

Report on 'Exploring Interculturalism' One-day Event May 14th 2016 at the Margaret Aylward Centre, Glasnevin

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1. Summary and introduction

On May 14th 2016 forty-seven people met at the Margaret Aylward Centre in Glasnevin, Dublin, to begin conversations on 'Exploring Interculturalism'. The workshop marked a new step for the Little Sisters of the Assumption (LSA) and their interest in interculturalism. As their first event on the topic, it is important to document the learnings and the success. This Report therefore presents an overview of the content and participant responses to the workshop.

Beginning with a brief background to the theme and the inspiration for the event, this Report then introduces the workshop and the speakers, and addresses the energy and commitment very much present among participants on the day. The contribution of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church Choir is highlighted as having been a bright and lively start to the day.

The Report provides an outline of each of the six spirited presentations. The first, addressing interculturalism in care homes and research conducted among staff and residents, offered a look at some of the positive and negative outcomes of an intercultural environment. The second focused on the causes of migration and the challenges and opportunities facing both migrant and host communities. In the third presentation we looked at understandings and experiences of stereotyping and discrimination.

The fourth presentation provided an insight into one woman's experience of Direct Provision (DP) and how the poor treatment and denial of rights of DP residents has sparked her own work as an activist. Presentation five highlighted the difficulties and benefits of a multicultural environment in care homes and the necessity for cultural understanding between residents and staff. Presentation six was a review of what culture is, what it means to us, and some of the differences between cultures.

Each presentation outline is accompanied by a range of group discussion points that arose. The mood of the group and genuine concern for issues discussed are portrayed in these discussion points from restrictions on asylum seekers in Ireland to traditional stereotyping, and from the absence of a 'hate crimes' law in Ireland to the agreed need for awareness-raising around such issues.

We read in detail of Ireen's story as generously shared on the day, a story of arrival in an unknown land and the consequent deep friendships unearthed.

The interest in the event and its overall success are evident in the considered and positive reflections from participants. The event was reported as being informative and revealing, challenging and invigorating, positive and inspiring. The enthusiastic sharing of experiences contributed to a relaxed and engaging atmosphere. A small but key list of suggested actions is presented in the Report, from lobbying to volunteering, and finally some colourful photos offer a glimpse of the gathering.

2. Background

Core to the mission of the Little Sisters of the Assumption (LSA) is to address issues of injustice and discrimination and to actively promote justice, equality and peace for all. The LSA Sisters work with individuals, families and communities who experience poverty. They develop their own skills and abilities through this work and in turn assist others on the journey of life.

Within the Congregation the work of the Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation group (JPIC) is a high priority. The work of the group is central to the LSA mission and an integral part of the International JPIC Commission with several branches throughout the territories of the Congregation. The Anglo Celtic Territory JPIC group organised the 'Exploring Interculturalism' workshop on May 14th as part of their educational program for themselves and the wider community. As Sisters and JPIC members, there is a need to understand the cultural shifts in Ireland and how they affect the Congregation's responses and attitudes to cultural issues as well as the opportunities they present.

The workshop was envisioned as an opportunity for native born and foreign born to share their reflections on ways to create an environment that is inclusive of different cultural and social backgrounds, and to gain an appreciation of the richness of an integrated society.

Having attended the launch of the Age Action Intercultural Care Home Project Report, which included presentations from Ann Moroney, the project coordinator, and from a number of people who had been involved with the project, a number of Sisters agreed that the content was particularly relevant to the LSA communities as ageing communities. With several Sisters in nursing homes, the findings of the Age Action Report resonated with attendees at the launch. The thinking was that the Report would help the Sisters to be more sensitive to the changing demographics of the staffing at care facilities; no longer staffed exclusively by the 'traditional Irish nurse' but by a diverse staffing from a range of different cultural backgrounds. This change has created a challenge (and opportunity) for some older people, including LSA Sisters, at a vulnerable time in their lives, since they may never have interacted in such a close, personal way with a person from another culture. An opportunity therefore presented itself to organise a workshop on Interculturalism and to create awareness and encourage appreciation of cultural difference.

Ann Moroney had been invited to meet with the LSA because of her involvement in the research with nursing homes. Ann's pioneering work with migrants in Dublin over many years facilitated easy access to contributors for the workshop. Indeed, in order to offer a valuable workshop, a diversity of contributors and participants was essential. This diversity is critical to intercultural training and contributed greatly to the success of the day.

