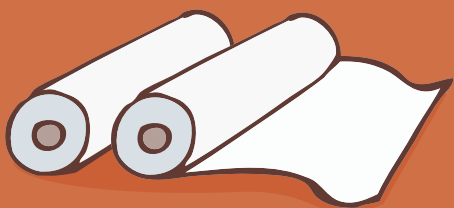


# TOOLS FOR SOCIAL CHANGE

A RESOURCE GUIDE FOR COMMUNITY WORK WITH  
MIGRANT WORKERS AND THEIR FAMILIES IN IRELAND



In association with the Community Workers Cooperative  
and the Department of Applied Social Studies, National  
University of Ireland, Maynooth



## **Tools for Social Change**

A Resource Guide for Community Work with  
Migrant Workers and their Families in Ireland

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Oifig an Aire d'Imeachta  
*Office of the Minister for Integration*

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## Preface

International migration has become a major force for social transformation in modern-day Ireland. Workplaces, local communities and the relationships we have with each other reflect this dynamic process. Without a doubt, the depth and pace of social change Ireland has undergone over the past fifteen years is phenomenal. Change brings many challenges and while it is not that change itself is problematic it is how it is managed that really counts.

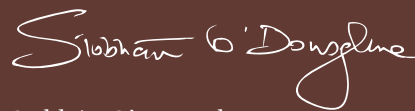
Community work has always sought to support communities, both interest-based and geographical, to strive for equality and inclusion, often in the context of a challenging environment – physical, financial, political and social. Community work as an approach to social change seeks to answer difficult questions about power, identifying who has it, who does not and how it is being used both positively and negatively. Most importantly, community work seeks to create opportunities for communities and groups who are most powerless to have their voices heard and their concerns acted on, and ultimately for them to feel empowered as active citizens and members of society.

This resource guide is designed to recognise, support and reinforce the vital work being led by many community workers throughout Ireland. Through our work, we are aware of the diverse and creative ways in which migrant workers are being supported to access their rights and have their voices heard

within local communities and beyond. We are also aware of the work being done to enable communities to adapt to the multicultural nature of their area, and to recognise the collective responsibility and benefits of combating racism and inequality.

Many of the ideas and methods for supporting participation and creating the conditions for empowerment contained in this publication have their foundation in community work practice developed over decades. It is important for us all to remember our collective capacity and experience in tackling inequality and exclusion, for instance in tackling the racism experienced by the Traveller community, rural and urban poverty and decline, long term unemployment and gender inequality.

Ireland is again at a turning point with the economic recession and attack on the equality and social inclusion infrastructure. It is vital, now more than ever, that we find ways to build and strengthen solidarity across all groups and communities within society who are experiencing exclusion, including migrant workers. Community work as an approach and methodology has an important role to play in this process.



Siobhán O' Donoghue

## Introduction

Migrant Rights Centre Ireland (MRCI) is concerned with the rights of migrant workers and their families, in particular those who are at risk of poverty, social exclusion and discrimination. Established in 2001 to bridge a gap in support structures and information provision for migrant workers, it has since evolved to become a national organisation concerned with: providing supports to migrant workers and their families, achieving policy change and empowering migrant workers through community work practice.

Over the years, MRCI has developed good community work practice with migrant workers, focusing in particular on supporting the participation of those who are in situations of vulnerability, for example undocumented migrant workers or those experiencing exploitation in the workplace. Through politicising migrant workers and supporting the organisation of campaigns, MRCI supports collective action on issues of concern to migrant workers and their families. Through its various action groups and the Migrants Forum, MRCI aims to create spaces for migrant workers to have their voices heard, identify the issues facing them, and collectively take action on these issues. Through its leadership development work MRCI is also committed to supporting migrant workers to take on leadership roles in the work of

the organisation and in the wider community. This work is constantly evolving but is always informed by a set of principles and standards, and underpinned by a commitment to social justice, equality and anti discrimination. MRCI is committed to supporting the development of good community work practice with migrant workers and their families and does so in a number of ways: through ongoing training with the community sector, by providing direct support to locally-based organisations, and by continuously documenting and sharing the analysis and learning that has been developed by the organisation. This resource guide aims to capture and share some of the analysis and learning developed in the area of community work with migrant workers.



## ‘Tools for Social Change’ has been designed with busy community workers in mind!

Working from a community work approach requires a broad set of skills and knowledge, including a good understanding of the fundamental principles and processes of community work. Examples of other areas of knowledge required include group work theory, social policy and social theories (particularly in relation to poverty, gender and racism) and an understanding and analysis of modern society at local, national and global level. Community work is a demanding profession that requires creative thinking and multitasking on a daily basis, in order to create the conditions for social change. The aim of ‘Tools for Social Change’ is to outline a community work approach to working with migrant workers and their families in a practical way, supporting the movement from theory to practice and the development of best practice.

These are challenging times for community work and the community sector in Ireland. At the same time, community work with migrants in Ireland, including asylum seekers, refugees and migrant workers is at a relatively early stage in its development. Whilst Ireland has a long history of community work approaches being used to promote social inclusion and participation of marginalised communities, work with migrants brings a slightly different set of challenges and requires additional competencies. In recent years, MRCI has experienced an increase in requests for training, inputs, and sharing of information and tools in relation to community work with migrant workers. These requests have primarily come from the community and voluntary sector, and Area Based Partnerships. This toolkit was envisaged

as an opportunity to capture analysis that has been developed in relation to migration and issues facing migrant workers, and to combine this with good examples of community work practice and share it with the broader community sector, in particular with community workers in Ireland.

‘Tools for Social Change’ has been designed with busy community workers in mind! Therefore great efforts have been made to make it relevant, up-to-date and user friendly. The document is divided into three main sections; Section 1: Introducing Migration and Community work; Section 2: Tools for Participation; and Section 3: Tools for Empowerment and Collective Action.

### Section One:

#### Introducing Migration and Community Work

As community workers we have a responsibility to inform ourselves of the reality in which the community we work with lives, and to get an insight into the critical issues in their lives. Section 1 is designed to inform community workers of the issues at hand, and to support analysis-building. It introduces the context of migration, issues facing migrant workers and their families and community work as an approach to tackling the inequality experienced by migrants. Through accompanying support sheets at the end of the section, accessible information is provided on migration and migrant workers in Ireland, as well as an explanation of the complex migration system and key migration policies.



## Section Two:

### Tools for Participation

This section outlines the different steps required to create the conditions for the participation of migrant workers and their families. It begins by outlining the importance of relationship-building and actively engaging with migrant workers, before illustrating ways in which participation can be actively supported and encouraged. Central to this is recognising the immediate individual needs of migrant workers, while enabling a movement from individual concerns to collective outcomes in the work. As with Section 3, there are relevant case studies to give concrete examples of community work in action, along with learning points, information on your role as community worker and support sheets to give practical help and information resources.

## Section Three:

### Tools for Empowerment and Collective Action

This section is divided into two sub-sections:

Empowerment of migrant workers presents an overview of strategies, steps and tools needed to support the empowerment of migrants. It focuses in particular on raising consciousness, developing effective groups, and supporting leadership and collective decision-making. The second part, Collective action for change, offers practical material that will support empowerment and the development of a collective analysis, focusing here on specific actions such as campaign work and other collective initiatives that can be undertaken. As in the previous section, there are case studies, learning points and support sheets outlining practical examples to support this work.

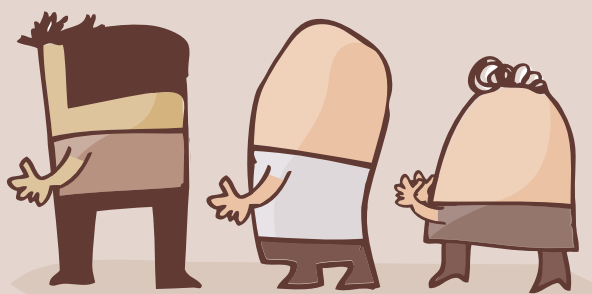
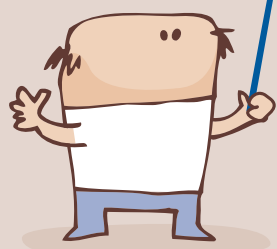


## Learning key: explanation of symbols

A final point on using this toolkit is that there are symbols throughout the document, which are explained below. We urge you to pay particular attention to these. These symbols identify different types of information and are designed to support

key learning, give examples of practice, and remind you of your role as community worker when engaging with migrant workers and their families. They also highlight the important stages and developments in using a community work approach.

The following symbols are used:



## List of Case Studies

Page	
52	1. Building relationships: Building relationships with the Brazilian community in Gort, Co. Galway – <b>NUI Galway</b>
54	2. Building participation: Migrant women working in the Irish mushroom industry – <b>Migrant Rights Centre Ireland</b>
58	3. Using opportunities to engage: Information sessions for migrant workers – <b>Clonmel Community Partnership</b>
61	4. Supporting the participation of migrant workers in the local community: A partnership approach to creating spaces for participation of migrant workers in the work of the organisation and the local community – <b>Bray Partnership</b>
65	5. Responding to individual needs: A partnership approach to responding to individual needs and building participation – <b>Ballyhoura Development Ltd</b>
69	6. Moving from the individual to the collective: The Migrants Forum – <b>Migrant Rights Centre Ireland</b>
87	7. Developing a collective analysis: The Domestic Workers Support Group Opening Doors project: using art to build a collective analysis – <b>Migrant Rights Centre Ireland</b>
90	8. Developing effective groups: Developing an intercultural group – <b>Rathmines Partnership</b>
93	9. Supporting representative roles: Supporting immigrants to take on representative and leadership roles – <b>Mayo Intercultural Action</b>
97	10. Developing leadership skills with migrant workers: Leadership Development Course 2008 – <b>Migrant Rights Centre Ireland</b>
106	11. Campaigning: Campaign to amend the Employment Permits Bill 2005 – <b>Migrant Rights Centre Ireland</b>

## Acknowledgements

Tools for Social Change has been produced in association with the Department of Applied Social Studies, National University of Ireland, Maynooth, and the Community Workers Cooperative. We would like to extend our gratitude to both organisations for supporting and advising on the development of this resource guide.

Initial funding for this publication came from the Office of Minister for Integration under the Integration Fund for Initiatives to Support the Integration of Legally Resident Immigrants as administered by Pobal. We appreciate the funding that made the work possible.

MRCI would like to thank Oonagh McArdle who carried out the initial research that made this final publication possible. We acknowledge also the various MRCI team members who have put a lot of time and effort into making the resource guide comprehensive and relevant to community workers. Thanks in particular to Helen Lowry of the MRCI who coordinated the project. Many thanks also to Form for making the final publication so engaging and accessible.

MRCI would also like to thank Sandra Byrne, Sally Daly, Eileen Byrnes, Frank Murray, Therese Ruane, Norma Roche and Hilary Dilworth for taking time out of their busy work schedules to share their experiences of working with migrant workers and their families in Ireland. The sharing of their learning adds an important dimension to the guide.



## SECTION 1

# INTRODUCING MIGRATION AND COMMUNITY WORK



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## Section 1

### Introducing Migration and Community Work

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This section introduces and informs readers on the complex nature of migration and explains some of the key systems and policies that have been developed to date. It further explores the critical issues facing migrant workers and the role of community work in responding to these issues. Through the analysis provided below and accompanying support sheets this section provides up to date and accessible information about the broader experience of migration.

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## 1.1 Introducing Migration

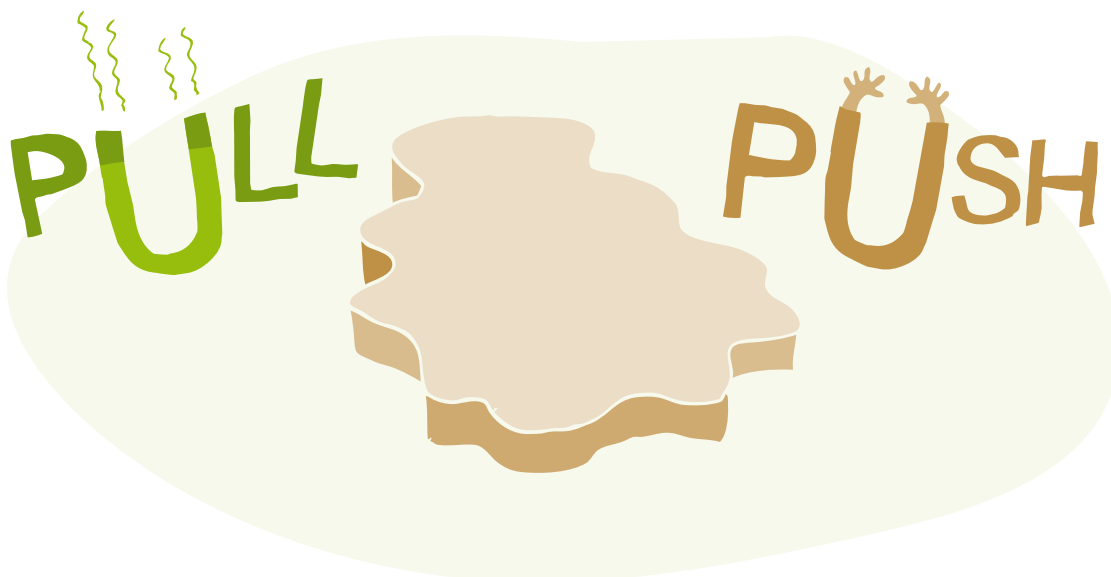
Migration is not a recent phenomenon. Men, women and their families have been leaving their homes since the beginning of time. Migration is essentially about the movement of people within and across borders and there are very different reasons and theories as to why people migrate. Generally these are referred to as 'push' and 'pull' factors, the former being the factors that compel people to leave their country (country of origin) and the latter, the factors that attract migrants to a particular country (destination country).

### Humanitarian migration

Hundreds of thousands of men, women and children flee persecution, war and natural disasters around the world every year. Such persons are commonly referred to as displaced persons, and their type of migration could be described as forced and is often in response to a humanitarian crisis. A refugee is a person who – due to a well-founded fear of being persecuted because of his/her race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion - is outside the country of his/her nationality and is unable to, or because of this fear unwilling to remain in his/her country (see Art 1, 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees for the official definition). A person seeking asylum, or 'asylum seeker' is someone who has left their country of origin, has applied for recognition as a refugee in another country, and is awaiting a decision on their application. If their application is successful, they will be given refugee status. Seeking asylum is a fundamental human right that goes beyond the economic situation in a sending or receiving country. Issues facing people seeking asylum and those with refugee status in Ireland are complex and varied, not least the experience of the 'direct provision' system.<sup>5</sup>

5

See [www.inis.gov.ie](http://www.inis.gov.ie) or  
[www.irishrefugeecouncil.ie](http://www.irishrefugeecouncil.ie)  
for more information



## Economic migration

Economic migration is essentially about social and economic development for individuals migrating and for sending and receiving countries. The factors which attract people to migrate include the opportunity to earn more money, to join family members, the desire to gain overseas experience, opportunities for career advancement, and the chance of a better job, better education and standard of living. Some of the push factors can include high unemployment and little or no economic opportunities in the home country. Pull factors include labour and skill shortages and higher wage levels. Today there are more migrant workers than in any period of human history. There is no continent, no region of the world, which does not have its number of migrant workers. The UN describes a migrant worker as

‘a person, who is to be engaged, is engaged or has been engaged in a remunerated activity in a State of which he or she is not a national.’<sup>6</sup>

**6** The term migrant does not refer to refugees, displaced or others forced to leave their homes. Migrants are people who make choices about when to leave or where to go, even though these choices are sometimes extremely constrained



See Support Sheet 1.3 on global migration facts and figures



## The global context

There are global realities such as globalisation, global poverty and demographic developments that have profound impacts on the movement of people around the world. Migration is a core aspect of a global process, and is largely irreversible. This interconnectedness means that local economies are shaped by global trends. As such, these processes have resulted in the restructuring of wages, labour and working conditions. The demand for flexible labour with temporary, short-term contracts, and the rise in outsourcing and contract arrangements, have all had significant implications for national economies. These are key ‘pull’ factors in the migration cycle. At the same time poverty and inequality exist on a global level, which ultimately means there will always be people on the move in search of a

better life. Demographic realities, such as the fact that many western countries have ageing populations, have direct implications for migration, an example being the shortage of carers. Policy developments, such as an EU attempt at harmonising migration policy, also impact directly on the movement of migrant workers, making legal routes more limited for non-EU migrant workers. These developments at a global level are important to bear in mind, as they impact directly on Ireland and on migrant workers here.

 See Support Sheets 1.6 and 1.7 for information on Irish policies and government structures relevant to migrant workers

### Migrant workers in Ireland

Ireland's long history as a country of significant emigration is well-known and documented. The most recent census indicated that 20% of the Irish-born population are in fact returned emigrants. The last ten years, however, have seen a reversal where immigration rates have been far higher than emigration rates. All Western states experience both inwards and outwards migration. Just like all other local economies around the world, Ireland is shaped by global trends, and migration is a core part of this global process. In Ireland the shift from manufacturing to services has impacted on the makeup of the labour force. Ireland is now home to a growing number of well-paid professional migrant workers, but also to an increasing number of migrants carrying out essential



work that is often invisible and low-paid. Many migrant workers will only want to work in Ireland for relatively short periods of time before returning home or finding work elsewhere. Others, however, will make Ireland their home and seek to obtain long-term residency and citizenship. Experience shows that once the migration cycle becomes established, networks form, roots are established and for many, settling becomes inevitable. In addition to this, Ireland is currently experiencing a recession and already its impact on migration trends is evident, for example the rise in the number of Irish people emigrating and the reduction in the number of migrant workers seeking work here. Whilst an economic downturn will mean some migrants will move on to seek work elsewhere, the reality is that those who have made their home in Ireland will not leave. In fact, the most vulnerable migrants who are at risk of poverty or in debt are unlikely to leave as migrating costs money. In addition, it is more difficult for migrant workers from outside the EU to move, as there are restrictions on their movements and access to the labour force in many countries. It is important to bear all this in mind in order to ensure that migrant workers do not become easy scapegoats for problems that will arise as a result of an economic downturn.

 See Support Sheet 1.4 for facts and information on migration to Ireland

### Critical issues facing migrant workers in Ireland

It is important to recognise that migrant workers are not a homogenous group. There are many differences between individuals, based on their social background and immigration status, gender, age, religious belief, educational background, family status and so on. Migration itself is a challenging process. Migrant workers who come to a new country are often unfamiliar with the society, its institutions and public services. They may be in debt or have limited resources. Generally they have left behind the support networks of family and friends. All these difficulties may be compounded by misplaced and unrealistic expectations of their destination, especially if they have been recruited using exploitative or misleading methods.

The manner in which a migrant worker enters Ireland, for example on a Work Permit status or on a Green Card, has huge implications for their migration experience. Rights and entitlements are directly linked to entry status - access to the labour market, supports, services and training are all dependent in one form or another on how a person enters the State. For example, migrant workers do not have automatic rights for their family to live with them, and many, most notably those on Work Permits and in low-wage jobs, experience extensive difficulties and lengthy delays in obtaining the right for their family to join them in Ireland. Further issues arise in terms of the Work Permit, for example difficulty in changing jobs, which can lead to people becoming undocumented. Women experience migration differently to men, therefore having a gender perspective and understanding of the different issues facing migrant women is also important in working with migrant workers and their families. Social exclusion and discrimination are obviously not experienced by all migrant workers in Ireland.

However it is clear that there are certain factors and issues facing many migrant workers and their families that put them at greater risk of poverty, social exclusion and marginalisation from Irish society. As community workers working with migrant workers and their families, there should be a focus on those who are experiencing discrimination, are at risk of social exclusion and poverty and whose voices are least likely to be heard in decision-making.



See Support Sheet 1.9 on gender and migration for a focus on migrant women and support in developing a gender analysis



**7** Equality legislation in Ireland prohibits direct and indirect discrimination across the nine grounds, which are: gender, marital status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race and membership of the Traveller community.

**8** National Consultative Committee on Racism and Interculturalism [www.nccri.ie](http://www.nccri.ie)

#### a) Discrimination and racism

Experiences of racism and discrimination are an ongoing reality for migrant workers, and these can take many forms. Migrant workers can experience racism and discrimination at an individual and personal level, for example being the victim of a racist attack (either verbal or physical) or being discriminated against in accessing employment or services in Ireland.<sup>7</sup> The NCCRI<sup>8</sup> has documented racist incidents experienced by immigrants in Ireland. These types of racist incidents range from verbal and physical abuse to discrimination in accessing goods or services. Migrant workers also experience varying degrees of inequality and discrimination in the workplace. This can vary from instances of being treated slightly less favourably to fellow employees in terms of pay and associated work privileges, to very serious exploitation involving numerous breaches of employment rights and health and safety standards.



### Your role as a community worker is to:

- ① Understand the root causes of inequality and discrimination
- ② Look at how to strengthen local and national policy responses through a collective and empowering process with migrant workers
- ③ Network, create linkages and avoid working in isolation
- ④ Name and challenge racism in all its forms, direct, indirect and structural
- ⑤ Make the connections with other groups experiencing racism, e.g. travellers

### b) Workplace exploitation

The exploitation of migrant workers in Ireland, particularly those in low-pay, non-unionised employment sectors, is widespread. Workplace exploitation constitutes a wide variety of situations in which a worker is taken advantage of and denied their rights provided under Irish & EU law. Exploitation can range from discriminatory practices in pay and conditions, to situations of forced labour. This exploitation is particularly prominent in sectors that are poorly regulated such as agriculture, domestic work, cleaning, restaurant and hotel work. In addition, a recent report published by the ESRI and Equality Authority<sup>9</sup> found that migrant workers are twice as likely to report discrimination in the workplace as Irish nationals. Migrant workers as a whole are more susceptible to exploitation due to several factors which make them more vulnerable to exploitive employers.

These factors include the following:

- The Work Permit system ties a worker's immigration status to one employer, so if anything happens to their job their legal status is put in jeopardy
- Many workers incur huge debts in order to secure work in Ireland, and most fear complaining until the debt has been paid
- For many occupations, particularly domestic work and agricultural work, a worker's accommodation is tied to the job, and there is therefore the risk of losing not only a job but also a home if problems arise
- Migrant workers have fewer resources and support structures, such as family, to fall back on if something goes wrong in their job
- Many have limited options for good pay and conditions in their home country and have little choice but to endure exploitive conditions in Ireland

**9** O'Connell, Philip J., and McGinnity, Frances, *Immigrants at Work: Ethnicity and Nationality in the Irish Labour Market*, The Equality Authority and The Economic and Social Research Institute, Dublin 2008.



**10** Migrant Rights Centre Ireland (2008)  
 Position Statement **Ending the Race to the Bottom – Changing the balance for Vulnerable Migrant Workers in Ireland**



As a result of these factors, migrant workers are much more reluctant to come forward and do something about exploitive pay and treatment. The risks for a migrant worker to come forward and potentially lose their job (and their legal status, for non-EU/EEA workers) outweigh the potential benefit of proper pay and conditions. On the other hand, the benefit of cheap labour to an employer who exploits is much greater than the risk of being caught and penalised. At present, the worst-case scenario for the vast majority of employers who violate workers' rights is that they have to pay a portion of the owed wages to the worker. In most cases employers pay a settlement to workers who lodge formal complaints, without any deterrent or penalty.<sup>10</sup>

#### Your role as a community worker is to:

- ❶ Be aware and concerned if workplace exploitation is happening in your area
- ❷ Be aware of the problematic sectors in which exploitation occurs and who works in them
- ❸ Be concerned with creating spaces and opportunities for those at risk of exploitation to come together, access support, information and redress
- ❹ Work with relevant stakeholders to address this issue, especially Trade Unions



**11** Migrant Rights Centre Ireland (2008)  
 Position Statement Ending the Race to  
 the Bottom – Changing the  
 balance for Vulnerable Migrant  
 Workers in Ireland



### c) Being undocumented

Undocumented migrant workers are generally non-EU/EEA nationals whose residency status in Ireland has expired or who entered the state without valid residency status. (A migrant worker can also be in the country with a valid legal status, but working irregularly, i.e. without permission, such as a valid Work Permit.) Some undocumented migrants may have overstayed a tourist visa or have fallen out of the Employment Permit system through, for example: exploitation, employers not renewing their Work Permit or being made redundant and not being able to secure a new permit immediately. Undocumented migrant workers are not entitled to access any form of State services except emergency healthcare. Due to their undocumented legal status they are often living in constant fear of drawing attention to their status.<sup>11</sup> Undocumented workers can experience high levels of fear and psychological distress due to this constant fear of discovery by the authorities. Lack of protections and paths to regularisation for migrant workers who have become undocumented is a key concern. Being undocumented leaves migrant workers at greater risk of exploitation, more vulnerable to social exclusion and at risk of living in poverty.

#### Your role as a community worker is to:

- ① Work with those at risk of social exclusion and poverty regardless of their legal status
- ② Ensure access to essential services and advocate for equal treatment within these services
- ③ Make the links between the systems and policies in place and a person's undocumented status
- ④ Find ways for those in an undocumented situation in Ireland to have their voice heard

### d) Accessing services

Difficulties arise for migrant workers in accessing essential State services, particularly due to the impact of the Habitual Residence Condition (HRC). Effective from May 1st 2004, the Irish government introduced the HRC as an additional criterion for qualifying for social assistance payments, Child Benefit and access to emergency accommodation. There appears to be much confusion amongst frontline service providers as to the entitlements migrant workers have, and migrant workers are often refused payments despite having the required number of social insurance contributions. The HRC was amended in late 2005, and EEA nationals now qualify for certain social assistance payments and family-related payments without being subjected to the HRC. The operation of the HRC continues to cause difficulties for all migrant workers when trying to access social protection and a safety net when they need it most. MRCI has called on the Irish government to amend the HRC so that exemptions can be provided for migrant workers who find themselves in a situation of vulnerability. MRCI believes services should be provided on the basis of need, not on whether a person qualifies under

the HRC. At the same time, there are other issues in relation to accessing services, for example simple procedures like registering with FÁS have proven to be problematic (migrant workers are not generally entitled to use FÁS services unless they have a 'Stamp Four' residency status). There is also the more complex issue of equality of access to key State services such as health and education.

 See Support Sheet 1.8 for more information on immigration and residency stamps



Your role as a community worker is to:

- 1 Understand the barriers which migrant workers face in accessing essential services and entitlements
- 2 Challenge systems, procedures and policies which prohibit migrant workers from accessing essential services, and promote equality of access and outcome in services which effect migrant workers
- 3 Ensure migrant workers have a say in how services are developed and delivered



## 1.2 Introducing Community Work with migrant workers

Community work is generally understood as a process that is ultimately concerned with the creation of a more equal and inclusive society, where power is used in the interests of all members of society.

Community work creates spaces for action and opportunities to change structures and systems of oppression. A community work process is underlined by an analysis of society, incorporating:

- The dynamics of power within society
- How decisions are made and in whose interests
- The relationship between social, economic and political institutions
- The role of collective action in achieving progress

It is important to say that not all activity which takes place in the community can be termed community work. For example, organising a multicultural food festival or similar event cannot itself be described as community work, although it may be an excellent way of engaging with migrant workers and creating spaces for intercultural activity at a local level. Community work is an intentional, political process which seeks to redress power imbalances through bringing together those most distanced from formal supports and structures. It is a process with a specific purpose and is underpinned by a clear set of principles.

Community work is always concerned with the right of the most excluded and oppressed to have a say in decisions that impact on their lives. This means supporting individuals, groups and communities to develop an analysis of their own experience. This process of consciousness-raising enables the identification of solutions and collective actions and outcomes necessary for a more equal and inclusive society.

