

Intercultural Events in Schools and Colleges of Education



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Partner organisations:

The DICE Project

The overall aim of the DICE Project is to provide support to five primary Teacher Education Colleges to integrate development education and intercultural education into existing initial teacher education programmes. DICE aims to equip student teachers with the necessary values, ideas, skills and capacities to integrate development education and intercultural education across all relevant areas of the Primary School Curriculum. The DICE Project is funded by Irish Aid.



www.diceproject.ie

Froebel College of Education

The Froebel College of Education under the patronage of the Dominican sisters was located in Slon Hill Blackrock for 70 years and prepared students for a career in primary education. Since September 2013 the Froebel College of Education has moved to NUIM.



Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council's Social Inclusion Unit

The Unit is responsible for promoting and mainstreaming social inclusion within the County Council by proofing programmes, policies, and activities; and ensuring that no group is excluded or disadvantaged from accessing public services. Where feasible the Unit promotes active participation by vulnerable groups in all aspects of public service delivery.



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'The Future is Ours': <http://www.dlrintegration.ie/index.php/component/content/article/25-website/content/48-integration-integration>



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WHAT IS INTERCULTURAL EDUCATION?

Intercultural Education is education which respects, celebrates and recognises the normality of diversity in all areas of human life. It sensitises the learner to the idea that humans have naturally developed a range of different ways of life, customs and worldviews, and that this breadth of human life enriches all of us (NCCA, Intercultural Guidelines for Primary Schools: 2006).

There are two main aspects to intercultural education: **acknowledging the normality of diversity** and **supporting pupils to actively challenge racism and discrimination**. Intercultural Education is much more than making minority students feel welcome in the classroom. All pupils, whether belonging to a majority or minority culture have a right to intercultural education, to learn to understand the cultural influences on their world view and to appreciate that of their peers.

Intercultural Education involves developing an inclusive school ethos, accessing resources, classroom teaching and supporting good relationships. Good practice cannot be measured fully by a set of guidelines – it should revolve around a critical process of the concept of inclusion. Intercultural education can be integrated into all areas of the curriculum. It is not an ‘add on’ extra but a commitment to creating an inclusive and safe school culture where discrimination is challenged. A radically child-centred curriculum involves understanding the children’s context which includes engaging with ethnicity, religion, culture, language and family history.

Intercultural events in schools and colleges are most effective when they reflect all the aspects of this work. Such events can bring together the work of celebrating diversity and challenging discrimination which occurs throughout the school year and which involves the whole school community. Everyone’s learning is deepened by hearing the stories and the insights of children in other classes and by seeing the work they have engaged in together.

Intercultural events in schools therefore should be mindful of the dual focus of intercultural education.

“Pupils of different religions and languages and countries and cultures coming together and getting the same education, learning together about different cultures, and all cultures being treated equally”
(6th class pupil).

Organise events that open minds to diverse experiences and perspectives.

Tutandaa matukio yatakayo fungua ufahamu na uelewa wa mang'amuzi na mitazamo tofauti ya mambo na maisha.

Organiza evenimente care deschid mințile la diverse experiențe și perspective.

[English Swahili Romanian]

Maintain a focus on both local and global contexts while teaching and support and challenge each other to teach in and culturally sensitive ways that respect and acknowledge the environment of the child.

Kutunza mkazo katika ufundishaji wa mambo ya nyumbani na yale ya dunia nzima huku tukidumisha, kuendelea na kutoa changamoto kwa kila mmoja katika namna inayo heshimu utamaduni na heshima na kutambua mazingira ya kila mototo.

पढ़ाते समय और समर्थन देते समय स्थानीय और वैश्विक संदर्भों, दोनों पर ध्यान बनाए रखें और ऐसे सांस्कृतिक रूप से संवेदनशील तरीकों से पढ़ाने में एक दूसरे को चुनौती दें जो बच्चों के वातावरण का सम्मान करें और इसे पहचानें।

[English Swahili Hindi]

Actively challenge discrimination, while maintaining respect for everyone.

Sprzeciwianiem się dyskryminacji, bez uszczerbku na szacunku dla ogółu.

Aktīvi apstrīdētu diskrimināciju, saglabājot cieņu pret visiem.

