and language classes for asylum seekers and refugees living remotely and Hugh Friel fielded questions on issues pertaining to the Traveller and Roma communities in Donegal.

“It was a great experience to be able to speak and have our voices heard at the United Nations,” he said afterwards.



MIGRANT INFORMATION EVENING

BIC invited staff from the Migrant Rights Centre Ireland (MRCI) to Donegal to offer an information session for migrants residing in the county in a Migrant Information Evening.

35 people from a diverse cultural and ethnic background attended the presentation at the Radisson Blu Hotel, Letterkenny, which focused on the rights and entitlements of residents.

Among the topics addressed were visa, residency and deportation issues as well as access to medical services, services for children and how to plan for the future. The event also gave migrants an opportunity to connect with each other in a welcoming and confidential environment.

Following the presentation, Sancha Magat, Casework Manager with MRCI offered one-to-one advice to those in attendance. “We learned that there are many undocumented migrants living in Donegal in difficult circumstances.

It was good to meet with those people and make the connection so they can access the support of the Donegal Intercultural Platform in the future to address the many challenges they experience,” said Caoimhe Sweeney, Project Worker, BIC.

Migrant Rights Centre Ireland is a national organisation working for the past decade to promote justice, empowerment and equality for migrants and their families.

The Centre has assisted over 36,000 people and 135 different nationalities, through its work. It has provided support for workers abandoned by their employers, documented racism and sought legal redress for domestic workers, victims of forced labour, students and undocumented workers and families.



WOMEN OF THE WORLD GATHER AT THE FOOT OF GRIANÁN OF AILEACH



Grianan of Aileach.

“Together we can make change happen”

-Ann Friel, Community Health Worker, Donegal Travellers Project
Beneath the ancient tribal hillfort of Grianán of Aileach, Donegal’s largest ever assembly of women of the world became one of the indisputable highlights of the BIC Project.

The unique cross-border Intercultural Seminar, Women, Culture and Crossing Borders last November at An Grianán Hotel in Burt drew together 86 women from countries as diverse as South Africa, Sudan, Syria, Poland and the US who have made their homes in Donegal. They were joined by Donegal Travellers, Roma and members of the majority community from both sides of the border with Northern Ireland to explore common ground, examine issues affecting them and to celebrate their different identities.

“This is probably the first time that this has happened in Ireland where women from BME communities and Traveller and Roma were brought together to explore issues common to them all,” reflected Francine Blaché -Breen, Community Development and Training worker with BIC, who chaired the event. She added that despite the often harsh realities that were being discussed, the atmosphere remained resolutely positive. “It was more than just all these different groups coming together on the day. There was a great positive energy and the atmosphere was absolutely joyful. It was a celebration and a sharing.”

Keynote speakers Amel Yasef, Chairperson of the Irish Network Against Racism, Ann Friel, Primary Health Care co-ordinator, Donegal Travellers Project, and Nolunga Shologu, a Community Health Worker with asylum seekers in Donegal all stressed the importance of women from minority backgrounds being able to assemble together in a shared safe space.

Ann Friel told delegates that a platform had been created for diverse women to share their lived realities and challenge inequalities and social injustices.

“Together we can make change happen,” she said.

Through a series of round table discussions, the women, with the aid of interpreters, raised issues and concerns regarding healthcare, education, employment, discrimination and accommodation.

These findings will now be used to influence NGOs in Donegal as well as the Local Authority and other statutory agencies, to ensure the inclusion of minority ethnic women and their families and communities in the way they organise their work.

Occasionally throughout the day, a speaker would pause and asked the women to take a moment to look around, congratulate each other and smile at the breadth of experience and multiculturalism that surrounded them.

By the end of the day, a world map, into which delegates had placed pins to indicate where they had come from and the place they now called home, resembled a multi-coloured pin-cushion.

Ann Friel said that the seminar had been inspired by a growing need to bring women from multicultural backgrounds together.

“Women came together in a space where cultural diversity and ethnicity were valued and celebrated while at the same time, acknowledging the challenges and oppression of women and the intersectionality of racism and sexism.”

And BIC project workers are determined that those voices will continue to be heard.

“This work should not stop. These women felt a sense of empowerment on the day and it is vital that the work that was started should continue,” insisted Francine Blaché-Breen.



“There was a palpable sense of solidarity among women in the room and a value in listening to each other stories and examining positive ways forward.”

-Caroline Kuyper, long time Donegal resident & social justice activist

“It has been eye-opening. Women don’t often have a space just for themselves. I can actually relate to all of their stories, from different cultures. It has opened my eyes and made me realise, ‘you’ve had that problem too’.”

-Angela O’Leary, part time community health worker, DTP



Keynote speakers Amel Yasef, Chairperson of the Irish Network Against Racism, Nolunga Shologu, a Community Health Worker with Asylum Seekers in Donegal and Ann Friel, Primary Health Care co-ordinator, Donegal Travellers Project.

ROUND TABLE

“We in this room will not tolerate racism, sexism and discrimination, domestic violence or gender based violence.”

This was the resounding message from delegates attending the Women, Culture and Crossing Borders seminar.

The key theme explored, discussed and analysed on the day was the intersectionality of feminism and racism.

The seminar addressed inequality and looked at ways to celebrate the richness and diversity of the region’s Black, Minority, Ethnic communities, including Travellers and Roma.

Round table discussions focused on how to create a more just and equal society for the region’s Black, Minority, Ethnic communities including Travellers and Roma, under the broad headings of Education, Employment, Making a Home, Discrimination, Health and Wellbeing, Conflict and Policing.

Delegates called for more opportunities for women to meet and develop friendships in women-only spaces and for the development of an intercultural café.

How to take their concerns beyond discussion to action was also debated with proposals to engage more with the media and to stage protests.

The seminar called for inclusivity training for educators and the creation of a volunteer buddy system for accessing health services. Participants also called for the use of an ethnic identifier in the HSE system to make the health needs of members of BME communities visible, recorded and responded to. Women highlighted challenges accessing mental and physical health services

where poverty, isolation and the lack of language skills were all identified as barriers.

Concerns were raised about discrimination within the education system, the cost of access to third level and the lack of easy access to information. Delegates also pointed to the lack of cultural diversity within the primary school system and the challenges faced by non-English speakers.

The impact of identity, ethnicity, culture and religion on accessing employment as well as the lack of equality of access and affordable childcare, the gender pay gap and sexual harassment in the workplace were among the issues raised concerning employment. Domestic violence, conflict between minority and majority communities and the exploitation of vulnerable women were all raised and debated.

