



# County Carlow Migrant Integration and Intercultural Strategy 2020 – 2024

Straitéis um Lánpháirtiú agus Idirchultúrtha Imirceach Chontae Cheatharlach 2020 - 2024

**2020**

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# List of Acronyms

CSO	Central Statistics Office
CYPSC:	Children's and Young People's Service Committee
FAI:	Football Association of Ireland
GAA:	Gaelic Athletic Association
GP:	General Practitioner (doctor)
GRETA:	Group of Experts on Action Against Trafficking in Human Beings
HEIs:	Higher Education Institutes
HSE:	Health Service Executive
LCDC:	Local Community Development Committee
LEADER:	Liaison Entre Actions de Développement de l'Economie Rurale (Links between actions for the development of the rural economy)
LEO:	Local Enterprise Office
LECP:	Local Economic and Community Plan
MENA:	Middle East and North Africa
RSES:	Regional Economic and Spatial Strategy
SD:	Social Distance
SUSI:	Student Universal Support Ireland
UK:	United Kingdom
UN:	United Nations
UNESCO:	United Nations Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization

# FOREWORD

By Carlow LCDC

Carlow has become an increasingly diverse county. Carlow Local Community Development Committee (Carlow LCDC) is eager to welcome and embrace the rich cultural and economic benefits that diversity brings to our county. Notwithstanding these benefits, there are issues that challenge the vision that we have for County Carlow – *“in which all residents belong and are valued equally, regardless of their colour, creed, language, heritage, nationality or culture.”* The County Carlow Migrant Integration and Intercultural Strategy 2020 – 2024, and the accompanying charter, will be important tools for everybody in our county – in all sectors. Several stakeholders are already active in promoting integration and interculturalism; they are committed to the actions presented here and to signing the Charter. They will ensure that our agreed vision becomes a reality. This Strategy reflects national policy objectives, but it is very much bespoke for this county and for local communities.

On behalf of the Carlow LCDC, I would like to express my appreciation to all those who gave their commitment, time and enthusiasm to the process. Special thanks are due to Carlow County Development Partnership and Carlow County Council who co-initiated and co-funded the formulation of this strategy. I would like to mention Brendan O’Keeffe, who systematically carried out extensive consultations over the past year (2019), with all stakeholders and with the wider community. I would also like to express my gratitude to the members of the LCDC subgroup, the Integration Steering Group, who supported Brendan in the development of this comprehensive strategic framework that provides for meaningful actions over the next four years.

Finally, I would like to emphasise that this strategy was made possible due to Co. Carlow’s strong commitment to inter-agency work. Its implementation will depend on the same kind of commitment and renewed efforts, so that we attain an inclusive society that caters for everybody’s wellbeing.



John Brophy, Chairperson LCDC



# ENDORSEMENT

By Carlow County Council

We are delighted to welcome and endorse The County Carlow Migrant Integration and Intercultural Strategy 2020 – 2024. The Strategy demonstrates, to us all, the importance of embracing the county's diverse population and the need to provide equal opportunities to all who live in Co. Carlow.

Carlow County Council is committed to developing a county with a society in which migrants have the opportunities they need to lead full lives; to enjoy the benefits of living in Carlow; and to contribute to the Carlow economy, society and civic life. This Strategy will underpin the work of Carlow County Council, in areas for which we are responsible. Moreover, we will commit to ensuring that all will be facilitated to access our services equally, and we will play a lead role in developing a county that is culturally enriched and inclusive.

We would like to acknowledge the valuable work already achieved by the essential inter-agency collaboration and the commitment demonstrated, by all sectors, through the first Carlow Integration Strategy (2014 – 2018). This has laid down a solid foundation for our work going forward.

The County we live in today and in the future will reflect the contribution from all its residents.

The County Carlow Migrant Integration and Intercultural Strategy 2020 – 2024 demonstrates, to us all, the importance of embracing the county's diverse population and the need to provide equal opportunities to all who live in Co. Carlow.



Cllr. John Pender, Cathaoirleach,  
Carlow County Council



Kathleen Holohan, Chief Executive





# ENDORSEMENT

By Carlow County Development Partnership

Carlow Development Partnership welcomes and fully endorses this integration and intercultural strategy for migrant communities. The process through which it was derived has harnessed much goodwill, expertise and commitment. This document gives effect to many voices and, as an organisation, we are strongly committed to driving and supporting its full implementation over the coming years.

The promotion of interculturalism will involve tapping into some specialist expertise, but above all, it will require a bottom-up approach. We recognise that urban and rural communities are among the main enablers of interculturalism. Community consultations and participation, together with the inclusion of migrants in community activities and decision-making, are hallmarks of this strategy, and ought to govern its delivery.

The values and principles articulated in this strategy are consistent with our organisation's core values and ways of working. We welcome, in particular, the integration of economic and social goals. As a community-led organisation, Carlow Development Partnership will be active, vigilant and forthright in ensuring a fusion of bottom-up and top-down approaches to promoting an inclusive and intercultural Carlow.

We are fully committed to the Carlow Intercultural Charter, and encourage all civic, religious and public bodies, and the private sector, to embrace it. It is our view that visible civic, religious and business leadership is integral to ensuring that the values of interculturalism are reflected and given effect in attitudes, behaviour and public discourse across all of society.

We strongly commend this strategy and look forward to co-delivering it.

Frank Corcoran, Chairperson, CCDP

Mary Lawlor, Chief Executive Officer







# Vision Statement

*Our approach to the Carlow Migrant Integration and Inter-Cultural Strategy (2020-2024) is motivated by a vision of Carlow society that welcomes and celebrates the rich contributions of different nationalities and ethnicities to the understanding and expression of what it means to be Irish in the twenty-first century. The aim of the strategy is to create and foster a vibrant, inclusive and truly intercultural society in Carlow, in which all residents belong and are valued equally, regardless of their colour, creed, language, heritage, nationality or culture. It shares the vision underpinning the national 'Migrant Integration Strategy 2017-20: A Blueprint for the Future', of an integrated society, in which migrants are facilitated to play a full part in Irish society - a society in which migrants have the opportunities they need to lead full lives; to enjoy the benefits of living in Ireland; and to make a contribution to Irish life.*

*From the outset, we have made sure that this strategy is strongly evidence-based - underpinned by robust data, responsive to the needs of migrants and promotive of integration and interculturalism in Carlow. Therefore, we ensured the application of strong academic rigour, while enabling stakeholders to actively input into the planning process. We also recognised, from the outset, that we were building on the work done by the then Carlow Integration Forum and partner agencies, over recent years.*

*In advancing this strategy, we took guidance from national policy frameworks, in particular the national migrant integration strategy. As our work progressed, we noted the need to go beyond traditional notions of integration - whereby migrants were expected to assimilate into the dominant culture, to the values and principles of interculturalism - grounded in equality and whereby all cultures work together, and engage and integrate fully with one another - enriching society and community for all. Indeed, there is strong evidence that Carlow people - native and newly arrived - embrace interculturalism and this strategy incorporates several actions that enable us to harness intercultural experiences, energies and commitments. Our research has also highlighted a number of challenges and blockages, including prejudice and experiences of racism. These have no place in our society, and the strategy commits stakeholders to working to eliminate them.*

*This strategy is intended to provide a disciplined, results-based approach and framework directed at achieving a more intercultural community, through partnership working and collective impact, over the next four years. Delivery will require investment, collaboration and coordination. The Migrant Integration Strategy Implementation Group will oversee this work. They will work with the Intercultural Forum, who will be supported to continue to act as a representative body for the engagement of members of migrant communities, and with the Local and Community Development Committee (LCDC), who will proactively support agencies and service providers to deliver on the outcomes that are presented here. Stakeholders will also facilitate the emergence of new fora and bodies to give effect to particular aspects of the strategy. The advancement and promotion of integration and interculturalism are primarily achieved, not by discrete or once-off actions, though these may be useful, but rather by a whole-of-society and whole-of-community approach, whereby interculturalism is fully mainstreamed, and all strategies are robustly proofed and monitored to ensure individual and collective efforts contribute to, and sustain an intercultural Carlow.*

## **Members of the Integration Steering Group**

Margaret Moore (Carlow County Council), Annette Fox (Carlow County Development Partnership), Helen Maher (Carlow College), Sandra Kazlauskaitė, (Forward Steps), Martha Jane Duggan (Carlow Sports Partnership), Lisa Hutton (Carlow Regional Youth Services), Niall Morris (St Catherine's Community Services Centre), Niamh McCrea (Carlow IT), Eilish Langton (Healthy Carlow) and Úna Hayes (Carlow and Kilkenny ETB).



# Achoimre Fheidhmeach

Is é contae Cheatharlach ceann de na contaetha is ilghnéithí in Éirinn maidir leis an éagsúlacht náisiúntachtaí, eitneachtaí agus teanga atá lonnaithe ann. Rugadh nach mór gach cónaitheoir as ochtar sa chontae lasmuigh d'Éirinn. Le fiche bliain anuas, tá Ceatharlach tar éis fáilte a chur roimh líon suntasach daoine ó thíortha éagsúla i gcéin. Tagann tromlach na ndaoine seo as Oirthear na hEorpa, ón bPolainn, ón Laitvia agus An Rómáin faoi seach. Tá fás ag teacht ar líon na ndaoine a thagann ón mBrasaíl agus ó fho-ilchríoch na hIndia – chun a bheith ag obair, den chuid is mó, sna hagraiththionscail agus i ngairmeacha cúraim éagsúla. Tá pobal Rohingya Cheatharlach socraithe sa chontae le breis is deich mbliana anuas agus cuireadh fáilte roimh theifigh ón tSiria le déanaí.

Baineann buntáistí suaithinseacha leis an imirce do Cheatharlach; cuireann imircigh leis an bhfórsa saothair, agus tugann siad smaointe is scileanna úra do phobail agus d'áiteanna gnó. Táthar tar éis gnónna nua a bhunú agus beogacht ar leith a mhúscailt i sráideanna, sráidbhailte agus ceantair tuaithe an chontae. Cuireann a gcuid ionchuir in ócáidí agus imeachtaí sóisialta go mór le saibhreas agus le beogacht shaol an phobail.

Ainneoin na gcúinsí dearfacha uilig a bhaineann leis an imirce, tá dúshlán ann chomh maith. Níorbh ionann taithí gach duine a tháinig go Ceatharlach. Cé go bhfuil tromlach den phobal imearcach socraithe isteach sa phobal, tá daoine áirithe atá ag streachailt agus iad i mbaol eisiaimh shóisialta. Is dóichí go mbainfidh imircigh an tsíleáil ghloine dá ngairm amach ná Éireannaigh dhúchasacha agus tá roinnt daoine fostaithe in earnáil nach mbaineann lena gcailíochtaí. Tá pobail imirceacha faoi ghannionadaíocht i réimsí éagsúla den saol, an tsochaí shibhialta agus sna struchtúir polaitíochta. Ar an drochuair, tá an ciníochas, an tseineafóibe agus an réamhchlaonadh mar chuid den saol anseo in Éirinn agus tá imircigh áirithe, an pobal Roma agus pobail eile a tháinig ón Afraic agus ón Áis, den gcuid is mó, tar éis taithí a bheith acu ar an gcineál iompair seo sa tír, meon nach luíonn le noirm agus le prionsabail an imeasctha.

