

2013-2017

GALWAY COUNTY INTEGRATION & DIVERSITY STRATEGY 2013 – 2017

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County Galway Integration and Diversity Interagency Strategy Group Members



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**Galway County Community
and Voluntary Forum**

Foram Pobail agus Deonach Chontae na Gaillimhe



for individuals, families
and the community



**Loughrea Family & Community
Resource Centre**



**CLANN
RESOURCE CENTRE**

Foreword

As Chairperson of the County Galway Integration and Diversity Interagency Strategy Group, I wish to acknowledge the work and commitment of all those who took part in the development of the Strategy; including members of the Integration and Diversity Group, the sub-groups and those who participated in consultation and focus groups throughout County Galway. I also wish to acknowledge the work of Galway Refugee Support Group and the Dún Gibbons Centre in developing the Strategy; both have now sadly closed.

We are indebted to the minority ethnic groups and individuals who shared the experience of their everyday lives with us. They highlighted the challenges such as language barriers, difficulty accessing services, training and employment that they encounter on a daily basis. This information has informed the actions planned in this Strategy. They also spoke of positive initiatives being implemented throughout the county. Everyone involved in the development of this Strategy is strongly committed to the process, to addressing the challenges and to the implementation of the actions. I look forward to working with all involved over the lifetime of this Strategy to ensure tangible results for the individuals and groups.

A special thank you to David Reilly, a student from Galway Technical Institute (GTI) who designed the Integration and Diversity Strategy logo which is on the front cover of the Strategy and to Sarah Farrell, GTI who co-ordinated the design project with the students in GTI.

Finally I wish to thank Donna Gleeson of Galway Rural Development for her commitment to and support of the work of the County Galway Integration and Diversity Interagency Strategy Group.

Delia Colahan
Chief Executive Officer
Galway Rural Development Company

March 2013

“Difference is the essence of humanity. Difference is an accident of birth and it should therefore never be a source of hatred or conflict. The answer to difference is to respect it. Therein lies a most fundamental principle of peace: respect for diversity.”

John Hume, recipient of the 1998 Nobel Peace Prize.

Acknowledgements

The Galway County Integration & Diversity Interagency Strategy Group, whose lead organisation was the Galway Rural Development Company, would like to thank all of the people and organisations who contributed to this Strategy. The hours and days dedicated to meetings, travel, research, group-work, consultations, phone conversations, writing, editing and rethinking the processes were many. It is a great tribute to those involved that they gave of their time and effort willingly, understanding how important this process is to the future of County Galway as a vibrant and integrated community.

In response to national initiatives, listed in the policy section, it was the Galway County Development Board and Social Inclusion Measures Committee which initiated this process, and it was agreed that Galway Rural Development (GRD) would lead the development of the Strategy.

Many thanks to everyone on the Interagency Strategy Group for the hard work involved in keeping this integration strategy development process moving. We would like to thank the Office of the Minister for Integration (OMI), now known as the Office for the Promotion of Migrant Integration (OPMI) for the funding successfully applied for by the Community and Enterprise Unit of Galway County Council, which enabled the development of the Strategy and funded many integration projects, which kept the process alive and meaningful. In addition GRD, under the Local and Community Development Programme and the HSE, provided funding towards the planning and completion of the Strategy.

We would like to thank Nollaig Mc Guinness who carried out the initial consultations and who wrote the draft report, which has informed this Strategy. We acknowledge, and are grateful for the work of, The Integration Centre in finalising the planning process and for holding Participatory Learning Action (PLA) planning sessions with Galway County Intercultural Forum; thanks to Kathy O'Connor who compiled this Strategy with the help of Jipe Kelly and Seamus O'Leary; and to Peter Szlovak and Arthur McIlveen for great assistance with statistical data analysis.

This Strategy could not have been brought to fruition without the dedication and hard-work of the committee and sub-committee members who contributed their local knowledge, research, statistics and, crucially, the editing of this document. The sub-committees were chaired by: Máire Uí Éanaigh (County Galway VEC) and Gearóid Ó Fatharta (Galway County Integration Forum), Education & Training; Donna Gleeson (GRD) and Denise Feeney (County Galway Community Forum), Community Participation; Jipe Kelly (The Integration Centre), Employment & Work; and Ann Mallaghan (Galway County Council), Health and Access to Services, discharged their duties efficiently and diligently. This work was made possible by the commitment and input of sub-committee members. Thanks also to the Community and Enterprise Unit of Galway County Council for providing venue space for meetings of the Interagency Strategy Group.

And of course, this Strategy would not be meaningful without the participation of the minority ethnic individuals and groups who gave so willingly of their time to build a realistic understanding of the positive initiatives and difficult challenges they face in helping to create a more integrated society in County Galway. Thanks to the Galway County Intercultural Forum for making it possible for minority ethnic individuals to participate in an organised manner.

This Strategy is only the beginning of an ongoing integration process which will continue to enhance County Galway. Its success depends on the leadership and engagement of service providers, minority ethnic individuals and groups, as well as the engagement of the general public.

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Glossary: Abbreviations and Terms

CDB: County Development Board

CDP: Community Development Project

CGSP: County Galway Sports Partnership

CIC/ CIS – Citizens Information Centre (At times there are a few CICs/Centres in a Citizens Information Service)

CSO: Central Statistics Office

DJLR: Department of Justice and Law Reform

DP/ DPC: Direct Provision/ Direct Provision Centre (for asylum seekers)

ESRI: Economic and Social Research Institute

EU: European Union

FAS/ ETB – FAS (Foras Áiseanna Saothair) is Ireland's National Training and Employment Authority. This is changing with some functions transferring to the Department of Social Protection and others due to form part of new local Education & Training Boards (ETB) from 2013.

FRC: Family Resource Centre

Gardaí: Police (An Garda Síochána is the national police service of Ireland)

GCC: Galway County Council

GCCCC: Galway City & County Childcare Committee

GCCEB: Galway County & City Enterprise Board

GRD: Galway Rural Development Company Ltd

GRSG: Galway Refugee Support Group

GTM: Galway Traveller Movement

GUH: Galway University Hospitals Group

HRC: Habitual Residence Condition

HSE: Health Service Executive

NAPS: National Anti-Poverty Strategy

NCCRI: National Consultative committee on Racism and Interculturalism

NGO: Non-Governmental Organisation

NPAR: National Action Plan Against Racism and Interculturalism

NQAI: National Qualifications Authority of Ireland

NUIG: National University of Ireland, Galway

NYCI: National Youth Council of Ireland

OMI: Office of the Minister for Integration

OPMI: Office for the Promotion of Migrant Integration

PAI: Portuguese Association of Ireland

PLA: Participatory Learning and Action

TIG: Traveller Interagency Group

UHG: University Hospital, Galway

UNHCR: United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

VEC: Vocational Education Committee

WTID: Western Traveller and Intercultural Development

Disclaimer

It is important to note that opinions of the people consulted, as expressly outlined in the Strategy document, do not necessarily reflect all of the views of the organisations involved in developing this Strategy.

Executive Summary



Reviewing input from integration planning sessions.



Yellow Flag Awards prior to this in May 2011.

Background and Introduction

This Strategy is the result of an energetic effort by the people and service providers of Galway County to address the significant demographic changes that have taken place throughout the County over the past decade or more. Like the rest of Ireland, there has always been diversity within County Galway, with a large Traveller population and various religious faiths. This diversity was not always named and recognised. However, with recent immigration and emigration trends, diversity of culture, languages, religion and traditions have become more visible and led to the need to increase understanding, awareness and respect of cultures. The Irish economy, like the population, has dramatically changed in the last several years. Economic cutbacks in all public and community services, demanding mergers, heavy workloads, and overstretched staff resources, have impacted upon the level of service that can be provided, often affecting the most vulnerable members of our society. Some of the organisations who were heavily involved in the support of ethnic minorities at the outset of this Strategy, such as Galway Refugee Support Group (GRSG), no longer exist, due to funding being discontinued, while Dún Gibbons Direct Provision Accommodation Centre has closed.

In 2009, Galway County Council, through its Social Inclusion Unit, secured funding from the Office of the Minister for Integration (OPMI) to help address these significant demographic changes and to build upon local responses and integration initiatives that were already underway to help create a more integrated society. With this support, Galway Rural Development Company helped established a broad-ranging Interagency Strategy Group, which has overseen the development of this integration Strategy. As integration is a two way process, the Strategy is for everyone living and/or working in County Galway with a particular focus on integrating minority ethnic communities.

This Strategy document is laid out as follows: Chapter 1 introduces the plan; Chapter 2 presents a review of Europe and National Integration Policy; Chapter 3 provides a statistical profile of minority ethnic communities both nationally and in County Galway; Chapter 4 outlines the methodology used

across a number of phases in developing this strategy; Chapter 5 presents the key findings, both positives and challenges; and Chapter 6 outlines detailed action plans across four broad themes.

European and National Integration Policies

Although large scale immigration and integration are relatively new to Ireland, we are part of a broader European community that has been addressing these issues for many years. We are party to European directives, but also wish to learn and benefit from other countries' experiences of integration. In this spirit, The Integration Centre has developed a Policy Research Resource of key EU and National Integration Policies, which will help to guide and inform local strategies. Major EU and National strategies are summarised in the policy chapter of this document as guidelines and inspiration for strategic thinking and local integration planning.

In addition, the Interagency Strategy Group drew on the excellent work of academics and researchers of NUI, Galway who are contributing very well to the integration agenda in the County and nationally.

Demographics and Statistical Profiles

An update on the demographics and statistics regarding minority ethnic populations is outlined, drawing on a number of sources, but primarily on the findings of Census 2011. In this section, population and age profiles are outlined for minority ethnic communities of immigrant background and for the Traveller Community. Census 2011 results reflect an increasingly diverse society in Galway County where 9.3% of its population have roots in cultures from outside of Ireland and a further 1.4% identify with a Traveller culture background.

In addition, some key statistics are presented in relation to the four broad indicators of integration: education, employment, social inclusion; and political and civic participation. These indicators relate to proposals at EU level as to how the impact of integration policy could be monitored, and provide insights into minority ethnic communities in the county.

Planning Methodology

The methodologies used in developing this Strategy have been diverse, and have developed over time. All of the methods exercised have been rooted in exploring the local experiences of minority ethnic communities and service providers alike, so that the county can develop a strategy that is specific and relevant to its changing population.

Phase 1 of the planning process revolved around establishing a multi-stakeholder interagency structure to set clear terms of reference for the process and to guide its progress thereafter. Detailed consultations with community members and service providers began in phase 2 with the work of researcher Nollaig McGuinness who conducted 22 consultations with service providers, either face to face or over the telephone. In addition, he held two focus group discussions: one with residents of Dún Gibbons Direct Provision Centre; and the other with the community sector. A detailed report on these consultations is outlined in the main document.

Phase 3 involved the identification of four core themes to emerge from the research. Thematic subcommittees then used the findings of this initial research to further develop this strategy throughout phase 4 of the process. Finally, phase 5 of the planning process was facilitated by

The Integration Centre with a view to finalising the integration planning process through a number of PLA-based planning sessions with Galway County Intercultural Forum. These planning sessions facilitated by the Integration Centre used PLA (Participatory Learning and Action) methodologies, which encourages participants as “local experts” who inform and guide research and learning, and which, most importantly, encourages participants themselves to become involved in the planning process and in the implementation of agreed actions thereafter. To conclude, a number of review sessions were held with members of the Interagency Strategy Group to draft and agree upon the thrust of this overall integration Strategy and its detailed action plan.

Key Findings: Positives and Challenges

The positive findings from all phases of the planning process were many, indicating both the efforts to date by many local organisations, and also that many ethnic minorities feel at home in County Galway and would like to make this county a home for themselves and their families. The following is an outline of the positives that have been identified, and which could be built upon:

1. Integration through learning English
2. Development of the Intercultural Resource Booklet for County Galway
3. Learning Irish language and culture
4. School activities that promote intercultural learning
5. Interagency partnership in supporting Clifden-based asylum seekers
6. Learning English to improve employment opportunities
7. Volunteering as a pathway to employment
8. Supports around employment
9. GRD Employment Mediators
10. Practical employment & business support provided by CICs
11. The GRSG Power Mentoring Programme
12. Regional Intercultural Health Forum (Galway, Mayo and Roscommon)
13. Intercultural Mediators trained to assist with health Issues
14. Primary Care Teams largely established throughout County
15. Diversity Committee established in Galway University Hospitals Group
16. Good Practice Guidelines for GPs piloted with ethnic minorities using PLA in Galway
17. Establishment of the Galway County Intercultural Forum
18. Activities and festivals that promote integration
19. Inclusive sporting activities
20. Specific projects that target minority ethnic youth
21. Building relationships and bridging barriers through volunteering
22. Dedicated community worker or support group for minority ethnic groups
23. Using libraries for integration work
24. Information and advocacy supports
25. Promotion of integration in local media

As can be seen, County Galway has developed many initiatives that have welcomed, assisted, and enabled minority ethnic communities to feel included and at home here in County Galway. However, the planning process also highlighted the following challenges to be addressed:

1. Racism, discrimination and negative stereotyping
2. Communication difficulties and lack of information
3. Difficulties with the Irish education system
4. General difficulties around training

5. Language barriers impeding employment
6. Work discrimination and exploitation
7. Limited engagement by Local Business Support Networks
8. Lack of information on business and employment opportunities
9. Employment permit issues
10. Difficulties with qualification recognition
11. Fear and anxiety about social welfare
12. Accessing culturally-appropriate health services
13. Difficulties in accessing public services
14. Difficulties experienced by ethnic minorities in accessing statutory supports
15. Lack of dedicated social workers for Direct Provision Centres
16. Limited interest in interculturalism
17. Isolation and the lack of social spaces to interact
18. Difficulties maintaining the momentum of minority ethnic groups
19. Low levels of civic engagement

Five-Year Action Plan (2013-2017)

In light of the findings of the initial phases of this planning process, the Interagency Strategy Group decided that action planning would be broken into the following four key areas:

1. Education and Training
2. Employment and Work
3. Health and Access to Public Services
4. Community Participation

Four thematic subcommittees were established from the members of the Interagency Strategy Group to develop action plans in light of the key findings and in relation to each of these four areas. The sub-committees were also tasked to identify lead and partnership agencies to be involved in implementing each action listed in this plan. The additional input from PLA-based planning sessions with the Galway County Intercultural Forum further informed the planning process at this stage.

Chapter 6 of this Strategy document outlines the results of this final stage in the planning process. Action plans for each of the four thematic areas outline an overall programme goal, a number of related strategic objectives and detailed actions through which it is hoped those integration-related objectives will be met. Lead organisations have also been agreed and are named for each action, alongside a number of possible strategic partners who may be able to assist, depending of course upon the availability of time and resources. An outline of expected results and indicative timeframes is also given for each action in order to facilitate the future implementation and monitoring of this local Integration Strategy for Galway County.

Chapter 1: Introduction



Learning the Irish language at Educate Together National School in Kilcolgan.



Participation in a St. Patrick's Day Parade.

Context of Change in Galway and Nationally

Galway, steeped in rural Irish culture, history and heritage, is an area of spectacular coastal and mountain scenery. Surrounding the city of Galway, the county is bordered by counties Mayo, Roscommon, Offaly, Tipperary and Clare; its western coast bordered by the Atlantic.

Like all of Ireland in the new millennium, County Galway is rapidly changing. Significant immigration into Ireland in the 1990s, and early 2000s, and the current waves of unemployment-driven emigration have dramatically changed the county's population, and thus, the needs of that population. The former white Irish rural population has now been broadened into a more culturally diverse society, with 9.3% of its population with roots in cultures from outside of Ireland and a further 1.4% with a Traveller culture background, according to the last census.

Galway County has a long history of community development and community services and continues to strive to reach and serve all of its population. Going beyond the more visible changes and progress that have occurred in the 21st Century, Galway County has recognized the benefits of immigration and the very diverse society that has developed here. International research has shown that diverse societies are often the most successful, and attractive to international business. Recognising that a new and dynamic intercultural society has brought benefits to its population, service providers are also aware that this society brings with it new needs and challenges to be addressed. Ultimately, attempts to build on the former and address the latter will contribute to a more integrated and inclusive society in which all residents of Galway County can flourish.

Support for the Development of Diversity and Integration Strategy

Galway County Development Board, under the social inclusion actions prioritised for 2009-2012 of its County Strategy, set out to support initiatives and programmes which lead to a more socially inclusive county and integration is among the critical issues highlighted therein.

In line with this, in 2009, Galway County Council, through its Social Inclusion Unit, secured funding from OPMI (then known as the Office of the Minister for Integration) to develop a long-term Diversity and Integration Strategy for Galway County. Shortly afterwards in April 2009, the Interagency Strategy Group made up of local service providers, including community and voluntary organisations, was established and chaired by the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Galway Rural Development Company Ltd., to oversee the planning process. This Interagency group became a sub-committee of the County Development Board Social Inclusion Measures Committee.

As will be outlined later in the chapter on methodology, the planning process was a lengthy one involving a very wide range of local organisations and communities. However, during the process itself a new Intercultural Forum emerged with participants from a wide range of different ethnic backgrounds. In addition, the very fact that members of the Interagency Strategy Group and others stayed with the process throughout is testament in itself to the level of commitment to and support for a long-term Integration Strategy in Galway County.

The Strategy has been supported throughout by the local authority (Galway County Council), the wider Galway County Development Board and numerous local service providers and communities. As will be noted in the action plan in Chapter 6, a very wide range of organisations have agreed to support this plan as leads and/or strategic partners on the implementation of its actions.

Although the contribution of immigration to social change is a national issue, integration happens at a local level and this planning process brought local needs into focus by incorporating the experiences of all minority ethnic communities in Galway County, be they of immigrant or Traveller background. In line with this, the Strategy sets out pathways under which minority ethnic communities living in County Galway will be supported to feel more included in the life of the county and the manner in which services are provided. It also aims to involve all communities, whether of minority or majority ethnic background, in community participation processes that contribute to the emergence of an integrated society at local level. The action plan itself, details specific actions which will be implemented, the results expected from those actions and the organisations that will be responsible for ensuring their realisation.



Above left: Members of the Integration Planning Steering Committee and right: Members of the Integration Planning Steering Committee during a planning session.

Chapter 2: Policy Review



PLA Planning Session with members of the Galway County Intercultural Forum.



Aodhán Ó Riordáin, John Joe Nevin and children and teacher from Gaelscoil Riabhach

Students & Principal Pól Mag Lionáin of Gaelscoil Riabhach in Loughrea being presented with their Yellow Flag by Olympic Silver Medalist John Joe Nevin and Councillor Aodhan O'Riordhain

1. European Integration Policies¹

1.1 EU Common Basic Principles for Immigrant Integration (2004)

The EU Common Basic Principles for Immigrant Integration, (CBPs) written by R. Pennix, focuses on the process of immigrants becoming an accepted part of society – both at an individual level and at the collective level of the immigrant group. There are Eleven CBPs, as the principles are often referred to, which provide a structure for Member States so that they understand their obligations to work with, and to act for a shared agenda of integration. The exact wording of all eleven principles can be found in the annex to “A Common Agenda for Integration” (Commission of the European Communities: (COM) 2005 389). In brief, the Common Basic Principles address:

- Integration as a dynamic two-way process of mutual accommodation;
- Respect for the values of the European Union;
- Knowledge of host society language, history, institutions;
- Emphasis on access to employment, education, goods & services (public and private);
- Dialogue and interaction between EU Member State citizens and immigrants;
- Participation of immigrants in the democratic process;
- Guaranteed respect for diverse cultures and religions; and
- Developing clear goals, indicators and evaluation mechanisms to evaluate integration processes and to exchange information.

¹ These summaries are taken from The Integration Centre’s *Policy Research Resources*.

1.2 The Stockholm Programme (2009)

The Stockholm Programme provides a roadmap for EU progress in the area of justice, freedom and security for the period 2010-14, with actions focusing on the interests and needs of citizens. According to the programme developers, a coherent policy response is required in order to address the challenges facing Europe. In this light they designed a consistent framework to monitor integration within the following four broad parameters:

1. Employment
2. Education
3. Active Citizenship (including civic and civil participation)
4. Social Inclusion (including poverty, housing, health, etc.)

A number of indicators are proposed under each of these areas so that progress in terms of integration policy and practice could be assessed consistently across all member states of the EU.

1.3 European Ministerial Conference on Integration: Draft Declaration from Zaragoza (2010)

A declaration on integration was made at an EU Ministerial Conference held in Zaragoza, Spain on the 15th and 16th of April 2010, which resulted in the drafting of this document. A comprehensive list of European Council conclusions, principles, agendas, pacts and communications dating back to 2002 are outlined in this declaration. They give evidence of the commitment of Ministers from all EU Member States to “promote integration as a driver for development and social cohesion by incorporating integration issues in a comprehensive way in all relevant policy fields.” The declaration gives particular attention to the following areas:

- Education and Employment - This section highlights the need to develop integration policies which are adapted to the labour market, rights of access to employment, new ways of recognising qualifications, and developing training programmes which would help immigrants access the labour market.
- Comprehensive participation: Diverse districts – This section emphasises “the role of local authorities and cities in dealing with intercultural challenges and developing and implementing integration programmes.” It calls on local governments to better manage diversity and combat racism, and to invest in districts with a high immigrant concentration.
- Evaluation of integration policies - This section calls for core indicators in employment, education and social inclusion for monitoring integration policies as a method of promoting the European learning process.

In terms of participation, the declaration emphasises “the role of local authorities and cities in dealing with intercultural challenges and developing and implementing integration programmes”, as well as managing diversity and combating racism more effectively. In an annex to this report, there is a list of 15 core indicators under the four broad areas agreed in the Stockholm Programme (2009), which are to be re-visited at a later date.

It is also worth noting that in July 2011, a “European Agenda for the Integration of Non-EU Migrants” was designed by the European Commission. The agenda points out the issues that restrict the EU from achieving its full potential supported by migration and diversity. The potential role in the

integration process of countries of origin is also examined.² The agenda aims to increase economic, social, cultural and political participation by migrants, with an emphasis on local action.

1.4 European Commission (EC) Handbook on Integration for Policy-makers and Practitioners (2010)

Written by the Migration Policy Group, on behalf of the EC (Directorate General for Justice Freedom and Security), the “Handbook on Integration for Policy-makers and Practitioners” (3rd ed.) resulted from an in-depth consultative process. The chapters are based on outcomes from 14 technical seminars which aimed to develop co-operation and the exchange of information within the National Contact Points of Integration, in a European context. Conference contributions have also come from Australia, Canada, Norway, Switzerland and the USA.