**12** Towards Standards Adhoc Group (2008), Towards Standards for Quality Community Work – An All Ireland Statement of Values, Principles and Work Standards, Community Workers Cooperative

People are thus active in the process of achieving change, rather than passive receivers of services or decisions made without their involvement. Recently, the values, principles and work standards of community work have been agreed as an all-Ireland statement, and this has been referenced throughout this resource guide.<sup>12</sup>



See Support Sheet 1.10 on community work values and practice principles

### Why community workers should work with migrant workers and their families:

- There is always a danger that the symptoms of exclusion, e.g. limited English language proficiency, rather than the cause of that exclusion that is prioritised. As community workers we must challenge and look beyond the symptoms of exclusion to these root causes.
- Community work is concerned with the rights of all people. If rights are denied, or restricted (as experienced by some migrant workers) community workers should be concerned.
- Community work emphasises the importance of solidarity and cooperation with other groups in society who experience unacceptable levels of discrimination and exclusion.
- As community workers we examine power critically, and analyse how it is distributed, so an important question to ask is whether migrant workers have power. If not then why not, who does have power, and how is it being used?
- Community work in Ireland has a long history of working with vulnerable groups and communities, and specifically prioritising marginalised individuals and communities. This is to promote a just, equal and inclusive society.
- In working with migrant workers and their families, a focus on those who are more vulnerable to social exclusion should take precedence, e.g. migrant women.
- Racism, poverty, and inequality lead to the exclusion and segregation of people and communities. The building of analysis and consciousness-raising that underpins a community work approach should be focused on addressing this.
- A community work approach facilitates the movement from a focus on individual needs and concerns, to a focus on collective outcomes. This means supporting migrant workers to identify, and take action on, challenging issues such as gender inequality, justice issues, class and racism. This emphasises strategies to change unjust social conditions through consciousness-raising, participation, education and collective action.



### Your role as a community worker is to:

- ① Be informed of the issues
- ② Think critically and act politically
- ③ Maintain a focus on those who are most marginalised
- ④ Challenge and be challenged
- ⑤ Think outside the box
- ⑥ Support local, national and global connections
- ⑦ Create the conditions for participation
- ⑧ Support migrant workers and other relevant actors to develop a critical and political analysis

### Why the community and voluntary sector in Ireland should be concerned with working with migrant workers:

- Irish society is significantly transformed as a result of globalisation, and consequently inward migration. There is a growing challenge to local structures to reflect this changed reality in their own structures, priorities and targets.
- Community groups can use their experience to offer support to migrant workers and create the conditions for their participation and integration in the local community. This is particularly important for future cohesion and solidarity at local community level. This avoids the danger that these structures become reflective only of indigenous community members and not of the full diversity, thereby fuelling racial tension and exclusion.
- Social inclusion and community cohesion is dependent on the degree of participation, connection and shared solidarity between all members of a local community, and the degree to which community organisations facilitate this. Community-based organisations have a role in strengthening the capacity of migrant workers as active citizens in decision-making processes.
- Similarly, where there are dedicated resources to support the inclusion of migrant workers without an awareness or explicit acknowledgement of the diversity and power inequalities within migrant communities, the likely consequence is that the interests of the most marginalised, including women, will not be included.
- If the specific situation and needs of migrant workers and their families are not named and incorporated into planning processes, actions and resource allocations, there is a real danger that a significant part of the local community or community of interest targeted by community work organisations will be ignored.

## 1.3

## Support Sheet

## Global migration facts and figures

- There are approximately 192 million people living outside their place of birth, which is about 3% of the world's population. This means that roughly one of every thirty-five people in the world is a migrant.<sup>13</sup>
- A migrant worker is, 'a person, who is to be engaged, is engaged or has been engaged in a remunerated activity in a State of which he or she is not a national.'<sup>14</sup>
- An asylum-seeker describes someone who has applied for protection as a refugee and is awaiting the determination of his or her status. Refugee is the term used to describe a person who has already been granted protection.
- Factors influencing migration include globalisation; changing demographics: ageing population, declining fertility; changing patterns of lifestyle: education, the restructuring of the labour market, hours in work; global poverty and wage disparities between countries.
- Throughout the world, migrant workers are very often doing the dirty, dangerous and difficult jobs that are considered essential to the functioning of society.
- Migration presents challenges and opportunities for the individual person migrating, their family unit, the sending country and receiving country.
- There are an estimated 800,000 Irish-born people living abroad today.<sup>15</sup> It is estimated that there are 50,000 undocumented Irish migrant workers in the United States.<sup>16</sup>
- Migration is often a two-way experience; most countries are both receiving and sending countries for migrants.
- Remittances are a portion of an international migrant's earnings sent back from the host country to his/her country of origin, and are considered to be one of the positive benefits of migration.

13

<http://www.iom.int/jahia/page3.html>

14

ILO Migration for Employment Convention (Revised), 1949. The term migrant does not refer to refugees, displaced or others forced to leave their homes. Migrants are people who make choices about when to leave or where to go, even though these choices are sometimes extremely constrained.

15

<http://www.ean.ie/issues/how-many-irish-people-live-abroad-an-ean-factsheet/>

16

Coalition of Irish Immigration Centres:  
<http://www.ciic-usa.org/news-immigrationreform.html>

## 1.4

## Support Sheet

Economic migration to Ireland  
facts and figures

All figures below were taken from Irish Census 2006<sup>17</sup>

- There were a total of 420,000 non-Irish nationals living in Ireland in April 2006, representing 188 different countries. The vast majority, 82%, are from a small number of countries (ten countries).
- 8.5% of the female population are migrant women.
- There are non-Irish nationals living in every town in Ireland. The majority are living in cities and large towns but some also live in small and medium-sized towns.
- The United Kingdom represents the largest non-Irish group in Ireland, resident here for longer than other groups (large numbers in Ireland since the 1970's and 1980's).
- Nearly half (48%) of immigrants are nationals of the EU accession countries.
- Non-Irish born nationals in Ireland are mostly people in their twenties and thirties, with significantly more men than women. More than half of immigrants are aged between 25-44, while a further 28% are between the ages of 15-24.
- A high proportion of non-Irish born nationals, almost 42%, are married.
- Census 2006 revealed that the labour market participation rate of non-Irish born nationals is higher, with fewer students, homemakers or retirees. Nationals from the accession states are predominantly workers, whilst there is a highest percentage of students among those from outside the EU.
  - At one in three, the hotel and restaurant sector has the highest proportion of non-Irish born workers.
  - Four industries employed three quarters of all workers from the EU accession states; manufacturing, construction, wholesale/retail/trade and hotels and restaurants.
  - Over one fifth of those from other countries worked in health and social work – these were mostly Asian workers.

## 1.5

## Support Sheet

Migrant workers in Ireland –  
challenging myths and misinformation<sup>18</sup>**Q Are migrant workers a drain on the economy?**

- Migrant workers expand the economy by allowing businesses to grow and by investing their own skills and money in enterprises.
- Migrant workers are vital for our health services and the hospitality sector, and many other sectors of the Irish economy.
- They contribute both as taxpayers and consumers of goods and services.
- The majority of migrant workers are skilled and educated. This contributes to Ireland's competitiveness and productivity levels.
- Non-EU students pay more than double the fees of Irish and EU students. Non-EU students cannot access any social welfare benefits even if working.
- Figures compiled by MRCI show that migrant workers contribute billions to the Irish economy in a variety of ways; €1.5 billion annually in taxes and PRSI, €10.86 million in registration fees to the Garda National Immigration Bureau, €15.5 million in registration fees to GNIB, €140 million in third level education tuition fees paid by international students and €2 billion<sup>19</sup> approximately in personal consumption.<sup>20</sup>

**Q Do migrant workers bring down wages?**

- Wage levels, including the minimum wage, have consistently risen over the past decade.
- Migrant workers should not be blamed for employers who do not pay minimum wage and who violate employment legislation for their own profit.
- Migrant workers are involved in campaigning for fair pay and good standards of employment for all workers.

**Q Are migrant workers a burden on public services?**

- Migrant workers tend to pay more in taxes than they receive in benefits. It is estimated that around 200,000 migrant workers provide an annual surplus in income taxes of around half a billion Euro.
- Despite unfounded fears of 'welfare tourism', less than 1% of the country's migrant workers are dependent on social welfare. Social welfare is important for any worker as a safety net in times of illness or unemployment. Even when migrant workers pay social insurance they can find it hard to access social benefits.



See Section 1.1, d) for information on the Habitual Residence Condition.

**18** MRCI and NCCRI Challenging Myths and Misinformation about migrant workers and their families in Ireland 2007

**19** Estimate based on CSO figures and average personal consumption (taken from Irish Economic Statistics 2007, Central Bank And Financial Services Authority of Ireland)

**20** Migrant Rights Centre Ireland Migrants contribute over €3.7 billion annually to Irish economy Press Release Tuesday 25th November 2008

- There can be pressure on public services when there are insufficient resources and increased needs (e.g. teachers or language supports), or when waiting lists are already long (e.g. affordable housing lists). This results from public services not being able to keep up to date with the changing needs of the population, and is not the fault of any one group.

### Q Should 'illegally' resident migrant workers be told to leave?

- There are no official numbers for undocumented people in Ireland. It is the MRCI's experience that most migrant workers come here legally, but subsequently become undocumented through reasons beyond their control, e.g. when an employer does not renew their Work Permit, or when they have been exploited.
- Like many Irish emigrants who have found themselves undocumented in the US undocumented migrant workers living in Ireland are simply trying to make a living and support their families, and they do not want to be undocumented.
- Many of those who became undocumented have also experienced workplace exploitation, which often involves being owed significant amounts of money in unpaid wages.
- Migrant workers often speak several languages, and given the opportunity would like to learn English. This can be difficult when working long hours, and when classes are not available at times when workers are free.
- Like the Irish experience of emigration, migrant workers generally develop identification with the country they live in, while retaining a strong attachment to their country of origin.
- Irish society has undergone huge changes in the past fifteen years. Only a part of this has to do with migration. Globalisation, communications, wealth, and international travel all shape how we define ourselves as a society.

### Q Are migrant workers not interested in being a part of Irish society?

- Sports clubs, churches and community associations all over Ireland are experiencing a new lease of life as migrant workers and their families participate and integrate into their local communities.
- Immigration increases the size of the economy creating more jobs for everyone.
- There are many reasons why it can be hard for unemployed people to find work, e.g. lack of childcare and disability access, discrimination, racism, deskilling, educational disadvantage.
- In the current recession the economy might slow for a period, however in the long term immigration contributes to stimulating the economy and creating more jobs for everyone.
- The Irish economy and Irish society is dependent upon the essential work that is carried out by migrant workers in Ireland, for example care work, services, agriculture. This is essential work has contributed to Ireland's economic success to date, but is characterised by low pay, is often less visible and is increasingly carried out by migrant workers.

## 1.6

## Support Sheet

Immigration –  
government structures and policies

There are a number of government departments which play an important role in the development of policies and procedures on immigration. The two main government departments responsible are the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform, and the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment, along with a Minister of State with special responsibility for integration. There is also legislation, and forthcoming legislation,<sup>21</sup> that directly impacts on the lives of migrant workers and their families in Ireland. As a community worker working with migrant workers, it is important to understand how the system operates, and how policies and decisions are made, in order to directly support migrant workers to access their rights and entitlements, and in advocating for policy change and in building strategic relationships.

## I. Government Structures

Who does what? Government Departments  
and the role they playThe Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform  
[www.justice.ie](http://www.justice.ie)

This department oversees the issuing of residency stamps and permission to remain in Ireland (for all non-EU nationals including migrant workers, people seeking asylum, refugees and student visa holders). Within this Department, the Immigration and Citizenship (Operations) Division is responsible for the implementation of policy in relation to the admission of all non EEA nationals (including migrant workers) to

the State, their residence in the State, for applications for permission to remain in the State referred from the Garda National Immigration Bureau and the granting of Irish citizenship. The Immigration Residence and Protection Bill 2007 is the main over arching legislation incoming in this area.

– Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Service (INIS)  
[www.inis.gov.ie](http://www.inis.gov.ie)

INIS was established in 2005 in order to provide a ‘one-stop-shop’ service in relation to asylum, immigration, citizenship and visas. INIS is responsible for the administrative functions of the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform in relation to asylum, immigration (including Visas) and citizenship matters.

The Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment  
[www.entemp.ie](http://www.entemp.ie)

The DETE is divided into seven divisions, the most relevant here being the Labour Force Development Division. It has responsibility for employment services, economic migration policy, employment permits and labour market policy, amongst other things. Within this Division is the Employment Permits Section:

## – The Employment Permits Section

This section processes applications for Employment Permits (including Green Cards, Work Permits, spousal/dependant Work Permits. All Employment Permits are processed in accordance with the Employment Permits Acts 2003 and 2006. The website of the DETE ([www.entemp.ie](http://www.entemp.ie)) outlines

guidelines to all of the Employment Permit schemes such as who can apply, what criteria are required to be eligible for a Work Permit, fees, labour market tests etc.

### The Department of Foreign Affairs

[www.dfa.ie](http://www.dfa.ie)

The Department of Foreign Affairs also plays a role in Ireland's visa system as visa applications from those who are resident outside of Ireland are lodged at Embassies and Consulates. For short stay visas such as business or conference applications, the decision is made by the Visa Officer at the local Embassy or Consulate. In other cases, such as family reunion, applications are referred to the Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Service (INIS) in Dublin.

### Garda National Immigration Bureau (GNIB)

[www.garda.ie/gnib.html](http://www.garda.ie/gnib.html)

All non-Irish-born nationals who are not citizens of a Member State of the European Union (EU), the European Economic Area (EEA) or Switzerland have to register with An Garda Síochána and have to be in possession of a registration card (GNIB card). GNIB is responsible for all immigration-related garda operations in Ireland. (e.g. they handle registration and renewal of immigration stamps). GNIB also carries out deportations, border control and investigations related to irregular migration and trafficking in human beings. An Garda Síochána has personnel specifically dealing with immigration in every Garda district and at all ports and airports. An Garda Síochána have also established the Garda Racial and Intercultural Office and appointed 145 Garda ethnic liaison officers.

### Office of the Minister for Integration

In July 2007 the Office of the Minister for Integration was created, with responsibility to develop and implement a national integration policy. The office brings together in one administrative unit key officials from relevant Government Departments who provide services to immigrants. The office has taken on responsibility for integration functions previously held by the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform, including integration of refugees and various related functions.

## II. Immigration-related Policies

### What does the law say?

There is a somewhat complex policy context relevant to immigration in Ireland that it is important to get to grips with as a community worker. In relation to working with migrant workers and their families there are several important policy developments outlined below. However as community work is about creating the conditions for social change and is therefore concerned with decision makers and policy in general, the broader policy context will always be relevant and important, particularly in relation to social policy development.

### The Habitual Residence Condition (HRC) 2004

The Irish government introduced the HRC in February 2004 as an amendment to the Social Welfare Miscellaneous Provisions Bill 2004. The basis of the HRC is that applicants, regardless of nationality, must be deemed to be 'habitually resident' in the Irish State, or the rest of the Common Travel Area (U.K, Channel

Islands and the Idle of Man), in order to qualify for Social Assistance payments, Child Benefit payment and access to key State services. The HRC was amended in late 2005 so that EU/EEA nationals could qualify for certain social assistance payments and family-related payments. The operation of the HRC continues to cause difficulties for all migrant workers when trying to access social protection and a safety net. Exemptions should be provided for migrant workers who find themselves in a vulnerable situation. Services should be provided on the basis of need, not on whether a person qualifies for HRC

### Employment Permits Act 2006

The Employment Permits Act 2006 introduced the Green Card Permit (formally ‘work visas’) and revised the legislation on Work Permits and spousal/dependant Permits. For further information on the changes the Act brought in including new permit schemes, access the ‘employment’ link on DETE’s website, [www.entemp.ie](http://www.entemp.ie). Some key changes to Work Permits include:

- Either the employer or the employee can apply for the Work Permit (the applicant pays the fee) – previously only the employer could do this;
- the Work Permit is granted to the employee, and a copy sent to the employer.

### Immigration Residence and Protection Bill 2007

The Immigration Residence and Protection Bill (IRPB) 2007 replaces all of the present legislation on immigration, some of which dates back to 1935, and establishes a statutory framework for Ireland’s immigration policies into the future.<sup>22</sup> It is an important piece of legislation to get to grips with, as once implemented it will impact directly on migrant workers and their families in Ireland. The Bill legislates for, amongst other things, a statutory basis for making and determining visa applications, processes for admission to the State, obtaining and renewing residence permissions and removal from the State. At the time of going to print, some problems with the Bill in its current format that have been highlighted by a number of civil society organisations include:

- Failure to legislate for family reunification;
- The Bill allows for summary deportation, i.e. a person can be deported without notice;
- It makes Long Term Residency conditional on the person not having accessing public funds (i.e. social welfare);
- It does not include an independent appeals mechanism for immigration decisions made.

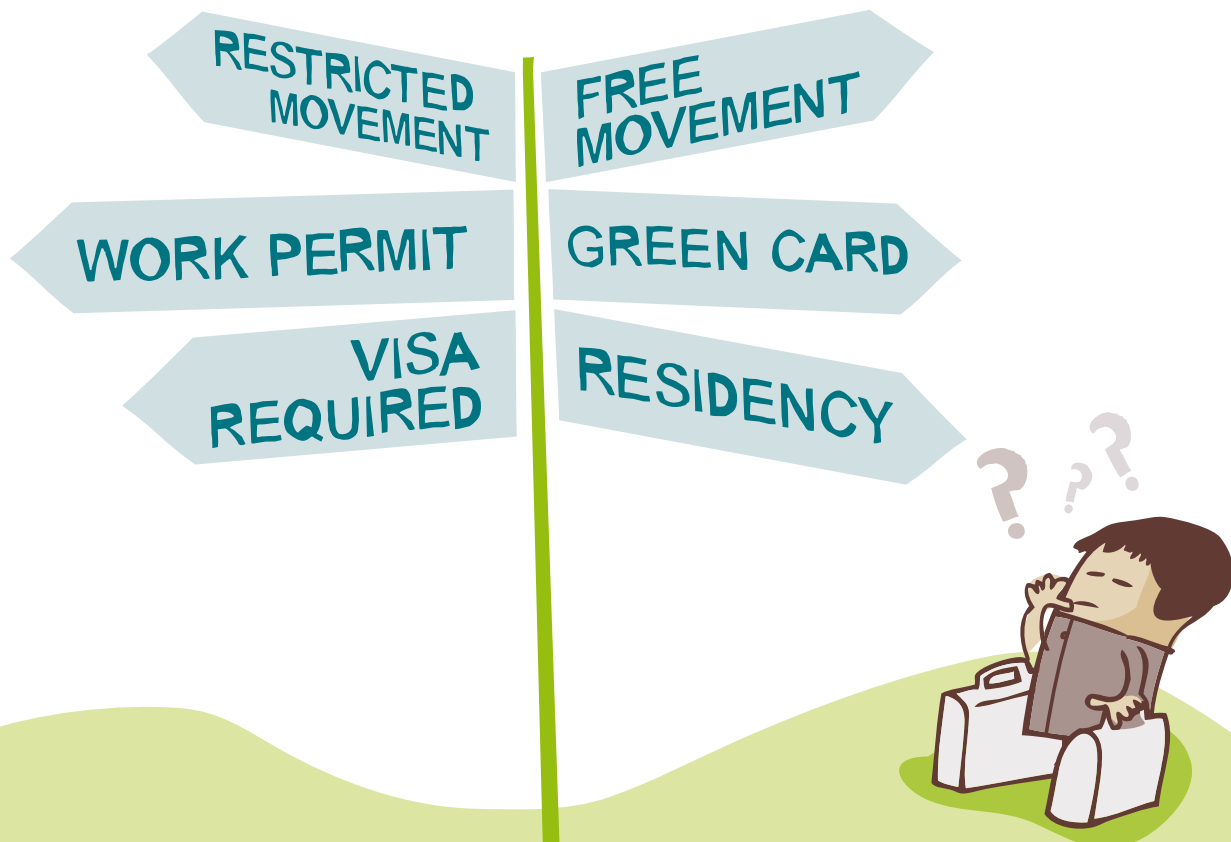
## 1.7

## Support Sheet

Immigration and residency –  
understanding the jargon**Migrating to Ireland –  
a quick tour of the basics**

Migrant workers living and working in Ireland come from all over the world. Those who are from EU Member States enjoy free movement of labour within the EU, and therefore do not require permission to work in Ireland (this does not apply to Romanian and Bulgarian nationals as Ireland placed restrictions on their access to the labour market when they joined the EU). Anyone coming to Ireland to work from outside of the European Economic Area (EEA), i.e. the EU Member States plus Iceland, Lichtenstein and Norway, needs permission to work in the form of an Employment Permit/Green Card. At the same time, all persons who are not Irish or EU/EEA nationals require

permission to reside in Ireland (given in the form of an immigration residence certificate, i.e. stamp in the passport). Permission to enter Ireland does not give permission to reside or work in the country. There are also countries whose nationals do not require a visa to enter Ireland, called 'non-visa-required' countries, for example Brazil or South Africa (see list of these countries on [www.dfa.ie](http://www.dfa.ie)). If, however, nationals from non-visa required countries wish to reside or engage in other activities other than short-term tourism (e.g. work or study full time), they require permission to do so. In practice, migrant workers in Ireland can be documented (i.e. have a residency stamp in date and valid Work Permit) or undocumented (their permission to remain in the country has expired).



### EU nationals

An EU national is a person who is a citizen of an EU Member State. All EU citizens have the right to travel freely within the European Union, including Romania and Bulgaria who joined on 1st January 2007. However a number of EU States have restrictions on who can access their labour market. Ireland imposed temporary restrictions on Romanian and Bulgarian national accessing jobs here. (However certain categories of Romanian and Bulgarian nationals do have access to the labour market.) Nationals from the EU Member States make up over half of the immigrant population in Ireland

### Non-EU international students

Non-EU nationals travelling to Ireland to study must apply for a student visa, and have limited rights in Ireland. The applicant must be able to show that s/he is enrolled on a privately-funded course involving at least 15 hours of organised daytime tuition each week. Students who are enrolled and attending a recognised full-time course of at least 12 months (which leads to a recognised degree) are entitled to work 20 hours per week during term and full time during holiday breaks and summertime. Not all foreign students have the right to work; students enrolled in a program for less than one year for example may not have the right to work in Ireland. A Work Permit scheme for non-EU students is to be introduced in the near future.

### Non-EU nationals

A non-EU national is a person who is not a citizen of an EU Member State. They have fewer rights than EU migrant workers, and need an Employment Permit (Work Permit or Green Card) in order to work legally in Ireland.

### Working in Ireland

A Work Permit gives permission for a migrant worker to be employed in a specific job, by a specific employer. The employer must fulfil a labour market test to show that there are no Irish or EU candidates available to fill the position. A Work Permit can be applied for by the employer or employee, is normally issued for two years and can be renewed for three years. The applicant for the Work Permit pays the fees, which start at €1000 for two years. Work Permits are not issued for jobs with a salary of €30,000 per year or less, and there are many jobs in the Irish labour market which are deemed ineligible for Work Permits.

Work Permit holders do not have the freedom to change jobs or job sectors easily. A Green Card is a type of Employment Permit issued for selected professional areas, for jobs with a salary of €60,000 per year and over. It is valid for two years. Green Card holders have access to family reunification after several months in Ireland.

### Spouse/dependant

Spouses and dependants of Employment Permit holders in Ireland have generally joined their spouse or parent on a family reunification visa. Spouse/dependant visa holders have the right to work in Ireland once a Work Permit is obtained. The fee for the permit is waived, ineligible sectors do not apply, and employers do not have to satisfy the labour market test in this case. Permission to reside in Ireland (the residency stamp) and the Work Permit are dependent upon the legal status and Employment Permit of the spouse. In situations of marital breakdown or domestic violence, spouses are in a vulnerable position in the country, as they can lose their status.

### Long Term Residency

Persons who have been legally resident in the State for over five years (60 months in total) on the basis of an Employment Permit (Work Permit or Working Visa/Authorisation, recently replaced by the Green Card) may apply to the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform for a five-year residency permission. In calculating the 60-month period, the Department only takes into consideration time spent in the State legally, on an Employment Permit. Time spent on a student visa or time undocumented is not included. Being granted Long Term Residency means a migrant worker no longer requires a permit to work and can change employers when they wish.

### Family Reunion

Work Permit holders do not have an automatic right to family reunion, and have to be legally residing and working in the country for one year before they can apply to the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform for their family members to join them. This decision is at the discretion of the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform. To qualify, a migrant worker has to have a valid Work Permit and have been in employment for at least twelve months before the date of application. S/he must be in full time employment on the date of application, and have an income above the threshold which would qualify the family for payment under the Family Income Supplement (FIS) Scheme administered by the Department of Social and Family Affairs. Applications must be accompanied by supporting documentation and appeals can be made on negative decisions. Green Card holders can apply for family reunification as soon as they start working in the country. Family reunification is not legislated for in the Immigration, Residence and Protection Bill 2007.



## 1.8

## Support Sheet

## Understanding immigration registration stamps

This is an outline of the main immigration registration stamps as currently used by the immigration authorities. The immigration stamps in the passport, in conjunction with the Certificate of Registration (plastic card) issued by GNIB, are evidence of permission to be in the State. They are not an indicator of, nor an interpretation of, legal entitlements other than those explicitly set out in the stamps. The immigration authorities have the right to assign or refuse immigration stamps to the various categories of persons as appropriate.

Please note that the stamps are kept under ongoing review and may be updated from time to time. Below is an indicative list of categories of persons who may be granted permission to remain in the State. This table does not give any assurance that a person in one of the categories will obtain the immigration stamp indicated. The immigration authorities have the right to grant or refuse permission to remain on a case-by-case basis.<sup>24</sup>

**Stamp 1**

This person is permitted to remain in Ireland on condition that the holder does not enter employment unless the employer has obtained a permit, does not engage in any business or profession without the permission of the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform and does not remain later than a specified date.

**Main category of person issued this stamp**

Non-EEA national issued with a Work Permit

Non-EEA national issued a Green Card Permit

Non-EEA national who has been granted permission to operate a business in the State

Working Holiday Authorisation holder

**Stamp 1A**

This person is permitted to remain in Ireland for the purpose of full-time training with a named body until a specified date. Other employment is not allowed.

**Main category of person issued this stamp**

Non-EEA national studying accountancy



**Stamp 2**

This person is permitted to remain in Ireland to pursue a course of studies on condition that the holder does not engage in any business or profession other than casual employment (defined as 20 hours per week during school term and up to 40 hours per week during school holidays), and does not remain later than a specified date. Also the person has no recourse to public funds unless otherwise provided.

**Main category of person issued this stamp**

Non-EEA national attending a full-time course of study recognised by the Department of Education and Science

**Stamp 2A**

This person is permitted to remain in Ireland to pursue a course of studies on condition that the holder does not enter employment, does not engage in any business or profession, has no recourse to public funds and does not remain later than a specified date.

**Main category of person issued this stamp**

Non-EEA national attending course of study not recognised by the Department of Education and Science

**Stamp 3**

This person is permitted to remain in Ireland on condition that the holder does not enter employment, does not engage in any business or profession and does not remain later than a specified date.

**Main category of person issued this stamp**

Non-EEA visitor  
Non-EEA retired person of independent means  
Non-EEA Minister of Religion and Member of Religious Order  
Non-EEA spouse/dependant of Employment Permit holder

**Stamp 4**

This person is permitted to remain in Ireland until a specified date.