3. Exploring Interculturalism' One-day Workshop

Invitations were circulated to the 'Exploring Interculturalism' workshop which took place on May 14th 2016 at the Margaret Aylward Centre, in the grounds of the Holy Faith Convent, Glasnevin, Dublin 11.

Organised by the Little Sisters of the Assumption (LSA), their invitation outlined that 'together with our friends and co-workers, we wish as Sisters to grow in our understanding of Interculturalism. We see this as important in our changing society and we wish to contribute to creating an environment that is inclusive and appreciative of different cultural and social backgrounds.'

In addition the invitation highlighted the key reference to the issue from the LSA Chapter Document of 2005:

'Search for ways to overcome the barriers between peoples, cultures and religions in a movement of openness, dialogue and faith ... setting up meetings with those who live the conditions of immigration, of uprooting ...'

Workshop contributors:

Ann Moroney, from Ireland, was the Project Coordinator for the Age Action Intercultural Care Home Project Report.

Archanabai Sharadabai, from India, is a Senior Nurse in a residential care home in Dublin.

Ellie Kisyombe, from Malawi, is a resident in a Direct Provision Centre in Ireland for the past six and a half years. She is an activist advocating for an end to Direct Provision.

In all there were forty-seven attendees (Appendix A) on the day with people from India, Ethiopia, Malawi, Philippines, England, Indonesia, Zimbabwe, Taiwan, and Ireland. The collective spirit gathered momentum throughout the day and there was an energy and enthusiasm for conversation and openness; openness to sharing and openness to learning. The numerous requests at the end of the day for more similar events were evidence of people's positive experience that day and their commitment to nurturing Interculturalism.

The event was organised by the JPIC Anglo Celtic Commission of the Little Sisters of the Assumption. The members of the Commission are Lena Deevy, Nellie Curtin, Siobhan Ryan, Salome Mbugua Henry, Bride Counihan and Sally Fayroddy.

Appreciation goes to the Ethiopian Orthodox Church Choir, Ann Moroney, Ellie Kisyombe, Archanabai Sharadabai, Lillian O'Brien and the staff of the Margaret Aylward Centre, and all who attended and contributed towards the day.

4. Ethiopian Orthodox Church Choir

Nine members, including three children, of the choir of the Debrewerk Mariam Ethiopian Orthodox Church opened the event with their lively performance of a number of songs. Their rhythmic drumbeats, singing and chanting, together with their rich blue choir costumes brightened up the indoors on a sunny morning. The songs performed were:

- Exhabier Yemeskan - Thanks be to God for this day, this hour, this minute, this special occasion;
- Mariam Fidel - Mary is the fidel ('fidel' literally meaning the Ethiopian alphabet) and we can learn from her about Jesus;
- Medani Alem Adanen - Jesus saves us as he has promised.

Thereafter we were treated to a very special performance by the children. The lingering buzz in the room after the choir's overall performance was testament to the energy and generosity of the choir in sharing their music with the gathering.

The Ethiopian Orthodox Church in Dublin is five years old and there are approximately twenty-five members in the full choir. The choir meets for Mass each week at the Lantern Centre on Synge St., Dublin 8.

5. Story of our Names

We were invited to sit in groups and share the stories of our names, where they came from, what they mean and why we were given them. Stories relayed included those of traditional and family names repeated across generations; how spellings of names had subtly changed over generations; of religious-based names such as names of saints and those featured in the bible; and names hailing from colonial experiences such as Spanish names used in the Philippines.

6. Workshop Content

Presentation One:

Background to the Age Action 'Interculturalism in Residential Care Project' – Ann Moroney

Ann Moroney presented the findings of the Age Action Needs Assessment, a piece of research into workers experiences in care homes.

Highlighting the benefits of multicultural staff teams research respondents had spoken of an enriched environment, of learning from each other, and of broadening the world of residents.

While things have improved in care homes, overall respondents felt that there remains a need to address significant issues such as discrimination and communication barriers. The research showed that skin colour and communication difficulties such as language and accent barriers have a negative impact on relationships between staff and residents.