Delegates expressed concern about harassment and called for greater garda involvement within the community to help stamp out hate crimes.

On accommodation, concerns were raised about discrimination in social housing allocation, overcrowded living conditions, the lack of support in accessing housing and the state’s failure to build public sector affordable rented accommodation in the region. Delegates also discussed the impact of the border on their lives and the BIC Project took the first steps to building meaningful relationships for BME’s in the north west region to ensure people, particularly asylum seekers and refugees, are not further isolated and marginalised by the existence of the border.

“I wanted to know the community and to meet people coming from other countries who are here. I could see myself doing more voluntary jobs with them because now they know me and I know them”

-Jihane Amin, Morocco

“It brought together people who are at the most intersectional points of vulnerability, suffering from multiple forms of discrimination and disadvantage as a result of origin, ethnic groups, religion, gender. I hope we can now move to action”

-Kathryn Daily, USA, Steering Group BIC

MIGRANTS

WHO ARE MIGRANTS?

A migrant is any person who is moving or has moved across an international border or within a state away from their habitual place of residence, regardless of

1. The person's legal status
2. Whether the movement is voluntary or involuntary
3. What the causes for the movement are
4. What the length of the stay is
5. Age



MEET VALENTIN GARCIA-ECHAV



“Getting better at English has helped me know Donegal better”
-Valentin Garcia -Echave, Galicia, Spain

Student turned tutor, Valentin Garcia-Echave describes his native Galicia as the Spanish Donegal.

“Both are situated in the north west of the countries, open to the Atlantic and the shape of the coastline, the green, the music, the Celtic connection, all make them similar. “The only thing that’s different is the summers are longer and more sunny,” he laughs.

When Valentin first moved to Donegal with his Letterkenny wife, his English was poor and he often felt lost in conversation. But thanks to the Fáilte Isteach classes, his proficiency rapidly improved and he has now moved on to be a volunteer tutor. “Getting better at English has helped me know Donegal better.

I like to meet people so I tutor people when they come in first. I find that the new immigrants, asylum seekers and refugees who have had to abandon their countries, are enthusiastic to learn because they want to live here.”

Valentin has attended several courses through the Intercultural Platform and BIC, most recently the NUI Maynooth- linked Community Work in a Changing Ireland.

“These courses connect people and give me the tools to understand and communicate in an intercultural environment. There is a positive benefit for both communities.”

And Valentin’s even picked up a bit of Irish along the way. ‘Cad é mar a tá tú?’ he inquires in perfect Donegal dialect.



EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY WEEK

The BIC Project and Donegal Travellers Project marked Equality and Diversity Week at Donegal’s LYIT last January, offering information about Travellers, Roma, Ethnic Minorities and Travellers’ Mental Health and distributing free cultural diversity t-shirts! The LYIT, which is in the process of joining the University of Sanctuary Ireland initiative, worked closely with BIC on a number of initiatives and in the provision of access courses for students for whom English is not their first language.



Celebrating equality and diversity at LYIT.



LYIT Malaysian Student Society

MIGRANTS

A Migrant is any person or persons who is moving or has moved across an international border or within a state away from their habitual place of residence.

FÁILTE ISTEACH CLASSES- BUILDING BRIDGES ONE PHRASE AT A TIME

It is a very positive thing to be part of a multi-cultural environment in Donegal.” -Volunteer tutor, Sean Nugent

Every Wednesday morning, the Arts Room in the basement of Letterkenny Library buzzes with the happy hum of conversation as dozens of people from all over the world practice their English language skills with trained volunteer tutors.



Faiilte Isteach English Conversation Christmas Party.

The Fáiilte Isteach workshop welcomes people of all ages and abilities from Donegal’s growing Black & Minority Ethnic communities who share the common goal of wanting to improve their English conversational skills from beginner to advanced levels.

This project is supported by BIC and co-sponsored by the Donegal Intercultural Platform and Fáiilte Isteach, a nationwide free initiative established by Third Age in 2006 to respond to the daily difficulties experienced by new migrants.

Since starting in Letterkenny over four years ago, upwards on 350 people and an estimated 40 different nationalities have passed through the doors with many former students going on to join the team of over 40 tutors.

The Wednesday class occasionally ventured out of doors on Walk and Talk sessions to explore the local surroundings at Glenveagh National Park and Portsalon Beach.

A cultural exchange class also took place in the Gaeltacht village of Falcarragh where participants shared stories not just through English and Irish but also through their own first language. Successful supports were also offered to conversation sessions in Ballybofey/Stranorlar, Falcarragh and in Carndonagh.

BIC also hosted an additional Fáiilte Isteach class every Thursday evening at its offices for Syrian men, struggling to learn English. “We found that older Syrian men in particular, were struggling with learning English so we run an English through Arabic workshop with them and we have a translator, which is helping a lot,” explained Paul Kernan, chairperson, Donegal Intercultural Platform.

“Fun, Free and Friendly,” is how Billy Banda, Community Links Worker, BIC summed up the Wednesday sessions which always end with people sharing tea and snacks from their home countries. Progress is honoured by a graduation ceremony at the end of the year.

“Most people come with very little English and at the end of the year they can have a conversation with you. “They will tell you themselves that language was always a barrier to them being able to take a step up. I know two women who couldn’t get a job before because of their lack of English and who are now actually working.”

Dr. Vassor Yvenert from Haiti says the class helps him improve his English conversational skills, understand the Donegal accent and meet new people.

“When I moved here I had no family, no friends. Being on the course, I made new friends and it feels like family how.” Acquiring a basic proficiency in English, enables participants to go on to further studies at Donegal Education and Training Board (ETB) and to avail of the Access Courses offered at LYIT – where a number of the Fáiilte Isteach graduates have taken up English for Employment courses.



ETHNICITY

Ethnicity is membership of a group that is defined by a long shared history, cultural traditions, language, ancestry, religion, food, music, economic activity and is self-determined by members of the group.

ETHNICITY

WHAT IS ETHNICITY?

Ethnicity is about membership that is defined by a long shared history, cultural traditions, language, ancestry, religion, food, music, economic activity and is self determined by members of the group.



INTERCULTURAL STUDIES

“People are coming away looking at things differently” -*Francine Blaché-Breen, Community Development and Training Worker, BIC*

An Intercultural Studies Course, run by the BIC Project and providing the knowledge and skills for active and positive participation in a rapidly changing society, has been described by participants as ‘life changing’.