These three handbooks are the main drivers of the exchange of information, along with the European Website on integration (www.integration.eu) and a network of European cities called “Integrating Cities”. The EC also has an ‘Immigration Portal’ for those wishing to migrate to an EU country which lists member states, support organisations, and covers immigration law, statistics and reports (<http://ec.europa.eu/immigration/>). The third edition has comprehensive discussions on: (1) European exchange of information and good practice; (2) mass media and integration; (3) awareness raising and migrant empowerment; (4) dialogue platforms; (5) acquisition of nationality and the practice of active citizenship; (6) immigrant youth, education and the labour market. Earlier editions focussed on: introduction of immigrants; civic participation and indicators; mainstreaming integration; housing; economic integration; and integration governance.

2. National Integration Policies and Strategies³

2.1 Planning for Diversity: The National Action Plan Against Racism (2005-2008)

Following commitments made by the Irish Government at the United Nations (UN) World Conference Against Racism in South Africa in 2001, this plan was developed at a national level and was sustained by the Social Partnership Agreement 2003-2005. It sought to “provide strategic direction to combat racism and to develop a more inclusive, intercultural society in Ireland based on a commitment to inclusion by design, not as an add-on or afterthought, and based on policies that promote interaction, equality of opportunity, understanding and respect.” The five objectives of this framework are:

- (1) Effective **protection** and redress against racism and other forms of discrimination;
- (2) **Recognition** and awareness of diversity;
- (3) Full **participation** in Irish society;
- (4) Economic **inclusion** and equality of opportunity; and
- (5) Accommodating diversity in **service provision**.

² For further information on EU actions and instruments around integration refer to the following website: http://ec.europa.eu/ewsi/en/EU_actions_integration.cfm

³ These summaries are taken from The Integration Centre’s *Policy Research Resources*.

A “whole system approach” was utilised to deliver this plan. The key elements of the plan are: mainstreaming; targeting; benchmarking progress; and the engagement of key stakeholders to support the implementation of the plan. It is this plan that set the stage for City and County Councils to engage in the development of Anti-Racism and Diversity Strategies (ARDS) and/or Integration Strategies.

2.2 Migration Nation: Integration Strategy and Diversity Management (2008)

“Migration Nation” launched by the Minister for Integration, Conor Lenihan, TD, in 2008, is a government statement on integration strategy and diversity management. This statement identifies modern Ireland’s context within the immigration/integration arena, and the need for a “whole of government” approach to migrant integration policy development.

Its key priorities are: (1) a clear commitment to immigration laws; (2) a formal pathway to permanent residency and citizenship; (3) a streamlined asylum process; (4) specific funding from government and the philanthropic sector to support diversity management in local authorities, political parties, sporting bodies and faith-based groups; (5) citizenship and long-term residency to be a contingent proficiency of skills in the spoken language of the country; (6) more targeted support for teachers and parents in dealing with diversity; (7) enhanced institutional and legislative measures to combat exploitation and discrimination; and (8) new structures to assist and reflect the changed dynamic of Ireland, with specific reference to a standing Commission on Integration, a Ministerial Council on Integration, and a Task Force to establish future policy needs. In relation to proposed new structures, Ministerial Councils were convened just once in each of four regions in October/November 2010 and have not been convened since then. The other two proposed bodies were not set up.

The Government Strategy on Integration is underpinned by the following key principles: (1) a partnership approach between the government and non-governmental organisations and civil society bodies; (2) a strong link between integration policy and wider state social inclusion measures, strategies and initiatives; (3) a clear public policy focus that avoids the creation of parallel societies, communities and urban ghettos; and a mainstream approach to service delivery to migrants; and (4) a commitment to effective local delivery mechanisms that align services to migrants with those for indigenous communities. The document points out that “integration lives and breathes, and indeed dies, at the level of community (2008: 22)” thus focusing on integration at the local level.

2.3 National Intercultural Health Strategy (2007-2012)

The core of this Strategy is a socially inclusive approach to address the health and care needs of disadvantaged people from diverse cultures and ethnic backgrounds. It aims to prioritise: (1) information, language and communication; (2) service delivery and access to services; (3) developing a whole organisation approach; and (4) working in partnership with minority ethnic communities. The key values and principles of the Strategy are: inter-sectoral collaboration; equality and targeting; interculturalism and anti-racism; community participation around health needs; partnership working; and, learning and support for staff. Utilising these values, the National Intercultural Health Strategy sets out key recommendations and an implementation plan to insure that the plan will be carried out within a quality framework which meets policy and legislative obligations, and which is grounded in the core values of the HSE.

The Intercultural Health Guide was developed in 2009 in response to an expressed need by healthcare staff across a range of cultural backgrounds. It provides the knowledge, skills and awareness in delivering care to people from diverse backgrounds. The Guide profiles the religious and cultural needs of twenty-five diverse groups being looked after in healthcare settings. The health sector can also pride itself in successfully piloting the ethnic identifier project which allows service providers to monitor the ethnic background of patients. The mapping exercise was deemed to be helpful in shaping service delivery such as communication with patients and identifying health risks affecting ethnic minorities. The HSE developed an Emergency Multilingual Aid to assist health service providers in their initial engagements with non-English speaking patients, prior to the arrival of an interpreter. It contains a welcome sheet; a language identification card for staff; guidelines for staff about how to use and access interpreters; and phrasebooks in English and 20 other languages, containing both staff and patient-led questions.

2.4 Action Strategy to Support Integrated Workplaces (2008)

This Strategy is a social partnership initiative organised by representatives of Congress, IBEC, the Small Firms Association, the Construction Industry Federation, Chambers Ireland, The Office of the Minister for Integration, and the Equality Authority. It was funded by The Office of the Minister for Integration and the Equality Authority. Its goal is to assist firms to develop, contribute to, and to manage culturally diverse and integrated workplaces, which are defined as: free from discrimination and harassment, helping those with cultural and linguistic diversity, ethnic minorities, and people with disabilities to adjust; and to achieve and communicate full equality in practice. As well as supporting all employees, migrant workers, ethnic minorities and members of the Traveller community, this action strategy was co-ordinated and supported by the Equality Authority in regular meetings to provide guidance for employers, trade unionists, and employees on compliance and good practice in culturally diverse workplaces.

2.5 Cultural Diversity and the Arts (2010)

This Strategy rejects the idea that the Irish population is fixed, or has its own ethnic or racial characteristics. It was sponsored by the OMI (Officer of the Minister of Integration) and the Arts Council, and researched by CREATE, the national development agency for collaborative arts. Lack of knowledge and capacity, poor communication, lack of clarity, fear of loss of quality, lack of funding, support and resources, and overdependence on “celebratory processes” are identified as barriers to cultural diversity. It lists its core principals as: (1) cultural diversity as an enrichment of the arts; (2) developing an intercultural approach towards arts provision; (3) plurality enhancing its work; and (4) cultural diversity as an adaptive process. The strategy outlines measures for actions to be initiated within a five-year time-frame and commitments to work on: (1) structures and operations; (2) resources and supports; and (3) promoting partnerships.

2.6 Intercultural Education Strategy (2010-2015)

This Strategy is the result of an in-depth consultation process and has been informed by national and international research and policy. Published by the Department of Education and Skills, and the Office of the Minister for Integration, it is designed to provide both students and educators with the guidelines to ensure that education in Ireland respects diversity, inclusion and integration. It identifies the ten key components of a framework for intercultural education for all students and educators. These components are: (1) leadership; (2) mainstreaming of education provision; (3) rights and responsibilities; (4) high aspirations and expectations; (5) enhance the quality of teaching;

(6) knowledge of language; (7) partnership and engagement; (8) effective communication; (9) data collection and research; and (10) actions, monitoring and evaluation.

The Intercultural Education Strategy is intended to inspire the work of stakeholders as opposed to prescribing it. In other words, it has high level goals but leaves the development of actions to stakeholders. This underlines the importance of local actions when endeavouring to promote integration.

2.7 An Garda Síochána's Diversity Strategy and Implementation Plan (2009-2012)

In order to develop this plan, An Garda Síochána⁴ appointed a "Diversity Champion" CAO and established a "Diversity Strategy Board", a "Diversity Management Unit" and the "Garda Racial, Intercultural & Diversity Office"(GRIDO). This Strategy is evidence of a commitment to champion, value and accommodate diversity by combating racism and promoting an inclusive, intercultural Ireland. It intends to improve employment conditions, service delivery and policing practice across the "Nine Equality Grounds". The Five Strategic Priority Areas of the Plan are: (1) deriving strategic benefit from diversity; (2) building partnerships with diverse populations; (3) reflecting our diverse society; (4) developing diversity competence for staff; and (5) enabling and managing diversity.

2.8 National Policies relating to Travellers

Policies and Legislation relating to Travellers have been developed over the past several years, much of which identifies Travellers as having distinct needs in different areas. The Task Force Report on the Traveller Community (1995) provided a range of recommendations in the areas of culture, discrimination, accommodation, health, education and training, Traveller economy, women, Travellers with a disability. A monitoring committee was established to oversee the implementation of its recommendations. Much of the subsequent policies relating to Travellers are based on these recommendations. Developments in the area of health include "Traveller Health – A National Strategy 2002-2005" and more recently the "All Ireland Traveller Health Study – Our Geels" 2010 study of Traveller health issues, with over 80% of Traveller families participating. Other areas identified such as education, employment etc. have not had a similar focus on developing actions or policies. The National Traveller Monitoring and Advisory Committee Report (2009) identifies the need for the development and implementation of Policies relating to Travellers and more effective implementation and delivery of policy objectives at local level.

Legislation has included the Traveller community being included in Equality Legislation (Equal Status Act and Employment Equality Act). Legislation relating to accommodation includes the Housing (Traveller Accommodation) Act 1998 which requires Local Authorities to meet the accommodation needs of Travellers. Unfortunately many of these targets have not been met.

⁴ 'An Garda Síochána were invited to participate in the Galway County Diversity & Integration Interagency Group and their role is confined to that as set out in their mission statement: 'Working with communities to protect and serve', without discrimination.'

Chapter 3: Statistical Profiles



Yellow Flag Award, November 2012.



Community Health Workers from Galway Traveller Movement receiving certificates from Minister Mary Hanafin and MABS.

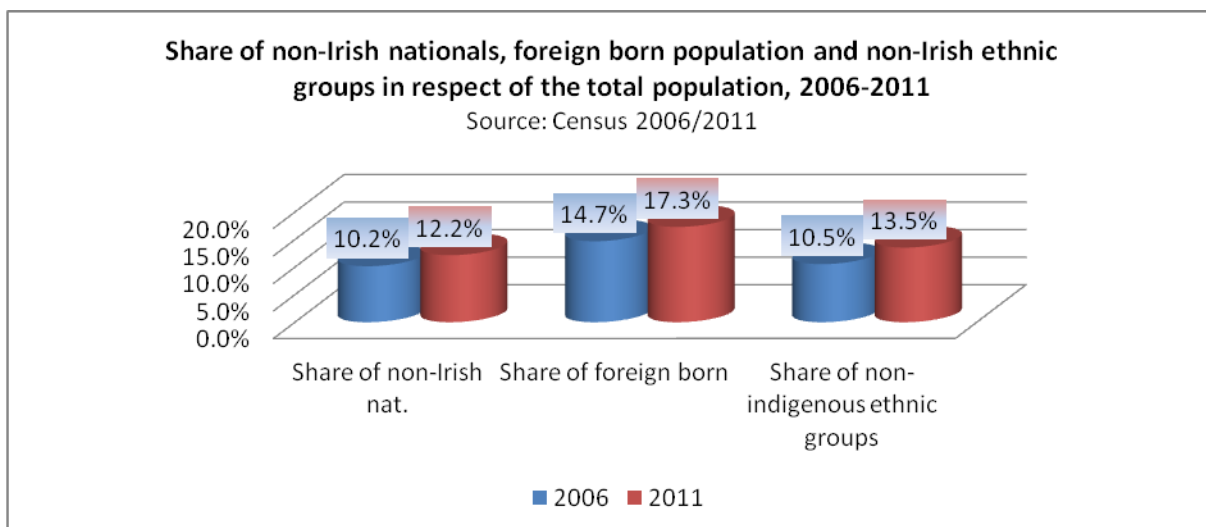
National Profile of Immigrant Minority Ethnic Population

Size of the Minority Population

There are many ways of looking at and assessing the immigrant population. One is by nationality, defined by citizenship, practically the type of passport people hold. This provides a certain picture, but does not depict minority ethnic groups who have recently become citizens here in Ireland, or their children, who may have been Irish citizens at birth.

Examining census results for who are foreign-born is another option. However, those born outside of Ireland could easily be the children of Irish citizens living abroad who have recently returned, while some children born here may for example retain the citizenship of their foreign-born parents.

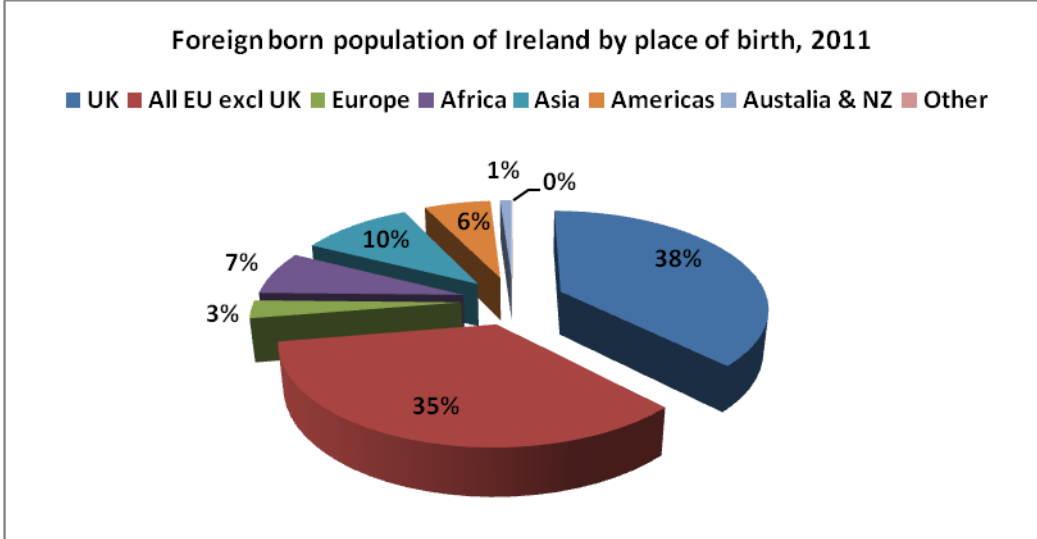
Ethnicity represents large cultural groups and as such is better at capturing second generation immigrants and association with multiple cultures (e.g. Black-Irish). However, currently it only works with large categories and could contain figures that do not reflect the shifting nature of the world's population. Nevertheless, it is useful to consider all three categories as presented in the census:



Composition of Minority Ethnic Population of Immigrant Background

1. Birthplace

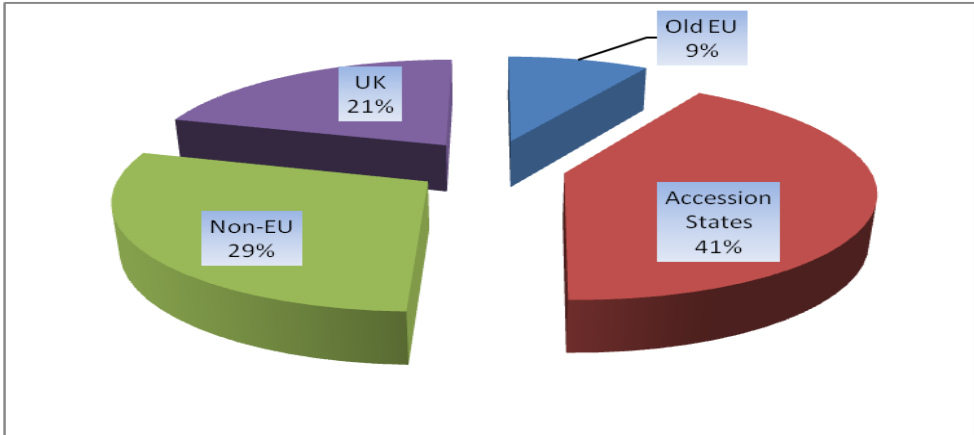
According to birthplace, there is a relatively even distribution among those born in the UK, EU and non-EU countries. As for those born outside the EU, most people arrived from Asia, followed by Africa, the Americas (both North and South) and non-EU Europe.



Top countries of origin were England & Wales, Poland, Northern Ireland, Lithuania, Nigeria, Romania, Scotland & India. Taken together, those born in the UK were by far the biggest group.

2. Nationality

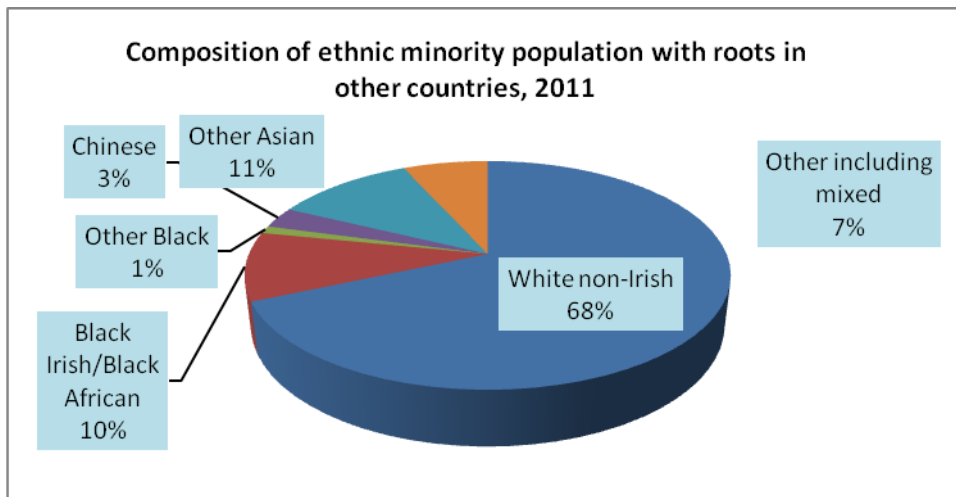
In terms of nationalities, UK citizens accounted for a fifth of foreign nationals living in Ireland while EU nationals made up half of the foreign population together. The majority of those were Accession State Nationals. Just under one third of foreign nationals were non-EU citizens. This is lower than in most EU countries but is still significant.



12 nations made up 74% of the non-Irish populations in Ireland: China, Germany, India, Latvia, Lithuania, Nigeria, Philippines, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, United Kingdom, USA. Large increases over the period 2006-2011 occurred in the number of Polish, Romanian, Indian, Latvian and Hungarian populations living in Ireland.

3. Ethnicity and Ethnic Groups with Roots in Other Countries

Regarding the minority ethnic population, the share of White non-Irish is dominant, which is expected in light of the large influx of EU nationals. Chinese and Other Asians accounted for 14% together followed by Black Irish/Black African with 10%. Interestingly, Asian groups other than Chinese registered a strong increase between 2006 and 2011 both in absolute terms (numbers) and relative terms (3% more). Black Irish/Black African also saw an increase but to a lesser extent.



Distribution of the Migrant Population

Non-Irish nationals are concentrated in urban areas: they make up 14% of the town populations but only 5.6% of rural areas. Dublin City has the highest number of non-Irish nationals (88,038), followed by Fingal and Cork County. Galway City has the highest proportion of non-Irish nationals (19.4%), followed by Fingal (18%) and Dublin City (17%). Donegal has the smallest proportion of non-Irish nationals (8.1%); Waterford County and Limerick County also have lower shares.

Gender

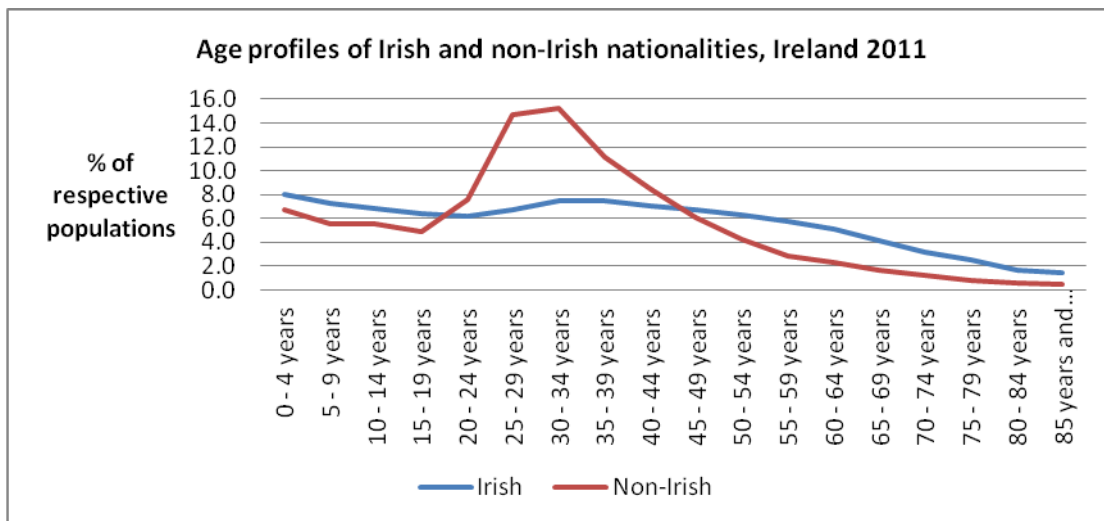
Males and females were evenly represented in the non-Irish population in 2011 with 271,864 males and 272,493 females. In 2002 and 2006 the number of males exceeded the number of females among the non-Irish national community.

Age Profile and Trends

The peak age in 2011 was 30 for non-Irish nationals and 32.6 for Irish nationals. There are much higher numbers of non-Irish nationals living in Ireland who are between the ages of 20 and 44. Just 19% of non-Irish nationals were aged 44 and over compared with 37% of Irish nationals. The low numbers of immigrant people aged 44 years and over may reflect the fact that significant inward migration has been a very recent experience in Ireland.

In addition, a comparatively low number of non-Irish nationals living in Ireland are in the youngest age cohorts. Just 21% of non-Irish nationals were aged under-22 compared with 31% of Irish

nationals. Nevertheless, Census 2011 also recorded an increase in the number of non-Irish children in Ireland compared with 2006, so this is changing and indicates that families are settling here.



Households

Census 2011 reveals that many immigrants live here now with their families. It is also important to see that some groups have a high proportion of single parents which poses challenges for them. Nationals of non-EU and Old EU countries (West and South Europe) seem to be more likely to live with Irish people than new Accession State Nationals.