Experiences of discrimination were reported with 27 of 60 respondents having experienced some form of discrimination and 38 had witnessed a colleague being discriminated against.

'People can put you down and you can lose confidence with everything'
(Respondent)

Ann discussed the negative impact of discrimination on staff, the knock-on impact on Irish staff, and the negative impression given to relatives. While some respondents had reported discriminatory incidents to management, discriminatory behaviour was often 'excused' on the basis that it was a result of dementia.

Ann summarised the key suggestions for improvement from respondents which included the need for intercultural training; acknowledging challenges and 'opening up conversation'; promotion of the vital role of cultures in the care environment; staff meetings and a space to 'name it'; more frequent cultural programs such as 'family days' and 'culture days' with sharing of food, music, dress and traditions.

Group discussion points included:

- Immigrants often being asked 'where are you from?', 'are you on holiday here?' etc., questions often considered by the Irish as making 'small talk'. Such questions however can be taken more seriously by other nationalities and may seem intrusive and discriminatory.
- While people may look like they have come from another country, they may in fact have been born in Ireland, and may have little or no experience of the country of their parents.

Presentation Two:

Migration in a world and in an Irish context – Ann Moroney

We were presented with the staggering figure that 3% of the world's population (192m people) live outside their place of birth. The many causes of migration were discussed from globalisation and economic inequalities to civil war along with some challenges and opportunities that apply to all involved in migration – both sending and receiving countries, and migrants and their families. An example challenge is the threat of global migration to comfortable western lifestyles. An example opportunity comes in the form of remittances: migrant's earnings that are sent back to family in their country of origin.

In the 2006 census of Ireland, 420,000 non-Irish nationals from 190 countries were recorded as living in Ireland. Highlighting that Ireland is not unfamiliar with emigration itself, Ann reported that currently 800,000 Irish-born people live outside of Ireland with at least 50,000 undocumented Irish migrant workers in the US. 2014 saw 52,700 people immigrate to Ireland while 89,000 emigrated in the same year.

The range of terms used for migrants was clarified, from economic migrants to asylum seekers and refugees. Ann pointed out the long and arduous process of 'burden of proof' for asylum seekers who, having often suffered extensively before arriving in Ireland, must prove their eligibility for refugee status.

Group discussion points included:

- The suggestion that considerably more than 3% of the world's population lives outside their country.
- The recent remark from Pope Francis that he dreamed of a Europe in which 'Being a migrant is not a crime'.
- As with the Irish undocumented in the US, there are considerable numbers of undocumented immigrants in Ireland.
- We were reminded of the large number of migrants recruited in Ireland during the boom and that the Irish government had sent representatives overseas to recruit for the Irish jobs market. Subsequently many recruited migrants lost their jobs during the recession including many Chinese, Bangladeshis, and Pakistanis.
- Asylum seekers are denied the right to work in only two countries in Europe, Ireland and Lithuania. Asylum seekers in Ireland are also not entitled to education beyond second level and their qualifications from home are most often not recognised in the labour market.

Presentation Three:

Understanding prejudice, discrimination, racism – Ann Moroney

We looked first at stereo-typing, how it is a simplistic way to label people and the definition from sociology that stereo-typing is 'perpetuating a simplistic image of a category of person, institution, or culture.' We use stereotypes based on what we know, what we *think* we know and on how far people are from our own experience. Ann added that stereo-typing is most often

negative, based on misinformation, perpetuated through jokes and often considered discriminatory.

We were asked to recall a time we experienced discrimination and/or prejudice and to share the experience within small groups. Four key questions were posed to aid our reflections: What feelings did you experience? On what ground was it? How did it make you feel? What would you have liked to happen? Experiences shared included religion-based discrimination, discrimination on the grounds of where one comes from and discrimination based on colour.

Group discussion points included:

- Examples of common stereotyping such as Irish people in England being considered drunkards and leprechauns, and Nigerian people in Ireland being considered dodgy and untrustworthy.
- It is anticipated that, in time, Ireland will become accustomed to interculturalism. The UK was given as an example where people don't ask 'where are you from?' since, for generations, people of different colour and ethnicity have lived there; interculturalism has become the norm in the UK.
- The nine forms of discrimination, contained in Irish equality legislation, are considered gender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, ethnicity, age, disability and membership of the travelling community.
- The absence of a law in Ireland regarding 'hate crimes' and ongoing calls for such legislation.

