

# Integration in Cork City

## WHAT IS INTEGRATION?

Integration is something that happens when:

- People from different backgrounds know and respect each other
- People from all backgrounds work and live together comfortably
- Those from all backgrounds and various countries are treated equally by all the people in **our** city.

## WHAT'S BEEN HAPPENING IN CORK TO ADDRESS INTEGRATION ISSUES?

'CONNECTING COMMUNITIES', The Cork City Integration Strategy, was launched in 2008. This was a strategic plan which sought to "welcome diversity, promote an inter-cultural society and to break down some of the barriers to integration in Cork City."

Through research and focus groups, which came from all cross-sections of Cork City life, integration needs were identified, and agencies worked together to address issues concerning:

- Racism and Justice
- Economic inclusion and equality of opportunity
- Employment, Language Difficulties, Educational Challenges, Service Provision, say in Health, Housing, Social Welfare, etc.

An ACTION PLAN was formed, and most of these actions have now been worked on and addressed. As the Integration Strategy progressed, a MIDTERM EVALUATION was undertaken in 2011. This was spoken about at the launch of the **CORK CITY INTEGRATION FORUM** launched by Minister Mary White TD at City Hall in September 2010.

## WHAT DID WE DISCOVER BY DOING A MIDTERM EVALUATION?

- We need more activities to promote integration and to combat racism in Cork City. Activities such as parades, celebrations, local community and inter-faith events help to bring people together.
- Local media needs to be more culturally inclusive, plus there needs to be a commitment in the City to challenge racist and negative media coverage.
- We need to commit to intercultural awareness in Cork, such as good practice on anti-racism and diversity. These good practices need to become the norm in organisations.
- There is a large demand for English language classes which needs to be met.
- We need to encourage the reporting of racist incidents, which are still happening in Cork.
- We need to safeguard equal access of employment for ethnic minority and immigrant groups.

## WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

Although progress has been made in integration through the strong efforts of agencies, groups and individuals, the CCIS Monitoring Group believes that it is now time to develop NEW ACTIONS in the City to further promote the integration agenda. These will be part of a new Cork City Integration Strategy for 2012–2014. It is expected that the Group will have developed the new Strategy between now and Christmas, to launch in early 2012. If you or your group would like to get involved in this work, please contact one of the email addresses listed below.

We also hope that our work will contribute to the wider debate about racism and discrimination in Ireland. Our research indicates a significant level of discrimination towards the ethnic minority population in Cork City.

## WHAT CAN YOU DO?

- Join a local or community support group for immigrants. This could be fun and would broaden your horizons. If you contact one of the email addresses listed below, we could let you know about groups in your area.
- Get involved, or volunteer to help others learn the English language. Help them to understand how Cork works and how Cork people are thinking. You could learn from them, too!
- Say hello to a new community member. Introduce yourself, ask their name, where they're from, and about how they find Cork. You may even make a friend, and share a cup of tea.
- If your children are in school, get to know the parents of the international classmates. They may feel lonely and confused by a new educational system. You could help them to understand.
- The Cork City Integration Strategy Group will be meeting regularly. We would value your ideas and input. Contact one of the emails below.
- Remember that INTEGRATION isn't just about immigrants. It's about YOU, too, and your neighbours, your children, your schools, your churches, etc. We ALL have a responsibility to make Cork a vibrant, inclusive and diverse city.

### CONTACT EMAILS:

Cork City Partnership: [info@partnershipcork.ie](mailto:info@partnershipcork.ie)

NASC: [info@nascireland.org](mailto:info@nascireland.org)

CoisTine: [coistine@sma.ie](mailto:coistine@sma.ie)

The Integration Centre: [kathy.oconnor@integrationcentre.ie](mailto:kathy.oconnor@integrationcentre.ie)

Cork City Council: [con\\_odonnell@corkcity.ie](mailto:con_odonnell@corkcity.ie)

Cork Migrant Centre: [corkmigrantcentre@eircom.net](mailto:corkmigrantcentre@eircom.net)



Cork City  
Partnership



Cork City Council  
Comhairle Cathrach Chorcaí



Office of the Minister for Integration  
Oifig an Aire Leigheairíochta