Tugann an anailís riachtanas a deineadh agus ar a bhfuil an straitéis seo bunaithe, aitheantas do thábhacht na teanga – an inniúlacht sa Bhéarla – chun go mbeidh ar chumas na bpobal imirceach seo bheith istigh níos fearr a bheith acu i sochaí Chontae Cheatharlach. Mar thoradh air seo, tá gá le breis infheistíochta a dhéanamh ar na deachleachtais a bhaineann le teagasc agus le foghlaim teangacha.

Léiríonn comhairliúcháin a deineadh le pobail imirceacha go mbaineann tábhacht le dóthain seirbhísí aistriúcháin agus ateangaireachta a bheith ar fáil agus taispeánann ionchur soláthraithe seirbhísí i gCeatharlach go bhfuil an toil agus an meon oscailte acu chun áiseanna nuatheicneolaíochta a úsáid ar mhaithe le cumarsáid níos fearr a dhéanamh le himircigh. Léiríonn an comhairliúchán a deineadh go mbaineann tábhacht le hidirghabháil dhíreach a dhéanamh le páistí agus le daoine óga agus imeascadh á chur chun cinn againn. Cé go mbíonn páistí óga, a bhfuil cúlra imirceach acu, ag fás aníos i dtimpeallacht Éireannach agus tuiscint níos fearr acu dá réir ar 'nósanna Éireannacha', is minic a bhíonn freagrachtaí móra acu mar aistritheoirí agus ateangairí dá ngaolta níos sine. Tuilleann páistí aird ar leith agus sinn ag obair le pobail imirceacha le cinntiú go gcuirfear léirithe cultúrtha ar siúl i gCeatharlach, ach go gcaitheann na léirithe seo cloí le noirm, luachanna agus cóid dlite na hÉireann/An Aontais Eorpaigh – go háirithe maidir le comhionannas inscne agus sláine choirp.



Cuireann an straitéis seo creatlach straitéiseach chun cinn ina bhfuil sraith beartas a chuireann leis an obair fhóna atá ar siúl faoi láthair ag áisíneachtaí agus eagraíochtaí pobalbhunaithe i dtaca le himeascadh sa chontae. Tugann sé éifeacht do spriocanna beartas náisiúnta, mar atá leagtha síos sa Pholasaí Náisiúnta Um Imeascadh 2017. Anuas air sin, cuireann an straitéis seo croí-luachanna agus croí-phrionsabail mar atá leabaithe sa Straiteis Um Imeascadh agus Idirchultúrtha Cheatharlach chun cinn.

Léiríonn cinneadh uilíoch gheallshealbhóirí an phróisis seo an focal 'idirchultúrtha' a úsáid agus claonadh acu 'an t-idirchultúrthacht' a chur chun cinn a thiomanta is atá Ceatharlach do dheiseanna a chur ar fáil do phobail uilig a bhféiniúlacht chultúrtha a chur in iúl agus a roinnt leis an gcéad ghlúin eile agus gan a bheith ag díriú ar phróisis comhshamhlaithe cultúir. Do mhuintir Cheatharlach, ciallaíonn an t-idirchultúrthacht go n-oibríonn cultúir éagsúla i gcomhar lena chéile i réimsí uilig an tsaoil agus go gcothaítear an chomhpháirtíocht mar bhonn de shaol phobal an chontae.

D'éascair breis is seasca beartas as an bpróiséas forleathan comhairliúcháin agus as an grinnstaidéar taighde a deineadh, a chiallaíonn go bhfuil bunús láidir fianaise ag an straitéis seo. Agus cuma cuimsitheach go leor ar an liosta seo, is fiú a thabhairt san áireamh go bhfuil nascanna idir cuid shuntasach de na moltaí atá luaite agus go dtógann siad ar dheachleachtais atá ann cheana féin. Tá rath na straitéise seo ag brath ar thiomanta athnuaithe a bheith ag geallshealbhóirí i leith obair chomhpháirtíochta agus tá gá lena chinntiú go gcuirfear tacaíocht agus seirbhís iomlánaíoch ar fáil chuige seo. Ba cheart go ndíreodh an cur chuige ar an gcumasú agus ar thógaint a dhéanamh a líon den phobal Éireannach a ghlacann páirt shofheicthe in imeachtaí imeasctha/ idirchultúrtha agus a cheiliúráin a dtábhacht agus a luach do shocháí na tíre. Cuireann an straitéis seo freagracht ar an Rialtas lár agus ar a áisíneachtaí tacaíocht chuí a thabhairt don straitéis agus a chinntiú go dtabharfar achmhainní oiriúnacha do chur i bhfeidhm na mbeartas sonracha.

Leanfaidh an Coiste Áitiúil Um Fhorbairt Phobail (CAFM) ar aghaidh lena shainróil i dtiomáint na straitéise, go háirithe i dtaca le hionchuir áisíneachtaí, monatóireacht, measúnóireacht agus seachadadh. Tá gá le Oifigeach Idirchultúrtha a earcú le cinntiú go dtabharfar na horduithe oibríochta slán sa phróiséas seo.

Tá geallshealbhóirí (imirceach agus neamhimirceach) i gCeatharlach airdeallach faoin luach a bhaineann le himeachtaí a bheith taitneamhach agus sóisialta. Tugtar aitheantas don fheidhm nasctha a bhaineann le bia a roinnt lena chéile – ó chineálacha cócaireachta éagsúla – agus táthar ag súil le hobair chomhpháirtíochta a chur chun cinn ag leibhéal áitiúil, contae, réigiúnach agus náisiúnta chun ceiliúradh agus forbairt a dhéanamh ar ilghnéitheacht agus ar idirchultúrthacht phobal an chontae féin. Cé go bhfuil gnéithe áirithe de chonair imearcach, imeascadh agus idirchultúrtha Cheatharlach cosúil leis an mórchonair atá in Éirinn ar an iomlan, tá réimsí uathúla aici, cuir i gcás, taithí fhorleathan a bheith ag an gcontae in athlonnú teifeach. Bíonn an contae i gcónaí toilteanach oibriú i gcompháirt le daoine eile chun a gcuid ceachtanna foghlama a roinnt agus deachleachtais a chothú.



# Executive Summary

In terms of nationality, ethnicity and language, Carlow is one of the most diverse counties in Ireland. Almost one-in-eight of the county's residents was born outside of Ireland. Over the past two decades, Carlow has received and welcomed considerable numbers of people from overseas. Most of these come from Eastern Europe, predominantly Poland and Latvia, and latterly Romania. Growing numbers of people are coming to Carlow from Brazil and the Indian Sub-Continent – mainly to work in agri-industries and caring professions. Carlow's Rohingya community is settled here for over ten years, and recently the county has welcomed refugees from Syria.

Migration has brought substantial benefits to Carlow; migrants contribute to the workforce, and they bring new skills and ideas to workplaces and communities. They have established new businesses and have breathed life into high streets, villages and rural areas. Their contributions to social occasions and events add to the richness and vibrancy of community life.

Notwithstanding the overwhelming positives associated with migration, there are challenges. The migrant experience has not been homogenous, and while most are integrating well into life in Carlow, some are falling behind, and many migrants are vulnerable to economic and social exclusion. Migrants are more likely than are Irish people to hit glass-ceilings with respect to the progression of their careers, and several are not employed in the sectors in which they are qualified. Migrant populations are under-represented in many facets of life, including civil society and political structures. Regrettably, racism, xenophobia and prejudice are features of Irish life, and migrants, particularly Roma and those who have come from Africa and Asia, have been on the receiving end of attitudes and behaviours that run counter to the norms and principles of integration.

The needs analysis underpinning this strategy identifies the importance of **language** – competence in English – in enabling migrants to integrate and to feel more fully part of Carlow society. Thus, the good practices that pertain in respect of language teaching / learning merit further investment and expansion.

Consultations with migrant communities also reveal the merits of ensuring adequate translation and interpretation services, and service providers in Carlow indicate tremendous openness and willingness to embrace technological interfaces to enabling better communication with migrants. Stakeholder consultations point to the importance of engaging specifically with **children and young people** in promoting integration. While migrant children and youth may grow up in an Irish environment and have a better understanding of 'Irish ways' than their parents or grandparents, they can face considerable responsibilities as translators and interpreters for older relatives. Children also merit particular attention, in working with migrants, to ensure that diverse cultural expressions take place in Carlow, but that these need to be in line with EU / Irish norms, values and legal codes – particularly in respect of gender equality and bodily integrity.



This strategy puts forward a strategic framework and sets of actions that build on, and add value, to the extensive good work already being done by agencies and community-based organisations in Carlow in respect of integration. It also gives effect to, and aligns with, national policy objectives, as set out in the 2017 national integration policy. Moreover, the strategy articulates core values and principles, and these are embodied in the Carlow Integration and Intercultural Strategy.

The universal decision among stakeholders to use the term ‘intercultural’ and to seek **to promote ‘interculturalism’** are indicative of Carlow’s resolve to resist any tendency towards assimilation, and instead, to enable, empower and encourage all ethnicities, nationalities and communities to express their cultural identity, to share these with others and to ensure they are passed on to the next generations. For Carlow people, interculturalism implies all cultures working, engaging and collaborating with one another in all facets of life – enriching one another.

Over sixty actions emerged from the extensive consultations and in-depth research that give this strategy a **robust evidence base**. While this may seem like an extensive list, it is noteworthy that many recommendations are interlinked and build on good practices that already pertain. The delivery of this strategy is contingent on all stakeholders re-affirming their commitment to **partnership working** and to ensuring that they provide holistic, wrap-around supports and services. Approaches should focus on **empowerment** and on engaging increased numbers of Irish people to visibly participate in, and champion, integration and interculturalism. It also behoves central government and its agencies to fully row in behind the strategy and to ensure that actions are adequately resourced and supported.

The Local Community Development Committee (LCDC) will continue to play an important role in driving the strategy, particularly in respect of agency inputs, monitoring, evaluation and dissemination. The recruitment of a dedicated Intercultural Officer is essential in ensuring that the operational imperatives presented here are delivered.

Stakeholders (migrant and non-migrant) in Carlow are conscious of the value of ensuring that activities have, where possible, **a fun or social dimension**. They note the binding effects of sharing food – from diverse cuisines – and they very much look forward to working collaboratively at local, county, regional and national levels in celebrating and promoting diversity and interculturalism. While Carlow’s migration, integration and intercultural trajectory, over the past two decades, reflects that of Ireland as a whole, it also has some distinctive features, not least the extensive experiences in refugee resettlement. The county is always willing to work with others in sharing learnings and in promoting best practices.

# 1

## The Evidence – Base and Methodological Approach

This four-year strategy is underpinned by a very strong evidence base, and is supported by an in-depth consultation process that took place over the first half of 2019. The consultation process involved the convening of ten focus groups with various migrant communities, several one-to-one interviews with migrants and the distribution of a survey questionnaire. A total of 315 migrants responded to the questionnaire, and the resultant database provides considerable details regarding their experiences of life in Carlow. Thus, it generates an important set of baseline indicators against which the progress of this integration and intercultural strategy can be benchmarked.