Presentation Four:

Life in Direct Provision – Ellie Kisyombe

From Malawi, Ellie Kisyombe has been in the asylum process in Ireland for almost six years now. After being in this system for many years Ellie found a coping mechanism in becoming a campaigner and advocate for an end to Direct Provision (DP). Ellie has spent the last year volunteering with the Irish Refugee Council working on the campaign to end Direct Provision and was a key participant in public outreach and awareness raising activities. She is a regular spokesperson in the media relating to issues that affect Ireland's asylum seeking and refugee community.

Ellie told us of how she has learned to convert the pain of living in DP into a coping mechanism saying that one can come out fighting in a positive way, as an activist. While Ellie does not yet have asylum status in Ireland, she shared that she originally came for safety and now calls Ireland 'home'.

In reference to DP services, she relayed that residents have no rights to do anything; that they are required to share rooms with people from other cultures, other religions; that they have no privacy in which to try to understand their own struggle and themselves; that it is like being in prison with nothing to do - no study, no work, no cooking. Rules re imposed and residents are careful not to breach them due to the fear of being moved or even of deportation.

Ellie posed the question: what kind of leaders is the Irish government producing by keeping children in DP, by treating them badly? There are approximately 2,000 children in DP and Ellie expressed

the concern that, since most will remain in Ireland and eventually join mainstream Irish society, many may rebel.

It seems the Irish government has chosen to segregate people, 'to dehumanise people' while the deep need is there for people to feel welcomed instead. She added that 'we are all gifted so we can do something', suggesting that we can give people food, and simply make them feel welcome and comfortable. 'We can choose to change the system' and, suggesting that if everyone can do a bit of work with people in DP, Ellie believes we can make a space for everyone.

Ellie invited everyone to attend an upcoming (June 2016) pop-up restaurant by the 'Our Table' initiative where asylum seekers, who are otherwise denied access to cooking facilities, take the opportunity to cook food for the public.

Group discussion points included:

- Clarification around children born in Ireland to refugee parents: the children are no longer automatically entitled to Irish citizenship. If one parent is Irish the family must formally apply for Irish citizenship for the child.
- The need for greater awareness-raising around the issue of DP.

Presentation Five:

Providing care in a multicultural environment – Archanabai Sharadabai

Archanabai Sharadabai is from Bangalore in India. She studied in the Government College of Nursing in Bangalore and has worked as a Clinical Nurse Manager in Beaumont Hospital in Dublin since 2005.

After a brief outline of her own experience of coming to Ireland and starting work here as a nurse in a care home, Archana addressed the diversity of cultures among people working in care homes today in Ireland. 'Care' encompasses physical, psychological, social and spiritual needs and Archana relayed that if care staff are unaware of the social and spiritual background of residents, it is difficult to care for them. It is important to know aspects of people's lives such as religion and culture in order to create care plans and to give better person-centred care without misunderstandings.

Cultural competency is necessary to provide high quality care, for example knowing the language and knowing cultural practices around birthdays, deaths etc. Archana highlighted that cultural competency is important for residents and their relatives, and for staff resulting in job satisfaction and higher staff retention.

The introduction of 'cultural days' during which people share foods, spices, crafts, art, traditional dress etc. has helped to create an awareness of the diversity of cultures within Archana's workplace. She concluded with the words that 'life never ends' adding that, while palliative care is care at the end of one's life, 'it is still life.'

Group discussion points included:

- The need for intercultural training throughout care homes and other services across Ireland with the suggestion of providing even one hour about Irish culture during induction training for migrant care workers.

Presentation Six:

Understanding culture, interculturalism, communication in a multicultural context

– Ann Moroney

Offered a list of ‘cultural hooks’ (Appendix B) that can have an impact on communication, we were asked to discuss in groups those that irritate us. Feedback points included:

- In the Philippines people ask someone’s age directly since addressing people according to their age is a formality in Philippine culture. In some cultures, such as Irish culture, asking people their age can be considered intrusive and rude.
- The annoyance of people speaking loudly in public places. While on one hand it may signify people arguing and angry, on the other it may be the norm in some cultures.
- A lack of eye contact can be respectful in some cultures but not in others. It can be understood as dishonesty, fear, inferiority, or a lack of self-esteem.
- Not saying ‘Thank you’ can be understood as being ungrateful, unmannerly, or as misunderstanding. It is typical in Irish culture and not so common in others such as Spanish culture.
- Using formal titles such as ‘Mrs’. And ‘Doctor’ varies across cultures. France and the Philippines are more formal and use titles, while Ireland is more relaxed.

