

<b>ACTION:</b>	<b>LEAD BY:</b>	<b>WITH SUPPORT FROM:</b>	<b>TIMEFRAHE:</b>
1. Propose that one volunteer to be appointed by every Citizen's Advice Centre in the County to help immigrants	Citizen Information Service	The Tipperary Integration Forum	Possibly one per month from October 2013-June 2014
2. Establish volunteer conversational English groups and encourage others to form such groups	Bronius Uzkiyrys	The Tipperary Integration Forum	Beginning early summer 2013
3. Lobby for funding to provide more advanced English Classes at appropriate times	Tipperary Education and Training Board	The Integration Forum	Ongoing
4. Contact the Consulates of the home countries of immigrants in Tipperary to participate and present at Forum meetings.	Patrycia Dabrowska and The Tipperary Integration Forum	The Tipperary Integration Forum	Ongoing, according to events being held
5. Employ an intern with diverse language skills within North Tipperary County Council	North Tipperary County Council, Liam Bergin and Tus	The Tipperary Integration Forum	By January 2014
6. Establish and maintain a Facebook Account for Communication and Information Updates	Bronius Uzkiyrys and The Tipperary Integration Forum	County Council Intern	Early summer 2013
7. Liaise and engage with established Community Events such as the Library, Local Festivals, and to bring intercultural value to established events. Advertise events widely.	The Integration Forum	The Integration Forum and local community organisers	Early summer 2013-2014
8. Promote yearly Intercultural Training event for key service providers to deepen their understanding of cultural issues.	The Integration Forum	The Integration Forum	Ongoing

## Conclusion and Acknowledgements

It is with excitement and enthusiasm that The Tipperary Integration Forum faces the future of integration work in the County, beginning with this Strategy. It is our hope that service providers and immigrant communities can work together to build the intercultural bridges that will celebrate integration and diversity, making Tipperary an even more vibrant and interesting place to live for all. We would like to acknowledge the support of The Integration Working Group, North Tipperary County Council (Mr. Liam Bergin) and The SIM

Committee, for initiating this work and supporting its initiatives. The North Tipperary Leader Partnership supported the design and printing of this document. The Tipperary Education and Training Board (Antoinette Coffey) has funded the development and writing of this strategy by Kathy O'Connor from The Integration Centre. The Integration Centre has been instrumental in promoting integration work in North Tipperary, and in supporting the development and writing of the Strategy.



## NORTH TIPPERARY INTEGRATION STRATEGY 2013-2014

### Introduction & Background Statistics

In response to increasing diversity and a growing immigrant population, North Tipperary chose to actively address and promote integration issues identified through its work with The Integration Centre (TIC) since 2011. The initial position paper, *Local Integration and North Tipperary 2012* documents the people who live in the new communities within North Tipperary and outlines the issues that need to be addressed in order to develop a County that celebrates and welcomes diversity. This brief integration strategy document should be read alongside that position paper to capture the details of the research and consultations which have led to the formulation of this strategy.

There are many ways of defining immigrant communities, as outlined in the table below and as detailed in the 2012 Position Paper. However the key fact to note in terms of cultural diversity is that 9.4% of North Tipperary's population identify with ethnic groups from an immigrant background.

### Summary Statistics for North Tipperary (Census 2011)

PLACE OF BIRTH	POPULATION
Ireland	61,052
England and Wales	3,618
Poland	1,642
Lithuania	443
Latvia	396
United States	313
Hungary	277
Northern Ireland	264
Scotland	153
India	117
South Africa	112
Other countries	1,230

#### BIRTHPLACE

- 12.6% are foreign born (i.e. 8,832 residents of North Tipperary were born abroad)
- 6.8% were born outside UK & Ireland

#### NATIONALITY

- 9.1% are non-Irish nationals

#### ETHNICITY

- 9.4% identify with ethnic groups that have roots in other countries

#### OTHER LANGUAGES

- 7.8% of North Tipperary residents are foreign language speakers; one in four of whom (i.e. 1,398 people) reported that they do not speak English well or not at all

#### SCHOOLS

- 7.8% of secondary school students in North Tipperary are non-Irish (485 pupils)



INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND STATISTICS CONTINUED

Consultations with service providers indicated great interest in integration, and documented the positive, and sometimes challenging experiences of those who work with new communities. The report recommended holding workshops with immigrant communities, which were completed in the autumn of 2012 and the late spring of 2013, with the assistance of the Tipperary Education and Training Board. Also, the Tipperary Integration Forum was established and launched on 25 May

2013, and continues to meet, contributing to the development of this short-term strategy which should be of benefit to the entire community. This strategy aims to develop specific and achievable actions to be achieved before the official merging of North and South Tipperary County Councils in 2014. Naturally it is hoped that the merged Councils will continue this essential work.



