

# Embracing Diversity

Information Update 2007

**EMBRACE NI**

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## Introduction

Last year's information update outlined briefly the situation relating to minority ethnic people, migrant workers and those who seek asylum in Northern Ireland. It also gave some suggestions for Christians who want to make this a more welcoming place for incomers. Much of the text is unchanged, but 2006/7 has seen changes and we hope that this booklet will help to keep you up to date. We have also included some new subject areas.

Please keep this as a document to refer to. Immigration and asylum law and procedures are complex and change frequently, so, although we have tried to be as accurate as possible, bear in mind the possibility of over-generalisation or inaccuracy. Similarly, the areas, spheres of work and conditions of migrant workers are also subject to change. We will continue to try to keep our members updated about major changes through our newsletters and links from our site to other web sites.

Inevitably, problems experienced by migrants and minority ethnic people are highlighted. Last year, for example, we have added a section on the destitution experienced by some migrants who are not entitled to benefits and we are able to tell you now how this is being tackled. However, we do not want to emphasise problems in a way that makes it difficult to see people as individuals with varied gifts and strengths, as well as vulnerability – just like the rest of the population. We hope that this booklet will not lead to migrants or minority ethnic residents being seen as victims, but help us to ensure that all people are treated with dignity.

EMBRACE is a voluntary group of Christians, from all the main denominations in Northern Ireland. Our primary role is to provide information and resources for Churches, groups and individuals, in order to help make this a more welcoming place for minority ethnic people, including residents, migrant workers and people who have been forced to flee from other countries. We want to help to build a community that has moved beyond racism.

Members of EMBRACE are active in providing information, leading workshops and giving talks to members of the Christian community and others. We are also involved in supporting refugees and foreign nationals by activities such as befriending, advocacy, transport, and providing food for social events such as picnics. EMBRACE on the Street is a pilot project enabling Belfast churches to provide practical support for destitute foreign nationals. An emergency fund was established in 2006–7. All this involves collaboration between church congregations, and other voluntary and statutory groups. Other practical initiatives include our resource library in City Church, Belfast.

In this 200th year of the abolition of the slave trade from these shores there is still much for Christians to do to champion racial justice and uphold the dignity of all human beings (see [www.setallfree.net](http://www.setallfree.net)).

*Please let us know if you have experience in building positive relationships with members of minority ethnic groups that we could help you to share with other people.*

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## Migration

Although we have always had small numbers of incomers, over the centuries people in the island of Ireland became used to migration as a one way process, with thousands of people leaving for the New World, never to return.

In recent years in the south, labour shortages and dramatic economic expansion have attracted returning Irish exiles and people from other countries. In addition, links with other parts of the world have made Ireland a possible haven for people who feel forced to flee from their homes, or to seek economic security. The Troubles and high unemployment insulated the north from these forces until very recently, but we now have a society that needs additional workers. Our declining birth rate is another factor in leading to job vacancies and skills shortages. Companies and public employers are now recruiting abroad more actively and, as more migrant workers come here, they encourage others to follow.

The 2001 census indicated that there were 26,600 people in Northern Ireland, including children, who were born outside the UK or the Irish Republic. (Bear in mind that this figure does not include people who were born in this country and who are members of minority ethnic groups.) It is clear that numbers have expanded since then. People come here primarily for the same reason as our young people still leave: for better employment prospects and higher salaries.

Whereas earlier immigrants tended to come to our cities, the latest migrants are more widely spread. Most country towns and rural areas now have some foreign nationals working there. Most have found work in food factories, building-sites, hospitals and nursing homes, fishing and fish processing, shops, fast food outlets and restaurants.

While we see growing numbers of immigrants, many come for a short time in the hope of improving their lives and then leave, just as many of our young people return. The numbers registering with GPs between 1992 and 2001 indicate that, during this period, 1300 more people left than arrived here (*Migrant Workers in Northern Ireland*, p.46). Accurate recent figures are difficult to obtain, but data from the Workers Registration Scheme shows that 18,300 people came into Northern Ireland in 2002/3 with a big increase to 26,900 in 2004/5. However, in the latter year there were still only 6,700 more people who came in than those who left. These figures include people who come and go, but there are some who make this their permanent home and so we have a gradually increasing number of minority ethnic people living among us from a rich diversity of backgrounds. It is reckoned that there are people living here from at least 120 different countries.

### CHANGING PATTERNS OF MIGRATION

Migrants who came to the United Kingdom following the Second World War tended to come from countries in the British Commonwealth or other countries where there had been British or Irish influence. They were drawn by the

### Some reasons why accurate figures on migration are difficult to obtain

- Foreign nationals resident in GB, who move here, will tend to be identified simply as GB residents.
- Some people may register for work here while still living in the Irish Republic.
- There may be a time delay in people registering for work.
- People who register again after a period away may be regarded either as a new person or as a 'rejoiner'.
- People applying for National Insurance numbers or registering for work only cover some of the adult population.
- The numbers of undocumented people are impossible to assess accurately.
- There is no legal requirement for people to register when they enter or leave the country.

expanding economy but also by their knowledge of the English language and were familiar to some degree with the local culture.

The first wave of more recent migrants here has included a substantial number of Portuguese speakers who have come here since 2001, to work in the food processing industry. At the same time, staff shortages in the health sector have led to people being recruited in the Philippines, South Asia and, to a lesser extent, Africa.

European Union enlargement in 2004 coincided with economic expansion here and people from Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia (the A8), and Cyprus and Malta, became entitled to come here and work. It is not easy to be precise about numbers, but between April 2004 and July 2005 applications for National Insurance numbers in Northern Ireland were received from 12,962 people from the A8 countries, with the largest number, 6,169, from Poland and the second highest, 3013, from Lithuania. By the end of 2006 a total 14,405 A8 nationals had registered for work here.

The Workers Registration Scheme figures for May 2004–March 2005 show that 70% of new registered migrants were men, and most were in their twenties and thirties. The women were in the same age groups. For a similar period (April 2004 – March 2005) there were at least 10 applications for National Insurance numbers from people from each of 37 countries other than the Irish Republic. In the same period, around a quarter of workers requiring work permits were for jobs in the health service with the next greatest number, 20%, for the computer services industry.

The latest accession countries, Bulgaria and Romania (A2) have been treated differently from the A8 countries. Nationals from these countries are free to be here but need work permits for most forms of employment.

#### **SOME OF THE LANGUAGES SPOKEN IN NORTHERN IRELAND:**

Albanian, Arabic, Bedawiye, Beluchi, Bengali (or Bangla), Bosnian, Bulgarian, Cantonese, Creole, Croat, Czech, Dutch, Edo, Estonian, Ewe, Farsi, Flemish, French, Fujianese, Ga, Greek, Grushi, Gujarati, Hakka, Hausa, Hindi, Hungarian, Italian, Japanese, Kannada, Kanta, Korean, Kutchi, Latvian, Lithuanian, Malayo, Malayala, Mandarin, Marati, Mina, Mirpuri, Oriya, Polish, Portuguese, Punjabi, Pushtu, Romani, Romanian, Russian, Serbian, Sindhi, Sohosa, Spanish, Sylheti, Tagalog, Tamazight, Tamil, Turkish, Urdu, Swahili, Telugu, Twi, Ukrainian, Vietnamese, Yiddish, Yoruba, Xhosa.

#### **QUESTIONS ASKED ABOUT MIGRANTS AND REFUGEES**

**Q** *Who is an asylum seeker?*

**A** Someone who has a well-founded fear of persecution by reason of their race, nationality, religion, social group or political opinion, in their own country, and seeks refuge in another country.

**Q** *Who is a refugee?*

**A** Someone who applies for asylum, and is successful in being granted refugee status, under the 1951 United Nations Convention Relating to Refugees. 'Refugee' is also the general term for all people who have been displaced from their own countries by persecution, war and civil unrest.

**Q** *Who is a migrant worker?*

**A** Someone who leaves their country with the intention of seeking work elsewhere. In practice the words are usually applied today to people who do not intend to remain permanently in the host country.

**Q** *Who is an immigrant?*

**A** This term has been applied to all people coming into the country to work, but it is now often applied to people who intend to settle and integrate here, as opposed to being a more temporary 'migrant worker'. It is important not to view people who are born here and part of long-established ethnic communities and populations as 'immigrants'.

**Q** *Who is an economic migrant?*

**A** Anyone who moves from their home country to improve their economic situation can be termed an 'economic migrant'. This term is sometimes used in a derogatory way, for example, to throw suspicion on people's motives in seeking asylum. In fact, poverty and economic deprivation, as well as violence, are tools of those who persecute individuals and groups of people. Most economic migrants simply seek a better life for themselves and their families, as many people from Ireland have done for generations.

**Q** *What is the difference between Trafficking and People Smuggling?*

**A** When people are 'smuggled' or 'trafficked' it means that they cross international borders in an unauthorised way. Both involve breaking the law. The difference is that people who are smuggled are assumed to have given their consent, and people who are trafficked are moved against their will.

#### **THE CAUSES AND EFFECTS OF MASS MIGRATION**

People have moved from their home countries for centuries but the volume has risen rapidly in the last decade. It is reckoned that now over 200 million people in the world live outside their country of birth. In the GB this has created public concern which is fuelled by media hysteria. These are some headlines from an English tabloid newspaper:

'Council Tax Must Rise to Pay for Migrants' – *Daily Mail*, 8/08/06

'Next migrant surge could tip us into chaos says minister' – *Daily Mail*, 31/08/06

'Arrests of foreigners rise by 18%' – *Daily Mail*, 18/09/06

'350,000 Romanians have their sights set on Britain' – *Daily Mail*, 23/08/06

'Migrants cost 90,000 Britons their jobs' – *Daily Mail*, 27/10/06

#### **Pull Factors**

Migrants are drawn increasingly to countries such as UK and Ireland by the following factors:

- Developed countries, or industrialised city areas within countries, draw labour from countries or areas where income is lower.
- International transport has never been easier and is cheaper than ever relative to incomes.
- The telephone and internet age make information easier to access.
- Falling birth rates in developed countries contribute to labour shortages and skills gaps.
- People are drawn to stable democracies where human rights and religious freedoms should be respected.
- Many people in other parts of the world understand and speak English.

#### **The words we use...**

The term 'asylum seeker' is now regarded by many people as a depersonalising term of abuse, often associated with the word 'bogus'. In EMBRACE, we try to use the phrase, 'person seeking asylum'. Similarly, the broad-brush term, 'illegal immigrant' is better replaced by the more objective words, 'undocumented person'. How can a human being be illegal?

#### **Ethnic diversity**

*The authors of How Public Authorities Provide Services to Minority Ethnic Groups: Emerging Findings Discussion Paper, estimate that the Northern Ireland population of 1.68 million in 2001 will rise to 1.8 million in 2030 and ethnic diversity will change from 1–2.5% to 5%.*

#### **The words we use...**

*We can properly refer to, for example, the Indian, Chinese or Jewish 'communities' but incoming people from some countries are small in numbers and dispersed, so the word 'population' or 'group' may be more appropriate. Some people understandably also feel uneasy at always being defined as part of a 'minority' ethnic group.*

**Last autumn** Poland's unemployment rate was running at around 17.7% and annual GDP (Gross Domestic Product) per head of population is £6,684 compared to 5.1% unemployment and £16,263 GDP in the UK.

## Push Factors

People look for work abroad partly because of these pull factors but these are usually accompanied by a range of economic and other problems that combine to push them away from home:

- Poverty and low incomes
- High unemployment rates
- Persecution and poor human rights
- Internal conflict and war
- Natural disasters and famine

## The Benefits of Immigration

Migration can benefit both host countries and home countries:

- Economic growth can be sustained. (Having had a more liberal immigration policy than other European countries has enabled the Irish and British economies to have one of the longest periods of sustained economic growth in our histories. It is estimated that the Irish Republic will need 45,000 extra incoming workers per year to sustain current economic growth.)
- Immigrants bring energy and innovation (In the USA today, the list of Nobel Laureates contains a disproportionate number of immigrants.)
- Services to an ageing population can be maintained despite declining local birth rates.
- Host countries benefit from cultural diversity (This brings special benefits to young people, learning about the wider world.)
- Young foreign workers can enhance their life prospects.
- Developing countries benefit from remittances that probably now outstrip international development aid in value. (For example, in the past year, \$19 billion passed in this way from North America to Mexico.)

