

## How can I find out more?

EMBRACE runs **Workshops** for groups of church people, to support and advise them on local initiatives they can undertake at congregational and local community level to welcome incomers. Topics include how to cope with language barriers; the setting up of English classes; how drop in centres and clubs can promote integration and friendship; and general information about the challenges faced by migrant people.

The group can also facilitate **Migration Awareness Training**. Knowledge makes it easier dispel negative attitudes that may be based on myths or ignorance.

EMBRACE produces an annual information update about immigration and associated issues, *Embracing Diversity*, see [www.embraceni.org/category/about-us/embrace-resources/](http://www.embraceni.org/category/about-us/embrace-resources/) See also [www.embraceni.org/category/information/](http://www.embraceni.org/category/information/)

Other resources are helpful in building welcome at parish/ congregational level. [www.embraceni.org/category/about-us/embrace-resources/](http://www.embraceni.org/category/about-us/embrace-resources/)

The website also includes Advice for Churches on signposting minority-ethnic people in crisis situations [www.embraceni.org/category/christian-response/advice-for-churches/](http://www.embraceni.org/category/christian-response/advice-for-churches/)

The United Bible Societies has produced the resource, *On the Road a Journey through the Bible* a combination of Bible stories, prayers and personal experiences and suggested questions for discussion. [www.la-bible.net/doc/dons08072.pdf](http://www.la-bible.net/doc/dons08072.pdf)

*And if a stranger dwells with you in your land, you shall not mistreat him. The stranger who dwells among you shall be to you as one born among you*  
Leviticus 19:33-34

*I was a stranger and you made me welcome* Matthew 25: 35

**EMBRACE NI**  
Building a Welcoming Community

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## Migration and Us

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*The Lord said to Abram: Leave your country, your family, and your relatives and go to the land that I will show you.*

Genesis 12: 1–5

*Are we not all migrants or descendants of migrants to this land?*

Our People Our Times: A History of Northern Ireland's Cultural Diversity,  
NI Museum Council

### Where have we gone to and why?

Over 80 million people in the world have Irish blood; 36.5 million US residents claimed Irish ancestry in 2007. Historically some were transported or sold into slavery or left because of poverty, hunger, persecution, discrimination, civil war or unemployment.

### Are many local people still leaving?

Over 20,000 people still leave N Ireland each year to study, to take up jobs or to see the world. (This number will now also include some people who are returning to their home countries.)

### Is inward migration new?

There have also always been incomers to Ireland, from pre-historic times onwards: Anglo-Normans in the twelfth century, Scots and the English in the seventeenth. Huguenots and Jewish people came to escape persecution. Italian and Indian communities developed from the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Small numbers of Vietnamese refugees came in the 1960s and larger numbers of Chinese people migrated from Hong Kong around the same time.

### Why are there increased numbers now?

The Troubles and high unemployment contributed to outward migration in the 1970s and 1980s. A declining birth rate has led to a reduction in the numbers of young people available for work. (The population of Belfast, for example, dropped from 400,000 in the middle of the twentieth century to 270,000 in 2006.) So, when violence reduced and the economy began to expand, there was a shortage of workers, and skills gaps also emerged.

## How many new people have come here recently?

The 2011 Census indicates that 95.49% of the people living in N Ireland were born in the UK or the Republic of Ireland. Of the remaining 4.51%, 45,407 were born in the rest of the European Union, and 36,046 in other countries. The greatest number of people came between 2004 and 2009. Some stay just long enough to save enough for specific projects such as buying a house or setting up a business back home. Others settle here, especially if they have children. Fewer new people are coming now because of the recession.

## What countries are recent immigrants from?

In the early 2000s people from Portugal and its former colonies came to work in Mid-Ulster, mostly in the food industry. The largest groups of people from outside Europe, working in the health sector, are from the Philippines and India. Since 12 new countries joined the European Union in 2004 the majority of people have come from Central and Eastern Europe, with the greatest numbers from Poland and Lithuania, but there are people here from many other countries.

## Why do they choose to come here?

Most people respond to advertisements or are recruited in their home country by agencies. Some may come because friends have had good experiences. A large number come here in order to improve their English. Others want to leave areas of high unemployment or where wages and salaries are very low.

‘ \_\_\_\_\_ Recruitment Agency was looking for welders back in Poland ... They got a fellow recruited from a factory where I worked. He went and then few others and few more and it went like a snow ball. I came too.’ Tomasz, Poland

*The New Workers: Migration, Labour and Citizenship in Northern Ireland in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* edited by B. Garvey, P. Stewart, J. Kulinska, R. Campuzano

## Do many people seek sanctuary/ asylum here?

Very small numbers apply for asylum here each year. The UK Border Agency was considering 140 applications from individuals, or people with dependents in 2012. In October that year 80% of applicants receiving support were from 5 countries: China (147), Zimbabwe (34), Nigeria (35), Sudan (36) and Somalia (38). As of 31st December 2013 there were 494 people in NASS (National Asylum Support Service) supported accommodation with applications under consideration.

## Who are they?

Research about recent European migrants found that they were mostly young people between the ages of 18 to 34 without dependents when they arrive. Around 60% were young men. They often work below the level of their skills and qualifications.

## What jobs do migrant workers do?

A report on central and eastern European workers, 2004–2009, showed them filling the following jobs: 10,840 in administration, business and management, 6,000 in manufacturing, 5,025 in food/ fish/ meat processing, 3,805 in hospitality and catering, 3,740 in construction and land, 2,240 in agriculture, 1,480 in retailing, 1,460 in the health sector, 855 in transport, 145 in entertainment and leisure and 535 others. These may not be entirely accurate as agencies enrol workers in the admin sector and they move to other jobs. The IT and health sectors have drawn skilled people from outside Europe.

## Do immigrants cost us money?

There are costs because of increased pressure on medical, education and housing services, but migrant workers pay tax and national insurance like the rest of us and contribute to the local economy by paying rent and buying food, clothing and other necessities. They are ineligible for out of work benefits until they have been living here for some time.

## Do we need migrants?

A research study published in 2009 found that migrant workers helped maintain an adequate labour supply during the 2004–2008 economic boom and seem to have made the difference between some businesses surviving, or relocating abroad. 31% of 600 businesses in one survey said that migrants were important to their survival. This rose to 50% in health and social care and agriculture. See *Economic, Labour Market and Skills Impacts of Migrant Workers in Northern Ireland* [www.delni.gov.uk/skillsimpactsmigrantworkers](http://www.delni.gov.uk/skillsimpactsmigrantworkers)

‘If you look at food processing, if it wasn’t for inward migration ... the factories would have closed. Everyone in them would have lost their jobs, most of the farmers on which the rural economy depends would also have lost their jobs...’

Dungannon interviewee in *Immigration and Social Cohesion in the UK*, Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 2008