Thereafter, Ann presented a range of comparisons for consideration: race vs. ethnicity; multiculturalism vs. interculturalism; integration vs. assimilation; and culture and cultural variations. In discussing culture, we were reminded that ‘we all have culture’, that it’s not only ‘different’, ‘exotic’ others who have culture. However we all have distinct personalities, which are influenced only in part by culture. Likewise culture is just a ‘framework’ and not absolute like a ‘straitjacket’, so we can’t make assumptions about anyone from a particular culture. Culture encompasses the customs, traditions, symbols, values, phrases and other forms of communication by which we belong to a group.

Culture is ever changing as a result of a range of new situations such as generational differences, and political, social and economic circumstances.

Ann introduced the idea of ethnocentric tendencies pointing out how we often tend to view our cultural way of living as ‘normal’ and that other cultures are ‘abnormal’ or even ‘uncivilised’ and that consciously or unconsciously we tend to favour the standards and practices within our own culture. Increasingly it is necessary to understand cultures on an equal basis; to suspend judgment and recognise reality; to be respectful and listen; and to promote inclusivity and equality through interacting with diverse groups.

Suggested Actions and Next Steps

Participants were interested in:

- Lobbying TDs (Irish parliamentarians), and the media such as RTE, the main Irish national broadcaster.
- Promoting intercultural training for a host of workplaces.
- Bringing the experience of the workshop to participant's own work environments.
- Holding further discussion around the challenges of bringing about change.
- Contacting the Irish Refugee Council regarding volunteering opportunities.

7. Ireen's Story

After arriving in Ireland, Ireen was helped by a very small group of five Sisters, all of whom were elderly. The help was through their relationship with her which shows the importance of relationship at any age of our lives. Ireen shared her moving story at the workshop.

How I came to Ireland

I came to Ireland in February 2003 after my marriage broke down. Despite not knowing anyone here, I came here because it's my father and grandparent's home.

My belief in God

In Matthew 6:26 – the bible says “look at the birds of the sky, they do not sow or reap or store away in barns and yet your heavenly father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they?” It's my belief that God helped me conquer all fear of the unknown. If me a human can love, care and be kind, what more our heavenly father. So despite me not knowing the future, I knew my God will not forsake me.

From the time I arrived in Ireland I worked hard. In 2005, I joined ‘Sharing the Caring Agency’ and that's how I came to be Sister Bridget's carer, one of the Little Sisters of the Assumption. And I got to know all the Sisters – Sr. Teresa, Sr. Máire, Sr. Eileen and Sr. Maura. I thought I had been sent there to be a carer but the truth is they cared for me too. I had received so much love from them; I called them “my five mothers”!! Each day they took time to ask me how I was and how my family was. They helped me set up in a lot of ways. Going to work at 6 Grange Crescent never felt like work but it felt like home. It was a happy and loving home, where I felt free.

So when one day I had received a letter denying Dan, my partner, a visa, I told the community. I was worried because he was going to be deported. I met Dan here in Ireland and he was very good to me and my daughters from my marriage. When I told them what had happened Sr. Máire offered to write them a letter, hoping it would help. In the letter Sr. Máire wrote about how them refusing to renew Dan's visa was going to break up our family unit which was an asset to the country. She asked them to reconsider which I believe helped greatly because they gave him an extension.

Dan and I got married in September 2006. As both Dan and I worked hard to save to put a deposit on a house, I asked the Sisters which county they would recommend. We wanted to move out of Dublin to a nearest commuter town either Navan or Athy and Sr. Máire recommended Athy in County Kildare. And so we did.

Sr. Máire recommended me to the HSE because at the time she also worked in the HSE. I was offered a job in St. Vincent's Hospital in Athy where I am now permanent. After we got married the Sisters invited us to the house where we had a celebration of our marriage organised by the Sisters. We felt so blessed.