**Main category of person issued this stamp**

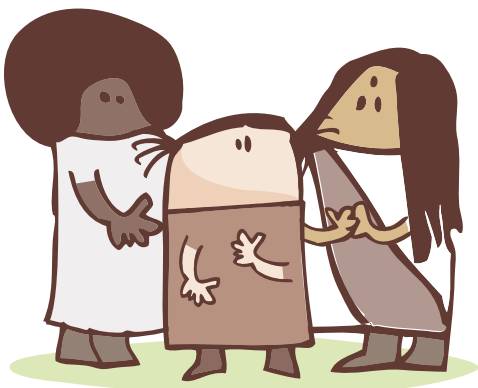
Non-EEA family member of EEA citizen  
Non-EEA spouse of Irish citizen  
Refugee  
Non-EEA person granted family reunification under the Refugee Act 1996  
Programme refugee  
Non-EEA parent of Irish citizen child where parent was granted permission to remain in the State  
Non-EEA family member of EU citizen where family member qualifies under the European Communities (Free Movement of Persons) (No. 2) Regulations 2006 (S.I 656 of 2006)

## 1.9

## Support Sheet

Gender  
and Migration

- 50% of migrants worldwide are women.
- Gender is about the differences between men and women and how they are perceived.
- Gender is perhaps the most important single factor shaping experiences – more important than the country of origin or destination, age, class, ethnicity or culture.
- Gender inequality in destination countries, such as the gender pay gap for example, means that migrant women are structurally disadvantaged from the outset.
- Women can also be empowered by migration as traditionally they have less access to resources and decision-making power than men. Education, work experience and economic independence abroad can release women from traditional roles and enable them to exercise their rights more effectively.
- Migration holds more dangers for women. They are more vulnerable to physical, sexual and verbal abuse when travelling or working in another country, and they are more likely to fall prey to human traffickers for the sex industry, become victims of trafficking for forced labour and be subjected to bonded labour.
- Migrant women are recruited into both high-skilled and lower-skilled but essential work categories; many are concentrated in low-status employment and highly-feminised sectors of the labour market, characterised by low pay, long hours, poor regulation and poor progression routes.
- A significant number of women migrant workers are employed as carers in our communities. Many are engaged as domestic workers, a hidden, isolated and largely unregulated sector of employment which has high levels of exploitation and in which workers are at greater risk of becoming undocumented.
- If the relationship breaks down, a migrant woman may lose her legal status if this status is tied to her spouse.
- Without a specific response, the legacy of gender inequality in decision-making and in positions of influence will continue, and the barriers to participation will be reinforced rather than addressed.
- Sending home money regularly, coupled with working long hours, receiving the minimum wage and in some cases below the minimum wage, puts migrant women at risk of living in poverty in Ireland.



## 1.10

## Support Sheet

Community work values  
and practice principles

Community Work is informed by and operates from a set of core values and principles. Values are generally understood as moral principles, priorities or accepted standards a person or social group holds. Practice principles are related rules of personal conduct, guiding theories or beliefs. In practice they work together to inform community work. These five values are adapted from *Towards Standards for Quality Community*<sup>25</sup> Work and are highlighted throughout the document in greater detail.

Value 1  
Collective Action

A focus on the collective means that the outcome sought should have a collective impact, e.g. a policy change that all of a particular group/community can benefit from. Community work is based on working with groups of people, and supporting and enabling them to develop knowledge, skills and confidence, so that they can then develop an analysis, identify priority needs and issues and address these through collective action.

## Example of practice principles

Community workers have a responsibility to:

- Inform themselves about the reality experienced by the communities with which they work, and build relationships with communities

- Involve communities in a collective analysis of issues and identify common needs
- Work towards collective outcomes for the community as a whole rather than the advancement of individuals
- Create and enhance conditions for collective action through building solidarity and sharing models of good practice

Value 2  
Empowerment

Community work is about the empowerment of individuals and communities, and addressing the unequal distribution of power. It is about working with people to enable them to become critical, creative, liberated and active participants, enabling them to take more control of the direction of their lives. It aims to effect a sharing of power, to create structures that provide genuine participation and involvement. It is a process based on mutual respect and equal and genuine partnership.

## Example of practice principles

Community workers have a responsibility to:

- Work with people to build an understanding and analysis of their reality through consciousness-raising
- Work with people to build confidence and self-esteem as pre-requisites to supporting them to undertake action

25

Adapted from: Towards  
Standards Adhoc Group (2008),  
Towards Standards for Quality  
Community Work – An All Ireland  
Statement of Values, Principles and  
Work Standards, Community Workers  
Cooperative

- Have an analysis of power and how it is acquired, sustained and applied
- Recognise power inequalities and seek to address them
- Work with communities to develop information and formal networks, and create alliances that support the achievement of collective goals
- Be prepared to challenge power imbalances in order to promote greater minority participation at all levels

### Value 3 Social Justice

Community work is based on a belief that every person and every community can play an active role in creating the conditions for a just and equal society, where human rights are promoted and all forms of oppression or discrimination are challenged. The pursuit of social justice involves identifying and seeking to alleviate structural disadvantage, and advocating strategies for overcoming disadvantage, discrimination and inequality. In effect it means working to promote human rights for all.

#### Example of practice principles

Community workers have a responsibility to:

- Develop a clear social analysis, making connections between local, national and global issues
- Develop an understanding of the ways in which the policies and activities of government, organisations and society can either create or contribute to disadvantage, or work towards inclusion and equality

- Build the capacity of communities to contribute to policy development
- Work in solidarity with marginalised communities towards gaining concrete improvements in their quality of life
- Promote human rights for all in line with UN Conventions and other human rights instruments

### Value 4 Equality and Anti-Discrimination

In working for equality, community workers must work from the starting point that while people are not the same, they are all of equal worth and importance and are therefore equally worthy of respect and acknowledgement. Community workers have a responsibility to challenge the oppression and exclusion of individuals and groups by institutions and society, which leads to discrimination against people based on ability, age, culture, gender, marital status, socioeconomic status, nationality, skin colour, racial or ethnic group, sexual orientation, political or religious beliefs. It is particularly important that community workers acknowledge the particular and historical inequalities experienced by women in all cultures.

#### Example of practice principles

Community workers have a responsibility to:

- Acknowledge the diverse nature of Irish society, and seek to understand the nature of social diversity and oppression with respect to disadvantaged communities and minorities
- Respect, value, support and promote difference and diversity

- Reject and challenge any form of discrimination and oppression
- Keep up to date with, and reflect on, their own practice in relation to equality and anti-discrimination legislation
- Find appropriate and constructive means to support equality for women in all work
- Support and promote the development of decision-making structures that are open, accessible and inclusive of those groups who experience social exclusion, discrimination and other inequalities, and ensure that working to build effective participation is at the core of community work practice
- Recognise and address barriers, including structural barriers, to meaningful and effective participation at all levels

## Value 5 Participation

Participation can be viewed as a continuum of activity that can start from information-sharing, through to capacity-building and empowerment, and active engagement and meaningful participation in democratic processes. It recognises that people have the right to participate in decisions and structures that affect their lives. In working to promote participation, it is vital that inherent power imbalances are acknowledged and addressed. Ultimately the participation of marginalised and disadvantaged communities should contribute to bringing about social change, through informed policies and processes, to the benefit of all.

### Example of practice principles

Community workers have a responsibility to:

- Work towards the development and achievement of meaningful participation and power sharing
- Support communities to gain the skills necessary for full participation
- Ensure work is based on the needs of the community



## Support Sheet

### Useful resources

#### Some organisations working with migrant workers and their families:

Crosscare Migrant Project  
[www.migrantproject.ie](http://www.migrantproject.ie)

Doras Luimni  
[www.doraskuimni.org](http://www.doraskuimni.org)

Galway Migrant Service  
[www.gcp.ie](http://www.gcp.ie)

Immigrant Council of Ireland  
[www.immigrantcouncil.ie](http://www.immigrantcouncil.ie)  
(Directory of Migrant Organisations in Ireland (2006):  
Immigrant Council of Ireland. Available to download  
from the ICI website)

Integrating Ireland  
[www.integratingireland.ie](http://www.integratingireland.ie)

Migrant Rights Centre Ireland  
[www.mrci.ie](http://www.mrci.ie)

Nasc, The Irish Immigrant Support Centre, Cork  
[www.nascireland.org](http://www.nascireland.org)

South Tyrone Empowerment Programme  
[www.stepni.org](http://www.stepni.org)

#### Useful websites:

##### Government websites:

Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Service:  
see [www.inis.ie](http://www.inis.ie) for further information on visas  
(including visa decisions), immigration, asylum and  
citizenship, a list of eligible study institutions and  
programmes (student visas).

Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment:  
see [www.entemp.ie](http://www.entemp.ie) for further information about the  
Employment Permits Act 2006 and the Employment  
Permits system (including procedures for applying for  
a permit, Work Permits for spouse dependents, fees,  
information for employers, etc.).

#### Information on Rights and Entitlements for migrant workers

See the Information for Migrants link on  
[www.immigrantcouncil.ie](http://www.immigrantcouncil.ie)

See the Know Your Rights link on  
[www.mrci.ie](http://www.mrci.ie)

See the Citizen's Information link on  
[www.citizensinformationboard.ie](http://www.citizensinformationboard.ie)

See the Information for Employees link on  
[www.employmentrights.ie](http://www.employmentrights.ie)

## Suggested publications for further reading:

Immigrant Council of Ireland (2008) *Analysis of the Immigration, Residence and Protection Bill 2008* as initiated and suggested amendments

Integrating Ireland (2007) *Recognition of Professional Qualifications: An Analysis of the Role of Professional Bodies*

Integrating Ireland (2008) *Immigrant Civic Participation*

Kropiweiec, Katarzyna with Chiyoko King-O'Riain, Dr R., for the National Consultative Committee on Racism and Interculturalism Community Profile Series (NCCRI) (2008) *Polish Migrant Workers in Ireland*

MRCI (2006) *Realising Integration – Creating the Conditions for Economic, Social, Political and Cultural Inclusion of Migrant Workers and their Families in Ireland*

MRCI (2007) *Life in the Shadows – An Exploration of Irregular Migration in Ireland*

MRCI (2008) *Enabling Equality: Migrant Women in Rural Ireland*

MRCI in association with Dublin City University (2006) *No Way Forward No Going Back – Identifying the problem of trafficking for forced labour in Ireland*

Nasc, The Irish Immigrant Support Centre (2008) *Integrating the Future: Nasc's Strategy on Access to Employment, Education and Enterprise for Migrants in Cork*

Platform for International Cooperation on Undocumented Migrants (PICUM) (2005) *Ten Ways to Protect Undocumented Migrant Workers* [www.picum.org](http://www.picum.org)

Pillinger, J. Report Commissioned by Immigrant Council of Ireland (2007) *The Feminisation of Migration: Experiences and Opportunities in Ireland*

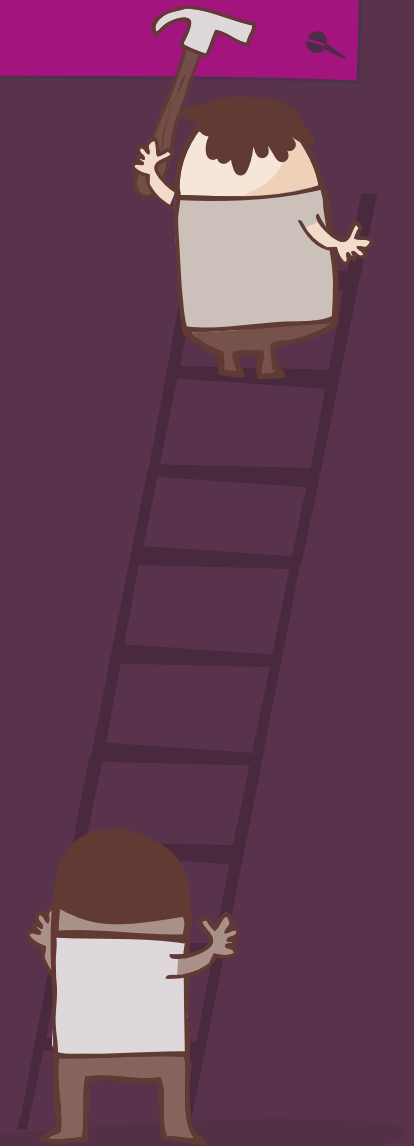
Towards Standards Ad Hoc Group (2008) *Towards Standards for Quality Community Work – An All Ireland Statement of Values, Principles and Work Standards* Published by Community Workers Co-operative [www.cwc.ie](http://www.cwc.ie)

The Migration and Citizenship Research Initiative at University College Dublin, prepared for Immigrant Council of Ireland (2008) *Getting On: From Migration to Integration Chinese, Indian, Lithuanian, and Nigerian Migrants' Experiences in Ireland*

Wang, Ying Yung and Chiyoko King O'Riain, Dr R., for the National Consultative Committee on Racism and Interculturalism Community (NCCRI) Profile Series (2008) *Chinese Students in Ireland*

## SECTION 2

# TOOLS FOR PARTICIPATION



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## Section 2

### Tools for Participation

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At the core of participation as a concept is the recognition that people have the right to have a say in structures and systems which affect their lives. Participation can be viewed as a continuum of activity, ranging from information sharing to active engagement, analysis and empowerment and meaningful participation in the democratic process.<sup>26</sup> Participation requires access to information, networks, resources, communication and leadership skills, and a sense of acceptance and belonging. If participation is not connected to addressing power imbalances, and to working for social change and collective outcomes, it can become an end in itself. As community workers, it is important to always be mindful of what it is we are asking people to participate in. This section deals with the initial responsibilities of informing yourself, identifying the issues facing migrant workers, engagement and outreach with migrant workers and their families, as well as creating the conditions for their active participation, both in the work of the project and in the local community.

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26

Towards Standards Adhoc  
Group (2008) *Occupational  
Standards for Quality  
Community Work – An All Ireland  
statement of values, principles and  
work standards* (P.26)





### Participation – your role as a community worker is to:

- ❶ Work towards the development and achievement of meaningful participation, which involves power sharing
- ❷ Support communities to gain the skills necessary for full participation
- ❸ Ensure work is based on the needs of the community
- ❹ Support and promote the development of decision-making structures that are open, accessible and inclusive of those groups who experience social exclusion, discrimination and other inequalities
- ❺ Recognise and address barriers, including structural barriers, to meaningful and effective participation at all levels
- ❻ Move beyond consultation with migrant workers, to their meaningful participation in decision-making structures.



## 2.1 Getting started – informing yourself

The causes and effects of poverty, exclusion and discrimination are complex and varied. It is important to take time to understand these as they affect migrant workers and their families, particularly those most vulnerable, to ensure your work will be effective.

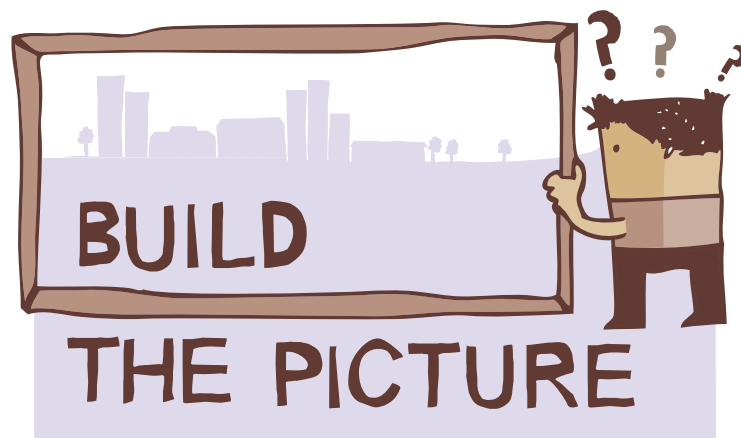


### Understanding the issues and context

Your responsibility as a community worker is to have an understanding of the issues facing migrant workers in the local community, and to inform yourself of the bigger picture with regard to the lives of migrants. The consequence of not having a solid analysis and understanding of migration, including the concerns of migrant workers at risk of poverty and social exclusion, will mean that the barriers they face will not be addressed. A possible result is that migrant workers themselves can subsequently be blamed for not participating in the well-meaning, but misplaced events and actions undertaken to address their perceived needs.



See Section 1 for issues facing migrant workers and Support Sheets at end of Section 1 relating to policy, procedures and the system governing immigration



### Building the picture – locally

Once informed in general terms about migration and migrant workers in Ireland, the next stage should be to further explore the situation of migrant workers living in the local area. At the heart of this process should be a concern to develop relationships and contacts with migrant workers living locally. Therefore, who undertakes this initial work and how it is done is very important. This is an ideal job for you as a community worker. The approach that is used is very important. For example, making contact with migrant workers through their employer is not likely to generate trust and meaningful participation. Examples of how you might set about making contact are given below.

## 2.2 Building relationships

It may sound obvious but a core ingredient in community work is building relationships. Clearly there are many different types of relationships, and as a community worker it is vital that the relationships you are attempting to build are founded on respect, equality and solidarity.



### The three 'R's: Relationships, Relationships, Relationships

Relationships do not just happen - they are built over time, through trust and confidence in the individual and the organisation supporting the work on the ground. In order to build these relationships, you may need to spend some time identifying where migrant workers are living and working in the local area. Consider that the most vulnerable are likely to be working long hours and not very visible in the local community. It is also frequently the case that migrant workers who are at risk of discrimination and exploitation also experiences a high level of control by their employers. Accommodation may also be directly linked to employment. These are important considerations and should be part of your strategy to target migrant workers and their families.

Here are some useful tips to start with:

- Find out if there are pick-up spots for day labourers.
- Where and when are social events organised?
- What shopping venues, internet cafes and money transfer centres are most frequently used?
- What are the school pick-up times, who is the language resource teacher in the school?
- Are there many migrant women working in the home?



### Making contact

One-to-one contact is frequently the most successful way to establish and build relationships. This can take many forms, and often a combination of approaches will be more effective than relying on a single method. Outreach work can be as simple as setting up an information table at a community or school event, meeting with a community organisation that works with migrant workers, handing out information at a local shop, or calling to a local factory/house with invitations to an event. Remember, though, that interpreting may be important, and there may be initial barriers to communicating if you are stopping someone on the street or calling to their door! Having materials in languages that people can use can be an important ice-breaker in some of these circumstances. Places like banks and post offices can be a good place to distribute information. Pharmacies in particular can be an excellent source of information about women with children who may be in the area, especially new mothers. These actions are not an end in itself, however, they are initially about meeting people to make yourself known and to build relationships with people. The individuals you reach out to over time will provide vital contacts for work into the future.



See Support Sheet 2.5 for information on supporting intercultural communication



### Finding out who the community leaders are

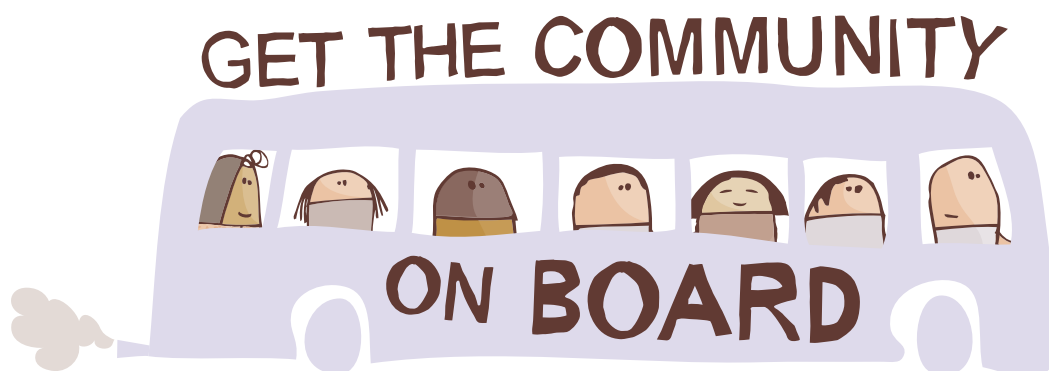
All communities have natural or “unofficial leaders.” You will likely hear people mention the same names frequently. Ask someone to introduce you to these unofficial leaders. But don’t limit yourself to these, as leaders can be overworked and sometimes may act as gatekeepers to a community. Look to communicate with, and get the perspectives of, both men and women, older and younger people, and avoid assumptions that church/religious leaders are the most appropriate people to represent the community.



### Building trust

Meet people where they are most comfortable. People may be unfamiliar with the local area so offering to meet at a place of their choice is important. This could be the public library, a religious institution, or even a private home. House meetings

are an extremely useful way of meeting people in a safe environment and can be very social spaces. Bring materials to convey a sense of what your organisation is about. Don't be afraid to ask questions and acknowledge your limited experience with migrant workers. Show respect and be sensitive to cultural differences. Follow through on work you said you would do or information you said you would provide – this builds trust.



### Getting the community on board

Community workers do not work in isolation. Letting local organisations know that you are trying to make contact with migrant workers and their families effectively feeds two birds with one seed; it builds connections with the other organisation and helps to identify migrant workers. Again, it is about establishing relationships. Look at the organisations around you that may be dealing with migrant workers and approach them. Organisations like the local Citizen Information Centre (CIC) are an excellent source of information, but may not be targeting their information to the needs of migrant workers and their families. This could easily be overcome with a little support.



#### As a community worker:

You may meet with resistance from the local community and indeed your own organisation. You may be asked why you are not working with other members of the community first. This is challenging but must be faced and overcome. Build support for your work where possible and equip yourself with some useful counter-arguments. Remember in the past the same arguments were used to argue against working with groups such as Travellers and lone parents. You may also meet resistance from local employers. It is probably a good idea to avoid most employers when seeking to talk to migrant workers; some may not be too forthcoming if their employers are watching. Do not organise a meeting about employment rights and expect an open and honest response if the employer has suggested to them to attend or is present in the room. This is not to say that all employers are exploitative, only that it may not be the most useful way in which to contact migrant workers and build trust.



## Building relationships:

### Building relationships with the Brazilian community in Gort, Co. Galway – NUI Galway



*In October 2004, the Adult and Continuing Education Department of NUI Galway assigned a worker, Frank Murray, to Gort, Co Galway, to coordinate the NUIG Diploma in Community Development Practice and to ‘capacity build’ with the local Brazilian community. There is a large Brazilian community in Gort made up of migrant workers and family members. This case study offers a good insight into the importance of building relationships as a community worker.*

#### Description of the work

In order to engage with and build the participation of migrant workers in the local community, the community worker went about meeting local Brazilians and finding out about people's experiences (of accessing services, migrating to Ireland, finding work, etc). Initial contact with the Brazilian community focused on building trust, by establishing the role of the community worker as someone who could help with problems and provide information. Some of the critical issues obvious from the outset included the language barrier, people being undocumented, poor employment conditions and the challenges of dealing with these in a small town in rural Ireland. Developing an insight into migrant workers' experiences proved very beneficial in understanding why some had migrated to Ireland and what they had left behind (these included discrimination, violence, poverty, politics etc). It was apparent from the beginning that establishing trust and respect was important so that migrant workers felt they could tell their story.

This element of trust took time to build, but proved to be the essential platform for all subsequent work. In moving forward, this trust and these relationships had to be protected (for example taking extra care when dealing with the media). Finding a common link with the Brazilian community proved important in engaging and building relationships. A group of volunteers, including members of the Brazilian community, got involved in a project to refurbish the local football club. The work and subsequent celebration of the project was a relaxed/informal way for Irish and Brazilian people to engage with each other, as well as for the local Irish/host population (or the community worker?) to meet Brazilians.

### What worked well

- ✓ Building trust from the outset
- ✓ Appreciating the fear of authority and mistrust some migrant workers have
- ✓ Getting to know the people on the ground doing the work – they have the information and knowledge
- ✓ Identifying those that speak good English and involving them in the work from the outset –
- they have a crucial role in supporting migrant worker participation in activities
- ✓ It was very useful to develop a good relationship with the local Garda Síochána, less of a sense of ‘us versus them’
- ✓ The job will drain you, don’t try and do everything yourself! Identify leaders and build up capacity of groups and other organisations



### Doing a community profile

A community profile is a useful way of connecting with the people you want to work with. It allows you to develop relationships, build trust, and develop the process of creating awareness of your work. It is also an excellent means of providing an evidence base for future work, as a community profile gathers information about the needs and concerns of a community. This information is then analysed as a basis for defining possible courses of action. Before you begin a community profile, it is important to be clear on why you are actually doing the profile, what it is you are trying to find out, what you intend to use the profile for, how comprehensive it should be and who needs to be involved. If you have never done something like this before, get in touch with people who have, and learn from their experiences. Using a community work approach in doing a community profile means that it becomes an excellent tool for supporting participation.



See end of Support Sheet 2.8 for list of community profiles and needs analyses previously carried out with migrant workers and their families



See Support Sheet 2.7 for a basic guide to doing a community profile



## Building participation:

### Migrant women working in the Irish mushroom industry – Migrant Rights Centre Ireland



*In January 2006, the MRCI began outreach work with migrant women employed as mushroom harvesters in parts of Counties Monaghan and Cavan, where there were a growing number of incidents of exploitation at the workplace. There was a real need to better understand the situation these women were facing. Equally important was the need to begin to facilitate the women in getting to know each other, and build relationships between people living in relative isolation across a large rural area.*

#### Description of the work

To get things started, an initial general information meeting on rights and entitlements was organised by MRCI for mushroom workers in Monaghan, on a Friday evening in late January 2006. Advertisements were placed in a variety of languages across the area. Twelve mushroom workers attended that evening. A community worker then contacted several of those who had attended and organised 'house meetings' where the women were able to share and discuss individual problems and concerns. The community worker then encouraged these women to contact other people they knew working as mushroom workers and invite them to a house meeting. After three months of house meetings and one-to-one relationship building between the community worker and the women, a general meeting was organised for a Sunday afternoon in May 2006. At this initial meeting the twenty women in attendance began sharing their experiences about work and living conditions in a group atmosphere.

They began to build a collective realisation and analysis of what was happening. It was also the beginning of relationship building among the group. After the initial meeting the group met every six weeks on Sunday afternoons with the assistance of the community worker in order to focus more in-depth on the main shared issues, and to develop a better understanding of these. This led to discussions on potential solutions, and defining the priority issues and solutions. The notes from these sessions were compiled into a report entitled *Harvesting Justice: Mushroom Workers Call for Change*, which the group (known then as the Mushroom Workers Support Group, since evolved into the Agricultural Workers Association) launched at a public gathering with media in November. Three of the women involved in the group shared their own experiences at the launch. There are now over 100 members of AGWA.

## What worked well

- ✓ **One-to-one relationship** building through house meetings, as well as networking to identify other individuals, was critical and occurred over a long period before the group meeting was held. This provided a stronger base to move to the collective.
- ✓ **The exercise of doing the profile** was important in that the main issues, concerns and changes needed were highlighted. Importantly the profile was also about the relationship building and group analysis that became the foundation for the group into the future.
- ✓ The profile **built group ownership** and became the group's first major action.
- ✓ The launch provided a catalyst for a public event which attracted much media attention on the issues the group wanted to highlight.



## Building solidarity within the community

As well as having a focus on migrant workers, the community worker should also focus on building awareness and solidarity within the wider community. There is a real danger that migrant workers will be blamed for the existence of racism in the same way other communities of interest, such as lone parents, Travellers, the unemployed, are sometimes blamed for their own exclusion. A key role for the community worker is to build connections and solidarity between groups who potentially share common areas of concern. Building dialogue and solidarity within the wider community also helps to counter the potential difficulty of marginalised groups within society being pitted against each other in the competition for scarce resources or limited services.



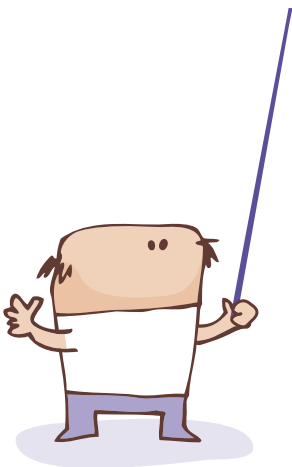
## 2.3 Engaging with migrant workers and their families

Having informed yourself and started to build a bigger picture of migrant workers in the local community, it is important to find the time to plan for real engagement and relationship building with migrant workers and their families, as well as with the other organisations and agencies working with them on the ground. There are a number of elements to engaging with migrant workers and their families outlined in this section. Initial engagement can take many forms, but it is important to link initial contact with a wider commitment to creating spaces and building opportunities for real participation, as well as a movement from individual concerns to collective analysis and action.