The most common household type for non-Irish nationals in 2011 was couples with children. 34% of households headed by non-Irish nationals were couples with children, compared with 35% of Irish nationals. Between 2006 and 2011, there was a marked increase in the number of non-Irish households where families lived with children.

Single person households made up 17% of households headed by non-Irish nationals compared with 25% of Irish households. The difference can be linked to the higher number of older Irish people who lived alone. It is worth noting that 33% of Nigerian households were headed by single parents, which is the highest share of lone parent households among all nationality groups.

There are great differences recorded between non-Irish nationality groups as to whether they lived in mixed households with Irish nationals or only with fellow citizens. Many UK and US nationals lived with Irish people in 2011; but also a large number of South African, French, Filipino and Spanish resided with Irish people. In contrast, Hungarian, Polish, Slovakian, Lithuanian and Latvian residents tended to live in non-Irish households. Interestingly, the highest rate of mixed households with Irish nationals was recorded among Nigerians. The majority of Irish nationals were children of the Nigerian parents. This can be attributed to particular arrangements that were made after the change in the citizenship law in 2004.

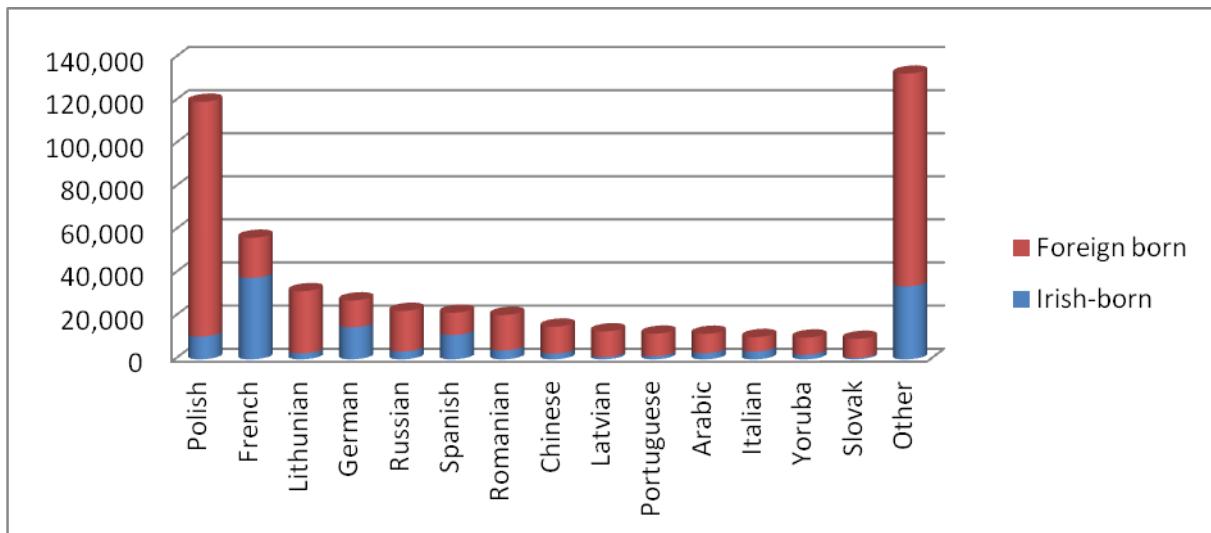
English Language

According to Census 2011, 18% of the foreign language speaking population (who spoke languages other than English or Irish at home) reported difficulty with English. More precisely, 2% did not speak English at all, while 16% stated that they did not speak English well. Language problems

primarily affect people from the Accession States as well as students who are here to study English (Chinese, Brazilian, etc.). Among Accession State Nationals, there were 9,000 people who reported that they spoke virtually no English.

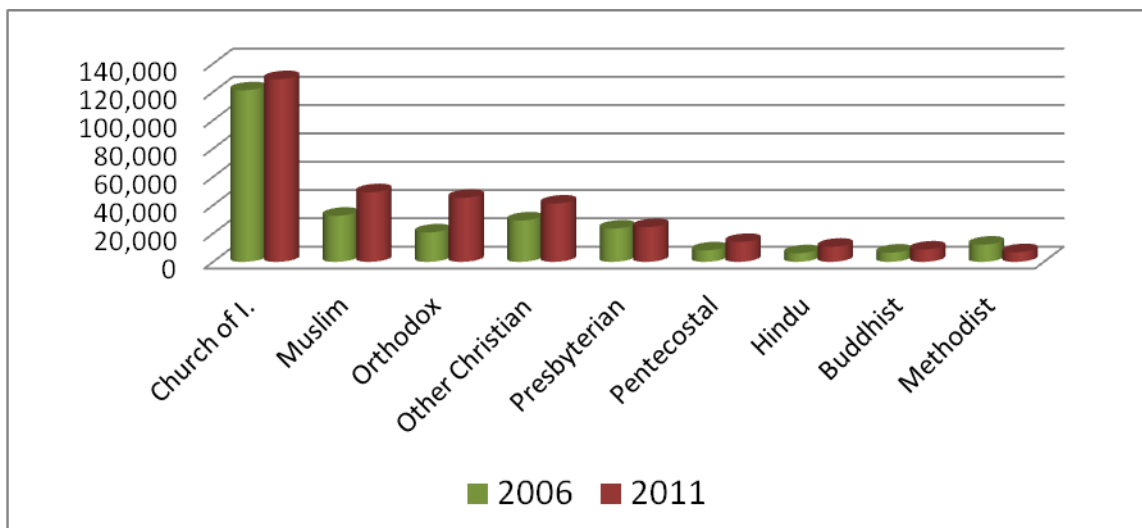
Multiple Languages

Census 2011 indicated that 11% of the population speak foreign languages at home. Almost one third of those are Irish-born and likely to be bilingual – an asset for the country.



Religious Diversity

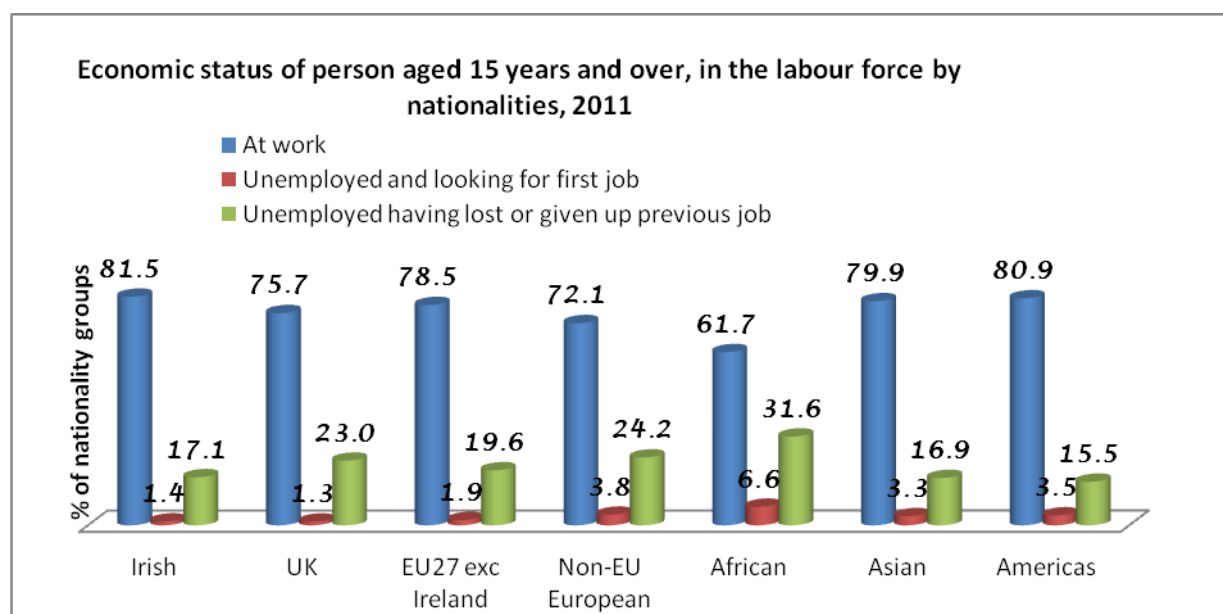
Ireland's religious landscape has changed through the increasing number of non-Catholic groups. The Orthodox, Muslim, and Pentecostal populations, as well as those with no religion, have seen the biggest increases. A notable increase has also occurred in the number of Irish Pentecostal, Orthodox and Muslim populations. Non-Irish nationals account for the majority of increases in religious groups including Catholics. While the Catholic religion has remained dominant, those who reported membership in non-Catholic religions account for 8.3% of total population and those with no religion make up 5.8%.



Integration Indicators: Employment and Skills

Immigrants in Ireland have brought a wealth of skills, qualifications, and a strong work ethic to our shores. The Annual Integration Monitor 2011 showed that 45% of non-Irish nationals have third level qualifications compared with 32% of Irish nationals. Examining only those who completed their education based on Census 2011 data, 30.7% of non-Irish have third level degrees compared with 23.8% of Irish nationals. But, there is a considerable group whose qualifications are not utilized.

Non-Irish nationals in total represented 13% of the total working age population. Since 2008 employment fell more significantly among non-Irish nationals than Irish nationals and the rate of the unemployment gap between non-Irish and Irish nationals has further increased. The Annual Integration Monitor, using the Quarterly Household National Survey, which applies a very strict definition of unemployment, found that in 2011 the unemployment rate was 18.2% among non-Irish and 13.8% among Irish nationals. According to Census 2011, which applies a looser definition, the unemployment rate was 22.5% among non-Irish nationals compared with 18.5% among Irish nationals. To sum it up, unemployment rates are 4 to 4.5% higher among non-Irish nationals.

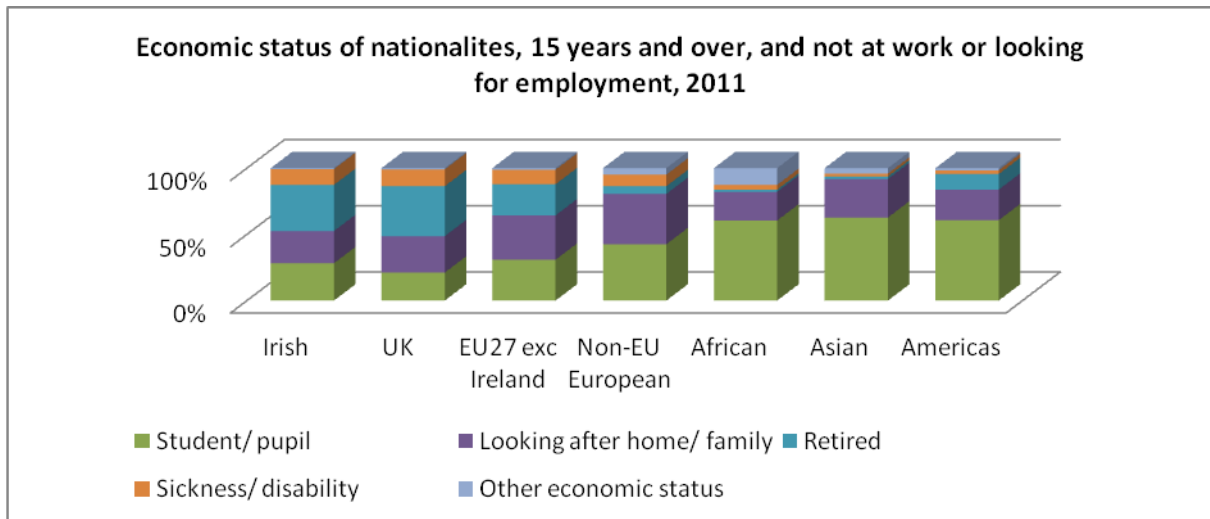


- Examining the different broad nationality groups, it can be observed that unemployment rates are similar among Irish nationals and citizens of countries from the Asian and American continents. However, UK nationals and particularly citizens of European (outside the EU) and African countries suffer from higher levels of unemployment. Therefore non-EU nationals have a mixed experience in the labour market with some groups experiencing higher unemployment than others. The Annual Integration Monitor, using QHNS data, showed that Accession State Nationals⁵ suffered from higher unemployment rates, while Old EU states were relatively shielded from unemployment related to the recession.
- A relatively large share of non-EU European and Asian people who are not active in the labour market do home duties. This can be explained by the current work permit system and the recession which makes it more difficult for spouses of work permit holders, many of whom are

⁵ Croatia, Iceland, Montenegro the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Turkey.

Asians and non-EU European, to look for work. Another possible factor can be the cost of childcare and their inability to receive social welfare support. Census 2011 showed that a large proportion of Filipino and Indian men look after home and family.

- As the graph, below shows, non-Irish nationals from the EU 27 countries, non-EU Europe and Asia, appear to have high rates of labour market activity. Non-Irish nationals from both the UK and Africa have relatively high levels of inactivity in the labour market.



Integration Indicators: Education and Training

Despite the difficulties of adjusting to a new culture, and in most cases a new language, immigrant pupils and students are highly motivated. The importance of them succeeding in their education cannot be under-estimated in terms of future employability.

On average 11% of secondary school pupils are non-Irish nationals but there are differences: in a third of schools there are few non-Irish students (5% or less) but in 12% of the schools they represent 20% or more of the students.

Most immigrant children are highly motivated students according to research. Research among mothers showed that they have high aspirations for their children – but non-English speaking parents have difficulty in helping with homework.

The command of English has a major impact on the performance of pupils from non-English speaking backgrounds. Where English is not spoken at home they perform worse, while those coming from English speaking backgrounds perform just as well as their Irish counterparts. Those parents are also less equipped to support their children. This indicates the vital importance of language support for pupils and parents alike.

Integration Indicators: Active Citizenship and Civil Participation

Becoming truly involved in a new culture necessitates meaningful involvement in community and civic structures. While immigrants are allowed to vote in local elections, their voter turnout has been varied, and very few have been elected to local office.

In addition, participation in community volunteering, sporting associations and local events paves the way to greater integration. To date, immigrants have on average been more active in some aspects of volunteering than others. Immigrants have re-vitalised churches and volunteer centres: in 2010 they accounted for 28% of registered volunteers. However, they are not so active in sporting and resident associations. Involvement in sport and resident organisations goes beyond community participation: they represent the first step in civic and very often political participation.

- Nearly half of Irish/UK nationals are members or volunteers of sports organisations, while 27% of EU nationals and 19% of non-EU nationals do so.
- Non-Irish nationals are under-represented on the electoral register: in Dublin only about 5% of registered voters are non-Irish. Previous voter registration drives led to increases but many non-Irish nationals are still not registered to vote.
- Four immigrants were elected in the June 2009 local elections (0.2% of all local council members). Overall only 37 immigrant candidates actually ran for election in 2009. While political parties made some effort in recruiting immigrants, their efforts were confined to the run up to the last local election and mainly targeted the Polish community. It was also argued that many politicians did not realize that around 25,000 non-Irish nationals received Irish citizenship between 2005 and 2011, which granted them the right to vote in general elections if registered.

Integration Indicators: Social Inclusion

Accessing social benefits, understanding how the Irish health system works, and being understood when engaging with Irish services and social milieu are among the biggest challenges that ethnic minorities and immigrants face. These difficulties can often lead to great social deprivation.

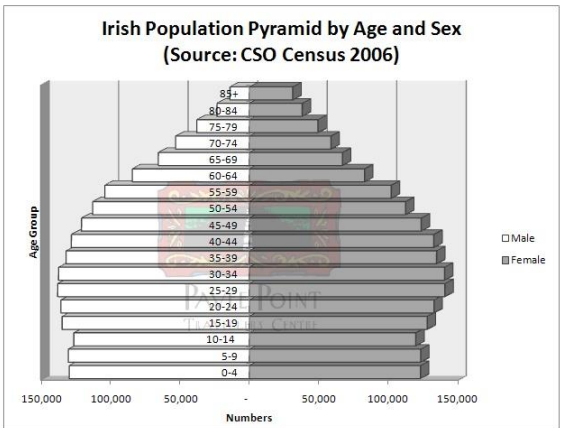
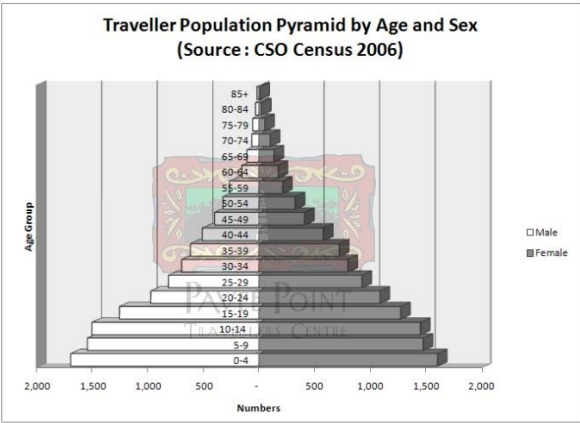
- About 10% of non-EU nationals are considered to be at risk of poverty: having low income and lacking basic items such as heating, shoes and meat. This is higher than among Irish and EU nationals.
- In general immigrants cannot access social welfare payments unless they show a connection to Ireland – e.g. record of employment (except refugees). The share of non-Irish nationals among jobseeker payment recipients (Live Register) has been 18% since 2009. Worryingly, in a large number of cases people who are foreign born were denied access to social welfare payments at first instance based on the Habitual Residency Condition only to have the decision overturned at appeal level. This delay causes its own difficulties in terms of deprivation.
- According to the Annual Integration Monitor 78% of Irish nationals own their houses, compared to just 27% of Non-Irish nationals. Nevertheless the number of non-Irish national homeowners increased between 2006 and 2011.
- Non-Irish nationals are more likely to report good health than Irish nationals but this can be explained by their younger age. Studies show that access to health services can be difficult for some groups due to cost, the existence of rare or unknown health conditions and language difficulties.
- Overall, 43% of Irish nationals reported playing sport, compared to 37% of EU nationals and 28% of non-EU nationals. Notwithstanding the efforts made by, for instance, the Football Association of Ireland (FAI) and the Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA), it seems that there is still room for improvement in terms of sport participation among non-Irish nationals.

National Profile of Traveller Minority Ethnic Population

Size of Population and Age Profile

The 2011 census identified the Traveller population as being approximately 0.7% of the total population of Ireland (29,573 Travellers). This is a slight increase on 2006 figures which were at 0.5%. The All Ireland Traveller Health Study “Our Geels” 2010 present the number of Travellers in the Republic of Ireland as 36,224. County Galway has the highest number of Travellers in any administrative council in Ireland with 2,216 Travellers identified (2011 Census).

The Traveller community is made up of a very young population compared with national averages. CSO figures (2006) point to a higher birth rate and a lower rate of life expectancy among Travellers. It was found that 63% were under the age of 25 years (compared with 35% nationally); 42% were under 15 years (compared with 21% nationally) and 3% were 65 years or older (compared to 13% nationally). There were as few as 52 Travellers over the age of 80 years enumerated as part of the Census 2006.



Integration Indicators: Employment and Economic Activity

In 2011, 57.3% of Irish Travellers over the age of 15 were in the labour force in Ireland. This compares to 61.9% for the whole population of Ireland. Of these, only 15.6% are in employment, compared with 81.8% of the population identified as White Irish, and 80.8% of the total population. Of those Irish Travellers in the labour force but not working, 76.2% are unemployed having lost or given up previous job, while 8.3% are looking for their first job.



- In 2011, 42.7% of Travellers 15 years and over were not part of the labour force, compared with 29.3% of the entire population. Of these, Travellers were nearly twice as likely to be at home looking after the family (42.1% compared to 24.9% nationally), and twice as likely to be unable to work due to serious sickness or disability (22.3% compared to 11.6% nationally). There were also less Travellers, as a percentage of those outside the labour force, that are students or pupils compared to the rest of the population of Ireland.
- While 33.2% of the entire population not in the labour force were retired, only 6.2% of Travellers not in the labour force identified as being retired.

Integration Indicators: Education and Training

In Ireland, in 2011, 16.3% of Travellers whose full time education had ceased, had no formal education; this compares with just 1.4% of the rest of the population who stated their ethnicity. Of Travellers whose full time education has ceased, 47.3% finished at primary level, while 20.1% finished at lower secondary level and 5.4% finished at upper secondary level.

- Only 44 Travellers, whose full time education has ceased, had qualified with an Honours Degree or higher. This is 0.4% of Travellers, whose full time education has ceased, compared with 17% of the rest of the population whose education has ceased.
- However, the 'All Ireland Traveller Health Study' (AITHS) (2010), found that, in studies among 14 year old Traveller children, attendance in education was seen as high, at 89%.

Integration Indicators: Active Citizenship and Civil Participation

There is one TD who identifies a parent and grandparent as being from the Traveller community. There have been a small number of Travellers who have been elected to Town or County Councils. One Traveller in County Galway held the position of Mayor of a Town Council in Tuam. Overall there are very few Travellers engaged as representatives in the political sphere.

Integration Indicators: Social Inclusion (Accommodation and Health)

“All Ireland Traveller Health Study – Our Geels” highlights that 18.2% of Traveller families lived in caravans, mobile homes or trailers in 2010. 73.3% lived in houses, while 7.3% lived in other permanent structures such as flats, apartments or chalets.

Traveller life expectancy remains at rates last experienced by the general population in 1941 (AITHS 2010). Male Travellers’ life expectancy stands at 62 years (compared with 77 years nationally) and females at 70 years (compared with 82 years nationally). Alarming, from 1987 to 2008 the gap in life expectancy between Traveller men and settled men has increased from 10 to 15 years.

- Compared to the general Irish population Travellers have a higher rate of death from diseases related to lungs and chest or heart disease and/or stroke. A male Traveller is 7.5 times more likely to die from diseases of the lungs or chest whereas a female Traveller is 5 times more likely to die from heart disease or stroke. Added to this, 40% of adult Travellers have indicated poor mental health, with statistics showing suicide rates within Traveller communities being up to 6.5 times higher than the settled population.
- According to the AITHS 2010, appreciable numbers of respondents cited frequent episodes of discrimination in all settings, the worst ranked setting being served in a shop or pub, with for instance 35.1% indicating this occurred at least 4 or more times; though situations most frequently cited as never occasioning such discrimination were on a sports team (64.9%), followed equally by obtaining insurance or a loan (60.7%) or in accessing health services (60.4%). In the past year, 26.1% of respondents worried about being unfairly treated as a Traveller most of the time, while 26.9% worried about unfair treatment sometimes.
- However, 6% of Traveller families, when surveyed, felt that, in the last twelve months, there have been episodes when a family child has needed treatment or care, yet did not receive it. However, such lack of treatment was due to many complex factors such as cost, lack of trust or information or unavailability of services (AITHS 2010).
- 9.7% of Traveller families in Ireland in 2010 have a child with an on-going chronic physical or mental health problem, illness or disability (AITHS 2010).
- In 2010, the majority of Traveller adults indicated their health was either excellent (22.6%) or very good (27.8%), with only 5.7% indicating their health was very poor (AITHS 2010).
- An appreciable minority of respondents in the Republic of Ireland (ROI) (17.8%) indicated their daily activity or work was limited by long term illness, more so in men (19.9%) than women (16.2%) (AITHS 2010).