Facilitated by Francine Blaché-Breen, Community Development and Training Worker with BIC, the course was held three times through the lifetime of the BIC project, in venues in Falcarragh, Stranorlar and Letterkenny.

28 of those who participated have been awarded QQI (Quality and Qualifications Ireland) Level 5 qualification on completion of the 8 week module.

For one day each week, participants explored, reflected and analysed such intercultural issues as diversity, identity, racism, prejudice, conflict, inclusion, participation and interdependence while also reflecting on their own culture.

Francine reflects that it was the exploration of their own identities that seems to have taken many of the participants by surprise. “The course is designed to get people to realise that this is a whole community discussion, not just one for people from Black, Ethnic, Minority communities.

“Each one of us is complex with different layers, strands and identities, and all of those broad brush strokes we are so anxious to paint onto others, we don’t paint on ourselves.

“So people come away looking at things differently or at least they are asking different questions.”

On the final day of the course at the Finn Valley Family Resource Centre in Stranorlar, the group, including participants from Syria and Venezuela, as well as Donegal and Northern Ireland, presented an outline of their final essays.

Lorraine Simmons, a Hospice nurse in Derry, who examined the reasons why so few people from the BME Communities availed of hospice services, described the course as an invaluable insight. “We need to become more aware of racism and we need to do better.”

Youth Worker, Sarah Browne said the course had helped her become more aware of diversity and the challenges facing people from BME communities, Travellers and people with disabilities.

“I came in here expecting to learn about different cultures but instead I actually had to look inside, and that changes everything. It makes you see things in a different way.”

Co-chair of the Donegal Intercultural Platform, Aalaa Elmusharaf, said the course had been a life-changer for her and for many people.

“I can’t think of anyone that has gone into that course and come out the same. It is so transformative and it really challenges the way you think of yourself and your identity.”



Francine and students at the Intercultural Studies course in the Family Resource Centre, Stranorlar.

STEREOTYPES

Stereotypes are beliefs or opinions about characteristics, attributes and behaviours of members of various groups.

MEET AALAA ELMUSHARAF

Co-chair, Donegal Intercultural Platform



“It is really a beautiful experience when you know you can impact and change somebody’s life in a very profound way”



Saudi Arabia native, Aalaa Elmusharaf, moved to Donegal to join her doctor father in 2017 having spent most of her life in Aberdeen, Scotland.

She befriended Thoiba Ahmed at a local women’s group, becoming her local election campaign manager. Through Thoiba she was introduced to the Donegal Intercultural Platform and is currently its co-chair.

“The Donegal Intercultural Platform is a glimmer of hope to actually push against incidents of racism and discrimination and bring about change. It completely aligns with my values, and my family’s values of creating a more peaceful society that is inclusive of all.”

Her work with the Platform has brought her into contact with refugees whom she says particularly suffer when their support systems dry up after just a year.

“My wish would be that there is an adequate support system in

place not just to support the newcomers but for those who continue to live here.”

She is a passionate campaigner for the introduction of speech and hate crime legislation. “It is hard to press charges at the moment. This legislation is about protecting people’s rights as well as simultaneously challenging oppressive practices.” A strong believer in social justice, she does not see her role as a rescuer of people.

“You cannot guarantee social justice without sustainable development. Our duty isn’t to dive in to be the rescuers. We are meant to be the change catalysts. We are supposed to empower people so we provide them with the skills they need.

“In the work we do, we see visible changes in people, even in just the way they carry themselves. It is really a beautiful experience when you know you can impact and change somebody’s life in a very profound way and deal with the roots of problems;”

Aalaa believes the BIC Project has achieved a lot in its lifetime. She describes the Intercultural Studies Course as lifechanging and the Women, Culture and Crossing the Border Seminar as “a rich and beautiful experience”.

CELEBRATING DIVERSITY AT CAFÉ ARABIA

“An event like this, helps people to meet other people, feel at ease and opens doors for them, to get out there, learn the language and be a positive influence on the community around them.”

-Dalia Taftazani, volunteer, Donegal Intercultural Platform, Arabic Support Worker, BIC

UN World Arabic Day was celebrated in Letterkenny with Café Arabia, bringing together scores of adults and children from many different religious, cultural and ethnic backgrounds.

Hosted by the Donegal Intercultural Platform, the common ground was a shared appreciation and recognition of the significance of the Arabic language as part of the UN Arabic Language Day, in terms of global communications, culture and faith.

Activities and displays included children’s art tables, a mix of Arabic music and traditional Irish music, cultural tables with artefacts from various Arabic cultures, costume, poetry, dancing, calligraphy, traditional Arabic cuisine, henna hand-painting. Syrian dancers encouraged others on to the dance floor. Arabic food and sweets and coffee sweetened with cardamom were served.



MEET NOLUNGA SHOLOGU



“When they see me they see hope. I always bring hope because I once walked in their shoes.” -Nolunga Shologu, Steering Group, BIC

South African - born Nolunga Shologu spent eight years living in Direct Provision when she first came to Ireland as an Asylum Seeker two decades ago.

She has been living in Letterkenny since 2002, receiving legal status in 2008. This mother of four wasted no time immersing herself in education, studying Community Care with Donegal ETB and Community Development at the LYIT. She received a PhD from NUI Galway in Advocacy and Public Activism.

“For me Donegal was like a miracle county where things happened.”

Nolunga has volunteered with the Intercultural Platform and worked with Letterkenny Community Development Project as a community links worker for women from minority ethnic backgrounds and for Donegal Youth Service. She was one of the keynote speakers at the Women, Culture and Crossing the Border Seminar.

She is currently a Community Health Worker with Asylum Seekers in Donegal.

“When they see me they see hope. I always bring hope because I once walked in their shoes. They are free to talk to me about anything. I encourage them to get straight into education so that they can keep their minds working.”

She believes that the BIC project has been a huge support for BME’s in Donegal.

“English language support classes are the most powerful tool in helping people from other countries to integrate. Some come with no knowledge or just a small understanding of English. BIC played a major part in improving that.

“Without the BIC Project I am lost in Donegal. I have attended multicultural events and this has opened the doors of communication for me to interact with people from different cultural backgrounds whom I never thought I would meet and share common values with.”



SIGNING UP TO ANTI- RACISM ELECTION PROTOCOL

LOCAL and European Parliament Election candidates in Donegal were urged to sign an Anti-Racism Election Protocol 2020 in an initiative hosted locally by the Donegal Travellers’ Project (DTP) and the Donegal Intercultural Platform. The protocol, drawn up by the European Network Against Racism (ENAR – Ireland), was made available to download or to sign in person at the DTP offices in Letterkenny.