### Learning Points for engaging with migrant workers

- Migrant workers are not all the same. Be sensitive to the fact that whilst you have targeted them as a group, many people may have little or nothing in common.
- Relationship building with migrant workers will be challenging. There are a number of barriers, including language obstacles and long and unsocial working hours. Be patient. Small advances with a few people over time may go a long way to building the trust that is necessary to build a foundation for further action.
- Migrant workers, particularly those who are undocumented, may be in a precarious or vulnerable situation. They may be particularly fearful and concerned about getting involved at any level. This should not be used as an excuse to do nothing. There are many useful examples of where 'difficult to reach' groups have been supported to participate and have their voice heard.
- Many migrant workers may not be familiar with Irish culture and society. This means that they may not understand the difference in authority or approach between a community worker employed in an Area Based Partnership and an immigration official. People may only understand the difference over time.
- It is unlikely that after all your work to create connections, you will have located huge numbers of migrant workers. Don't worry about this. Once you begin to build trust, more people will become visible and known to you.



### Finding opportunities

Community workers should always be looking for opportunities to reach out and engage with the people they work with, and this is no different in working with migrant workers and their families. Organisations wishing to support the integration of new communities often organise social events, from intercultural

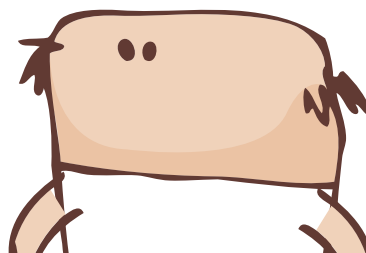


**28** Adapted from A Strategy Guide for Community Development Projects, Family Resource Centres, and Partnerships. Published by Pobal and NCCRI to support the implementation of the National Action Plan Against Racism and Towards EU Year of Intercultural Dialogue. Author Siobhan Lynam

food fairs to welcoming days and international family events. These initiatives do not necessarily create conditions for ongoing participation and empowerment of migrant workers, but do provide important and positive starting points to initiate contact and build relationships. They are often useful spaces to engage with migrant workers, find out who is living in the local area and also provide an opportunity for existing members of the community to meet those who have arrived more recently. The manner in which these events are organised is also important, as the process of organising provides the perfect opportunity for migrant workers to get involved, use their own skills and spread the word about the event.

### Learning Points for involving migrant workers in community events<sup>28</sup>

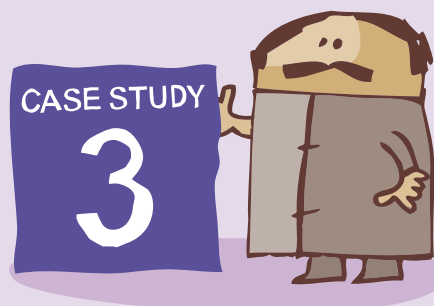
- From the very beginning, rely on the participation of a number of migrant workers in the organising of community events, this builds ownership and creates opportunities for participation.
- Organise events at a suitable time, e.g. evenings and weekends for migrant workers.
- Address barriers to participation, e.g. poor public transport and/or lack of childcare.
- Avoid organising social events in pubs; this may not be appropriate for all migrant workers.
- In the initial stage it may not be necessary to pay for professional translation of leaflets to advertise events – ask migrant workers with language skills if they can help in translation of flyers.
- Post leaflets and flyers where migrant workers meet or go, e.g. Post Office, Western Union, shop windows, internet café, local libraries, churches and ethnic newspapers.
- Some useful and important international dates that provide an opportunity to collectively organise an event in the community include;
  - March 8th International Women's Day
  - December 18th UN International Day for Migrants





## Using opportunities to engage:

### Information sessions for migrant workers – Clonmel Community Partnership



*Under the Pobal Integration Fund<sup>29</sup> and building upon previous work, Clonmel Community Partnership sought to engage with migrant workers and their families in the local community through organising information sessions targeted at migrant workers.*

#### Description of the work

In partnership with the local community welfare officer, one of the first information sessions was organised on social welfare rights and entitlements. The event was advertised through flyers and posters which were placed in the local CIC, social welfare office, library, FÁS office, swimming pool, tax office, ethnic food shops and staff canteens in local businesses. An advisory group of migrant workers had been established when the project was initiated, and the advisory group members were key in spreading the word about the event. They also had a role in relation to translation of flyers as well as interpreting on the night. The flyers were translated into three different languages; Polish, Lithuanian and Hungarian. They requested that migrant workers who would be attending send a text message including details of their name and nationality. This allowed the community

worker to get a sense of numbers, interpreting requirements and also build a database of names and contacts. The session worked well in that it allowed individual migrant workers to meet the Community Welfare Officer on a one-to-one basis and come in contact with the local Partnership. Thanks to the presence of interpreters, migrant workers who did not have English were able to make contact and get information and support about their own concerns.

**29** In October 2006, the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform announced the **Fund for Initiatives to Support the integration of Legally Resident Immigrants**, for which €3m was made available to Area Based Partnerships and Non Governmental Organisations. For more information see Pobal's website [www.pobal.ie](http://www.pobal.ie)

### What worked well

- ✓ **Setting up an advisory group** of migrant workers to help organise events aimed at engaging with migrant workers
- ✓ **Translating flyers and posters into different languages** – this meant that those migrant workers who would not normally come due to language barriers were able to participate
- ✓ **Using text messages** proved a straightforward and successful way of communicating
- ✓ **Having interpreters available** on the night enabled the participation of migrant workers who had limited English
- ✓ **Organising the session in the evening** meant it was easier for people to attend
- ✓ **Building relationships** with those migrant workers in the advisory group who helped organise the event, and also with the local Community Welfare Officer who made their services available on the evening
- ✓ **Focusing on a specific theme** relevant to migrant workers as opposed to a general open information session encouraged people with issues and concerns to attend

## 2.4 Building the participation of migrant workers

Initial engagement with migrant workers and their families living locally is essential in terms of making contacts, building relationships and getting an insight into some of their concerns. However there is a point, early on in the work, at which it is important to begin to actively create the conditions for the participation of migrant workers both in the work of the organisation and in the local community, and for raising awareness and understanding of issues that impact on their lives.





### Maintaining contact and support to encourage participation

After the initial step of making contact with migrant workers and their families in the local community, it is important to keep up that contact:

- Build a simple database of people's contact numbers and queries they may have, so you can stay in touch with people on a regular basis;
- Sending text messages is a great way to communicate as it is often easier for people to understand a written message than a spoken one;
- Creating a mailing list for newsletters and events is also a good way for people to know what your organisation is involved in;
- Encourage participation and offer support by encouraging people to come to events with family and friends, offering a lift to an event, following up on information you may have committed to.



### Creating opportunities for participation

As a community worker concerned with the participation of migrant workers in the local community, an important element of your job is to create ongoing spaces for participation. Once-off sessions may be a better way initially of getting people involved, possibly moving in the future to a more structured and ongoing activity, such as an action group or setting up a leadership development course. Many workers will find that they are experiencing a problem but do not realise others are experiencing the same thing, unless they get together to share experiences. In creating spaces for participation be mindful of the way it is structured and facilitated. Incorporate into the programme a space for small-group discussion. Pose questions that stimulate discussion and an opportunity to move from individual experiences to collective-orientated solutions. This begins to foster political and critical analysis and creates valuable spaces to build participation, which are linked to change and collective outcomes.





## Supporting the participation of migrant workers in the local community:

A partnership approach to creating spaces for participation of migrant workers in the work of the organisation and the local community – **Bray Partnership**



*Bray Partnership is a local development company in Ireland, and its mission is to tackle social exclusion and disadvantage in the Bray area. The partnership works with local communities, groups and agencies to identify what the issues are for some of the most disadvantaged individuals and communities in the Bray area, and to develop and support appropriate collaborative responses.*

### Brief description of the work

In 2004, Bray Partnership carried out a piece of research, *New Ethnic Minorities in Bray*, which aimed to determine the needs and experiences of ethnic minorities. Following on from this, through outreach and engagement with migrants locally the community development worker in Bray Partnership built up relationships with individual migrant workers who had moved to the area more recently, along with members of established ethnic minority communities living in Bray some time, for example the Chinese community. The European Year of Intercultural Dialogue was used as an opportunity to invite migrant workers to participate in a committee to coordinate activities for this year. This group became the Bray Intercultural Group, which aimed to look at some of the issues which emerged in the original research carried out in 2004, as well as information and advocacy around new immigration legislation and planning activities as part of the European Year. One such intercultural event was

a Karaoke fundraiser for earthquake victims in China and Burma. Members of the local community present at the event were from very diverse backgrounds, and it also proved to be a much-needed activity for families and one which mothers and children could easily participate in. Along with the European Year for Intercultural Dialogue, the initiation of an Anti Racism and Diversity Strategy (ARDS) by the County Development Board in Wicklow was also used as an opportunity to build the participation of migrant workers, both in the work of the organisation and in decision-making at a local and county level. Bray partnership went to the Intercultural Group with the proposal for an ARDS plan. The group were then supported to develop a proposal to support the participation of migrant workers on the steering group for the plan. Suggestions included holding meetings in the evenings, compensating participants for travel and striving to ensure a 50% representation

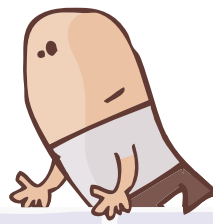
of ethnic minorities on the steering group. The group also proposed that the research on which the ARDS plan would be based should be carried out using a participatory learning approach, meaning a more qualitative, interactive approach allowing the participation of those 'being researched' in the process.

The steering group for the ARDS plan has since been established and is made up of various representatives from both the statutory and community sector in the County, along with two members of the Bray Intercultural Group. The group is very excited about the future of the project.

### What worked well

- ✓ Identifying leaders in some of the different communities, through this others got involved
- ✓ Supporting groups to come together and supporting them to formalise their organisational structure
- ✓ Knowing the main workplaces locally where migrant workers are employed
- ✓ Continuously looking for creative ways to reach out and make contact with migrant workers and their families locally (for example using the 'L Voter' figures, i.e. those who can only vote in local elections)
- ✓ Shared decision-making and shared accountability
- ✓ Using policy developments and initiatives to create opportunities for involvement and participation of migrant workers (e.g. new legislation in the area of immigration, European Year for Intercultural Dialogue and an Anti Racism and Diversity Plan at County level)

OVER COME



BARRIERS



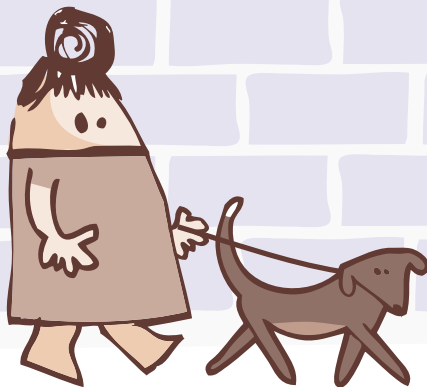


Your role as community worker is to be aware of the barriers to participation that exist:

- ❶ Factors such as lack of suitable and affordable childcare, poverty, access and transport to events, timing of events, can act as barriers to all marginalised and excluded people from participating in society. In order to build participation with migrant workers, you need to have an understanding about the specific barriers that prevent migrant workers from getting involved and participating in the community, community activities, and decisions that affect them. Some of these barriers to be mindful of include;
- ❷ Workplace exploitation – someone experiencing workplace exploitation is more than likely working long hours for low pay and is therefore immediately going to face obstacles in participating at events and particularly in longer-term initiatives.
- ❸ Experiences of discrimination and racism obviously impact negatively on individuals, undermining self-confidence and possibly making someone very reluctant to get involved in a more collective space or to form relationships with others.
- ❹ Being undocumented – the fear factor that accompanies being undocumented and the lack of rights undocumented migrant workers have make it very difficult for them to participate fully in their local communities.
- ❺ Living and working in Ireland can present many challenges for migrant workers, some of which can contribute to a sense of fear or nervousness. There can be a natural sense of apprehension about the local community they are unsure about or know little about, and language barriers making it difficult to communicate.
- ❻ Income pressure and time pressure – migrant workers generally come to Ireland in the hope of earning more money to guarantee a better life for themselves and their families. In many cases this can involve working long hours in low-paid work, leaving little free time for socialising and getting involved in activities.

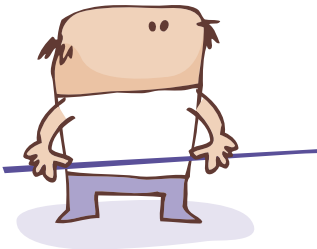


See Critical issues facing migrant workers in Section 1





**30** Changing Ireland (2008) –  
The National Magazine of the Community  
Development Programme '8 ways  
to promote integration through  
community development' Issue 26 The  
Migrants Issue Article



### Learning points for creating spaces for participation

Once you have developed relationships with migrant workers and their families in the local community and gained an insight into the issues, you will be clearer about what people might be interested in participating in. Some projects have established knitting groups, organised a series of myth-busting workshops, started up a quilting group or organised intercultural fun days.<sup>30</sup> Information sessions are also good way to get people used to the idea of attending events, speaking in a group and becoming familiar with the types of issues facing the community. As a community worker you are not expected to have all of the information yourself. This is a good opportunity to link in with local service providers, local and national organisations and statutory agencies, invite them where relevant to participate and provide information at such events.

Possible themes could include:

- Employment Rights
- Social welfare – how the system operates, rights and entitlements
- Accessing local services for mothers and children
- Private Rental sector – rights and entitlements
- Immigration Policy updates
  - Long Term Residency
  - Family Reunification
  - Work Permit System

### Responding to problems

One sure way of building trust with any community is when they see problems being addressed and results achieved. Identify and begin to respond to problems which directly affect migrant workers. You will be a valuable link and resource person to them - act on this. In addition you may need to get involved in some advocacy work, supporting migrant workers to access appropriate services and supports to meet their needs. This advocacy support can be vital.



## Responding to individual needs:

A partnership approach to responding to individual needs and building participation  
– Ballyhoura Development Ltd



*Ballyhoura Development Ltd is a community-based organisation operating within the North Cork and South East Limerick area. A piece of research was commissioned to make recommendations on the support needs of migrant workers in the Charleville region initially (to be used as an adaptable pilot). The research found that the most pressing need was the establishment of an information service, in a central and accessible location for migrant workers and their families. The Migrant Information Service (MIS) was established in July 2004 and initially delivered on a weekly basis in the evenings. A community development worker (CDW) was employed (by Ballyhoura Development) to deliver this project part time, with the assistance of a CE worker.<sup>31</sup>*

### Description of the work

It was through addressing individual needs that relationships were formed and contact made between the community development worker and migrant workers. Initially migrant workers who were interested were encouraged to volunteer, mostly for interpreting work on an ad-hoc basis. A more structured and collective approach was then taken with the establishment of a local Migrant Forum (this later merged in to the North Cork Integration Forum in September 2005). The Forum meets on different days and evenings to facilitate participation,

every other month. The purpose of this space is for people from immigrant communities and service providers to come together, and create an informed understanding of shared challenges in meeting the service needs of a multi-ethnic society. It also allows individuals to present issues of concern on behalf of their communities. At the same time, in order to engage with migrant women in the community (many of whom were not working or had children), English language classes were organised. The hope was to support this group

**31** The community development worker had a background in the area of advocacy and community work and so immediately set about training the CE worker in information provision, and began discussions with Comhairle to see whether

the service might be mainstreamed into CIC delivery eventually. From the start the project worked closely with the local Vincent de Paul office



of women in the long term through a community development approach, encouraging a sense of solidarity and encouraging members to identify needs in their communities. The English language

classes were a tool for building participation and building relationships. This work eventually resulted in the formation of a women's group. The process is slow but continues to develop in a positive way.

### What worked well

- ✓ **Having something to offer** migrant workers and their families in the local community (access to information and support, language classes)
- ✓ **Encouraging volunteers to participate** and contribute to the work of the project
- ✓ **Creating collective spaces** for migrant workers to come together and share their experiences, discuss their needs and issues – such as the initial Migrants Forum
- ✓ **Attempting to mainstream the work** from the outset through active engagement with local service providers and establishment of the North Cork Integration Forum



### Recognising immediate individual needs and moving beyond

It can be difficult for migrant workers to engage in community work activity that is concerned with longer-term societal change while struggling to deal with more pressing needs, such as information, accessing basic services, or coping with long working hours. In addition, a vital element of a successful community work process is a strong sense of ownership and commitment. To systematically build this ownership and recognise that burning issues need to be progressed it may be necessary to first take action on areas that are not generally considered community work activities, e.g. providing services that are the remit and responsibility of the State or others. However the community worker and organisation may act as a catalyst for developing more appropriate responses, for example through piloting initiatives, policy engagement, seeking mainstream support and so on. Recognising and responding to the immediate needs of migrant workers can help to build confidence and vital relationships, however the challenge is to then move beyond this to more strategic and collective actions, e.g. seeking policy change in the way a service is designed in the first place rather than working at the level of assisting individuals to access an inappropriately-delivered service.



### Building working relationships with other organisations

Participation is not just important for community groups and the community, it is also about accessing public services. You do not want to become the only contact or source of information. Ask other organisations and service providers to attend or provide information sessions. This will provide an initial contact and enable migrant workers to develop links with relevant information providers. It also serves to raise awareness with service providers of the issues which migrant

workers face. Connect migrant workers to service providers and specialist services, such as mental health services or services for women experiencing violence. You will likely begin to be identified by service providers as a key contact and link person. Use this to your advantage in seeking to develop a coordinated, coherent approach across service providers, by encouraging dialogue between service providers and migrant workers. Work with the wider community to ensure racism is being tackled, services are more targeted to a diverse population, community structures are becoming more welcoming and inclusive of migrants. Migrant workers will not be able to overcome barriers they are experiencing at a community level without people with access to decision-making being involved and actively engaged.



### Moving from the individual to the collective

This is an important stage in a community work approach as community work is based on working with and supporting groups of people. The approach enables people to develop the knowledge; skills and confidence so that they can develop an analysis, identify priority needs and issues and address these through collective action. This is not to say that as a community worker you do not work with individuals. A great deal of time is spent, as mentioned earlier, in building trust and relationships and a certain amount of this is on a one-to-one basis. However, one of the essential practice principles of a community work approach is that of collectivity. Whilst at times you may be busy responding to individual needs and identifying issues in the work of the project, the solutions sought and actions organised must have a collective outcome for all, not just for an individual. Some of the steps outlined below are useful in considering ways to move forward, from the individual to the collective:



# MOVING FROM THE INDIVIDUAL...



Moving from the individual to the collective –  
your role as community worker is to;

- ❶ Involve communities in a collective analysis of their migration experiences, identify common needs and priority issues;
- ❷ Work towards collective outcomes for the community as a whole, rather than the advancement of individuals;
- ❸ Collaborate and build alliances with other groups, organisations and agencies in order to advance key community objectives;
- ❹ Create and enhance conditions for collective action through building solidarity and sharing information on models of good practice;
- ❺ Develop innovative and creative approaches to working with communities, and learn from other models of work nationally and globally;
- ❻ Create opportunities for progression by migrant workers within communities and in the wider society they are part of.



... TO THE  
**COLLECTIVE**



## Moving from the Individual to the collective:

### The Migrants Forum – Migrant Rights Centre Ireland



*The Migrants Forum <sup>32</sup> is an important part of MRCI's community work approach with migrant workers and their families. The Migrants Forum facilitates the movement from the individual to the collective: Individual service users of MRCI's Drop In Centre are encouraged to attend the Migrants Forum, and in this space can make the link between their own experience of migration to Ireland and that of other migrants, and are supported to develop a collective analysis and concern for equality and rights for all migrant workers and their families in Ireland.*

#### Description of the work

Initiated in 2002, the Migrants Forum meets every six weeks on a Sunday afternoon in the Teachers Club in Dublin. The Forum is targeted at migrant workers and their family members who have either accessed the MRCI Drop In Centre or have heard about it through word of mouth or participation in one of MRCI's action groups.<sup>33</sup> The Migrants Forum is a place for migrant workers and their families to: share their experiences, receive support and information, share and develop an analysis of the issues facing migrant workers in Ireland, take action on some of these issues, lobby the Irish government by meeting with politicians and contributing to campaigns. In the past the Migrants Forum has organised a series of 'Know Your Rights' information sessions as well as updating migrant workers on key policy developments in the area of immigration and

the labour market. The Forum has also facilitated dialogue between relevant statutory agencies, including government departments and political representatives and migrant workers and their families.

#### Outcomes:

The Migrants Forum has become an increasingly diverse and political space that builds the collective voice of migrant workers and their families and directly encourages their political participation in Irish society, as well as supporting their integration. The formation of a core group of the Migrant Forum, made up of 9 migrant workers, has led to greater ownership of the Forum and has seen the emergence of leaders who have become spokespersons in advocating for rights for migrant workers.

**32**

A short film has been produced on the work of The Migrants Forum. 'Hear Our Voices' is available upon request from MRCI

**33**

Action Groups include Domestic Workers Support Group, Agricultural Workers Association, Restaurant Workers Action Group, Bridging Visa Campaign Group

## What worked well

- ✓ **Regularly producing simple flyers and posters** in advance of each Migrants Forum so that migrant workers know the date and topic of each Forum
- ✓ **Compiling a database of migrant workers** who can be contacted by text message about each Forum
- ✓ **Organising the Forum outside of usual working hours:** The Forum meets on a Sunday afternoon at the same time and place to make it easier for people to remember
- ✓ **Making sure information delivery is accessible, jargon free,** engaging and relevant to the lives of migrant workers and their families
- ✓ **Supporting the development of a core group** of migrant workers to support the organisation of the Forum and its future development, and enabling people to take up spokesperson and leadership roles
- ✓ **Informing migrant workers** who come into contact with MRCI as a result of their own individual concerns and situations of the existence of the Forum and encouraging them to attend
- ✓ **Creating a space for migrant workers to discuss issues facing them** and articulate concerns to political representatives and relevant statutory agencies can be very empowering and encourages continued participation
- ✓ **Celebration is good!** Every year the Migrants Forum celebrates International Migrants Day on 18th December. Migrant workers and their families from all over the world come together on this day to celebrate their collective journey of hope



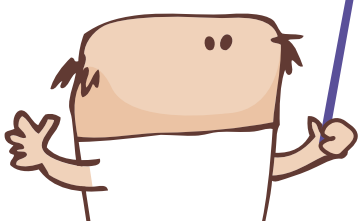
## Getting a group together

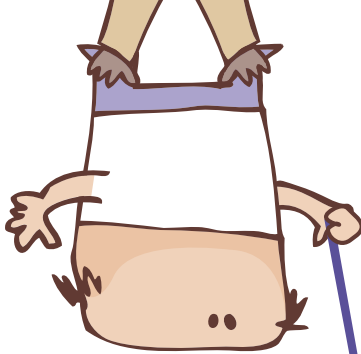
Collectivising experiences is one of the key ways to build participation. In building relationships with migrant workers and collectively addressing the issues facing them in their lives, the beginnings of a group can start to emerge. This can start with as little as two or three people and will expand over time. Group work supports the movement from individual to collective, but also creates the conditions for people to participate in the work of the project and on issues that are close to their hearts. A good deal of personal development and leadership skills development can also happen in a group-work setting. The section on tools for empowerment and collective action explores effective groups and looks at how to turn problems into issues and issues into action and campaigns.



## Learning points for building participation with migrant workers and their families

- The best way to build participation is by welcoming it. People know when they are welcome and when they are not. Take personal responsibility for making migrant workers feel welcome and part of the process.
- Find ways to encourage, target, attract, and enable migrant workers to become involved, but allow participation by choice.
- Pay attention to the timing of meetings and events. Sunday afternoons, evenings and weekends are the best times for participation of migrant workers.



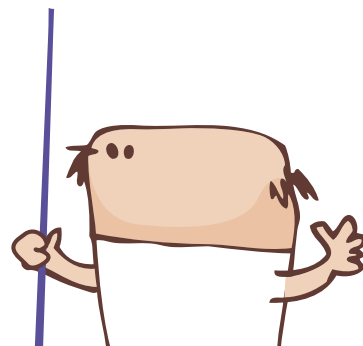


- Through building participation, more work will be created. It will be a sign of your success if more migrant workers come your way. The need and demands on the organisation may widen. This has implications both in terms of time and in terms of the resources needed to support participation. Provision needs to be made to deal with this.
- Remember, you can't do everything. Migrant workers face varied and complex issues. It is not your job to respond to all issues and demands - be careful about getting caught into service responsibilities. Be strategic. Link up with local service providers, and avoid duplication of work.
- Building ownership and developing participation can be difficult. It takes time. You may find it difficult to get beyond people's self-interest, and motivate people to get involved in collective action. Low turnouts may be a result of a number of factors outside the community worker's control. Don't worry; it is not just about how many people participate but how they participate. Quality involvement is more powerful than quantity involvement.
- In responding to the many diverse and critical needs facing migrant workers, don't just keep doing the work - stop and reflect on how you are consciously doing the work. Regularly refer back to community work practice principles.
- Managing diversity can be challenging and difficult. Communicating with others who do not speak the same language as you requires patience and time. Be conscious that there may be cultural traditions of which you are unaware, for example in the workings of groups. It is okay to acknowledge that you have little knowledge or experience of working with any specific group or individuals. Be respectful and open to learning.
- Seek to encourage participation of both men and women from the community.



**Your role as community worker is to remember that participation should not be an end in itself**

Participation is not an end in itself but a means towards achieving an outcome. Of course the very act of participating can bring benefits for the individuals involved, e.g. personal development and access to training. However you need to regularly ask the question 'what are you trying to build and achieve?' The answer rests in the fact that you are trying to address a democratic deficit, in promoting active participation in your local area or community of interest; you are linking people with systems of power to redress inequalities and discrimination. Participation is therefore intentional and political, and seeks to bring about real and lasting change for groups in society.



## 2.5

## Support Sheet

## Supporting intercultural communication

The content of this support sheet has been adapted from a section entitled 'Developing intercultural communication competence', in Opening Doors, an Intercultural Toolkit for Service Providers in the North West Inner City.<sup>34</sup>

### What do we mean by intercultural communication?

Intercultural communication refers to communication between people from different cultures. Developing effective communication between people from different cultures does not require learning the norms of all cultures and subgroups. Rather, we should familiarise ourselves with the barriers to intercultural communication to develop strategies for overcoming these.

### What are some of the barriers to intercultural communication?

#### Anxiety

When we are anxious we tend to focus on that feeling, rather than on communicating effectively. For some, anxiety about speaking English properly may lead to avoiding interactions with English speakers, and limit interactions to those between people who share the same language.

#### Mistaken assumptions

##### (assuming similarity instead of difference)

Assuming that people from different cultures all communicate in the same way can lead to significant misunderstanding or inappropriate behaviour, for example using offensive gestures that in your culture have neutral or positive meanings.

#### Ethnocentrism

Ethnocentrism is the belief in the superiority of one's own culture and the tendency to judge other cultures by the standards of your own. It is restrictive and limiting and inhibits intercultural communication by excluding other points of view, blocking the exchange of ideas and skills, and can lead to derogatory viewpoints.

#### Stereotypes and prejudice

Stereotypes and prejudice can aggravate communication problems and prevent people from realising that there are multiple ways of interpreting a situation. Both stereotypes and prejudice can lead to discriminatory behaviours and racism, and in extreme situations may shut down communication altogether.

#### Language

Differences in language and language use make intercultural interactions difficult. Even when people are fluent in or speak the same language misunderstandings can occur. Culturally-specific

features of language include: the degree to which people display directness in addressing another person, forms of politeness, and use of the word 'no' (which is avoided in some countries), or the question-answer speech sequence which is not used in all cultures.

#### Misinterpretations of non-verbal communications

The importance of non-verbal communication (i.e. 'body language') is heightened when communicating across cultures, as we tend to look for non-verbal cues when verbal messages are unclear or ambiguous. We have culturally-specific ideas about what is appropriate or normal when it comes to non-verbal behaviour and use of different gestures, posture, silence, spatial relations, emotional expression, touch, physical appearance and others. For example, in some cultures people do not maintain eye contact during conversations.