## What One Newspaper's Headlines Say

'God bless the foreigners who do our dirty work' – *Independent*, 23/08/06  
 'They come over here and fix our teeth: foreign workers help to ease dentist crisis' – *Independent*, 24/08/06  
 'Let them all in, say business leaders' – *Independent*, 30/08/06  
 'Migrants add £37bn to UK's wealth' – *Independent*, 27/10/06

## Problems for Migrants (See also pp10 – 11)

Population movement leaves individual migrants with the possibility of experiencing the following problems:

- Isolation and separation from family and culture
- Racist attitudes and attacks
- Poor public services due to lack of government preparation for large numbers of immigrants
- Exploitation in the workplace
- Physical and moral danger, including trafficking and abuse by organised criminals
- Failed expectations (often due to less profitable work and higher cost of living than promised or envisaged)
- Destitution and the accompanying social and health problems

## Problems for the Country of Origin

### • Economic disadvantage

Many eastern European countries are hampered in their own expansion by the loss of people of working age. The Polish birth rate, for example, is one of the lowest in Europe.

### • Loss of highly trained people, especially health workers

The World Health Organisation (WHO) has said that there is a chronic shortage of about 4 million health workers throughout the world. This has a knock-on effect on preventive medicine for children, pregnancy care and access to treatment. The WHO says life expectancy in many poorer countries is half of that in rich nations. Western countries need to be careful not to 'poach' workers from these countries. In fact international funding may be necessary to help some countries to find, train and retain sufficient healthcare staff.

For more on this see BBC NEWS:

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/1/hi/health/4877376.stm> 07/04/2006

### • Social problems for children left behind while parents work abroad

For example, access to jobs in Irish agriculture, on both sides of the border, with higher pay rates than those at home, means that many children are left behind in Latvia, and are known as the 'mushroom orphans'. Because its population is small, Latvia is now forced to attract workers from other countries to fill the labour shortages created by so many people going to work abroad.

## Negative Effects of Mass Migration on the Host Country

The following are possible problems although not all are proven to happen:

- Depression of wages may occur, although recent research tends to show reduction in pay rates are temporary and that immigration simply allows the economy to expand, e.g. 'Increase in immigrants found to aid expansion' (*Financial Times*, 13 May 2005). Nevertheless, genuine worries remain.
- Financial benefits may be overstated. (Critics of immigration policy feel that the stated benefits fail to take account of the extra expenditure needed for public services for immigrants.)
- There is disruptive pressure on public services such as medicine, housing and education.
- Unemployment may rise if there are too many incomers. The National Institute of Economic and Social Research suggests that between 60,000 to 90,000 people have lost their jobs due to the recent influx into the UK workforce. However, unemployment remains low.
- A large pool of eager young capable foreign workers makes it more difficult to get local people off benefits and back to work. (UK currently has around 5.4 million people on benefits.)
- There may be difficulties with cultural integration and friction with local people.
- At a time of heightened awareness of international terrorism, large-scale movements of people lead to more security monitoring.
- There is anxiety about increased crime and anti-social behaviour if large

### Low pay

*The Government's Accession Monitoring Report, February 2006, shows that 80% of the 345,000 applicants to the Worker Registration Scheme from the eight central and Eastern European countries (the A8) between 1 May 2004 and 31 December 2005 were earning less than £6 per hour.*

numbers of young people are thrown together without being given a sense of community.

*For examples of dangerous negative stereotyping of migrant workers see p.13 –14.*

### Summary

It is clear that immigration can be beneficial for migrants, but only if their rights are protected properly. It is also economically beneficial for both countries of origin and host countries. However, with present economic and trading structures it is the rich and powerful countries that benefit most. Migration brings social and cultural problems that need to be taken into account in planning for future services. Where the economic preconditions exist, migration is inevitable. If it is banned, it just goes underground.

Migration also has potential for bringing peoples together culturally. (It is an interesting side issue to the decision of the government to restrict Bulgarian and Romanian workers that this was against the advice of the Foreign Office. They were aware that relationships between friendly countries could be harmed by this decision, and the media scaremongering about Bulgarian and Romanian criminals that preceded it.) There is the possibility that in the long term, migration will have an equalising effect both in terms of the world economy and in the rights of the individual. Making the nation state less important may ultimately contribute to economic equality and world peace.

It is important to recognise our patronising attitudes. Although both mission and Christian development organisations now use much more positive images, many people from a religious background have been imprinted with the idea that people from other parts of the world are victims to be helped. The very charitable impulse to welcome, or support people who are destitute, may lead us to have a subconscious feelings of superiority. Migrants simply want to be received in dignity and equality just as we would hope to be treated in other countries

### GOVERNMENT IMMIGRATION POLICY

Every country seeks to protect its borders and monitor who comes in and out. Any expanding economy will also need additional workers. Immigration policy is a power that is retained at Westminster and the title of the Government's 5-year plan, *Controlling our borders: making migration work for Britain* reflects an emphasis on security and having the right people to fill labour and skills shortages. It focuses on internal interests rather than the needs of people who have to flee from their homes, or of people forced to look for work because of poverty.

Historically regulations have been complex with 80 different schemes that have allowed people into the UK to work. In March 2006 the government announced its intention to replace all the different work permit and entry schemes with a single points system with 5 tiers:

- **Tier 1: highly skilled professionals**, including doctors, scientists and entrepreneurs
- **Tier 2: skilled people with job offers** such as medical workers and tradesmen

- **Tier 3: low-skilled** including people such as contract workers in catering and construction
- **Tier 4: students** from other countries
- **Tier 5: temporary workers, youth mobility** to cover sports people, professional musicians, cultural exchanges and working holidays for young people.

An advisory board will inform the Home Office so that entry points can be adjusted to reflect skills and labour shortages. As part of new control measures, some short-term workers will have to lodge a bond on entry, refundable on exit, and employers will face large fines for each illegal worker.

The Government hopes that there will no longer be a need for many low-skilled workers from outside the European Union (EU). This may cause problems for some of our traditional areas of migration from the developing world. For example, minority ethnic catering establishments may struggle to find suitable employees. Similarly, Asian medical staff, who have traditionally been an important part of the health service, may no longer find it easy to get permission to work here.

There are some concerns about these plans:

- They will effectively discriminate against poorer, less qualified immigrants who may need the opportunities more, and who could make a real difference to their families and the development of their home countries by the money they send home.
- Attracting skilled people can be a brain drain on developing countries. It underlines the detrimental effect of 'selfish' immigration policies which do nothing to address people's underlying need to migrate. And of course the vast majority of people would rather stay at home with friends and family than be forced to leave home in search of work.

For more detail on the government's plans see: BBC News 'Migration: How points system will work', [http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk\\_politics/4244707.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk_politics/4244707.stm)

In the meantime, a complex system of migrant entry schemes remains in existence.

### UK Borders Bill

Legislation around immigration has gradually become more restrictive and infringements of regulations criminalised. As we go to print, the UK Borders Bill is making its way through parliament. There are anxieties about a number of its provisions:

- In trying to stop people working without documents Immigration Officers will be able to seize the pay packets of undocumented workers who may themselves be the victims of traffickers or unscrupulous employers.
- Immigration officers will have increased powers, for example, the ability to detain people on suspicion that an offence has been committed. While these powers have steadily increased in legislation from 1999–2006, so that they parallel the powers of police, they have not been accompanied by increased mechanisms to check abuse of power, similar to those to which police are subject.

- Foreign nationals who have committed one of a wide range of offences or have been sentenced to one year's imprisonment are to be deported automatically, regardless of the circumstances.

### CATEGORIES OF MIGRANT WORKER

These are some of the main categories:

**European Economic Area Nationals** do not need to ask for permission to move here to live and work. These include people from the European Union (EU), from the European Free Trade Area (including Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein), and from Switzerland.

**Nationals from the New EU Accession States** are entitled to freedom of movement in the other EU states, but must register with the Home Office when they take up employment. These include people from what are termed the A8 Countries, which joined the EU in May 2004: Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia. (Cyprus and Malta, who also joined in 2004, are not subject to these restrictions and are treated like states that joined previously.) The latest accession countries, Bulgaria and Romania (A2) have been treated differently from the A8 countries. Nationals from these countries are free to be here but need work permits for most forms of employment.

**Work Permit Holders** are foreign nationals from countries, other than those listed above. Permits will only be issued when the employer has demonstrated that they have been unable to fill the post in any other way.

**Students from abroad** (there were around 1300 in around 2001–2) are entitled to work part time. They often help as language assistants in schools.

**Working Holidaymakers** who are not recorded by immigration officials.

**Permit-Free Workers** include several categories, such as people working here temporarily, for example, as diplomats, airport staff, representatives of foreign firms, members of the foreign press, or clergy!

**Undocumented Workers** are impossible to quantify, but a couple of years ago the Immigration Service gave a guesstimate of around 2000 people. Most of them have probably entered the country legally and overstayed their work permits or visitors' visas.

### SOCIAL AND JUSTICE ISSUES RELATING TO MIGRANT WORKERS

These are only emerging but several are beginning to stand out:

- **Racist abuse and attacks.**
- **The lack of regulation of agencies** who may charge large fees on the promise of high wages and good conditions, which do not always materialise. (Deception in this area can be legally defined as trafficking.)
- **Long-term debt may be established.**
- **The power of employers.** Work permits are held by employers, and someone

losing a job cannot look for another one or seek benefit. If sacked, they face destitution and deportation.

- **Contract workers** may be supplied with **poor quality, living conditions.** They often end up in multiple occupancy housing.
- All these issues are made worse by a **lack of access to interpreters** making it hard for people to communicate their difficulties, or to establish their rights.
- There is the possibility that local people may be disadvantaged by the **exploitative use of 'cheap labour'**
- **Homelessness and destitution** if people lose their jobs, or are between jobs. They often have no family or social networks to tide them over.
- **The information gap.** Migrants need good information and access to services such as advice about the law and their rights, language classes, medical care, and safe affordable housing. People who move from one country to another need clear information. To open a bank account here, for example, or obtain a driving licence, can be a real hurdle for foreign nationals.

**Concordia**, a partnership group including business (CBI), voluntary groups (Northern Ireland Council for Voluntary Action NICVA), trade unions (Irish Congress of Trade Unions), and farmers and growers (Ulster Farmers' Union), has produced a policy document challenging Government. *Migrant Workers in Northern Ireland: Meeting the Needs of Migrant Workers, their Families and their Employers*, March 2006:

[http://www.concordiapartnership.org/files/2006321115822\\_\\_Concordia%20migrant%20w%20LR.pdf](http://www.concordiapartnership.org/files/2006321115822__Concordia%20migrant%20w%20LR.pdf).

It called for the following:

- A specific Government minister responsible for migrant workers
- Annual forecasts with realistic predictions relating to the immigrant population
- A local public enquiry office for the Immigration and Nationality Directorate, and local advice and support centres for migrant workers
- The establishment of a skills advisory service
- Enforcement of regulations governing houses in multiple occupation
- A migrant worker emergency rehousing fund

## Case Study

'In November 2005, STEP [a migrant worker support group in South Tyrone] was contacted by a young Latvian couple with an eight month old baby. Their employer, a recruitment agency, expected the family to share a room with a single bed in a three-bedroomed house in which six other Latvian men also resided. The couple were paying £120 per week for a room which was cold and damp. When they complained to their employer, they were told they would be evicted and lose their jobs if they complained again. STEP contacted the landlord and asked for the family to be moved to more suitable accommodation. The family were eventually moved to a two-bedroom flat, and stayed a short time before finding alternative accommodation with another agency.'

Concordia, *Migrant Workers in Northern Ireland: Meeting the Needs of Migrant Workers, their Families and their Employers*, March 2006, p.7.

[http://www.concordiapartnership.org/files/2006321115822\\_\\_Concordia%20migrant%20w%20LR.pdf](http://www.concordiapartnership.org/files/2006321115822__Concordia%20migrant%20w%20LR.pdf)

### Strangers into Citizens Campaign

*There is a growing feeling among both politicians and church people that undocumented people, who may number around 500,000 in the UK, should be given amnesty and the right to work. They propose a one off regularisation for everyone who has been in the country for over 4 years, to include long term asylum applicants as well as the many people working without legal documentation. The Strangers into Citizens Campaign held a rally on May Day 2007 in London, attended by faith leaders and trade unionists. Cardinal Cormac Murphy-O'Connor, who held a special mass for migrant workers in Westminster Cathedral, told the BBC: "Many of them are married, settled down and so they live in a kind of shadow land. That's not right and it's not fair."*

[http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk\\_news/6631193.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk_news/6631193.stm)

See also: [www.strangersintocitizens.org.uk](http://www.strangersintocitizens.org.uk)

Recent research in Tyrone commissioned by Animate has concluded that foreign workers have had a positive economic impact on the area. On the negative side, the report speaks of 'economic racism'. It found that there was often unlawful underpayment of migrant workers due to their vulnerability, and that this could have a knock-on effect on other workers. Commenting on the research, Daniel Holder of Animate said it was important to 'strengthen employment rights rather than scapegoating migrant workers'.