Galway County: Immigrant and Traveller Population

Key Figures

- 14.7% of the population of Galway County is foreign-born, which is an increase of 0.9 percentage points since 2006; top countries are England & Wales and Northern Ireland (UK) followed by Poland, United States, Brazil and Lithuania.
- 7.1% were born outside UK and Ireland.

- 9% were non-Irish nationals; this is an increase of 0.8 percentage points since 2006.
- 9.3% belong to ethnic groups with roots in other countries (13.5% nationally).
- 1.4% belonged to the Irish Traveller Community (0.7% nationally).
- 7.5% spoke foreign languages at home; the top three languages were Polish, French and Lithuanian.
- 12% of secondary pupils in Galway County are non-Irish.

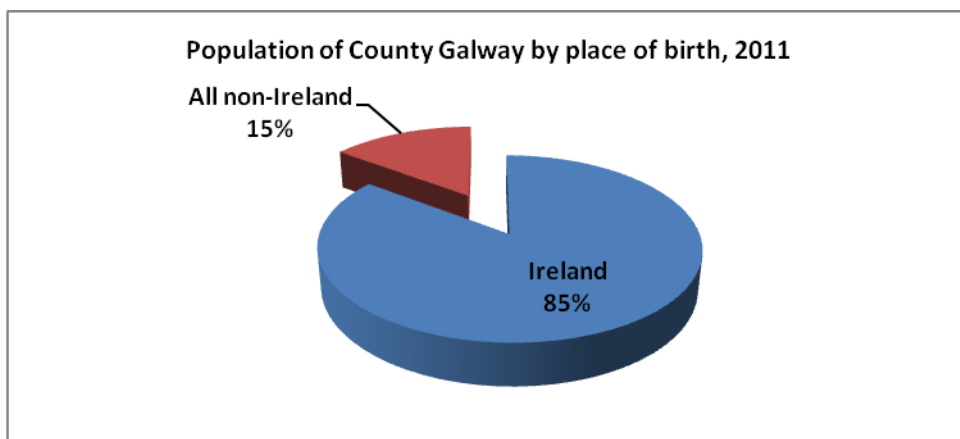
Size of the Minority Ethnic Population

The immigrant population is significant in County Galway although it is a bit lower than nationwide. The figures vary depending on how immigrants are defined, whether it is by birthplace, large ethnic/cultural groups or nationality (citizenship). The immigrant population grew in Galway County since 2006 according to all three definitions used. But even if using the definition of nationality, which is probably the narrowest, almost 9% of those living in Galway hold nationality other than Irish.

Regarding the Traveller Community, it is interesting to note their share in the general population is higher in County Galway than nationwide. The Traveller Community represents 1.4% of the overall population of County Galway, compared to 0.7% nationally.

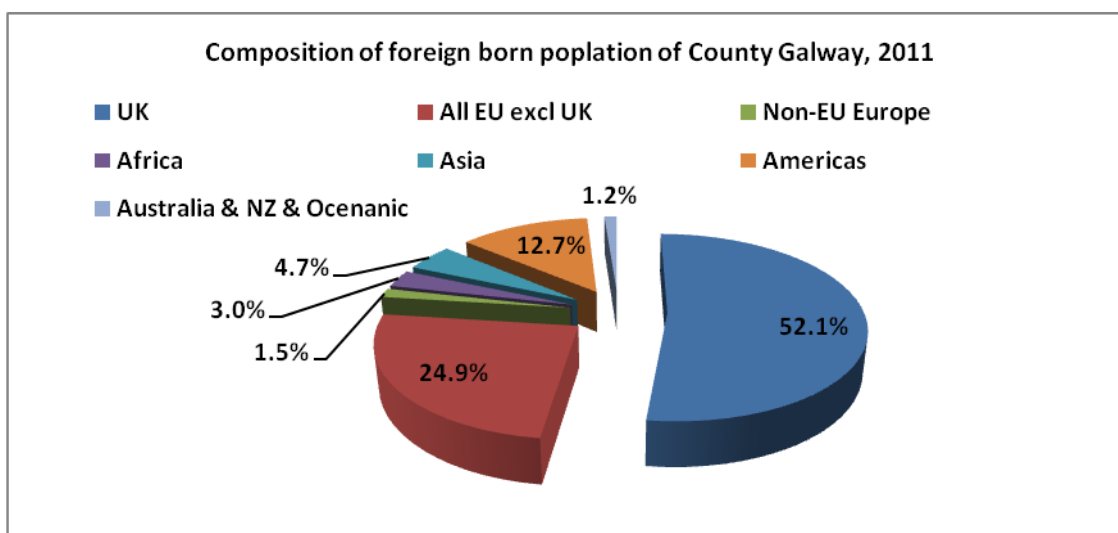
1. Foreign Born: 14.7%

Among County Galway residents, 25,454 people were born outside of Ireland, which is approximately 14.7% of the population. That is 3,789 more people than in 2006, which represents a 0.9 percentage point increase.



The breakdown of the immigrant population according to birthplace shows the high share of those born in the UK. However, around half of those are Irish nationals, presumably born to Irish parents in the UK. UK born residents made up 52% of the foreign born population of County Galway, with a further 24.9% born in the rest of the EU and 23.1% being born outside the EU.

Interestingly, the percentage of the non-EU foreign born population that was born in the Americas was high compared to the rest of Ireland, while the non-EU, foreign born populations born in Africa and Asia were low compared to the rest of Ireland. That said, the latter group still made up a marked share of the foreign-born population in County Galway.



A further breakdown reveals that apart from the UK and Poland, the United States and Brazil are the most represented countries of origins in County Galway. The chart below shows that the share of people born in Brazil is much higher in County Galway than nationwide. In fact almost every tenth Brazil-born person lived in County Galway. The share of those born in the US is also higher than nationally. This explains why the share of those born in the American continent is high.

Top countries of birth outside Ireland, Co. Galway & Ireland			
County Galway		Ireland	
Country	Share among total foreign born	County	Share among total foreign born
England and Wales	45.21%	England and Wales	27.33%
Poland	12.56%	Poland	14.83%
United States	8.06%	Northern Ireland	7.53%
Northern Ireland	4.90%	Lithuania	4.49%
Brazil	3.42%	United States	3.57%
Lithuania	2.22%	Latvia	2.57%
Germany	2.04%	Nigeria	2.55%
Scotland	1.96%	Romania	2.32%
France	1.14%	Scotland	2.30%
Hungary	1.02%	India	2.30%

2. Nationality: 9% Non-Irish Nationals

Nationality is defined by the type of passport people hold and the nation state with which they are legally affiliated to. In terms of nationality, 9% of people in County Galway reported nationality other than Irish. This compares to 12.1% for the whole country. However, even in Galway County, there were 2,610 more non-Irish nationals in 2011 than in 2006, a 0.8 percentage point increase.

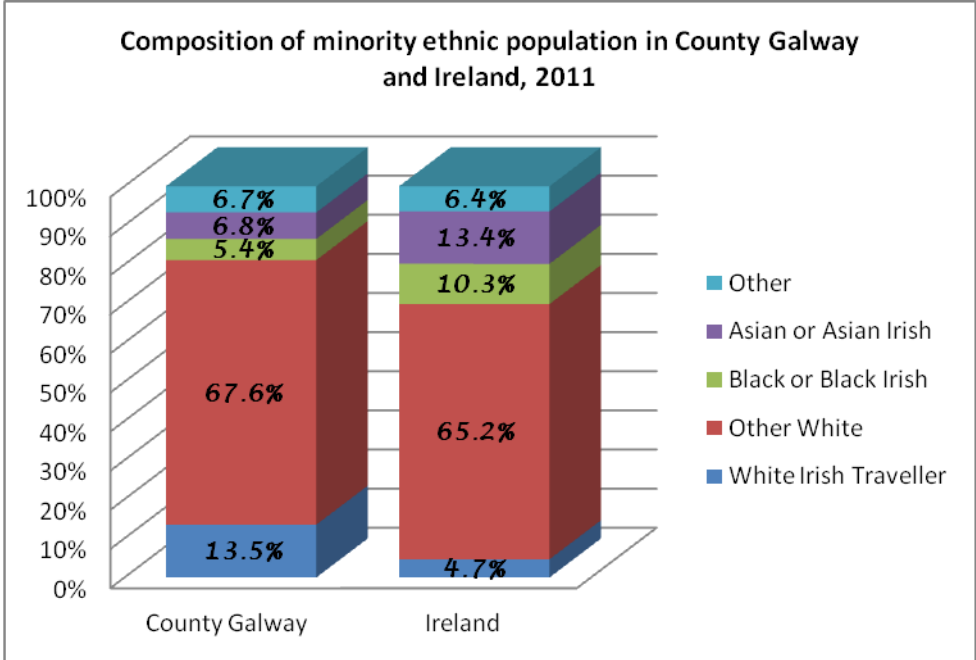
Over four out of ten non-Irish nationals were EU citizens (42%), with a further 33.7% being UK nationals and 23.9% non-EU citizens. While EU citizens are most represented, in terms of single nationality groups, UK nationals are the biggest group, followed by Polish nationals.

3. Ethnic Groups with Roots in Other Countries: 9.3%

The ethnic makeup of Galway County is similar to that of the rest of Ireland. Ethnic groups with roots in other countries made up 9.3% of those who reported their ethnicity. This is below the national figure which is 13.5%.

Examining only the composition of the minority ethnic population (and excluding the majority White Irish population) it can be seen that the broad group of White non-Irish is somewhat higher than nationally. On the other hand, ethnic groups with African and Asian roots make up a smaller proportion of the population in County Galway than nationally.

This corresponds to findings on birthplaces, where large numbers reported birthplace in the UK, Europe and the United States. It is interesting to note, the share of Asian ethnic groups is higher than the share of Asian born people (6.8% vs. 4.7%), and similarly for those born in Africa and the share of Black/Black Irish (5.4% vs. 3%). While this is only an approximate comparison, it suggests that there is a growing minority of Asians/Asian-Irish (and Black/Black-Irish) who are born in Ireland but report membership of a minority ethnic population. On a more general level this points to the need to look at both birthplace and ethnicity.



Distribution of Immigrant Population

Although quite evenly distributed, many UK-born people live in the West of County Galway, with another large group residing North of Tuam and South of Loughrea. In contrast, those born in Poland are much more concentrated: in the West around Clifden; in the East bordering Roscommon (Creggs, Killeroran); Northeast of Galway City in areas such as Oranmore, Athenry, An Carn Mór, Clarinbridge); and in the Southwest in Portumna.

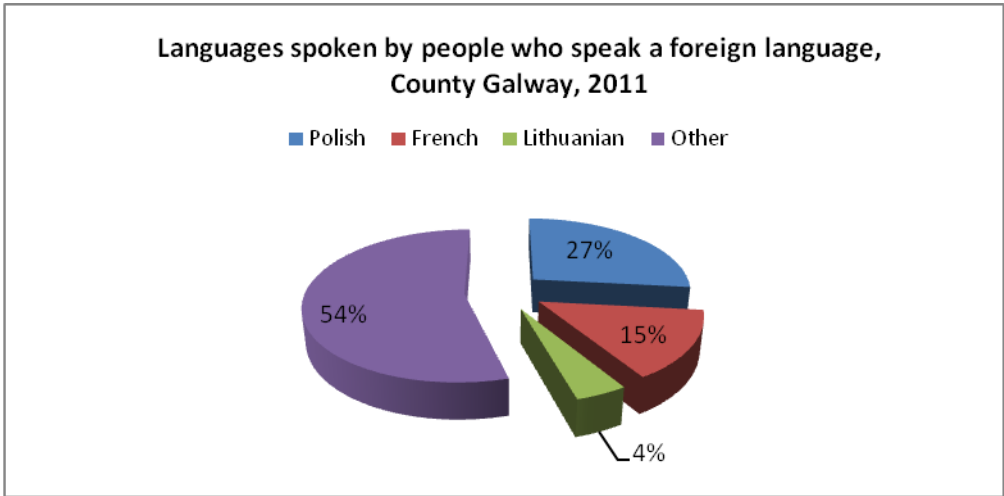
Non-EU groups are relatively widely dispersed. The biggest concentration of those born outside the EU is in the middle of the county: Oughterard, Tulaigh Mhic Aodháin, Maigh Cuilin, an Carn Mór, Oranmore, Clarinbridge and Gort. The area around Clifden also has a larger number of non-EU born

groups. The areas in County Galway Northeast of Galway City and in the West around Clifden have high percentages of foreign-born population in general.

Languages: 7.5% Spoke Foreign Language at Home

There were 12,924 people in Galway who spoke foreign languages at home (not English or Irish). These made up 7.5% of the population. This is lower than nationally where 11.3% of the population spoke languages other than English or Irish at home. It is interesting to note the difference between the share of non-Irish nationals (9%) and the share of foreign language speakers (7.5%). Of those who speak a foreign language in County Galway, 26.7% speak Polish, while 15% speak French.

Around one in five foreign language speakers in Galway County (i.e. 2,377 people) reported that they do not speak English well or not at all (19.2% of foreign language speakers). This is a marginally higher than the national figure of 18%.



Religious Diversity: Non-Catholic Religions among 4.4% of the Population

90% of County Galway is Roman Catholic, compared to 84.2% in the entire state. 4.4% of the population is of a religion that is 'other than Roman Catholic', while 4.6% stated they had no religion. Nationally the share of non-Catholic religions and those with no religion was somewhat higher at 8.3% and 5.8% respectively.

Integration Indicators: Employment

14.9% of the total number of unemployed people in County Galway is non-Irish. Non-Irish nationals are severely affected by the recession in County Galway as is the case elsewhere around the country. Of those non-Irish jobseekers, just under half were EU nationals, a third from the UK and around 20% were citizens of non-EU countries. Accordingly, EU citizens in Galway seem to be more affected by unemployment than other groups.

Integration Indicators: Education

Schools in both Galway County and Galway City have an average of 12% of their pupils who are non-Irish. Importantly, this is higher than the share of non-Irish nationals in the general population of Galway (9%). There is a great difference, from school to school, in terms of the numbers of immigrant children and young adults attending. Some schools have quite high densities of non-Irish students relative to their size, while other schools have much smaller, or no, non-Irish student cohorts attending. According to the Department of Education and Science Post-Primary School Database, 2011/12 the following are the top County Galway secondary schools as per share of non-Irish pupils: St. Brigid School, Tuam Co. Galway 18% (59 non-Irish students), Scoil Pobhail, Clifden 17% (67 non-Irish students), Presentation College, Headford 17% (132 non-Irish students), Gort Community School 16% (110 non-Irish students), Calasanticius College Oranmore 15% (112 non-Irish students) St. Brigids Vocational College, Loughrea 15% (86 non-Irish students). While lower is percentage terms; Presentation College in Athenry has 100 non-Irish students.

Integration Indicators: Active Citizenship and Civil Participation

In the 2009 local elections there was one candidate representing the immigrant community in County Galway, in Tuam. This candidate, Paul Osikoya, came eleventh out of fifteen candidates but did not succeed in taking one of the nine Council seats. Over the last fifteen years, a Traveller has been consistently elected as a political representative on the Tuam Town Council.

Integration Indicators: Social Inclusion (Housing)

Housing needs among non-Irish nationals

EU citizens make up 16.4% and non-EU nationals a further 2.3% of those on the Galway County Council housing list. It can be assumed that the strong representation of the non-Irish population on the housing list, relative to their actual numbers within the overall population of Galway, reflects their lower income and higher risk of poverty.

Applicants on the Housing List in County Galway, 2011			
Irish Citizen	EU Citizen	Non EU Citizen	TOTAL
81.3%	16.4%	2.3%	100%

Traveller Accommodation in County Galway

According to the most recent Annual Count of Traveller Families (ACTF), the vast majority of Travellers in County Galway who are assisted by the Local Authority are in permanent private or Local Authority housing. A smaller number are accommodated on halting sites provided by Galway County Council. A small, but significant proportion of the Traveller population in County Galway lives on unauthorised halting sites. The number living on such sites increased between 2009 and 2011 from 20 to 25.

Chapter 4: Methodology and Planning Process



Above Left & Right: Members of Galway County Intercultural Forum engaged in the PLA-based integration planning sessions during the final phase of this process in April 2012.

Phase 1: Formation of Interagency Strategy Group

After funding was secured from the Office of the Minister for Integration (now OPMI) in 2010, an Interagency Strategy Group was formed to oversee the development of a long-term Integration Strategy for Galway County. This was made up of local community groups, local development organisations and statutory agencies (a full list of members is outlined in Appendix 1). This Strategy Group established the following terms of reference to guide them in developing the strategy:

- Provide a forum for agencies, groups and the community sector, that are committed to develop the County Galway Integration & Diversity Strategy, to network on a regular basis.
- Exchange information about the work being undertaken by the different agencies/ organisations; notify/update members in relation to existing programmes /services and any new measures being implemented.
- Agree and prioritise tasks within a set timeframe.
- Promote the use of existing supports and services by highlighting what is available.
- Identify gaps and overlaps in the delivery of existing services / programmes.
- Seek opportunities for members to work resourcefully at an inter-agency level.
- Support members to work together and facilitate the development of this new initiative.
- Be accountable as service providers, make every effort to maximise the resources that are available, support a coherent approach to the work on the ground and promote consultation among members prior to the implementation of key actions.
- Share information about existing and new developments and consider existing research/documentation in line with proposed recommendations.
- Establish specific working groups as required.

Phase 2: Initial Consultations by Nollaig McGuinness

The Interagency Steering Group hired an external consultant, Nollaig McGuinness, to help with the development of the Strategy. The consultant carried out preliminary research with a wide variety of stakeholders from the autumn of 2010 through to early 2011. Extensive one-on-one interviews with service providers were held, as well as consultations with communities. The Consultant produced a report on each of the consultations (outlined in Appendix 2), which shows the level of engagement that many local organisations have with ethnic minorities in the County. A total of 24 consultations were held with the following stakeholders:

Preliminary detailed consultations with the immigrant and community development sector:

- 1) The Integration Centre (Jipe Kelly), 15th November 2010
- 2) Galway Refugee Support Group (Triona NicGiolla Choille), 17th November 2010
- 3) Galway Migrant Service (GMS Staff), 24th November 2010
- 4) Dun Gibbons Direct Provision Centre (Patricia Dunford), 26th February 2011
- 5) Gort Family Resource Centre (Annie Rozario), 15th November 2010
- 6) Community Worker with the Brazilian Community in Gort (Frank Murray), January 2011
- 7) Oughterard (Clann) Family Resource Centre (Ann O'Shaughnessy), 8th March 2011
- 8) Na Calai CDP (Telephone consultation)
- 9) Solas FRC, Headford (Telephone consultation)
- 10) Loughrea FRC (Feedback from Aine Deely)
- 11) Galway VEC – English Language Provision (Pascal Lally and Sheila Donnellan)
- 12) Saint Vincent De Paul (Edel Pierce and Luke Tighe)
- 13) Portuguese Association of Ireland (Maria Maneula Silva), March 2011.
- 14) Meadows Cross Cultural Association (Siobhan Byrne), 10th March 2011
- 15) Galway Traveller Movement (Eleanor Clancy), 7th March 2011

Other one-to-one consultations:

- 16) County Galway VEC (Louise Ryan)
- 17) Galway Sports Partnership (Mick Curley)
- 18) Tuam Chamber of Commerce (Sarah Roarty)
- 19) West of Ireland Networking/WIN (Caroline Duggan)
- 20) HSE (Maeve Geraghty-work with Dún Gibbons DPC residents)
- 21) FORUM Connemara (Cathy Keane)
- 22) NUIG (Anne Mac Farlane and Tomas Debrun re GP Guidelines for Cross-Cultural Communication)

Two further focus group discussions were also held by the consultant:

- 23) Dún Gibbons Direct Provision Centre Focus Group, March 2011
- 24) Community Sector Focus Group in Loughrea, 7th March 2011

Phase 3: Preliminary Analysis and Selection of Themes

A preliminary analysis of the consultant's findings was presented at a planning session held in the Pilo Hotel on the 5th May 2011. This session presented the findings of the research carried out and set out a range of potential actions for the Strategy. The full Interagency Strategy Group were invited to this session along with other key people who were not members of the Interagency Group

but who had either been consulted with and/or were involved in some part in integration work. A number of themes and potential actions began to emerge from this preliminary analysis. The analysis of findings was further reviewed and developed at the following series of meetings:

- 26th May 2011 – Meeting with Strategy Subgroup
- 20th July 2011 – Meeting with Strategy Subgroup
- 16th September 2011 – Meeting with Health Subgroup
- 5th October 2011 – Meeting with the Galway County Intercultural Forum
- 4th November 2011 – Meeting with Intercultural Health Forum
- 14th December 2011– Meeting with Galway County Intercultural Forum

During the course of the above series of meetings, a number of subcommittees also met to progress the planning process in relation to each of the specific themes and to report to the interagency working group. Later on a smaller subcommittee, made up of individuals and organisations drawn from these subcommittees, who were deemed to have expertise in the four emerging thematic areas, was set up to work closely on finalising the Strategy. Thus, after a draft of the consultant’s work was presented, the Interagency Strategy Group agreed to conclude the consultant’s engagements and to progress the Strategy with the expertise which existed within the overall Interagency Strategy Group.