[English Polish Latvian]

Develop an understanding of major belief systems and ethical frameworks for educational settings.

تطوير مفاهيم أنظمة المعتقدات الأساسية والأطر الأخلاقية للمحيطات التعليمية.

Ein Verständnis der wichtigsten Glaubenssysteme und ethische Rahmenbedingungen für Bildungseinrichtungen zu entwickeln.

[English Arabic German]

EXCERPTS FROM THE FROEBEL COLLEGE OF EDUCATION'S DIVERSITY CODE



AVOIDING TOKENISM

“The problem with stereotypes is not that they are untrue but that they are incomplete”

Chimamanda Adichie: ‘The danger of a single story’ Available at: <http://www.diceproject.ie/links>

The identity of children is complex, influenced by stories of family, community, friends, interests, music, sport, fashion etc. Children’s identity stories emerge from both their family history and their contemporary life. When working on issues of identity all this multi-storied complexity needs to be honoured.

Schools should avoid tokenism in organising intercultural events. Tokenism arises when one person is put in the position of having to speak or represent an entire group. It does not recognise that we all have multiple identities or that within any group there are different stories.

People often use stereotypes to categorise ‘others’. Stereotypes arise from real situations and should be engaged with. However, uncritical use of stereotypes risks cementing in people minds a homogenised view of a certain group or community. To borrow an idea from the Irish word for stereotype ‘buanchló’, we risk attributing a ‘permanent print’ to something.

Africa for example, is a whole continent of over 50 countries, all of which contain within themselves a rich diversity of language, culture, religion and lifestyles. As educators we need to recognise that stereotypical images of Africa encountered in the past have undermined our learning and our ability to appreciate the diversity and initiative of people. We need to open space for multiple stories of Africa through a critical reflection on the texts and images we select in our lessons.

Intercultural events in schools should acknowledge that culture is not fixed or static but constantly evolving. The challenge of describing Irish culture for example can help us appreciate this. Children in our schools live between cultures and cannot be asked to represent all other members of their cultural group.

“There was a time when different classes dressed up in the clothing of different cultural or faith groups and explained what they believed. There was a time where we made flags to represent all the countries. But mostly we learn through regular class, working with each other and assemblies, not special events”

(6th class pupil).

“Stereotyping is always around. As a teacher I just have to ask myself am I perpetuating it or challenging it?”

(Infant teacher).

The use of images in the classroom

Teachers must adopt a very critical approach to using images in class and must consider how the images used impact on the identity of children from those countries. The impact of images can be internalized inviting deficit identity conclusions.

'Imagine how the only black child in the class would feel if pictures of starving black children are introduced into a lesson?'

(Migrant parent)

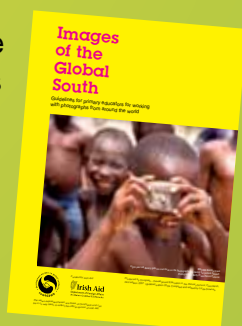
Above all, teachers should strive to ensure that images which respect the dignity of children are chosen for lessons.

Golden Rules for Images in Classrooms

- Use a balanced selection of images to convey diversity of people and situations
- Check images and text, as far as possible, for accuracy, any contradictory messages, clichés and stereotypes
- Avoid 'victim' images: show people as active as possible in their own development
- Include images of minority groups, for example, people with disabilities, members of ethnic minority groups, appropriately and naturally
- Check text / language (e.g. captions) for tone and accuracy: avoid patronising, demeaning or sentimental language
- Identify and name those in images if at all possible. Check for permission where possible
- Provide a context for the images or those in it

For further information, please see Comhlámh's publication 'Images of the Global South':