Over forty migrants participated in focus group discussions, which were independently facilitated by Paul O’Raw and Brendan O’Keeffe. The focus group deliberations provide further insights, in addition to teasing out the recommendations and suggestions advanced in the survey. In essence, the consultation process ensured that migrants were afforded real opportunities to engage in the formulation of this strategy. The process also increased their awareness of the Carlow Intercultural Forum and its work, and it provided opportunities to engage with regional and national bodies. The research methodologies received ethical approval from Carlow College and Carlow Institute of Technology.

In addition to the consultations with migrant communities, the process involved engaging with native Irish people, as the ‘host community’. Ireland’s migrant integration strategy (2017: 11) states that, “as a two-way process, integration involves change for Irish society and institutions so that the benefits of greater diversity can be fully realised”. Thus, Carlow residents, of all nationalities, were invited to complete a survey questionnaire, capturing their attitudes to a range of nationalities, ethnicities and social groups. Almost three hundred (n=291) people responded. The questionnaire was modelled on the seminal work of Prof. Micheál MacGréil S.J. *‘Prejudice and Tolerance in Ireland’*. This enabled a measurement of the concept of social distance. The findings reveal that Carlow people do not view all nationalities or ethnicities equally, and that there are prejudices among the population. These data are important in that they highlight that a one-size-fits-all approach is not applicable, and that differentiated strategies and actions are needed in promoting truth, integration and interculturalism, and in dispelling mis-information and stereotypes.

Service providers in the public and voluntary sectors contributed very generously to the compilation of this strategy. Some participated by responding to a bespoke survey questionnaire, while over fifty personnel from thirty-one agencies and organisations participated in interviews. These conversations allowed for an exploration of the issues facing migrant communities. They also enabled personnel to recount their experiences and to advance views and recommendations regarding the forthcoming strategy. The Local and Community Development Committee (LCDC) and Social Inclusion Forum (SIF) members participated in workshops that interrogated the census data on migration. Their engagement, along with that of the Intercultural Forum members, allowed for a stocktake in respect of the outputs and achievements of the previous integration strategy – thus ensuring that the approaches and actions to be pursued between 2020 and 2024 will build on, and add value to the work that has been done to date.

As soon as the strategy was drafted, it was circulated to all service providers and to representatives of migrant communities who had provided data and information during the consultation process. These provided feedback on the document, and many of them attended rolling workshops (October 24 and 25), at which they provided further feedback and discussed how they would contribute to the strategy’s delivery. The Integration Steering Group anticipates convening further workshops, so that all stakeholders can commit to agreed specific actions, targets and indicators.

# 2


## Carlow's Increasing Diversity – Profile of Nationalities and Ethnicities

Over the past two decades, Carlow's population has become increasingly diverse in respect of nationality and ethnicity. In this respect, the county is reflective of trends across Ireland. In 1996, the vast majority (93%) of persons resident in Ireland were born within the State. A small minority (1.5%) was born outside of Ireland, the UK and USA. Carlow was even more homogenous, with less than one percent (0.8%) of its resident population having been born outside of these three countries. By 2006, the situation had changed considerably. In Ireland, the proportion of the resident population born within the State had fallen by almost ten percentage points (to 84%). In Carlow, the experience was similar. Between 1996 and 2006, the county experienced a tenfold increase in the number of persons, in its resident population, who was born outside of Ireland, the UK and USA – from 335 to 3,604 (7.2% of the population). The most recent census of population (CSO, 2016) records an increase in diversity, although the pace of increase has slowed down. **The data reveal that almost one-in-eight (12.2%; n=6,880) of Carlow's population was born outside Ireland.** The inter-censal data reveal that migration to Ireland and to Carlow is relatively recent. While there are elements of organised migration, such as the recruitment initiatives promoted by the Irish government and employers, most of those who have come to Carlow come as individuals and families. The following table lists the numbers of persons in the ten most numerous nationalities (other than Irish) recorded as resident in County Carlow.

**Table 1: Number of Persons, by Nationality, in Carlow (2011 and 2016) – ten most numerous nationalities**

Nationality	Population 2011	Population 2016	Change 2011-2016	% Change 2011 – 2016	As a % of non-Irish nationals (2016)
Polish	2275	2275	0	0.0%	33%
UK	1238	1111	-127	-10.3%	16%
Latvian	328	480	152	46.3%	7%
Romanian	195	277	82	42.1%	4%
Lithuanian	236	239	3	1.3%	3%
Irish-Polish	-	161	161	-	2%
Irish-UK	103	141	38	36.9%	2%
Irish-American	80	129	49	61.3%	2%
Chinese	120	111	-9	-7.5%	2%
Portuguese	90	99	9	10.0%	1%

Among those with a nationality other than Irish, **over half (54%) belong to an East European nationality**, while over one-in-eight (12.8%) is a dual national. In addition to the three dual nationalities shown above, there are seventy persons whose self-declared nationality is Irish-Nigerian. The survey fieldwork undertaken with migrant communities, in 2019, suggests that these figures are an **under-recording of the number of non-Irish nationals in County Carlow.** In responding to the fieldwork questionnaire, several migrants, particularly those from Sub-Saharan Africa reported that they see themselves as Irish and / or as dual nationals, regardless of the passport or citizenship they possess. Moreover, it should be noted that the census data date from 2016, and thus pre-date the Syrian Resettlement Programme, which has seen Carlow hosting approximately 86 Syrian refugees.



The composition of Carlow's migrant population differs from that of Ireland as whole, in respect of the component nationalities. Across the State, the largest populations of nationalities, other than Irish, are, in sequence, Polish, UK, Lithuanian and Latvian. Relative to the State, **Carlow has a higher proportion of Polish, Latvian and Romanian nationals**. This distinctive composition of the Carlow population needs to be factored into engagement activities, not least with respect to the translation of information materials.

Carlow has also become more linguistically diverse, with **sixty-five languages** being spoken in homes across the county. The ten most widely-spoken languages, apart from Irish and English, are as follows (in sequence, by number of speakers): Polish; French; Latvian; Romanian; German; Lithuanian; Portuguese; Spanish; Chinese and Russian. **Over 1,200 people in Carlow declare that they cannot speak English 'well' or 'at all'**. The survey fieldwork undertaken as part of the consultation underpinning this strategy found that considerable numbers of migrants have 'functional' English that enables them to undertake their work. However, they frequently lack the vocabulary to enable them to communicate about issues beyond their sphere of work / employment. Age and gender influence levels of fluency in English, with older women being the most likely cohort to face language barriers. The fieldwork also found that Francophones, most of whom are from African countries, are more likely than are others, to be multi-lingual.

### **Migrants make a very significant contribution to the economy of Carlow and Ireland.**

The Irish health service and several manufacturing industries are heavily reliant on imported labour. **In Carlow, the labour force participation rate among migrants (57.2%) is nine percentage points higher than among Irish nationals (48.5%)**. Migrants are, however, under-represented in the higher social classes; one-in-eight (12.1%) is classified as having a 'managerial and technical' occupation, which is less than half the figure for Irish nationals (26%). Persons with a nationality other than Irish, and in particular those from Eastern Europe, Asia and Latin America, are younger than average, and therefore significant contributors to the social welfare system (by virtue of their social insurance (RSI) contributions). Over half (>55%) of Poles, Latvians, Lithuanians and Romanians resident in Carlow are aged 25 to 44 years.

Almost a quarter (24%) of Carlow-resident children who are not Irish nationals are classified as having 'no nationality' or their nationality is 'not stated'. This is more than twice the average across all age cohorts.

International experiences caution against any residential segregation based on nationality or ethnicity. Therefore, it is important to look at the current geography in respect of the distribution of migrant communities across County Carlow, and to plan effectively and deliver healthy and vibrant mixed communities. The work done by Spatial Insight Solutions, commissioned by Carlow County Council, is important in this regard, so that patterns can be tracked over time. The most recent Census of Population data reveal that the ten Electoral Divisions (EDs) with the highest proportions of persons with a nationality other than Irish are as follows:



**Table 2: Percentage breakdown of the Population by Nationality, in the ten EDs (Electoral Divisions) with the highest proportions of non-Irish nationals, in County Carlow, 2016**

ED (Electoral Division)	Ireland	Non-Irish	UK	Poland	Lithuania	Other EU 28	Rest of the World	Not Stated
Tullow Urban	78.0	20.3	1.7	8.9	0.6	7.8	1.2	1.7
Carlow Urban	78.6	17.5	1.6	4.7	0.7	5.3	5.1	3.9
Carlow Rural (i.e. suburbs)	81.8	16.5	1.7	7.3	0.9	4.0	2.6	1.7
Cranemore	87.1	12.0	1.6	8.0	0	1.8	0.5	0.9
Muinebeag Urban	87.7	11.3	2.2	5.9	0.3	1.6	1.3	1.0
Tullowbeg	87.9	10.0	0.8	8.7	0	0.3	0.2	2.1
Tullow Rural	90.1	9.4	1.1	4.2	0	3.2	1.0	0.5
Coonogue	91.3	8.2	5.3	1.9	0	1.0	0	0.5
Borris	91.4	8.1	2.3	4.2	0	1.1	0.6	0.5
Graigie Urban	79.9	8.0	1.6	3.6	0.3	1.6	0.9	12.1

As the table shows, Tullow Urban ED has the highest proportion of persons with a nationality other than Irish. Poles and Lithuanians constitute almost ten percent of the population locally. The adjoining EDs of Tullowbeg and Tullow Rural also feature as having among the highest proportions of migrants in County Carlow. Among the 'other EU' (non-UK / Polish) nationals resident locally, the largest proportion is Latvian. Carlow Town, as defined by the three EDs of Carlow Urban, Carlow Rural (i.e., inner suburbs) and Graigue Rural, also has significant proportions of persons with nationalities other than Irish. In contrast, the EDs that are beyond walking distance of Carlow Town but are within its peri-urban zone (i.e., up to a c.10km radius of the town) have the lowest proportions (<4%) of migrants in their resident populations. The following table provides a more fine-grained geographical analysis in respect of the concentration of migrant communities that has emerged in parts of Carlow. It lists the neighbourhoods (based on CSO Small Area boundaries) in which at least thirty percent of the population is of a nationality other than Irish:

**Table 3: Percentage of Persons with a nationality other than Irish or UK at Neighbourhood Level in Carlow, 2016 – in the Small Areas (SAs) that have values in excess of 30%**


Community	Neighbourhoods	%
Carlow	Old Burrin, Paupish Lane (north), The Riverbank	46%
Carlow	Anglers' Walk, Hannover Crescent	45%
Carlow	Tullow Street (east), Potato Market, Kennedy Avenue, Barrack Street (west)	45%
Carlow	Barrack Street (east), Little Barrack Street, Crosby Place, Paupish Lane	38%
Tullow	Bridge St. (south), John St. (west), Chapel Lane, Old Chapel Lane, Mill St. (north)	37%
Carlow	Willow Park (south)	35%
Carlow	Burrin Manor	35%
Carlow	The Laurels (south)	32%
Carlow	Barrow Mews, John's Mill, Castle Street (western end - north side)	31%
Tullow	Gortnahowan, Graigowan	30%
Tullow	Park Rise, Park Court, Park Avenue, Oak View, Ash Lane, Birch Avenue	30%

There is also evidence, in Carlow, of geographical concentrations in respect of ethnicity. The spatial pattern is similar to that which pertains in respect of nationality, as particular local geographies are increasingly associated with various ethnicities. The following table lists the ten EDs with the highest proportions of persons who state that their ethnicity is other than 'White Irish'.