**Policy Context**

While there are numerous international and EU policies that support integration work, two core documents, *The EU Common Principles for Immigrant Integration* (2004) and the *Declaration of the Zaragoza European Ministerial Conference on Integration* (Zaragoza 2010) help EU Member States to understand their obligations to "promote integration as a driver for development and social cohesion in a comprehensive way in all relevant policy fields". These declarations emphasize the fields of Employment, Education, Social Inclusion and Active Citizenship, as well as combating racism. The Zaragoza Declaration highlights the role of Local Authorities in developing and implementing integration programs.

In Ireland, both the *National Action Plan Against Racism* (2005-2008) and *Migration Nation* (2008) urge the full participation of all key stakeholders to develop policies and strategies that promote a more inclusive and intercultural society. Many City and County Councils began at that time to develop Anti-Racism and Diversity Strategies which have now become Integration Strategies. Government funding from the now defunct Officer of the Minister for Integration (OMI), and from private Philanthropies has been made available for this work, but these funds have shrunk radically during the recent economic downturn.

CORE CHALLENGES HIGHLIGHTED

**THEME AS NOTED BY SERVICE PROVIDERS AS NOTED BY IMMIGRANT COMMUNITIES**

<b>A. LANGUAGE</b>	Difficulties in helping immigrants to understand local services, community values and practices	More English classes are needed to build confidence, so that immigrants can positively approach the labour market, which is crucial to life in Ireland
<b>B. EDUCATION</b>	Problems in both explaining and understanding the difficulties immigrants face with Labour Laws, Rights and Entitlements, visas, etc.	Immigrants lacking the English they need to understand the health system, health insurance, and doctors & other health care professionals they engage with
<b>C. EMPLOYMENT</b>	Difficulties for both teachers and immigrants, as immigrants need great help to understand educational practices in Ireland. Teachers/parents/children isolated.	Lack of English language often brings lack of respect; service providers considering them to be stupid
<b>D. SOCIAL ISOLATION</b>	Recognising that immigrants need supports around employment, job-search, CVs and job application methodology. Employers need help in assessing the skills, ethnicity, and qualifications of immigrants. Employers need help in understanding visa issues. Awareness that many immigrants are exploited at work. Recognition that immigrants can be intimidated by service providers. Cultural barriers that impede the understanding of both service providers and immigrants. Issues of poverty and social isolation. Clustering of immigrants with their own nationalities in neighbourhoods does not promote integration. Requests for further Intercultural Training. Need further understanding of "who is there" and how to help them. It would be helpful to have integration work included in strategic work plans and policies. Funding and staffing cuts make integration work difficult.	Immigrants need help, support, and information about seeking employment and their legal rights around same. Immigrants frustrated by the lack of Qualification Recognition, and they are often working below their ability level. Immigrants wish to mix with the host population socially, in Churches, sporting, etc, and hope that more links will be built. Immigrants would like more Intercultural Days where they could showcase their food dance, culture, etc. Immigrants want better access to information about community meetings and affairs. They need places to meet. Immigrants would like to get councillors and politicians to meet with them, and understand their issues. Weekends would be a good time.
<b>E. CROSS-CULTURAL ENGAGEMENT</b>		

**Action Plan 2013-2014**

Having reviewed the core challenges identified in the consultations and workshops, Tipperary Integration Forum has devised a realistic and achievable Action Plan which will begin to address these challenges. This plan is not comprehensive, but the Forum believes it is best to proceed in a realistic manner, taking small steps to set the stage for the enhanced communication and building of bridges between cultures which inform meaningful integration work. This short-term Integration Strategy will hopefully be built upon and further developed by the newly formed Tipperary County Council and key service providers after 2014.