By signing, candidates sent a message to their constituents that they rejected racism and all forms of discrimination and hate speech and agreed to condemn any campaign materials or statements that may incite hatred or express prejudice on the grounds of ‘race’, colour, nationality or origin, ethnic background, religious belief or membership of the Traveller Community.



Independent candidate Thomas Pringle signs the Election Protocol at the DTP offices.



Celebrating International Mother Language Day in Letterkenny

ASYLUM SEEKERS

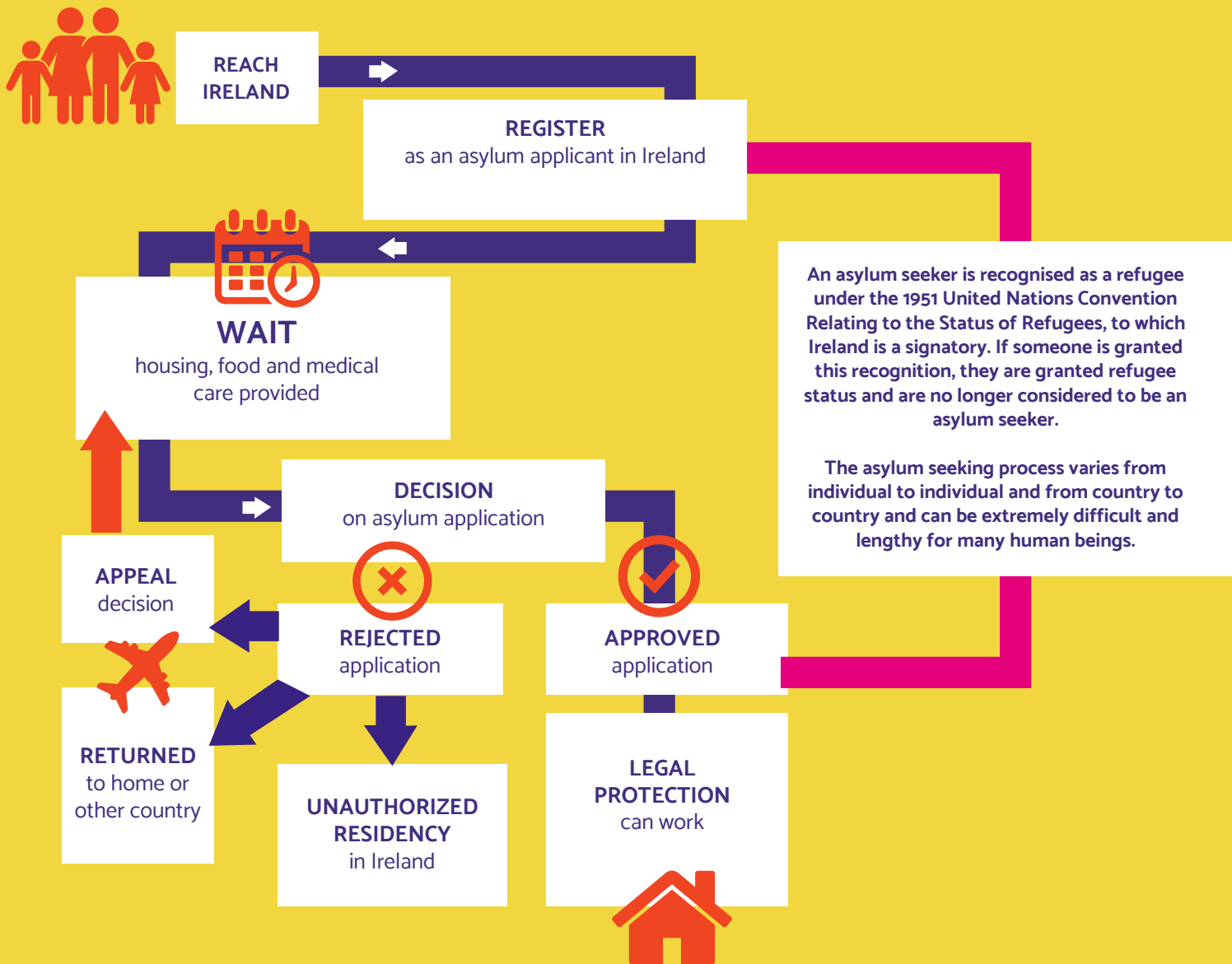
Asylum Seekers are people seeking International Protection who are legally entitled to stay in the state while waiting for the authorities to decide on their applications for asylum.

ASYLUM SEEKER

WHO ARE ASYLUM SEEKERS?

Asylum seekers are people seeking to be recognised as refugees, who are waiting for the authorities to decide on their applications. People in this process are legally entitled to stay in the state until their application for protection is decided. They also have a right to a fair hearing of that application and to an appeal if necessary.

ASYLUM SEEKER'S PROCESS IN IRELAND



BIC OUTREACH WORK - MOVING FROM INDIVIDUAL TO COLLECTIVE OUTCOMES

“The BIC project is vital in helping people navigate the system, access information and empower themselves”

-Billy Banda, Community Links Worker, BIC

A CRITICAL aspect of the BIC Project has been its outreach work to promote the needs, rights and entitlements of members of Black, Minority Ethnic (BME) communities living in Donegal.

BIC Community Links Worker, Billy Banda with BIC, originally from South Africa, has been engaged in a voluntary capacity with various BME youth and community projects since moving to Letterkenny 16 years ago.

His work with the BIC Project has brought him into contact with many people in the BME communities who are living in extreme poverty and isolation, in fear of deportation and sometimes in situations of domestic violence, requiring emergency intervention. “I try to assist these people in accessing the help they need and point them in the direction of the existing services at a local or national level.”

For others, access to accommodation and places to worship and even just being able to understand how the system works, are recurring issues.

“Much of the job I do is supporting people in navigating the system. I take people to the Citizens’ Information, Social Welfare or County Council offices.

“Habitual residency is one typical area of confusion. People don’t know the process. They also encounter difficulties when it comes to applying for social housing. The BIC project is vital in helping people empower themselves.”

Another aspect of Billy’s work has been to encourage people from the BME communities to partake in wider Donegal society, through informal gatherings and sporting activities.

“People who do not speak the language tend to keep to themselves. I try to persuade these groups to participate more and to share more of their tradition and culture with the wider community. This also helps develop bonds between different minority cultures.

“When the guys from the Bangladeshi and African Associations came together to play football with Donegal Travellers, they did not see any differences. They just saw the game of football.”