[www.communityni.org](http://www.communityni.org)

### MIGRANT WORKER DESTITUTION

There is increasing concern about the suffering of migrant workers who lose their jobs here and end up on the streets. There have been a very significant number of people coming to Northern Ireland from some of the new states who joined the EU on 1st May 2004, especially those from the A8: the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia.

- Compared to the rest of the UK, Northern Ireland has the highest % of migrant workers from these states, as a proportion of the local population.
- They pay a £70 registration when they register for employment.
- Many are paid low wages for the type of work they do and need to send money back to families at home. They are also often over-qualified for the work they do.
- They need one year of uninterrupted employment to be entitled to social welfare, other than emergency health care.
- Those who lose their jobs are not entitled to any statutory support.
- If living in tied accommodation, the loss of a job may lead to homelessness.
- Private hostels for the homeless have limited spaces, and have been informed that beds paid for by the NI Housing Executive cannot be used for destitute migrant workers. The providers must fund these beds themselves.
- Migrant workers here on visas are not entitled to official homelessness advice.
- The language barrier makes understanding forms and regulations an additional problem.
- Foreign rough sleepers are subject to harassment and intimidation.
- Homelessness makes it almost impossible to obtain and keep employment.
- Destitution can lead quickly from an ordered life to one with multiple social and medical problems. This can include resorting to crime and/or alcohol and drug abuse.

- The devolved parliament in Scotland has chosen to stand apart from the rest of UK and does not debar new EU entrants from benefits.

### EMBRACE on the Street

During the past year, in response to the emerging concerns about migrant worker destitution a pilot project, **EMBRACE on the Street** was organised with churches and organisations working with homelessness in the community sector. In consultation with Homeplus, the Belfast Welcome Centre and the Simon Community a list of needs: clothing, blankets, toiletries and easily handled foodstuffs was drawn up. Inner-city Belfast churches provide goods and storage for Homeplus – a voluntary organisation seeking out 'rough sleepers' to offer support.

Homelessness charities have observed that with early support it is relatively easy to get these destitute foreign nationals back into jobs before they slip into a cycle of severe social problems. So, in some cases money has provided a couple of nights in a hostel to make it easier for people to get back into work quickly.

The pilot is now being analysed to assess future needs. For more information email EMBRACE.

### MYTHS ABOUT MIGRANT WORKERS

People who help migrant workers to adjust to life here are concerned at the kind of language used about migrants. ANIMATE, a partnership group supporting migrant workers in Mid Ulster, has come up with a few commonly heard views, and some of their material is used here: for more, see their web site: [www.animate-ccd.net](http://www.animate-ccd.net).

*"The migrants are taking our jobs."*

**The facts:** Migrants are attracted by job vacancies. They fill skills gaps and labour shortages and where there is nearly full employment, they often do jobs that local people are not prepared to do. Industries such as the food processing industry cannot survive without migrant labour.

*"They are costing the country money."*

**The facts:** The Home Office calculates that after subtracting benefits and public services from Income Tax and National Insurance contributions, migrants provide an annual surplus of £2.6 billion to the UK Treasury. One local factory, O'Kane Poultry, in Ballymena calculated recently that their migrant workers contributed £624,998 in National Insurance and £1,562,496 in Income Tax in just 2 years, while spending £2.2million locally.

*"Migrants are getting everything on social security."*

**The facts:** Most migrant workers are not eligible for any social security benefits in spite of paying tax and National Insurance. The only people entitled to benefits here, similar to those available to local people, are from member states of the European Union who joined before 2004.

*"I don't mind 'them' being here but 'they' need to behave."*

**The facts:** Everyone is subject to the law and should behave. If a person a migrant worker misbehaves, that should not reflect badly on others from their country or ethnic group. We have our fair share of local people who misbehave.



'The stereotyping of a group of people as criminals has always been an easy way to demonise them. This has at times happened with migrant workers – for examples racist stereotypes such as "they all carry knives" based on a handful of real or imagined incidents that allegedly involved individual migrant workers. Imagine that if following an incident involving people in the local communities that people went round saying "all local people carry knives."'

**Source:** *Information Paper: Migrant Workers, useful Terminology and Challenging Myths* published by Animate.  
See [www.animate-ccd.net](http://www.animate-ccd.net)

### The words we use...

*It is common to hear people talk about 'non-nationals' which is demeaning as well as inaccurate. 'Foreign nationals' is more appropriate.*

### POSITIVE INITIATIVES

The **Equality Commission** has held a number of conferences on employing migrant workers. **Business in the Community** has published a **Voluntary Code of Practice for the Employment of Migrant Workers** [www.bitc://guide2migrant-workers.org.uk](http://www.bitc://guide2migrant-workers.org.uk). In May 2006 the mid-Ulster migrant worker support groups, Animate and STEP, joined with the National Consultative Committee on Racism and Interculturalism to hold a conference on 'Promoting the Rights of Migrant Workers'. This pinpointed many of the human and civil rights issues raised by migration.

The **Department of Employment and Learning** now has a migrant workers branch. This co-ordinates a group to address issues of research regarding statistics, needs and public services; joined up government and information sharing; inspection and enforcement; and the roles of the government and voluntary/community sector. Research in Scotland, the Irish Republic and Northern Ireland enabled the publication in September 2006 of *Improving Government Service Delivery to Minority Ethnic Groups*, which addressed some of these issues. The Northern Ireland research acknowledged that our equality legislation (see pp 30–31) had been a remarkable tool in removing ignorance and helping public authorities to mainstream their responses to minority ethnic people. Emerging groups such as the Ballymena Inter Agency Forum were praised and many organisations and service providers now have specific staff to relate to minority ethnic people. On the negative side, it was recognised that some groups are more difficult to provide for than others. It is easier, for example, in the case of longstanding minority ethnic groups than migrant workers.

There is better information for incomers. The Multi-Cultural Resource Centre (MCRC), **Orientation Pack for Migrants**, compiled by Tatiana Rehakova, for people from mid and eastern European accession states, is now available in Polish as well as English. It contains leaflets with advice on employment, housing, social security, benefits, health services, education, shopping, transport and opening a bank account. To check on availability phone MCRC, (028) 9024 4639. **A Rights Guide for Migrant Workers: Your Rights in Northern Ireland** explains the rights and entitlements for foreign nationals working here. It is available in 3 versions and a number of languages depending on the country of origin. The guide covers employment, housing, healthcare, human rights, political, and educational issues. For further information or to obtain copies please contact the Law Centre NI (028) 9024 4401. Many local authorities have now developed welcome packs that help people to navigate their new social environment.

The **Gangmasters Licencing Act** became law in 2006. It seeks to curb exploitative activities of 'gangmasters' otherwise known as labour providers –

people who provide a flexible workforce especially where seasonal labour is required. It creates a clearer distinction between legal and illegal labour providers. However, it is limited in its remit and applies mostly to the agriculture and food processing industry. The **Gangmasters Licensing Authority (GLA)** shares intelligence and co-operates with other agencies in working to safeguard the welfare of workers. Licences are issued for 12 months and there is an inspection system. It only has a small number of people responsible for compliance and there is still widespread concern about vulnerable workers.

Recent investigations by the BBC in England confirmed the existence of serious abuse, and the urgent need for new safeguards. An official inquiry is being launched into evidence gathered by the BBC that migrant workers are being trafficked into Britain and exploited. Detective Chief Constable Grahame Maxwell programme director of the UK Human Trafficking Centre, said the opening of Europe's borders had brought with it a new kind of people trafficking '...This is a kind of forced or bonded labour – this is modern day slavery.' Paul Whitehouse, who chairs the Gangmasters Licensing Authority, told BBC 2's *Newsnight*: 'It's two hundred years since slavery was abolished. We mustn't allow it to continue now.' Aidan McQuade, director of campaign group Anti-Slavery International, said trafficking to exploit labour involved a number of factors. These included the use of deception, intimidation, the removal of documents, excessive charges for accommodation and transport, the exploitation of someone's irregular immigration status or the fact they are in debt, in order to force them to work in conditions they do not agree to. To read more see BBC News: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/6594577.stm> See also the GLA web site: [www.gla.gov.uk](http://www.gla.gov.uk)

### Some interested groups:

**ANIMATE** [www.animate-ccd.net](http://www.animate-ccd.net)

**Belfast Welcome Centre**

**Concordia** [www.concordiapartnership.org/home.asp](http://www.concordiapartnership.org/home.asp)

**Council for the Homeless in Northern Ireland** [www.chni.org.uk](http://www.chni.org.uk)

**Equality Commission** [www.equalityni.org](http://www.equalityni.org)

**Northern Ireland Council for Ethnic Minorities (NICEM)** [www.nicem.org.uk](http://www.nicem.org.uk)

**Shelter** [www.northernirelandshelter.org.uk](http://www.northernirelandshelter.org.uk)

**Simon Community** [www.simoncommunity.org](http://www.simoncommunity.org)

**STEP (South Tyrone Empowerment Project)** [www.stepni.org](http://www.stepni.org)

**Ballymena Ethnic Minorities Project** Email: [emp@ballemenacommunityforum.org](mailto:emp@ballemenacommunityforum.org)

See [www.arthurrankcentre.org.uk](http://www.arthurrankcentre.org.uk) for information about the Churches Rural Group in England and positive suggestions about responses to rural migrant workers.

### The Northern Ireland Council for Ethnic Minorities (NICEM)

*is no longer funded to give Immigration Advice. People should now be encouraged to ring one of the Law Centre advice lines Belfast (028) 90244401 or Derry/Londonderry (028) 71262433.*

### Useful sources include:

Animate, South Tyrone Empowerment Programme, National Consultative Committee on Racism and Interculturalism, *Promoting Rights of Migrant Workers, Conference Report*, 23 May 2006, 2006.

*Migrant Workers in Northern Ireland: Meeting the Needs of Migrant Workers, their Families and their Employers*, a policy paper, Concordia, March 2006.

Philip Watt and Fiona McGaughey, *How Public Authorities Provide Services to Minority Ethnic Groups: Emerging Findings Discussion Paper*, NCCRI, 2006.

Philip Watt and Fiona McGaughey, *Improving Government Service Delivery to Minority Ethnic Groups*, Belfast 2006.

Kathryn Bell, Neil Jarman and Thomas Levebvre, *Migrant Workers in Northern Ireland*, Institute for Conflict Research, Belfast, 2004.

Neil Jarman, *Migrant Workers in Northern Ireland (Review)* Institute for Conflict Research, 2004.

## People Seeking Asylum and Refugees

'In 2006, we celebrate the indestructible hope which drives refugees to defy all odds in order to survive and, eventually to rebuild their lives.'

World Refugee Day statement from the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR), June 2006

'...we recognize that it is becoming more and more difficult for people to cross borders to seek a place of refuge. Simply put, their story is often not believed and they are turned back. The coming among us of Jesus, as part of the human family, reminds us that no one is excluded from God's family. Building up this family is our task as individuals Christians, as communities and as a country.'

Sr Joan Roddy, Director of the Bishops' Refugee & Migrant Project, Maynooth, 14 January, 2006 speaking about the World Day of Migrants and Refugees.  
[www.catholiccommunications.ie](http://www.catholiccommunications.ie)

A small number of people here have been forced to flee from their home countries, and this makes them particularly vulnerable, as there are often few, if any, other people from their own ethnic and cultural backgrounds to help them through the experience. Applications for asylum are lodged with the Home Office and there are no separate officially published figures for those who apply from Northern Ireland. However, the Home Office has stated that there were 165 applications here in 2003 and only 110 between January and October 2004. The Northern Ireland Council for Ethnic Minorities (subcontracted until recently by the Refugee Council to channel support services for people seeking asylum) reported that the number of service users declined from 166 in the year August 2004–July 2005 to 153 in the year August 2005 to July 2006. During that time the number of single applicants increased from 61 to 129 and the number of families fell from 30 to 24. [www.nicem.org.uk](http://www.nicem.org.uk) (These numbers do not include asylum applicants who have not sought support through NICEM.)

