



# City of Dublin

## Intercultural Profile

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### Background<sup>1</sup>

Dublin is the capital and by far the largest city of the Republic of Ireland. The city proper (which is the subject of this report) has a population of 506,211 (2006) within a wider metropolitan area of 1,045,769 people.

There were almost 74,000 non-Irish nationals living in the Dublin City administrative area in 2006, with 46% living within the inner city area, representing a higher level of concentration than for the population as a whole. The predominant ethnic group for Dublin City was White Irish, accounting for 81 per cent of the total city population compared to the national figure of over 87 per cent.

The northeast area of the city centre continues to be home to the greatest concentrations of ethnic minority communities – four out of the ten Electoral Divisions in this part of Dublin have an ethnic minority population of over 50%, while a further three in that area have an ethnic minority population of over 25%. There were just over 5,500 black and black Irish residents and 16,436 Asian of Asian Irish residents.

Just under 80% of the residents of Dublin city are Catholic, less than the national figure of 87%. Muslims comprise the main minority religious group in the city. Although no precise figures are available, Muslim sources currently believe the number of Muslims living in the city to be around 12,000 persons. Other religious groups include Christian Orthodox, Protestant, Presbyterian, Evangelical, Hindu and Sikh.

### National context

To state that Ireland is a country of emigration that has had to come to terms with immigration is almost a cliché but no less true for that. Political and cultural repression and physical and economic isolation have made Ireland a place from which people have felt compelled to leave over the last century and a half. But, more than most emigrants, the Irish have retained a longing for the homeland and an ability to transmit their culture to others so, compared to the size of the population, Irish culture must have a higher international profile and popularity around the world than almost any other.

Between 1983 and 2008 the Irish economy experienced an uninterrupted and unprecedented period of growth, including consecutive years between 1994 and 2000 when GDP never fell below 8% per annum – the years of the 'Celtic Tiger' economy. This new vibrancy firstly meant young workers no longer had to look abroad for work, then the economy started to attract back Irish expatriate workers, and finally, as the labour market remained unsatiated, the novel phenomenon of foreign workers seeking access to Ireland's labour market was created. From 1991 Ireland moved into a condition of positive net migration (the last member state within

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<sup>1</sup> This report is based upon the visits of the CoE inspection team on 7 & 8 June 2011, comprising Irena Guidikova, Yvonne Hutchinson and Phil Wood.

the EU at that time to achieve it) and this remained emphatically the case at the last census in 2006.

The great bulk of foreign workers arrived from Poland and other EU accession states, although numbers are difficult to verify. However, many asylum seekers were also admitted from Nigeria, Pakistan, Iraq, China, Georgia and other places. Although the majority of overseas workers and asylum seekers settled in the Greater Dublin Area, the pattern of Irish immigration is notable by its dispersal, and particularly by its impact upon deeply rural areas. For example there are widely known cases such as the large Brazilian community in the tiny west coast town of Gort, and the expectation that in coming years the majority of pupils in the schools of isolated County Donegal will be of migrant background.

In the meantime, however, Ireland has taken the full force of the international financial crisis, necessitating a €85 billion bailout from the IMF in November 2010. Well before this date, the slow-down in the Irish economy was seeing many eastern Europeans either retuning home or moving on to other countries, and homelessness and destitution faced some of those who stayed on. Even before the economic collapse, Irish authorities were taking a harder line on asylum applications and approvals had been in decline since 2002.

In consequence, Ireland is now facing up to the prospect of once again being a country of negative net migration. Young Irish workers and families are looking to the traditional destinations of the UK, USA and the English-speaking Commonwealth but also, ironically, to Poland.

## Policy context

Ireland has a relatively long history of engaging with the terminology of interculturality in public and political life. The National Consultative Committee on Racism and Interculturalism (NCCRI) was established in 1998 as an independent expert body funded by the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform. It was a partnership body, bringing together government and NGOs to:

- develop an inclusive and strategic approach to combat racism by focusing on its prevention and promoting an intercultural society;
- contribute to policy and legislative developments and seek to encourage dialogue and progress in all areas relating to racism and interculturalism;
- encourage integrated actions towards acknowledging, celebrating and accommodating cultural diversity;
- establish and maintain links with organisations or individuals involved in addressing racism and promoting interculturalism at national, European and international levels.