In 2008, we managed to put a deposit on a house in Ballylinan and Sr. Máire and Maura managed to come and see the house. Dan and I went on to have two children, a boy and a girl. My two daughters from my first marriage are now third year students in college while the two smaller ones are in primary. My children call the Sisters their grannies.

When Samuel started school in Ballylinan, he was proud to tell people he did not only have one grandmother but five.

So I think what helped me set up was:

- 1) My belief in God*
- 2) Hard work and honesty*
- 3) Loving and caring people I met along the way*
- 4) A great friendship formed that is like family*

I have been greatly blessed to have crossed paths with genuine, loving people. I wouldn't be where I am today without them. I never lost contact with them. They know what is going on in my life and I know theirs.

Last year we were able to invite Dan's parents over and they loved Ireland. At the moment I am also studying Fashion Design in the Grafton Academy.

8. Participant Reflections

Having only lived in Ireland for the last 9 months, I do not know much about the refugee and migrants in Ireland. However, I've always wonder why the migrants from Middle East are not interested to move to this country. I made an assumption that it probably because Ireland's economy who's just hit by the crisis couple years ago. The interculturalism session, opened my eyes about heavy bureaucracy in Ireland which slow down the administrative process for an asylum seeker. In addition to that, I was also exposed to much new knowledge on how to deal with people from different background and most importantly how to remove label from other people. Be it Irish or the other immigrants. In a nutshell, it was a very interesting and positive experience. The new knowledge and value that I gained are certainly helpful to deal with my job where I interact with people from more than 60 different nationalities.

Ailsa Dempsey

The Speakers were excellent as well as being really informative - especially the Indian lady (Archana). I was very impressed by the African lady (Ellie). She is a courageous woman. At the very least, Irish people meeting and hearing such women should make us more aware of what the country has to gain by having their gifts and experiences. I'm very familiar with the situation of asylum seekers as I have been in contact with some of them here in Cork, and was quite taken aback that many people seemed to be very unaware of how Ireland treats them.

I loved having the Ethiopian Orthodox group at the start and was disappointed they could not stay! The facilitator was good, and had a light touch. The venue was ideal, keeping things simple and manageable for everyone. The entire day seemed to be full of enthusiasm and energy. Thank you to all responsible for doing the work!

Carol Dorgan

I thought the day was very well organised, with a good blend of excellent input and chance for audience sharing. I personally found the 'Cultural hooks' very revealing!! A good mixture of nationalities which helps people get to know other cultures.

Margaret Collins

Generally the workshop was a real success to gather people from different backgrounds. For me the big crowd spoke a lot in terms of moving forward, hopefully more people will come on board.

I'd like to congratulate the organisers for a very successful workshop. It was facilitated well and very informative. It has given people/participants space to interact with each other, not just their knowledge on the issues and concerns about migration but also on a personal level, expressing thoughts and feelings. It also challenged the people to act for justice and equality, especially on the issue about asylum seekers and direct provision.

The workshop was an opportunity to meet like-minded people and for me it feels good and assured to know that there are more people who are concerned and very much willing to get involved despite age.

Overall, it was very overwhelming! Again, kudos to the organisers.

Lorelei Ocaya

People all over the world are facing and experiencing interculturalism. People of other cultures are all over the world visiting, migrating, for schooling or even as immigrants. Therefore we have mixed different cultures and as a result we experience misunderstanding.

Very often cultures which are different to our own can seem unfamiliar. Unfamiliarity can sometimes be uncomfortable. There's unfamiliarity with neighbours, work colleagues, schools etc. We are all now interacting with people who look and dress differently and behave in ways that may even be considered "odd" compared to our own culture. Misunderstanding can occur because what makes sense in one culture seems strange, even rude in another.

Ireland has become an increasingly diverse society over the last couple of decades. Today it is home to people from approximately 200 nations. The change has been enormous for the country, not least for the older adult care sector. It is now estimated that up to a third of staff

working in the older adult care sector are from another country. This brings new skills into the workforce and also helps society.