Asylum and immigration issues have risen to the top of the political agenda in recent years, partly because of the genuine fears of some people in the more overcrowded parts of Great Britain, and partly because of a climate of political and media hysteria. This is a factor in fuelling racist attitudes. Immigration and asylum are election issues with both Conservative and Labour vying to have even tougher policies. The press has helped to turn the words 'asylum seeker' into a term of abuse, but politicians have also not always been careful with their language. House of Commons leader, Jack Straw, is quoted as claiming that the problems at the Home Office were less to do with the staff but the people they deal with, 'dysfunctional individuals many of them, criminals, asylum seekers, people who do not wish to be subject to social control...'. [bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk\\_politics/5017028.stm](http://bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk_politics/5017028.stm), 25 May 2006. The needs of vulnerable people have become secondary in this emotionally charged climate.

## In 2005

Asia hosted 41% of the world's refugees, 8.6 million people, followed by Africa (25%) 5.2 million, Europe (18%) 3.7 million, Latin America (12%) 2.5million, North America (3%) 716,800 and Oceania (04%) 82,500.

Source: Refugees by Numbers 2006, UNHCR [www.unhcr.org](http://www.unhcr.org)

So, there have been many restrictive changes in the law in recent years. This, rather than a markedly safer world, accounts for a marked drop in applications. The United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR), commenting in March 2005, noted that numbers of asylum applicants in the UK had plummeted by 61% in 2 years. (25,720 asylum applications, excluding dependants, were received in 2005, 24 per cent less than the 33,960 applications in 2004. There was a further 9% drop in 2006 with 23,520 applications. Of the 20,960 who got initial decisions, 10% were granted asylum and 11% Humanitarian Protection or Discretionary Leave to Remain. 79% were refused. [www.statistics.gov.uk](http://www.statistics.gov.uk).)

Local concerns need to be seen in the international context. The countries which host most of the world's displaced people are often poor, are those in conflict, or have conflict on their borders. The United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) calculated that there were 1,200,000 internally displaced people in Iraq at the start of 2006. The top 2 countries hosting refugees at this time were Pakistan (next to Afghanistan) with 1,085,000, and Iran (on the borders of Iraq) with 716,000. In February 2007 the Refugee Council accused the United Kingdom of not pulling its weight, and pointed out that while Jordan and Syria host 1.5 million Iraqi refugees we had only 950 applications for asylum from Iraqi nationals in 2006. [www.refugeecouncil.org.uk](http://www.refugeecouncil.org.uk).

## ASYLUM: THE APPLICATION PROCESS IN NORTHERN IRELAND

Frequent changes in legislation mean that the application process, rules and conditions of leave to remain vary, depending on when application has been made. (For example, some people who applied a number of years ago are allowed to work while their claim is processed. People who apply today are generally not allowed to work, although they can apply for permission to do so if their case is not settled after a year.) Claimants must now make an **Asylum Application** at the earliest opportunity on arrival. A **Screening Interview** establishes their identity and nationality and checks if another country should be considering their case. This process includes fingerprinting as a check of identity against an international database. Applicants undergo induction and are told about their rights and responsibilities. They are issued with an identity number. Under a new process, known informally as **Fast Track**, some people, from countries thought to be 'safe', are immediately detained and transferred to Great Britain while their cases are considered. If the case is not deemed to be arguable, then the person may be deported swiftly. Or, they may be sent to other parts of Great Britain under Home Office dispersal arrangements.

If people seeking asylum cannot support themselves the **National Asylum Support Service (NASS)** can provide subsistence benefits, 70% of normal social security benefits. As of 9 April 2007 the weekly allowances are as follows:

A couple	£64.96
A lone parent	£41.41
A single person over 25	£41.41
A single person between 18 and 25	£32.80
A young person between 16 and 18	£35.65
A child under 16	£47.45

On top of these allowances there are additional payments: £3 per week for a pregnant woman and children between the age of one and three, for the purchase

healthy food; and £5 per week for a child under 1 year.

In May 2007 **Bryson One Stop Service** took over from the Northern Ireland Council for Ethnic Minorities (NICEM) as the group sub-contracted by the **Refugee Council** (the main charitable British refugee support organisation) to facilitate advice and emergency assistance for asylum applicants who are over 18. (NICEM is still currently offering a refugee **Integration Service** for those who get a favourable decision.) Children and young adults are the responsibility of the appropriate **Health and Social Services Board**. Follow-on accommodation is provided by the **Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE)**, on behalf of NASS, and is sourced from private landlords and housing associations. Most asylum applicants in Northern Ireland live in the community while they are waiting to have their claims assessed but they may be detained at any time. Most are not allowed to undertake paid employment. Throughout the application process people may be asked to report to the authorities: immigration officials or police stations. At any time during the application process people can ask for help to return to their home country voluntarily.

Applicants have previously been required to complete a **Statement of Evidence Form (SEF)** which has to be completed in English. There is then an **Asylum Interview** at which people can submit additional information such as medical reports. Home Office officials interview applicants and case officers **Assess the Claim** and make an **Initial Decision**, by looking at the consistency of the evidence, and relating this to background information on the country of origin, supplied by the Country Information and Policy Unit of the Home Office Immigration and Nationality Directorate. The claim may be allowed under the 1951 Convention on the Status of Refugees or on human rights grounds under the European Convention on Human Rights.

Successful applicants are entitled to the same social and economic rights as UK citizens and are assessed for housing like everyone else. They have full access to medical treatment, education and employment, but most applications fail at this stage. Latest Home Office figures show that of the 23,520 applications in the UK last year. Only 10% were successfully granted asylum following the initial decision, with 11% given **Humanitarian Protection or Discretionary Leave to Remain**. The other 79% were refused. 18,235 people whose applications failed were removed from the country, 16% more than in 2005. (This includes people who returned to their home country voluntarily.) [www.statistics.gov.uk](http://www.statistics.gov.uk)

Unsuccessful applicants have normally had a right of Appeal to a tribunal before an immigration judge. This takes place in a court setting in Northern Ireland. Applicants who fail at the appeal stage are able to apply for a review of the immigration judge's decision, if the earlier decision was wrong in law, and the error would have made a difference. If this is unsuccessful then a person may apply for **Statutory Review**. In some cases, people who have not been able to demonstrate that they fulfil the criteria, but who need protection, could be given **Exceptional Leave to Remain**. This has been replaced recently by the more restrictive categories of **Humanitarian Protection** or **Discretionary Leave**. Both of these are rarely given.

Changes in asylum legislation have tended to be increasingly restrictive. Successful asylum claimants in the past, and who were granted **Refugee Status**, also received **Indefinite Leave to Remain**, but since August 2005 they are only granted **Limited Leave to Remain**, for 5 years in the first instance. After this

## The Fast Track process

*'The Home Office issued new guidance in February 2006. This included the statement that "any asylum claim, whatever the nationality or country of origin of the claimant, may be fast tracked where it appears, after screening, to be one that may be decided quickly". The list of countries of origin deemed suitable for fast track processing has now extended to 55. Asylum seekers from 15 of these countries (plus Nigeria and Ghana for men) whose claims are "certified as clearly unfounded" can only appeal after they have been returned to their own country (known as Non Suspensive Appeals or NSA). They have no right of appeal in this country.'*

*Extract from In Touch, the bulletin of the Association of Visitors to Immigration Detainees (AVID) No. 35, April 2006*

time there is a reassessment, taking into account such things as a possible improvement to the situation in their country of origin. In the meantime they have rights to family reunion, to benefits and the right to work

In the past it has been common for the process described here to last for several years, but the Government has made strenuous efforts recently to speed up the process and also to attempt to remove a greater number of people whose applications have failed. The streamlining of the system has led to a diminution of legal safeguards in dealing with people seeking asylum.

As asylum applications have dropped, the **Home Office Quality Initiative Project** has aimed to improve the way in which they are assessed and to expedite the process. It is hoped to get more decisions right at the first stage. The United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) has been working with the Government and feels it is making genuine efforts but that there is still a need for improvement. Their fourth report to the Home Office in January 2007 continues to recommend improved training and accreditation for caseworkers, who should have university degrees or equivalent. They also stress the importance of improving the way in which facts are gathered and the need for good research and up to date information on the situation in countries of origin of claimants.

For more see [www.ind.homeoffice.gov.uk/6353/aboutus/unhcrfourthreport.pdf](http://www.ind.homeoffice.gov.uk/6353/aboutus/unhcrfourthreport.pdf)

From March 2007 new applicants fall within the government's **New Asylum Model (NAM)** which is aimed at ensuring that as many asylum cases are concluded within 6 months, partly by categorising applicants at initial screening. This is called **Segmentation**. The 5 segments include:

- Segment 1: People who could have claimed asylum in a third country
- Segment 2: Unaccompanied minors
- Segment 3: People from one of 16 'safe' countries who may not be entitled to appeal in this country
- Segment 4: Applications that are regarded as 'late and opportunistic' e.g. following arrest for working without documentation
- Segment 5: All other cases

On the positive side, each applicant will have a single **Case Owner**, a named Home Office official responsible for their case who will be better trained than before. It is also proposed that in complex cases there will be more flexibility in the time-scales, so that cases can be properly presented. However, in general, the Refugee Council feels that the timings are generally too short for proper evidence to be sought on behalf of applicants. In particular, vulnerable people such as abused women, children and victims of torture will find it difficult to disclose sensitive information within the time allowed. Also, under NAM, people will no longer have the opportunity to submit a written statement of evidence (SEF) and have no guarantee that they will see a legal representative before their substantive interview. There is also anxiety that segmentation may be arbitrary and difficult to challenge. Broader fears are that the longstanding culture of disbelief remains.

Previous applications, called **Legacy Cases**, will gradually come under NAM. (To read more, see the Refugee Council briefing on the NAM see [www.refugeecouncil.org.uk](http://www.refugeecouncil.org.uk).)

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### **Bryson One Stop Service for Asylum Applicants**

*A 24-hour advice and support service for refugees and people seeking asylum, is no longer provided by NICEM. People should be advised to contact:*

*Bryson One Stop Service*

*9 Lower Crescent, Belfast BT7 1NR*

*Tel: (028) 9043 9226*

*Their emergency out of hours number for asylum claimants in need of assistance is (028) 9024 2025*

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### **Web sites:**

Home Office, Immigration and Nationality Directorate:

[www.ind.homeoffice.gov.uk](http://www.ind.homeoffice.gov.uk)

Law Centre (NI) [www.cinni.org](http://www.cinni.org)

Northern Ireland Council for Ethnic Minorities (NICEM) [www.nicem.org.uk](http://www.nicem.org.uk)

Refugee Council (UK): [www.refugeecouncil.org.uk](http://www.refugeecouncil.org.uk)

UNHCR [www.unhcr.org.uk](http://www.unhcr.org.uk)

### **PROBLEMS FOR PEOPLE SEEKING ASYLUM**

**Isolation:** Many people have lost all contact with friends and family and a way of life where they had worthwhile jobs and status. People here are unlikely to understand their culture.

**Language:** The language barrier is a problem in the asylum application process, in daily life (including communication with doctors) and in developing a normal social life.

**The Application Process:** The process, previously described by Les Allamby of the Law Centre as, 'a war of attrition', has included delays, difficulties with translation, and limited access to financial and other social support. There can be high levels of fear and anxiety. People who may have been tortured or abused find the questioning difficult. It is also hard for most people to back up their cases with written evidence. Research has shown that people fleeing from repression often have difficulty in recalling the details of traumatic events. They do not always make the best witnesses. Efforts to expedite the system bring other problems. (See p. 20 above.)

**Detention:** There is a strong fear of detention and the humiliation it brings.

**Harassment and Discrimination:** Most people will experience verbal abuse either on racial grounds, or because of the stigma attached to being an 'asylum seeker'. The sense of rejection can be powerful.

**Not Being Allowed to Work:** Enforced idleness makes hours of anxiety seem longer and people feel shame at living off the state. Some find volunteering beneficial.

**Poverty:** The basic allowance of 70% of normal benefit gives no leeway for emergencies, especially where there is none of the family support that exists for local people. There can also be administrative glitches that leave people

### Some examples

from Bristol quoted in the  
Tablet, 12 Feb. 2005:

Consuelo: 'You don't know  
what to do all day' and  
Grace speaks of 'psycho-  
logical torture, to drive  
you mad and make you  
want to go back.'

temporarily without even enough to eat. (For details of the allowances see p18.)