Phase 4: Action Planning by Four Thematic Subcommittees

In order to distribute the workload among members of the strategy subcommittee, who were now tasked to develop action plans, four thematic subcommittees were formed as follows:

Thematic Subcommittees	Lead & Supports for Thematic Subcommittees
Education and Training	Gearóid O’Fatharta of Galway County Intercultural Forum led this theme followed by Máire Uí Éanaigh (CGVEC) and was supported by the CGVEC and GRD
Work and Employment	Jipe Kelly of The Integration Centre led this theme and was supported by Galway County Council and Galway Rural Development Company
Access to Public Services/ Health & Housing	Ann Mallaghan of Galway County Council led this theme and was supported by HSE and Galway Refugee Support Group
Community Participation	Donna Gleeson of Galway Rural Development led this theme and was supported by Galway County Council

During early 2012, these thematic subcommittees conducted further consultations with service providers and the County Galway Integration Forum. The consultations focused on exploring the integration measures currently in place with the service providers, challenges faced by minority ethnic communities and possible actions to address the challenges. Organisations consulted at this stage in relation to each of the four themes were also engaged again during the final phase when lead organisations for each action were agreed. Organisations consulted by the thematic subcommittees during both phases 4 and 5 are listed in the table below:

Theme	Organisations Consulted by Thematic Subcommittees in 2012
Education and Training	Citizens Information Centres; Cómhar na nOileán; County Galway VEC; FORUM Connemara; Galway City and County Childcare Committee; Galway County Council; Galway County Intercultural Forum; Galway Family Resource Centres; Galway Rural Development; Galway Traveller Movement; Irish Traveller Movement; NUI, Galway; The Integration Centre; Tuam School Completion Programme; and Western Traveller and Intercultural Development.
Work and Employment	Ballinasloe Jobs Club; Ballinasloe Training for Employment Centre; Citizens Information Centres in Clifden, Rosmuc, Galway and Tuam; FAS Ballinasloe; Forum Letterfrack; Galway City and County Enterprise Board; Galway Rural Development; Employment Mediators and Enterprise Officer; Gort Chamber of Commerce; and WESTBIC.
Access to Public Services/ Health & Housing	Community & Voluntary Groups; County Galway VEC (soon to become Local ETB); FORUM Connemara; Galway County Council (Community & Enterprise Unit, Housing Unit and Libraries Service); Galway County Intercultural Forum; Galway Rural Development Company; Galway Traveller Movement; Galway University Hospitals Group (Diversity Committee, HR Division and Health Promotion Division); HSE (Primary Care Teams, Specialist Screening Units and Traveller Health Unit); Minority Ethnic Groups; The Integration Centre; and Western Traveller and Intercultural Development (WTID).
Community Participation	An Garda Síochána ; Citizen Information Centre; County Galway Sports Partnership; County Galway VEC; FORUM Connemara; Galway County Community & Voluntary Forum; Galway County Council; Galway County Intercultural Forum; Galway Refugee Support Group; Galway Rural Development; Galway Traveller Movement; Galway Volunteer Centre; Gort Family Resource Centre; NUI, Galway; Western Traveller and Intercultural Development (WTID); and Youth Work Ireland Galway.

Phase 5: Finalisation of Planning Process by The Integration Centre

After the one-to-one consultations with agencies were completed it was decided that The Integration Centre should be contracted to facilitate the final phase of this planning process. Thus, a memorandum of understanding was signed in May 2012 between Galway Rural Development Company, HSE and the Integration Centre and the following steps were agreed and carried out by The Integration Centre in conjunction with the members of the Interagency Strategy Group:

- Preparation of charts and materials to be used in PLA-based planning sessions
- Facilitation of two PLA-based integration planning sessions with members of the County Galway Intercultural Forum to update and validate findings of the planning process to date
- Drafting of the Integration Strategy document by collating the following material:
 - Relevant strategies and policy documents
 - Relevant statistics
 - Records of planning methodology used

- Key findings from all phases of the integration planning process
- Action planning matrices in each of the 4 themes
- Presentation of final Strategy document for review and approval

Given that the overall planning process had been on-going since late 2010 it was felt that at this stage the process itself needed some re-vitalisation and the findings needed to be checked and validated to ensure they were still relevant. Thus, a participatory planning process known as Participatory Learning and Action (PLA) was used for this final phase of the process. PLA is an action and learning methodology that was developed in the 1990's to promote the active participation and learning of community members. The interactive nature of tools used in PLA support full stakeholder involvement and cross-cultural communication, regardless of language or literacy abilities.⁶ Overall the PLA process promotes inclusion, integration and co-ownership through steps that bring vitality and partnership to integration planning, and to date it has been used successfully in local integration planning processes in Wicklow, Waterford and Kilkenny.



Above: Charts summarising key issues and the suggested actions to address each issue, as outlined by Galway County Intercultural Forum at one of two PLA-based integration planning sessions in 2012.

Two PLA-based planning sessions were held in Galway with 26 participants from the Galway County Intercultural Forum and some members of the Interagency Strategy Group as follows:

- First PLA-based planning session: 11th April 2012 (14 participants)
- Second PLA-based planning session: 21st May 2012 (12 participants)

These planning sessions aimed to promote the joint-involvement of ethnic minorities and service providers in action planning. The sessions also captured a synopsis of key the integration issues in order to verify and validate the relevance of findings from previous phases of the overall planning process since late-2010. The PLA-based sessions revolved around the following key questions:

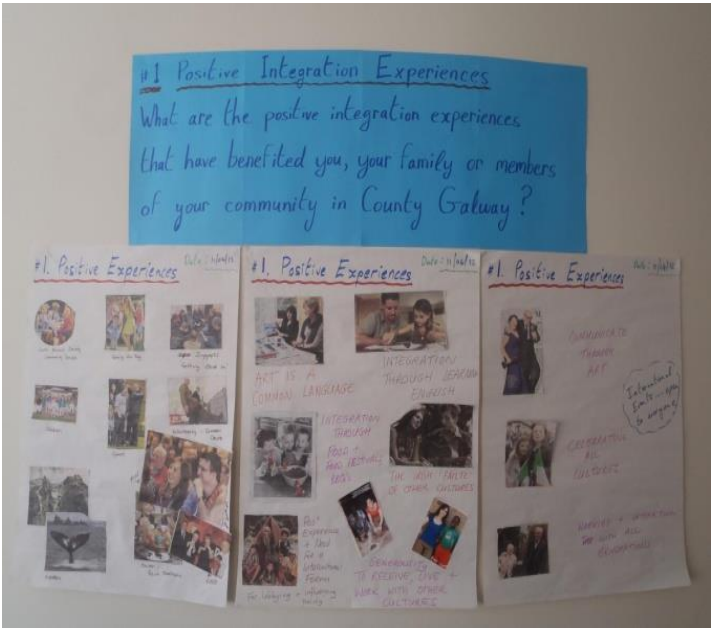
⁶ Invaluable support in how best to apply PLA to integration planning processes has been provided to The Integration Centre by the Centre for Participatory Strategies Galway and their *PLA Training Manual (2011)*.

- 1) What are the positive integration experiences that have benefited you, your family, or members of your community in County Galway?
- 2) What barriers and challenges prevent you, your family, or members of your community from feeling a part of the community in County Galway?
- 3) What actions can be taken to address the barriers and challenges that prevent you, your family, or your community from being integrated in County Galway:
 - (a) by you;
 - (b) by you with support;
 - and (c) by others?

From July to November 2012, The Integration Centre liaised closely with the Interagency Strategy Group, particularly with the lead of each of the four thematic subcommittees in order to ensure emerging actions related to key issues of concern, and that lead organisations were agreed for each action. A number of meetings were held at which draft findings and actions were presented to the Interagency Working Group for review and editing. During this process, suggested actions were prioritised and only those which were seen to have the greatest chance of being implemented in the current environment were selected.

The final Integration Strategy, including action matrices for each of four themes, was presented to the Interagency Strategy Group for final approval in January 2013.

Chapter 5: Overview of Key Findings



Charts summarising some of the existing positive integration initiatives, as outlined using a photo-language exercise during the PLA-based planning sessions.

Inclusive sporting activities were named as one of many existing positive integration initiatives in Galway.

Background to Findings

In County Galway, the consultation process has gone on over some time, and has involved meetings with community groups and one-on-one meetings with service providers, all undertaken by the original research consultant, Nollaig McGuinness, as well as focus groups in Loughrea, and the Pilo Hotel, both in 2011. A detailed overview of these initial findings, which informed subsequent phases in the overall planning process, can be found in Appendix 2.

The Interagency Strategy Group developed these findings further in 2012 through the work of four thematic subcommittees and with two PLA-based planning sessions facilitated by The Integration Centre, with members of Galway County Intercultural Forum. Findings from these sessions were also complemented by the work of each of the four subgroups, informing the four themes of: Education and Training; Employment and Work; Health and Access to Services; and Community Participation. In addition the plan acknowledged the extensive consultation undertaken with Travellers as part of the County Galway Traveller Interagency Strategy.

This chapter is divided into two overall sections, the first of which outlines positive integration initiatives that have been noted in Galway County, while the second section examines challenges that need to be addressed. In addition, each section is further sub-divided according to the four themes mentioned above.

1. Positive Integration Initiatives in Galway County

There is no doubt that many agencies and community groups in County Galway have directly engaged with Minority Ethnic Communities, have identified their needs, and have designed specific supports, developing a range of initiatives to support integration around the county. This work bodes well for the future, should be recognised and built upon. The following is a list of these initiatives:

Education and Training

1.1 Integration through Learning English

Immigrants themselves noted that learning English, which has largely been provided through the CGVEC English for Speaker of Other Languages (ESOL) programmes, has been crucial to their integration. Improving their language skills helps immigrants in education and employment but it also provides a direct means of communicating in the community with neighbours, in shops, at the school gate, and at school meetings. As immigrants become confident in the use of English, they can engage with neighbours and build new communities. Classes also provide a means for immigrants to understand local cultural norms, rules of the road, electoral issues, etc., all of which help newcomers to feel at home in Ireland.

The Adult Literacy and Community Education Service in CG VEC provide literacy and language supports for students whose first language is not English through the ESOL programmes throughout the county. Specific programmes focus on Family Learning SCÉAL, Understanding the Curriculum, and Creative Communications. There is also the Back to Education Initiative (BTEI) which is accessible to all learners throughout the County and is certified at FETAC Level 3-6.

1.2 Development of the Intercultural Resource Booklet for County Galway

This Intercultural Resource Booklet is a valuable, county-wide information booklet for all international newcomers to County Galway, listing relevant service providers and contact details. This useful resource booklet, published in May 2011, was developed by the Galway Refugee Support Group (GRSG) – no longer in operation due to loss of funding- with the support of the Office for the Promotion of Migrant Integration and Galway County Council. Similarly, Sergeant Brendan Moore of An Garda Síochána, Gort and Mr. Isaias Silva developed and published a key resource entitled; “Driving In Ireland, A guide for Immigrants”/”Dirigindo Na Irlanda; Um Guia para Imigrantes.” This has proven to be an invaluable tool for the local community, and has been distributed via the Garda Station and The Family & Community Resource Centre.

1.3 Learning Irish Language and Culture

Some immigrants expressed the welcome and generosity they experienced from Irish people and the great pleasure they found in coming to understand Irish culture, dance and music. Immigrants living in Connemara in particular expressed the wish to engage with the Gaelteacht regions.

1.4 School Activities that Promote Intercultural Learning

Some primary schools in County Galway have been involved in activities which promote intercultural learning. The Educate Together National School in Kilcolgan has organised intercultural training for their pupils in various classes. They have also held different events such as the annual ‘International

Day' and exhibitions which celebrate the different cultures represented in the school. They have also taken part in the "Show Racism the Red Card" programme, which portrays racism as a negative influence in the sporting arena to their pupils. Gaelscoil Riabhach, Loughrea has been awarded the Irish Traveller Movement "Yellow Flag" (Brat Bui). This is a series of eight steps that bring issues of interculturalism, equality and diversity into the whole school programme. The school designed and delivered a comprehensive Action Plan which successfully culminated in being granted the Flag and significantly raising awareness amongst the broader school community including students, board, staff and parents. GRD under the LCDP programme are supporting the ITM to roll a second Yellow Flag initiative in a primary school in Co Galway in 2013.

1.5 Interagency Partnership in Supporting Clifden-based Asylum Seekers

Interagency collaboration proved to be the key in supporting Asylum Seekers living in Clifden to engage in education and training programmes. At the beginning of each year the Direct Provision Centre Manager carried out a review of the previous year's activities and held consultations with residents to identify priorities. This feedback from residents on their current needs formed the basis of the yearly activity programme. Activities included English language classes, physical and nutritional education, non-formal education programmes and an accredited programme in hairdressing. Social events including a Christmas party, summer outings, and day trips were also organised as part of the yearly programme.

An Activities Management Committee was formed to coordinate this support, through which the following groups and agencies came together: HSE West, County Galway VEC, Galway Refugee Support Group, the Management of Dún Gibbons DPC, Galway County Council Social Inclusion Unit and FORUM Connemara. The agencies combined funding and other resources to support these activities each year and regular meetings were held to monitor progress and identify issues at an early stage.

1.6 Broader Understanding that Promotes Integration

Many statutory and Community and Voluntary Agencies and Groups train their staff in Intercultural Awareness Training, Equality Training, Communication Across Cultural Barriers Training amongst others to raise awareness and empathy amongst staff and volunteers in their dealings with their broader client group. This training then permeates into the culture of the organisation and creates understanding between the diverse clients with their service provider and other service users. An example of this training in County Galway is the Ballindereen Community Childcare Crèche where the FETAC Level 6 Diversity Training completed by the Deputy Manager helped her to bring knowledge of interculturalism to the work of the Crèche, the staff, the children and the parents. Members of the Interagency have also undertaken Intercultural training throughout the development of the Strategy.

Employment and Work

1.7 Learning English to Improve Employment Opportunities

As noted above in sub-section 1.1, knowledge of the local language is an invaluable tool when trying to contribute to the creation of a more integrated society. In a similar manner, initiatives that help minority ethnic individuals to learn English also improve the chance of finding employment and contribute towards the creation of more integrated and inclusive workplaces.

1.8 Volunteering as a Pathway to Employment

As has been mentioned earlier, improving English skills proved invaluable in terms of how it increases an individual's chances of getting work. Similarly, volunteering provides opportunities to learn new skills and to prepare for future engagement with the labour market in Ireland. Understanding the work culture of Irish organisations, a willingness to contribute to one's community and developing English language skills through volunteering has been beneficial to immigrants in their job searches. This consultation and planning process found that some immigrants have volunteered with community and voluntary organisations to acquire additional skills and improve their employment prospects. Although employment opportunities are now limited in the community and voluntary sector due to the economic downturn, which has significantly affected this sector, the skills learned through volunteering prepare people for future engagement with the labour market in Ireland.

The Galway Volunteer Centre (GVC) has asylum seekers accounting for 10% of their registered volunteers. Volunteering provides ample opportunities for immigrants to engage with their communities, to learn new skills, and to prepare for future engagement with the labour market in Ireland. Although there have been challenges faced in the placement of asylum-seeking volunteers, the GVC has undertaken research and gained valuable insight into how the organisation can best support asylum seekers registered with the service.

1.9 GRD Employment Mediators and Enterprise Officer

The GRD Employment Mediators Outreach services (covering Glenamaddy, Dunmore, Headford, Woodford, Gort, Ballinasloe, Ballygar, Loughrea, Oranmore, Tuam and Portumna) have had positive engagement with immigrants, and have assisted people with employment related difficulties including helping them with CV preparation/presentation, interview skills including doing mock interviews with immigrants to help them prepare for job interviews.

The Back to Work Enterprise Officer in GRD also has positive engagement with approximately 8% of clients being from Minority Ethnic backgrounds. The role of the Enterprise Officer is to provide key supports to individuals who are in receipt of the Job Seekers payment in progressing into self-employment. The Officer liaises with the Department of Social Protection in an effort to assist those who wish to develop a business idea into a viable self-employment project. Training and income support payments are made available to those who meet the required criteria of the Back to Work Enterprise Allowance and the Short Term Enterprise Allowance schemes.

1.10 Practical Employment & Business Support Provided by CICs

The CICs in Tuam, Clifden, Rosmuc and Galway provide practical support to immigrants in a number of areas to help them access employment and set up businesses in the county. The CICs provide information and advice on tax issues, social welfare entitlements related to back to work initiatives and general advice and assistance with starting your own business.

1.11 The GRSG Power Mentoring Programme

The Galway Refugee Support Group (GRSG) *Power Mentoring Programme* specifically targeted immigrants to help them access the labour market. Ballinasloe Jobs Club provided related services

and Training for Employment, with additional supports. All of these programmes have lessened the difficulties that immigrants face in understanding and approaching the Irish labour market.

Health and Access to Services

1.12 Regional Intercultural Health Forum

This one-day forum, held in Tuam in November 2010, was organised by the Galway County Diversity and Integration Strategy Health Committee. The forum brought together many agencies and projects in the HSE West area which are addressing the health needs of immigrants in Galway County. There was good attendance from key agencies such as the HSE and this provided opportunities for projects and agencies to network and share information and ideas on major health related issues as well as barriers and challenges faced by immigrants in the county.

1.13 Intercultural Mediators Trained to Assist with Health Issues

Some minority ethnic community members were trained as Intercultural Mediators who could be used to provide appropriate intercultural mediation between minority ethnic communities and service providers. Although the intercultural mediators have not been fully utilized, it is hoped that, with the establishment and full-functioning of the Galway County Intercultural Forum, links will be established and programmes will be developed to encourage service providers to access the intercultural mediators.

1.14 Diversity Committee established in Galway University Hospitals Group (GUH)

A Diversity Steering Committee was established in Galway University Hospitals (GUH) to ensure that diversity is embraced throughout GUH. This Committee consisted of a number of disciplines including front line staff; senior management; community and voluntary organisations working to promote diversity in the Galway area; service users and other interested individuals. The Committee worked towards achieving the actions set out in the HSE National Intercultural Health Strategy (2007 – 2012), and towards making UHG take a leading role in promoting diversity and equal opportunities in Galway, as opposed to merely meeting the basic legislative requirements. Examples of the work undertaken by the Committee include: Cultural Diversity training for staff; new policies for interpreting services; English language classes for staff and theme days with catering services.

1.15 Guideline for Communication in Cross- cultural General Practice Consultations

This Guideline for enhancing communication in cross-cultural general practice consultations was developed by the Discipline of General Practice, NUI, Galway in partnership with the Centre for Participatory Strategies, Galway and the HSE National Social Inclusion Unit. The Guideline provides a menu of options of acceptable strategies that stakeholders could consider using to support communication in cross-cultural consultations, depending on specific needs and circumstances. It was developed as a direct and practical response to the reality that service users with limited English and their GPs face significant challenges on a daily basis in their consultations together because they do not have a shared language or cultural background. This frequently results in misunderstandings and communication breakdowns, which are distressing and unsatisfactory for all involved. The Guideline was funded by the Health Research Board (HRB) and the HSE National Social Inclusion Unit through a HRB Partnership Award.

1.16 Traveller Peer Led Primary Health Care

Two peer led Traveller Primary Health Care Projects are in existence in the county, with GTM and WTID, supported by the HSE and with the support of FAS for training. 'Primary Health Care' has been identified and used as an innovative approach to health care in the developing world. There has been a growing interest and demand for such a service in the developed world as evidence from studies which indicate that the expanding marginalised populations here are suffering disproportionately from poor health and have less access to health care services. The concept of Primary Health Care was established at the joint WHO/UNICEF conference in Alma-Ata in 1978 (Pavee Point, 2005).

The Traveller Peer Led Primary Health Care projects have trained Traveller women to work as Community Health Workers in their own communities and with relevant agencies. This includes health promotion, advocacy and support with the Traveller community, as well as representation, training and engagement with relevant health and other agencies. The model recognises social determinants of health as being a key impact on health.

Community Participation

1.17 Galway County Intercultural Forum

During the initial consultation process immigrants and service providers identified the need for an Integration Forum, where both immigrants and service providers could come together, discuss their difficulties and work together to find positive solutions. In response, the Galway County Intercultural Forum was set up in 2011. This Forum provides an opportunity to members of the immigrant community to collaborate, network and give peer support on issues that are important and relevant to them. The Forum also aims to disseminate information to all immigrant communities in County Galway and to provide a link between their communities and the local people. The Forum meetings, which happen quarterly, have been well attended, generally with 20-25 participants. On many occasions there have been guest speakers to address relevant topics. Some members hope that this group can also be used for lobbying to influence policy relating to immigrant issues. Membership consists of immigrant community representatives from different parts of County Galway.

It is hoped that the running of the Forum will be transferred to the community through an elected structure from the Forum membership which is largely made up of immigrant community leaders. There will however be continued support from Galway County Council and other statutory, community and voluntary organisations involved in the Diversity and Integration Strategy.

1.18 Activities and Festivals that Promote Integration

Community Groups, local NGOs, Galway County Council, Local Development Companies, the Community and Voluntary Forum, and schools have organised events and Intercultural Festivals that encourage immigrant groups to celebrate and showcase their indigenous cultures, showcasing food, music, dance, dress, etc. Art activities were especially noted as having a "universal language" in which all could take part. Much of this type of activity was funded through the Office of the Minister for Integration Small Grants Funding (€ 30,000 received in 2010 and € 20,000 2011) was allocated and distributed through the Community and Enterprise Unit of Galway County Council while some was raised locally or contributed by other agencies. Activities that have been noted are an

Intercultural Summer Camp for 8-13 year olds, the His and Hers Co-operative Society, the Oranmore Multicultural Fashion Show, the Tuam Intercultural Food Event, the His and Her Intercultural Group, the Galway Multicultural Choir, the Gort Community and Family Resource Centre in collaboration with the Galway Arts Centres' "Image Making" Integration Arts Project which culminated in an exhibition, the Ballinasloe Intercultural Festival, the intercultural project for local primary schools in Oughterard, Killanin, Moycullen and Derrglen areas which was co-ordinated by Clann Resource Centre Oughterard. There are indeed many more events not mentioned. These activities give confidence to immigrant groups, and allow them to celebrate and share their cultures. They also provide an excellent opportunity for the Irish population to learn about and to understand their new neighbours. Immigrants have also expressed their positive attitudes towards Irish family values that they have learned about through community activities. GRD under the LCDP programme have supported many integration activities in the county including in 2012, an Integration Grants Scheme to build the capacity of Minority Ethnic Groups in the county and support integration activities in Schools.

1.19 Inclusive Sporting Activities

County Galway Sports Partnership has already undertaken targeted sports events and camps that have attracted immigrant youth. They remain committed to focus on interculturalism through training, awareness raising and supporting the role of national groups that promote diversity such as Show Racism the Red Card. Outstanding successes include the Multicultural Sports Camp in Oranmore in 2011, the Dún Gibbons Summer Camp in 2010 and 2011 and the Tuam Handball Integration Skills Camp. County Galway Sports Partnership also liaises with a number of sports bodies and events such as the FAI, *Integration and Social Inclusion Workshop* in Dublin, FUTSAL Family Sports Days, and the Street Leagues initiative targeted at asylum seekers, to ensure that minority ethnic groups in County Galway actively participate in sporting events and activities. The Gort FRC worked with the support teacher for the Brazilian community at Gort Community School, in accessing funding to provide intercultural sporting activities such as Sea Kayaking and Windsurfing. The GAA is also developing an inclusion and integration plan which seeks to encourage the participation of minority ethnic communities in GAA, and invited minority ethnic community leaders to one of its round of Connacht meetings held in Oranmore in May 2012.