Billy also believes that an important aspect of interculturalism is understanding and embracing all aspects of people’s culture. The foundations of this work were laid over the past decade by the voluntary work of Donegal Intercultural Platform and in the support and advocacy work undertaken by Donegal Travellers Project.

“The Platform and latterly BIC have been reaching out to the county’s BME communities to offer support and advice and extend the hand of friendship,” said Paul Kernan, Chairperson, Donegal Intercultural Platform.

“We see this work as forming the basis of our intervention with these communities, but the challenge and the vital work is moving from achieving small individual outcomes for people to ensuring collective outcomes for the BME communities, including Travellers and Roma.”



BIC Outreach worker, Billy Banda.

DIRECT PROVISION

Direct Provision is the main system used in Ireland since 2000 to accommodate and provide basic welfare to asylum seekers whilst their applications are being processed. Other initiatives like ‘community sponsorship’ have been piloted as an alternative to DP for programme refugees.



PARTICIPATING IN LOCAL STRUCTURES

“Representation needs to reflect the society we live in and currently it does not,” -Francine

Blaché-Breen, Community Development and Training Worker, BIC

BIC has actively campaigned for greater representation of Black & Minority and Ethnic Communities, including Traveller and Roma on participative democratic structures.

Representatives met with the Local Community Development Committee (LCDC) of Donegal County Council, the Public Participation Network (PPN), Donegal Local Development CLG (DLDC) and the Peace Partnership to deliver the message that greater participation was not about special treatment, but about equal treatment.

Despite being established to provide a link between local communities and the County Council, BIC maintains there remains limited opportunities for minority ethnic representation on either of these two important decision-making structures. Currently there is just one dedicated seat for representation from the Donegal Travellers Project on the LCDC but no seat for a representative from the Black, Minority, Ethnic communities.

Francine Blaché-Breen, Community Development and Training Worker, BIC and Hugh Friel, Men’s Health and Development Worker, DTP and a member of the BIC Steering Group, met with the various bodies to outline the strategic goals and work of the BIC Project and to call for the inclusion of minority, ethnic groups

in local structures.

“Surely representation needs to reflect the society we live in and currently it does not,” argues Francine Blaché-Breen.

“All you need do is walk around Donegal these days and you will know it is no longer the place that it was, even 10 years ago. There is visible diversity on the ground. Whatever the percentage is of minority ethnic people living in Donegal, every structure should be reflective of that. If it isn’t we should be looking at why.”

She adds that the presence of diversity on decision-making structures lead to better decision-making.

“This is not about special treatment. It is about equal treatment. How can you say you represent us, if you do not know what our issues are and what our needs are? Why wouldn’t these structures want to make better decisions at a county level for all our citizens?”

In a follow-up written submission to Donegal County Council, Hugh Friel urged the Council to proactively ensure that there was diversity on all community-based local government structures to reflect Donegal as a diverse multicultural county and send out the message of Donegal as a welcoming, caring place.



REGISTERING TO VOTE

Garda Annmarie Mcgrath Overseeing Voter Registration.

Dozens of people added their names to the voting register at a special Participation Day at the Fáilte Isteach

English Conversation session in the Letterkenny Library and Arts Centre.

The event was hosted by the BIC Project and the Donegal Intercultural Platform to encourage participation in local democracy and bring together members of Black and Minority Ethnic Communities to share stories and experiences about living in Donegal.

Garda Annmarie McGrath from the Community Policing Unit of An Garda Síochána in Letterkenny was present to assist people in getting registered to vote in advance of the Local Government Elections in the county.

The day proved a huge success, with dozens registering to vote and guests from the Donegal Travellers Project sharing tales and stories with the BME communities.

The biggest turnout on the day was from the local Bangladeshi community who arrived in numbers to chat, share some snacks and sign up to vote. By the end of the event, dozens had registered, and dozens more forms had been handed out for others to complete.





CELEBRATING TRAVELLER CULTURE IN LETTERKENNY

“Days like these change people’s attitudes and that’s what brings about social change.” -Hugh Friel, Men’s Health and Development Worker, DTP

From wattle tents and barrel top wagons, to tin-smithing and paper flower-making, people in Donegal were given a unique opportunity to explore Traveller life in Ireland in bygone days at a Living History exhibition during Traveller Pride Week. Over 200 people attended the celebration of Traveller history, culture and identity, which was jointly hosted by Donegal Travellers Project (DTP) and Building Intercultural Communities (BIC) project and launched by Councillor Gerry McMonagle at the forecourt of An Grianán Theatre in Letterkenny.

“It gave people a chance to see for themselves what life on a traditional Traveller campsite was like,” explained Annie Mongan, Community Health Worker, DTP. Story-telling and song around the campfire were other aspects of Traveller culture showcased at the Living History event, which was created by Meath Travellers Workshop as a way of honouring and raising awareness about the history and culture that are central to Traveller identity.

Katie Boyle, Community Health Worker, DTP, was pleased that the day provided Travellers with the opportunity to express and showcase their culture with pride. “Travellers were denied their culture and ethnicity for so long but to be able to go out and express pride in who you are and what you were born into is so important.” Ann Friel, Primary Health Care Coordinator with DTP said that an unexpected outcome had been the impact the day had on members of the Black & Minority Ethnic Communities. “People began to talk about shared past experiences. It reminding one woman of her home in South Africa and another about life in rural Bangladesh. It really helped build relationships across communities.”

Hugh Friel, Men’s Health and Development Worker, DTP pointed out that the event had encouraged brilliant interaction between the settled community and Travellers. “People shared memories and told stories. The more days we can have celebrating ethnic minority groups and cultures and bringing all communities together the better. Discrimination and racism and stereotyping take place when people have never engaged. Days like these change people’s attitudes and that’s what brings about social change.”



IRISH TRAVELLERS

Irish Travellers are an indigenous, minority, ethnic group who have been documented as being part of Irish society for centuries. Irish Travellers have a long shared history, traditions, language, culture and customs which make them a distinct group.

IRISH TRAVELLERS

WHO ARE IRISH TRAVELLERS?

Irish Travellers are an indigenous minority ethnic group who have been documented as being part of Irish society for centuries.

Travellers have a long shared history, traditions, language, culture and customs which make them a distinct group. Extended family and community are key social institutions in most Traveller communities. Historically the communities way of life has been centred around nomadism.