#### How can intercultural communication be improved?

- **Be aware of possible barriers to communication.** Learn to identify your own strengths and limitations;
- **Be aware of cultural differences.** Try to understand the basic customs of the people you work with and demonstrate a willingness to learn about different cultural norms relating to such matters as work, time, family or humour;
- **Be positive.** When faced with cultural misunderstandings avoid attributing blame. Analyse why the problem arose and work as a team to prevent its reoccurrence
- **Self reflect.** Take time to reflect on your own communication;
- **Spend time with people from other cultures.** Cultural differences may be difficult to notice unless you spend extended time with members of another cultural group(s)
- **Develop your tolerance of ambiguity.** Learn to accept lack of clarity and to be able to deal with ambiguous situations constructively;
- **Establish ground rules.** Collectively develop ground rules regarding such matters as the format of meetings or dealing with disagreements, and communicate these clearly.

## 2.6

## Support Sheet

## Understanding racism and discrimination

'Race' is a social construct that artificially divides people into distinct groups based on characteristics such as physical appearance (particularly skin colour), ancestral heritage, cultural affiliation, cultural history, ethnic classification, and the social, economic and political needs of a society at a given period of time. 'Racial' categories subsume ethnic categories, for example 'white' people are defined in terms of being American, Irish etc. There is no scientific basis for race theory, and there is only one human race.<sup>35</sup>



**Racism** is any distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference based on race, colour, descent, or national or ethnic origin which has the purpose or effect of nullifying or impairing the recognition, enjoyment or exercise, on an equal footing of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural or any other field of public life.<sup>36</sup>

**Institutional racism** is the collective failure of an organisation to provide an appropriate and professional service to people because of their colour or ethnic origin. It can be seen or detected in processes, attitudes and behaviours which amount to discrimination, through unwitting prejudice, ignorance, thoughtlessness and racist stereotyping which disadvantages ethnic minority people. Institutional racism relates to the entire institution, including people within it.<sup>37</sup>

**Systemic racism** is found in the systems of an organisation and in society, for example in policies, procedures and practices. It is often unintentional but can have a negative impact on an ethnic minority group(s). It is unlikely to be identified and tackled unless proactive steps are taken by the organisation. Systemic racism relates to an organisations systems, policies and procedures.<sup>38</sup>

**35** Sheehy, M., Naughton, F., O'Regan, C. (2007) Partners Intercultural Companion to Training for Transformation Partners Training for Transformation (p. 93)

**36** NCCRI (2006) How public Authorities Provide Services to Minority Ethnic Groups, Emerging Findings Discussion Paper, Glossary of key terms

**37** North West Inner City Network (2008) Understanding Racism Opening Doors - The Intercultural Toolkit for Service Providers in the North West Inner City [www.nwincn.ie](http://www.nwincn.ie)

Racism takes different forms and impacts on a range of groups in Ireland, including migrant workers. The manifestations of racism can include:

- discrimination in the workplace and in the provision of goods and service
- assault, threatening behaviour and incitement to hatred
- labelling of minority ethnic groups which can occur through racism on internet or through media / advertising
- institutional forms of racism – the failure of public services to accommodate diversity through lack of planning

Racism is dealt with in Ireland under two main pieces of legislation:

- ① **Equality legislation** – when racism is in the form of discrimination in employment or when accessing goods or services
- ② **Criminal legislation** – when a person is the victim of a racist incident. A racist incident is any incident which is perceived to be racially motivated by the victim, a member of An Garda Síochána, a person who was present and who witnessed the incident or a person acting on behalf of the victim. Racist incidents can take many different forms, for example, physical assaults, damage to the home or property, as well as verbal abuse, hate mail or circulating racist leaflets and material.

## 2.7

## Support Sheet

Building a bigger picture –  
a basic guide to doing a community profile**Before you begin**

- Think about why you are doing the profile, what it is you are trying to find out and what you intend using the profile for.
- Ensure migrant worker participation from the outset. This may be about ensuring a working group includes the participation of migrant workers, or it may be about an existing group of migrant workers deciding to take this on as a piece of work.
- The size and scope of what you aim to do will affect both the timing and the resources that you need. For example, do you need to have the information urgently, to inform a strategic plan?
- Think about the resources which you have available to you. If it is something that a number of people can work on, or if you have money to pay someone else to do it, it might become a comprehensive piece of work. Alternatively, it may be something extra to your existing workload, and this will limit the scope of the profile.

**Information gathering**

- Think about gathering two types of information: hard and soft. Hard information will require collecting official and other data sets and statistics. Soft information is about asking individuals to express their attitudes, opinions, thoughts, and to identify issues.
- What do you know already about migrant workers? Talk to your colleagues. Has anyone else in your area done any research? Are migrant workers included in any local reports or publications?



See Support Sheets in Section 1 for more information on migrant workers, migration and the system in Ireland

**Gather information about the needs and experiences of migrant workers**

Draft and distribute a short specific questionnaire to migrant workers in the community. Keep the information general, as people are unlikely to reveal sensitive information on a questionnaire. The type of questions asked should obviously relate to what you intend using the profile for. Perhaps the profile is intended to highlight the information needs of migrant workers, or experiences

in the workplace or in accessing services. The questionnaire can be followed up with more in-depth interviews, to obtain a greater level of information. These in-depth interviews can also be written up as case studies, which are a good way of communicating the situation and experience of individuals from the community being profiled.



### Focus Groups

Talking to people in groups is a good way of getting more in-depth information. It's a good idea to work with key individuals from the community to do this with you. Try to organise a number of small focus group discussions. You will probably facilitate this discussion yourself but will need a note-taker. You also need to think about enabling people's participation at such a focus group, e.g. can you get an interpreter(s) for the meeting? Will child minding allow greater participation? Is the meeting organised at a time when the people being targeted are not working?



### Analyse the information

The next step is to get to grips with all the information you have and analyse your data. This may require a lot of work, depending on how much information you have collected, and the sort of information it is. If a large number have completed questionnaires then you will have a lot more quantitative information to deal with. Equally, if you have gathered people's experiences and stories through focus groups and in-depth interviews, you will have a lot of detailed information to sort through in order to establish key issues and needs. As the picture becomes clearer, so should the conclusions you will reach and the recommendations for action and change that will follow.



### Write the report

A good final report should be clear, readable and accessible to migrant workers, the local community, and organisations and agencies. It should detail how you went about establishing the needs and experiences, what the findings were and make recommendations for action. At this stage, you should think about how to work to implement the recommendations, by developing the work of the project or influencing service providers.



### Launching the report and moving recommendations forward

Organise an event to launch the report, in order to publicise it and also as a celebration of the work (this should be publicised in the local media and invitations extended to all in the local community). One potential outcome from this piece of work could be that your organisation, or another relevant agency, could set up a local task force or working group to take forward agreed recommendations. This group, which ideally would have migrant worker representation, can agree a timescale for priority areas of work as well as monitor and report on progress.



### Your role as community worker

A community profile presents a good opportunity to begin connecting with migrant workers in the local community and to share and build power about an issue. Using participatory methodologies will perhaps take longer to complete, however this will have a more lasting and meaningful effect. The outcomes and solutions identified jointly will automatically give a sense of ownership. So from the outset, this is something you should be aiming for – to work in conjunction with migrant workers in designing the approach, asking the questions, and analysing the information.



## 2.8

## Support Sheet

## Useful resources

Some useful publications:

### Racism and discrimination

Amnesty International (Irish section) and The Irish Centre for Human Rights (2006) <i>Breaking Down Barriers: Tackling racism in Ireland at the level of the State and its institutions</i>	<a href="http://www.nuigalway.ie/human_rights">www.nuigalway.ie/human_rights</a>
NCCRI <i>The Muslim Community in Ireland Challenging Some of Myths and Misinformation</i>	<a href="http://www.nccri.ie">www.nccri.ie</a>
National Consultative Committee on Racism and Interculturalism and Migrant Rights Centre Ireland (2007) <i>Challenging Myths and Misinformation about Migrant Workers in Ireland</i>	<a href="http://www.mrci.ie/publications">www.mrci.ie/publications</a>
Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform <i>The National Action Plan Against Racism</i>	<a href="http://www.diversityireland.ie">www.diversityireland.ie</a>
European Network Against Racism (2008) ENAR <i>Shadow Report on Racism in Ireland</i>	<a href="http://www.enar-eu.org">www.enar-eu.org</a>

### Building migrant worker participation

Community Workers Co-Operative (2006) <i>Tools for Change – A Community Work Resource</i>	<a href="http://www.cwc.ie">www.cwc.ie</a>
Community Workers Co-Operative (1997) <i>Strategies to Encourage Participation</i>	<a href="http://www.cwc.ie">www.cwc.ie</a>
Inner City Organisations Network and North West Inner City Network (2008) Good practice guide to community participation	<a href="http://www.iconnetwork.ie">www.iconnetwork.ie</a> <a href="http://www.nwcn.ie">www.nwcn.ie</a>
Lynam, Siobhan (2006) <i>An exploration of local strategies for the integration of migrant workers and their families</i> Pobal	<a href="http://www.pobal.ie">www.pobal.ie</a>

Lynam, Siobhan (2008) <i>A Strategy Guide – Supporting the Implementation of the National Action Plan Against Racism and Towards EU Year of Intercultural Dialogue. For Community Development Projects, Family Resource Centres and Partnerships</i> NCCRI and Pobal	<a href="http://www.nccri.ie">www.nccri.ie</a>
North West Inner City Network (2008) <i>The Intercultural Toolkit for Service Providers in the North West Inner City</i>	<a href="http://www.nwicn.ie">www.nwicn.ie</a>
Prendiville, Patricia (2002) <i>Developing Facilitation Skills</i> Combat Poverty Agency	<a href="http://www.combatpovertypublications.ie">www.combatpovertypublications.ie</a>
Rudd, Joy (1999) <i>Studying your local area A handbook for group facilitators</i> Combat Poverty Agency	<a href="http://www.cpa.ie">www.cpa.ie</a>

### Community Profiles and Needs Analysis on migrant workers and their families

Ballymun Partnership (2008) <i>Issues, Challenges and Opportunities Faced by Immigrant Communities and Service Providers in Ballymun and Surrounding Areas</i>	<a href="http://www.ballymun.org">www.ballymun.org</a>
Cavan Partnership Company Ltd (2006) <i>Working with New Communities in Co. Cavan</i>	<a href="http://www.cavancommunity.ie">www.cavancommunity.ie</a>
Monaghan Partnership (2008) <i>Community Profile and Needs Analysis of New Communities in Co Monaghan</i>	<a href="http://www.monaghanpartnership.ie">www.monaghanpartnership.ie</a>
Mayo Intercultural Action (2006) <i>Building a Diverse Mayo a report on immigration, integration and service provision</i>	<a href="http://www.diversityireland.ie">www.diversityireland.ie</a>
Migrant Rights Centre Ireland – Mushroom Workers Support Group – <i>Harvesting Justice Mushroom Workers Call for Change</i>	<a href="http://www.mrci.ie/publications">www.mrci.ie/publications</a>
Migrant Rights Centre Ireland – Restaurant Workers Action Group (2008) <i>Exploitation in Ireland's Restaurant Industry</i>	<a href="http://www.mrci.ie/publications">www.mrci.ie/publications</a>
Tuam Community Development Resource Centre (2008) <i>Tuam: A Town of Many Nations – Profiling diversity in Tuam</i>	<a href="http://www.cwc.ie">www.cwc.ie</a>

## SECTION 3

# TOOLS FOR EMPOWERMENT AND COLLECTIVE ACTION



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## Section 3

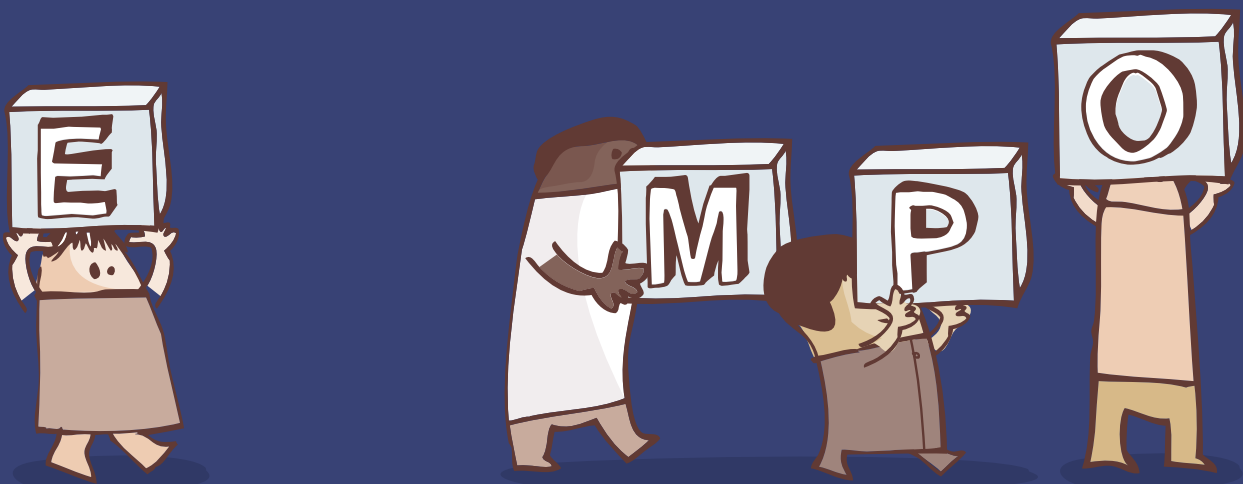
### Tools for Empowerment and Collective Action

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Community work is ultimately concerned with redressing power imbalances within society. In working with migrant workers, it is vital then that the policies and decisions which impact on the lives of migrant workers are considered and challenged. An important part of the work at this stage is supporting migrant workers to critically reflect on their own situation. This is about providing spaces for migrant workers to come together for sharing and analysing individual and collective experiences, supporting their participation in strategic areas of decision-making, and enabling their connection with wider/national community sector structures.

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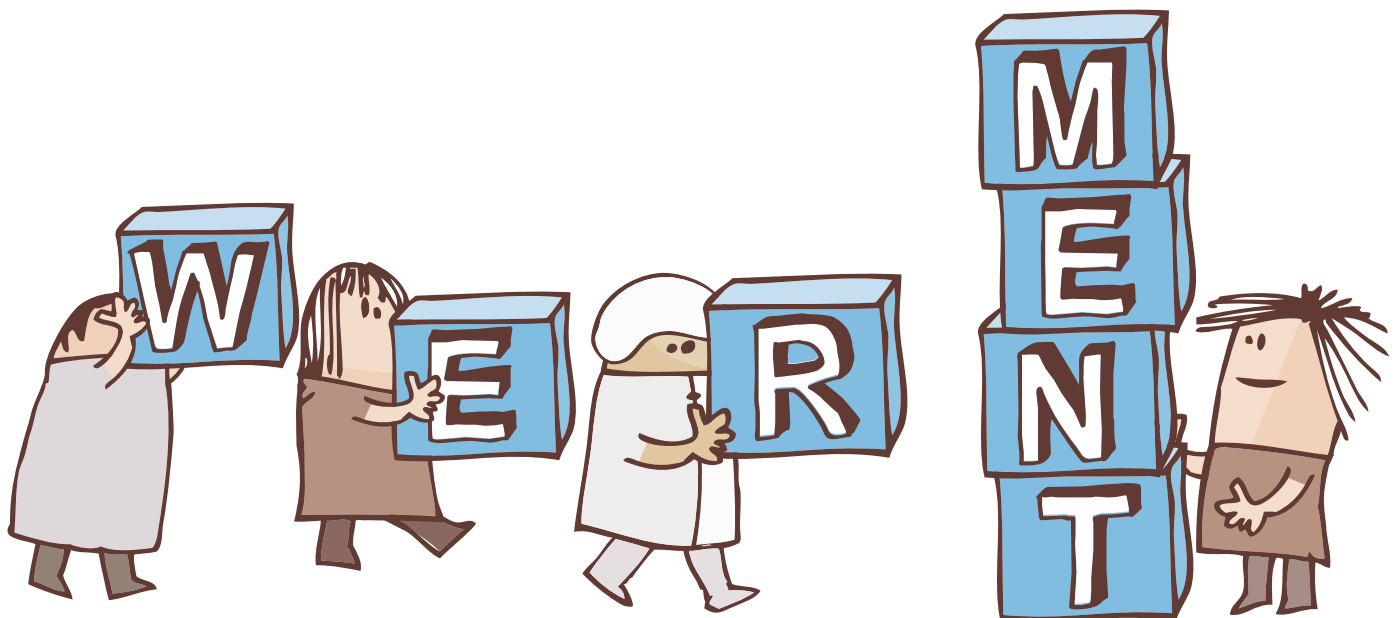
A great deal of this work involves creating collective spaces, supporting groups and leaders to emerge as well as encouraging collective decision-making and supporting people in representative roles outside of the groups they are in. Section 3.1 looks at the empowerment of migrant workers and presents an overview of strategies, steps and tools needed to develop this. It focuses in particular on effective groups, supporting leadership and collective decision-making. Section 3.2 looks at collective action for change, and in a similar way offers practical material that will support empowerment and the development of a collective analysis, but focuses on particular actions, including campaign work and other collective initiatives that can be undertaken.



### 3.1 Essential elements for empowerment

Community work is about the empowerment of individuals and communities, and addressing the unequal distribution of power.<sup>39</sup> Building on participation, it involves supporting people to develop skills and confidence, as well as highlighting the importance of not doing for others what they can do for themselves. It involves supporting people through consciousness-raising, to build an understanding and analysis of their reality. This creates the conditions for migrant workers to analyse together the issues affecting them, identifying ways of overcoming these problems. Through bringing people together who share common problems, in this case migrant workers, an awareness and understanding develops that goes beyond the personal. In the process of doing this, participants can begin to understand why they are experiencing these problems and identify what factors keep barriers in place. This results in a very powerful experience.

**39** Towards Standards Ad Hoc Group (2008) Towards Standards for Quality Community Work An All Ireland Statement of Values, Principles and Work Standards Published by Community Workers Co-Operative [www.cwc.ie](http://www.cwc.ie)





### Empowerment – your role as community worker:

- ① Work with people to make sense of their own experiences, and to make the link between their own individual experiences and a more collective and political analysis of migration and equality.
- ② Have an analysis of power and how it is acquired, maintained and used.
- ③ Recognise power inequalities and seek to address them. Work with communities to develop informal and formal networks and create alliances, which support the achievement of collective goals.
- ④ Be reflective and conscious of your own power and perceptions of this, and strive to use it appropriately.
- ⑤ Work in partnership with communities to achieve outcomes that address the issues they have identified.
- ⑥ Identify and deal appropriately with conflict when it arises, and support individuals, groups and communities to manage conflict.
- ⑦ Be prepared to challenge power imbalances in order to promote greater minority participation at all levels.



### Understanding Power

Analysing power is an important part of the work. This involves having a sense of the absence of, or access to, power that migrant workers and their families have. It also involves getting to grips with how decisions are made and influenced, and the structures and processes at local and national level where power lies and where key decisions are made. Central to this will be the personal experiences of migrant workers. Developing an understanding of power with migrant workers can happen in any number of ways, usually through a group process and ideally as part of the development of an effective group process. Any group coming together to discuss their experiences and issues facing them, for example impact of workplace exploitation on their lives, should ideally be facilitated to develop an analysis of power (who has it, who doesn't, and why) within this. This helps in turning problems and negative experiences into campaigns calling for change on particular issues.



### Learning points for 'power'

- Visible or tangible power relates to decision-making structures, institutions and places where policies are made.
- Invisible or intangible power often relates to the values and norms in society and to ideologies, such as neo-liberalism, which are prevalent but lie beneath the surface.
- Power can manifest and be exerted a number of ways. It can be held through force, correction, intimidation, influence, expertise, knowledge, politics, group dynamics and tradition, to name but a few.

- All people have power in some shape or form. We need to be conscious of our power and how we use it.
- It is an analysis of our own power, and the power of 'others' that enables us to see where the possibilities for struggle can lie. It is only through this type of struggle that change can happen and the balance of power can shift.



#### Your role as community worker:

- 1 Think of those most disempowered and least likely have their voice heard.
- 2 Remember that the core of community work is about working with people who are socially excluded, and working to address the causes of social exclusion
- 3 Specifically prioritise more vulnerable individuals and communities, i.e. working with migrant workers and their families who are more vulnerable to social exclusion. Such migrant workers are generally employed in the low-paid, less stable and often poorly-regulated sectors of the Irish economy, such as the services sector, restaurant work, agriculture and the private home.



#### Developing a collective analysis

As a community worker it is important to work with people to raise awareness and understanding of issues that impact on their lives. This process is usually referred to as consciousness-raising. Consciousness-raising allows migrant workers you are working with to develop a collective analysis of the issues affecting them and can then lead to identifying ways of overcoming problems. Essentially this is about supporting those you work with to see the bigger picture. For example, in working with a group of migrant workers from outside the EU (who are in the Employment Permits System), it could be useful to create the space for a discussion and critique of the impact of managed migration policies on access to rights for migrant workers. It is an important process because it encourages migrant workers to move from a personal and individual understanding of their experience to a political and collective one. This development of a collective analysis supports any type of collective action for change and enables the turning of real problems facing individuals you are working with into broader issues facing migrant workers and their families in Ireland, issues that could be worked on together and possibly campaigned on. Developing this collective analysis ideally happens in a group process, which is why supporting the formation of effective groups, outlined below, is important. Support materials have been included to give some ideas for developing a collective analysis with groups.



See Support Sheet 3.3 for some practical ideas on exercises designed for consciousness raising and building a collective analysis



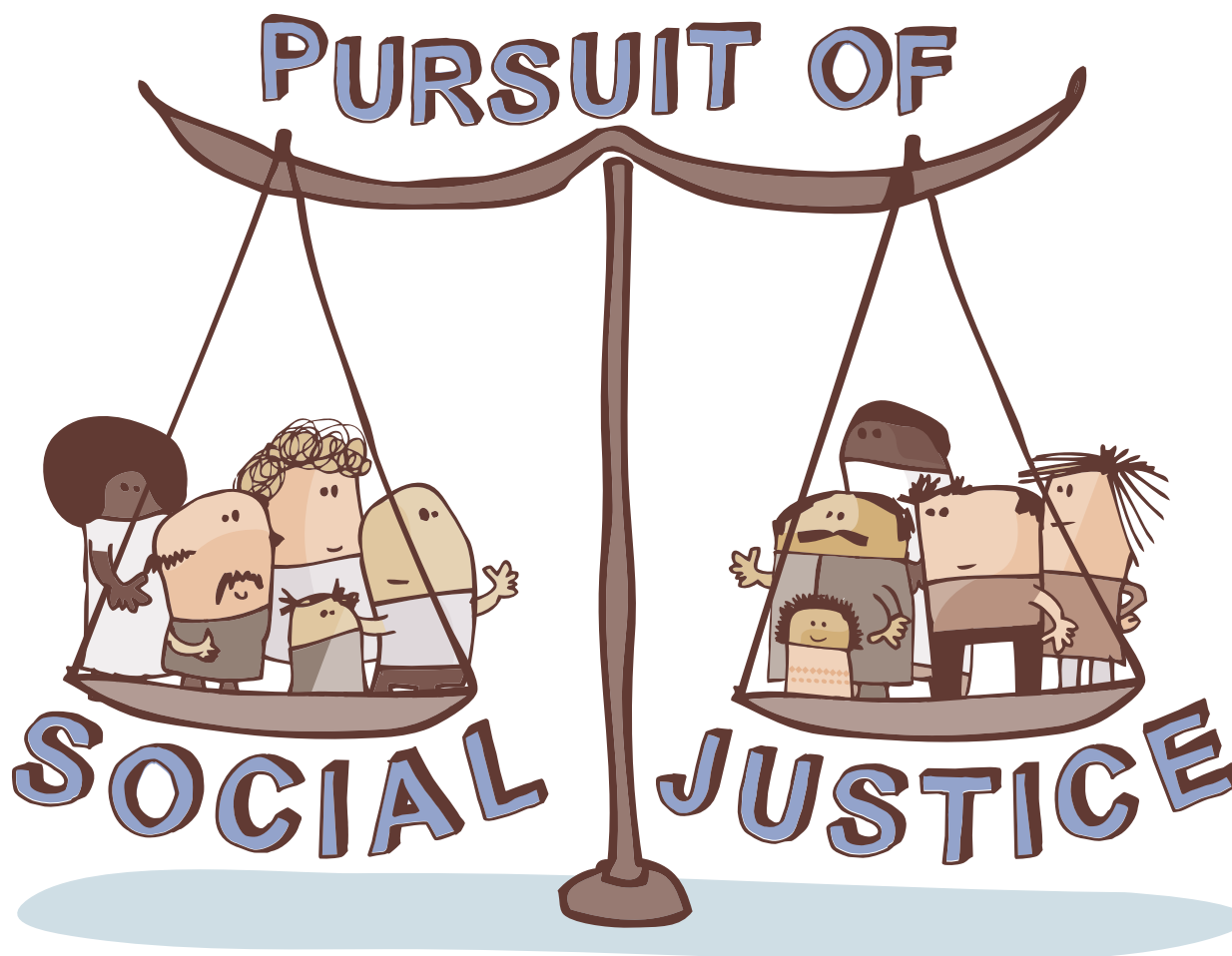
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Towards Standards Adhoc  
Group (2008) Towards Standards for  
Quality Community Work An All-Ireland  
Statement of Values Principles and Work  
Standards Community Workers Cooperative

Your role as community worker is to be concerned with the pursuit of social justice<sup>40</sup>

The active pursuit of social justice is an essential element of community work. It is based on the belief that every person can play an active role in creating the conditions for a just and equal society, where human rights are promoted and all forms of oppression or discrimination are challenged. It involves:

- ① Developing a clear social analysis (exploring social issues with a view to understanding their root causes).
- ② Develop an understanding of the ways in which the policies and activities of government, organisations and society create or contribute to disadvantage, or work towards inclusion and equality.
- ③ Build the capacity of communities to contribute to policy development.
- ④ Work in solidarity with marginalised communities towards gaining concrete improvements in their quality of life.
- ⑤ Promote human rights for all, in line with UN Conventions and other human rights instruments.





