

INTERCULTURAL NEWS

Briefing Bulletin of Donegal Intercultural Platform

Summer 2018



Living in Donegal - What Migrants say

By Nchedo Obi Igweilo

County Donegal, like other counties that lie along Irish Wild Atlantic Way, possesses stunning scenery that has continuously been etched in my mind from visits I've made to the North West over the years; it beckoned a return to settle in this county that is rural rather than the urban environment.



It drew me in, with its roads meandering across green carpeted fields, hills and valleys, strewn with lakes, reminding me of my own green homeland in Nigeria, and with its eco-friendly beaches that clean-beach-seekers and barefoot beach walkers, like me, can explore its white sands and crystal clear seas. Apart from the allure of its landscapes, Donegal is a border county with Northern Ireland. I had not expected the extent this influences social-cultural, political and economic lives of the county and the easy way daily border-crossers move back and forth for work.

Relatively, the county has small but vibrant migrants' communities. As a newly arrived, I wanted to find out what migrants think of living in Donegal. And here are comments that reflect general conversations I have had over recent months:

Denis (Italian) who arrived Donegal in 2017 says Donegal possesses "fabulous [natural] beauties, unspoiled tradition, and village lives".

He believes Donegal offers him a sense of belonging and is a better place to improve his English. A lack of good means of transport he sees as a setback to the county.



Jessica (Italian) compared the good nature of the Donegal people to those of Sardinians.

Herself and **Marja** (Afghan) hope the welcoming nature of the Donegal people will continue and suggested a need for improvement in towns and villages transport connection.

Nancy (Egyptian) who has left Donegal for Waterford, as a result of her job offered a valedictory message to the Donegal. For her Donegal was an epitome of Irish salubrious nature-with smile, tolerance and generosity; and place that she would always belong to.

Foreign Mentors Group (St Eunan's)

A group of Mentors was formed in St Eunan's College in Letterkenny under the supervision of their E.L. Teacher Ms. Niamh Haggan. This group was founded so students could help mentor new entrants coming into the school, help them make new friends or help with language difficulties. We looked at the new Syrian Families coming to Donegal as refugees and thought why not start with them as they would have language difficulties and will know no one when they join school. The mentors come from different parts of the world and have the ability and commitment to help other students. The group was formed under the initiative of DIP Co-chair Billy Banda and Donegal Youth Service worker Frankie Mc Greevey. The first group has done their Level 2 OCN accredited course and the second lot starts again in September. They hope to help in the August welcome events as well.

Working for Interculturalism, Equality & Human Rights

FACING UP TO RACISM AND DISCRIMINATION

Before we talk about racism it is fundamental to connect with the declaration of Human Rights key principles of the declaration include 'all human beings been born free and equal in dignity and rights, being entitled to all the rights and freedoms of the declaration without distinction and being equal before the law without discrimination.' These key principles are an aspirational statement however they seek to help create a better world for all. In the Irish context, human rights are protected under various legislation pieces including, but not limited to, the Employment Equality Act 1998-2011, Equal Statuses Acts 2000-2011 and the newest one being the Public Sector Duty 2014.

When we hear the term 'Racism' or 'Discrimination' can we really understand its complexities and the realities? The fear is these words get lost in the everyday and the majority of society is too disconnected to really hear and connect with these words. The reality is racism is alive and breathing in our communities. So what is racism? Racism is treating someone unfairly or differently based on race, colour, descent or national or ethnic origin. According to the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination:

'The term 'racial discrimination' shall mean any distinction, exclusion, restriction, or preference based on race, colour, descent, or national or ethnic origin that 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'.

Ireland has become an increasingly diverse society. 2016 Central Statistics Office figures show that overall Ireland's non-Irish national population accounts for 535,475 while there are 30,987 Irish Travellers enumerated. Racism is a reality for Traveller, Roma, Migrants, Black and other Ethnic Minorities living in Ireland and is a barrier for real inclusion and interculturalism. With this barrier it can limit opportunities for building a connected society based on mutual respect and equality. Donegal Travellers Project and Donegal Intercultural Platform has worked for years and is still working to promote inclusion and combat racism. A number of studies including papers and research from the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission and ENAR Ireland indicate that racism and discrimination towards ethnic minorities and migrants is a persistent problem in Ireland. There is an initiative called iReport which is a tool to report racist incidents. It enables people who experience or witness racism and/or those supporting them to do something about it and break the silence. Here at DTP and DIP we encourage anyone who has experienced racism or discrimination to come break the silence and report racism so that together we can break down the barriers of exclusion and promote equality for all. After all we are all different, but we are equal.