**Diet:** It can take a while to adjust to cooking cheap, locally available, ingredients to replace a familiar diet. People end up with a poor diet and digestive problems.

**Climate:** Applicants often come from hot climates and find it hard to keep warm here.

**Health:** Pre-existing illnesses and injuries may be made worse by poverty, living conditions and climate.

**Stress and Depression:** Some people will be suffering from the after-effects of wounds and torture, or the death of relatives. Trauma and the worry about failing to achieve refugee status may easily contribute towards chronic depressive illness.

**Exploitation:** Asylum applicants who work illegally, or failed applicants who stay and work in the underground economy are often exploited, in the hours they work, and the conditions in which they live and work. They are vulnerable to abuse by their employers.

***Remember** that international conflict, and trade and justice issues interact directly with refugee issues. Campaigning around these issues and support for development organisations will help to prevent the misery of people having to flee from their homes or move because of extreme poverty.*

### Destitution

Failed asylum applicants are not entitled to work and most lose their small amounts of benefit. They are forced to live on what handouts they can manage to obtain or slipping into the black economy with all its dangers and potential for exploitation. Most are asked to leave the country as soon as possible. Although the Government has increased the number of removals it is unable to enforce this in all cases. Some countries will not accept people back and others have poor human rights records. The health of individual applicants may also be a factor in preventing removals. A recent independent inquiry reported that the present system falls between two stools in terms of being too soft-hearted or too tough, and leaves 'an invisible population of destitute people who can neither go home nor contribute to British society'. The Joseph Rowntree Trust team based their research in Leeds where they found people failed by 'a tattered safety net', rough sleeping, with grave social and health problems and many wrestling with thoughts of suicide. The report calls for revocable licences to work until people can go home and reasonable assistance such as basic food, shelter and care. Inquiry chair Kate Adie said 'For the benefit of everyone, there has to be urgent and pragmatic reform which brings these people in from the shadows so that they can be treated humanely, contribute to the community and remain inside the system.' (28 March 2007) To read more about the report, *Moving on: From Destitution to Contribution*, see [www.jrct.org.uk](http://www.jrct.org.uk).

### Lunchtime Drop-in for Refugees

NICRAS, the Northern Ireland Committee for Refugees and Asylum Seekers, is the only refugee-led organisation in Northern Ireland. This community group

for refugees and people seeking asylum aims to support the integration process while consciousness raising, campaigning and informing people about the legal situation, and organising social and fundraising events.

NICRAS is becoming much more active and now has an address at One Vision Offices, Unit 2, 129 Ormeau Road, Belfast, BT7 1SH, Tel: 90246699, E-mail [nicras@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:nicras@hotmail.co.uk). They have a Thursday lunchtime drop-in for refugees and people seeking asylum, at the One Vision Offices (12.30–2.00).

### NICRAS Volunteering Programme

It is now possible to volunteer with NICRAS. This programme has two aspects. People who are applying for asylum here are given the possibility to undertake worthwhile activities. (In the past they have made valuable contributions mostly to working in the community sector.) NICRAS are now also looking for people who support the aims of NICRAS to volunteer in a number of ways, such as helping at social events, lobbying and advocacy, assisting asylum applicants in accessing funding for education, and finding opportunities for them to volunteer. To find out more contact NICRAS. (See above.)

'Human beings are social animals. They depend on others. Their family, or extended family, is the group on which many people most heavily depend, socially, emotionally and often financially. There comes a point at which, for some, prolonged and unavoidable separation from this group seriously inhibits their ability to live full and fulfilling lives'.

Lord Bingham quoted on the National Coalition of Anti-Deportation Campaigns web site, April 2007. <http://www.ncadc.org.uk>

# Enforcement of Immigration and Asylum Legislation

## Background

The political rhetoric of the immigration/asylum debate has helped to create a climate where the Government wants to be seen to be active in removing people with criminal convictions, those without documents (including visa overstayers) and people whose asylum claims have been unsuccessful. There are targets for numbers to be removed and large numbers of deportations are trumpeted as a sign of political success.

Immigration officers, acting on behalf of the Home Office, have the right to detain anyone they suspect of committing an immigration offence, people waiting for a decision on an application for asylum in this country or about to be removed. In practice this may include people who have strayed across the border, people seeking asylum who live in the community but who are thought to have broken the Home Office conditions e.g. by spending time away from home or by getting paid work. Detention periods may be very short or quite lengthy.

The issue of immigration detention in Northern Ireland has given concern for some time. Numbers have risen over the years and there have been anxieties around treatment and conditions. In the past, the major campaigning issue was around the stigmatising of people who had not been convicted of any crime but were held in prison or prison-like conditions. A number of bodies here, including the Churches, have made representations to Government over the years. Partly because of this, male detainees were no longer housed in prison but moved to a dedicated wing in a small prison 'work out unit' on Belfast's **Crumlin Road** in 2004. In the same year all women prisoners and female immigration detainees were moved from **Maghaberry Prison** to **Hydebank Wood Young Offenders' Centre**.

The **Refugee Action Group (RAG)** is an umbrella group of interested groups, including EMBRACE. Much of its information used to be gained from the first hand experiences of RAG volunteers, who visited detainees each week. A RAG report on detention, in February 2006, showed that the number of immigration detainees held in Northern Ireland continued to rise in 2005/06. 120 people were held in detention in Northern Ireland at the orders of the Immigration Service during 2005. Of this number, about one-third (37 people) were seeking asylum and over a quarter (33 people) were women. They came from 25 different countries with (57%) from various African countries, 45 from Nigeria. There were 8% from China, 7% from South Africa and 7% from Romania. About one-third of detainees (41 people) were subsequently deported to their country of origin, one-fifth (27 people) were transferred to detention in Great Britain and a further one-fifth (25 people) were released or bailed. 91% of detainees were arrested while entering Northern Ireland, with most being seized at airports and ferry terminals.

## In 2005 the Government ended immigration detention in Northern Ireland.

People apprehended here are now sent to removal centres in Great Britain, a development of what RAG had already highlighted as a worrying trend in 2005. Some of the anxieties about this are:

- Concern that people may not receive timely legal advice and there will therefore be greater risk of deportation to countries where human rights are abused.
- There will be less scrutiny and the local spotlight of social concern.
- If detainees are removed from Northern Ireland against their will, they lose contact with family, friends and support networks, including the solicitors who are familiar with their cases.

Since this change it has indeed proved much more difficult to monitor how many people have been taken from Northern Ireland to removal centres in GB, or whether the other anxieties are well founded. However it is clear that the increase in numbers has continued, with at least several hundred people apprehended during last year, and removed to GB. In some cases it has proved more difficult for people to communicate with families and solicitors. The **Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission** is examining the situation currently and RAG also hopes to undertake research when NIHRC have completed their overview.

## Belfast Immigration Enforcement Unit

A unit opens this year, which will house Home Office officials and members of the PSNI. Gardai officers will be present in order to ensure that there is prompt liaison with the southern authorities. There is frustration that this enforcement unit is being put in place while there is no government centre giving helpful advice on immigration, at a time when the Northern Ireland economy is benefiting from so many migrant workers.

In addition to the earlier concerns, immigration documentation infringements are now criminal offences and this means that some people may once more be remanded within the prison system. There are also fears that people may be allocated solicitors with experience of criminal offences who lack the specialist expertise to advise on immigration and asylum cases.

# Racism

... 'we must not merely regard black and minority ethnic people as 'deserving' respect and inclusion, but reject racism as the sin of exclusion, disrespect and 'segregation', by grasping and cherishing the fact that all God's children inherently share in the dignity of the Being of God.'

Rev. Arlington Trotman, Churches Commission on Racial Justice speaking at the All Ireland Churches' Consultative Meeting on Racism (AICCMR) conference, *Challenged by Difference: Threat or Enrichment*, November 2005.

## Police Figures.

In 2004–05 a total of 813 racial incidents were recorded in Northern Ireland. Of the 634 recorded racist offences there was 1 murder, 187 woundings and assaults, 61 cases of intimidation and harassment, and 322 criminal damage offences. The percentage clearance rate was 15.9%. Unfortunately these figures rose in 2005–6 to 936 overall. While there were no murders, there were 238 woundings or assaults and 351 incidents of criminal damage. The clearance rate rose to 20.5%. Source: [www.psnl.police.uk](http://www.psnl.police.uk)

Northern Ireland has been labelled the race hate capital of Europe and we have a rising tide of hate crime against people from minority ethnic groups and migrant workers.

We are all aware of the physical and verbal racial attacks. However, more subtle forms of racial discrimination, indifference and overlooking can exist throughout people's lives, in contacts with official bodies, in the schoolroom, job hunting and the workplace, medical and housing services, and socially.

## Deprived of identity

'People threaten you saying they are UVF/UDA and may be or not, they tell you that they see you as "Indian" and think you don't know the difference'.

A member of the Bangladeshi community quoted in *30 Years Seen but Not Heard*

'Local people who want to do something for ethnic minorities tend to want to group them all together. ... Being put together with other ethnic groups can make us feel vulnerable unless we have enough support'.

Julie Chiang Li of the Belfast Chinese Christian Church quoted in *lion & lamb: racism and religious liberty*, Autumn 2004.

## School

'When my eldest first went to school he encountered some problems. He is quite dark and other little boys told him that his hands were very dirty. They were PI children too young to know any better. The principal took action'.

A mother from a minority ethnic community group quoted in *Fermanagh: Other Voices*

## The health service

A family did not know their 6-year old child was dying until the day he died because an interpreter was not offered to them.

'I have had to interpret for my wife, it was very serious, goodness knows what

would have happened if I had not been there'.

2 examples from the Bangladeshi community quoted in *30 Years Seen but Not Heard*

## Workplace

'Sometimes people will talk the bad language. Maybe call you Chinkie and maybe 'go back to your country' just like that you know. Some...will not be friendly you know, But most people is quite nice'.

A Chinese woman restaurant worker quoted in *Into the Light*.

## Officials

'They assume you are employed illegally'.

A member of the Bangladeshi community, complaining about heavy-handed raids on restaurants. *30 Years Seen but Not Heard*

## Politics

'Everyone wanted you to take sides'...'people should not expect you to be involved in their fight'.

Extract from an interviewee quoted in an ICCM briefing for Church Leaders.

## Links with Sectarianism

' "Because I have darker skin", says Marizete, "people think I am Portuguese and therefore assume I am a Catholic." For this reason she avoids some parts of town.'

From an interview with a Brazilian Baptist pastor's wife, Marizete Lara living in Dungannon, *Lion & lamb: racism and religious liberty*, Autumn 2004.

## Subtle Racism

*Stereotyping:* People are asked questions such as: 'Are you a mail order bride?'

*Patronising:* 'It really annoys me when people ask me "where did you learn English?" People take it for granted that I don't know many things and that in general Asian people don't know many things.'

Women from a minority ethnic community group quoted in *Fermanagh: Other Voices*

## Church

'The local minister...provided tins of food and spoons to our home but did not invite us to his church. They [the Church] were saying we were poor. I was insulted. Would the same thing have happened if a white person moved into the area?'

An African woman quoted in an ICCM briefing for Church Leaders.

'Being a foreigner in this land has not been easy because people take you as a leper... We have once sat in the church ... we smiled as we sat down, but there was nothing in response. They shifted and moved to keep space and distance between us so much that it became embarrassing. ... Was this just? Everywhere we go, it brings home the fact that once you have coloured skin you are regarded as scum and a refugee who has come to take...take...take...'

Yvonne Mefor in *Inter-Cultural Insights: Christian Reflections on Racism, Hospitality and Identity from the Island of Ireland*

## The Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI)

have appointed Minority Liaison Officers in each area to respond to the increase in racial incidents and have published *Hate Crime, Racial Incidents: Protecting your Rights*. [www.psnl.org.uk](http://www.psnl.org.uk)

## The words we use...

A recent American study of 10 ethnic communities has revealed the lethal power of language. The most astonishing finding was that ethnic immigrant groups subjected to more "hate speech" were more likely than others to commit suicide.'