The NCCRI played a key role in the formation of policy on and awareness towards interculturalism and in preparing for the challenge of integration

A Reception and Integration Agency (RIA) was set up in 2001 within the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform to coordinate services for refugees and asylum seekers and to implement integration policy for refugees. Its priorities are the protection of rights, the creation of opportunities to participate in economic, social and cultural aspects of Irish society, and the development of a tolerant and inclusive society. With guidance from NCCRI a National Action Plan Against Racism (NPAR) for Ireland was launched in 2005, with a focus on 'reasonable and common sense measures to accommodate cultural diversity', including the emergence of an 'intercultural workplace'. The NPAR concluded at the end of 2008.

NCCRI's operations were also wound up by the government in December 2008 following a review within the context of economic recession, with its remit subsumed within the Office of the Minister for Integration. This decision gave rise to widespread debate, with NGOs in the field of immigration and integration concerned at the loss of expertise and capacity.

The new Office of the Minister for Integration had been set up in June 2007 to deal with issues arising from large-scale immigration into Ireland, but whilst the Minister for Integration published a policy statement in May 2008 entitled 'Migration Nation', no detailed strategic framework has so far emerged from it. In 2007, the Houses of the *Oireachtas* [National Parliament] Joint Committee on European Affairs proposed the establishment of a National Forum on Integration, chaired by the government, to provide for a permanent dialogue between central government, local authorities, migrant representatives, NGOs and similar groups. The committee also recommended the setting up of one-stop shops in larger cities and towns so that migrants can access information about employment opportunities, as well as guidance to enable them to integrate fully into Irish society.

### Commitment of the city

Dublin City Council (DCC) has taken a proactive and leadership role at city level to respond to new migration and its impact on the city. The Office for Integration was set up in 2006 as a strategic unit with a responsibility to facilitate understanding and commitment to intercultural integration across the Council and to build relationships with civil society. In 2008 the Council published *Towards Integration: a city framework*<sup>2</sup> which identifies the following objectives:

- acting as a focal point for integration in the city through strong civic and political leadership and building a strong knowledge base through active participation in local, national and international networks;
- establishing an Annual Integration Dialogue as well as facilitating and supporting Integration Forums at area level;
- setting up a Migrant Forum as a channel of communication on migrant issues at city level;
- promoting and supporting the development of a City Intercultural Centre as a centre of culture, learning and exchange, as well as a training resource;
- continuing to build supports for, and the capacity of, ethnic-led organisations to ensure full participation in the economic, social, cultural and political life of the city;
- establishing integration as a core element of business processes and strategic planning in the organisation;
- monitoring and reviewing activities, progress and outcomes, and reporting on them publicly.

The OFI recognised from the outset the value of working in close partnership with a network of civil society organisations in the city. The most prominent of these are:

- the Lantern Centre<sup>3</sup>, an intercultural deriving from the Christian Brothers organisation which provides a home and dialogue space for groups and individuals of over 30 nationalities;
- the Polish Network<sup>4</sup>, a cooperative platform that brings together representatives of various Polish community organisations, the media and individuals involved in projects relating to the Polish minority and its links to Irish society as a whole;
- the Islamic Foundation of Ireland<sup>5</sup>, which considers itself to be the official representative of Muslims in Ireland since its inception in 1959, and aims to look after the religious, educational and social needs of Muslims in Ireland;
- the New Communities Partnership<sup>6</sup> (NCP), a national network of 104 ethnic minority-led organisations, whose mission is to be an effective network, representing and empowering minority ethnic-led groups at all levels in order to influence positive change in policies that impact on their lives;
- Integrating Ireland<sup>7</sup> now the Integration Centre, an independent network of community and voluntary groups working in mutual solidarity to promote and realise the human

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<sup>2</sup> See <http://www.dublin.ie/uploadedFiles/Culture/Towards%20Integration%20Final.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.lanterncentre.org/>

<sup>4</sup> <http://forumpolonia.org/>

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.islaminireland.com/>

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.newcommunities.ie/>

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.integratingireland.ie/>

rights, equality and full integration in Irish society of asylum seekers, refugees and immigrants;