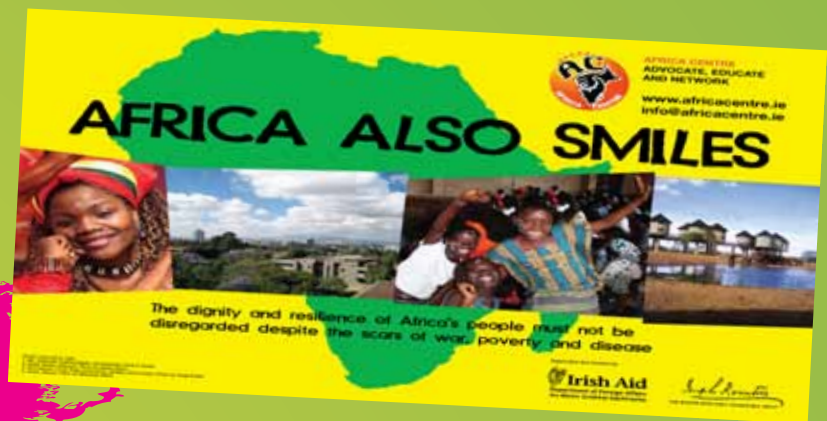
http://www.comhlamh.org/ckeditor_uploads/files/word_docs/Images%20of%20the%20Global%20South.pdf



Teachers and pupils should be mindful of these golden rules when choosing images for their intercultural events in schools.

Policy context

We should begin with a recognition that diversity is not a new phenomenon but that there has always been rich cultural, linguistic and religious diversity in Ireland. Schools can examine their enrolment policy, anti-racism policy, anti-bullying policy, inclusive education policy, language policy and parental involvement



© Africa Centre

policy on a regular basis to ask themselves if their intentions for integration are in fact being realised. When revising their intercultural policy parents, children, staff and management can work together. Without such reflective practice and full participation from all members of the school community, there is a danger that tokenistic or once off approaches to intercultural education may actually essentialise identity and further emphasise difference.

A school should have a clear anti-racism policy and a statement about how the school will deal with racist incidents. This policy needs to breathe life into the school by offering a framework through which children's experience or witnessing of racism is understood and responded to. Children need to be involved in discussions around the effects of discrimination of all kinds and supported in thinking about how to identify it, report it and stand against it. Their own experience, their understanding of the local context and their feelings need to be part of these conversations, and their ideas need to feed into policy.

The intercultural event can then be a gathering where cross-curricular work done throughout the year by different classes can be showcased. This could include presentations or performances on culture or anti-racism and children can learn from the work done in other classes.

A key policy is the availability of translators where

"A few years ago sixth class put on this assembly about different kinds of discrimination. I did not think of it like that before. It was a catchy label and it was helpful"

(Sixth class pupil).

possible. Translators are most essential during annual parent teacher meetings or if difficulties or assessments have to be explained to parents. Key policies, in particular the enrolment policy, should be available in multiple languages.



ENGAGING PARENTS

Parents' expectations of schools are shaped by their own educational experiences. Migrant parents will also bring expectations based on schools in their country of origin and these practices may be very different at times from those in Ireland. Migrant parents often have a very high value on education and very high expectations for their children. Information sessions explaining the approach and the scope of the curriculum at the start of the year can prevent a lot of misunderstanding and allow for school and home to support children to enjoy school and excel in their school work.

The Constitution of Ireland determines that the State, in its provision of education must respect parental choice and cannot favour any particular religious denomination. The European Convention on Human Rights provides that the State must respect the rights of parents to have their children educated in conformity with their religious and philosophical convictions.

Parents from minority faith groups differ in their hopes about the experiences their children might have in a denominational school. Some prefer children to withdraw from specific religious instruction. Others are willing for their children to listen and learn about another faith. Teachers and parents can begin to explain their expectations and concerns at registration so that over the years a plan develops in a way that is acceptable to all.

Teachers can experience a challenge in their efforts to respect parents' cultural wishes when those wishes

conflict with their own values. An example of this would be where a parent chooses not to involve their child in dance or music. The teacher is torn between their belief in the inclusion of the child in the full curriculum and respecting the wishes of individual parents. Dialogue between parents and teachers is the only way forward. Parents need to work with the teachers to understand the practical implications of their choices, the complexity of timetables and the needs of the child. Teachers should work with parents to ensure that a creative solution is found.

Teachers recognise that many parents may have had negative or even abusive relationships in school themselves and may feel anxious, reluctant or defensive in their relationship with the school. However with a warm welcome, clear information and ongoing communication trust can be built. This can be true of Traveller parents as many Travellers have experienced exclusion and segregation in schools in previous generations.