SOOC project supporting parents - My personal learning experience

From my own experience at the Donegal Intercultural Platform (DIP) is that no one is left behind, Shaping Ourselves and Our Children at (SOOC) programme was suggested to me by the DIP. My learning experience with Shape Ourselves and Our Children at (SOOC) programme was a wonderful interactive informative learning experience. It was short but powerful. We have learnt about:

- * Child development. * Parenting Styles. * The role of community in managing child behaviour
- * Child self-esteem in the Context of social and cultural diversity. * How to build a child's self-esteem.
- * Family community and social relationship. I could say that this experience as an instance of purposeful thoughts. It is encouraging for critical thinking. What I learnt is the learning itself not only about a grade or certificate, but also because it helps me to know how to connect and understand my community.

Thanks to all the people who make this happen.

By **Thoiba Ahmed**

Thoiba along with two other Platform members has undertaken training and has been selected to facilitate to forthcoming Shaping Ourselves and Our Children parental support and diversity project. For more information on SOOC go to www.lifestartfoundation.org/programmes-services/shaping-ourselves-and-our-children Or call the coordinator, Mary Holmes on 0872107496



This bulletin is produced by Donegal Intercultural Platform

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People in Donegal working towards Interculturalism, Equality and Human Rights





Recipe Recommendation Pakistan, India & Bangladesh

Chicken Jalfrezi

Jalfrezi is a type of curry which involves frying marinated pieces of meat like chicken, beef, fish and vegetables in oil and spices to produce a dry thick sauce. As the dish includes green chillies gives spicy taste to the dish. Other main ingredients include bell pepper, onion & tomato.

Origin Of Jalfrezi:

Jalfrezi recipes originally appeared in cookbooks of The British Raj as a way of using up left overs by frying them in lots of chilli and onion.

Jalfrezi means spicy food in Urdu and in Persian it means suitable for a diet. Others suggest it means Twice Fried!

Recipe Of Jalfrezi:

Preparation time 40-50 minutes - Serves 5-6 people

Ingredients:

- Chicken (cut into strips) ½ kg/1lb
- Oil 2 tbsp
- Sliced onion 2 large
- 2 Green or red peppers (cut into strips)
- Garlic paste
- 2 Chopped tomatoes
- Butter 3 tbsp
- Red chilli powder 1-1/4 tbsp
- Garam masala 1-1/2 tbsp
- Tomato ketchup 3 tbsp
- Salt to taste
- Chopped 2 inch piece of ginger
- Fresh coriander leaves

Instruction For Cooking:

1. Heat oil and deep-fry the onions till brown in colour. Drain on an absorbent paper & set aside to cool. Grind it to a fine paste.
2. Heat two tablespoons oil. Add pepper strips and fry quickly do not let colour change. Remove and set aside on absorbent paper.
3. Add garlic paste to the same oil & sauté for half a minute. Add tomatoes & cook till the tomatoes gets cooked. Remove and set it aside.
4. Heat butter in another pan, add chicken strips and keep stirring continuously till golden brown in colour. Add red chilli powder, garam masala powder, tomato ketchup, salt, mix well. Cover & cook 35 mins.
5. Add fried onion paste, ginger and capsicum and sauté. Add the tomato-garlic mixture and mix well and cook further.
6. Remove and serve hot garnished with coriander leaves and naan chapati or paratha.

In a survey in 2011 Jalfrezi was rated the most popular dish in UK Pakistani and Indian restaurants.

DARE to Lead Change-a cross border cultural, ethnic understanding programme

The Platform are involved in this cross border Diversity and interculturalism project led by our colleagues in Bryson Intercultural. It is funded under the PEACE IV programme in Northern Ireland. It involves ordinary people from all walks of life and all ethnic backgrounds getting together to challenge what might separate us and explore dialogue and understanding. The next step will be an Intercultural Interest Forum in Strabane on 17th August. If you are interested in taking part contact us at 0860841433 or email us at donegalip@gmail.com. In the autumn the project proposes to bring an accredited course called **Stepping Into Diversity - An Introduction to Good Relations and Civic Leadership**. This will be free of charge and based in Letterkenny. It is an Open College Network Level 2 course (equivalent to QQI level 4 minor award). We will organise an information workshop for all interested people in mid-September so let us know if you would like to come along and find out more.

For more information contact us at the above numbers and addresses.

Join us in the struggle for an Intercultural Ireland

The Intercultural Platform is committed to helping establish a more inclusive, welcoming and anti-racist society. We are a voluntary Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO) that welcomes people who are interested in building respect, recognition and equality in Donegal and in promoting Human Rights & opposing discrimination and racism nationally.

Representing the Priorities for Minorities across Donegal...

We are widely recognised by minority communities and state agencies as the representative forum for intercultural inclusion and we have representatives on many community, health and social inclusion bodies. Join now! Text 0860841433; Find us on Facebook.