- the Immigrant Council of Ireland<sup>8</sup> (ICI), a national, independent NGO that promotes the rights of migrants through information, legal advice, advocacy, lobbying, research and training work;
- the Migrant Rights Centre Ireland<sup>9</sup> (MRCI), a national organisation concerned with the rights of migrant workers and their families which aims to bridge a gap in support structures and information provision for this group;
- the Africa Centre<sup>10</sup>, an organisation that seeks to advance attitudes, policies and actions to promote tolerance, justice and social inclusion for African communities and to encourage a more positive Africa–Ireland exchange;
- the Akina Dada wa Africa<sup>11</sup> (AKiDwA – Swahili for ‘sisterhood’), which is an authoritative, minority ethnic-led national network of migrant women living in Ireland;
- the Irish Chinese Information Centre, which provides a range of information and support to Chinese migrants and acts as an important link for other Chinese affiliations within the city.

The City Council through direct funding provision has supported actions and measures promoting integration on the ground within communities which are consistent with the strategy framework.

In addition funding of €250,000 was allocated by Office of the Minister for Integration in 2009 to the City Council and similar sum has been allocated for 2010 to support integration at city level. A sum of €160,000 has also been allocated on an open call basis to 40 organizations for proposals consistent with city strategy “Towards Integration” with a further €100,000 to targeted initiatives led by OFI.

## Education

Education in Ireland is managed at central rather than at local government level, although there remains a strong involvement at the local level by various religious denominations. As a result the main management and decisions on policy implementation and ethos remain with individual school boards. This can create a challenge for the implementation of intercultural policies at a city level. A significant number of national schools under diocesan patronage have also been established in English-speaking areas in which pupils are educated through the medium of Irish. There are also a number of *Gaelscoileanna* (Irish language and cultural schools) under the separate patronage of the *Foras Pátrunachta na Scoileanna LánGhaeilge* organisation

It is unusual for a city of such size to have so little control over the education of its citizens and it is evidently a source of some frustration to the administration. The DES has published the “Intercultural Education Strategy 2010-2015” which provides important guidance, but there is concern that practical expertise and provision for the educational needs of a multi-ethnic society is patchy and erratic.

The Department for Education and Science does not collect data on the ethnicity of students. However it is estimated that about 4000 of the secondary students in Dublin are of migrant background, representing about 25% of the total, and that this figure continues to grow. If such information is not collected systematically, though, it is difficult to see how the Intercultural Education Strategy can be monitored and implemented effectively. Perhaps it is time to review the policy on the collection of ethnic-specific data in education.

The Strategy defines intercultural education as:

*...education which respects, celebrates and recognises the normality of diversity in all areas of human life. It sensitises the learner to the idea that humans have naturally developed a range*

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<sup>8</sup> <http://www.immigrantcouncil.ie/>

<sup>9</sup> <http://www.mrci.ie/>

<sup>10</sup> <http://www.africacentre.ie/>

<sup>11</sup> <http://www.akidwa.ie/>

*of different ways of life, customs and worldviews, and that this breadth of human life enriches all of us.*

*It is education, which promotes equality and human rights, challenges unfair discrimination, and promotes the values upon which equality is built.*

It aims to ensure that

*all students experience an education that “respects the diversity of values, beliefs, languages and traditions in Irish society and is conducted in a spirit of partnership” (Education Act, 1998).*

*all education providers are assisted with ensuring that inclusion and integration within an intercultural learning environment become the norm.*

It concludes that there is little evidence of segregation of immigrant students in Irish primary schools. In the small number of schools where there are more immigrants than native Irish students, this is largely due to the availability of local employment, affordable housing and school places, as well as proximity to family and friends.

The Immigrant Council of Ireland is carrying out “Pathways to Parental Leadership” which seeks to support migrant children’s learning by getting parents more involved in the school life of their children’s primary and post-primary schools. This project also endeavours to strengthen the voice of migrants in the community. ICI conducted research into the interactions between teachers and migrant parents and their impact on pupils, and organised a series of workshops with parents, teachers associations, the relevant education commissions, and other experts and stakeholders. This has resulted in the development of a ‘toolkit’ for improving parental participation in the school system. The toolkit is now being tested.

## **Communities and Neighbourhoods**

Dublin City has a tradition of residential neighbourhoods which are ethnically and religiously mixed. If segregation exists it has been done more to social class and income. The two decades of economic development and immigration have been particularly felt in the outer suburbs of the city region (which are mainly outside the boundary of the city council). Areas such as Blanchardstown, Tallaght and suburban towns in other counties have become very mixed. The area within the South and North Circular Roads has also seen the emergence of several migrant neighbourhoods. These have a large quantity of cheaper accommodation, and with three hospitals and a main mosque. In particular an Asian and African concentration has developed around Parnell St in the North Inner City.