<b>Table 4: Percentage breakdown of the Population by Nationality, at ED level, in the ten EDs (Electoral Divisions) with the lowest proportions of 'White Irish' in County Carlow, 2016</b>								
<b>ED</b>	<b>White Irish</b>	<b>White Irish Traveller</b>	<b>Other White</b>	<b>White Irish &amp; Other White</b>	<b>Black or Black Irish</b>	<b>Asian or Asian Irish</b>	<b>Other</b>	<b>Not Stated</b>
Carlow Urban	72.8	1.0	12.5	85.3	2.4	4.0	2.1	5.1
Tullow Urban	73.7	1.6	19.1	92.9	0.7	0.9	1.5	2.4
Carlow Rural	73.8	2.0	14.3	88.1	2.5	2.4	2.1	2.9
Graigie Urban	77.4	0.5	5.9	83.3	1.1	0.7	1.5	12.8
Cranemore	80.8	4.3	12.1	92.9	0.1	0.2	1.1	1.5
Tullowbeg	82.9	3.5	11.3	94.2	0	0.5	0	1.8
Muinebeag Urban	85.5	0.1	10.2	95.8	0.5	1.4	0.9	1.3
Grangeford	85.6	0.4	7.1	92.7	2.4	1.3	2.6	0.6
Ballon	87.0	0.6	7.0	94.0	1.1	0.6	1.4	2.4
Tullow Rural	87.4	0	8.7	96.1	0.5	0.5	0.5	2.5

While the total non-white population in the county is small (<3%), there are notable concentrations in Carlow Town, and, to a lesser extent, in Tullow. The following table provides a more fine-grained geographical analysis in respect of the concentration of non-white ethnicities that has emerged in parts of Carlow. It lists the neighbourhoods (based on CSO Small Area boundaries) in which at least forty percent of the population is of non-white ethnicity (e.g., Black, Asian):

<b>Table 5: Percentage of Persons with a non-white ethnicity, at neighbourhood level in Carlow, 2016 – in the Small Areas (SAs) that have values in excess of 40%</b>	
<b>Neighbourhoods</b>	<b>%</b>
The Laurels (south)	68%
Barrack Street (east), Little Barrack Street, Crosby Place, Paupish Lane	59%
Willow Park (south)	57%
Old Burrin, Paupish Lane (north), The Riverbank	57%
Tullow Street (east), Potato Market, Kennedy Avenue, Barrack Street (west)	54%
Anglers' Walk, Hannover Crescent	53%
Burrin Manor	48%
The Laurels (north)	45%
Bridge St. (south), John St. (west), Chapel Lane, Old Chapel Lane, Mill St. (north)	43%
Castlewood Gardens, St. Bridget's Place, Link Road	40%
Sandhills, Brownshill Wood	40%



This micro-level geographical analysis is highly relevant in the context of an integration / intercultural strategy: 'A Discussion document and proposed actions for Local Authorities on developing local migrant integration strategies' (Immigrant Council of Ireland, 2018: 8) specifies the need to ensure "avoidance of ghettoisation in housing provision". Indeed, the wider literature on integration (Eurobarometer, 2017; McGinnity *et al.*, 2018) reveals correlations between integration and inter-ethnic interactions and social relations.

The Census of Population data reveal that Carlow is, like Ireland as a whole, becoming increasingly diverse in respect of nationality, ethnicity, language, religion and cultural identity. The county is, in many respects, reflective of the situation across Ireland, but Carlow also has some distinctive features including having a proportionately larger Latvian population and a growing number of persons from Romania. Carlow also has experience in hosting Rohingya and Syrian refugees, who came to Ireland under programmes that were sponsored by the United Nations (UN) and Government of Ireland. In geographical terms, all communities across the county are now home to people of diverse backgrounds; thus, in-migration is both an urban and rural phenomenon. Although in-migration is a relatively new experience for Ireland, having largely occurred over the past twenty-five years, there is already clear evidence that it is contributing to the rejuvenation of rural communities and core urban areas. There are however, notable concentrations of migrants in particular neighbourhoods, which indicate a need to redress any segregation that may emerge and to ensure integration in housing, education and all aspects of Carlow society.



The sentiments conveyed in the wordclouds are captured and conveyed, with greater detail, in the responses, as presented in the following tables and graphs. As the following table shows, the majority of migrants are generally satisfied with life in Ireland / Carlow. However, satisfaction with Ireland is, on all indicators, higher than satisfaction with Carlow. The table shows the percentage of respondents indicating agreement (agree/strongly agree) with a series of given statements about both Ireland and Carlow. The survey findings (from the questionnaire and focus groups) show that migrants find it hard to penetrate Irish social networks and get information about events and activities.

**Table 6: Percentage of survey respondents who indicated agreement with given statements about Ireland and Carlow.**

**Statements about life in Ireland and Carlow**

“ People are welcoming and tolerant of foreign-born people. ” Ireland 89%  
Carlow 84%

Ireland 89% “ I am happy to live in this place. ”  
Carlow 62%

“ Life here has lived up to my expectations. ” Ireland 74%  
Carlow 62%

Ireland 70% “ I have friends and people I can call on when I need them. ”  
Carlow 66%


“ I would like to spend the next ten or more years here. ” Ireland 69%  
Carlow 48%

Ireland 66% “ Most of my friends are not from this place ”  
Carlow 49%

“ I find that people here welcome me as a newcomer. ” Ireland 65%  
Carlow 58%

Ireland 55% “ I find that people want to include me in social networks / groups. ”  
Carlow 51%

“ Most of my friends are from this place. ” Ireland 34%  
Carlow 49%



The data presented in table 6 reveal lower ratings for Carlow than for Ireland. When this pattern was pursued and explored in the focus groups, with the migrant communities, participants reported that the lower scores awarded to Carlow are associated with other counties having a wider range of natural amenities (e.g., beaches, coastline) and more opportunities to meet and socialise with people from their home countries – due to a larger ‘critical mass’ of migrants.

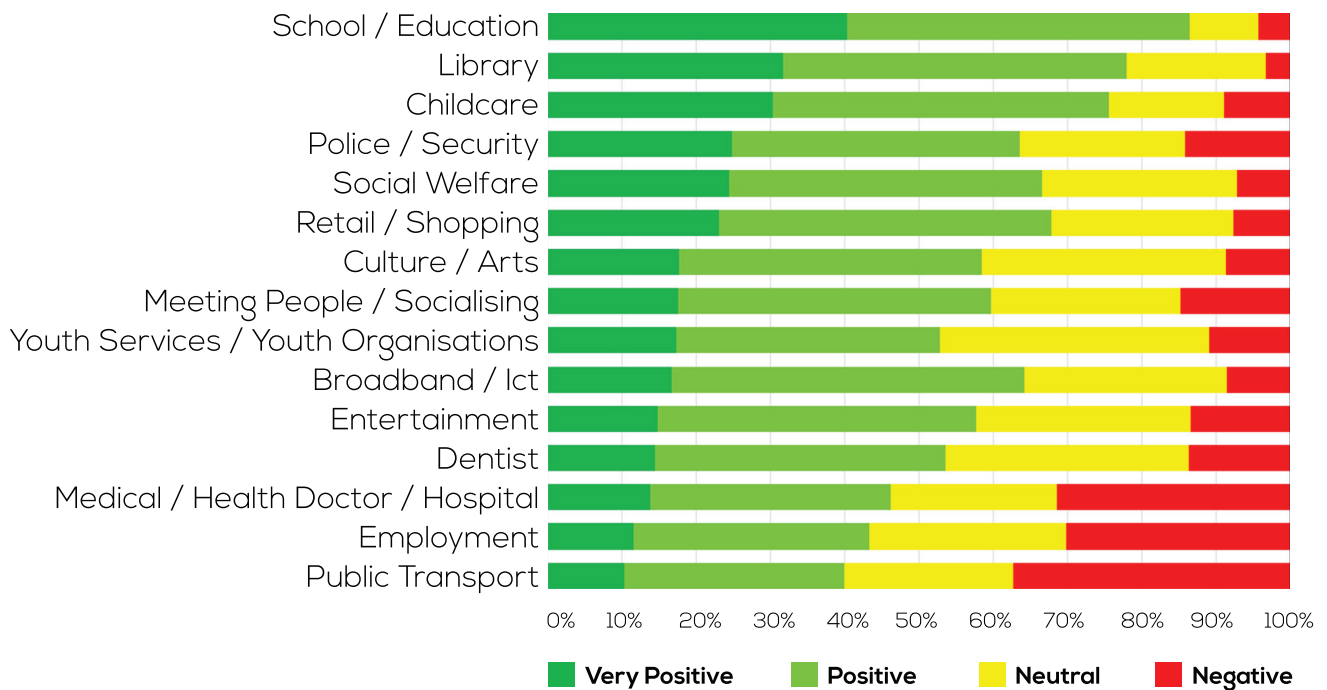
An analysis of the survey findings and the focus group discussions also suggest that persons whose national groupings are more numerous in Carlow (e.g., Poles and Lithuanians) are more likely to have friends locally and are more likely to participate in social networks than are persons who have fewer compatriots locally. Thus, some travel to large urban centres, particularly to Dublin, to meet and socialise with people from their home countries. A sizeable number of migrants indicated that faith-based groups, including the Islamic Centre and prayer rooms and evangelical churches provide important spaces for social interaction. In contrast, the holding of community events in pubs / bars can exclude many migrants, particularly those of Islamic faith. Ireland’s lack of a café culture can also be a barrier to social engagement. On the other hand, migrants also reported that primary schools and sporting organisations have been to the fore in reaching out to them.

Overall, the survey findings indicate a need to promote social inclusion, community engagement, befriending and increased social interaction – involving all migrant communities and Irish people. The consultation process has served to heighten awareness among civic, sporting and church groups of their potential role in promoting greater social interaction and interculturalism, and it is important to invest in, build on, and deepen these linkages over the lifetime of the strategy.

The survey questionnaire also explored migrants’ experiences and perceptions of particular services – provided by statutory and non-statutory bodies. As illustrated in the following graph, the survey findings reveal that migrants’ most positive experiences have been with schools, libraries, childcare, the Gardaí, social welfare and retail; over sixty percent of respondents view these in positive terms. These findings point to useful conduits through which information can be disseminated, to engage migrant communities in the implementation of this strategy. Focus group participants spoke about the dedication, diligence and kindness of teachers and school principals, and they reported how their children were progressing well in local schools. Most are supportive of religious-run schools, although they have mixed views on gender segregation. They also spoke highly of An Garda Síochána, but some commented that the Gardaí can appear powerless when dealing with those whom migrants perceive to perpetrate racist behaviour.