## Developing a collective analysis:

### The Domestic Workers Support Group Opening Doors project: Using art to build a collective analysis – Migrant Rights Centre Ireland



*The DWSG was set up to respond to exploitation of domestic workers employed in the private home, as carers, childminders and housekeepers. In this unregulated sector of employment, often with poor conditions, the DWSG was set up to campaign for improved protections and standards in this type of employment. In order to encourage participation, develop group cohesion and build critical analysis, the group used art as a means to explore the issues, raise awareness and make visible the experiences of domestic workers. Part of this strategy was the development of a textile quilt, which depicted the lived experiences of domestic workers, as well as the structural change necessary for this group of workers to be free from exploitation. The project was part of a broader campaign to put in place protections for workers. The DWSG initiated a dialogue with the trade union movement to explore this issue, and were instrumental in the development of a Code of Practice for this area of employment.*

#### Description of the work

The quilt explores the complexities experienced in domestic work, where the boundary between work and leisure time is unclear, and where navigating the roles of both employee and family member can become problematic. A core group of eight women from the group were elected to oversee and help to plan the project. The first step was a planning and development stage which enabled the group to develop critical analysis and name the issues very clearly. The large group was broken into small groups, and asked to discuss their experiences and identify some of the key problems they experienced as live-in carers and childminders. The DWSG agreed on 18 key areas of collective concern that were central to the difficulties they experienced in this work, and highlighted each

of these in the quilt. These included long working long hours, having no privacy, and babysitting without pay, to name but a few. This also enabled a deeper discussion to emerge about the elements necessary to have a full life. The group looked at what they did on their days off and their rare evenings off, which lead to them identifying that part of the quilt should highlight the need for social supports. Another facilitated discussion looked at the structural changes needed to enable this group of workers to be free from exploitation. The smaller groups identified issues such as the need to have a contract of employment, and the importance of the support given by members of the DWSG. Options were also presented to the group about the various policy and legislative changes which

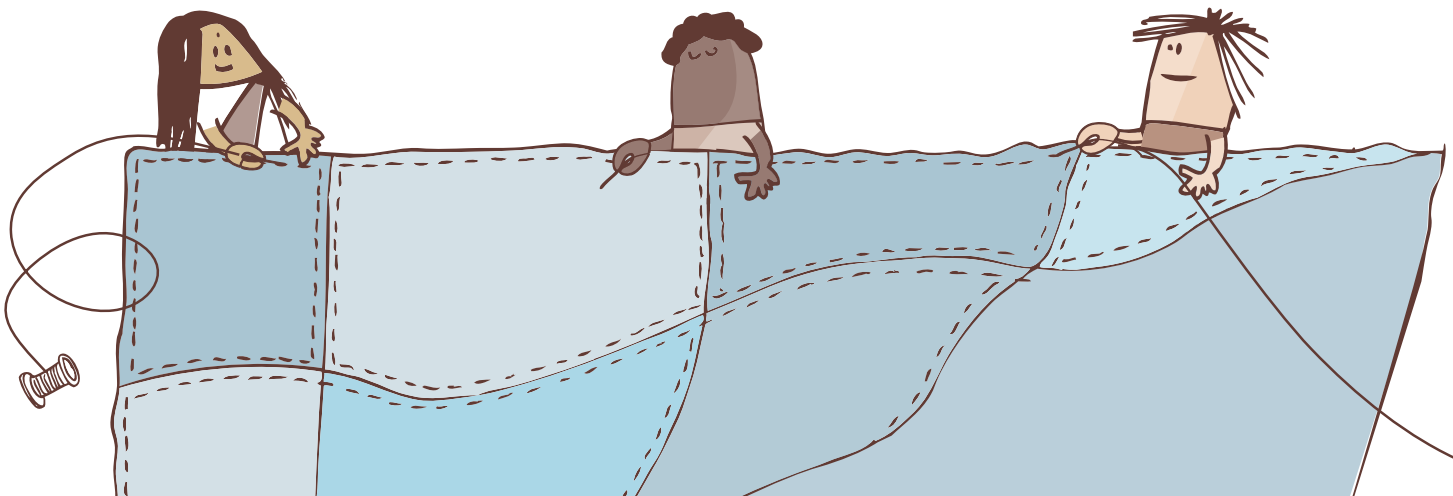
could help to regulate this sector. This process enabled the group to engage meaningfully with policy areas of concern to them, and to develop a critical analysis of their situation, but also of the next steps needed to enhance their workplace rights. Once the planning and design stages were completed, both individuals and small groups worked on the panels to depict a collective story. The panels also acted as a starting point for discussion at key meetings, where people shared their experiences to stimulate discussion on developing a framework for an Employment Regulation Order. This sets minimum standards in a given area of employment. The group have developed this framework, as part of an ongoing campaign to regulate this sector of employment. The quilt took 12 months

to complete, due to work and life constraints, the fluidity of the group (not everyone could be at each meeting), time constraints, only meeting one Sunday a month and working around employers' holidays. Depicting the complexities of the issues was also a challenge. To further explain the ideas and issues represented in the quilt, the group recorded the voices of individual members explaining what is depicted in each panel. The quilt was then exhibited at a public exhibition, as part of a broader photography and multimedia project entitled 'Opening Doors', which highlighted the skills and pride in this employment.

More information about this project, including the quilt and audio recordings, can be viewed at [www.mrci.ie/activities/opening\\_doors/](http://www.mrci.ie/activities/opening_doors/)

### What worked well:

- ✓ Starting with people's individual stories and experiences of working in the private home, and collectivising these experiences through a group process.
- ✓ Using creative and participative methods to support migrant women to engage with policy and decision-making
- ✓ Timing of meetings – the group met on the second Sunday of every month, Sunday being the most common day off for domestic workers. This consistency was also important.
- ✓ The establishment of a Core Group to assist with coordination of the work.
- ✓ Breaking into small groups to support discussions and to finish the panels.
- ✓ Developing a key message and making the issues political.





### Supporting effective groups

Supporting effective groups to emerge allows migrant workers to participate in something collective, supports individual personal development and is empowering. It can also be a source of support to participants, through the sharing of experiences and information. How and why groups come together depends on any number of factors. Sometimes it is on the basis of a shared issue arising in people's lives (which could result in an action group or campaign group being formed) and other times it might be a need identified (for example setting up a women's group). Supporting the establishment of a group might also be about encouraging more active participation of migrant workers in the work of the project, and supporting leaders or potential spokespersons and representatives to emerge. For example some projects have supported the development of intercultural groups or committees who take on a greater degree of responsibility for work and local initiatives aimed at supporting integration. A group should develop a clear, democratic way of working and identify clearly what they are working towards. It is the role of the community worker to facilitate this process.

 See Support Sheet 2.5 for information on supporting intercultural communication

 See Support Sheet 3.4 for information on supporting the group process



### Your role as a community worker in supporting groups

- 1 There are particular challenges in working in a group setting to build a collective analysis and enable empowerment:
- 2 Different cultures have different ways of interacting in a group. Be aware of this and seek to manage the diversity.
- 3 It can be difficult to get people to look beyond their individual problems and issues, and to engage with collective issues. However if you can get past this, it can be very powerful for individuals to realise that they are not alone.
- 4 You may have some drop-off in numbers at this stage, but don't lose heart. Try to find out why people have left the group, and what could have been done differently.
- 5 Exploring collective issues can be overwhelming, and people will feel disempowered if the group doesn't look at what needs to change and move to the next stage of taking action to address the issues identified.





## Developing effective groups:

### Developing an intercultural group – Rathmines Partnership



*Through a partnership approach, the Rathmines Community Partnership aims to counter social exclusion and promote equality of participation, opportunity and benefit for all sections of the community, with the purpose of improving the quality of life of those individuals and groups within the community who experience disadvantage. Some of the key areas of work have been taken under Services to the Unemployed, Community Development and community-based youth initiatives.*

#### Description of the work

The Intercultural Group was established in 2003 under the broad remit of developing and supporting initiatives that work to address social exclusion of ethnic and cultural minorities and promote anti-racism and interculturalism. The group have worked on a number of projects, including: events to celebrate cultural diversity within the local community,

producing a guide to Dublin 6 (an information pack to provide accessible information on the local community and its services), an arts project exploring the themes of home and community, accessible information on migrants' rights, and a local campaign on the Immigration, Residence and Protection Bill.

#### What worked well:

- ✓ **Engagement with migrant workers** through the organisation of cultural and social activities
- ✓ **Developing contact with participants** on ESOL classes, computer classes and other adult education training, and the participation of members of the Intercultural Group in the organising of events
- ✓ **Ongoing engagement with migrant women** and mothers. Many migrant women were found to be isolated within the community, from any support network of friends and family, and facing structural barriers in accessing services and community

supports. Women were key to the development of the Intercultural Group and were instrumental in developing peer supports around the 'Irish Born Child' application process. They remain core to the group, have encouraged increased participation and have taken a lead role in the development of information initiatives.

- ✓ **Collaborative approach:** Information Initiatives organised in partnership with other relevant organisations (e.g. CICs), enabled the provision of accessible information and referrals, encouraged people to attend meetings, generated discussion of issues as well as personal needs and enabled

Intercultural Group to move from individual focus to collective analysis.

- ✓ **Identifying and supporting leaders** within the group by supporting development of leadership and facilitation skills, and providing training opportunities
- ✓ **Working to develop further analysis** of the root causes of racism and discrimination
- ✓ **Encouraging members to engage with networks** and other groups, in order to learn from different

approaches and models of work. Important for people to feel that they are part of a bigger movement (e.g. a campaign) as well as building alliances with other local community groups in the local area.

- ✓ **Integrated Approach** – important that Partnerships take an integrated approach to work with migrant groups and ethnic and cultural minorities, mainstreaming it right across the work of the Partnership.



## Networking

Part of the framework you are seeking to build will include opportunities for the group to link with other similar groups or organisations. Creating opportunities for this to happen, or taking advantage of opportunities that others have created, is very important. Networking results in: groups being less isolated, a deeper understanding of their issues and similar issues, an enhanced capacity of the group and individuals within it to take action, and increased solidarity. Links should also be made with relevant support networks and organisations, and connections developed with mainstream agencies, trade unions, and community sector organisations.



## Supporting migrant workers to take on representative roles

Once a group of migrant workers is working together in the community it is likely that there will be opportunities for individuals to represent that group on a committee or decision-making body. Representatives from the group may also be invited to give an input or presentation at a seminar or conference, for example highlighting the work of the group and possibly some of the issues facing migrant workers and their families in Ireland. Whilst it is important that the group is not put under pressure or diverted by the needs of other organizations, these are important opportunities for migrant workers to communicate the issues themselves, and for participants to develop practical skills in the area of public speaking, media engagement and communication.



### Your role as a community worker supporting representative roles:

- ① Take time to map out the opportunities for representation and involvement and to decide as a group who does what, and when.
- ② As a community worker it is your role to continually look for opportunities for migrant workers to take on leadership roles, access decision-making at a local and national level, and in this work to support participants to develop their own practical and analytical skills.
- ③ Supporting migrant workers to take on representative roles is often about mentoring, and consideration should be given to developing a mentoring policy in the work. Mentoring essentially refers to a developmental relationship in which a more experienced person supports a less experienced person to develop in a specified capacity. It requires making time for one-to-one meetings, explaining the contexts and structures into which migrant workers may be going as a 'representative', and generally supporting all aspects of this work.



## Supporting representative roles:

### Supporting immigrants to take on representative and leadership roles – Mayo Intercultural Action



*Mayo Intercultural Action is a support and advocacy group for migrants in Mayo working from a community development approach. It is run by a voluntary management committee, including migrant representation made up of refugees, asylum seekers and migrant workers. MIA has a drop-in centre, runs an employment project to improve employability of migrants and works to create opportunities for leaders and decision-making for migrants in Mayo. This case study highlights important work being done primarily with people seeking asylum and refugees in county Mayo. This work also includes migrant workers, and MIA hopes to engage more actively with migrant workers and their families in the County as the organisation grows. Ultimately this is dependent upon funding and resources being available.*

#### Description of the work

Over the past number of years MIA realised that there was no representation of migrants in decision-making structures in the country, and that their voices were not being heard. The organisation went about setting up a representative structure (primarily made up of people who were in the asylum process) where members participated in activities and developed their leadership skills. The organisation continuously sought to create collective spaces for migrants and those seeking asylum to come together in the County to prioritise what issues they wanted progress on. A second stage of this work involved mentoring and providing support to emerging leaders who began to take on the role of representatives and spokespersons on the issues, at a local regional and national level. Opportunities and structures were identified to ensure issues facing migrants in the County were actively feeding into key policy developments and decision-making structures. Some of these structures included the Mayo Immigrant

Liaison Forum, and activities included participating at roundtable discussion groups and conferences.

#### Outcomes

Because of the time and resources put in to the groundwork and to developing relationships, members of MIA believe that people seeking asylum and the problems they face are better represented in the County. The challenge now facing the organisation is that it is at an earlier stage in this work with migrant workers. This is particularly challenging considering the limited resources (both financial and staff) facing the organisation. However the model of good practice developed with people seeking asylum who are in the 'Direct Provision' system in the County can successfully be replicated with migrant workers and other immigrants, should funding be made available and staff sourced.

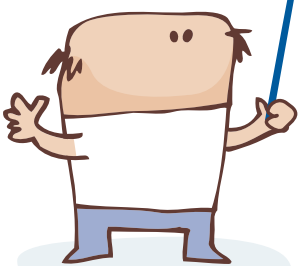
### What worked well:

- ✓ Taking time to **build relationships and trust** with migrants (the results of this are clearly evident after four years).
- ✓ **Networking, information-sharing and linking** into the policy work of relevant organisations at local and national level.
- ✓ **Creating intercultural spaces for participation** in the local community regularly, for people to meet and gain support, to celebrate diversity, break down barriers between new communities and the local Irish community
- ✓ **Provide good leadership training** with migrants who are getting involved. One partnership initiative that worked very well included leadership training for ethnic minority women, including travellers, asylum seekers and refugees
- ✓ Consistently **looking for opportunities** for migrants to take on representative roles and to highlight issues facing migrants in the county – for example in relation to giving talks, presentations, participation in conferences and decision-making forums.



### Learning points for supporting migrant workers to take on representative roles

- It is important that opportunities are created for all individuals to take up representative roles if they wish to, and that training and support (including material resources) are provided on a regular basis. Try to avoid the same people going forward from the group and be aware of people's time constraints.
- In order to act in the interests of the community rather than self-interest, there needs to be clarity and accountability to those who are being represented, and appropriate structures for this. Key to this will be ensuring effective communication channels are in place with those who are being represented.
- In order to make any impact, the representative will need to be up-to-date on issues and information relating to migrant workers and their needs. Furthermore, the individual will need continued support in order to have an effective role and achieve impact. To this end, seek to establish a formal support structure such as mentoring or supervision. This one-to-one contact is very important in supporting individual group members to take on representative roles. Mentoring is one of the most practical ways to support people taking on representative roles.
- Real participation means that there are recognisable outcomes from everyone's contributions, things are being achieved, and clear actions are agreed and acted upon. It is important to name what the group wants to gain from representation on a particular committee before joining, otherwise it will be difficult to monitor progress. Mark any progress that is made with celebration and by widely disseminating information on how progress was achieved.





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Towards Standards Ad Hoc  
Group (2008) Occupational  
Standards for Quality Community  
Work – All-Ireland Statement of  
Values, Principles and Work Standards  
Community Workers Cooperative  
[www.cwc.ie](http://www.cwc.ie)



## Voluntary work

Voluntary work is not an end in itself, it should be viewed in the context of developing leadership skills and ownership of the work amongst migrant workers. Encouraging migrant workers to volunteer in the work of the organisation or in a particular project is a useful way of supporting meaningful participation. It can also be hugely beneficial to the organisation, as migrant workers bring with them a vast amount of talents, skills and life experience. Volunteering could involve translating, helping with the organisation of a particular event, making contact with local migrant workers. Whilst creating opportunities within your own and other organisations, be mindful that volunteering is not tokenistic, or even worse, exploitative. Ensure appropriate support is in place, such as mentoring, and develop a volunteering policy.

## Ensuring a focus on equality and anti-discrimination

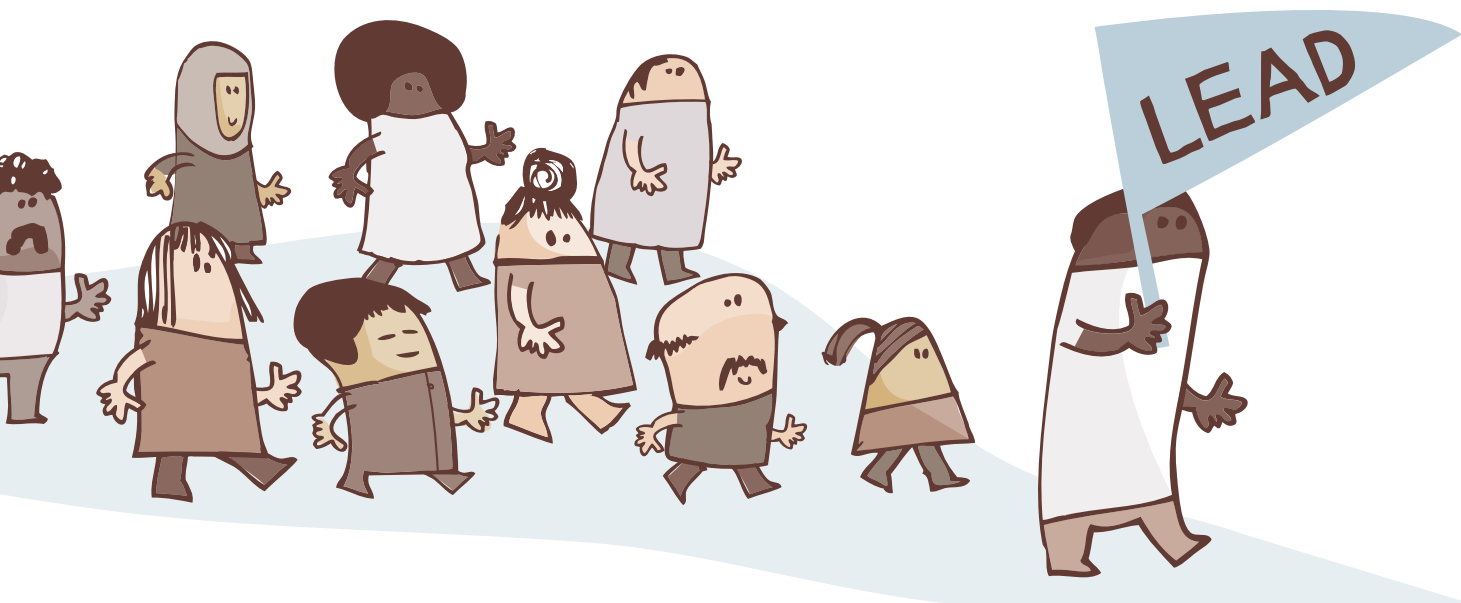
Working with migrant workers and their families means working with people from all over the world, who will inevitably be from very diverse cultural and ethnic backgrounds. This in itself poses particular challenges for group work and may require up-skilling in the area of intercultural communication. This is about more than simply signing up for anti-racism training; it is about being conscious of our own individual prejudices and values. It also requires a constant challenging of racism and oppression in all of its various manifestations in society. This, too is a challenge but a necessary one in order to ensure that as community workers our actions do not reinforce existing inequalities, in particular those arising from class, 'race' and gender inequalities. Community workers have a responsibility to challenge the oppression and exclusion of individuals and groups by institutions and society which leads to discrimination based on ability, age, culture, gender marital status, socio-economic status, nationality, skin colour, racial or ethnic group, sexual orientation, political or religious beliefs.<sup>41</sup>



See Support Sheet 2.6 for useful definitions and information on racism and discrimination

### Your role as community worker is to:

- 1 Acknowledge the diverse nature of Irish society and seek to understand the nature of social diversity and oppression with respect to disadvantaged communities and minorities
- 2 Respect, value, support and promote difference and diversity
- 3 Reject and challenge any form of discrimination and oppression
- 4 Support and develop anti-oppression policies and practices
- 5 Keep up-to-date with equality and anti-discrimination legislation and reflect on your practice in relation to these
- 6 Challenge inequality at all levels
- 7 Find appropriate and constructive means to support equality for women in all work



### Leadership Development

As individual migrant workers start to participate in a collective process such as becoming an active member of a group, opportunities need to be created for their vision, skills and talents to be nurtured and developed. In this way true empowerment of the group can begin to take place and your role will become more supportive as the group members move in and between different roles. Leadership training and development for migrant workers should not wait until someone is identified or identifies themselves as a leader. It is a core part of community work, and needs to be continually worked at. There may not always be the time and resources for running a full leadership development course, and if this is the case it is about creating spaces on a regular basis for skills to be developed and making sure migrant workers are being supported to take on leadership roles. The development of leadership skills should involve a focus on the development of both practical skills (for example media and communication, presentation and lobbying skills) and analytical skills (for example taking time to develop a collective social and economic analysis of migration, by focusing on push and pull factors of migration, globalisation etc).

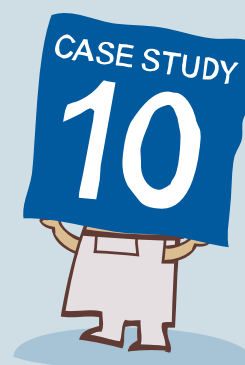


See Support Sheet 3.7 for ideas about content for a leadership course



## Developing leadership skills with migrant workers:

### Leadership Development Course 2008 – Migrant Rights Centre Ireland



*Over the years, and through collective spaces such as the Migrants Forum, as well as the emergence of action groups like the Domestic Workers Support Group and organising of campaign groups such as the Bridging Visa Group, individual migrant workers have begun to emerge naturally as leaders, participating more actively in core groups and in group decision making. MRCI is committed to supporting migrant workers to take on leadership roles within the organisation and in broader society. In 2008, MRCI organised a second leadership development programme to support potential leaders to take up representative roles, participate in discussions on issues such as racism, migration, immigration policies and engage with policy and decision-making processes. Much was learned from this process.*

#### Description of the work

The course was organised for migrant workers who were actively involved in existing MRCI groups.<sup>43</sup> The aim of the course was to support participants to develop both practical and analytical skills that are relevant and useful to participating in groups, for decision-making, and for taking on representational and leadership roles. The course content was designed to enable participation and engagement, and sought to develop skills, knowledge and analysis in the area of migration and campaigning for rights for migrant workers. The course content was workshop and practice-based, i.e. it was not in lecture format but

rather based on experiential and participative learning techniques. This meant using inputs, role play and group discussion to support participants to make the link between their own individual experiences of migration and develop a collective analysis of the systems, global context and politics of migration. After consultation with the 17 participants, sessions were organised on a Sunday from 10am-4pm.

#### Outcomes:

It was the first time many of the group had met, and the group process was supported throughout the duration of the course. Friendships were formed, people gained support from each other and personal development was very much evident. What was also very apparent by the end of the course was the degree to which migrant workers in the group had become politicised, active and passionate about issues facing migrant workers in Ireland. Participants developed a deeper analysis and insight into issues of power, racism and prejudice and better

**42** These groups included the Domestic Workers Support Group (support and action group of migrant women employed in the private home), Migrants Forum Core Group (core group of migrant workers coming together to help to strategically plan the Forum and taking on spokespersons roles within the Forum) and the Bridging Visa Campaign Group

(group of migrant workers who came together to campaign to the Department of Justice Equality and Law Reform for the introduction of a 'bridging visa' or temporary permission to remain for undocumented migrant workers in Ireland)

### What worked well:

- ✓ **Enabling participation** – organising the workshops at a time and on a day that suits participants is very important. This course was organised on Sundays as it was the day that suited most. During the week the vast majority were working. Location is also important. Ask yourself if the course is accessible, in a practical location, and in a format conducive to learning and group work.
- ✓ **Important – organisational skills are required!** It is important to make the time for planning and organising before and during the course. This pays off, contributing to quality workshops and minimising confusion for participants.
- ✓ **Participation** – covering costs make a difference. If the budget can stretch to participation and childcare costs, all the better. This can make a real difference for participants, and be an extra incentive for committing to participate in the course.
- ✓ **Establishing ground rules.** The group should agree on ground rules from the beginning, and these should be referred to regularly. These set the tone for group work, engagement and discussion, outlining what is expected from participants.
- ✓ **Evaluation is important.** As mentioned above, evaluation is important and should be built in to individual workshops where possible, with an overall evaluation carried out at the end of the course.
- ✓ **Give thought to and plan for the ‘fall out’** of discussions and group exercises that may be upsetting for individuals, for example experiences of discrimination, exploitation, racism etc. Individuals may want to discuss some of this on a one-to-one basis, and may require individual support and access to information.
- ✓ **Celebration is important too!** It helps the group to bond and gives participants a sense of achievement. In this case, a graduation party was organised at which all participants received certificates of completion from MRCl.



As a community worker your role in supporting empowerment and the building of a collective analysis should result in:

- ① Improved level of skills within the group, particularly in relation to leadership, advocacy, organising and empowerment.
- ② Emergence of new leaders in the community, particularly from non-traditional members such as young people and women.
- ③ Engagement with mainstream agencies, including community and government agencies.
- ④ Increased level of networking and community solidarity, particularly in response to events such as racist incidents.
- ⑤ Improved ability to articulate community issues and voice concerns in committees and other representative structures.
- ⑥ Increased participation in policy development, through an increased understanding of the processes of government and policy formation at different levels.
- ⑦ Enhanced community capacity through better access to resources.
- ⑧ Better understanding of cultural issues by broader society — contribution to a more socially inclusive society.

### 3.2 Collective action for change

Collective action for change should be considered in the broader context of contributing to the building of social movements. Social movements are not built overnight, they take time and sustained commitment. They are collective challenges to elites, authorities, those in power and other groups, by people with a common purpose.<sup>43</sup> Once migrant workers have identified issues that impact on their lives and have begun to build an analysis of these, the next step is identifying actions to address these problems. Change sought may have a small or large impact, it may benefit migrant workers in a small community or at a wider level. It may also involve participating in networking events designed to develop a policy focus, making submissions, advocating and lobbying for changes, linking with political process and documenting and sharing good practice. It is built on participation, consciousness-raising, and empowerment. This section presents an overview of strategies, steps and tools needed to carry out collective action for change.

**43** Sidney, T. (1998) *Power in Movement: Social Movements and Contentious Politics*. Second Edition. Cambridge University Press





## Doing the groundwork

Sometimes collective action, for example in the form of a protest or campaign, is developed immediately in response to a particular governmental decision or crisis that has emerged in people's lives. Often it is developed once a community has decided they can take no more, and have begun to organise around an issue that may have been a problem for some time. Whatever the issue and whatever form collective action takes, doing the groundwork is essential in terms of choosing an issue, getting people involved, deciding on a strategy and working together to bring about change.



## Building analysis

Before we can influence change it is critical to identify what the issue is and to have a clear understanding of how it affects migrant workers and their families. Influencing change will involve speaking to others, particularly those in power, about this issue and convincing others why it matters and what needs to change, therefore having a good analysis is paramount. At this stage, ideally, experiences of migrant workers in the local community should be documented, with a particular focus on migrant workers experiencing workplace exploitation and discrimination, undocumented workers, and those at risk of social exclusion (including women and families). As a community worker you should be able to identify individual migrant workers affected by this issue and involve them from the beginning in any collective process. This immediately allows you to identify what is already known about this problem and also offers an important opportunity to document people's own direct experience.



## Choosing an issue to take action on

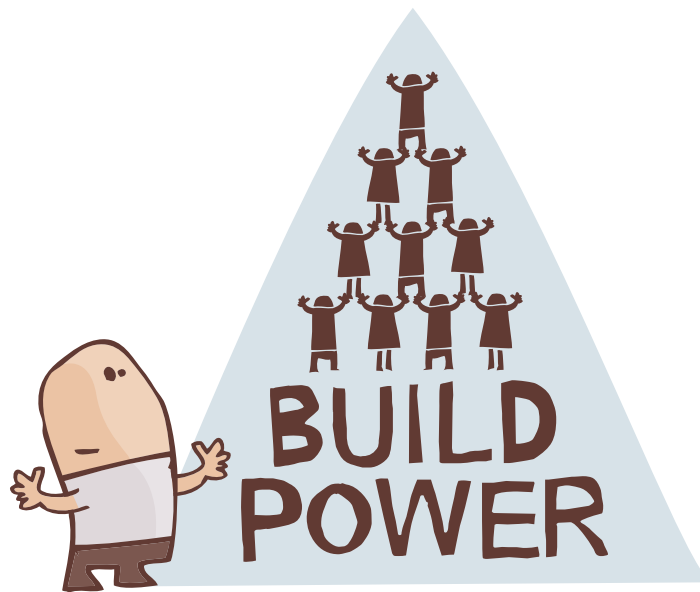
Sometimes the issue that needs to be worked on is very obvious and there is immediate agreement by all. However sometimes this is not the case, and choosing the right issue to progress is essential, and this can be influenced by many factors. At this stage it is important to differentiate between a 'problem' and the 'issue': A problem is a particular concern, for example, migrant workers from outside of the EU being refused family reunification with no access to an independent appeals system. An issue presents a solution or partial solution to this problem<sup>44</sup>, for example, advocating for family reunification to be legislated for in the Immigration, Residence and Protection Bill, or for an independent appeals mechanism for immigration decisions. As a community worker, you have a responsibility to turn problems facing migrant workers into issues that can be campaigned on collectively an issue to take action on the first step is to analyse the problem and decide what kind of solution to work toward. The second important step is to evaluate the range of presenting issues and select one. This is about more than running with what the majority thinks, and requires a collective process to engage with critical questions, such as whether it will result in a real improvement in people's lives, whether working on this issue will build leadership, if it will be non-divisive.