Psychiatrist, Raj Persaud, *Independent*, 29 January 2005

'I am from a rejected people. As a member of the Traveller Community neither society, nor the church knows me. And in not knowing me they fear and at times despise me. I am so tired of the rejection and ignorance. I too am much in need of the water from the well. I crave the life giving water that is life from God. ... My only hope is to be filled with the spirit of love or I will be lost to the continuous hurt I experience as a Traveller person.'

Cathleen McDonagh reflecting on John 4: 5-15 in *Inter-Cultural Insights*.

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## The word 'ethnic'

In reality the word 'ethnic' refers to all people because all people have ethnicity. In other words, each person belongs to a people group: Asian, white, black, all have a particular heritage. In order to be careful not to reinforce exactly what we are trying to defeat – racism and discrimination – African, African Caribbean, mixed heritage and Asian peoples in Britain are understood as minorities, simply in terms of numbers. White people in Britain are the majority. Whilst people prefer self-definition, 'minority ethnic', with the emphasis on 'minority' respects those minority identities because it emphasises 'minority', rather than 'ethnicity'. To emphasize ethnicity is to deny it to white people, and to use it negatively to segregate minority ethnicities from white ethnicities.

Consequently, even though it is widely used, 'ethnic minority' should be avoided as it places the emphasis wrongly on the ethnicity of African, African Caribbean, and Asian and mixed heritage people as the only ones that possess ethnicity. As such 'ethnic minority', for all intents and purposes means someone that is marginalized, excluded and unwanted in society, because those terms have attracted grossly negative connotations for minority ethnic groups in Britain.

'Ethnic group', 'ethnic community', 'the ethnics' 'ethnic minorities', 'ethnic people' as references to minorities in Britain are all linguistically incorrect, socially offensive, and do nothing to help our case against racism and racial discrimination.

Rev. Arlington Trotman Churches Commission on Racial Justice speaking at the All Ireland Churches' Consultative Meeting on Racism (AICCMR) conference, *Challenged by Difference: Threat or Enrichment* at Dromantine, November 2005.

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## Consider undertaking race or ethnicity awareness training

If you can get a local group together, the Irish School of Ecumenics, in Belfast, Learning Together: Education for Reconciliation Programme, may be able to design a course for you, based on biblical insights. They have also organised courses on hate crimes, including racism, and restorative justice.

[www.tcd.ie/ise](http://www.tcd.ie/ise)

Yvonne Naylor has developed resources for young people and these can be freely accessed on a number of websites including that of Corrymeela, [www.corrymeela.org](http://www.corrymeela.org) under 'Free resources'. They can also be seen on [www.puppetwoman.org](http://www.puppetwoman.org).

There are courses on ethnicity/ diversity awareness and anti-racism available from groups such as the Northern Ireland Council for Ethnic Minorities (NICEM) [www.nicem.org.uk](http://www.nicem.org.uk), the Multi-Cultural Resource Centre (MCRC) [www.mcrc-ni.org](http://www.mcrc-ni.org), the Chinese Welfare Association [www.cwa-ni.org](http://www.cwa-ni.org), and the

Ulster Peoples' College. [ulsterpeoplescollege.org.uk](http://ulsterpeoplescollege.org.uk), Ask your District Council if there are any courses available locally. Members are made aware of the training which EMBRACE makes available from time to time.

## Some interested groups:

**Chinese Welfare Association** [www.cwa-ni.org](http://www.cwa-ni.org)

**Equality Commission for Northern Ireland** [www.equalityni.org](http://www.equalityni.org)

**Labour Relations Agency** [www.lra.org.uk](http://www.lra.org.uk)

**Law Centre NI** [www.cinni.org](http://www.cinni.org)

**Northern Ireland Council for Ethnic Minorities (NICEM)** [www.nicem.org.uk](http://www.nicem.org.uk)

**Northern Ireland Citizens Advice Bureaux (NIACAB)** [www.citizensadvice.co.uk](http://www.citizensadvice.co.uk)

**Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission** [www.nihrc.org](http://www.nihrc.org)

**Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI)** 0800 555 111  
[www.crimestoppersni.com](http://www.crimestoppersni.com)

**Victim Support** [www.victimsupport.org](http://www.victimsupport.org)

## Important resource:

*Seeking Advice and Redress Against Racism in Northern Ireland: An Information Handbook*, Equality Commission for Northern Ireland and National Consultative Committee on Racism & Interculturalism, March 2005 (This booklet also contains *Seeking Advice and Redress Against Racism in Ireland* for people in the Republic of Ireland.) This publication is available online: [www.equalityni.org](http://www.equalityni.org) and [www.nccri.ie](http://www.nccri.ie)

## Sources:

Daniel Holder, Rozana Huq and Loanne Martin, *30 Years Seen But Not Heard; a Listening Session with the Bangladeshi (Sylheti) Community in Northern Ireland*, MCRC, Belfast, 2001.

Scott Boldt ed., *Inter-Cultural Insights: Christian Reflections on Racism, Hospitality and Identity from the Island of Ireland* is edited by Scott Boldt, All Ireland Churches' Consultative Meeting on Racism, Belfast 2007.

*Into the Light*, Conference Report, Equality Commission for Northern Ireland, Belfast, 1999.

*Lion & Lamb, Racism and Religious Liberty*, No 37 Autumn 2004.

## 'All forms of racism

are ultimately unsustainable because they are not only evil, but racism tries to subvert the essential identity of all human beings. We as Christians must embrace difference and be 'richer' by undergoing a measure of cultural integration, recognise our human interdependence, promote social and economic redistribution, and pursue ethnic harmony, so that our Being is being-in-love-for-one-another.'

Rev'd Arlington Trotman, Churches' Commission for Racial Justice (CCRJ), speaking at the ACCMR conference Nov. 2006.



# Official Responses

Incomers and members of minority ethnic groups have not always felt welcome here and report negative attitudes and unequal treatment by official bodies as well as individuals in society. **Institutional Racism** exists when there is collective failure to deal with people properly. This is similar to **Systemic Racism** where policies, practices and systems that work against certain groups of people become embedded in organisations. For example, deciding to treat everyone in exactly the same way may result in disadvantaging a group whose needs are not met by this policy. There is increasing awareness of the dangers and policies are being put in place to redress them.

Until very recently we have had a concentration on **Community Relations** strategies that attempted to address the divisions between Protestant and Catholic communities. The term **Good Relations** is applied to dealing positively with other forms of difference. **The Belfast Agreement** of 1998 refers to equality and parity of esteem for people from different social, religious and ethnic backgrounds. This has been given legal backing. **Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998** obliges public bodies to promote equality of opportunity between different groups of people, including 'racial groups'. They are also obliged to promote good relations between people of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group. Public bodies are obliged to have **Equality Schemes** and to submit their policies to **Equality Impact Assessments** that are open to public scrutiny.

Under the **Race Relations (Northern Ireland) Order 1997** it was already unlawful to discriminate either directly or indirectly on racial grounds, in terms of employment and training; education; provision of goods and services; and the disposal and management of premises and advertisements. **The Human Rights Act 1998** gave people rights to protection under the European Convention on Human Rights. A **Human Rights Commission** and **Equality Commission** have been set up in Northern Ireland to ensure that existing legislation and practice protect and uphold human rights and equality. They also have an advisory role on these issues.

Following consultation, the UK Government published **A Shared Future Policy and Strategic Framework for Good Relations in Northern Ireland (2005)**. <http://www.asharedfutureni.gov.uk/> It carries the aspiration that, through time, we will achieve, 'a normal civic society, in which all individuals are considered as equals'... 'A society where there is equity, respect for diversity and recognition of our interdependence.' The first policy objective flowing from this is to 'eliminate sectarianism, racism and all forms of prejudice and to enable people to live and work without fear or intimidation'. Northern Ireland is recognised as no longer being a bipolar society but one which is enriched by becoming more culturally diverse. It is also recognised however, that racism has emerged as a problem.

In practical terms, Government is setting up an inter-departmental **Good**

**Relations Panel** to shape policies and institutions. It includes faith representatives. The **Office of the First and Deputy First Minister (OFMDFM)** has a policy role and is responsible for challenging, undertaking research and monitoring progress. The new 2007 ministerial pledge of office includes the words 'and will promote a shared future'.

The existing **Community Relations Council** ([www.community-relations.org.uk](http://www.community-relations.org.uk)) has an enhanced role in good relations work, independent of Government and representative of civic society. **Community Relations Officers (CROs)** in district councils fund local good relations activities. A *Shared Future* recognises the role that churches and other faith-based organisations have to play in developing good relations at local level.

In July 2005, to complement A Shared Future, the government also published: **A Racial Equality Strategy for Northern Ireland 2005-2010**. Priority areas for practical action include training and employment, housing and accommodation, health, education, the criminal justice system, and the particular areas of concern around immigration, asylum and the exploitation of migrant workers.

Under this strategy, The **Racial Equality Unit** within OFMDFM manages a fund that is targeted at helping minority ethnic groups and other groups in the wider community to work together to foster integration. (See [www.pfngi.gov.uk](http://www.pfngi.gov.uk)) As well as the Racial Equality Unit, government has set up a **Racial Equality Forum** to help draw up an action plan, to implement the strategy, and to monitor and review progress.

The *Journey Towards Healing* booklet and training course on trauma for pastoral carers in faith-based organisations has been developed under the auspices of the Victims Unit OFMDFM and includes a recognition of trauma experienced through racism. [www.victimsni.org.uk](http://www.victimsni.org.uk)

The Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) has appointed Minority Liaison Officers in each area to respond to the increase in racial incidents and have published *Hate Crime, Racial Incidents: Protecting your Rights* [www.psni.org.uk](http://www.psni.org.uk)

## Useful documents

*A Shared Future Policy and Strategic Framework for Good Relations in Northern Ireland (2005)* <http://www.asharedfutureni.gov.uk/>

*A Racial Equality Strategy for Northern Ireland 2005-10* OFMDFM [www.ofmdfmi.gov.uk/raceequality](http://www.ofmdfmi.gov.uk/raceequality) The OFMDFM web site also contains other useful research texts on racism and racial equality. [www.research.ofmdfmi.gov.uk](http://www.research.ofmdfmi.gov.uk)

*A Good Relations Framework: an Approach to the Development of Good Relations*, the guidelines that sponsored bodies will be asked to use by the Community Relations Council. Available from [www.community-relations.org.uk](http://www.community-relations.org.uk)  
*The Journey towards Healing: A Faith-based Resource on Trauma* [www.victimsni.org.uk](http://www.victimsni.org.uk)

## Web sites

Equality Commission for Northern Ireland [www.equalityni.org.uk](http://www.equalityni.org.uk)  
Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission [www.nihrc.org.uk](http://www.nihrc.org.uk)  
Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency [www.nisra.gov.uk](http://www.nisra.gov.uk)

## The Racial Equality Strategy has 6 shared aims

– shared that is with minority ethnic representatives

- Equal protection and redress against racism and racist crime

- Equality of service provision for minority ethnic people in accessing public services

- To increase the sense of participation and belonging of people from minority ethnic backgrounds in public, political, economic, social and cultural life.

- To promote dialogue and mutual understanding between people of different faiths and cultural backgrounds

- To build capacity within minority ethnic communities

# The Christian Response

## Welcome

Celtic Blessing for Hospitality  
I saw a stranger yestereen,  
I put food in the eating place  
Drink in the drinking place  
Music in the listening place  
And in the sacred name of the Triune  
He blessed myself and my house  
My cattle and my dear ones  
As the lark said in her song  
'Often, often, often  
Goes the Christ in the stranger's guise.'

Quoted in *What the Bible Says about the Stranger*  
by Kieran J O'Mahony OSA. The Churches' Peace Education Programme,  
Irish Commission of Justice and Peace & Irish Council of Churches, Maynooth and  
Belfast, 1999.

In helping to build a welcoming community it is important not just to provide a welcome for newcomers but also to help existing populations to adjust to change. Cultural shock is acute for people who are made to feel out of place, but an influx of people who are different can also cause a range of emotions from unease to fear and hostility in local people. It is part of Christian leadership to acknowledge all these emotions and needs, and to find ways of creating mutual understanding and fellowship.

## CHURCH RESPONSES

### ...to issues of immigration, asylum and racism

The main Churches in Ireland have responded in different ways. The **Catholic Church** has a big commitment to refugees through the Refugee and Migrant Project in Maynooth and Sr Joan Roddy who co-ordinates of the Churches Asylum Network in the Irish Republic. The work of the Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People was published in 2004 as *Erga migrantes caritas Christi* (The love of Christ towards migrants). It examines the challenge of human mobility and the pastoral implications. Each diocese in Ireland now has a person in charge of the pastoral care of immigrants and they report to the Bishops' Conference. In June 2006 the Bishops issued a statement calling for legislation which protects the innocent parties in people trafficking and strengthens criminal sanctions against the traffickers.