The main challenge associated with employment services is the lack of recognition of qualifications acquired outside of Ireland. Focus group participants raised the issue of what they perceive to be high fees on the parts of GPs and dentists, and some recounted negative experiences with hospitals. They also reported taking out loans to fund medical treatments – here and in Eastern Europe. Survey respondents were asked (on a scale ranging from ‘very positive’ to ‘negative’) about their experiences of various services. The following graph summarises their responses.

**Figure 3: Migrants' perceptions of services in Carlow.**



This set of findings (with respect to service provision) indicates strong foundations on which to build in providing migrants with opportunities to acquire accurate information about life in Ireland and to engage more fully in all aspects of Irish society. The positive experiences with, and perceptions of schools, the library service and An Garda Síochána, among others, point to conduits through which integration and interculturalism in Carlow can be further advanced. The consultations with these specific services and with others including the trade union movement, local authority and the HSE revealed strong commitments to working locally and through regional and national channels to promote and advance integration and interculturalism and to give effect to the spirit and letter of Section 42 of the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Act (2014). This legislation obliges all statutory bodies to eliminate discrimination; promote equality of opportunity and treatment for staff and persons to whom it provides services; and protect the human rights of staff and services users (Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission, 2019). Furthermore, it calls on agencies to:

- 1. Assess** - set out in its strategic plan an assessment of the human rights and equality issues it believes to be relevant to the functions and purpose of the body;
- 2. Address** - set out in its strategic plan the policies, plans and actions in place or proposed to be put in place to address those issues; and
- 3. Report** - report on developments and achievements in its annual report.

This three-dimensional approach represents both a delivery and monitoring mechanism to support and ensure the implementation of this strategy, here in Carlow, over the coming years.

Although the vast majority of interactions with Irish people are positive, migrants in Carlow have had experiences of racism and discrimination, as the following table illustrates.

**Table 7: Frequency with which migrants in Carlow have experienced forms of racism and / or discrimination.**

<b>Types of Racism or Discrimination</b>	<b>At least 5 times</b>	<b>3 or 4 times</b>	<b>Once or twice</b>	<b>Never</b>
Physical abuse / attack	4%	10%	28%	58%
Exclusion from an event or group	4%	10%	28%	58%
Discrimination in housing (from a property owner)	4%	10%	27%	58%
Discrimination from a public body	5%	10%	28%	57%
Discrimination at work	4%	10%	28%	57%
Racist Name calling / verbal abuse	5%	10%	28%	57%
Being overlooked because I am not Irish	5%	10%	28%	57%
Suspicion or Hostility	10%	9%	28%	53%

Over 25% of migrants report having experienced each of the manifestations of racism / discrimination (listed in the questionnaire), on at least one occasion. The most frequent manifestations are attitudinal, verbal and institutional. The figures are relatively evenly distributed across the rows (variables). When analysed, these figures show that persons from Asia and Africa are statistically more likely to experience racism / discrimination than White migrants, and that their negative experiences occur across the range of scenarios presented above, as the following set of graphs illustrates.

The findings reveal that there is a need to tackle and address all forms of racism, discrimination, prejudice and intolerance in Carlow, and to work with Irish people and with all nationalities and ethnicities in promoting mutual tolerance, respect, engagement and interaction. The data indicate a particular need to address colourism – to counteract the higher levels of prejudice reported by people who come from Africa, relative to other world regions. Service providers such as Bus Éireann and Iarnród Éireann, and sporting organisations such as the Football Association of Ireland run highly visible anti-racism campaigns, and these offer templates and models that can be adopted more widely across society.

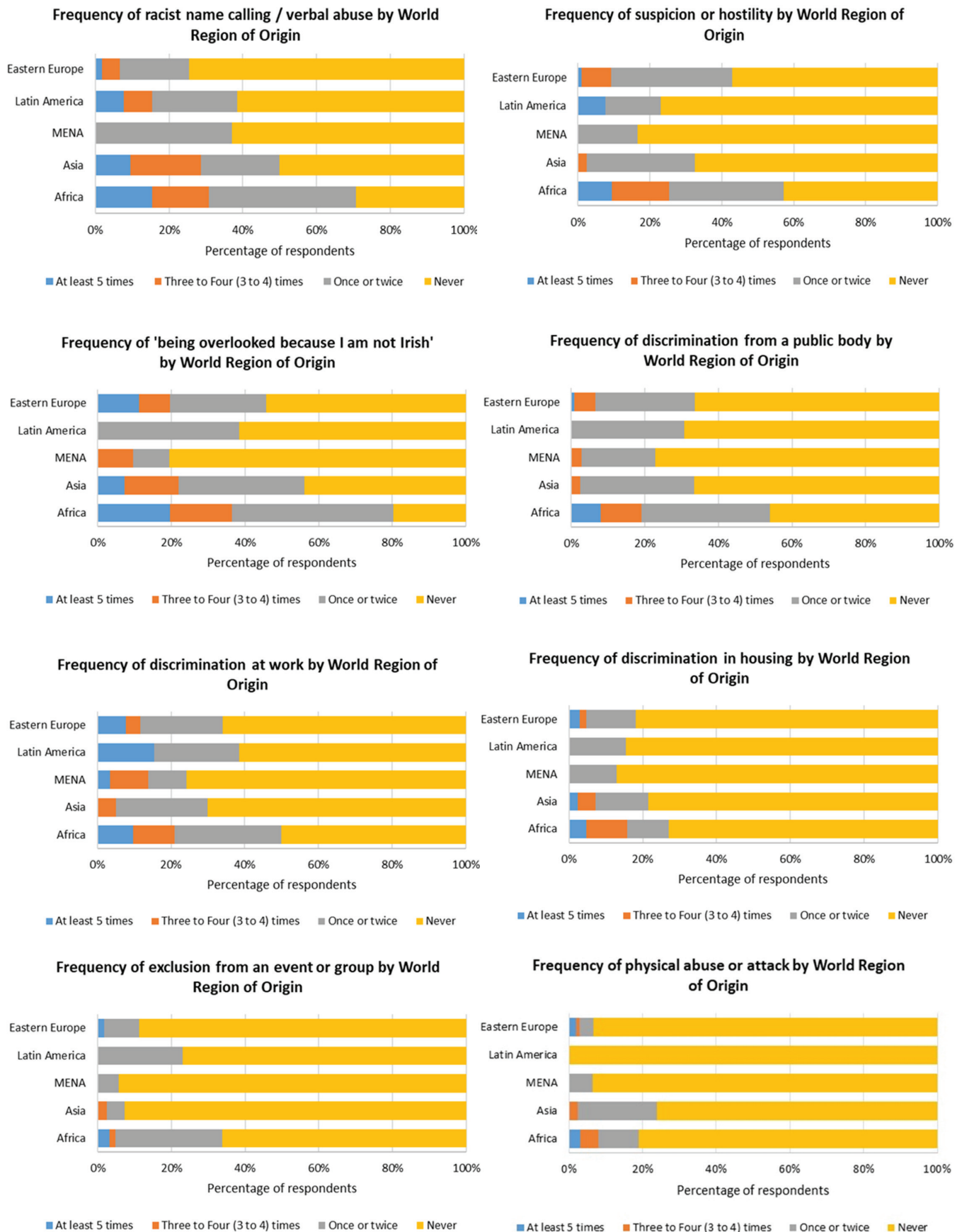
The findings presented in the ESRI (2018) monitoring report on integration in Ireland confirm that such experiences are more indicative of wider prejudices in Irish society, rather than any local factors. The ESRI report observes that its “analysis of Afrophobia points to broader problems of hostility and antipathy directed specifically at people who belong to the African diaspora in Ireland” (McGinnity et al., 2018: 26). Other, earlier research (in Dublin) found that “notions of black and white thus acted as signifiers of inclusion and exclusion” (Ní Chonaill, 2009: vii).

The consultations with migrants and service providers in Carlow pointed to the importance of working with frontline staff (e.g., security guards, shop attendants, counter staff) to make them more aware of interculturalism and to enable them to fully engage with greater respect and cordiality with those from other world regions, and in particular those with limited competence in English. Indeed, training and awareness-raising for frontline staff ought to include an element of foreign language instruction.


When those who are in Carlow under resettlement programmes are excluded, most migrants are ‘at work’. As evidenced by the many businesses in the main streets of Carlow’s towns and their presence in the hospitality sector and caring professions, migrants are making notable contributions to the Carlow economy. The majority (62% of females and 64% of males across all respondents) have a third-level qualification. However, less than one-third (32% of male graduates and 29% of female graduates) are working in the sector in which they are qualified.



**Figure 4: Frequency with which migrants have experienced various forms of prejudice, intolerance and / or xenophobia in Carlow over the past year, by world region\* (based on mother's place of birth).**



\*MENA: Middle East and North Africa.



Thus, Carlow / Ireland may be failing to fully realise the potential contribution of migrants to addressing skills' shortages in particular sectors, while migrants are hitting glass ceilings with respect to their socio-economic status. The focus groups suggested that the absence of inter-country agreements, including between Ireland and other EU member states, is a barrier to migrants' integration into the labour market. Some migrants also reported that even when they produce documentary evidence of their qualifications, employers are more likely to promote an Irish person over them. This has led to tensions in some workplaces. These findings and observations indicate a need for specific workplace-based interventions, so that migrants are made more aware of their rights, and that those in supervisory and management positions work more effectively to ensure fair, equitable and transparent practices in recruitment and employment. Workplaces can also be spaces for intercultural engagement, and the social partners (trade unions, farmers and employers) all have roles to play in ensuring inclusive workplaces.

The survey findings reveal that just over one-third (35%) of migrants are members of a community or voluntary group. The figure is higher for males (39%) than for females (31%), and is, in-part, associated with men from Middle Eastern and North African (MENA) countries being more likely to be members of faith-based and cultural groups. Men from Eastern Europe reported being members of gyms and sports groups, while the cricket club is important to the Rohingya community and other peoples from South Asia. These findings indicate considerable scope for greater engagement of migrants in civil society organisations, and behove Irish people to be more proactive in communicating what their groups do, and ensuring they are open and welcoming. Focus group participants reported that, in general, and especially among migrants with children, the GAA has enabled them to get to know more Irish people and to make friends locally.

The survey findings in respect of participation in the democratic process reveal a notable gender gap. A minority of migrants (46%) are registered to vote; 57% of males and 38% of females are registered. Among those who are registered, only a minority (33%) has ever voted. When asked (in advance) if they intended to vote in the local and EU Parliament elections (2019), less than half (41%) indicated that they would vote, with an additional twenty percent reporting that they might do so. These figures are below the corresponding average voter participation levels in Ireland.