INTERCULTURAL FAMILY DAY

“To have so many different communities in the same place at the one time and interacting, and to see their kids getting to know each other, made it a huge success, beyond our expectations”
-Caoimhe Sweeney, Project Worker, BIC

An Intercultural Family Day hosted by BIC in collaboration with the Filipino Association, attracted around 200 participants and became one of the most successful events of the BIC project.

With the Aura Leisure Centre in Letterkenny as the venue, it took place following consultation by BIC, to encourage the Filipino community to introduce aspects of their culture to the wider Intercultural community.

“They wanted an event that could be for all the family so we decided on a Family Fun Day which would bring together many different cultural aspects,” explained Billy Banda, Community Links Worker, BIC. The fun-filled day included a wide range of activities and cultural celebrations from a Russian dance performance to reflexology, card reading, creative nail art and live music. Children meanwhile enjoyed face painting, balloon modelling, arts and crafts, sack and egg and spoon races, giant chess and a football and basketball tournament.

An estimated 20 different ethnicities joined in the fun. Diversity was also evident among the volunteers with the Donegal Volunteer Centre appointing seven volunteers, and others emerging from the Muslim, Indian, Asian and Eastern European communities. Asylum Seekers residing in the Emergency Temporary Asylum Centre in Portsalon, also offered their skills and joined in the fun. Included on the menu was Filipino and African food, with vans outside providing crepes, burgers, fish and chips and ice-cream!

“To have so many different communities interacting in the same place and to see their kids getting to know each other, made it a huge success, beyond our expectations,” said Caoimhe Sweeney, Project Worker, BIC. The event strengthened the bonds between the Filipino Association, other groups and the Intercultural Platform, and brought new attendees to the Fáilte Isteach English workshops and other intercultural events.





BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS AMONG YOUTH

“Slowly you could see change happening. In team-building and survival tasks where they needed each other, you could see them starting to

seriously help each other and friendships forming”

-Billy Banda, Community Links Worker, BIC

Gartan Outdoor Adventure Centre was the idyllic setting for a summer workshop and team-building initiative for a group of 19 young adults from a range of BME communities in Donegal, among them Traveller, African, and Syrian.

Organised by the Building Intercultural Communities project, this was the second outing for the group, which had previously travelled to W5, the award-winning Science & Discover Centre in Belfast in a BIC organised day trip.

At Gartan, the group learned to collaborate with each other to tackle challenges in a range of activities including a team-building workshop, kayaking, rock-climbing and archery.

“Slowly you could see change happening. In the team building and survival tasks where they needed each other, you could see them starting to seriously help each other and friendships forming,” recalled Billy Banda, Community Links Worker, BIC.

“As the day progressed you could see engagement increasing. They were beginning to make real connections with participants from the Traveller community, for example, asking the Syrian young people how to say hello in their language,” added Caoimhe Sweeney, Project Worker, BIC. “It was really nice to see the impact one day made, on how these kids, who definitely would never have interacted with each other before, socialised.”



PROMOTING INCLUSION IN AN GARDA SÍOCHANA

THE BIC team joined forces with An Garda Síochána to hold a successful workshop to promote opportunities in on Garda Síochána. Taking place at the Loft Youth Centre in Letterkenny, this was the first such workshop with the local Garda for both BIC and the Donegal Intercultural Platform.

Its purpose was to encourage young people from the BME Communities including Traveller and Roma to join the Garda Síochána as either reserves or Garda.

Over 30 young people participated in an engaging presentation from Inspector (now Superintendent) Goretti Sheridan and Garda Annmarie McGrath from the Community Policing Unit at Letterkenny Garda Station.

“This was a very valuable experience. Often these young people are only aware of the barriers that exist. We had a number of young Africans who registered interest that day and others in the group who were interested in joining the Army Reserve at Finner,” said Billy Banda, Community Links Worker, BIC.

RACISM

Direct Provision is the main system used in Ireland since 2000 to accommodate and provide basic welfare to asylum seekers whilst their applications are being processed. Other initiatives like ‘community sponsorship’ have been piloted as an alternative to DP for programme refugees.

BIC ACHIEVES STRATEGIC GOALS

The Building Intercultural Communities project succeeded in achieving its strategic goals, despite a forced early end to the work due to the Covid-19 Crisis.

From the outset, BIC ensured that Black, Minority, Ethnic communities including Traveller and Roma, were represented and involved in the decision making of the project at every level across its structures.

In keeping with good governance, the steering and management structures provided the supportive framework for the work. Throughout its 18 month lifespan, upwards on 1,500 people from an estimated 25 different ethnic minority groups engaged with the Project, directly and indirectly.

BIC hosted scores of events - outlined in this report- from training and educational to informative and celebratory.

Cultural events such as Traveller Pride Day, Café

Arabia and Intercultural Family Day attracted some of the largest attendances from different cultures, building up respect and a better understanding of the cultural norms of all the different communities. These gatherings also broke down barriers of language, religion and culture and strengthened relationships with the settled majority community and among different ethnic and religious minorities.

The outreach work by BIC built connections and ensured that those most marginalised were reached.

The BIC project's collaboration with Fáilte Isteach (a national welcoming initiative) and the Donegal Intercultural Platform resulted in hundreds of people being offered English Language Support Services. Additional language supports were provided by BIC for Syrian men.

BIC hosted a range of intercultural educational and training initiatives, youth and creative activities. These created spaces where participants could analyse ethnicity and diversity and the challenges these posed. This work contributed to a greater critical social conscience across BMEs, about the lived realities of others. BIC actively lobbied for greater BME representation and participation at local democracy level, and provided information, workshops, training and seminars.



Successful campaigns - including voter registration and anti-racism - were launched, creating the conditions of inclusion and challenged the hegemony of treating people as others.

BIC took the concerns of BME Communities including Travellers and Roma, to local government and to the UN committee for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination in Geneva.

One of the project highlights, the 'Women, Culture and Crossing the Border Seminar' united over 80 women from both sides of the border in a shared space where cultural diversity and ethnicity were valued and celebrated, and the challenges and oppression of women and the intersectionality of racism and sexism were acknowledged.

The project also took the first steps towards building meaningful relationships for BME communities in the north west region to ensure people, particularly asylum seekers

and refugees, were not isolated and marginalised further by the existence of a border.

BIC augmented its presence through the effective use of social media to communicate its message of social inclusion, in disseminating information and promoting anti-racism and cultural competency practice in the county.

This work, and access to an extensive data base, created the conditions for BME communities which were at the greatest risk of marginalisation, to be included and protected during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Workshops and training, focusing on diversity, cultural competency, and anti-racism training, led to the development of a free online diversity training course and information boards for use in workplaces and schools, which have become part of the lasting legacy of the project.