The **Presbyterian Church in Ireland** has adopted a document, *Policy on Asylum Seekers and Refugees; a Report by the Race Relations Committee to the 2003 General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland*. It is more comprehensive

than the title suggests, as it also explores issues of immigration, racism and welcome. The responsibility in this area lies with the Race Relations Panel. The PCI Peacemaking Programme has a module on Relating to our Neighbours in its new Gospel in Conflict: Loving our Neighbour course. The **Methodist Church in Ireland** has adopted the Presbyterian policy document and addresses the issues through their Council on Social Responsibility. Scott Boldt, Reconciliation Development Officer at Edgehill Theological College is also currently continuing his work with the All-Ireland Churches Consultative Meeting on Racism (AICCMR) – see below.

The **Church of Ireland** is in the middle of a 3-year *Hard Gospel* programme that aims to improve the ways in which the church deals with difference at all levels. This includes the challenge of ethnic difference and consultations on immigration and racism are being run currently in every diocese. A six-part course on Loving our Neighbours has been distributed to all rectors and it includes a session on Welcoming the Stranger. One southern diocese, Dublin and Glendalough, has a working group on combating racism which has published a useful booklet: *Welcoming Angels*. Much of this publication (including the material on welcome) is equally applicable in the north, and although aimed at Church of Ireland parishes, other denominations should find ideas that resonate with them.

**Quakers** are raising awareness among their own members through workshops, seminars and regular exchange of information. They also work closely with other churches and faiths. Other Christian groups such as the **Evangelical Alliance** have worked to raise consciousness around the issues and the Centre for **Contemporary Christianity in Ireland (CCCI)** (formerly ECONI) have been involved in hosting conferences and building awareness. For example, see ECONI's *Lion & Lamb, Racism and Religious Liberty*, No 37 Autumn 2004 and Noel Fallows, 'Multi-cultural church life' in *Lion & Lamb*, No 36 Spring/ Summer 2004, pp 10–17.

The **Corrymeela Community** continues to provide an annual holiday break for refugees and people seeking asylum. Its website includes some useful resources. [www.corrymeela.org](http://www.corrymeela.org)

This year has seen a marked increase in the number of individuals, groups and congregations who are acting imaginatively at local level to make this a more welcoming community.

## Organisations and resources

Centre for Contemporary Christianity in Ireland (CCCI)  
[www.contemporarychristianity.org](http://www.contemporarychristianity.org)

Corrymeela Community [www.corrymeela.org](http://www.corrymeela.org)

Evangelical Alliance: [www.eauk.org/northern-ireland](http://www.eauk.org/northern-ireland)

The Refugee Project at Maynooth, publishes *Sanctuary*, on the Refugee situation in Ireland and the involvement of the Churches.  
[www.catholiccommunications.ie/sanctuary](http://www.catholiccommunications.ie/sanctuary)

Hard Gospel Project: [www.hardgospel.net](http://www.hardgospel.net)

Methodist Church in Ireland [www.irishmethodist.org](http://www.irishmethodist.org)

Presbyterian Church in Ireland [www.presbyterianireland.org](http://www.presbyterianireland.org)

## Welcoming Angels

is available from the  
Diocesan Office, Diocese  
of Dublin and  
Glendalough, Church of  
Ireland House, Church  
Avenue, Rathmines,  
Dublin 6. The price is  
5.00 euro.

## Inter-church structures

**Churches Together in Britain and Ireland (CTBI)** is the umbrella body for Christian Churches. It liaises with ecumenical bodies in Great Britain and Ireland as well as ecumenical organisations at European and world levels. It provides a forum for joint decision-making, and enables the Churches to take action together. See [www.ctbi.org.uk](http://www.ctbi.org.uk). The **Churches' Commission for Racial Justice (CCRJ)** ([www.ctbi.org.uk/ccrj](http://www.ctbi.org.uk/ccrj)) is a commission of Churches Together in Britain and Ireland, and includes representatives from the Churches and related organisations. It monitors trends and developments in the field of racial justice in Britain, Ireland and Europe, and seeks to co-ordinate the Churches' response on key issues.

In Ireland, the **Irish Council of Churches** includes the mainstream Protestant churches. The Irish Inter-Church Meeting includes the Catholic Church and the ICC members. That umbrella grouping combined with the CCRJ, as the **All-Ireland Churches Consultative Meeting on Racism (AICCMR)** and some initiatives have taken place. The late Fee Ching Leong undertook research for AICCMR that was published in November 2005 as *The experiences, expectations and aspirations of black and minority ethnic people in relation to the churches' role in tackling racism*. The interviews undertaken for this research reveal the shortcomings within the Churches in responding to the needs of minority ethnic people and this was discussed at a major conference in November 2005, Challenged by Difference: Threat or Enrichment. Follow-up sessions have been held to assist networking.

In May this year in Belfast, AICCMR hosted Taste and See, a series of workshops and worship reflecting the variety of new Christian worship expressions on the island of Ireland. The contact for AICCMR is Dr. Scott Boldt, Edgehill Reconciliation Project Edgehill Theological College 9 Lennoxvale Malone Road Belfast, BT9 5BY Tel: 028 9068 6933, Email: [rec@edgehillcollege.org](mailto:rec@edgehillcollege.org).

## BUILDING WELCOMING CONGREGATIONS

'So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are citizens with the saints and also members of the household of God.'

Ephesians 2: 19

'The authentic Christian community must always be asking "Who is being excluded?"'

Archbishop Rowan Williams quoted in Inter-Cultural Insights

Richard Kerr of the Presbyterian Race Relations Panel and EMBRACE has the following suggestions:

'Use **initiative** in exploring options. Find out what is appropriate in your situation and for those you meet. What works elsewhere may be a good pointer, but may well need adaptation for your situation and your gifts and resources. **Perseverance** is an important attribute; if at first you don't succeed try and try again. Some things may work, others (perhaps inexplicably) won't. It is important to **network** with other churches, statutory organisations and non-government organisations (NICEM, MCRC, Law Centre and ourselves in EMBRACE for

example. **Commitment** is required to make things happen and to build relationships. Within your congregation there will be need to inform and persuade members and leaders of the importance of reaching out. This will inevitably demand patience. Being involved may well involve **risk**; it will not necessarily be easy. Yet, the challenges and opportunities are there to be met, and provide us with an opportunity to share and show the love of Christ.'

The authors of *Welcoming Angels*, published by the Church of Ireland Archbishop of Dublin's Working Group on Combating Racism outlines 3 stages of Christian welcome:

- **'Genuinely outward-looking': a social welcome**  
The welcome beginning in the wider society
- **'Truly welcoming': a welcoming church event**  
How people are made welcome when they choose to attend a service
- **'Seriously inclusive': a structural welcome**  
Celebrating diversity and encouraging participation  
*Welcoming Angels*, Dublin 2005, pp37–51.

## Some ideas on congregational welcome (including some from *Welcoming Angels*):

- Ensure that the building is welcoming from the outside, with clear welcoming signs.
- As well as having individuals responsible for welcoming at services, involve the whole congregation in learning about the importance of welcome.
- Welcome should never be overwhelming, people need to take their time before they decide to make a congregation their home.
- Language is very important, and it is helpful if people can be greeted with a phrase or two in their own language.
- Encourage newcomers to participate, for example, in reading a lesson or taking up the collection/ offertory – small, visible signs of acceptance.
- Include some aspect of the worship tradition from the country of origin, such as a song or a prayer.
- Invite members of minority ethnic churches to take part in special services.
- Hold special services for example, in Refugee Week, Anti-Racism Sunday, or Holocaust Memorial Day, and invite members of minority groups to speak or attend.
- Expect blessings, such as enthusiasm and sense of fellowship, not just problems.

## What churches can do together

- Work together to let new residents know about church services and activities.
- It is helpful if local church leaders have an agreed policy so that they can respond jointly and immediately if a racist incident occurs.

## Liturgical expression

...can be very mono-cultural with music and movement (or lack of it) from one tradition. In the parish where I now serve as Parish Priest, we have three choirs, a "folk" choir, an African choir and a Filipino choir. The Filipino choir sings at the main Sunday service on the second Sunday of the month and the African choir on the last Sunday of the month. There would always, however, be at least three hymns in English on those days. This aspect of affirming identity needs to be mainstreamed so that it pervades all that we do.

Rev. Philip T Sumner from Oldham in England speaking at the All Ireland Churches' Consultative Meeting on Racism (AICCMR) conference, Challenged by Difference: Threat or Enrichment at Dromantine, November 2005.

### The words we use...

*We need to find out what people want to be called, and to expect change – at one time 'coloured' was acceptable for African or Caribbean people, now, in almost all cases, it is not. People became proud to be 'black', but some may now prefer to be 'people of colour'. People from the far East were once happy to be called 'Asian' or 'British Asian' or 'Irish Asian' but now some prefer other, more precise, religious, ethnic or national names.*

## PASTORAL CONSIDERATIONS

Many people who come here will adjust easily. However, we need to bear in mind that some people find a change of country very difficult. In addition, people who have been forced to flee here, destitute migrant workers, or undocumented people all have special difficulties. It is not always easy to understand people's feelings of insecurity, bewilderment, loneliness, suspicion, fears, hopes and needs, when their stories are so different from ours. We need an attitude of openness, respect and sensitivity.

- You may need to research where to access expertise – legal, social, and medical.
- You may be pressed to find a lot of time for people whose multiple problems leave them very emotionally dependent.
- You will need to be aware of special sensitivities, for example, regarding confidentiality. Someone left a church permanently because he felt shamed at being introduced as an asylum seeker by someone who probably only wanted him to be made especially welcome.
- In responding to a racist incident the natural instinct to make public your sense of outrage should always be overridden if the victim of the attack needs privacy.
- In some cultural backgrounds women should never be visited by a single man so it is helpful to make at least initial pastoral visits in pairs.
- Be aware that immigrants and minority ethnic groups are not homogeneous; there is great diversity, and sometimes animosity, within and between ethnic groups.
- It is important to listen empathetically. It can be a challenge to hear what someone is feeling and not just the words they are saying. Different cultures invariably express things in different ways, even similar words can be understood in different ways, and body language can be significant.
- You may never know if what people tell you is completely true, and it is hard to measure up a story when the normal parameters do not apply. You have to take a certain amount on trust, and you may find cultural signals confusing. A failure to make eye contact may appear a sign of untrustworthiness or trauma, when in reality it may only be what is regarded as respectful in the country of origin.
- We all make cultural mistakes, whether in your assumptions, language or behaviour, such as simply forgetting to remove your shoes in an Asian house.
- You may be confronted by new unpleasant issues, such as prostitution and people trafficking.
- You may find yourself acting at or beyond the edge of the law and uncertain where the moral and legal boundaries lie.
- Above all you will not be human if you do not experience frustration and anger, pain and guilt, as there is often little which can be done to assist in immigration cases which are governed by procedures which seem beyond influence.

## HELPING TO BUILD MORE INCLUSIVE COMMUNITIES

Christians are not just called to be welcoming within their congregations but also within their private lives and in how they act as part of the wider community.

'The command to love your neighbour extends to everybody who lives near you and everybody you meet in the six days between attending church. ... We should avoid thinking of 'church' as simply a 'church' building and instead think of ourselves as the active, committed people of God.'

*Welcoming Angels*, Dublin 2005, p. 40.

'People deprived of familiar rootedness in family, culture, tradition and geography deserve the next best thing, which is welcome, hospitality and compassionate concern in their new environment.'

Paul Surlis, 'Exile, *The Furrow*, April 2000, (reproduced in *Inter-Cultural Insights*.)

Extracts from some suggestions by Rt Rev. Dr Ken Newell, former Moderator of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland on the subject of racism:

**Refocus on the life God calls you to live in your community:** 'live a life of love'.

**Assess your emotional involvement with the issue:** 'Before Hlaleleni from Zimbabwe described the hell of racist abuse she had been put through in an estate in East Belfast, I felt emotionally detached from the problem of racism. After hearing her story of windows smashed, doors kicked in and dog's dirt shovelled in piles on her doorstep, I changed.'