The survey data in respect of civic engagement reveal considerable scope for community and voluntary organisations across County Carlow to reach out more to members of migrant communities. At present, many voluntary associations report difficulties in attracting new members, particularly to fill officer positions. At the same time, many migrants are looking for opportunities to become more involved in their local communities and to engage socially with Irish people. Thus, community and voluntary organisations – in all areas i.e., geographical and issue-based – need to be more involved in, and proactive in, reaching out to migrants. The figures also point to the need to increase migrants' awareness of the democratic process and the importance of exercising their franchise. Both sets of actions i.e., community group engagement and voter participation, need to focus particularly on women.

The data garnered through the survey questionnaire and focus groups reveal challenges and opportunities. They show that while Carlow is adapting well to multiculturalism, there is still a journey to go in terms of fully realising interculturalism, whereby all nationalities are tolerant and inclusive of one another and that all persons, regardless of their background are empowered and enabled to realise their potential – economically and socially. Some population cohorts merit particular attention and supports, particularly women who have come from outside Europe. The next section provides more specific pointers in enabling Carlow society to respond more effectively to the needs and potential of various nationalities and ethnicities.

# 4

## Social Distance in Carlow

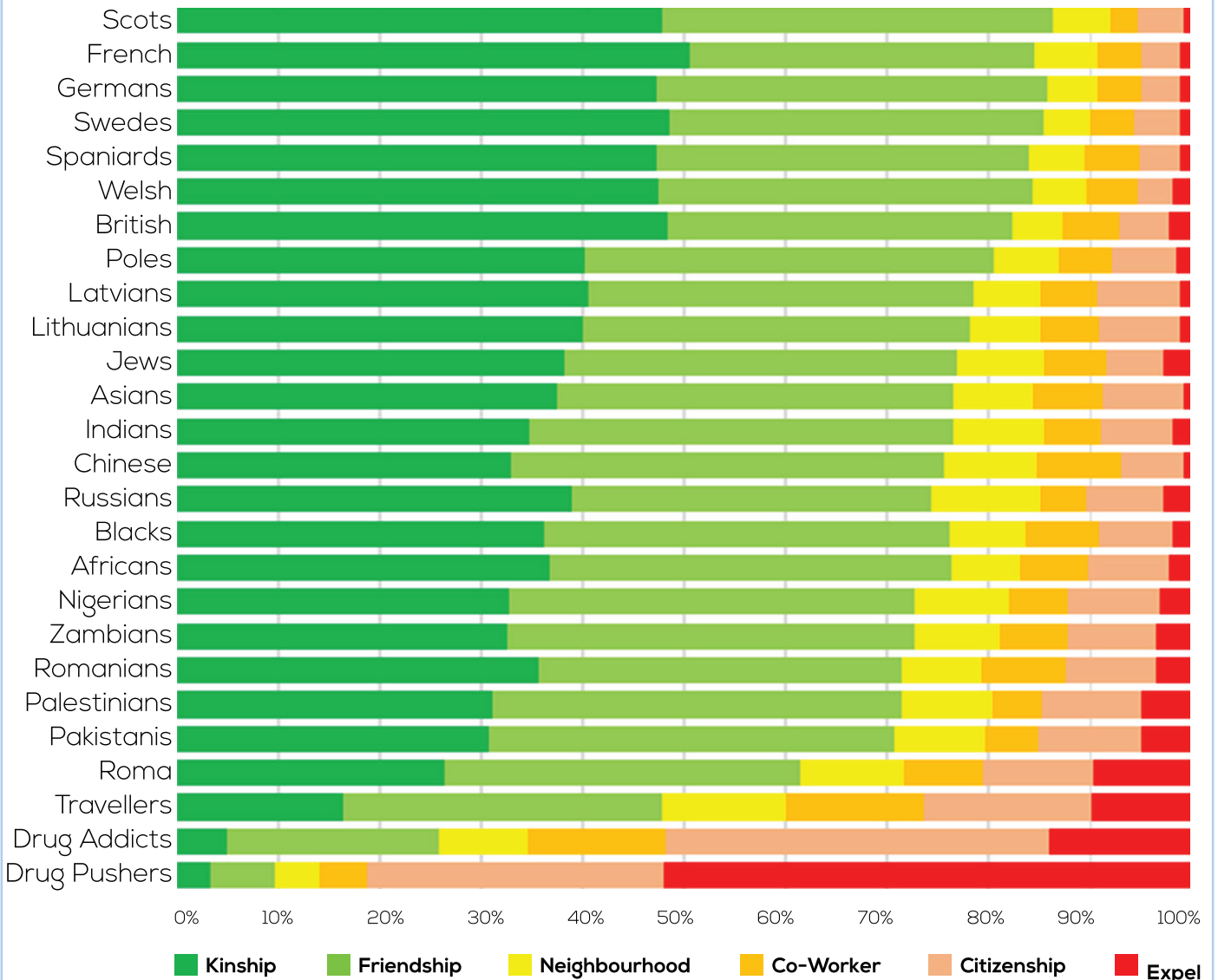
This section presents the findings from a survey of Carlow's residents (predominantly Irish nationals) that measures attitudes to a range of nationalities and ethnicities. From the outset, the Integration Steering Group recognised that the promotion and attainment of integration need to include those whom social scientists term 'the host community'. Host communities are responsible for setting the dominant language, discourse, norms and values in any society and they generally hold positions of power in communities, the economy, the media and body politic. Thus, they can act as either 'gatekeepers' or 'enablers' of integration, and they create the lenses through which migrants are viewed. A special Eurobarometer Report (2017: 3) on the integration of immigrants noted that, in order to better understand how the EU institutions can work with Member States and other actors to respond to the challenges of integration, it is necessary to have a clearer understanding of public opinion on the issue.

Given their roles and potential, the 'host community' inputted into the formulation of this strategy. Community leaders and service providers were interviewed, while members of the general public completed a survey questionnaire to capture their attitudes to a range of nationalities, ethnicities and social groups. In addition to engaging Irish people in the process, this survey sought to address the fact that migrants are not a homogenous group; they come from a wide range of cultural, religious, linguistic, ethnic, economic and other backgrounds, and their experiences vary widely. Moreover, depending on their identity, among other factors, they can be perceived differently by the host community.

The aforementioned Eurobarometer found that only a minority (37%) of Europeans say they are well informed about immigration and integration, and this is the case in most countries. The figure for Ireland is slightly lower (35%). People in Ireland reported having the fourth highest frequency of interaction with migrants (after Greece, Sweden and Cyprus); over one-third (34%) of Irish people interact daily with migrants in their neighbourhood, while a third (33%) interact with migrants daily in the workplace. The Eurobarometer research also found that over half (57%) of respondents say they feel comfortable with having social relations with immigrants (as friends, neighbours, work colleagues, doctors, managers or family members). The highest 'levels of comfort' in respect of social interaction with migrants are in Spain (83%), Sweden (81%) and Ireland (80%).

Recent research in the Irish context, (McGinnity *et al.*, 2018) showed that social contact generally promotes less negative attitudes to immigration and immigrants, and suggest that enhancing opportunities for meaningful and positive interactions will reduce anti-migrant sentiment. Host community perceptions and attitudes determine behaviour. Thus, in scoping out the integration and intercultural strategy and in setting baselines (for targets and indicators), the data presented in this section will inform the ongoing monitoring and evaluation of the strategy over the coming years. The methodology used here is that of the Bogardus Scale of Social Distance, as this is widely recognised, among social scientists, as a reliable tool (MacGréil, 1977; Parrillo and Donoghue, 2005; Maurer and Keim, 2018). The results dovetail with those of the survey among migrants themselves, as they reveal that attitudes towards migrants are not homogenous, and that factors such as skin colour and ethnicity are significant. The following graph summarises the findings.

**Figure 5: Percentage of Respondents willing to admit selected nationalities, ethnicities or social groups to degrees of social distance (from family / kinship to expulsion from Ireland).**



*With the survey questionnaire, respondents were asked to indicate their closest level of social distance to each nationality / ethnicity on the following scale: I would be willing: to marry or accept as a member of my immediate family (kinship); to have as my close personal friend (friendship); to have as my neighbour (neighbourhood); to have as a colleague at work (co-worker); to have as a citizen or my country (citizenship); or I would deport or bar these people from my country (expel).*

While the findings indicate that Carlow is not an overtly racist place, racism and social distance are problematic, and **there is considerable work to be done in addressing prejudice, intolerance, fears and mis-information, particularly islamophobia and colourism.** The graph (Fig. 3) and the following table show the perceived racial / ethnic hierarchy that exists in Carlow.

The data reveal that Carlow residents are most accepting of people from countries that are close to Ireland but are less tolerant of those from some East European countries, most notably Romania. People are also more likely to be tolerant of those with white skin and from Christian backgrounds. These findings underscore the importance of differentiated approaches to migrant communities and the need for specific outreach work to promote integration and interculturalism with those from Africa, the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) and Southern Asia (particularly Pakistan). The low ranking of Travellers – Ireland’s largest ethnic minority – is a grave

cause for concern. The findings here and the consultations with migrant communities suggest that, as members of the host community (being Irish) and as victims of social distance themselves, Irish Travellers ought to be actively involved in the attainment of an intercultural Carlow.

The following table provides a summary of the findings. It presents the mean social distance (on a scale from one to seven) in respect of the nationalities, ethnicities and social groups that were included in this survey.

**Table 8: Mean Social Distance (SD) in respect of selected nationalities, ethnicities and social groups in County Carlow**

Cohort	Mean SD	Cohort	Mean SD	Cohort	Mean SD
Scots	1.80	Lithuanians	2.07	Zambians	2.29
French	1.80	Jews	2.10	Romanians	2.29
German	1.82	Asians	2.11	Palestinians	2.37
Swedes	1.83	Indians	2.14	Pakistanis	2.39
Spaniards	1.85	Chinese	2.14	Roma	2.71
Welsh	1.86	Russians	2.15	Travellers	3.12
British	1.91	Blacks	2.15	Drug Addicts	4.00
Poles	2.02	Africans	2.16	Drug Pushers	5.06
Latvians	2.06	Nigerians	2.28		

The survey findings point to the importance of educating citizens about the cultural norms and life experiences of those who have come, or whose families originate from Eastern Europe and further afield. There is also a very clear need for specific strategies to enable more engagement with Romanians and Roma and to promote more contact between them and all other nationalities / ethnicities, in order to dispel fears, prejudices and misunderstandings.

An analysis of the survey findings reveals that, in Carlow, tolerance (indicated by low social distance) is greater among some population cohorts than others, as follows:

- 🌻 **age** – young people are more tolerant than are older people;
- 🌻 **gender** – women are more tolerant than men;
- 🌻 **nationality** – Asian and African people are more tolerant than are other nationalities;
- 🌻 **citizen participation** – those who vote in elections are more tolerant; and
- 🌻 **membership of voluntary / community groups** – volunteers are more tolerant than those who do not participate in community / voluntary groups.