An intercultural approach is about -

- *Making the unfamiliar more familiar and understanding what it is like to walk in somebody else's shoes.*
- *Promoting interaction, understanding and respect between people of different cultural and ethnic backgrounds.*
- *Making sure that cultural diversity is acknowledged and catered for.*
- *Acknowledging that people from all cultures should have freedom to keep their cultural heritage alive and share it with others.*
- *Recognising racism as an issue that needs to be tackled in order to create a more Inclusive society.*

We learned quite a lot and all this has been very helpful to me, more especially nursing being what I want to do in future. With Archanabai Sharadabai, she had a very lovely presentation and with her experience in all, it was very helpful and educative to me. I loved the experience of meeting new people and hearing their point of view. It was a lovely experience, I wouldn't mind going for another workshop. It really did help me. Being an asylum seeker as well, Ellie Kisyombe did a wonderful presentation and made me feel a lot better with my life.

Joan Jim Arthur Nankwenya

I really enjoyed the day and found it very informative, practical, and invigorating. Great to have a cross section of people / representation of cultures. The session was informative about issues / beliefs. It also made me aware of the language I use as it can be source of so much misunderstanding and I am very conscious now when shopping etc.

It was important hearing first-hand about the inequalities existing in direct provision. Also hearing what was done in the Nursing Home by way of integration and acceptance. I'm sure there is a lot more I have to learn and unlearn. Appreciation to the organising group! And look forward to another.

Alice Ryan

It was a very informative and mind opening seminar. We learn to know what is happening and the reality of being homeless. Working in a residential setting I can relate to what the speaker was saying. I love to attend on this seminar. More power to your group.

Anonymous

I felt that there was definitely a buzz as soon as I walked in to the room. I know a lot of the Sisters so I was pleased to see them. I assisted with catering on the day and I thought there was a positive atmosphere straight away, it was very relaxed. Even when there was a technology hiccup, no one was bothered by it. There was an especially lovely atmosphere at lunchtime with everyone exchanging stories.

Lillian O'Brien

I enjoyed the day in Glasnevin and found the emphasis in Inter-culturalism very good. The day was informative and challenging. I particularly liked the input from Archana who is working in St Joseph's Hospital - I could relate to a lot of what she said. Ann Moroney's easy way of

presenting the day was very helpful and she was affirming in the way she responded to what others had to say. I found the practical questions she put to us challenging and thought provoking.

Carmel Molloy

Overall the workshop was excellent! The singing part was my first time to see and hear the songs. It looked like family gathering songs. I enjoyed very much. The story too of asylum seekers in Ireland was very interesting.

Clara Hsu

Everyone has a culture ...

Cultural competence begins with the recognition that we are all born, raised and living in social, educational and organisational cultures. These cultures shape our assumptions,

Beliefs, values and behaviours. When we interact with others, the similarities and differences between our cultural expectations often make the interaction both more interesting, and more challenging. In a health setting, these challenges must be met if we are to provide equitable, appropriate and accessible services to all our clients.

Archanabai Sharadabai

I found the inter-cultural experience very inspiring. The music from the Ethiopian Church was a very beautiful opening to the day.

Hearing first hand from a person who is experiencing "Direct Provision" shocked me. It really brought to life what we have been hearing... it was no longer just words; this was a person who was living with the suffering. It makes me want to support every effort to get this situation changed; we cannot let this continue in our country. We are all human beings with the right to equal dignity and respect. These are people like us.

It was refreshing to hear the nurse's experience of a positive welcome and so inspiring to hear what is being done in certain contexts to enable a real sharing of cultures and integration of people coming here from different cultures. We need more of this.

The day was well planned, relaxed and yet plenty to reflect on. I would be happy to stay connected with you and be part of future projects.

Teresa Brogan

This workshop was attended by friends of the Little Sisters of the Assumption (LSA) and their co-workers, together reflecting in their understanding of Interculturalism. This is seen by the LSA as important in our changing environment that is inclusive and appreciative of different social and cultural backgrounds.

In their chapter document 2005, the sisters were searching for ways to overcome the barriers of peoples' cultures and religions in a movement of openness, dialogue and faith... Setting us

meeting with those who live in the up-rooting condition of immigration.

My biggest learning was experiencing the sharing of their lay associates, men, women and young people. About 3% (192 million) of people live outside their birth place. Threat is the huge challenge to families who stay and those who travel, many on foot to other countries. In our history we as Irish people can identify with our immigrants from many of our forefathers who had to travel because of the potato famine in the 19th Century.