'For a long time, I did not feel comfortable going up to the school by myself and got a lot of support from other women in the community and the Visiting Teacher for Travellers'

(Traveller parent)

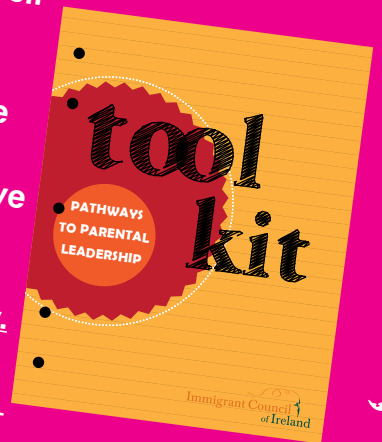
'The only way forward is to build trust slowly and consistently sometimes over years'

(School Principal)

Invitations to parents to share their stories, food, fashion, music, crafts and other cultural practices may be extended as part of an overall plan for intercultural education in the school. For example, parents can be an invaluable support to the teacher in the classroom when it comes to sharing first-hand experiences of naming, coming of age and wedding ceremonies, religious pilgrimages and festivals. Parents can also tell their stories of migration, which can be discussed alongside contemporary stories of Irish emigration. It is important to avoid suggestions that all people within a group had similar experiences or similar reasons for migrating to Ireland.

Garda vetting has proved a challenge for some schools who invite parents as volunteers. Everyone working with children has to have Garda vetting. This can get in the way of volunteering by migrant parents as they have fears about what this vetting may involve and how it may affect their status. When the nature of vetting is made clear, parents may feel much more willing to get involved. Within some cultural groups it is more difficult for women to be involved outside the home. However their central parenting role means that school is a very significant site where they may make friends, learn English and find new interests. Parents and teachers both benefit from working cooperatively and children benefit from witnessing the collaboration. Where families from an ethnic group

The Immigrant Council of Ireland have produced a toolkit which gives guidance and many practical ideas on how to involve migrant parents in school life: It is available at: <http://www.immigrantcouncil.ie/images/stories/Toolkit - Full version.pdf>



are slow to engage with the school, a link person with leadership skills and good English can become a conduit through which welcome is extended and information disseminated to all.

Intercultural events in schools provide further opportunities for welcoming parents to share their experiences. Intercultural events can include the whole family and build relationships between the school and the home.





COLLABORATIVE PLANNING FOR INTERCULTURAL EVENTS

Many schools organise intercultural events as part of their ongoing commitment to intercultural education. When organising intercultural events, a committee including teachers and parents from several ethnic groups including the majority culture, could be formed to plan the event. The committee could begin by clarifying the goals of the event. The following questions could be used as a guide:

- What conversations are we making space for?
- What learning will occur?
- What knowledge will be gained?
- How will it be planned so that people from diverse ethnic groups talk to each other?
- How will the Irish culture be represented as part of the diversity?
- How will Irish Traveller culture be represented as part of the diversity?

When choosing a focus for intercultural events, the decision should not be left to individual teachers alone. Parents with particular ideas for initiatives should be supported and invited to join this committee. The committee could develop a three-year plan, which sets out a number of themes and events for each school year. Experience will be built up over the years. Care can be taken to ensure that diversity of cultural practices is explored during the three-year cycle to ensure that all children feel included. Planning in this way creates a possibility for themes to be explored in depth within the classroom setting rather than attempting to cover many themes in a superficial way.

A whole school intercultural event can be a time when children view each other's work, then ask questions about it and learn from each other.

Irish Travellers

Representation of Traveller culture should be included in intercultural planning, even if there are no Traveller students currently enrolled in the school. Teachers should not underestimate the distinct nature of Traveller identity for those members of the community who have lived in permanent accommodation for some time.

A Traveller living in a house is still a Traveller - just as an Irish person living in Britain is still Irish

(Culture and Heritage Factsheet : www.paveepoint.ie).

When teaching about Traveller culture schools should contact a Traveller organisation to work in partnership with them. The Irish Traveller Movement www.itmtrav.ie and Pavee Point www.paveepoint.ie are the two national organisations. In DLRCC the local organisation is STAG in Sandyford www.southsidetravellers.com. All of these organisations are happy to work with schools to develop an educational programme about Travellers. Adequate time should be allowed to plan such a programme well and develop good collaboration.