In partnership with the Social Inclusion Office the OFI has run many projects to specifically address neighbourhood relationships, including the Annual Social Inclusion week and Neighbours Day. One example of this was a focus on the Liberties Area of Dublin in 2010 with a project called “The Bayno”<sup>12</sup>.

The city works in partnership with the Garda Síochána (the police service, which is also nationally rather than locally managed) and for many years has run a North Inner City Garda Forum. This was effective in encouraging communication and links between inner city indigenous and ethnic minority communities to network and engage on issues of community safety and policing.

One of the city’s most important services is the provision of a large stock of social housing. Certain areas with a concentration of white working class have expressed resistance to the settling of new migrants and the OFI has had to work closely with the housing department and local groups to overcome this.

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<sup>12</sup> <http://www.dublin.ie/dcdb/social-inclusion-week-2010.htm>

Places of worship have sometimes presented challenges because they can attract large crowds which can become a public nuisance. For example the South Circular Road mosque attracts large numbers on a Friday which can lead to local traffic congestion. OFI has worked with the planning and transport authorities to ameliorate the situation.

One area of concern is with the Irish travelling community. This is an extremely complex issue that has developed not only In Ireland but across Europe as is seen very clearly at present in the UK. There are a number of serious problems in Dublin with small amount of traveller settlement areas. This is due to the long term with the Irish travelling 'gypsy' community and the evolution of their social relationship with the settled community. This has been neglected and left unaddressed overall for many years. The area of integration and interculturalism is certainly attempting to engage with the issue but within Ireland and Dublin this will need to be done at a national level with a serious discussion and careful examination of all the problems and issues.

The city's principal ongoing policy initiative to build neighbourhood cohesion has been the 'One City One People' campaign<sup>13</sup> with the message that Dublin is an open city, which respects and embraces difference, is accessible, safe and equal and does not accept racism and discrimination.

### **Public services**

There is great variation in the levels of ethnic minority employment in the public services in Dublin. The Health and Transport services have a high number of migrants especially among nurses, doctors, carers, drivers within the transport system and general operatives. Within the public service body of the city council and civil service, however, there are far fewer migrants employed. The traditional source of recruitment for public service was through mainstream Irish media, specific recruitment advertising and exams for civil service jobs. Policies in recruitment have not changed as rapidly as the population and now, with the recession there is an embargo on recruitment making it harder to rectify the situation in the short term.

The Immigrant Council of Ireland reported upon a recent survey of migrants working in the public transport system. There is a concern over increase of racist incidents in the area of public transport services and ICI supported by DCC OFI and the public transport companies has undertaken research to address these issues which will be published in Oct 2011.

The City's own campaign One City One People focused on public transport with clear statement that racism and discrimination are not acceptable.

The Health Service Executive adopted an intercultural health strategy in 2007. Included in this has been the introduction of a multilingual toolkit which provides clinicians with advice on dealing with emergency situation with non-English speakers.

Turning from recruitment to the provision of services, Dublin City Libraries and the Citizens Information Service (CIS) launched a city directory and map of essential services for migrants available in five languages, English, Polish, Chinese, Russian and French and this was distributed through all branch libraries and all CIS offices. It contains details of migrant organisations, community groups and information on education employment and social welfare. Dublin City Council information portal Dublin.ie now provides access in 5 languages to information on the city.

### **Business and the labour market**

Related to comments elsewhere in the report on the openness of Dublin, several respondents expressed an interest in the economic implications of migration and cultural diversity. It seems a widely-held view in Dublin that cities which express hostility to diversity will fail to attract foreign direct investment and will lose major companies and employers to cities which are

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<sup>13</sup> <http://www.dublin.ie/onecity>



more cosmopolitan. Google is cited as a prime example of a company which was attracted to Dublin by its openness, and one which would consider leaving if attitudes to diversity were ever to harden in the city. Melbourne was quoted as an example which Dublin did not wish to emulate. Here the authorities had failed to deal with rising xenophobia against Indians, and this rebounded against the city with a serious decline in Indian business investment and student applications. Some respondents were concerned that attitudes embedded in certain sections of the Irish Ministry of Justice and Garda had the potential to create a similar situation in Dublin. We were not able to meet a Garda representative during our visit.