44

Bobo, K., Kendall, J.,  
Max, S. (2001) *Organising for  
Social Change*, Midwest Academy  
Manual For Activists Seven  
Locks Press (p.22)



See Support Sheet 3.7: Supporting collective action for change – 5-point Campaign Plan, on choosing a campaign issue



### Building power

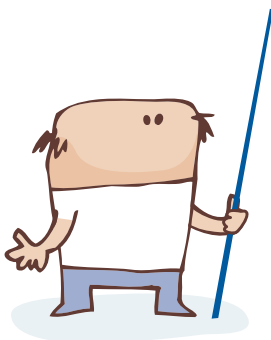
From an early stage, regardless of what form the action takes, time and energy should be given to building power around the issue and in the community/group you are working with. A fundamental way of building power is by getting people to understand the source of their social or political problems, to devise solutions, strategise, take on leadership, and move to action through campaigns that win concrete changes. There are some essential elements for building power that is considered strong and deep-rooted, regardless of the problem or setting. The following learning points for building community power have been adapted from 'Tools for Radical Democracy', an American publication which offers an interesting insight into organising for collective change. Some of these principles apply to the concept of collective action for change in general, and not just to building power.

### Learning points for building power<sup>45</sup>

- Build a base of members: more people means more power. A community worker should be getting migrant workers and their families involved from the beginning. This involves building relationships and organising people, which is ongoing work that never stops.
- Action fosters commitment. Support migrant workers to see the roots of the problem. As a community worker you can help people to understand how their problems stem from policies, programs, practices or ideologies. Moving migrant workers towards action engages people fully in the process. Whether this is on access to services, or on experiences of racism for example, it provides an opportunity to link the local to the global.
- Develop capacity for leadership: leaders learn by doing. As a community worker you have a responsibility to support migrant workers to be leaders by training and supporting them, and by engaging them in the social justice

45

Minieri, J., Getsos, P. (2007)  
Tools for Radical Democracy How  
to Organise For Power in Your  
Community, John Wiley & Sons,  
Inc (P.xxiii)



movement. Political education and leadership development training are key to this.

- Analyse power. Power analysis is a distinct process, and is fundamental to an effective campaign. If you implement a campaign based on an inaccurate power analysis, or worse, with no power analysis, it is likely to fail.
- Build a movement. Successful campaigns and organisations engage in the larger social justice movement. You build relationships with other community leaders and organisations and expand your community's base of power.



46

Bobo, K., Kendall, J.,  
Max, S. (2001) **Organising for Social  
Change**. Midwest Academy Manual For  
Activists Seven Locks Press (P22)

### Adopting a strategy

Having chosen your issue you now need to adopt a strategy or strategies that will progress action on the issue. Whilst a plan might outline the various practical steps that need to be made in any project, a strategy is the overall design for building the power to compel others, i.e. decision-makers, to do something in the public interest that he or she does not otherwise wish to do.<sup>46</sup> Collective action for change may involve some or all of the following elements: organising a campaign, engaging the media, developing policy positions, lobbying, direct action and organising a petition. Developing a campaign plan is a central aspect to any strategy, but working on a strategy initially allows for thinking more broadly around the issue, defining the policy ask and the requirements in the short, medium and long term. This section will focus on developing a campaign plan that is centred on the involvement of migrant workers, but at an organisational level it is important to also give time to developing an overall strategy.



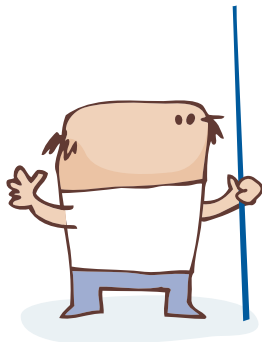
See Support Sheet 3.6 on SMART analysis tool, which outlines a useful exercise to help define potential actions



### Learning Points for developing a strategy

At this stage the issue will have been identified and researched, it is now important to think about:

- What resources are needed, and to begin to source them.
- What are some of the organisational considerations? How will this campaign strengthen the organisation you work with? Will this strategy put resource demands on the organisation, for example budget and staff requirements?
- Consider the short, medium and long term goals of this strategy. There might be a short term outcome desired but in the long run you may also be hoping for a bigger win.
- Develop strategic alliances and partnerships and a collectively-built agenda with a high degree of ownership. Also consider who your potential opponents are.
- Connect with migrant workers and their families, along with supportive organisations – locally, regionally, nationally and internationally – to show you have wide support. Often people will support it if they think you've already got momentum.
- Be tactical and strategic – recognise the limitations of any single approach and use different tactics at different times.
- Your action will be most effective if it is multi-dimensional, e.g. using media, lobbying, direct action.
- Have targets. There will be obvious key decision makers, for example the Minister for Justice Equality and Law Reform, high-level civil servants and others in positions of power and responsibility, who need to be identified.



### Campaigning

At its simplest, campaigning is about an organised, sustained effort to influence and make collective claims on targeted authorities. It can happen as part of an action plan to address an issue, or be organised in response to an issue emerging suddenly that has a direct and negative impact – for example the deportation of a local resident. As collective action for change is about working together with people to take action, before developing a campaign strategy consider who will work on the campaign. Draw in key people who are sympathetic to your cause, involved in similar organisations, or experts in the field. A campaign plan might include some if not all of the following actions: designing a petition and collecting signatures, organising a protest, engaging with the media, lobbying key policy and decision-makers.



See Support Sheet 3.7 on a 5-Point Campaign Plan, which offers ideas and material on developing a campaign plan

## Before You Begin

### Assess

- What do you want to do?
- What do you want to communicate, and to whom?
- What power do they have?
- What power are they willing to give up?
- Who will give you support?

Know whom the issue affects and build alliances accordingly

Develop a clear strategy

Turn problems into issues

Have one clear aim and purpose. This should be in the interests of the collective

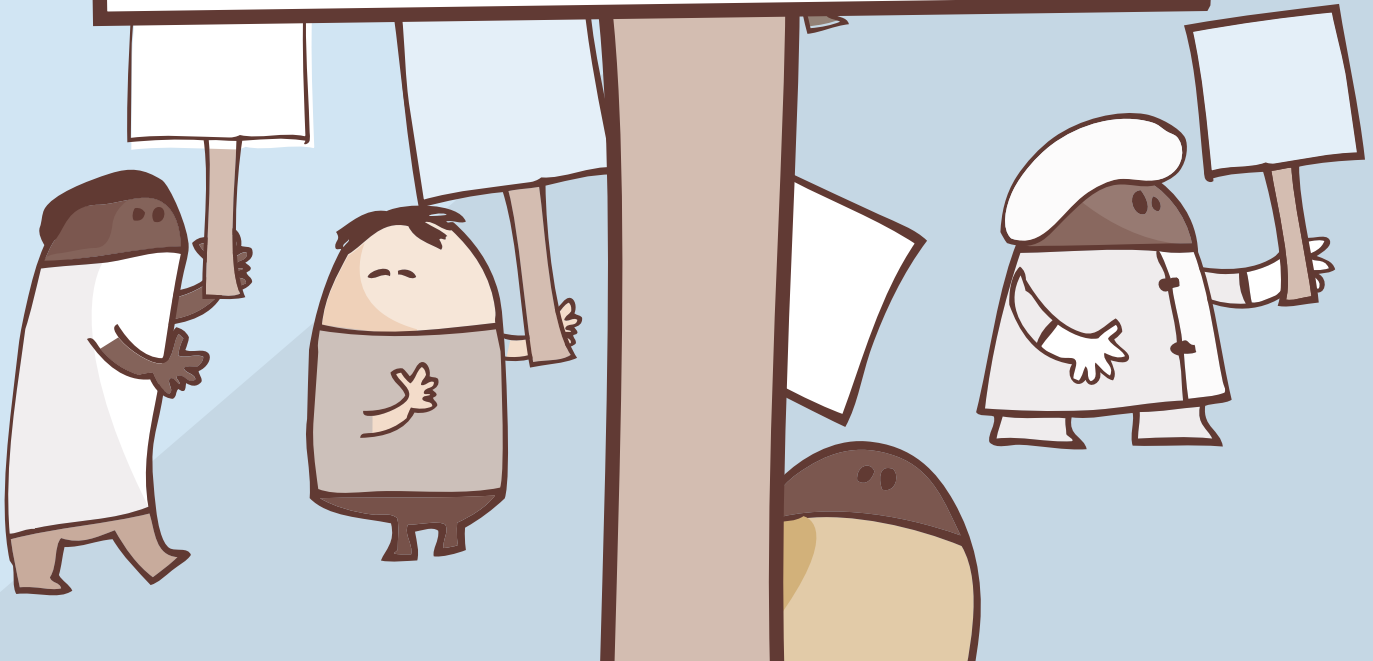
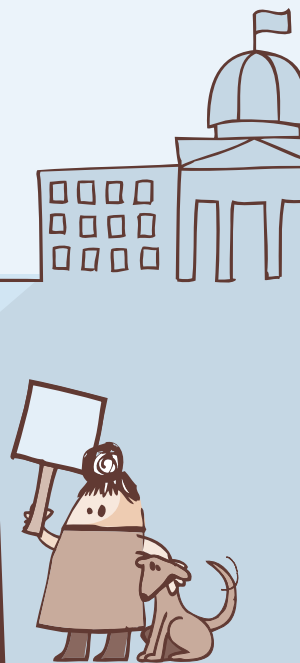
Timing: take into account the life of a campaign, timescale, and context.  
Think about the best time to start, and work within a given time frame

Develop your key messages. Remember to be creative and visual.  
Think about imagery and logos

Research similar campaigns. Network with others from whom you might learn

Troubleshoot – be aware of what might go wrong, and have back-up plans

Develop relations with the media.  
One or two main people should deal with the media work



## As You Are Campaigning

You can find allies in the most unusual places, while those you might expect to be allies may not turn out to be. If a group has been formed, it should continue to engage with other community sector organisations to ensure the specific experiences of migrants are incorporated into policies and agendas. Alliances with local trade union and employer representatives and specialist NGOs should be developed.

Don't preach, but keep your message simple – don't over-estimate your audience

Keep up the morale. Acknowledge small successes throughout

Be clear on what you want – don't side-track/divert. Know your bottom lines and what can be compromised on.

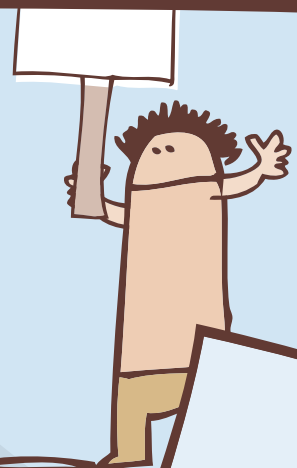
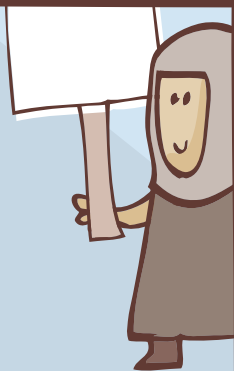
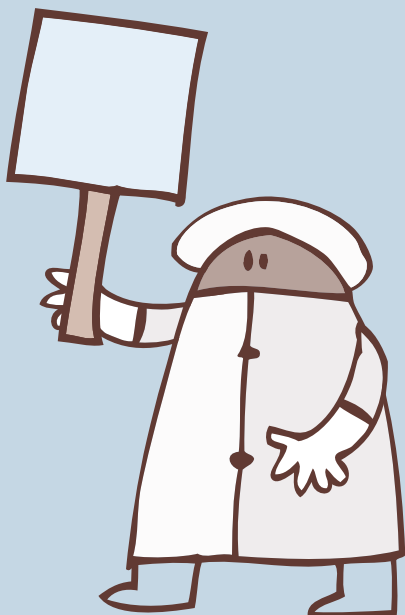
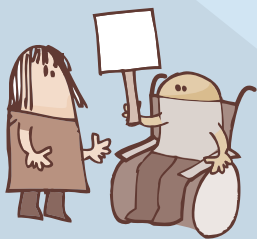
Develop good relations with important people. Communicate with all those involved, and listen to them. Have respect and use non-abusive criticism

## After the Campaign

Review success or progress

Evaluate the campaign and the process

Celebrate – acknowledge people's contribution





## Campaigning:

### Campaign to amend the Employment Permits Bill 2005 – Migrant Rights Centre Ireland

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*The Employment Permits Bill was published in June 2005, signalling an overhaul of the Employment Permits System. It was clear this would have great implications for migrant workers and their families. MRCI as an organisation produced a submission on the Bill, calling for clarifications and amendments on a number of issues. At the same time, a group of migrant workers concerned about what the Employment Permits Bill meant to them also came together in the MRCI, to learn more about the Bill and to organise actions to try and have an impact on it.*

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#### Description of the work

The campaign group was made up of migrant workers from outside the EU, for example, Bangladesh, the Philippines and the Ukraine, the majority of whom were in Ireland on work permits. The first task was to list the many concerns and issues faced by people on work permits, based on their own personal experiences. These formed the basis for a 'wish list' which summarised suggested amendments to the Employment Permits Bill 2005. An initial reaction was to suggest calling for the abolition of the work permits system, as migrant workers felt it tied workers to exploitative employers, led to migrant workers becoming undocumented and ultimately afforded a lot less rights to work permit holders than those on working visas/authorisations. However it was agreed that calling for amendments to the Bill would be taken more seriously by government, and would be more likely to generate positive change. The next task was to come up with a list of amendments on the Bill and a plan of action for moving forward. A decision was taken to launch a petition to gather support for the proposed changes to the Bill. It was also agreed to

develop a campaign pack, distributed by MRCI, for migrant workers and organisations around the country. The pack contained information to support lobbying on the Bill (e.g. contacting political representatives by letters, phone calls and visits). The group met every fortnight in the evenings for the duration of the campaign, and were actively encouraged to identify other migrant workers who could get involved and undertake to get signatures and lobby their political representatives. Some of the meetings involved informal training on the decision-making system and political structures, other evenings involved collecting signatures on the streets of Dublin or at intercultural events such as the Sports Against Racism Ireland (SARI) football matches.

**Outcomes:**

The Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment officially accepted 4,260 signatures from the campaign group, the culmination of eight months of work. For those involved in the campaign, the handing over of the signatures to the Minister signified the end to what was a very empowering process that saw many people having their voices heard in the political system

in Ireland for the first time. It also contributed in no small way to the changes brought in as part of the Employment Permits Act 2006. Some of these changes included right to work for spouses of work permit holders, work permits being extended to two years, and migrant workers being permitted to apply for work permits themselves.

**What worked well:**

- ✓ Identifying with migrant workers the key problems with the work permits system, and turning these problems into issues that could be campaigned on.
  - ✓ Having clear statements on the campaign issues that people could understand and relate to.
  - ✓ Developing accessible and useful information to aid lobbying on the Bill (creating a campaigning pack)
  - ✓ Identifying allies that could lobby and show their support for changes (e.g. community and voluntary sector organisations, employers, trade unions).
  - ✓ Identifying who had power and influence and would be making key decisions on the Bill, and targeting lobbying efforts at them (e.g. an Taoiseach, the Minister for Enterprise Trade and
- Employment, senior civil servants, and political representatives from all parties, particularly in opposition, who were looking for information on the Bill).
  - ✓ Keeping the message simple and clear.
  - ✓ Supporting the core campaign group in relation to training on the political system, delivering key messages, finding out who their local representative was, etc.
  - ✓ Using all contacts that anyone had.

**Engaging with the media: communicating your campaign effectively**

Engaging with the media will be an essential element of your campaign, as it is a central medium for delivering messages to the public and can be very influential. From the beginning it will be important to support migrant workers involved in the campaign to develop their own media and communication skills, in order for them to become key spokespersons who can confidently engage with the media. Communicating effectively about the issue your group is campaigning on may need time and resources, such as media training. If there is no budget for this, it is important to at least decide as a campaign group who the spokespersons will be, who are the targets of your media message, and how the message will be communicated.



See Support Sheet 3.8 for materials and ideas on how to communicate effectively about an issue



## Lobbying

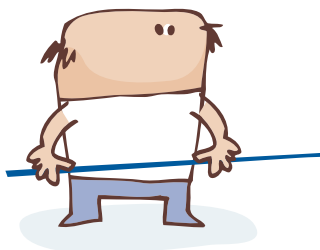
Lobbying essentially boils down to persuading someone to do what you want. It is about the process of pressuring, informing and influencing policy-makers in favour of a certain cause. It can involve various methods, from meeting with politicians and civil servants, to negotiating with policy makers, and writing submissions. Lobbying will be more effective if you are working as part of a larger campaign.



See Support Sheet 3.9 on useful resources, which highlights user-friendly guides to decision-making systems and influencing policy in Ireland

### Learning points for lobbying

- Develop a full, sound understanding of your issue, supported by social analysis and a long-term vision.
- Having a common-sense approach. Policy, politics and power are at the heart of community work. The complexity of policy-making can be a diversion – use a common-sense approach to getting to the heart of the issue, and identifying who has the power and makes the decisions which have relevance to the campaign issue.
- Get to grips with the decision-making system in Ireland at a local and national level. This takes a small amount of research, and there is a great deal of learning in the organising of a campaign as it requires finding out very quickly who are the targets of your campaign, and how best to contact them, whether this is your local T.D, a high-level civil servant or a government Minister.
- Realise that influencing policy and lobbying isn't rocket science, and remember you start with the advantage of knowing and understanding the reality of the issues on the ground. Not all policy makers can say the same!<sup>47</sup>
- There are key questions your group should be able to answer when initiating lobbying:
  - What do we want to influence? Is it a key piece of legislation, for example the Immigration, Residency and Protection Bill, or a process such as the Partnership Talks?
  - Why this particular policy process or this issue? Again this is in relation to being clear about the issue, how it impacts on migrant workers and their families, and the policy ask.
  - Who makes the decisions that directly impact on this campaign issue?
  - How can we influence them? Identifying that decision-makers may not have the same understanding of the issues you have is important. Be very clear about what you want and who you represent. Have solutions ready



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Adapted from a presentation  
by Robin Hannon, CEO of  
Refugee Council of Ireland given  
at Realising Integration – A series  
of practice seminars focusing on  
community work with migrant workers  
and their families 2008



and build up personal relationships with key decision makers where possible and relevant.

- When should we intervene? It is important to intervene at as early a stage as possible, and before a decision is set in stone.<sup>48</sup>
- How can we set a new agenda?

### Direct action

Direct actions are often defined by their confrontational, public, disruptive nature. They can be done with large or small groups of people and can take the form of marches, rallies, vigils, overnight sleep-outs, road-blocks, etc. They are most effective when carefully planned, when they focus public attention on injustice in a compelling way, and when other avenues for change have been exhausted. Before your group engages in direct action, carefully consider:

- Will an action advance or set back your cause?
- Will you have broad support?
- Can you convince others that it is necessary?
- Are you ready to handle the difficulties of any backlash?

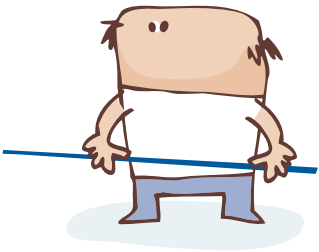
Let everyone talk about his or her ideas, fears, and past experiences. If, after all of this, you still agree that direct action is needed, then there are a few guidelines in the support section you may wish to follow. Engaging in successful direct action requires having a thick skin, knowing your issue inside out, having an understanding of the legal consequences, organising good publicity, gaining the support of other organisations and/or the public, reviewing and evaluating.



**TAKE  
DIRECT  
ACTION**

### Learning points about collective action

- A Brazilian saying asserts that as long as you are struggling, you are winning! Remember this and keep struggling. When some people think about collective action for change, they think only about change on a large scale, but change can be measured in many ways. It is important to recognise change when you see it, on whatever scale. Similarly, success can also be measured in different ways.
- Collective action does not have to cost a lot, but it can take up a lot of time. Your effort should be sustainable – or burnout could be an issue. Choose your action carefully, if it is a contentious issue, make sure you have the stamina and support to keep going.
- Bear in mind that collective action can take place at a number of levels. Collective action around a local issue may be more winnable, but collective action nationally or even internationally, while taking longer, will have a wider impact.
- Don't forget power in numbers. Your collective action for change is more likely to be successful if many people support it. Link with others to carry out your actions.
- Your group does not have to start collective action on its own. There may be a campaign or action already taking place, which someone else is organising. Link nationally with other migrant worker groups to be part of their campaign.



Empowerment and building a collective analysis is a complex process, and probably involves working with a fairly small group(s) of migrant workers. It can be labour-intensive and time-consuming, and therefore has resource implications. It is important to note that while this is a crucial stage in the community work process, we also cannot overlook creating connections and building participation with other migrant workers. Furthermore, empowerment involves supporting migrant workers to acknowledge and take action on challenging issues such as gender inequality, class, and racism. In the reality of day-to-day work with a community there are limited resources in relation to staff, time and funding. At the same time, community work on the ground does not realistically happen in a smooth, fluid and chronological order. Sometimes it is when a sudden need arises or an issue reaches a crisis point that effective group work and the development of a collective, critical analysis has to happen, and happen quickly. The above stages and steps are therefore intended as useful reference points in supporting the empowerment of migrant workers, and making that important shift from initial engagement and participation to collective action for change.

# 3.3

## Support Sheet

### Exercises to support the development of a collective analysis within a group

The following two exercises were taken from session one of MRCI's recent leadership development course (See Support Sheet 3.5 on a sample leadership development course). This session aimed at supporting participants in moving from individual to collective understanding, by introducing a political and social analysis of migration. The exercise is really an 'ice-breaker' but can be a quick and energising way for participants to make the links between their own individual experiences of migration and a collective analysis of their journey of migration. The second exercise provides an opportunity for people to tell their own stories of migration, an important first step in developing their analysis. Placing these stories on a timeline locates participants' experiences in the wider context of inward migration to Ireland, which is influenced by global realities such as globalisation and national political and economical concerns.

#### EXERCISE 1

#### Let's Move! A miming introduction<sup>49</sup>

##### Aims:

- To use as an introduction and a fun, physical ice-breaker
- To connect personal experiences of migrating to the issue of global migration

##### Time:

20 – 30 minutes

##### Plan

- ① Form a large circle, with all participants standing and facing inwards
- ② Explain to participants that this is an exercise for everyone to introduce themselves. Ask each person to:
  - Say their name

- Say a place where they used to live
- Make a physical motion (see examples below) that illustrates the reason that they moved

After someone introduces her/himself, everyone in the circle repeats their name and motion. You may want to demonstrate this with an example before you begin. Encourage participants not to repeat what someone else has already done to get the creative juices flowing!

- ③ When all participants have introduced themselves, ask them to find a partner. Each person should explain what their action represented to their partner.
- ④ After the partners are finished sharing, ask the large group how they felt about the exercise.
  - What did they notice?
  - What were some of the reasons why people moved?
  - What were some of the similarities?

49

Adapted Hyunhye Cho, Eunice et al (2004) BRIDGE Building a Race and Immigration Dialogue in the Global Economy – A popular education resource for immigrant and refugee community organizers, National Network for Immigrant and Refugee Rights (page 118)

**Example 1:** Making an action of holding your arms out in front of you like you are hugging someone (reason wanting to join your family)

**Example 2:** Making an action of pulling your pockets out and showing that they are empty (reason could be needed a new job, or wanted to make money)

### Discussion points

- Personal reasons for migrating often relate to economic, social and political factors, structures and policies
- These same reasons also lead other people in similar situations around the world to migrate
- Some of the push and pull factors influencing migration which are part of broader structural movements include:
  - integration of the world economy
  - structural inequality and poverty
  - globalisation

## EXERCISE 2

### Stories of Immigration<sup>50</sup>

#### Aims:

- Share personal and family stories of migration
- Place our personal migration stories in relation to the Irish experience of inward migration
- Look at how Irish immigration policy is starting to shape Ireland, including how the economy drives policy development, along with government concerns about security and border control

#### Time:

45 – 90 minutes

#### Facilitator Preparation:

- Create an immigration timeline for Ireland, reviewing history and dates before facilitating the session – this timeline should ideally be colourful and engaging
- Photographs can be sourced from the internet or symbols printed out to represent different eras
- Post the 'Immigration History Timeline' on the wall of the room with plenty of room for participants to tape their pages beneath and/or alongside it

#### Plan:

- ① Introduce the exercise by highlighting the framing questions for the activity. In this exercise we will be thinking about the following questions:
  - What are some of the reasons that people have migrated to Ireland?
  - What groups have immigrated to Ireland?
  - How has Ireland responded to this immigration?

**50** Adapted Hyunhye Cho, Eunice et al (2004) BRIDGE Building a Race and Immigration Dialogue in the Global Economy – A popular education resource for immigrant and refugee community organizers, National Network for Immigrant and Refugee Rights (page 44)

- How are immigration laws developing, and what impact are they having on migrant workers and their families?

② Distribute a half-sheet of paper and crayons/coloured pencils/markers to all participants. Ask participants to think about the following questions:

- When on the timeline did you move to Ireland?
- How did you come to Ireland, for example was it on a student visa / Work Permit?
- Is your family with you, and if so when did they come?
- How many times have you gone home on holidays since you came to Ireland?

Ask participants to write the answers to the questions on their paper, and to draw a picture to illustrate their migration experience.

③ Assign participants a partner each, preferably someone they do not know very well. Ask participants to share their “personal migration history” with their partners. Participants should ‘tour’ the timeline with their partners or their small groups. Distribute pieces of tape, so that participants can hang their personal history on the timeline as they walk through. Have extra sheets of paper available so that participants can add key dates that are not on the timeline.

④ After participants have walked through the timeline, ask for 3-4 participants to share their personal migration story with the rest of the large groups. If you have more time you can review each participant’s migration story. Explain that our individual stories connect to historical patterns and are part of broader economic and social movements.

⑤ Once participants have toured the timeline with their partners and located their own testimony on the line, gather the larger group together and process the activity together. Some questions that could shape the discussion include:

- Did anything surprise you about this activity? If so what?
- Who does the Irish government allow entry into the country to easily?
- What groups and individuals find it harder to migrate to Ireland to live and work?
- How much does your entry status determine your level of rights and entitlements in Ireland?
- How have immigration regulations and legislation affected immigration to Ireland?
- Who designs and plans migration policy in Ireland and who do they listen to.
- How do you think this has affected the lives of immigrants?

## 3.4

## Support Sheet

Group work –  
supporting the development of a group process

A good group is:

- Active and fun
- Democratic and inclusive
- Empowered and motivated
- Creative
- Organised
- In regular contact
- Strategic and informed
- Where knowledge and skills are shared
- When group members are clear on why they are part of the group
- When group members are listened to, understood and respected

51

Adair, John (1986)  
Effective Teambuilding,  
Pan, London

A number of needs must be met for groups to be effective. Adair's Functional Approach<sup>51</sup> below outlines individual, group and task needs. Effective groups will have all these needs met:

Task needs	Group Needs	Individual Needs
Defining the task	Setting standards	Attending to personal problems
Making a plan	Building team spirit	Constructive and positive feedback
Allocating work and resources	Encouraging, motivating, giving sense of purpose	Giving status
Checking performance against plan	Appointing roles	Recognising and using individual abilities
Adjusting plan	Ensuring communication within the group	Training
	Training needs	

## 1. Group Roles

In every group, different individuals play different roles. In establishing a group, it is useful to have a number of these roles represented. The roles compliment each other. You may run into problems if you have too many people playing the one role, e.g. leader.

**Leader:** makes sure everybody is involved, committed and motivated, co-ordinates the group, ensures that decisions are made and the group makes progress.

**Thinker:** collects and analyses information, listens to what is being said and watches what is going on, is sometimes quiet before contributing ideas, thinks through the problem, sees solutions anticipates problems.

**Achiever:** wants to succeed and strives for results, wants to progress towards the goal quickly, becomes impatient with delays, has lots of enthusiasm.