1.20 Specific Projects that Target Minority Ethnic Youth

The CGVEC is currently focusing on youth work that is inclusive of immigrants, and is working closely with the National Youth Council of Ireland (NYCI) to promote best practice to promote diversity and inclusion. Comhairle na nÓg also worked with the NYCI to deliver Intercultural Awareness Training for Youth Workers in 2010. Comhairle na nÓg is actively involved with Youth Work Ireland/Western Traveller and Intercultural Development, and they are planning to engage more with young people from the new communities now living in County Galway. Also, CGVEC together with NYCI have carried out a Diversity Survey of funded youth projects and Youthreach Centres in County Galway.

1.21 Building Relationships and Bridging Barriers through Volunteering

Ten percent of the registered volunteers at the GVC are asylum seekers. Volunteering provides opportunities for immigrants to engage with their communities, to learn new skills, and to prepare for future engagement with the labour market in Ireland. Although there have been challenges faced

in placing asylum-seeking volunteers, the GVC has undertaken research and gained a valuable insight into how the organisation can best support these registered users of the service.

1.22 Dedicated Community Worker or Support Group for Immigrants

The consultations have shown that immigrants or marginalised groups feel most supported when there is a dedicated Community Worker or Community Support Group to assist them in the difficulties surrounding settling in a new country and culture. Particular areas of best practice were in Gort where there was a Community Worker who actually spoke Portuguese, complimented by the Portuguese Association in Ireland. Similarly, in the Dún Gibbons Direct Provision Centre, there was an Interagency team involving FORUM Connemara; the HSE, the Centres Manager and the CGVEC, while the Family Resource Centres in Oughterard, Gort and Loughrea developed support groups and specific activities for new communities. Community Development Projects appear to be the key to successful integration measures. The Western Traveller and Intercultural Development is a community project working successfully with the local Traveller community and the wider community, providing a crèche and after school facilities, as well as other community events and supports.

1.23 Using Libraries for Integration

Throughout Ireland, libraries have been open and welcoming places for immigrants. An example of good practice is Westside Library, which, in association with the Westside Resource Centre and Galway County Council's Social Inclusion Unit, held its first Human Library in March 2011. In the Human Library, instead of borrowing books, "readers" can borrow a Traveller, an Older Person, a Teenager, an Immigrant, a member of An Garda Síochána and many others for a chat. The Human Library will allow "readers" to have a candid chat with "human books" (people), and the aim is to challenge prejudices and stereotypes that we may have around professions and people.

During the 2009 local elections, some libraries in the county (e.g. Oranmore and Tuam) hosted voter awareness events that targeted immigrants. These events were organised by Galway County Council in partnership with The Integration Centre and Galway Refugee Support Group. Gort FRC organised a visit from the Domestic Workers' Action Group to Gort library to perform a striking drama highlighting the issues facing immigrants working in Irish homes. Also, voter awareness leaflets printed as part of this campaign were distributed to the libraries for dissemination to immigrants who used the library.

1.24 Information and Advocacy Supports

Galway Traveller Movement is involved in local information and advocacy work on key issues for the Traveller Community such as health, accommodation, education, employment and anti-racism, and is actively involved in the wider diversity and integration sector in Galway. The Western Traveller and Intercultural Development community project is also involved in policy and campaign work.

Until January 2013, the Integration Centre's Galway Regional Office provided two information and advocacy clinics per week in conjunction with the Galway's Citizen Information Centre (CIC). Diversity training was also provided to mainstream service providers and capacity building support to local immigrant groups. The Integration Centre continues to engage in local policy work including support for the development of local integration strategies. The Information and Advocacy clinics are now provided by the CIC. These clinics provide great support to newcomers struggling with the Irish immigration system, and difficulties with citizenship, social welfare, the HRC, access to employment,

workplace discrimination, language and literacy issues, access to education grants and issues of racism. The Integration Centre is a national organisation which also does research, policy work, and advocacy to promote integration throughout Ireland.

The Galway Refugee Support Group has done great outreach work in the Direct Provision Centres (DPCs) which involves information, advocacy, group development and service development within DPCs, as well as research and peer support projects in the areas of health and education, while also playing an active policy role through participation in the NGO Alliance and Forum on Direct Provision. They also developed the Intercultural Resource Booklet.

The Citizens Information Centres and Services in Tuam and Clifden also provide useful information, advocacy and advisory services to immigrants on barriers related to their rights, entitlements and access to services. These services are of particular importance to immigrants - who can drop in at any time (when the service is open) if they have pressing issues that seem to infringe on their rights, entitlements and access to services. Similarly, some FRCs in County Galway offer such advice and endeavour to make the information accessible. Gort FRC, for example, translated the "Break Free" Domestic Violence Information leaflet into six languages. They were assisted with Portuguese translation by the Portuguese Association of Ireland.

1.25 Promotion of Integration in Local Media

Connemara Community Radio (CCR) had undertaken extensive work with asylum seekers who were accommodated in Dún Gibbons Direct Provision Centre (DPC), Clifden, before this centre was closed in 2012. Programmes organised and the opportunities provided for residents in this centre to participate in the Radio Station activities helped residents to improve their mental health; allowed them to utilise and retain their skills; helped them develop new skills; helped to build their self-esteem and also helped families to integrate into the wider community. Media training was organised for residents and this provided them the opportunity to be involved in other activities in the radio station such as researching, editing and presenting radio programmes. Residents of the Dún Gibbons DPC produced a series of excellent educational programmes which were very informative for the listeners of Connemara Community Radio. Residents informed the wider community about their countries; their customs and their cultures, which to some extent helped to break down cultural barriers and alleviated the fear that existed within the local population.

CCR also partnered with AkiDwA (a Dublin-based National Network of Migrant Women organisation) as part of the European Year for Combating Poverty & Social Exclusion 2010 to organise a program in Clifden Town Hall which highlighted social inclusion issues in Ireland and the extent to which these issues affect immigrant communities.

2. Key Challenges to Integration in Galway County



Discussions to outline and categorise key challenges to integration in Galway County during a PLA-based integration planning session.



Reviewing summary charts of the key challenges in order to identify overlaps in relation to core areas named by different subgroups.

As can be seen from the previous section, County Galway has made great strides in its integration initiatives. Dedicated efforts have been made to promote inclusion and diversity. However, we are all on a learning curve, and consultations with immigrants provide challenges to our thinking, and suggest gaps and difficulties with existing services, as well as suggestions for new and more inclusive practices. Likewise, service providers learn from experience and from national and international initiatives on an ongoing basis. In the spirit of strengthening inclusiveness and integration within the county, we must examine the challenges that have arisen in our research and consultations.

Listed below are the major challenges that have been identified during the consultation and planning processes in Galway County. It will be noted that the first two issues outlined below cut across all four themes of this Strategy, while the remaining challenges relate to one or other of the four themes.

Challenges that Cut across all Four Themes

2.1 Racism, Discrimination and Negative Stereotyping

Myths, lack of information, and ignorance about other cultures, and about the immigration system in Ireland have led to insults, name-calling, and occasional physical abuse based on ethnicity, colour and nationality, as reported by those involved in this planning process. Such incidents contribute to a culture of fear for both new and host communities. Minority ethnic communities also feel discriminated against and rejected when they apply for vital services and benefits such as social welfare benefits, registering with a GP, enrolling their children in schools etc. In particular, people who were consulted from the immigrants community revealed that sometimes their community members are refused legitimate entitlements for apparently no just reason and will be forced to go through an arduous appeal procedure before their benefits can be reinstated. This has caused undue burden to many immigrants living in County Galway and their families.

In the consultation process, reference was made to the negative perspective taken by the media on occasion. In addition, immigrants raised issues related to institutional discrimination and how they

felt it is embodied in the treatment of immigrants by some government agencies. Also, significant for County Galway was the reference made (by some immigrants) to the negative racial abuse towards African taxi drivers.

Similar racism and negative stereotyping is also clearly experienced by the Traveller Community in Galway, and their needs must also be identified and addressed.

2.2 Communication Difficulties and Lack of Information

This issue cuts right across all the other listings in this section. Immigrants expressed a general lack of awareness about existing resources and services that are in place and available to immigrants. They also noted the absence of user-friendly information on a number of areas that are relevant to their integration in County Galway. In particular, reference was made to lack of dedicated services that provide targeted information about employment and business opportunities in the county that are relevant to immigrants; information about education and training opportunities and services; information about health related matters and services; and information about community events, including sports and leisure activities (also for children) in the county.

As immigrants are not aware of the community activities in County Galway, they tend to keep to themselves, believing that there is “nothing to do.” This leads to a great sense of isolation, complicated by the general fears surrounding community engagement. Also, due to the transient nature of the way some immigrants live in the county, many key immigrants who have established good community connections leave or move on, and both the indigenous and immigrant communities lose key contacts and information providers. Cultural misunderstandings can also complicate issues, where for example many immigrants are unfamiliar with the Irish Pub Culture and cannot relate to it as a means of socialising. Naturally, language challenges also contribute to lack of information and misunderstandings.

Education and Training

2.3 Difficulties with the Irish Education System

The Irish education system can be difficult to understand for new parents and new students, especially if a family’s first language is not English. Budget cuts have reduced language support funding in schools, which makes learning very challenging for students who do not speak or understand written English. Likewise, immigrant parents are unfamiliar with the system, have language difficulties, and do not understand how they can support their children in schools.

While immigrant children are allowed free education through primary and secondary school, children of many immigrants, particularly those who have *Leave to Remain*, *Work Permit* or *Green Card* status must pay prohibitive international-student fees for third level, which makes it almost impossible for them to progress in the system.

Those involved in the consultations noted that teachers and principals often have difficulties in identifying their international students’ ethnicities, their educational level, and their immigrant status, all of which make it difficult to offer their students the most appropriate services.

2.4 General Difficulties around Training

Training can be difficult to access for many reasons. Many immigrant parents, particularly if they are single, share a common concern with Irish parents in that they cannot access training because of childcare issues, and transport difficulties (both availability and cost in rural regions). If there are supports regarding childcare, they need to be made available to immigrants in an easily accessible format. Many immigrants felt that information regarding all education programmes, including primary and secondary schools, supports, and training was either inadequate or not reaching the appropriate target groups.

Also, different levels of training are not available in each and every community, so progression can be difficult for immigrants, particularly when they do not have a car, and experience the transport problems previously listed.

On top of these difficulties, lack of proficiency in English inhibits access for learners who wish to engage fully in Adult Education Programmes, especially accredited programmes.

Employment and Work

2.5 Language Barriers Impeding Employment

This presents considerable difficulties for immigrants who often have problems presenting their skills or business ideas when looking for jobs or when looking for support to establish or grow a business. Sometimes, even if an immigrant has prepared an excellent CV, he or she must defend it in interview, which is often compounded by language difficulties. In a typical Gaelteacht area like Connemara, lack of Irish could also pose problems to access employment and succeed in business.

2.6 Work Discrimination and Exploitation

Many people from minority ethnic groups in County Galway are in low paid jobs with little or no promotion or career advancement. Many immigrants are employed as domestic workers; care workers and services in hotels. There is anecdotal evidence that at times, they are paid below the minimum wage requirements, and are sometimes obliged to work longer hours with no additional pay by a minority of unscrupulous employers. Immigrants are often offered short term contracts or work without contracts and anecdotally are reported to be refused wages. They often feel that they are treated less favourably.

2.7 Limited Engagement by Local Business Support Networks

There is little engagement between immigrants and the local business support networks, and very few immigrants have received formal support from these business networks. Some local business support networks felt that projects presented by immigrants for support, often fall short of the innovation required to attract support from them. It was also highlighted that sometimes projects are presented at a very early start-up stage with no clear feasibility or success path, and sometimes even if an immigrant presents a very good business plan, he or she would face difficulties defending it due to language difficulties.

2.8 Lack of Information on Business and Employment Opportunities in County Galway

There are no dedicated services providing targeted and user friendly information to immigrants on the business and employment opportunities in County Galway. Although information about jobs and business opportunities is always provided by the mainstream media (usually in English), immigrants still find it difficult to access it due to language barrier.

2.9 Employment Permit Issues

The current Irish immigration system that ties Work Permit to a particular employer has often caused immigrants to become undocumented and subjected to exploitation. Many immigrants have become destitute in the County because they could not renew their employment permits. In the consultation process, it was also emphasized that employers in County Galway often do not understand different immigration statuses. We have been told of cases where employers would ask some immigrants to produce documentation which they do not hold or require, such as the example of a Refugee being asked to produce a passport.

2.10 Difficulties with Qualification Recognition

Many immigrants do not get the recognition for the certificates they have achieved through previous qualifications they obtained in their home countries. A majority of employers are not familiar and would have limited knowledge on qualifications obtained out of Ireland and the UK. It is therefore difficult to translate both their work experience and qualifications, as there are no local services in the county to help with this. It can take a considerable amount of time to get a qualification, acquired in a foreign country, matched to Ireland's equivalent through the National Qualification Authority Ireland, which is based in Dublin.

2.11 Fear and Anxiety about Social Welfare

Difficulty in accessing social welfare was also identified as a key issue in the consultations. This is obviously a critical issue for people given the current environment of high unemployment and continuing job losses. The main issue identified here is the difficulty some immigrants face in satisfying the Habitual Residence Condition (HRC) in order to qualify for social welfare support. Organisations working with immigrants reported that it has become increasingly difficult for immigrants to fulfil the HRC and also reported inconsistencies as to how the HRC is being applied.

The experiences of some immigrants in dealing with social welfare bottlenecks quickly spread within their community. This creates fear and anxiety, and cause people to worry about losing their important entitlements if they get a low paid job. Hence, people are not motivated to engage in a reasonable effort to get a job. Myths created by the emergency tax trap also discourage people from looking for jobs.

Health and Access to Services

2.12 Accessing Culturally-Appropriate Health Services

Evidence stemming from the consultation reveals that immigrants have found it difficult to access health care that is sensitive and appropriate to their diverse cultural, religious and spiritual needs. This is compounded by language difficulties, misunderstandings, inappropriate translations often

provided by their children and limited income. Undocumented migrants are often reluctant or unable to access health services due to their precarious immigration status. Asylum seekers in Direct Provision may experience considerable and prolonged mental health difficulties and although they are entitled to medical cards and can access free medical services, as persons lawfully resident in the State, they are also faced with difficulties due to their limited income, as they are not allowed to work and are paid €19.10 per adult and €9.60 per child per week. At the time of our consultation, there was a Direct Provision centre in Clifden. Residents in this centre faced difficulties to access healthcare services, or to support families to access healthcare services in Galway City. Many misunderstandings in the provision of healthcare services to immigrants are caused by unwritten rules of culture which are difficult for newcomers to understand. Also, many immigrants suffer low self-esteem which is caused by deepened social isolation.

2.13 Difficulties in Accessing Public Services

Particular mention (in the consultation) was made in this section about the considerable difficulties that minority ethnic communities face in accessing Public Services. There is a strong lack of information and awareness among immigrant communities about the Irish public services, their statutory entitlements to services, and how they are delivered locally. Also, lack of public transport, particularly in rural areas, makes accessing all public services difficult for immigrants who have no cars.

2.14 Difficulties Experienced by Ethnic Minorities in Accessing Statutory Supports

Immigrants in County Galway face difficulties in accessing statutory support such as social housing. It was highlighted that people who qualified for social housing support in other counties often found themselves homeless when they move to Galway as their application to be included in the County Council Housing list is refused. Also, people are refused social housing due to the misinterpretation (by some officers) of the Department of Environment, Community and Local Government circular entitled “Access to Social Housing Supports for non-nationals – including clarification re Stamp 4 holders” of 7 December 2011. Denial of social housing to people can also affect other social welfare entitlements, which can cause desperation among immigrants and their families.

2.15 Lack of Dedicated Social Workers for Direct Provision Centres

Residents of Direct Provision Centres suffer tremendous isolation, poverty, mental health difficulties and lack of motivation that inhibits their engagement in the wider community. If a Social Worker could be made available for each centre, there would be a contact point for residents to deal with their problems, and to explore means to engage with the outside world. As the situation stands, residents have to rely on community support groups, NGOs and outside agencies to help solve their ongoing problems.

Community Participation

2.16 Limited Interest in Interculturalism

Many immigrants involved in this process, felt that local communities have little interest in promoting or hosting or engaging in interculturalism and intercultural activities. Perceived little cultural understanding between new and established communities further contributes to apathy

relating to involvement in intercultural activities. It was felt that many do not even understand what culture is, and what contribution different cultures can make to society.

2.17 Isolation and the Lack of Social Spaces to Interact

Immigrants find it difficult to initiate social interaction and intercultural exchange. Although living in communities, they are often unaware of local activities, amenities, and the resources that exist for them. They find it difficult to initiate engagement, to source local information, and often feel socially isolated. For some, the lack of viable opportunities for volunteering contributes to a sense of social isolation when a willingness to get involved remains fruitless.

Frequently there is a lack of public meeting places where immigrants can engage with each other and with the wider community. Those consulted believed that it is difficult to get involved in or initiate new groups, for examples drama groups, without financial support or available community meeting places.

2.18 Difficulties Maintaining Momentum of Minority Ethnic Groups

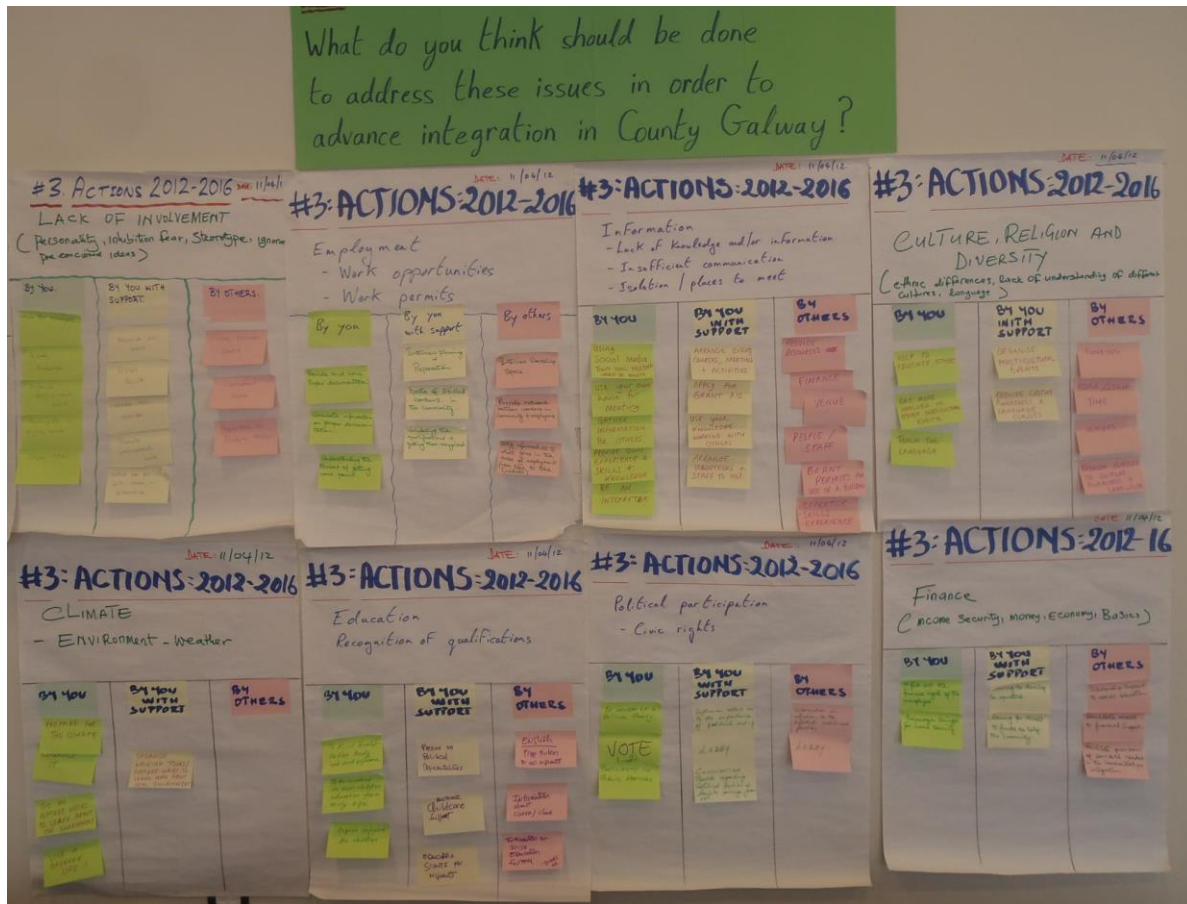
In addition to meeting spaces, minority ethnic groups need administrative support, assistance in applying for and securing grants, and general capacity-building skills.

Even when voluntary groups have been well-formed, leaders can move, leaving groups on their own, with no contact point to the outside community. Service providers are also often frustrated when they lose contact with these community leaders, and find it difficult to keep volunteers and participants motivated to attend meetings, and to keep the group momentum going.

2.19 Low Levels of Civic Engagement

Although many immigrants have actual voting rights, and are eligible to contest local elections, they are often unaware of these rights, and how the election process works in Ireland. It was suggested that local civic groups and political parties could offer greater information to immigrants and would benefit from their involvement in the electoral process.

Chapter 6: Action Plan 2013 – 2017



This four-year action plan sets out a programme goal and a number of specific objectives and actions for each of the following four thematic areas:

- Theme 1: Education and Training
- Theme 2: Employment and Work
- Theme 3: Health and Access to Services
- Theme 4: Community Participation

Each of the four action plans is prefaced with a summary recap of the related positive initiatives and challenges outlined earlier in the findings chapter. Lead organisations have been agreed and are clearly indicated for each action below. A number of possible strategic partners are also listed for each action, but the level of their involvement may vary and will depend upon available time and/or other resources at the time of implementation. Indicative timeframes and expected results are also detailed for each action in order to assist with the implementation and monitoring of this long-term Integration Strategy for Galway County.