It is suggested that the private sector in Dublin has proved itself far more responsive to the changing population than public sector employers, particularly the multinational companies, such as Intel which makes specific reference to diversity and cultural sensitivity in its recruitment policy. The Dublin Chamber of Commerce represents the interests of businesses, both large and small. They were also a key signatory on the City Framework "Towards Integration".

There was a concern expressed that whilst Dublin was investing much in foreign trade missions, it was overlooking the potential of its own resident ethnic minority business community. An Institute of Minority Entrepreneurship<sup>14</sup> has been set up in the Dublin Institute of Technology and there are aspirations to establish managed workspace and a business support programme. Research has identified key business sectors and growth models, but funding is in short supply. However, it is suggested that DCC's own economic development department has yet to wake up to the potential. So far it is maintaining a 'colour blind' approach which fails to acknowledge business specificities according to ethnicity. Irish banks are also a problem and have proved particularly unwilling to lend to businesses of minority background, leaving several local entrepreneurs to look to British banks instead. In this regard DCC is hoping to improve matters by forging an agreement with Ulster Bank to create €10 million new credit for small business generally.

There are on-going discussions on the pros and cons of designating a 'Chinatown' within the city centre. The debate rests on the question of whether this would simply be a cosmetic exercise to create an exotic space in the city, and whether there might be more subtle ways of working with the Chinese community to build international trade links.

The Immigration Council of Ireland is launching a new project called Pathways to Work. It will focus on the needs of young immigrants and aims to enable them to compete with other job seekers on a "level playing field" by equipping them with practical tools like job searching and transition skills.

The Lantern Centre is also now interested in supporting ethnic and intercultural entrepreneurship and is in discussions with Dublin Institute of Technology. The challenge is to establish a business incubator which would have joint ownership and management by different cultural and religious communities.

### **Faith, culture, sport and civil society**

Religious faith plays an important role in building intercultural relations in Ireland but the situation is complex. It is only recently that Ireland ceased being described as 'Europe's last theocracy' and Irish society is still working through the process of finding a new equilibrium. The Catholic Church still plays a powerful role in education and civil society and owns a large property estate. Through its missionary tradition it has strong international connections and pockets of great intercultural expertise, as we noted at the Lantern Centre. Whilst organised religion is trying to manage an orderly retreat from many aspects of civil society, the Catholic Church is being battered by the wave of revulsion arising from the child abuse scandal. Against this backdrop, large numbers of newcomers have arrived in Ireland and many of them (from Eastern Europe, Africa and several Muslim countries) are more religiously devout than the Irish themselves, creating an unpredictable situation of countervailing trends.

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<sup>14</sup> <http://www.ime.ie/>

The Irish Council of Churches has completed a mapping of all religious communities across Dublin. In partnership with DCC OFI it is undertaking project funded by EIF to develop concept of city interfaith model to promote integration through faith communities in the city. On the basis of this it is hoped to form an interfaith body which will have consultative status with DCC. There are many issues arising (such as marriages, funerals and cemeteries) where DCC needs to take special advice and it hopes this body may be able to provide an authoritative voice. It may be disappointed in this regard as it is notoriously difficult, and possibly ill-advised, to set up a single body which can achieve a single voice on both doctrinal matters and more practical questions. Already there are questions about who has been consulted and invited into membership and who has not, and whether such a body should be built on strictly defined constitutional lines, or allowed to grow in a more organic way. Nevertheless this is a positive step.

Sport is seen as one of the most important means of bringing different elements of Irish society together. Sports clubs (both Gaelic and international sports) are at the heart of many neighbourhoods and villages. The organisation Sports Against Racism in Ireland (Sari) is well established and operates a partnership with DCC and 5 other districts. It has helped to produce templates for anti-racist work in other sports in Ireland and was one of the founders of Football Against Racism in Europe. It takes little public funding enabling it to maintain an independent role. For example, were it to accept financial backing from the government Office of Integration it would be unable to work directly with members of the traveller community (as this group is not classed as an ethnic minority under current legislation).