The work of BIC project has further developed and strengthened the Donegal Intercultural Platform in the county in coordinating services and delivering workshops to BME communities.

The ethos and values of community development permeated all aspects of the project, as all partners engaged and sought to analyse the value and purpose of using this approach to address inclusion and anti-racism.

-Compiled by the Management of Donegal Travellers Project.

REFUGEES

WHO ARE REFUGEES?

A refugee is anyone who leaves their country because they fear they are in danger of persecution for one of the following five reasons:

Race

Nationality

Membership of a particular social group

Political opinion

Religion



It is exactly on the right track, just not big enough or long enough

-Dr Sean Ruth, Steering Group, BIC, Organisational Psychologist, Author

“BIC has created very positive events and spaces that have made it possible for people to get to know immigrant communities and that makes it easier for them to become part of the wider community.

It’s been positive for the people who come here. It’s been positive for Donegal people, and if we can build on this work, the potential it has is enormous.

An important part of the BIC Project has been about people coming here and bringing their own culture with them. It is not



about giving up their culture. I want them to bring all of themselves. To get close to people from different cultures, with different languages and different experiences and to learn about their lives, makes my life bigger. There is a sense of being connected to a much bigger world.

In a sense, the BIC project has only scratched the surface, but I think people in the system need to have a

picture of the potential of this to build the whole community and to make people in the communities much more connected and much more in charge of their own lives.

It is exactly on the right track, just not big enough or long enough.”

“

“All we have been doing is laying the groundwork. It is a nonsense to think that any more could be achieved in this length of time. Now this work needs to be imbedded and built on so that we can achieve true inclusion, equality and diversity across all aspects of people’s lives.”

-Francine Blaché-Breen, Community Development and Training Worker, BIC

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MEET THOIBA AHMED

Her interest in working with people prompted her to start volunteering with the Donegal Intercultural Platform and she is currently a member of the BIC Project steering group.

“From the second I arrived in Ireland I tried to make connections and build relationships with people around me, with the neighbourhood. I always loved to be with people, and to work with the community.”

She believes the BIC project has played an important role in the lives of the minority community.

“THE BIC Project has strengthened the minorities. It has given them a secure space to express their dreams and hopes and access to people answering their questions and calming their worries.”

Originally from the Republic of Sudan, Thoiba Ahmed came to Letterkenny five years ago with her doctor husband and two children.

“THE BIC Project has strengthened the minorities. It has given them a secure space to express their dreams and hopes and access to people answering their questions and calming their worries.”

Thoiba has been one of the key organisers of Café Arabia, one of the main events of the Intercultural Platform and BIC.

“People are now waiting for this day every year, they enjoyed it so much. The best thing about it is that it is open for everyone.”

She became the first Muslim woman to stand for local election in the Letterkenny Municipal District in 2019, when she ran as an Independent candidate with the slogan ‘Let My Difference Make a Difference’.

“I thought it would be a great opportunity for me to represent others, to look for positive social change and to build peace bridges between communities.”

Thoiba polled 525 first preference votes and was eliminated on the fifth count with 651 votes. The experience has made her determined to run again.

Thoiba is content that Donegal is her home for life.

“I love it so much. I feel I belong to Donegal strongly but I made the effort myself. I did not wait for anybody to do it for me.”

From the Staff

The 'Building Intercultural Communities' (BIC) Project was always going to be important to those of us who delivered it. Of course, the actions of the programme mattered, but when we've spoken to those involved about them, one word was repeated: Relationships.

The aim to 'build positive relationships' was at the core of intent for this project, but the impact of that sense of organisation linking people, breaking down isolation and connecting individuals and groups to something bigger was a confirmation of the efficacy and impact of Community Development methodologies to deliver on this central goal of peacebuilding.

From the Fáilte Isteach group that became more than just a means to improving spoken English, but a community networked into the wider programme to the Cross Border Women's Seminar that brought together women of many ethnicities to examine common experiences and interconnections, but also created a positive and energetic buzz through participation, this project has made new connections and strengthened others.

Central to this successful delivery has been the building of collaborative relationships with the staff of Donegal Travellers Project who brought with them over 20 years of delivering projects with and for the Traveller and Roma communities. Without this experience and expertise, the BIC Project might have been found wanting. Indeed, this collaborative work has meant that significant learning has been shared with BIC staff and participants and should be seen as one of its major achievements.

With the arrival of COVID-19, the project, in its final weeks, has had to change gears and focus to assist Black and Minority Ethnic communities and individuals to stay healthy and access services and supports in Co. Donegal. With information videos produced in a number of languages, hundreds of support calls made, numerous individuals sign-posted to the county-wide helpline and many applications for services completed, the project has done its utmost to meet this challenge.

But the inequities and exclusion for BME, Traveller and Roma communities continue past the lifetime of this project and COVID-19 highlights these in brutal starkness. As the project comes to an end and we consider its actions and achievements, it becomes clear that there will be a gap in information, training, support, visibility and inclusion left in its absence. The challenge will be for us all to fill it.

Francine Blaché-Breen

Billy Banda

Caoimhe Sweeney



“
‘With information videos produced in a number of languages, hundreds of support calls made, numerous individuals sign-posted to the county-wide helpline and many applications for services completed, the project has done its utmost to meet this challenge.’
– Billy Banda
”



“
‘...this project has made new connections and strengthened others.’
–Caoimhe Sweeney
”

“
‘Of course, the actions of the programme mattered, but when we've spoken to those involved about them, one word was repeated: Relationships.’
– Francine Blaché-Breen
”

CONCLUSION:

-Siobhan McLaughlin, Manager, Donegal Travellers Project & Building Intercultural Communities Project

“The Building Intercultural Communities Project was the first time in the county Travellers, Roma and Black Minority Ethnic communities came together to name racism, build relationships across communities and to act in solidarity collectively.”



The project over the last 18 months showed significant participation and engagement at all levels across a range of initiatives. The BIC project invested in minority communities, building positive relationships with the majority population and the high levels of participation by many different ethnic minorities in the events and activities that were delivered on is testament to its success.

“We are determined this work will not stop here. Donegal Travellers Project and its sister organisation, Donegal Intercultural Platform will continue to build a cohesive response to racism in County Donegal, inclusive of all partners, including state agencies. We will continue to focus on inclusion, diversity and combating racism. We will continue to hold the space open for BME voices, including Travellers and Roma, to be heard meaningfully across the different realms.