Theme 1: Education and Training

Programme Goal: To increase the educational attainment of minority ethnic groups and their children in County Galway

Strategic Objectives:

- To increase awareness amongst minority ethnic groups on the education and training programmes organised in County Galway
- To provide opportunities for interagency information sharing on the challenges and barriers faced by minority ethnic groups on education and training, as well as good practices, that can lead to the development of a good referral protocol between agencies
- To ensure that minority ethnic groups in County Galway can participate in education and training without undue anxiety

Relevant Positive Integration Initiatives in Co. Galway	Relevant Integration Challenges in Co. Galway
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integration through learning English • Development of the Intercultural Resource Booklet for County Galway • Learning Irish language and culture • School activities that promote intercultural learning • Interagency partnership in supporting Clifden-based asylum seekers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficulties with the Irish education system • General difficulties around training • Racism, discrimination and negative stereotyping • Communication difficulties and lack of information

Actions	Lead Organisation	Strategic Partners	Expected Results	Timeframe
1.1 Identify, track and document issues of access and progression for minority ethnic communities including a review of current practices in delivering basic language education through identified research and share with the relevant agencies.	CGVEC/GRD/FORUM (Research Funding) Strategy Group	Intercultural forum The Integration Centre Other relevant stakeholders Members of the Integration and Diversity Committee	- The identification of gaps in education and language provision and strategies for addressing these gaps. (This can inform action 1.3).	2013-2014

<p>1.2 Continue to provide Adult Literacy ESOL, Family Learning and Parenting Programmes with an emphasis on innovative approaches.</p>	<p>CGVEC</p>	<p>FRC's The Integration Centre Members of Integration and Diversity Committee GRD/FORUM County Parenting Forum Other relevant stakeholders</p>	<p>- The provision of a range of educational supports for individuals and families which will adequately meet their needs.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
<p>1.3 Disseminate information about educational opportunities for ex. ESOL for parents, accredited programmes and supports available including childcare using information networks and platforms that target minority ethnic communities.</p>	<p>Intercultural Forum</p>	<p>FRC's The Integration Centre GRD/FORUM CGVEC GCCCC WTID/GTM Citizens Information Centres NUI, Galway Other relevant stakeholders</p>	<p>- Increased access to educational opportunities and supports for ethnic minorities. - Develop regular bulletins on ESOL opportunities on social media platforms Regular promotion of ESOL opportunities through local media.</p>	<p>2013</p>
<p>1.4 Create opportunities to bring various stakeholders involved in education provision together in order to develop an integrated service for minority ethnic communities.</p>	<p>Galway County Council</p>	<p>FRC's Intercultural Forum GRD/FORUM/ COMHAR Members of the Integration and Diversity Committee CGVEC WTID GTM GCCCC NUI, Galway Other relevant stakeholders</p>	<p>- Development of structures which could support an integrated service for immigrants which would enhance education opportunities available to them and improve their knowledge of the Irish Educational System.</p>	<p>2013- 2016</p>

1.5 Support the implementation of the Yellow Flag programme in County Galway.	GRD/ITM/GTM	Intercultural Forum Galway Education Centre Members of the Integration and Diversity Committee Schools SCP, Tuam Other relevant stakeholders	- Greater awareness of diversity in our schools.	2013-2017 (Funding dependent)
1.6 Hold Information sessions for Travellers on opportunities in education including continuation and development of second level after school support (where possible) to support progression of Traveller and minority ethnic young people.	CGVEC/GRD	GTM WTID SCP Other relevant stakeholders	- Increased awareness of educational opportunities amongst Travellers. - Increased attendance of target groups at open information sessions. - Increased participation in education and continuing education. - Increase in the number of young Traveller's completing second level education.	2013-2014
1.7 Support the County Galway Traveller Interagency Plan, with a particular focus on promoting Equality and Diversity within pre-schools and schools.	GCCCC/GTM	Intercultural Forum The Integration Centre GRD Other relevant stakeholders Members of the Integration and Diversity Committee	- Increase in equality and diversity policies. - Equality and Diversity policies reviewed and implemented by pre-schools and where possible schools.	Ongoing
1.8 Continue to provide information in different languages on access to childcare services for families whose first language is not English and to assist New Communities in setting up childcare services as a support to participation in education and training.	GCCCC	Intercultural Forum Integration Centre FRCs Galway County Council GRD/FORUM	- Access to childcare services which facilitates participation in education and training and provides early education opportunities for children in New Communities. - Information on childcare services provided in languages priorities in GCCC.	Ongoing

Theme 2: Employment and Work

Programme Goal: To increase the employment prospects of minority ethnic communities in County Galway and to ensure that they are getting adequate support to access employment and to set up and grow their businesses

Strategic Objectives:

- To increase the level of English language training to meet the needs of speakers of English as a second language
- To ensure that minority ethnic communities in County Galway are accessing and benefiting from the support provided by local and national business support networks
- To increase awareness amongst ethnic minorities on the existing and emerging business and employment opportunities around County Galway, and support them to access those opportunities
- To ensure that local companies recognize the opportunities provided by a diverse and integrated society, and are tapping into these opportunities to grow their operations

Relevant Positive Integration Initiatives in Co. Galway	Relevant Integration Challenges in Co. Galway
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning English to improve employment opportunities • Volunteering as a pathway to employment • Supports around employment • GRD employment mediators • Practical employment & business support provided by CICs • The GRSG Power Mentoring Programme 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Language barriers impeding employment • Work discrimination and exploitation • Limited engagement by Local Business Support Networks • Lack of information on business and employment opportunities • Employment permit issues • Difficulties with qualification recognition • Fear and anxiety about social welfare • Racism, discrimination and negative stereotyping • Communication difficulties and lack of information

Actions	Lead Organisation	Possible Partners	Expected Results	Timeframe
2.1 Disseminate information about English language courses organised in the County using the existing structures and networks that target minority ethnic communities in County Galway and also community associations, Libraries, social networks etc.	Galway County Intercultural Forum	Citizens Information Services in Tuam, Galway City, Clifden etc. GRD, Forum, Gort Community Resource Centre etc.	- Increased awareness of the English language courses organised around the County can lead to more immigrants taking those courses. This will further improve their communication ability, and will increase their prospects of accessing jobs and establishing businesses around the County.	2014
2.2 Track the Business courses and employment open days organised around the County and circulate the information using the existing networks and platforms that target minority ethnic communities.	Galway County Intercultural Forum	GRD, Proactive Galway City & County Enterprise Board	- Increased awareness amongst minority ethnic communities on the available Business courses and employment fairs around County Galway.	2013 – 2016
2.3 Create skills profiles for jobs which may offer opportunities for immigrants (e.g. export agent for companies seeking to get access to foreign markets) and identify the skills training necessary to fill skills gaps. (Note: This includes piloting the general job skills courses as provided by the E-Epsol Process).	ProActivate	Galway County and City Enterprise Board The Integration Centre Galway Rural Development Employment Mediators Galway County Intercultural Forum Galway County Council	- A short list of identified job types Skills Profiles developed for the identified job types. - Immigrants are matched with local companies and are used as links to access foreign markets. - List of possible specific skills training courses. - At least 25 candidates will complete the pilot courses.	January to November 2013
2.4 Provide training to employment and business support agencies on different immigration statuses, entitlements, permits, etc.	The Integration Centre	Galway Rural Development	- Three training programmes will be provided, targeting at least 15 participants per programme. - Employment and Business support agencies will be enlightened on different immigration statuses and their associate entitlements in terms of access to employment and jobs support services. This will enable agencies to better target their resources and provide adequate support to those who really need it.	2015 – 2017

2.5 Participate in national and international events which promote human rights and social justice by promoting these events locally and raising public awareness and understanding on the extent to which issues related to these events affect minority ethnic communities locally.	Galway County Intercultural Forum	Migrant Rights Centre of Ireland (MRCI) Irish Refugee Council (IRC) Galway Traveller Movement	- Local population and politicians will be enlightened on the extent to which human rights issues and social injustice, including the right to work and workplace exploitation, affect minority ethnic communities in County Galway, and will take positive actions towards a more humane and just society.	2013 - 2017
2.6 Develop a system to track local companies which have measures in place that promote diversity and nominate such companies for recognitions and awards.	Galway County Intercultural Forum	The Integration Centre Galway County Council	- The local companies which will be recognised and awarded for promoting diversity and integration will be motivated to continue to pursue such measures. Other companies would likely follow.	2015 – 2017
2.7 Provide information on local volunteering opportunities to ethnic minorities in County Galway and help people to access those opportunities.	Galway Volunteer Centre	Galway County Intercultural Forum	- Increased access to volunteering opportunities amongst minority ethnic communities. This will help people to acquire local experience and improve their prospects of getting jobs.	2013-2017
2.8 Increase awareness of opportunities for minority ethnic women in business and share learning from GTM Toolkit developed for Traveller women entrepreneurs.	Galway Traveller Movement	Galway County Intercultural Forum The Integration Centre Galway County Council	- Increased awareness for minority women in relation to accessing support to develop business ideas and opportunities.	2013



Theme 3: Health and Access to Services

Programme Goal: To ensure that members of immigrant communities have fair and equal access to public services

Strategic Objectives:

- To ensure that information and access to services are available to all minority ethnic communities
- To provide the appropriate intercultural training to service providers to ensure that all services are free from racism, discrimination and negative stereotyping
- To provide health services that are culturally appropriate

Relevant Positive Integration Initiatives in Co. Galway	Relevant Integration Challenges in Co. Galway
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional Intercultural Health Forum (Galway, Mayo and Roscommon) • Intercultural Mediators trained to assist with health Issues • Primary Care Teams largely established throughout County • Diversity Committee established in Galway University Hospital Group • Good Practice Guidelines for GPs piloted with ethnic minorities using PLA in Galway • RESTORE Initiative testing GP tool in Galway 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accessing culturally-appropriate health services • Difficulties in accessing public services • Difficulties experienced by ethnic minorities in accessing statutory supports • Lack of dedicated social workers for Direct Provision Centres • Racism, discrimination and negative stereotyping • Communication difficulties and lack of information

Actions	Lead Organisation	Strategic Partners	Expected Results	Timeframe
Theme 3a: Access to Public Services				
3.1 Raise awareness of public services by advertising locally, and disseminating accessible and translated information leaflets in Community Information Centres, libraries and other information points in County Galway.	Citizens Information Service (CIS/ CIC)	Intercultural Forum Public Bodies Galway County Council Libraries Service WTID & GTM Local media	- Members of minority ethnic communities trained & involved in advice/ information giving in integrated advisory settings. - Minority ethnic communities better informed and more familiar with how to access public and voluntary services in the County and beyond.	2013-2017

3.2	Hold annual intercultural and diversity training/awareness days with statutory and non-statutory service providers in the County to increase awareness of, and prevention, of racism and discrimination in any service provision.	Galway Rural Development	Local Development Companies HSE Local Authorities Other statutory bodies Community Groups	- Increased understanding of exclusion caused by racism and discrimination among service deliverers who participate in training. - Examples of improved practice in delivery of culturally appropriate service delivery actions arising from increased awareness.	2013
3.3	Identify barriers in access to Social Housing for Migrants and work with Social Housing Authorities, HSE and Homelessness and other agencies to improve quality of service and access to housing and information on access to housing for minority ethnic communities.	The Integration Centre	Intercultural Forum Housing Unit (GCC) HSE Homelessness Forum COPE Galway Simon Community Threshold	- Clearer information on routes to access social housing. - Increased awareness in public and other social housing authorities (personnel) of barriers faced by minority ethnic communities in accessing system. - Accessible information provided.	2013
3.4	Provide training / awareness raising for staff in GCC Housing Unit regarding minority ethnic communities in County Galway, their backgrounds, linguistic and other cultural needs.	Social Inclusion Unit, Galway County Council	Housing Unit (GCC) The Integration Centre Intercultural Forum Community & Enterprise Unit (GCC)	- Increased understanding of issues affecting minority ethnic communities resident in County Galway. - Improved relationships between new residents to housing areas and integration into their local neighbourhoods.	2013 - 2014
3.5	Provision of a booklet/information resource to those new to the County/ or local area regarding services/ support groups etc in the area.	Citizens Information Service (CIS/ CIC)	Intercultural Forum Housing Unit GCC C&E Unit GCC HSE Primary and Community Care Community & Voluntary Groups WTID & GTM	- Improved information about services available to new migrants into local communities/neighbourhoods and contact points with community/voluntary groups	2013

Theme3b: Health					
3.6	Deliver public campaigns and public information sessions on immunisation, vaccination and screening and other health services in many languages to raise awareness in the minority ethnic population.	HSE National Immunisation Office	Primary Care Teams Intercultural Forum C&E Unit GCC Specialist Screening Units	- Minority ethnic communities will benefit from the information which is vital to maintaining a healthy population.	Schedule of forthcoming immunisation and screening campaigns provided for 2013 onwards.
3.7	Establish a dedicated study group to research Traveller health models and to make suggestions as to how these models could transfer to health models for minority ethnic groups in general.	Galway Traveller Movement	WTID HSE PCCC Intercultural Forum HSE THU LETB	- Learning from Traveller Health Models will provide models of good practice for some aspects of services to minority ethnic groups. - Opportunities identified for culturally appropriate health training and resources to be developed for minority ethnic communities.	2013
3.8	Researching the feasibility of introducing the use of Ethnic Identifiers in services in Galway with a view to better tracking of access and take up of health services by minority ethnic communities in Galway.	HSE	HSE Traveller Health Unit Traveller Representative Organisations Intercultural Forum Minority Ethnic Groups	- Increased ability to track take up of services by minority ethnic groups.	Initial testing of ethnic identifier within Mental Health Services in Galway (2013 – for Travellers initially).
3.9	Develop a protocol for the use of Intercultural Mediators and Community Interpretation Services for use by Health and other public services providers.	Integration Centre	HSE Intercultural Forum LETB (Formerly VEC) Galway County Council CIS UHG Diversity Committee Jigsaw	- Panel of Intercultural Mediators established and professionally accredited. - Knowledge of value of Intercultural Mediation role by Service providers. - Availability of Intercultural Mediators and Community Interpretive Service to Health service professionals and members of minority ethnic communities in County Galway.	Panel of Intercultural Mediators established in 2013. Research undertaken on issues in certifying Community Interpretive Services to agreed professional standards by end 2013.

3.10 Devise and pilot a checklist for Primary Care Teams on Integration to be used by GPs and other professionals operating under the umbrella of PCTs in County Galway.	HSE (Primary Care Team Co-ordinator)	Intercultural Forum HSE Traveller Health Unit GTM & WTID	- Pilot PCT checklist devised. - Increased awareness amongst GPs and other PCT members of composition of their catchment population and the need for culturally appropriate services.	Pilot checklist devised in 2013. Checklist evaluated by end 2013
3.11 Continue the legacy of work undertaken by the Diversity Committee of the Galway University Hospitals Group in implementing a range of initiatives focused on promoting services for all.	Galway University Hospital Group (GUH - HR /Health Promotion divisions)	Intercultural Forum Integration Strategy Implementation Group Minority Ethnic Groups GTM & WTID Disability Groups	- Increased awareness of diversity issues / protocols established for dealing with minority ethnic groups within hospital settings. - Transfer of good practice examples within hospital settings to other departments and between health professionals.	Annual meeting of relevant stakeholders in GUH.
3.12 Build on the establishment of the Regional Intercultural Forum on Health by having regular meetings on specific themes to update and exchange experience across the region; and develop strategic approaches to combat barriers hindering access to health services for minority ethnic communities.	Integration Strategy Implementation Group (Health Sub-group)	HSE Intercultural Forum Local Area Partnership Companies	- Opportunity provided to share good practice across region. - New initiatives can be implemented from learning in other areas. - Transmission of good practice between and within health professions and within and between sectors e.g. health, other statutory and voluntary.	1 meeting per year of Regional Intercultural Forum on Health.



Theme 4: Community Participation

Programme Goal: To promote the integration and social inclusion of all newcomers in County Galway through greater community participation

Strategic Objectives:

- To encourage and facilitate increased levels of participation by minority ethnic groups in the activities of their local communities
- To create an environment that builds relationships between various minority ethnic groups and the overall community
- To provide the information and support that both minority ethnic groups and the wider population need to create an integrated County Galway

Relevant Positive Integration Initiatives in Co. Galway	Relevant Integration Challenges in Co. Galway
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Galway County Intercultural Forum • Activities and festivals that promote integration • Inclusive sporting activities • Specific projects that target minority ethnic youth • Building relationships and bridging barriers through volunteering • Dedicated community worker or support group for minority ethnic groups • Using libraries for integration • Information and advocacy supports • Promotion of integration in local media 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited interest in interculturalism • Isolation and the lack of social spaces to interact • Difficulties maintaining the momentum of minority ethnic groups • Low levels of civic engagement • Racism, discrimination and negative stereotyping • Communication difficulties and lack of information

Actions	Lead Organisation	Possible Partners	Expected Results	Timeframe
4.1 Hold outreach events and continue “The I Do it” campaign in order to raise awareness of volunteering opportunities and foster registration with materials translated where appropriate.	Galway Volunteer Centre	FRCs Other community centres/public spaces for hosting outreach Community Forum Libraries	- All minority ethnic members/groups will better understand the dynamics of volunteering and raised awareness of the benefits of volunteering in County Galway, and will have a greater desire to engage with the service.	2013-2017

4.2	Enable organisations working with minority ethnic groups to source volunteers to assist them in their work, by advertising volunteer roles and providing volunteer management training.	Galway Volunteer Centre	Minority Ethnic Groups Citizen Information Service	- Deliver two training programmes per year including fair and inclusive recruitment and management of volunteers.	2013-2017
4.3	Provide information, advice and advocacy to all members of the community on their rights and entitlements.	Citizen Information Service	Libraries, Galway County Council Intercultural Forum Schools Community Groups	- Minority ethnic members and groups are better aware of rights and entitlements and supports available if incidents of racism and discrimination are experienced. - Polish, Russian and Lithuanian community receive support from weekly clinics. - Referrals made from county centres and outreach offices also.	2013-2017
4.3a	Include provision of weekly clinic with workers who are fluent in Polish and Lithuanian and Russian.				
4.3b	Provide talks to community groups (issue and area based) and schools as requested on rights and entitlements.				
4.4	Provide meeting spaces for minority ethnic groups and promote this facility through organisations/groups brochures, newsletters and websites.	WTID FRCs CGVEC training centres GRD outreach offices (Portumna, Tuam, Ballinasloe) FORUM Connemara GTM Galway County Council	Libraries Schools and Churches Intercultural Forum and Community Forum to promote meeting spaces	- Minority ethnic groups would be more inclined to gather, meet, and to engage with the wider community. - Greater awareness of community facilities, greater availability.	2013 - 2017
4.5	Provide a point of contact and community information for minority ethnic groups and ensure that they can access this information within a friendly environment.	FRCs Citizen Information Service	An Garda Síochána Libraries Minority Ethnic Groups	- User friendly information and points of contact will encourage minority ethnic groups to integrate with local services.	2013 -2017

4.6	Train Citizen Information Service staff and volunteers on immigrants rights, entitlements and access to services to provide onward support, advice and advocacy to minority ethnic individuals and groups.	The Integration Centre Galway Citizen's Information Service	Local CICs around County Galway	- Staff and volunteers will acquire the required skills to provide onward support advice and advocacy to minority ethnic groups and other Citizen Information Centres through referrals to Galway CIS.	2013
4.7	Support the Galway County Intercultural Forum which was set up in 2011 by attending meetings and providing administrative support.	Galway County Council	Galway Rural Development The Integration Centre Galway County Community Forum	- The Galway Intercultural Forum will grow in strength, competence and numbers. - The Intercultural Forum will become a recognised vehicle for consultation in the county, region etc.	2013-2017
4.8	Organising an Awards programme on behalf of Galway County Intercultural Forum for best practice in relation to the various themes of the strategy (e.g. best practice in Community Development, Enterprise, Employment, Education and Training for Minority ethnic communities (including Travellers)	Intercultural Forum	Galway County Council Philanthropic bodies Mayor's Office FORUM Connemara GRD Business Organisations Chambers of Commerce Community Forum	- Celebration of good practice of inclusion of minority ethnic groups.	2013 - 2014
4.9	Liaise with the media for representation of issues effecting Minority ethnic group issues in Galway, and to ensure that Minority ethnic groups are properly represented.	The Integration Centre	Intercultural Forum Local Media	- Through maintaining better relationships with the media, issues of immigration and integration will be understood and represented.	2014-2017
4.9b	Investigate and develop strategies and opportunities to address racism and discrimination and provide support to victims	Galway County Intercultural Forum	Galway Traveller Movement The Integration Centre Integration and Diversity Interagency members	Increased awareness and information sharing in relations to methods of challenging racism and discrimination. Victims of racism and discrimination provided the necessary support.	2013-2017

<p>4.10 Create an internship/work placement to support the implementation of the County Galway Integration and Diversity Strategy.</p> <p>(Note: An assigned Intern/admin of the Interagency to be sourced through Job Bridge or TUS programme).</p>	<p>Galway Rural Development as lead of the Integration and Diversity Interagency</p>	<p>Integration and Diversity Interagency Strategy Group</p>	<p>- Minority ethnic groups and longstanding community members will have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greater awareness of issues and events • Wide circulation of information to groups through intern/admin worker through established Networks and social media (Facebook) • Greater understanding of minority ethnic communities in County Galway • Increased engagement with local electoral process and; • A more tolerant and engaged community. 	<p>2013 – 2014</p>
<p>4.11 Provide capacity building support to local immigrant /minority ethnic groups. (A small grant scheme will be created to support this).</p> <p>4. 11a Increase the level of participation of minority ethnic groups in the Active Citizenship courses that take place in the county and promote through local networks enabling minority ethnic groups to participate.</p>	<p>Galway Rural Development</p>	<p>Intercultural Forum NUI, Galway FRCs Community groups</p>	<p>- Minority ethnic groups will have the capacity to sustain themselves and to engage successfully with the wider community.</p> <p>- Building groups from pre-development, to capacity building to engaging with policy.</p> <p>- Maintaining momentum and support for minority groups as well as promoting integration activities.</p> <p>- Establishment of Forum for young migrants</p> <p>- Support minority ethnic groups through small grant scheme.</p> <p>- Two GRD Active Citizenship courses provided county wide.</p> <p>- Increased participation by minority ethnic groups will enhance capacity to sustain and develop as groups and to engage successfully with the wider community.</p>	<p>2013 – 2014</p>