Sari also felt there had been a shortage of positive portrayals of migrants in the media and forged a collaborative project with Setanta Sports (an independent television sports channel) entitled United through Sport. The project was a major awareness campaign and education support promoting the powerful potential for positive integration through sport. A 15-minute film was produced illustrating positive intergroup relations through the medium of sport and it was broadcast on Setanta Sports at regular intervals over a 12 month period.

Sari points out the dearth of players of migrant background in the Irish national football team and other representative teams, in comparison to many other European countries. They attribute this to the difficulty many foreigners experience in gaining Irish nationality. Sari also cites several examples of how young migrant sportsmen and women have been picked up on the streets and arrested if they cannot immediately produce their passports. This is not universal within the police but certain sections are apparently notorious for this behaviour.

Also at the other end of the spectrum it is still rather difficult for minorities to gain acceptance in many of the well-established local sports clubs. Many young sports people have been driven out of these clubs by abuse and forced to form their own minority-only teams. One means of addressing this is FUTSAL (Football Used Towards Social Advancement & Learning) a project developed by the Football Association of Ireland. Futsal is a simplified form of football in which all can participate. By developing connections between schools, parents and sports clubs the FAI are hoping to break the barriers that currently keep many migrants out of sport.

A significant issue affecting the ability of migrant organisations to participate more fully in social and cultural activities is the difficulty in accessing premises and facilities and in getting insurance coverage for public events. There is, however, an insurance provision linked to the Community Forum which appears to be helping.

## Public space

DCC has collaborated with an independent body Design Twentyfirst Century<sup>15</sup> on a project called Designing Dublin to improve the city centre as a space of social interaction. Firstly, between September and November 2009, they ran the first phase of the project Designing Dublin: Learning to Learn, entitled 'Finding the Hidden Potential of Place', in Clongriffin, located

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<sup>15</sup> <http://design21c.com/> and <http://www.designingdublin.com/>



in Dublin's North Fringe. It brings together a multidisciplinary team of volunteers to work on some of the challenges that the city is facing. Simply put, it was about using design as a method to find solutions with Dubliners (in the broad sense, including everyone who uses the city) to make Dublin a better place.

A second phase, 'Love the City', was about "inspiring people to become re-aware of the City Centre's offerings." The team researched and selected an area that they felt "deserved more love" and are now investigating ways to make it more attractive. In a 6 month period of public engagement, city centre users were asked to tell stories and highlight favourite places, what they felt were missing in the centre and about their dreams for the area. They detected that many people felt a lack of ownership of or influence over the city centre. They also detected fear of crime – although crime statistics did not back up these perceptions. Selecting the Market area as a prototype they invited people to create their own alternative spaces. For example one group of people closed a street by temporarily covering it with grass. This then challenged the rules and conventions by which space is normally governed, and required public agencies to respond more flexibly. One permission process which might normally take 6 months was reduced to 4 days.

At the end of the process John Tierney, City Manager, and Dick Gleeson, City Planner, spoke about how the City can build on the findings of Designing Dublin to develop a new approach to working in Dublin. It seems that this form of civic engagement and community planning can be identified as a strong theme which should be explored in the ICC study visit to Dublin in September 2011.

The project operated out of a city centre premises called Exchange which is in itself a novel idea. Originally a vacant retail property Exchange Dublin is a new collective arts centre run entirely by young people and holding discussions, gigs, visual arts and performance. Most projects originate from the autonomous "Exchange Groups" that use the space as a hub for their activity<sup>16</sup>.

DCC has been studying the ways in which people make use of public space under different conditions. It found that, in general, the areas which have been built according to a rigid plan and development process were less attract as places of public interaction than the places which has developed in a more organic and incremental way. For example the Docklands development where people were allowed to discover ways of public behaviour for themselves and, in turn, service industries (bars, coffee shops, etc) were attracted to the area.

## Language

Language is a complex issue in Ireland. Irish is an official language but is the first language of very few, with English predominant. Irish is however being taught in all schools so all migrant children are exposed to it. Interestingly, many migrant families have identified that ability to speak Irish well can be a passport to a good job and the higher levels of society and so are encouraging their children to learn it well at school – in many cases better than their indigenous counterparts. One professor of linguistics even suggested that immigration could be the saving grace of the Irish language.

