



Building Positive Relations Project Update October – December 2020

2020 has been a time of challenge and change.

As a project, we have adapted our delivery in line with public health guidelines around the Covid-19 pandemic.

During the period October – December, we delivered a season of online workshops on Thursday evenings, where participants could engage in Building Positive Relations from the comfort of their own home. These workshops proved highly successful and had excellent attendance with participants being able to join safely online.

We look forward to continue delivering the Building Positive Relations project, including two further workshops, a conference and closing event taking place in early 2021.

Below is an outline of events and project successes between October and December 2020.

October Workshops

Our first online workshop took place on Thursday 1st October 2020. We were delighted that it was well attended and was an engaging and informative experience. The two-part workshop was facilitated by local historian, Dr. Eamon Phoenix and former NICRAS chairperson Justin Kouame and was entitled Past and Contemporary Experiences of Migration.

Our second October workshop took place at the end of October, and was a Cultural Awareness workshop entitled 'A History of Migration through the Centuries'. This workshop was facilitated by Dr. Brian Lambkin, former Director of Migration Studies at the Mellon Centre, Ulster American Folk Park, with contributions from Dr. Patrick Fitzgerald, and focused on the realities and stories of migration on the island of Ireland from the 1800s to the present day.

Adapting to the challenges of lockdown our Belfast Co-ordinator designed informative graphics for the online workshops, which we used in conjunction with the formal invitation, to advertise the events to participants. Below is an example of the graphic used for the October Workshop.

A History of Migration through the Centuries

Date: Thursday 29th October 2020
Venue: Zoom. Link provided after registration
Time: 6.30pm – 8.00pm

Dr. Brian Lambkin former Director of Migration Studies, Ulster American Folk Park, with contributions from **Dr. Patrick Fitzgerald**, and will focus on the realities and stories of migration on the island of Ireland from the 1800s to the present day.

This lecture is organised by Coiste na n-Iarchimí
To confirm your place please e-mail
elaine.mcilroy@ashtoncentre.com
A zoom link will be sent to you
as confirmation of your place



November Workshop

Our November workshop was entitled 'How Emigration Changed Ireland'. This talk explored how emigration, particularly in the 19th and 20th centuries, shaped Irish history and was facilitated by Dr Maurice J Casey, DFAT Historian in Residence at EPIC the Irish Emigration Museum.

December Workshops

There were two workshops held in December. The first was an Anti-Racism workshop entitled 'Rooting out Racism' and was delivered by Dr. Livingstone Thompson, an experienced diversity and inclusion trainer specialising in cross-cultural interactions and cultural competence training. He was recognised by Belfast Home Coming as cultural ambassador for Belfast in 2018 and is Chairman of the African and Caribbean Support Organisation NI (ACSONI). The workshop delivered an interactive approach to the theme presenting an introductory session seeking to 'Root out Racism' by exploring historical and contemporary examples of racism in society, and set out ways to define, identify and respond to racial incidents.

The final workshop of this period was a two-part Anti-Racism Workshop. The first part was facilitated by Eyad Meshael, a Jordanian national with major interest in global economy, politics and peace activism. He is an intercultural support worker with the Irish Refugee Resettlement Programme in Donegal. With guest speaker, Nadine Abd El Jalil, the first presentation introduced the Irish Refugee Resettlement Programme and shared a story from a Syrian refugee family who resettled in Co Donegal, shedding light on the difficulties they face today. Part Two was facilitated by Nolunga Shologu - a community development activist and a Community Health worker for a group of asylum seekers and refugees. Nolunga is also a steering committee representative within the Donegal Intercultural platform (DTP), assisting in hosting interactive workshops, conferences, and shared cultural events to raise awareness of the disadvantages faced by refugees, asylum seekers, migrants and the undocumented, with particular focus of community bringing change. Nolunga's presentation focused on highlighting the experiences of asylum seekers, the asylum process, and exploring some of the reasons why people leave their own countries.

Participant Engagement and Feedback

All the workshops were well received and had high attendance. Below are some comments from participants.

The content was well presented, making an informative and stimulating discussion.

Really interesting, lovely rapport between the speakers,

'Zoom is a great way of reaching diverse, distant audiences on a winter's night.'

Sustainable Leadership Programme

We completed our Leadership Programme in December due to current pandemic and government restrictions. This had to be delivered virtually; however, more participants were able to take part.

Counselling and Welfare Advice

Our counselling service and welfare and benefits advice continues to operate within public health guidelines, and are providing an invaluable service for project participants during this particularly challenging time.

Contact details and Information regarding the Building Positive Relations Project, as well as all our communications documents, e-zines, newsletters and report of Year 1 are available for viewing on our webpage:

<https://www.ashtoncentre.com/services/community-development/building-positive-relations>



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