Schools need to be aware that in recent years there have been disproportionate budget cuts to Traveller education initiatives and as a result, Traveller pupils often face discrete challenges. For example, transition from primary to post-primary for some Traveller boys can still be challenging, Traveller children are blocked entry to some schools and poor attendance for some

children continues to be a cause of concern. Unequal outcomes and cultures of low expectations can seriously damage the extent to which Traveller pupils can participate in certain aspects of school life.

All pupils tend to have a genuine interest in Traveller culture and can use creative writing to articulate and reflect on what they have learned. Traveller Pride week is a very good opportunity for this work.

Traveller pupils in the school will need to be supported before and after the teaching as a specific focus on their culture can leave them vulnerable. If they know in advance what will happen and if they are given a chance to talk afterwards, fears can be overcome. Some Traveller pupils and teachers do not disclose their identity in school so they may need particular support.

It is important to note that in recent years, the Irish Traveller Movement has taken a lead in the development of good intercultural practice in schools through the establishment of the Yellow Flag Programme. Further information and learning from the project is available at www.yellowflag.ie.

Asylum seekers in Ireland

Asylum seeker pupils and parents are also a group who face distinct challenges in their participation in school life. An asylum seeker is someone who is seeking refuge in Ireland on the basis that it is dangerous for them to return to their country of origin. Asylum seekers have often experienced trauma or persecution in their country of origin and could also have endured a hazardous passage to Ireland. Under Irish law, unlike in many other countries, an asylum seeker is not allowed to work while their claim is being processed. If the claim is unsuccessful, an asylum seeker can face deportation to their country of origin. If the claim is successful, an asylum seeker becomes a refugee, with permission to stay in Ireland and is entitled to apply for Irish citizenship after a number of years.

When an asylum seeker first arrives in Ireland, they are placed in hostel-style accommodation centres. This system is known as 'Direct Provision' because the state provides directly for the immediate physical needs of asylum seekers. Asylum seekers receive their accommodation and three meals a day in the hostel. Asylum seekers have no right to social welfare, child benefit payments or to go on public housing lists. They receive a weekly



payment of €19.10 (adults) or €9.60 (children). It is important to note that these rates have remained the same since 1999, despite increases to other social welfare payments in line with inflation. The time spent in a direction provision centre can range anywhere from a year to over nine years. Asylum seekers may also be moved from hostel to hostel or from county to county, affecting their opportunities to establish friendships with Irish people. Children have to change school, losing friends and classmates. Some asylum seekers call this a "desert nomadic life".

Many asylum seeker children are in Ireland since birth or a very young age and therefore have complex identities in that they may feel a connection to both Ireland and their family's country of origin. The system of Direct Provision is not very child-centred. Children queue for food alongside the adults. The lack of cooking facilities means there is no choice and parents cannot cook their own recipes. There is inadequate homework or recreation space for students in some of the centres. Children are unable to have their friends over to visit, or organise birthday parties or other celebrations. The system also impacts on the capacity of parents to manage the rules and customs of their family or to be a role model for their children.

Asylum seekers can be supported in their participation in intercultural events in the school. It should be remembered that practical issues such as the timing of events, access to cooking facilities and limited funds can all impact the degree to which an asylum seeker student or parent can engage with a school event. It should also be remembered that asylum seekers who have experienced trauma may be reluctant to talk about their life in their country of origin or share some of their cultural practices in these intercultural events as a result. Teachers can be guided by parents in these instances.



A typical asylum seeker's bedroom:
Exhibition by Doras Luimní



OPPORTUNITIES FOR CONVERSATIONS

“The only way to avoid stereotyping is to create channels of communication, opportunity for conversations where both adults and children learn about each other.”

(Migrant parent)

“We learn about special celebrations through working with other pupils, through different teachers teaching about their religion. We have had teachers who were Jewish, Buddhist, Christian and Atheist. What we learn from listening to teachers who have different beliefs is equality.”