Because of Ireland's ambivalent historic relationship with England, the teaching of English has never been accorded high priority or resources in Ireland. This is now having a negative backlash in two ways because Ireland is not able to meet the demand to learn English from migrants in either quality or quantity, Firstly there is a shortage of trained professionals to teach English as a second language to new migrants. Secondly many foreign language students, who were lucrative to the Irish economy, are now going elsewhere for tuition. However the majority of these foreign language students go other place but for *specialist* tuition in English due to a shortage of trained professionals.

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<sup>16</sup> <http://exchangedublin.ie/>

## The Media

We did not meet anyone from the mainstream public or commercial media whilst in Dublin. We were led to believe that the media plays a generally responsible role in the reporting of migration and diversity issues, but would like to explore the issue further in the future.

## International outlook

Ireland's historic tradition as an exporter of emigrants and missionaries has given it a certain kind of internationalism, but with EU membership and then during the economic boom years the country engaged in a broader and more balanced engagement with the wider world, particularly through trade. Now, with the recession, there is a debate on the extent to which the country should withdraw into itself to weather the storm, or continue in the opening up of its economy and society. The latter seems to be the official line, with Dublin hoping that it can trade its way back to economic recovery. Indeed, on our arrival the City Manager, John Tierney, had just returned from an official delegation to China where a twinning arrangement was signed with the city of Beijing. Other examples of the international outlook are Dublin's designation as a UNESCO City of Literature and European City of Science in 2012, and its recent shortlisting for the award of World Design Capital 2014. An Office of International Relations was established in 2007 to promote Dublin as an International Gateway City-Region for Ireland.

One example of international outlook is the fact that outside of the OAU, Dublin is the only city that celebrates Africa Day on 25th May.

Dublin is also a member of a range of international networks including CLIP, Eurocities, Mixities and Open Cities. In terms of openness (as defined by the Open Cities methodology), Dublin ranks ahead of most cities in most criteria other than the hosting of major events and institutions and in its international profile. Therefore, the question should not be whether Dublin is open and international in its outlook, which it clearly is, but how it evaluates its membership of so many international initiatives and how it ensures that they all achieve the best value for the its citizens.

## Intercultural intelligence and competence

The city's Integration Strategy, Towards Integration, is endorsed by the Council and 16 other agencies:

- Health Service Executive
- Department of Education & Science
- Department of Social & Family Affairs
- FÁS (National Training and Employment Authority)
- Department of Justice, Equality and Law
- Reform
- Area Development Partnerships
- Dublin City Community Forum
- Enterprise Ireland
- Dublin Chamber Commerce
- Dublin City Enterprise Board
- Irish Congress of Trade Unions
- Dublin Tourism
- City of Dublin Vocational Education Committee
- Investment and Development Agency of Ireland
- Dublin City Childcare Committee

As part of the review process of the Strategy, the Office for Integration must ensure that all of these, plus all Council departments, are fulfilling their commitments and keeping abreast of the

latest developments. It is also endorsed as an important issue to be taken on by all staff and included within the Council's Employee code of conduct and staff training.

## Welcoming

There has always been much anecdotal evidence of the warmth and friendliness of Dublin but, within the framework of Open Cities the city recently participated in a major opinion survey of the Dublin region, *'Your Dublin, Your Voice'*. It sought the views of people who live, work, study or visit the Dublin Region, and respondents identified Dublin's key strengths as its people (31%), in particular their humour, friendliness and warmth, its culture and arts (17%), its compact size (15%) and its diverse cosmopolitan feel (13%). Some 88% of respondents welcomed diversity in the city and felt that this was one of Dublin's key strengths.

## Governance

Whilst DCC has made big steps in intercultural policy development and implementation, it has changed little in its complexion. We have already noted the scant opportunities for migrants to enter the paid service, and the elected membership of the council in no way mirrors the ethnic make-up of the city – in fact there are no councillors of migrant background at present. One explanation given for this is that politics is highly localised in Ireland. Where there are large concentrations of migrants in the outer suburbs of greater Dublin, ethnic minority councillors have been elected to the peripheral district councils, but within the city of Dublin proper they do not represent a sufficiently concentrated electoral force.

Measures are in place to address the political imbalance. In 2008 the then Lord Mayor of Dublin Eibhlin Byrne launched a new initiative by the Office for Integration Dublin City Council called "Migrant Voters Campaign". This new and innovative project raised awareness amongst migrant residents in the city on their right to vote, the need to register to vote and the how to vote on Election Day. Regardless of an individual's status if they were over 18 on the 15th November 2009 they were eligible to vote in local elections, although to participate in National elections they had to be an Irish citizen.