Pope Frances has asked us in Laudato Si "to become agents of mercy through which God can water the earth and all creation".

It was magnificent to experience and to see the sincere sharing of the participants, swapping phone numbers and email addresses with a promise of making contact to support each other in their work on behalf of immigrants.

What a surprise to be presented by a prayerful liturgy by the Congregation of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church so near to our Catholic tradition but a lot more colourful!

Thank you for a very good workshop.

Jacinta McGrath

Firstly I would like to say that it was a wonderful day. The Ethiopian choir starting the day was truly wonderful and a heart lifting experience – a real celebration. The location of the event in the Margaret Alyward Centre was lovely too and the participants were very open and sharing in relation to feedback on the day which led to learning for all.

I found the report that Ann prepared most enlightening and in places very saddening. The Irish story is one of historical emigration to all countries of the world and experiences have been mixed for Irish migrants worldwide. It was with a heavy heart that we heard stories of how we now treat people from other nations in Ireland who are seeking asylum and have come here in some cases seeking asylum/refuge/a better life/for love. There are undoubtedly challenges for each and every one navigating the differences that exist between people from different nations and different cultures. Central to a solution must be the premise that each person regardless of nationality, religion or cultural background should be treated with equality, dignity and respect. This is certainly not the case for people who are living for years in Reception centres in Ireland, there is certainly no equality, dignity and respect here or the céad mile fáilte that we pride ourselves in. I was ashamed when I heard how we as a nation treat people in crisis who come here, in the words of Mahatma Ghandi - "A nation's greatness is measured by how it treats its weakest members."

I am of the view that the best way of addressing inherent racism, while on the other hand encouraging and embracing multiculturalism, is through education. Education spans all periods of one's life and is not limited to school/college. We are living in an era where there is lifelong learning. In the organisation where I work, we encourage staff to embrace and understand difference, to respect each other, to listen to service users and each other, to treat each other with dignity and respect and not to be judgmental. My sincere thanks to both Sr. Lena and Ann for both the invitation and the 'food for thought'.

Martina Slein

9. Photos from the Day

- *Debrewerk Mariam Ethiopian Orthodox Church*





Sr Marie McAuliffe and Ireen Byrne-Kai



Archanabai Sharadabai



*Sinekosi Ncube, Ellie Kisyombe
and Joan Jim Arthur Nankwenya*



Sally Fayroddy and Sr Siobhán Ryan

- *Group photos*



10. Appendix

Appendix A: List of Attendees

Imelda O’Sullivan
Siobhán Ryan
Marie McAuliffe
Dympna Gilmartin
Alice Ryan
Olivia Russell
Marion Feeney
Eileen Creedon
Margaret Collins
Carmel Molloy
Bridget Shannon
Bride Counihan
Nellie Curtin
Lena Deevy
Mary Malone
Nuala Short
Margaret Hickey
Bernadette Mangan
Gary Dempsey Ailsa
Dempsey Carol
Dorgan
Joan Jim Arthur Nankwenya
Sinekosi Ncube
Ireen Byrne-Kai

Sr. Jacinta McGrath
Sr. Ita Nonan
Mary Hughes
Eileen Adams
Mary Behan
Catherine Mac Meanmain
Lorcan Mac Meanmain Lillian
O’Brien
May Carrick
Rose Gallagher
Aileen Doyle
Claire de Jong
Sally Fayroddy
Clara Hsu
Sr. Teresa Brogan
Lorelei Ocaya Vicky
Rose Garrihy
Martina Slein
Sr. Betty Kelleher
Ann Moroney
Archanabai Sharadabai
Ellie Kisyombe

Appendix B: Cultural Hooks

**This is a list of Cultural Hooks that can affect Communication;
have a look at them + pick out those that irritate you.**

Behaviour	Possible Interpretation	Cultural Explanation?
Speaking loudly in public places		
Avoiding Eye Contact		
Nodding or Saying YES without understanding		
Not saying THANK YOU at what you think are appropriate times		
Emphasising formal titles like Mrs, Doctor etc when addressing people		
Paying more attention to what men say than to women		
Asking direct questions		
Calling people by their first names		
Being very respectful when speaking to people in authority		
Being on time		
Showing respect to older people		

From *Partners Intercultural Companion to Training for Transformation*