<p>4.12 Promote diversity in sport</p> <p>4.12a Organise and deliver a pilot programme for Futsal in Galway by supporting groups to participate in matches, set up local leagues and fixtures and participate in joint tournaments with the Clare Sports Partnership.</p> <p>4.12b Organise and deliver multi-cultural sports camps in Galway for primary school children 5 to 12 yrs.</p> <p>4.12c Promote Integration in sport and cultural activities through liaison with local community, intercultural and inter-faith groups through targeting specific groups to participate in area based activities.</p>	<p>County Galway Sports Partnership</p>	<p>Garda Síochána Intercultural Forum Football Association of Ireland GAA The Integration Centre Community Forum</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increased opportunity for greater integration through sport. - Greater participation in sport and related health benefits. - Increased opportunity for greater integration through sport for younger members of targeted communities’. - Greater participation in sport, health benefit. - Programme provides opportunity to participate in physical activity at low cost for Persons who may not be able to access such opportunity otherwise. - Increased number of minority ethnic participants in area based sporting activities, (e.g. Kick Start to Fitness programme 12 week low cost physical activity programme for unemployed men between 25 and 60, running in Athenry, Loughrea, Gort, Mervue and Westside). 	<p>2013</p> <p>2013</p> <p>2014 -2017</p>
<p>Diversity in Youth Work</p> <p>4.13 Engage with National Youth Council of Ireland in their intercultural and equality programme and participation in training in the Access All Areas: A Diversity Resource and Toolkit Resource aimed at promoting inclusive youth work practice.</p>	<p>National Youth Council of Ireland CGVEC</p>	<p>Galway County Council Youth organisations:– Foróige, Scouting Ireland, Youthwork Ireland Galway, INVOLVE, Óige na Gaeltachta</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Youth Organisations receive training in “Access All Areas” resource and will be able to assess their projects and practice in terms of equality and inclusion and develop action plans to provide a better service to young people. 	<p>2013- 2015</p>

<p>4.14 County Galway VEC together with NYCI to conduct a Diversity Survey of funded youth projects and Youth reach Centres in County Galway</p>	<p>County Galway VEC</p>	<p>NYCI Galway County Council Office for Integration 5 Youthreach Centres in Galway Youthwork Ireland's 3 Galway projects INVOLVE youth projects WTID Tuam Muintearas Leitir Móir FORUM Connemara Adolescent Support Project (Foróige) HSE West</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mapping of staff and young people in Youthreach centres and youth projects in County Galway using the Access All Areas surveys. - Baseline picture of youth provision and strengths and gaps of inclusive youth work practice in County Galway. - Development of Action Plans for youth services to improve and increase inclusive youth work practice. - Publication of Diversity Survey report subject to funding. 	<p>2013</p> <p>2013-2015</p>
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Appendices

Appendix 1: Participants on Interagency Strategy Group

Name	Organisation	Duration	Interagency Strategy Group/ Sub Committee
Delia Colahan	Galway Rural Development (CEO)	2009-2012	Chair of the County Galway Integration and Diversity Interagency Strategy Group
Donna Gleeson	Galway Rural Development	2009-2012	Secretary of the Interagency Strategy Group and lead of the Community Participation subcommittee
Elaine Quinn	Galway Rural Development	2011-2012	Interagency member and support lead of the Education subcommittee
Jipe Kelly	The Integration Centre	2009-2012	Interagency member and lead of the Employment subcommittee
Ann Mallaghan	Community and Enterprise Unit, Galway County Council	2009-2012	Interagency member and lead of the Health subcommittee
Michael Keady	HSE	2010-2012	Interagency member
Mick O'Dwyer	An Garda Síochána	2009-2012	Interagency member
Cathy Keane	FORUM Connemara	2009-2012	Interagency member
Annie Rozario	Gort Family Resource Centre	2009-2012	Interagency member
Triona Nic Giolla Choille	Galway Refugee Support Group	2009-2012	Interagency member
Denise Feeney	County Galway Community and Voluntary Forum	2009-2012	Interagency member
Máire Uí Éanaigh	County Galway VEC	2009-2012	Interagency member and lead of education sub committee
Mary Giblin	County Galway City and County Childcare Committee	2009-2012	Interagency member
Virginia Moyles	Galway Volunteer centre	2010-2012	Interagency member
Catriona McQuillan	Community and Enterprise Unit, Galway County Council	2009-2012	Interagency member
Gearóid O'Fatharta	Galway County Intercultural Forum	2009-2012	Interagency member and support lead of education subcommittee
Dr Kathy Reilly	NUI, Galway	2010-2012	Interagency member
Dr Siobhan O'Connor	Gort Family Resource Centre	2012	Interagency member
Orla McCaffrey	Galway Traveller Movement	2009-2012	Interagency member
Patricia Dunford	Dún Gibbins D.P. Centre	2011	Subcommittee member
Ellen O'Loughlin	Galway Traveller Movement	2010-2011	Subcommittee member
Ernest Bishop	Galway City Partnership	2009-2011	Interagency member
Eithne Nic Dhonnchadha	County Galway VEC	2009-2012	Interagency member

Donnacha Foley	Galway Volunteer Centre	2009-2010	Subcommittee member
Mick Curley	County Galway Sports Partnership	2009-2012	Subcommittee member
Carmel Higgins	FAS/ Dept of Social Protection	2009-2012	Interagency member
Martina Forde	Na Calai / GRD	2009-2011	Interagency member
Ardison Leal	Gort FRC/ Community rep	2009	Interagency member
Brenda Gallagher	Galway Rural Development	2009-2010	Interagency member
Mary Davitt	Galway Rural Development	2009-2011	Interagency member
Fiona Stewart	Galway Rural Development	2009-2010	Initial Co-ordinator of the Strategy 2009/ Interagency member
Dr Valerie Ledwith	NUI, Galway	2010-2012	Subcommittee member
Maeve Geraghty	Health Promotion HSE	2009-2010	Interagency member
Donal Conlon	Dept of Social Protection	2009-2010	Interagency member
Gabriel Lawal	GRSG rep	2010-2011	Interagency member
Jenny Dagg	GRSG rep	2010-2011	Subcommittee member
Tom Madden	GRD Chair and rep	2012	Interagency member
Phil James	ProActivate member	2012	Subcommittee member
Geoff Ginnetty	HSE	2010-2012	Health subcommittee member
Scott Brady	HSE	2010-2011	Health subcommittee member
Marie Prendergast	PCCC, HSE	2010-2012	Health subcommittee member

Appendix 2: Findings of Initial Consultations (2010/2011)

Nollaig McGuinness, the Researcher hired to undertake the County Galway Diversity and Integration Strategy, began consultations to profile services and groups supporting minority ethnic communities from the autumn of 2010 through to early 2011. The following is an outline of those contacted and the initial findings.

Consultations with the Migrant and Community Development Sector

1) The Integration Centre (TIC)-Consultation with Jipe Kelly 15th November 2010

Services and Supports offered by TIC: This national organisation has a regional office in the Galway Citizens Information Centre providing county-wide information and advocacy clinics, diversity training to mainstream service providers, capacity building support to local immigrant groups, and policy work including support for the development of local integration strategies.

Key Issues identified through the local TIC office include:

- Access to citizenship.
- Access to social welfare and difficulties with the Habitual Residence Condition (HRC).
- Access to employment and issues of workplace exploitation.
- Language and literacy issues.
- Access to employment grants.
- Racism.

2) Galway Refugee Support Group (GRSG)-Consultation with Triona NicGiolla Choille, 17th November 2010

Services and Supports offered by GRSG: This is a local NGO working with asylum seekers and refugees in Galway City and County. The main areas of its work include outreach in Direct Provision Centres (DPCs) (including advocacy, group and service development within DPCs). The organisation has also undertaken a number of research and peer support projects in the areas of health and education. The Group plays an active policy role through participation in the national NGO Alliance and the NGO forum on Direct Provision. Projects undertaken in the autumn of 2010 include the development of a Migrant Resource Booklet, and the development of an Intercultural Mediators Network. (NB: Community Activists and Mentoring projects by GRSG were up and running following the consultation.)

Key Issues for GRSG clients:

- The difficulties associated with the Direct Provision system and how it impacts on residents' lives, i.e. mental health issues, poverty, isolation, and the social exclusion that resident's experience.
- Access to health services, and the social determinants of health, including understanding and responding to health issues.
- The difficulties experienced by GRSG in trying to support and facilitate the development of a residents' group in Dún Gibbons, despite the positive work of the Centre's Manager.

3) Galway Migrant Service (GMS) – Consultation with GMS Staff 24th November 2010

- Services and Supports – local migrant support service providing an information and advocacy service to migrants. Mainly third country nationals supported. Refugees and asylum seekers generally referred to GRSG and/ or The Integration Centre. Project had collaborated with GRD and FRC's to provide outreach service to county towns. However, this was only a temporary arrangement due to limited funding. In the region of 30% of GMS clients are from the county. The service also provides weekly English language classes which are free and open to all.

- Key Issues for GMS clients include:
 - Securing legal status and citizenship.
 - Access to social welfare and difficulties with the HRC.
 - Access to employment and issues of workplace exploitation.
 - Access to public services, in particular education and housing.

4) **Dún Gibbons Direct Provision Centre (DPC)- Consultation with Patricia Dunford, 26 February 2011**

Services and Supports: This Direct Provision Centre in Clifden is home to 22 families. It provides accommodation and meals to all residents. The centre also has a playschool on site along with a sports/recreation room. Regular consultation with residents and an inter-agency team involving FORUM Connemara, the HSE, the CGVEC and others has seen the development of a range of on-site supports including homework clubs, English language classes, craft, computer, parenting and keep fit classes, as well as summer camp activities for children. The Centre also assists residents in arranging hospital, GP, and other appointments.

Key Issues identified and discussed by the Centre management include:

- Transport difficulties in general and, in particular, emergency travel to hospital, with residents being left to their own devices for the return journey.
- Lack of a dedicated Social Worker for the residents.
- Challenges in getting male residents to engage in Centre activities and supports.
- The inter-agency approach has worked well, as has a consultative approach towards developing supports and activities for residents. The Centre remains committed to that approach.

5) **Gort Family Resource Centre (FRC)-Consultation with Annie Rozario, 15 November 2010**

Services and Supports-This FRC provides the standard community supports and services provided by most FRCs, including outreach clinics from CIC and MABS. Gort FRC has played a key role in supporting the large local Brazilian population. In addition to providing a central point of contact and information, the centre has managed a range of intercultural initiatives including a dedicated Community Worker for the Brazilian community (see Frank Murray consultation). They have also provided “Creative Conversations”, (an arts & crafts/language skills project) the development of a new support group for Brazilian women, and a research project into poverty and the associated needs within the Brazilian community.(Reference Frank Murray).

Key Issues identified by the Gort FRC include:

- Difficulties in estimating the size of the Brazilian population in Gort. Although the economic downturn has resulted in some Brazilians leaving Ireland, many other Brazilians who had previously lived elsewhere in Ireland have moved to Gort.
- Challenges and problems arising from the undocumented status of large numbers of the Brazilian community, including: workplace exploitation, accessing health services, accessing social welfare, dealing with the Garda and court services, and difficulties in securing regularisation of legal status. Overall, it was felt that there has been a positive and proactive response to these challenges through workers and volunteers from local organizations such as Gort FRC, school staff, local Gardai, the SVP, and the Lions Club.

6) **Frank Murray-Community Worker with the Brazilian Community in Gort, January 2011**

Supports and Services: At the time of the consultation, Frank had just finished work as a Community Worker with and for the Brazilian community in Gort, and he was attached to the Gort FRC. The majority of Frank’s work was identifying the needs of, and providing support to individual Brazilians and families. This work involved providing advice, information and frequent advocacy on key issues such as employment, legal status, travel, and accessing health, education and other support services. Frank acted as an interpreter and mediator in addressing these issues.

Key Issues identified through Frank's work and the research project carried out includes:

- Challenges and problems arising from the undocumented status of large numbers of the Brazilian community include: workplace exploitation, accessing health services and social welfare, dealing with the Gardai and the court services, and difficulties in gaining regularisation of legal status.
- Levels of poverty and deprivation in many households due to the severity of the economic downturn. The undocumented status of many means no access to social welfare and ultimate financial hardship. Desperation from this hardship can manifest itself in prostitution, unsustainable debts and petty crime.
- Language difficulties affecting people's ability to engage and to integrate into the community. Frank's ability to speak Portuguese was key to working effectively with this community.
- When key Brazilian community contacts return to their home country, it effects the engagement and intercultural work of the entire community.
- The availability of a "go to guy" or dedicated social worker was effective in helping the Brazilians to engage with local services and the wider community.

7) Oughterard (Clan) Family Resource Centre (FRC)-Consultation with Ann O'Shaughnessy, 8th Mar., 2011

Services and Supports: This centre provides the standard FRC community supports such as outreach clinics with CIC and MABS. Clann FRC has been quite active in working with migrants and promoting interculturalism locally. They developed an intercultural support group that organized language classes and activity days; an intercultural arts programme that produced a mural and booklet; anti-racism workshops; and an intercultural project with the local school showcasing cultural diversity from different countries.

Key Issues identified:

- The minority ethnic population in Oughterard has decreased in recent years.
- A community development approach is seen as an important way of supporting integration and interculturalism.
- A welcome/orientation pack would be useful for migrants as levels of awareness around local services and community events are often low.
- Anti-racism and awareness-raising work is also important. While overt racism is not a common problem, negative attitudes and lack of understanding and appreciation of interculturalism are often issues.
- Local sports clubs in small rural areas could be key to anti-racism and awareness-raising work.

8) Telephone consultations with Na Calai CDP and;

9) Headford FRC, about their work with ethnic minorities. Both reported that intercultural work was not a major element of their overall work. The main focus of minority ethnic support involved the provision of English classes with the CGVEC; acting as a local point of contact, information and referral; and ensuring that all of their work and programs were open and accessible to ethnic minorities.

10) Feedback from the Loughrea FRC was from Aine Deely, who attended the focus group in Loughrea. This FRC also acts as an important local point of contact, information and referral to ethnic minorities.

11) County Galway VEC (CGVEC)-English Language Provision, phone consultations with Pascal Lally and Sheila Donnellan, regarding CGVEC provision of English language classes for migrants. Certified ESOL classes are provided throughout the county on a regular and ongoing basis. Where additional/new demand is identified, additional classes can be put on. Classes are generally well attended, and running well. Difficulties in attracting and retaining absolute beginners (those with very little English) was noted, and it was felt that a redoubling of efforts is probably required in terms of targeting this group.

12) Saint Vincent De Paul (SVP), phone consultations with Edel Pierce and Luke Tighe. SVP has and does provide support to minority ethnic families around the county, although minorities do not form a large proportion of their caseload. At the time of the consultation, there were no major changes reported in the numbers of ethnic minorities seeking support from SVP.

13) Portuguese Association of Ireland (PAI) -Consultation with Maria Manuela Silva, March 2011.

Supports and Services: The PAI, run by volunteers, provides information and advocacy to members of the Portuguese-speaking community (Brazilian and Angolan) living in the city and county, and other parts of Ireland. This group organizes cultural and community events and also runs weekly Portuguese classes for children of Portuguese speaking parents. Much of PAI's work (through Maria) involves advising people of their rights, providing information, and interpreting and mediating on behalf of members of their community on issues regarding employment, accessing public services, and court cases.

Key Issues identified by PAI include:

- Work exploitation issues – non-payment of wages, rates of pay, hours of work, unfair dismissal, etc. Enforcement of existing legislation needs to be strengthened.
- Difficulties in accessing social welfare and problems with the HRC.
- Increasing desperation in some sections of the community, which can be seen in incidences of prostitution, and problems with money lenders.
- Challenges in meeting the need for interpretation supports, particularly with hospitals and GPs.
- Support is needed by groups like the PAI, who provide essential support to their communities, and can play a vital part in the wider integration process.

14) Meadows Cross Cultural Association (MCCA)-consultation with Siobhan Byrne, 10th March 2011

This is a voluntary group established to promote intercultural activity in Ballinasloe. With the assistance of a number of volunteers, MCCA has run a number of intercultural community events in the town, including one very successful intercultural festival. At the time of the consultation, the group had become less active, but was hoping to develop and launch its website soon.

Key Issues identified:

- Local minority ethnic population seemed to have decreased at time of consultation.
- Keeping the momentum and activity of MCCA is challenging due to the lack of committed volunteers; some original volunteers had also moved away.
- While the festival was a great success, local organizations and groups have not rowed into support this work and ensure that it becomes properly established in the town. There is possibly a lack of interest and commitment to promoting interculturalism locally.

NB: Attempts were made by the consultant to meet with representatives of other migrant community groups, but it proved to be difficult to arrange. Contact was made with Paul Osikoya, Mary Uwaygue, Gabriel Lawal, and a contact for the Liberian Association. However, they were all invited to the Loughrea Focus Group, along with others who had received County Council Integration Grants.

15) Galway Traveller Movement (GTM)-Consultation with Eleanor Clancy, 7th March 2011

The focus of this consultation was on how and where the Integration and Diversity Strategy and its actions would be relevant to the work of GTM, and the Traveller community in County Galway.

Key Points:

- Where the Strategy talks about racism, discrimination and interculturalism, it should make clear reference to the racism experienced by Travellers.
- Any actions that focus on challenging racism and promoting interculturalism will be directly relevant to the Traveller Community, and as such should include a Traveller focus.
- The Primary Health Care Projects have been very successful initiatives and may provide a model for working with migrant communities.

NB: The Researcher had a telephone consultation with the Western Traveller and Intercultural Development group about their work. In addition to the community services provided by WTID, the organization is involved in intercultural community projects and events from time to time. Similar views to those of the GTM were expressed in terms of anti-racism and intercultural work being generally relevant to the Traveller community and WTID is committed to supporting and getting involved in this work.

Other One-to-One Consultations

Further one-to-one consultations, by phone or in person, were undertaken to inform the research, and to help develop actions for the Strategy. Please note the following:

16) Consultation with Louise Ryan, County Galway VEC (CGVEC) on: the local youth sector, the need and potential for developing intercultural youth work with local youth organisations.

- Planning was underway at time of the consultation with the National Youth Council of Ireland (NYCI) to implement the ACCESS ALL AREAS Programme with Galway's youth organizations. This involves an audit/assessment approach to establish how open and accessible youth groups are to minority ethnic youth, and providing best practice resources to improve inclusion.
- Also spoke to Anne Walsh, the National Co-ordinator of the NYCI, who confirmed their commitment to working with the CGVEC to roll out this programme in Galway.

17) Consultation with Mick Curley, Galway Sports Partnership (CGSP)

- Two consultations focused on the intercultural work that CGSP was currently doing, and potential future work which could be developed as strategy actions.
- CGSP had already targeted sports events and young people's sports' camps which had been successful in attracting minority ethnic youth.
- CGSP is committed to developing a focus on interculturalism through: training, awareness raising, and the roll out of national initiatives such as Show Racism the Red Card.

18) Consultation with Sarah Roarty, Tuam Chamber of Commerce

- Despite proactively promoting the Chamber of Commerce and its events to local minority ethnic business people, there has been limited engagement with same. The reasons for this are unknown, but perhaps minority ethnic led businesses are unaware of the role of the Chamber, and the benefits of engaging with business networks.

19) Consultation with Caroline Duggan, West of Ireland Networking (WIN)

- Although WIN has not specifically targeted minority ethnic communities, they are open to ideas and actions which would proactively promote their work with these groups.

20) Consultation with Maeve Geraghty, HSE, about her previous work with Dún Gibbons Residents

Key issues identified:

- General isolation felt by residents due to being in a Centre, and in a rural community such as Clifden.
- Mental health issues of residents.
- The challenges of keeping residents motivated and involved in activities and supports provided.
- Lack of a dedicated social worker for residents.
- The inter-agency, and consultative approach to supporting residents had worked well, and this approach should continue.

21) Consultation with Cathy Keane, FORUM Connemara.

Kathy's work had greatly benefited from liaising closely with the Centre Manager at Dún Gibbons, and being a key member of the Interagency Group which gave support and made funding available for the developments and activities in Dún Gibbons.

22) Consultations with Anne Mac Farlane and Tomas Debrun (GP Guidelines for Cross-Cultural Communication)

The researcher spoke to the Project Managers about the development of this resource, which had been developed through participatory research with local migrants, on new guidelines for cross-cultural communication in GP consultations. They were keen to explore how the promotion, dissemination and implementation of the guidelines could form an action in the new Diversity and Integration Strategy..

NB: The researcher also contacted the HSE National Office, regarding the publication of the new *Lost in Translation* guidelines for translation of HSE materials. Although the publication date was later than expected, these guidelines were published in January 2012.

The following two further focus group discussions were also conducted by the Researcher:

23) Dún Gibbons Focus Group, March 2011

It was decided that holding the focus group in the Dún Gibbons Centre rather than in Clifden itself, would make it easier for residents to attend. Unfortunately, only two residents attended, despite the efforts of the Researcher.

Key Findings:

- The residents found that living in a DPC caused them to feel isolated and depressed, despite the positive efforts of the Centre Manager.
- Difficulties with public transportation in an out of Galway for medical appointments, and for visiting friends and family.
- Residents expressed the need for more community activities, especially for men, at the same time recognising their own lack of motivation.
- Residents were tired of being consulted about their experience of being migrants, and what changes they would like to see, because they were frustrated that nothing had changed.

24) Community Sector Focus Group-Loughrea, 7th March 2011

This was organized for the community sector, i.e.: community workers and local migrant groups. The session focused on the experiences and challenges faced in working with minority ethnic communities, and the potential of establishing a new intercultural forum for the county.

Key issues raised and discussed:

- The value of local intercultural community events: - especially those involving music, dance, food ,sports, children's activities, etc.- for promoting integration, and providing real opportunities for people to engage, socialize, and celebrate their local communities.
- Challenges for minority ethnic groups: Finding funding for activities, dealing with the administration involved in seeking grants, and the lack of activities and meeting spaces available.
- Language and Information: Difficulties with language and lack of information about locale and public services provide many challenges for ethnic minorities. The development of the GRSG Intercultural Resource Booklet was particularly welcome.
- Awareness of Existing Resources: Ethnic minorities are often unaware of the community and information resources available to them. It was felt that the presence of skilled Community Worker.

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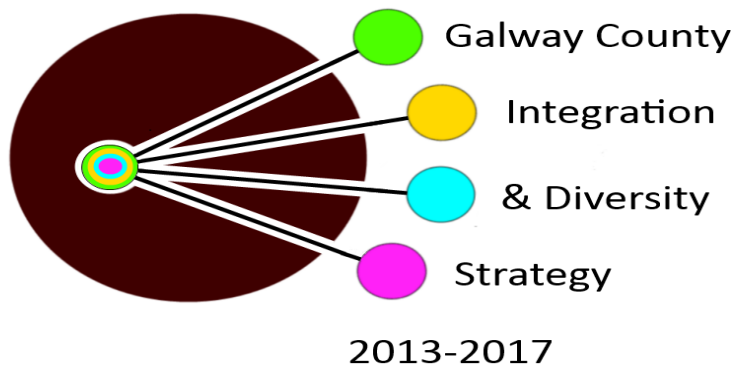
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Notes

Notes

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