**Change your lifestyle:** 'Become more socially inclusive. If you rarely have people from a different ethnic, religious or cultural backgrounds to your home for a meal, why not adopt a different approach? Open your heart and your home. ... There is nothing more powerful than your neighbours seeing you enjoy the friendship of people from different ethnic and racial backgrounds.'

**Open up the issue in your church:** 'Compile a dossier of racial attacks in your area. Share this material with your friends in church. Present it to your minister and church leaders. Ask them to discuss it and initiate a positive response in your area. ... Would Jesus be passive if he lived in your neighbourhood? He does!'

*From lion & lamb: racism and religious liberty*, Autumn 2004

### How we can learn about each other

- Encourage racial awareness and anti-racism training.
- Hold celebration meals such as harvest suppers where you might invite people from minority ethnic groups to share their cooking traditions with you.
- Celebrate festivals such as Chinese New Year.
- Visit cultural centres together. For example, people from a rural background,

anywhere in the world, will find something in common at somewhere like the Ulster Folk and Transport Museum.

- Visit the cultural centres of minority ethnic communities – such as the Indian Community Centre in Belfast, to learn, and affirm their presence as part of a shared society.
- Learn about other people's religious beliefs and practices by hosting an exhibition, visiting religious centres, or inviting members of other faiths to explain their religious beliefs.
- Encourage young people to study the languages, cultures and religions of people from local minority ethnic populations.
- Find ways of celebrating and honouring the achievement of individuals and groups from minority ethnic populations in your community.
- Use any forum, inter-church groups, Community Safety Groups, District Policing Partnerships, to make sure that even minor acts of racism are taken seriously.

### The use of church premises and other resources

Churches form part of the social capital of a community and many already make their buildings, facilities and the skills of their members available to other groups. These are some suggestions as to how our churches can, and are being used:

- A community audit of local needs
- Working with others on a welcome pack for new residents
- Drop-in centres giving people the chance to integrate
- Mother and toddler groups for refugees or the families of migrant workers
- After-school clubs, helping incoming children to adjust to the differences in our education system
- Language and conversation classes
- Advice centres for newcomers
- Recreational facilities for minority ethnic groups

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### Passing by on the other side?

*Many of us feel uncomfortable when we pass by people who ask for money in the street, whether it is for goods that we do not want or simply begging. For local people in this position we usually have a strategy worked out that we can live with. We now see people who are obviously 'not from here', perhaps women in selling magazines, accompanied by babies or young children; young girls selling flowers late at night; or young men dodging the traffic to sell newspapers. We want to know who they are, and if they need help or are being exploited.*

*There are no easy answers. Most people are probably from the EU and are perfectly entitled to be here, although, if they are from Romania or Bulgaria they would not have an automatic right to work without a permit. Some may live outside Northern Ireland and may be brought here on a daily basis by an organising figure who may or may not be a family member. Others live here. There is likely to be some exploitation but you cannot assume that they are all people in need.*

*You may feel that your sensitivities are being played on if you are begged to give money for something you do not want, but you do not want to turn away from need. You might offer someone a hot drink or some food. If this is refused you know that the person, at least is not hungry or thirsty.*

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### WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS ABOUT WELCOMING OUTSIDERS

At the EMBRACE Annual General Meeting in 2004 Sr Brighde Vallely (EMBRACE Vice-Chairperson) reflected how, in John's Gospel, while Peter warmed himself by a charcoal fire, in the in-group, Jesus was in the out-group, among the demonised. After the resurrection, it was Jesus who cooked breakfast on a charcoal fire for the disciples, and Peter, following his earlier denials of Christ, had the opportunity to make his threefold response to Jesus' question: "Do you love me?" Brighde then asked 'So what must we do?' and answered:

- Repent of sectarianism, racism and prejudice
- Wash the feet of others
- Churches and church communities should be communities of the inclusive charcoal fire.
- Be informed and learn to ask the right questions, of Churches, politicians and policy makers

### Embracing the Stranger

God is portrayed in the scriptures as identifying with fallen and broken humanity. God revealed Himself as the God of the outsider when He intervened in the lives of the Israelites in Egypt. His liberation of His people from their oppression displayed His commitment to the marginalized and the vulnerable. And it is this concern, compassion and commitment that God holds up as a blueprint for His followers. ...

The Israelites themselves are portrayed as sojourners or tenants on the land that God has given them and their tenancy is linked to their obedience to God. Indeed, the way in which the stranger, together with the widow and the orphan, is treated, is an indicator of the Israelites' obedience to the law of God and it is this commitment to justice and the defence of the weak that the prophets highlight repeatedly. God does want lip service; He desires obedience. He requires us to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with Him (Micah 6:8). The stranger provides the opportunity for the Israelite to reciprocate the heart of God for the downtrodden and the oppressed. ...

Jesus takes this a step further when he tells his disciples that what they do to the stranger, they do to Him. He is in the guise of the stranger, the poor and the weak and His call is to treat all people as we would treat Him. In the incarnation Jesus comes as a stranger into this world. ... Jesus understands those who seek refuge and asylum and identifies with them. As the stranger on the road to

Emmaus, He draws alongside and supports the weak. His great call is to hospitality, a central theme of scripture. Jesus epitomised hospitality in his welcome and treatment of those on the fringes of society. But it was more than a welcome. His hospitality was about reconciliation and the transformation from stranger to guest and from guest to friend.

Part of an article by EMBRACE chairperson, Richard Kerr,  
in *lion & lamb: racism and religious liberty*, Autumn 2004.

Let mutual love continue. Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by doing so some have entertained angels without knowing it.

Hebrews 13: 1–2.

**EMBRACE CD ROM: Once we were strangers**

EMBRACE has produced a collection of first-hand accounts of the life experiences of immigrants and refugees here. The personal stories are accompanied by 7 bible studies and other resource material. The study themes include, for example, Recognising Jesus in the Stranger and A Refugee’s Story: The Flight to Egypt. To obtain a copy of the CD, or to find out more about this resource please contact the EMBRACE office, by email or phone. These can be used for group study, to inspire sermons, addresses, or for prayer.

‘What can we do to help people coming into our country?’ ‘...From a Christian perspective, I think genuine love is the key, the Bible says “Love your neighbour as yourself.” I think this is the fundamental answer to your question. I will say that you can help people coming into this country by showing them genuine love. Firstly, I think that it is important that Northern Irish people love themselves first and then perhaps this love can be genuinely extended to ‘foreigners’ coming here, ... a genuine love that will cut across communities, sectarianism, racism and other related intolerance.’

Extract from an interview with Alfred Albolarin, Nigerian- born British, former chairperson, Northern Ireland Council for Ethnic Minorities (NICEM), interviewed for *Once we were strangers*.

‘Even if we are always strangers (foreigners), when we truly believe and know for a fact that God is in control and has placed us where we are, it enables us to overcome each obstacle that arises.  
Even if always strangers in Ireland, in God’s eyes we belong. It is not easy but by faith when we place ourselves in God’s hands, we have hope to face another tomorrow.’

Florence Muthoni Hegarty  
in part of a reflection on  
the Book of Esther in *Inter-Cultural Insights*.

**Some biblical sources**

Who is my neighbour?	Luke 10 25–37
How to treat a foreigner	Leviticus 19 33–34
How foreigners can be a blessing	The book of Ruth
Justice love and fellowship	Micah 6: 8
Treating others as we treat the Lord	Matthew 25: 31–46
The gift of hospitality	Hebrews 13: 2
Breaking down barriers	Ephesians 2: 11–22

*Policy on Asylum Seekers and Refugees; a Report by the Race Relations Committee to the 2003 General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, Presbyterian Church in Ireland, p. 15.*

# Some useful organisations

For a more comprehensive list of organisations see our web site:  
[www.embraceni.org](http://www.embraceni.org)

*If telephoning from the Republic of Ireland please drop the code (028) and use (004 28)*

## **The All Ireland Churches' Consultative Meeting on Racism, (AICCMR)**

Reconciliation Office,  
Edgehill Theological College,  
9 Lennoxvale, Belfast  
BT9 7BY  
Tel: (028) 9068 6933

## **Animate Project**

Unit T2 Dungannon Enterprise Park  
2 Coalisland Rd  
Dungannon  
BT71 6JT  
Tel: (028) 8772 9439  
Fax: (028) 8772 2869  
E-mail: [info@animate-ccd.net](mailto:info@animate-ccd.net)  
Web: [www.animate-ccd.net](http://www.animate-ccd.net)

## **Amnesty International Northern Ireland**

397 Ormeau Road  
Belfast  
BT7 3GP  
Tel: (028) 9064 3000  
E-mail: [nireland@amnesty.org.uk](mailto:nireland@amnesty.org.uk)  
Web: [www.amnesty.org.uk](http://www.amnesty.org.uk)

## **Community Relations Council**

6 Murray Street  
Belfast, BT1 6DN  
Tel: (028) 9022 7500  
Fax: (028) 9022 7551  
E-mail: [info@community-relations.org.uk](mailto:info@community-relations.org.uk)  
Web: [www.community-relations.org.uk](http://www.community-relations.org.uk)

## **Equality Commission for Northern Ireland**

Equality House  
7-9 Shaftesbury Square  
Belfast BT2 7DP  
Tel: (028) 9050 0600  
Fax: (028) 9024 8687  
E-mail: [info@equalityni.org](mailto:info@equalityni.org)  
Web: [www.equality.org](http://www.equality.org)

## **Law Centre (NI)**

124 Donegall Street  
Belfast BT1 2GY  
Tel: (028) 9024 4401  
Fax: (028) 9023 6340  
Textphone (028) 9023 9938  
E-mail  
[admin.belfast@lawcentreni.org](mailto:admin.belfast@lawcentreni.org)  
Web: [www.lawcentreni.org](http://www.lawcentreni.org)

## **Law Centre (NI) North West**

9 Clarendon Street  
Derry  
BT48 7EP  
Telephone (028) 7126 2433  
E-mail:  
[admin.derry@lawcentreniwest.org](mailto:admin.derry@lawcentreniwest.org)

## **Multi-Cultural Resource Centre (MCRC)**

9 Lower Crescent  
Belfast BT7 1NR  
Phone (028) 9024 4639  
Fax (028) 9032 9581  
E-mail [mcrc@mcrc-ni.org](mailto:mcrc@mcrc-ni.org)  
Web: [www.mcrc-ni.org](http://www.mcrc-ni.org)

## **Northern Ireland Council for Ethnic Minorities (NICEM)**

3rd Floor  
Ascot House  
24-31 Shaftesbury Square  
Belfast BT2 7DB  
Tel: (028) 9023 8645 / (028) 90319666  
Fax: (028) 9031 948  
E-mail [info@nicem.org.uk](mailto:info@nicem.org.uk)  
Web: [www.nicem.org.uk](http://www.nicem.org.uk)

## **NICEM Ballymoney**

Tel: (028) 2766 9149  
Fax: (028) 2766 8920  
E-mail: [mpetrushkin@nicem.org.uk](mailto:mpetrushkin@nicem.org.uk)

## **Northern Ireland Committee for Refugees and Asylum Seekers (NICRAS)**

One Vision Offices,  
Unit 2, 129 Ormeau Road,  
Belfast, BT7 1SH,  
E-mail [nicras@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:nicras@hotmail.co.uk)  
Tel: (028) 90248855.

## **Refugee Action Group (RAG)**

c/o MCRC  
9 Lower Crescent; Belfast BT7 1NR  
Tel: (028) 90 244639  
Fax: (028) 90 329 581  
E-mail: [refugee@mcrc-ni.org](mailto:refugee@mcrc-ni.org)  
Web: [www.mcrc-ni.org/RAG/RAG%20home.htm](http://www.mcrc-ni.org/RAG/RAG%20home.htm)

## **Red Cross**

87 University Street  
Belfast BT7 1HP  
(028) 9024 6400  
Web: [www.redcross.org.uk](http://www.redcross.org.uk)

## **Refugee Action Group**

C/o MCRC  
9 Lower Cresecent  
Belfast  
BT7 1NR  
Tel: (028) 9024 4639  
Fax: (028) 9032 9581  
E-mail:  
[refugeeactiongroup@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:refugeeactiongroup@hotmail.co.uk)  
Web: see [www.mcrc-ni.org](http://www.mcrc-ni.org)

## **STEP**

## **(South Tyrone Empowerment Programme)**

Unit T7  
Dungannon Business Park  
2 Coalisland Road  
Dungannon  
BT71 6JT  
Tel: (028) 8773 9002

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