To support this, the Vincentian Partnership for Social Justice provided voter education training to 75 members of ethnic minority communities. Following completion of a one day training course these 75 trainers in turn set out to deliver a program of voter's education sessions across the city in local community centres and places of worship used by migrants<sup>17</sup>.

One of Dublin's key strength seems to be in creating the conditions in which ideas, alliances and practices can emerge organically through the free mixing of people across a variety of backgrounds (policy officers, NGOs, travellers, asylum seekers, entrepreneurs, artists etc.), and in providing informal spaces for these initiatives and relationships to develop, supporting them with small but appropriate means, and not smothering them with excessive oversight or regulation.

## Conclusions and recommendations

In general it can be said that national policy in Ireland has echoed the mood elsewhere in western Europe with a gradual hardening and instrumentalising of official attitudes towards outsiders. However, in Ireland it seems that attitudes are less likely to translate into formal policies and strategies, and that much more is left to the discretion of ministers and public agencies. This is a double-edged sword which, on the one hand has allowed DCC great scope to make considerable progress, relatively untrammelled (for example in local voting rights); but which also leaves large areas of important policy beyond the influence of the civic authorities and civil society (such as education and policing).

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<sup>17</sup> <http://www.dublin.ie/arts-culture/migrant-voters-campaign.htm>

Also we have seen elsewhere in Europe that the capital city appears to be ahead of much of the rest of the country in the pursuit of diversity and intercultural policy (although not yet in political representation)

However, where Ireland stands out in Western Europe (with the exception of Portugal) is that, whilst there is an undercurrent of xenophobia in parts of the general population, this has found no manifestation in political form. Ireland and Dublin are thankfully rather free of the toxic mix of a populist political movement and a rabble-rousing media which, elsewhere, is able to fan the flames of a small crisis into a dangerous conflagration in a short time. Again like Portugal, Ireland seems like a society which is divided more along lines of social class and income than by race and religion, and in which the national identity is built on a pride in its own pragmatism, adaptability and hospitality.

Whether these qualities prove to be finite in the face of a continuing economic recession remains to be seen. There remain large parts of Dublin society untouched by and unresponsive to their fellow citizens. Whether these lines of separation will harden or melt with the passage of time remains to be seen. Much will rely upon the maintenance of the strong web of mutual respect and co-operation which has developed between DCC and its civil society partners, particular in the climate of spending cuts which will pervade the foreseeable future. We became aware of voices within the elected membership of the council who could not see the point of so many voluntary organisations. However we would say there is a need for vigilance in this regards because the loss of one or two strong individuals or organisations could plunge these carefully wrought arrangements into crisis.

In several conversations we had, there appeared to be a disconnect between what people on the ground were saying they needed and how this was translating into action on the ground. It seemed as if the message was often being lost in translation as it passed through the layers of the administration. As such we would like to see more community participation in formulating policy objectives and a participative monitoring and evaluation approach built in. The new Migrant Forum which will be established may be one way of achieving this. It will also be necessary to bring together front-line agencies in joined-up approaches in relation to specific problems, places and issues, so that organisational silos can be overcome.

A lot of the good work in the city depends on volunteers which is a gauge of dynamism and commitment but gives little continuity. DCC could perhaps be more explicit or give more thought to when and why it chooses an "organic" approach and where and when a more structured approach is needed.

Whilst we sympathise with Ireland's historic reasons for following a rapid course towards secularism in public life, the Lantern Centre demonstrated that faith-based bodies can play a very constructive role in promoting interculturalism among new minorities for whom faith still plays a significant role in their daily lives. This being the case, discretion should be applied to avoid reactionary responses against the involvement of faith groups in developing intercultural policy, if it can be demonstrated that they make a useful contribution to practice and dialogue.

It seemed to us that on occasion the term 'intercultural' is used rather too easily and imprecisely in Dublin as a cover-all for anything involving migration and diversity. It is not. Given the demise of NCCRI there is perhaps a space for someone to lead a discussion and debate on what is the true meaning of interculturality in the Dublin context. In particular there is a need to highlight and valorise those cases of genuine intercultural innovation and quality which are taken place in the city and to uphold them as models for others to follow.