They stole my heart more than they would ever know

The personal statement of Nancy Elaraby, from Port Said, Egypt who just recently moved to Waterford after 2 years living in Letterkenny.

"They say that alienation brings us closer to people. Sometimes that closeness reminds us how much we love each other. Sometimes it reminds us that we drive each other crazy, as family often does. And yes I found a family and a second home in Ireland with the amazing people of Donegal.

I hold for them the deepest appreciation for the gifts they've given me. Some gifts are more immediately obvious than others—the type that come with praise, affection, and genuine esteem. Others

push us, stretch us, test us, and make us wonder if there's anything to be grateful for at all and I am grateful for the past three years I spent in Donegal.

When you hear thousand "hello" with smiles from people that you don't even know, then you are in Donegal. When you are given the way to pass with car or on foot with patience and smile then you are in Donegal.

You do see a look of curiosity in their eyes about what you wear or where you came from but still treated with respect, equality and friendliness.

When the people are confident enough and kind enough to tell you that "your make up is lovely, your accent is beautiful or you look nice today" with neither jealousy nor hesitation then you are in Donegal. When it is common to strike up a conversation with a complete stranger that could last for over an hour, believe me that is an everyday occurrence in the amazing county Donegal.

They found a way to say "thank you" for giving them the way while driving even when they are stuck in their cars by lighting up the hazard light and the car behind will understand the thank you sign and beep back. Don't be surprised to stand in a queue and the mayor is waiting for his turn after you to fill up his dish with no guards or convoy of hundred armoured land cruiser to protect him from his own people.

Once I was in a taxi with an old driver, I remembered after I arrived to my destination that I had forgotten my phone at home. I apologized to him to take me home again, we went back home then again to the place where I was supposed to meet my friends and I was surprised that the driver refused to take triple the money for the three rides instead he took only 5 euros, greeted me with a smile and said: "it's ok, it wasn't actually a long ride" that's beside offering me his phone to talk to my friend, I thanked him with a smile, completed my way and now I still remember that gentle Donegal man although it's two years old story.

They are known for their hospitality, tolerance and generosity. I always had a confidence problem, I hated public speaking all my life until I was encouraged and pushed out of my comfort zone to do what I feared the most and yes I succeeded here in Ireland. Certain relationships are more challenging than others, but through each we have an opportunity to grow and help others do the same. Every relationship teaches us something about loving, trusting, forgiving, setting boundaries, taking care of ourselves, and taking care of each other. I've learned a lot on a personal and professional level so this is a vote of thanks to each and every person who's helped me to be who I am today." #Donegal_people_are_in_my_heart #will_always_be_back

Please welcome Joleen Kuyper to the DTP team!

Joleen has just started with DTP this summer and she is the new Community Development & Advocacy Worker and she will be working with the Roma Community Monday and Tuesdays 9-5:30pm and Wednesday and Thursdays 9.30-1pm. Joleen is looking forward to working with and for the Roma Community in Donegal as part of the staff team at Donegal Travellers Project. Welcome Joleen!



Chicken Jalfrezi, Pilaf Rice & Cucumber Raita (image Wikipedia)



Celebrating hard work English conversation workshops

The Donegal Intercultural Platform helps organise free English conversation classes every week at Letterkenny library between 10.30am and 12.30. We finished up for the summer break and has a very special celebration along with the new Mayor of Letterkenny & Milford Municipal District - Cllr. Ian McGarvey. It was a wonderful day and certificates were given to both the volunteer tutors and the students. We are back in the Library from 12th September, so we hope to see you there. We are aiming to expand this project and need more volunteer helpers. If you would like to volunteer as a tutor call/text 0860841433 or email donegalip@gmail.com

We all have the right to vote in the local elections

The Intercultural Platform is undertaking a campaign to get as many members of Black and Minority Ethnic Communities to register in good time for the next round of Local Government Elections, due in May 2019. There are very many people who do not know they have the right vote here, and anyone resident here with an address and over 18 can exercise that right. There are a number of conditions for who can vote in which election, from Presidential elections to referenda, general election and local elections and we will explain them here.

The right to vote is as follows:

- Irish citizens may vote at every election and referendum;
- British citizens may vote at Dáil elections, European elections and local elections;
- Other European Union (EU) citizens may vote at European and local elections
- Non-EU citizens may vote at local elections only.

We will be meeting with religious and community leaders in all the minority communities in Donegal over the next few months to promote the right to vote and the right to be heard and listened to by elected representatives and the local authorities. We aim to run a campaign of voter registration and information and we need your help to bring this to people all over Donegal. We recently hosted a very successful meeting on voting rights with Joe O'Brien (Immigrant Council of Ireland) as guest speaker, and he has offered to help with this campaign over the coming 4 or 5 months. Contact us to get involved!