These findings, which are largely consistent with Eurobarometer data (2017) point to the merits of promoting interculturalism in tandem with wider community development, social inclusion and citizen engagement strategies and actions. The data also suggest a need to acknowledge and address the problems caused by legacy issues (e.g., current and historical political and inter-ethnic conflict) in the countries of origin among those who now call Carlow their home. These findings underscore the importance of working with Irish people, as well as migrants and those of migrant heritage, and of mainstreaming integration and interculturalism into the ways in which community groups, agencies and service providers operate. The existence of a racial hierarchy, as indicated by the data on social distance, highlights the absolute importance for all agencies, community leaders and public figures to be vigilant, vocal and visible in challenging racism. These specific findings in respect of social distance and the levels of racism and prejudice reported by migrants point to a need to deliver a structured, organised, far-reaching and visible inter-ethnic campaign to address all forms of discrimination, and to actively promote interculturalism in Carlow.

# 5

## Perspectives and Experiences among Agencies, Public Bodies and Service Providers


Consultations with agency personnel and service providers, in the statutory and non-statutory sectors, revealed a desire to promote greater integration and interculturalism. Service providers, particularly those on the front line, are generally aware of the needs of migrant communities, although they seldom have had the time or resources to enable them to systematically document or record the issues they face and the progress that is, or is not, being made in promoting integration and / or interculturalism. All agencies have been adversely affected by the fiscal crisis and austerity policies, and most have to contend with reduced budgets despite increased demand for services, relative to a decade ago. Service providers also admitted that migrant communities had not been sufficiently 'namechecked' in most strategies, and they expressed commitments to making interculturalism more explicit in their forthcoming strategies and annual operating plans. The impending review of the Carlow Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP) provides an opportunity to further engage citizens and agencies in promoting integration and interculturalism.

Service providers were universally welcoming of this strategy and of the focus on robust baseline data and indicators. They noted that the previous strategy and the work done by the Carlow Intercultural Forum had enabled significant awareness raising and celebration of Carlow's diversity. They emphasised the importance of integrated and multi-sectoral approaches, rather than singular actions, in the promotion of integration and interculturalism, and they underscored the need to systematically monitor the strategy's progress.

A number of service providers employ migrants, and the Health Service Executive (HSE) is the organisation with the greatest ethnic diversity in respect of the composition of its workforce. The HSE has also taken strident steps towards the promotion of multilingualism; it provides information in several languages and formats, and it offers an interpretation service to its customers, as do the justice system and trade unions, among others. This approach and the promotion of enhanced language skills – among Irish people and migrants – are seen, by service providers, as important components in the promotion of interculturalism. Thus, the findings point to a need to deliver systematic intercultural training to frontline staff across all agencies, and that this training ought to incorporate language instruction. Ongoing English-language classes for migrants are also essential.

Interviewees and survey respondents raised a number of concerns about the welfare and wellbeing of many migrants. They referred to their living conditions and to what they perceive to be overcrowding in several households. They have observed overcrowding in Carlow Town, with members of extended families living under the one roof, and they named some housing estates that have notable concentrations of migrants. They also spoke about overcrowded houses comprising of men, mainly migrant workers from Eastern Europe, predominantly in Tullow and in other smaller towns. Some expressed concerns about home-based drinking (rather than in licenced premises), which is becoming increasingly prevalent across Irish society and which appears to adversely affect migrant communities, particularly in all-male households.

These observations point to the importance of enabling agencies to undertake outreach work across the entire county, and to empowering local level personnel and civil society leaders to reach out to migrants and to refer them towards services and supports. **Interviewees also expressed concerns regarding the concentration of migrants in certain neighbourhoods, and how this could compound segregation, which they noted would be particularly challenging for children and second-generation migrants.** Reference was also made to the so-called 'white flight', whereby Irish and other white



people move from Carlow Town, to its peri-urban zone, either to live, and / or to access schooling and other services, thus driving segregation and possible ghettoization.

Agency personnel also raised questions about the accuracy of census data in respect of the number of Chinese people living in Carlow; they suggested that the census figures represent an under-recording of the population. **They reported that greater efforts be made to assure Chinese people to feel more confident in engaging with public authorities.** Indeed, the number of Chinese people who responded to the migrants' questionnaire, for this strategy, is disproportionately low, thus indicating that specific engagement and consultation work with Chinese people may be required.

Agency personnel, in Carlow, reported coming across instances of trafficking, including of men into the services sector. These observations tally with those of the Group of Experts on Action Against Trafficking in Human Beings (GRETA). Its report concerning the implementation of the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (2017) notes an increase in the number of people being trafficked into Ireland over recent years. GRETA records that the majority of the presumed victims were female (n=197, or 63%). In terms of forms of exploitation, the majority of the presumed victims were subjected to sexual exploitation, followed by labour exploitation. Here in Carlow, migrants themselves reported instances of discrimination and exploitation. Organisations such as trade unions and the Migrants' Rights Centre of Ireland are among the actors already supporting migrants in dealing with labour-related issues, and are positioned to act as partners with local stakeholders in promoting integration.

**Language and culture consistently emerged as the two issues most frequently cited, by agency personnel, as requiring attention.** They reported how limited competency in English is a barrier towards progression in employment and in preventing migrants from fully availing of social services. They observe that women, particularly those from Middle-Eastern and North African (MENA) countries and Roma tend to have poorer English than other migrants, and are more likely to rely on others, including children, to act as interpreters / translators for them. They recounted instances of children being burdened with considerable responsibilities in performing such roles.

Agency personnel also referred to different parenting norms among migrant communities, and some expressed concern regarding corporal punishment and other social practices inflicted on children. They cautioned against cultural diversity being used as a pretext for any compromises in respect of the rights of women and children.

Several agency representatives raised the issue of the 2004 amendment to the Irish Constitution, and they **advocated its repeal, so that children born in Ireland can enjoy the same citizenship rights, including access to education (especially third-level), as do persons born in Ireland before that date.** While this issue is beyond the remit of local-level actors, it is one they can pursue in collaboration with others at regional level.

Service providers suggested that while Irish people are becoming more tolerant of migrant communities and that most people are conscious of Ireland's own migrant tradition, they observe some attitudes that give cause for concern. They reported that during the recession, between 2008 and 2015, Irish people were more likely, than was the case during the so-called 'Celtic Tiger years', to speak of migrants as 'taking our jobs'. At the same time, myths began to re-emerge in respect of migrants' use of the social welfare system, with certain falsehoods being propagated e.g., grants to buy new pushchairs and cars. While such innuendo is more prevalent among certain population cohorts than in the general population, its very existence further underscores the importance of an evidence-based campaign in promoting interculturalism.

Over the course of the research, agency personnel spoke about economic issues, and, in particular, the high levels of entrepreneurship among migrants. They reported that migrants have brought renewed life into many communities, and they pointed to the number of businesses in Carlow's main streets that are owned and operated by migrants. They also further emphasise the importance of explicitly working with Irish people – as well as migrant communities – in advancing all aspects of this strategy.



# 6

## Delivering Integration and Interculturalism in Carlow

This strategy for County **Carlow reflects and adds value to Ireland's National Strategy for the Integration of Migrant communities**. Our shared vision is of a county in which migrants are facilitated to play a full role in society, and in which integration, inclusion and interculturalism are core principles across all agencies and communities. This implies that **all stakeholders and institutions work together to promote integration**. Moreover, the strategy encompasses those who have come to Ireland from other countries and those of migrant backgrounds or heritage – including second generation Irish and dual nationals. The Carlow Strategy also responds to particular local patterns and issues. It emphasises interculturalism, as the highest level of integration, and is reflective of the UNESCO assertion that “cultural diversity is related to the dynamic process whereby cultures change while remaining themselves, in a state of permanent openness to one another... This is reflected in multiple and changing cultural identities, which are not easily reducible to definite categories, and which represent opportunities for dialogue based on sharing what we have in common beyond those differences” (2009: iii).

Ireland's national strategy for the integration of migrants outlines general actions that pertain to several government departments and statutory bodies – including provisions regarding access to citizenship and long-term residency. These relate mainly to statutory functions and legal frameworks. In addition, the strategy identifies specific actions under nine thematic areas as follows: *access to public services and social inclusion; education; employment and pathways to work; health; integration in the community; political participation; promoting intercultural awareness and combating racism and xenophobia; volunteering; and sport*. These thematic areas were also articulated by stakeholders in County Carlow, and the extensive survey work undertaken locally provides baseline indicators and benchmarks against which progress, in all nine areas, can be monitored and evaluated. In addition, the local fieldwork and consultations underscored the importance of integrated approaches to the delivery of strategic actions, such that agencies and organisations are working collaboratively and are promoting synergies. The fieldwork identified a clear need to work with Irish people in challenging and dispelling myths and stereotypes, while also recognising the need to promote greater tolerance and increased engagement across and among the many nationalities and ethnicities that now live in Carlow. Thus, in addition to giving effect to the actions identified by government in respect of the nine themes, the Carlow Integration and Intercultural Strategy also advocates awareness-raising, education and the celebration of diversity – so as to eliminate all forms of racism, prejudice, xenophobia and intolerance, and to promote a more inclusive, enriched and vibrant society. The body of evidence demonstrates need and support for a **Carlow Intercultural Charter**, to which all agencies, organisations and citizens ought to commit.

In embarking on this strategy and in promoting it among all Carlow residents and our partner organisations, the members of the Steering Group note that diversity and interculturalism in Carlow are dynamic and evolving. The opening section of this document outlines the changes that have occurred over the past two decades in respect of Carlow's population. Further changes can be anticipated as family and social networks become more encompassing of people from all over the globe. The research referred to here suggests that as diversity increases, and as more non-white people come to reside in Carlow, integration issues may become more acute, as more people may be susceptible to prejudice and intolerance. The research has clearly identified that, in terms of host community attitudes and migrants' experiences, migrants and those of migrant backgrounds / heritage are not a homogenous group, and that some are more vulnerable than others – particularly those who have darker skin. In line with the framework offered by national policy, this strategy envisages cross-cutting actions and collaborations in the following areas:





 **Promoting Intercultural Awareness and Celebrating Diversity**

 **Combating Racism and Xenophobia**

 **Integration in the Community**

 **Political Participation**

 **Access to Public Services and Social Inclusion**

 **Employment and Pathways to Work**

 **Health**

 **Schools and Education**

 **Community and Voluntary / Volunteering**

 **Sport and Leisure**

 **Support for Vulnerable Persons**

 **Children and Families**



# 6.1

## Promoting Intercultural Awareness and Celebrating Diversity

### Analysis

Carlow has become increasingly diverse over the past twenty years. There is now an imperative to progress from being a multi-cultural county to an intercultural one; this implies recognising that migrants are not just here to fill gaps in the labour market, but that they can enrich society and civic life. The survey findings and stakeholder consultations recommend proactive initiatives in the development of greater reciprocal understanding between migrants / new communities and the 'host' / Irish community as well as increased engagement and interactions among diverse nationalities and ethnicities.





### Recommendations

The **promotion of the Carlow Intercultural Charter** will underpin Carlow's elevation to a more tolerant, inclusive and respectful county. The Charter will embody a statement of key principles and objectives, leading to specific and measurable outcomes, and must penetrate all aspects of Carlow life.

An **intercultural training programme for community groups** and residents' associations involving members of migrant communities and Irish community members should be developed.