(Sixth class pupil)

Throughout the school year teachers can structure activities and groups so that children work and learn from all of their peers at different times. During SPHE stories of identity, family and belonging can be shared and children can learn to listen, interview each other, develop respectful curiosity and appreciation for each other lives. Children develop empathy when they engage with personal narratives of others. Children from diverse cultural backgrounds can often bring their perspectives to Geography and History and the teacher can challenge Eurocentric thinking. Literature, art and music from a variety of cultures can open up conversations for children to understand and

appreciate different ways of life. PE, Drama and Sports activities can be very good sites for social interaction.

Current affairs and global news stories can be debated in senior classes. From time to time parents may contribute in the classroom as well as supporting the teacher’s implementation of the specific themes or events, which are chosen within the three year cycle. Children can be asked to discuss the meaning of Irish culture. They may have very different ideas about this and the difficulty in finding agreement could be instructive, allowing an appreciation for the complexity and changing nature of culture to emerge.



Job works with his Dad and his friend Richard

If a new Intercultural school was being started it should:

- Have no discrimination
- Let each student express themselves as they want and express their culture
- Allow children a chance to explain about their own background and culture and celebrations
- Have assemblies and workshops where different cultures and faiths are explained
- Include everyone when you are playing games
- The website should say that the school is open to all cultures

[6th class pupils]

When organising intercultural events many schools invite pupils to come to school in their national dress. When this is approached with sensitivity it can be a very good opportunity to feel proud of ethnic identity and to express this pride to others. Other schools form random groups and allocate each group a country or cultural group. The children have to carry out research and decide how to represent another country. For this activity, pupils have to learn and consult with each other and borrow items and a lot of good conversations can emerge. Schools could perhaps adopt both of these practices on different occasions.

There have been very successful sessions in some schools where children broke into faith or cultural groups and spoke about their beliefs within these different groups. Groups were then invited to visit other groups to listen and witness and ask questions thus promoting respect and dialogue. Children will often ask the questions that adults fear to ask and, as a result, there is real sharing.

If a committee is in place the members can plan, and support all of the above ideas so that the day runs smoothly and all aspects are well resourced.

There should also be opportunities for parents to meet and communicate during intercultural events. When food is involved it can bring a lot of parents. Parents bring a dish from their country of origin, and this breaks down ghettoisation. It helps to have name cards for the food, to have vegetarian, vegan and Halal food clearly marked and name tags for everyone present. Some schools arrange it so that the parents have the food at night and the children during the day. Others all join together as a family day. The decision to include alcohol can be a challenging one as such a decision can support inclusion or exclusion for different parents and the committee will need to consider a range of views before making a decision.

It must also be remembered that schools often have diversity among the wider staff in the school. In order to promote a truly whole-school approach to interculturalism, these staff members can be central to event planning and development.



B Ed, students at NUIM discuss priorities for Development and Intercultural Education



PLANNING QUESTIONS FOR TEACHERS

1. How would the pupils in my class describe their ethnicity?
2. How many native languages are represented in my class?
3. What religions are in my class?
4. What SESE has been taught? What perspectives have I considered?
5. What images are represented on my wall?
6. How many parents have I consulted in preparation for teaching?
7. Who wrote the story books I use? Where are they set? Whose lives do they depict? Whose lives have not been depicted?
8. Who contributes most to class discussions? Are there children who do not contribute as much to class discussions? How can I address this?
9. Have there been racist incidents or racist bullying in my class or the yard in the last year? How have I challenged this?
10. What have I done to improve the children's sense of belonging in the yard and in the classroom?



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Pupils from Griffen Valley ETNS Lucan, celebrated their tenth anniversary by producing a book about Human Rights



LANGUAGE

Language is not a difficulty for all pupils from minority ethnic groups many of whom have excellent English. Many of the children in our classrooms are working all day with us in English, which may be a second or third language for them and their competence and abilities in this regard are not always recognised.

Parents from migrant families often differ in the emphasis they put on mother tongue and teachers need to ask about their wishes rather than make assumptions. As teachers we can show appreciation for the languages children bring from their own families alongside an appreciation for the importance of Gaeilge. For example, migrant students who arrive in Ireland after the age of 11 are automatically offered an exemption from Gaeilge. Teachers should engage in dialogue with parents on this issue, to ensure that they are aware of the long-term implications of this decision.