**Carer:** is concerned that everybody is fitting in, works to develop a team spirit, is keen to get everyone to agree, watches out for feelings and attitudes, eases tension and fosters a positive spirit.

**Doer:** always wants to be active, wants to see progress and adherence to plans, gets bored with too much discussion, hates time-wasting, works hard to finish the task.<sup>52</sup>

## 2. Setting ground rules

Ground rules are important if you want to establish an effective group and a strong working relationship. The group should spend time at the beginning agreeing a number of ground rules, which outline how the group will operate. Some examples are:

- Confidentiality – what is said in the room stays in the room
- Be honest and open
- Listen to others
- Try not to interrupt
- In heated discussion, allow the chairperson to moderate and don't get personal!

The group can always re-visit these agreed ground rules and refer to them if any group member feels they are being ignored. It is very important at the outset that the group is facilitated to establish ground rules themselves, and that these are not imposed on them. Once these are agreed on it is useful to place them in a visible location for all future sessions.

## 3. Mission statements – developing a vision for a group

The mission of a group should be clearly outlined, and not merely be in people's heads. The purpose should be articulated and discussed at the initial meetings to give group members a sense of ownership. A mission should say, in one or two

paragraphs, who the group represents, what it does, where it does it, and why and how the group does it. This is then useful in establishing work objectives and planning for future work.

#### 4. Group meetings

How a group holds its meetings is core to the effectiveness of the group. Identify a purpose for the meeting, and give appropriate notice to all group members. Do not hold unnecessary meetings. Distribute an agenda before the meeting. At the meeting, establish start, stop and break times. Start promptly and end on time. Agree someone to chair the meeting, and someone to take notes and write them up. Do not allow certain people to dominate the discussion, or allow discussion to wander from the topic. At the end of the meeting, re-cap on decisions made during the meeting. Set deadlines for follow-up actions. Arrange the next meeting date and time. Act on decisions made.

#### 5. Analysing problems

Tree Diagrams<sup>53</sup> are visual tools for outlining and analysing problems. A tree-like diagram is presented on a large sheet of paper, with the main issue is represented by the trunk, and outcomes are shown as branches. Relevant factors, influences and causes of the problem are the tree's roots. The tree diagram can be used to help people to uncover and analyse the underlying causes of a particular problem. In seeking to address the problem, the causes of the problem need to be tackled.

#### 6. Creating an action plan

An action plan is a summary document that breaks down into steps what will be accomplished, by whom, how and when. It should be thorough, concise and remind participants of past decisions and goals that have been agreed on. Each step of the plan should clearly define:

- **What** – Name or short description of the action to be taken
- **Who** – Name(s) of individual(s) responsible for action and anyone else involved
- **When** – Deadline or projected completion date by which action is to be taken
- **How** – Identifies tasks and resources necessary for completing the action.

#### 7. Group & task maintenance

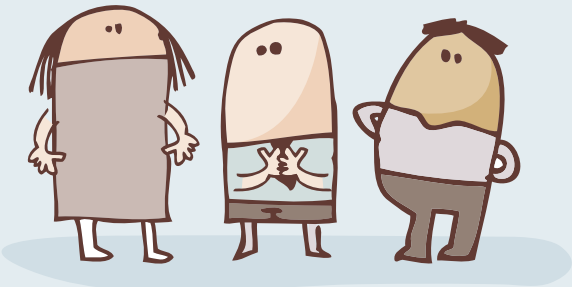
Good group dynamics rarely happen by accident, they need to be reviewed and worked on continuously. This is a role for the community worker. Encourage the group to develop open communication, listening skills, cultural awareness and sensitivity. Systems for review and evaluation and for dealing with conflicts are important to such group dynamics. Make sure you have procedures for communicating, checking the work is done, and ironing out problems (with tasks or people). Ensure you are all working towards the plan. You may want to set up sub-groups. Get everyone's phone numbers and email address and identify good meeting times and places.

## 3.5

## Support Sheet

## A sample leadership development course

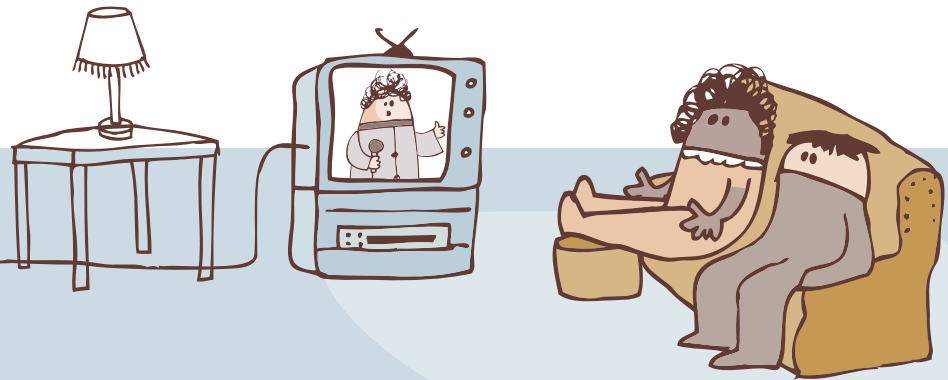
The full content of this leadership development course which includes reference to materials used in the development of the content is available on request from MRCI. Below is an outline of the main elements of each workshop.

Workshop Theme	Workshop Aim & Content
1. Introduction & Building an Analysis	
<p>It is essential to get the tone right from the beginning and to establish trust between individual participants and facilitators. It is important to get the message across that people will be active participants in their own learning, getting out of the course what they themselves put in. This is also the beginning of the group process, and an opportunity for participants to 'buy into' and commit to the course.</p> 	<p><b>Introduction</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participants introducing themselves to each other, and to the facilitators</li> <li>• Give people a clear idea about the course methodology and content</li> <li>• Establish trust and agreement within the group before getting started</li> <li>• For the group to agree ground rules for engagement with the course and group-work discussion, e.g. confidentiality and punctuality</li> </ul> <p><b>Starting to Build a Collective Analysis</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Place personal stories of migration within the context of Irish experience of inwards migration – look at processes that shape migration (for example globalisation and migration policy development at national and EU level)</li> </ul>

Workshop Theme	Workshop Aim & Content
2. The Political System and Decision-Making Structures in Ireland	
<p>Legislation, policies and procedures are developed by government, which impact on a daily basis on migrant workers and their families in Ireland. It is difficult to lobby for change and advocate for rights for migrant workers without having an understanding of how decisions are made in Ireland, and how the political system operates.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enable participants to share their existing knowledge and understanding of the political system in Ireland and identify the main elements and processes of decision-making</li> <li>• Provide accessible, concise and up-to-date information on the Irish political system – prepared input and presentation</li> <li>• Through group-work discussion and the use of a case study, develop a collective analysis and critique of how law is developed with an emphasis on:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– the personal (how law impacts on you),</li> <li>– stakeholder analysis (who do government and law-makers listen to?)</li> <li>– being politically active (methods of engaging with the political system)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
3 & 4. Campaigning for Change	
<p>Collective action for change is an opportunity to turn problems faced by migrant workers and their families into campaign issues, which can in turn create opportunities for active political participation and engagement with the political system. This group process can be unifying and energising. In taking an issue identified by the group, participants develop practical and analytical skills in the area of campaigning.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify an issue facing migrant workers and their families in Ireland</li> <li>• Working through the 5-Point Campaign Plan<sup>54</sup> over two days, develop participants' practical experience and insight into the stages of developing a campaign plan.</li> </ul> <p> See Support Sheet 3.7 for details of the 5-Point Campaign Plan.</p>

Workshop Theme	Workshop Aim & Content
<h3>5. Media Skills Development</h3> <p>The media has a powerful role to play in shaping public opinion about migrant workers in Irish society. Migration and its effects are increasingly discussed in the Irish media, sometimes leading to the stereotyping of migrant workers. Migrant workers have little control over how they are portrayed in the media, sometimes negatively, e.g. as potential social welfare fraudsters, and sometimes positively, e.g. as great contributors to our economic growth. Migrant workers speaking about their own experience and highlighting issues make powerful spokespersons. This requires an insight into how the media operates, as well as training on how to get your message across.</p>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify the various outlets for media in Ireland (print and electronic journalism), highlighting some of the key spaces where migration and related topics are regularly discussed</li> <li>• Discuss and analyse examples of newspaper articles on migration, developing a group analysis of how migrant workers are portrayed in Irish newspapers, and highlighting the positive and negative stereotypes that exist</li> <li>• Using relevant samples of live radio interviews on topics relevant to migration, participants actively listen and assess how well interviewees communicate their message, and how migrant workers were portrayed</li> <li>• Using different media techniques and focusing on the campaign issue selected, participants develop their own media skills in relation to getting their message across and appealing to the public on their campaign 'ask'</li> </ul>





## Workshop Theme

## Workshop Aim & Content

### 6. Residential Analysis Building – Power, Racism and Discrimination

Making the time and resources available for a residential session (overnight or weekend away) contributes very positively to the group process. The time away from individuals' every day working lives, in a new location, makes participants feel they are part of something unique and that they are valued. It also importantly creates an opportunity for the group to have fun and celebrate the ongoing work. A residential can be used to focus on any one aspect of a leadership programme. In this case, a day-and-a-half-long residential focused on broader issues of power, discrimination and racism.

- To focus attention on the concepts of difference and social exclusion, and how the two are interlinked (emphasis on gender, class, faith and sexuality)
- Acknowledge the assumptions we make about people, and how assumptions can feed into stereotypes
- Build an understanding of stereotypes and the ways in which society stereotypes oppressed groups
- Through experiential learning exercises, explore the issue of power, its use and misuse and the impact this can have on individuals and groups
- Develop an understanding of the cycle of discrimination and oppression
- Identify experiences of being discriminated against and the effects it has, including strategies for coping
- Explore and build understanding of the link, but also inherent differences, between prejudice, discrimination and racism


Workshop Theme	Workshop Aim & Content
7. Introduction to Community Work	
<p>Community work is concerned with, amongst other things, inequality, social exclusion and power. As an approach it is centrally concerned with collective action, participation and empowerment of communities experiencing marginalisation and exclusion (be these communities of interest, for example migrant workers, or geographical areas). A session on community work is a concrete way for the group to explore tangible and practical ways to challenge racism, inequality and discrimination as discussed in previous sessions, and importantly to reinforce the movement from individual concerns and experiences to a group analysis and collective action.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explore power and powerlessness from personal experience</li> <li>• Use an exploration of power to introduce the role of community work as an approach in addressing inequality and being concerned with power</li> <li>• Participants develop an understanding of the principles of the community work approach, and how community work differs from other ways of working with migrant workers and their families in Ireland (e.g. information provision, or charity model.)</li> <li>• In discussing inequality, participants will explore what equality means, and the different methodologies for contributing towards its creation'</li> </ul>
8. Evaluation, Closure and Celebration	
<p>Evaluation is an important ongoing element of organising a course such as this. Smaller evaluations can be carried out after workshops to establish what is going well for participants, what could be organised better and what people might like to see more/less of as regards content. An overall group and individual evaluation at the end of the course offers an opportunity for participants to reflect on what they have taken from the course, and for course organisers to get comprehensive feedback. It is also important to have an opportunity for closure with regard to the group process, and to celebrate the achievements of the group as well as the completion of the course</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Course facilitators provide an overview of course content</li> <li>• Locate the learning within broader work going on in the organisation and in groups, and how the course will contribute to future decision-making and leadership opportunities</li> <li>• Participants get an opportunity individually and in groups to share:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Their key learning from the course</li> <li>– What they found challenging or difficult</li> <li>– What they found most enjoyable</li> <li>– What they would have organised differently</li> <li>– What they would like to have seen more of</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Celebrate the end of the course, awarding participants with certificates of completion and achievement</li> </ul>

## 3.6

## Support Sheet

Supporting collective action for change –  
SMART analysis tool

SMART is a well-known and useful acronym for analysing and assessing potential actions. Use this checklist to 'SMART-test' your action. It is important to take the time to analyse and go through the action properly. Remember that when you change something in one area, it may have an impact on the other areas. This most often happens in relation to 'specific' and 'realistic'. Acknowledging what is realistic and unrealistic about the action will impact greatly on the specifics of the action, e.g. defining who you are targeting.

Name of Action/Objective	Checklist	
<b>Specific</b>	Are the action and objectives clear and well-defined?	
<b>Measurable</b>	Is your action measureable? If you cannot measure your action, you will not know if you have succeeded. You should be able to assess your progress in achieving your objectives. Remember that measurement can be qualitative as well as quantitative.	
<b>Action-oriented</b>	Have specific objectives and key actions been named?	
<b>Realistic</b>	Are you able to achieve your objectives? Do you have the resources needed to reach your objectives? Are your objectives realistic? Are there specific barriers, which will be insurmountable? Are you aiming too high?	
<b>Timed</b>	What is your time scale? Do you have specific time constraints or deadlines?	

## 3.7

## Support Sheet

Supporting collective action for change –  
5-Point Campaign Plan

**55** Bobo, K., Kendall, J., Max, S.,  
(2001) *Organizing For Social Change*  
Midwest Academy for Activists  
Seven Locks Press Third Edition

**56** McCamley, C., Oliver, Q. (2004)  
*Influencing policy: Training Pack*  
*A Companion to Working for Change*  
– A Guide to Influencing Policy  
Combat Poverty Agency  
[www.combatpoverty.ie](http://www.combatpoverty.ie)

The 5-Point Campaign Plan was developed for training purposes as part of MRCI's 2008 leadership course for migrant workers. The Plan is adapted from previous MRCI campaign templates (which focused on who, what, when, where and why), on the Midwest Academy Manual For Activists,<sup>55</sup> and a training pack published by Combat Poverty Agency as a companion to *Working for Change – A guide to influencing Policy*<sup>56</sup>

Campaigns are often organised in response to a particular problem arising in people's lives. As a result, many campaigns are very focused on action; "what can we do, let's organise a march, let's collect signatures". The planning, structure and strategy behind a campaign often comes after. The 5-Point Campaign Plan puts an emphasis on exploring elements of the problem and turning this problem into a clear campaign issue. It also allows groups to become clearer about who they are, who they represent, what change they really want to see happen and how it is possible to bring about this change.

**1. WHO**

The 'we' is very important in campaigning. In developing a response to a problem and a campaign plan it is very important to ask the question who are we, and who do we represent? This question relates to the process behind developing a campaign. In using a community work approach for example, you are concerned with the process for developing a campaign and not just the end result. It is important to ask questions such as, "Are leaders emerging and representing the issues themselves? Is this an agenda being pushed upon a community or group, or has it emerged from the community?"

**2. WHAT and WHY**

Before we can influence change, we need to identify what our issue is, and understand how it affects us and our community, in order to articulate this clearly. To influence is to convince others, who may not share our experience or know what we know, that they can do something to improve things. This is true whether we are asking Government to change policy, or simply asking a neighbour to sign a petition. Being able to explain the issue and how it could be changed for the better is key to influencing. This will ensure that your actions or campaign will be based on accurate information and analysis, and gather the widest support possible.<sup>57</sup>



58

Bobo, K., Kendall, J., Max, S.,  
(2001) *Organizing For Social Change*  
Midwest Academy for Activists  
Seven Locks Press Third Edition (p. 23)

### Choosing an issue<sup>58</sup>

Because campaigning for change is about winning progress on an issue, the first steps often involve forming an analysis of the problem and deciding what kind of solution to work towards. Some people have the luxury of choosing the problems on which they work. For others, the problem chooses them and can't be avoided no matter how long or difficult the effort required to change it. Either way the organisation and individuals must still define the solution to the problem. Many approaches can be taken to solving any problem, and the implications of each must be thought through carefully. It is also very important to decide how to frame the issue in a way that will gain the most support. The checklist below is an aid for evaluating issues. The recommendation is that before a group starts to choose from issues, the members are asked, "what are the criteria for choosing a good issue for us?" The process of choosing an issue will be made much easier, and it will also be a sounder choice. In choosing an issue, the group must ask itself if campaigning on this will:

1. Result in a real improvement in people's lives?
2. Give people a sense of their own power?
3. Alter the power relations?
4. Be worthwhile?
5. Be winnable?
6. Be widely felt?
7. Be deeply felt?
8. Be easy to understand?
9. Have a clear target?
10. Have a clear timeframe that works for you?
11. Be non-divisive?
12. Build leadership?
13. Set your organisation up for the next campaign?
14. Will require financial resources?
15. Raise money?
16. Be consistent with your values and vision?



### Getting to the core

It is important to start with the question, “what is the problem facing migrant workers and their families in this instance?” Members of the campaign group need to start by individually spelling out what this problem is, in their own words.<sup>59</sup>

### Developing our statement

Once the main problem has been identified, it is then necessary to develop a statement. The statement should offer a solution, or partial solution, to the problem identified, which allows it to become a campaign issue. The statement needs to be short, to the point and most importantly agreed on by the entire group. In developing a statement it is useful to ask: “is the statement clear? Is each element of the statement essential in order to state the problem clearly? Which elements are most persuasive in arguing for change?”<sup>60</sup>

### Identifying what we know already about this problem / issue

To convince people that change is needed we must use all the information that supports our case, and be able to deal with arguments against it. Our case can be made on the basis of our own experience, what we know has happened to others, reports or research, and the views of other experts or groups with knowledge and understanding of the issues. The more facts that we can assemble to back up our case, the better. If we play devil’s advocate we can also anticipate, and deal with, the arguments that may be used to oppose what we want to do. Drawing up a map or outline of what we know is a good way to begin to make the case, and to identify gaps or weaknesses. This can include the following:

- my own direct experience – it happened to me
- what I heard / saw happening to someone else
- statistics that tell us something about this issue
- views of ‘experts’ on the issue<sup>61</sup>

59

McCamley, C., Oliver, Q. (2004)  
Influencing policy: Training Pack A  
Companion to Working for Change  
– A Guide to Influencing Policy Combat  
Poverty Agency (p.11) [www.combatpoverty.ie](http://www.combatpoverty.ie)

60

Ibid (p.13)

61

Ibid (p.15)

### 3. To WHOM

Once we have identified what the issue/problem is and developed our statement on it, we then have to consider who can make a difference. Often the person encountered at the point where we experience the problem is not the person who can solve it (i.e. they are implementing government policy.) Having a sense of how the power system works in relation to an issue will help to pinpoint where the change should come from.



#### Getting to the power

Let us assume that the issue we are addressing requires a decision by a member of government or a senior official in a public body. Very few people have immediate access to that sort of power. We have to find out how to reach the person with power and who can open the doors on the way. This is the beginning of a plan of action defining who must be approached for help and support, and who the main target to be influenced is.



#### Who can make a difference?

In identifying as a group some of the people, institutions and government departments that may have power, it is then important to identify who amongst these can really make a difference. Ask who has the main power to change, and who are others with power who might support change.

### 4. HOW

There are various ways that an issue might be dealt with, and various ways to identify the strategy that will most likely bring about change. The strategy relates to the way in which the group goes about the business of change. This means thinking about different routes which might be successful, combined with the resources – people, expertise, money and so on – which will be necessary to do the work.



#### What are the options?

There are many ways to go about achieving the change we want and we can increase our chances of success by exploring the different ways it might come about. The temptation is often to choose the obvious path, or go the route of the strongest voice. Thinking through each option and identifying alternatives will help to ensure that the best route is chosen. We know the issue, we know whose mind or decision we need to change, and we know our preferred outcome.

62

Ibid (p.37)

So, how do we make it happen? Identify five or six different ways to use your influence and bring about the change you want.<sup>62</sup>

- direction action such as organising a march or protest
- collecting signature for a petition
- letter writing campaign
- media campaign

In considering each of these options and others it is important to think about what we have to do if we follow this approach? What resources do we need, what do we like about this approach and what would be difficult or possibly not work? It is important to consider then what is most likely to be effective and what is least likely to be effective. The campaign may end up using one option or indeed a combination of options as the basis for action. It is also important to consider resources: all campaigns require resources – people, time, money. Having a clear understanding of the resources that are available is vital to ensure that the campaign can be carried through successfully.



63

Ibid (P. 44)

### What will we do?<sup>63</sup>

Preparing for a project of this sort requires thought and careful planning, whether you wish to change the world or resolve a local problem. However, the time comes when a decision has to be made on what action will be taken. Once the options have been explored and the resources identified, you must choose the best strategy available.

Consider the following:

- Which issues are within your control?
- Which issues depend on those you work with and on getting a commitment from others?
- Which issues are outside of your control?

## 5. WHEN

The timeframe is very important to consider in organising a campaign.

A campaign should have a beginning, a middle and an end. You should have an idea of the approximate dates on which those points will fall. External factors will impact on this, such as what stage a piece of legislation is at, whether the Government appears to be pushing it through the legislative process rather quickly. The group must decide if it is prepared to campaign long-term, when this might take years, and ask itself if it has the resources and manpower to do so.



## Support Sheet

### Communicating your campaign issue effectively<sup>64</sup>

64

Adapted from media training provided by Frank Sharry, Director of America's Voice [www.americasvoiceonline.org](http://www.americasvoiceonline.org) as organised by Forum on Migration and Communications (FOMACS) [www.fomacs.org](http://www.fomacs.org) at which MRCI participated Dublin 2007

#### Who

'Who' refers to the main people who are delivering the message (this message is the campaign issue, e.g. implementing a bridging visa for undocumented migrant workers in Ireland who have become undocumented for reasons beyond their control). 'Who' means you, the campaign group, people affected by the issue (migrant workers and their families in Ireland), as well as possible unusual allies from across the political spectrum who may have a different impact on your audience or campaign targets (for example supportive employers), opinion leaders, policy makers and community leaders.

A key point is:

**YOU +  
HUMAN FACE +  
ALLIES + UNUSUAL ALLIES  
= VICTORY**

#### What

'What' refers to the message. This is most important bearing in mind what works is to firstly emphasise shared values, using facts and figures second. For example, communicating that undocumented migrant workers are hard working, law abiding men and women who contribute to the Irish economy and who want to regularise their legal status, like the undocumented Irish in America, so that they can visit their families and come out of the shadows. How the problem is framed is important, as it should offer a solution.

A key point is:

**TO PREPARE 3-4 MESSAGES  
AND STICK TO THESE**

### To Whom

‘Whom’ refers to the audience, remembering that public opinion regarding immigration ranges from conservative anti-immigrant, to liberal and pro-immigration. Importantly, however, the vast majority are more than likely in the middle, leaning to either side, when it comes to the question of immigration and rights for migrant workers in Ireland. Therefore it is important to speak to this larger group in the middle and not alienate them, remembering also that the “antis” tend to have more intensity than “pros”.

A key point is:

**SPEAK TO THE MIDDLE +  
HOLD BASE  
= WIN AGENDA**

### How

‘How’ refers to the vehicles through which the message is delivered, and can include conversations, speeches, debates, written materials, newspaper quotes, radio and television appearances or interviews, press conferences, fundraising pitches, meetings with policy makers and opinion leaders.

A key point is:

**IF YOU DON'T SPEAK UP –  
AND OFTEN –  
YOU WON'T BE HEARD!**

## 3.9

## Support Sheet

## Useful resources

**Guides to lobbying, influencing policy and the decision-making system in Ireland:**

- Airey, Siobhan (2006) *Communities, Voices and Change – A report on the policy work of CDP's, FRC's and Partnerships*, Combat Poverty Agency
- Harvey, Brian (2008) *Working for Change: A guide to influencing policy in Ireland*, Combat Poverty Agency [www.combatpoverty.ie](http://www.combatpoverty.ie)
- McCamley, C., Oliver, Q (2004) *Influencing policy: Training Pack. A companion to Working for Change – A guide to influencing policy*, Combat Poverty Agency [www.combatpoverty.ie](http://www.combatpoverty.ie)
- *Houses of the Oireachtas: Information DVD*. Produced by Windmill lane corporate communications. Available from Public Relations Office, Leinster House, Dublin 2. [www.oireachtas.ie](http://www.oireachtas.ie)
- *Houses of the Oireachtas: Information Pack*. Selection of information handouts providing a short history of Leinster House and guide to the activities and structures of the Houses of the Oireachtas [www.oireachtas.ie](http://www.oireachtas.ie)
- Community Workers Co-Operative *Strengthening Our Voice: A guide for community sector participation in local decision-making* [www.cwc.ie](http://www.cwc.ie)

### Useful resources for empowerment and collective action:

- Bobo, K., Kendall, J., Max, S. (2001) *Organising for Social Change: Midwest Academy Manual For Activists*, Seven Locks Press
- Hope, Anne and Timmel, Sally (1999) *Training for Transformation A Handbook for Community Workers Book 1 – Book 4*, ITDG Publishing
- Hyunhye Cho, Eunice et al (2004) *BRIDGE Building a Race and Immigration Dialogue in the Global Economy – A popular education resource for immigrant and refugee community organizers*, National Network for Immigrant and Refugee Rights
- Minieri, J., Getsos, P. (2007) *Tools for Radical Democracy: How to organise for power in your community*, The Chardon Press Series. John Wiley & Sons, Inc
- Pretty, Jules N et al (1995) *A Trainer's Guide for Participatory Learning and Action, IIED Participatory Methodology Series*. International Institute for Environment and Development, London
- Sheehy, M., Naughton, F, O'Regan, C. (2007) *Partners Intercultural Companion to Training for Transformation – Exercises Processes, Resources and Reflections for Intercultural Work*, Partners Training for Transformation

## References

- Bobo, K., Kendall, J., Max, S. (2001) *Organising for Social Change, Midwest Academy Manual For Activists* Seven Locks Press
- Central Statistics Office (2006) *Irish Census 2006 Non-Irish Nationals Living in Ireland*
- Changing Ireland (2008) – The National Magazine of the Community Development Programme ‘8 ways to promote integration through community development’ Article from Issue 26, The Migrants Issue
- Community Workers Co-operative *Tools for Change – A Community Work Resource*
- Hyunhye Cho, Eunice et al (2004) *BRIDGE Building a Race and Immigration Dialogue in the Global Economy – A popular education resource for immigrant and refugee community organizers*, National Network for Immigrant and Refugee Rights
- Lynam, Siobhan (2008) *A Strategy Guide for Community Development Projects, Family Resource Centres, and Partnerships*. Published by NCCRI and Pobal to support the implementation of the National Action Plan Against Racism and Towards EU Year of Intercultural Dialogue.
- McCamley, C., Oliver, Q. (2004) *Influencing policy: Training Pack A Companion to Working for Change – A Guide to Influencing Policy* Combat Poverty Agency
- Migrant Rights Centre Ireland (2008) Position Statement *Ending the Race to the Bottom – Changing the balance for Vulnerable Migrant Workers in Ireland*
- Migrant Rights Centre Ireland (2007) *Life in the shadows – An exploration of irregular migration in Ireland*
- Minieri, J., Getsos., P. (2007) *Tools for Radical Democracy How to Organise For Power in Your Community*, John Wiley & Sons, Inc
- MRCI and NCCRI (2007) *Challenging Myths and Misinformation about migrant workers and their families in Ireland*
- NCCRI (2006) *How public Authorities Provide Service's to Minority Ethnic Groups*, Emerging Findings Discussion Paper
- North West Inner City Network (2008) *Opening Doors – The Intercultural Toolkit for Service Providers in the North West Inner City*
- O'Connell, Philip J., McGinnity, Frances (2008). *Immigrants at Work: Ethnicity and Nationality in the Irish Labour Market*, The Equality Authority and The Economic and Social. Research Institute, Dublin
- Sheehy, M., Naughton, F., O'Regan, C. (2007) *Partners Intercultural Companion to Training for Transformation Partners Training for Transformation*
- Sidney, T. (1998) *Power in Movement: Social Movements and Contentious Politics*. Cambridge University Press, Second Edition
- Towards Standards Ad Hoc Group (2008). *Towards Standards For Quality Community Work An All Ireland Statement of Values, Principles And Work Standards*. Community Workers Cooperative





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Oifig an Aire d'Imeachtha  
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