RECOMMENDATIONS

As a project we recommend the following, going forward:

- Mandate the inclusion of Black Minority Ethnic Communities including Traveller and Roma representatives on all local bodies and within government structures including the following committees:

Local Community Development Committee

Local Development Companies (implementers of SICAP)

PPN Secretariat

Children and Young Persons Services Committee

Strategic Policy Committee

Donegal County Childcare Committee

- Social Inclusion – Celebrate Interculturalism Day in the county.
- Promote and include representation from BME communities, including Traveller and Roma, in arts events throughout the county.
- Public Sector Duty training to be provided to all public sector staff in the county.
- All education providers to support Teachers and SNA's to participate in Diversity Aware Training.
- Anti-Racism Protocols to be developed for all candidates in any elections in the county.
- People living in emergency or direct provision to be provided with inter-agency resources and support with a view to ending Direct Provision within the next year and in line with the new Programme for Government.
- Ethnic Identifier to be introduced to all agencies and community-based organisations across the county.
- Interculturalism and social inclusion work with BME communities to be resourced and supported through the development of community development posts in the county.
- All public information materials, in particular health materials, to be made accessible in a range of languages across the county; our newly established Diversity Training tool to be promoted and staff to be supported to participate across the county.
- Housing and accommodation of all Traveller and Roma communities to be addressed by the state as recommended by the United Nations Committee on Eradication of Racial Discrimination (CERD).

INTERCULTURALISM

Interculturalism is essentially about interaction, understanding the struggles of ethnic groups, respect and equal opportunity. It is about ensuring that cultural diversity is acknowledged and catered for.

Community consultation Workshop
20th Feb. 11am - 1pm
AFRICA DAY
Room 3451 LYIT 3rd floor

Come along and have your say about how to celebrate, explore & understand AFRICA on 25th May 2020 in Donegal

If you can't attend or want more information email donaigalip@gmail.com text 0866041433 or find us on facebook - [InterculturalDonegal](#)

Supported by Donegal County Council

NO ROOM FOR RACISM IN THE DAÍL

If your candidate:

- Blames migrants for the housing crisis
- Scrapes goats minorities for social issues
- Uses dogwhistle tactics
- Stigmatizes people in the Direct Provision system
- Discriminates against Minorities (the Traveller Community)
- Promotes the "Great Replacement" conspiracy theory

Don't give them any vote, not even a low transfer, use your vote to reject racism and the Far Right!

GARN

Mabuhay!
To the BIC Project & Filipino Association
FAMILY FUN DAY!
SATURDAY 24TH AUGUST

ACTIVITIES INCLUDE:
Tea/Coffee Reception, Russian Dancing, Heart's Shower, Massage, Hair Styling, Face Painting, Egg Relay, Apple Ring Dance, Live Music Performances, Henna Tattoos, Bouncy Castle, Trampoline, Crochet, Pottery, Lego Building, Paper Airplane Making, Balloon Modeling, Marbles, Arts & Crafts, Games, Prizes & Competitions, Live Reading, Traditional & Cultural Performances

Donegal Travellers' Project in collaboration with Donegal Intercultural Platform

BUILDING INTERCULTURAL COMMUNITIES

COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT
PARTICIPATION
COLLECTIVITY
HUMAN RIGHTS
SOCIAL JUSTICE

DTP Peace LCDC

Donegal Intercultural Communities (BIC) in collaboration with Donegal Travellers' Project

INTERCULTURAL TRAVELLER TRAINING COURSE

As an integral part of the BIC project, a training course will be held for Travellers in Donegal. The course will be held on the 11th and 12th of June 2020. The course will be held in the Regional Cultural Centre, Letterkenny Co. Donegal.

Peace DTP LCDC

LOVE NOT HATE
UNITE TO LEGISLATE AGAINST HATE CRIME

MALAYSIAN CULTURE WEEK

FOOD FAIR WEDNESDAY 28th FEB
12.00pm - 4.00pm
Main Hall, Donegal Regional Cultural Centre, Letterkenny Co. Donegal

CULTURAL EXHIBITION WEDNESDAY 28th FEB
12.00pm - 4.00pm
Main Hall, Donegal Regional Cultural Centre, Letterkenny Co. Donegal

MALAYSIAN NIGHT WEDNESDAY 28th FEB
7.00pm - 10.00pm
Main Hall, Donegal Regional Cultural Centre, Letterkenny Co. Donegal

LCDC MALAYSIAN STUDENT SOCIETY

Donegal Intercultural Communities (BIC) in collaboration with the Donegal Travellers' Project

TRAVELLER PRIDE SATURDAY 13th JUNE 11.00am - 4.00pm

Donegal Travellers' Project in association with Building Intercultural Communities invite you to experience

Peace DTP LCDC

Culture Crossroads Cafe

2-5pm
Sunday 14 April
Regional Cultural Centre, Letterkenny Co. Donegal

SAY NO TO RACISM!
WE ARE ALL HUMAN

Donegal Intercultural Communities (BIC) in collaboration with the Donegal Travellers' Project

TRAVELLER PRIDE SATURDAY 13th JUNE 11.00am - 4.00pm

Peace DTP LCDC

DTP TRAVELLER PRIDE

Donegal Travellers' Project in association with Building Intercultural Communities invite you to experience

THE TRAVELLER LIVING HISTORY EXHIBITION

TRAVELLER HISTORY & TESTIMONY

Date of Event: TUESDAY 18th JUNE
Venue: AN GERANNAH THEATRE 11.00am - 4.00pm

Peace LCDC

WOMEN TOGETHER

MOMENT CULTURE AND CROSSING THE BORDERS

#SISTERSINSOLIDARITY

Donegal Intercultural Communities (BIC) in collaboration with the Donegal Travellers' Project

YOUTH SUMMER CAMP

14th - 18th August 2020

Peace DTP LCDC

Donegal Intercultural Communities (BIC) in collaboration with the Donegal Travellers' Project

TRAIN THE TRAVELLER

Peace DTP LCDC

The Building Intercultural Communities (BIC) Project

Migrant Information Evening

What is it about?

- Chat
- Information
- Plan
- Connect

Who Will Be There?

Peace LCDC DTP

23 February on Sunday 1-4pm

Bangladeshi community Donegal

Stylized illustration of a woman's face with intricate patterns and colors.

The Building Intercultural Communities (BIC) Project

Migrant Information Evening

What is it about?

- Chat
- Information
- Plan
- Connect

Who Will Be There?

Peace LCDC DTP