Sometimes schools offer language classes in English and Irish, or facilitate language exchange among parents. If a school offered Polish lessons after school, not just to the Polish children but to all children it would send out a strong message that linguistic diversity is valued. Many cultural groups in Ireland, for example, the Polish, Hungarian and Latvian communities provide Saturday schools in their own languages. The teachers in these schools could be a valuable resource to mainstream teachers in planning events in their school.

Providing signs in different languages acknowledges the diversity of linguistic backgrounds in the school and creates a strong welcoming message for the school. On a practical level it makes life easier for students new to the school or parents or visitors.

When a child is new to a school and has little English, a student with the same mother tongue can help for a time. This can greatly support the child in feeling safe and at home in the classroom and clarify important school routines. However this arrangement needs to be in place simply for a settling in time as children need the immersion in a language to learn. Children will often use their mother tongue in the yard among themselves and this space for their native language should be respected. Teachers must at all times take care to pronounce and spell names accurately.

'If I had known the opportunities I was closing off down the road for my child, I would never have accepted the Irish exemption. Now she wants to be a primary teacher and her options are limited'

(Migrant parent).

Teachers can find creative ways to honour the mother tongue of their pupils. A bilingual "Write a Book" project can invite parental involvement in very positive ways, honour the languages spoken at home and promote Gaelge in a practical way for those of Irish ethnicity. For further information please see www.writeabookireland.com. Work on these books can be displayed at intercultural events in the schools.

It is also important that schools take care of the language and terminology they use in relation to interculturalism. For teachers interested in current discourse around appropriate terminology, a handout is available on the DICE website under 'Education Links': <http://www.diceproject.ie/links/>

LANGUE språk

język

lughha

γλώσσα

IDIOMA

KALBA

wika

KALBA

LINGUAGEM

ةغل

Language

nyelv

limbã

limbã

teanga

的語言

språk

ЯЗЫК ЯЗЫКТА

ةغل

SPRACHE

LANGUAGE

的語言

limbã

język

IDIOMA

wika

Camila Portela Byrne from St. Patrick's College teaching in Uganda as part of the Réalt programme





INITIAL TEACHER EDUCATION

INITIAL TEACHER EDUCATION

Colleges of Education to date have drawn most of their students from the majority culture. The student population does not as yet represent the diversity which exist in schools. This leaves colleges at a disadvantage, as the richness of diverse cultural experience is not part of every discussion. There is an onus on staff and students to commit to challenging ethnocentrism in their work, to create links with diverse organisations who can contribute to teaching as partners and to dialogue and celebrate cultural diversity with staff and pupils on School Placement. Colleges need to prepare students to develop an anti bias curriculum and to actively challenge racism and discrimination.

Colleges of Education need to be proactive in recruiting young students from minority groups to a career in primary education. This is an area of interest to the authors who would love to hear from any young migrant or Traveller student who is interested in becoming a primary teacher.



Artwork by Amy Lawrence
Church of Ireland College of Education

Checklist for Intercultural Events

THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS OFFER A STARTING POINT FOR A REVIEW OF AN INTERCULTURAL EVENT. CHILDREN, SCHOOL STAFF AND PARENTS CAN EXPLORE THESE QUESTIONS TOGETHER.

1. Is this a 'once-off' or 'stand-alone' celebration or does this event bring together and share the intercultural work planned and in progress?
2. How has this event been informed by the relevant policy context? For example: the DES Intercultural Education Strategy, the NCCA Intercultural Guidelines for Schools and the Traveller Education Strategy
3. Have we avoided representing diversity as something 'new' or 'exotic'? Is the 'normality' of diversity reflected in this event?
4. How has the school's ethos been represented in the event?
5. Has 'otherness' been avoided by including representation of Irishness and Irish heritage?
6. Have minority ethnic groups been involved in the leadership of the planning process?
7. Have 'single-story' identities been avoided and have children been supported to represent the complexity of their life stories?
8. How has school management supported or been involved in the event?
9. In what way is this a 'whole-school' event?
10. How has the planning for the event created CPD opportunities for teachers?



Artwork from Camila Portela Byrne, St. Patrick's College

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