There is a desire among migrants and host communities to **promote arts, music and food-based events** in order to enable intercultural gatherings and celebrations. Such events have been found to enhance intercultural exchanges and need to be more than once-off happenings; they need to be embedded within and contribute to the awareness-raising and anti-racism efforts already articulated here. Carlow, and in particular the town, has a strong network of cultural / arts organisations and good facilities, and the personnel involved are keen to support and get more actively involved in interculturalism promoting events, for example around Cultural Night and Christmas, in arts centres and through the library service among other outlets.

### Deliverables

-  An intercultural training programme, delivered on a rolling basis, to community groups, frontline agency personnel and the social partners;
-  A rolling calendar / schedule of events to celebrate Irish / Carlow culture and the various cultures of migrant communities – showcasing entrepreneurship, crafts, food, music and other modes of expression;
-  Increased visible presence of 'white Irish' people at events that celebrate and promote Carlow's cultural diversity, and increased inter-ethnic participation in all intercultural events; and
-  Supports for schools and cultural / arts organisations to raise awareness of Carlow's cultural diversity and to enable migrants to 'tell their stories'.

## 6.2 Combating Racism and Xenophobia




### Analysis

The survey findings and stakeholder consultations indicate that combatting racism and xenophobia is integral to delivering on all elements of this integration and intercultural strategy. Regrettably, there is evidence of racism and xenophobia in Carlow, and an attitudinal hierarchy exists among the host community that puts certain nationalities and ethnicities at considerable social distance from Irish people. Other counties in the region are currently formulating their integration strategies, thus generating opportunities for inter-county and regional collaboration in promoting integration and interculturalism.

### Recommendations

Tackling prejudice and addressing the ignorance and innuendo that lead to racist attitudes and behaviour require inter-agency collaboration and extensive citizen / community engagement. **A Carlow Anti-racism Campaign should be launched**, with a particular focus on islamophobia and colourism, replicating elements of other successful campaigns, such as those applied in sporting organisations (e.g., show racism the red card). Local celebrities, church, trade union, farmer, business and political leaders need to be visibly involved in the campaign, which must be concerted and sustained.

### Deliverables

-  A Carlow / regional anti-racism campaign;
-  Responsible reporting of migrant-related issues – in all media; and
-  Demonstrable leadership from civil society, the business community, the media, churches, public bodies and local leaders in naming issues and in promoting truth about the merits of interculturalism.

## 6.3 Integration in the Community

### Analysis

The consultations with agencies and service providers and the focus group discussions with migrants noted the importance of language acquisition in enabling integration. Migrants also reported favourably on the Fáilte Isteach / KCETB language classes and the outreach activities of several community and voluntary groups. It is important that English-language instruction continue, and be provided in areas beyond Carlow Town.

Migrants have added to Carlow's religious diversity and a number of faith-based groups and churches have been established, particularly in Carlow Town. The numbers attending suggest that religious faith is important to most migrants. Faith-based gatherings are important in building social capital among migrants and these have the potential to act as fora in which further community development can take place.

Segregation in housing, education and other walks of life should be reduced and eliminated, and planning and housing functions and housing providers will ensure the development of socially and ethnically mixed and vibrant communities.

### Recommendations

The research findings indicate **a need to continue to provide English-language supports** to recent migrants and to many who have been in Ireland for some years. The significance of the value of having access to **freedom of religious expression** was actively communicated through the research process. Religious practice can be a constant in the disrupted life that the migrant experience represents, and communities of worship provide a home from home for many who have moved to Carlow. Inter-faith dialogue and ecumenical gatherings can serve to bring diverse groups of people together.

The research findings also indicate a need to **reach out specifically to women**, especially those from MENA countries. Thus, women's organisations, among other community and voluntary organisations, in the county **ought to be empowered and resourced to reach out to migrant women** and to include them in their activities and as group members. It is essential to avoid parallel structures whereby women are segregated on the basis of nationality or ethnicity. While cultural groups and gatherings have a role to play in ensuring that minority cultures are supported and celebrated, inclusion and interculturalism should trump exclusion.

### Deliverables

- ☀ Training / information provision for personnel in agencies and community support services to enable them to respond more effectively to migrants' needs;
- ☀ Ongoing capacity-building of the Carlow Integration Forum including strengthened linkages with decision-making fora and public bodies;
- ☀ Structured inter-faith / inter-religious dialogue and gatherings;
- ☀ Good practices, such as those associated with 'Moving On' (*a back to education and employment programme*) and the refugee resettlement programme, will be more mainstreamed;
- ☀ Continuation and expansion of English language programmes, such as Fáilte Isteach; and
- ☀ A specific training and support programme for women in migrant communities to ensure that they are fully aware of their rights and freedoms under EU / Irish law.

## 6.4 Political Participation

### Analysis

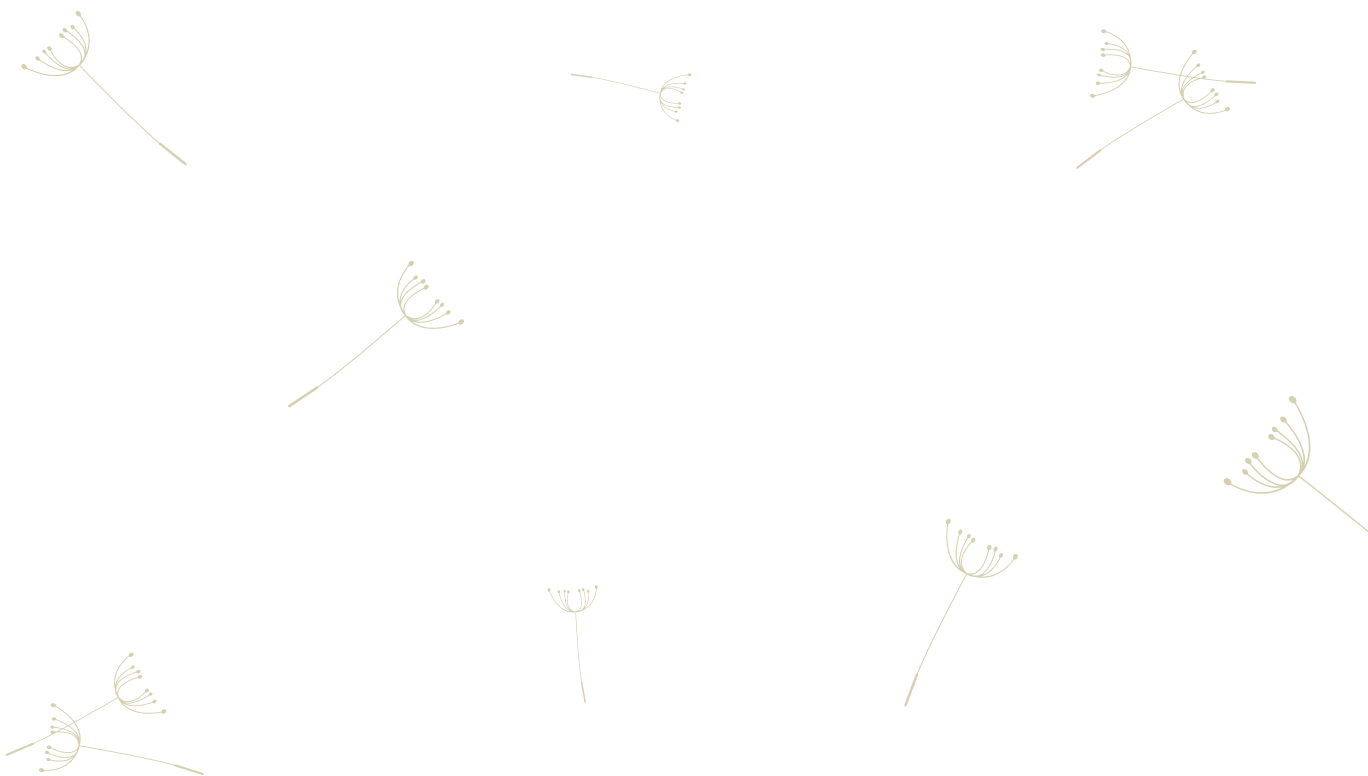
The 2019 local government elections were significant in that a number of foreign-born persons were elected to Irish local authorities, albeit not to Carlow County Council. It is also significant that migrants ran for mainstream Irish political parties, rather than on 'migrant tickets'. While welcome, these advances will only be symbolic unless they are accompanied by generous and overt gestures on the parts of community and political leaders, and by attitudinal and cultural changes in organisations of representative and participative democracy. While individual candidacies cannot be promoted over others, Carlow's institutions and community structures need to ensure they are inclusive in name and in practice.

### Recommendations

**A sustained campaign of citizenship education in Carlow is required** in order to make migrants aware of their specific voting entitlements in line with EU and Irish law. This will involve second-level schools, HEIs, workplaces and civil society. It will require inputs from Carlow County Council and from political parties.

### Deliverables

- Increased (+25%) voter participation (by migrants) in the next local / general election; and
- Increased (+25%) voter registration (among migrants).



## 6.5 Access to Public Services and Social Inclusion

### Analysis

The research and consultations underpinning this strategy underscore how integration and interculturalism need to be advanced through integrated and multi-sectoral approaches, whereby all agencies consistently review their strategies and practices – including decision-making mechanisms – to ensure that they are inclusive of all migrant communities. The research has revealed that some migrant communities are more vulnerable to social exclusion and are more distant from public services than are others – due to language and cultural barriers as well as complacency, racism and ignorance in Irish society. The consultations have also documented prejudices among members of ethnic minorities.

The advent of *Project Ireland 2040* and the Regional Economic and Spatial Strategies (RSEs) has brought forward the timeframe in which all agencies with a planning remit, beginning with the local authority, are obliged to review their development plans. This affords an opportunity to Carlow County Council, among other agencies to ensure that strategy statements and corporate plans contribute to attainment of the objectives set out in this strategy, and to put in place safeguards for a balanced development of all communities. The refresh of the LECP and the associated commitments on the part of organisations that are represented on the LCDC ought to ensure more specific actions targeted at migrant communities, and the strengthening and full mainstreaming of proofing mechanisms. The consultations with agencies reveal a universally strong commitment to Ireland's equality legislation and a willingness to constructively complement legislative compliance with advocacy on behalf of migrant communities.

### Recommendations






There is a need for **both bottom-up and top-down approaches** to promoting social inclusion. **A training and capacity building programme for agency personnel and civil society organisations needs to be developed.** This ought to include some **instruction in foreign languages** – notably Polish, Latvian, Lithuanian and Romanian.

The Carlow Intercultural Forum has an important role to play in promoting quality assurance in respect of public service provision for, and social inclusion of members of migrant communities. Thus, **the Forum needs to be strengthened**, so that it is more reflective and inclusive of all migrant communities and is more visible and active in rural areas. The Forum's structures may need to be streamlined, so that there are more **systematic communication mechanisms between Forum members, affiliated organisations and the representatives it has on other bodies.**

The Forum ought to pay particular attention to the needs of more recently arrived communities, and those experiencing the greatest levels of social distance, notably Romanians, Roma, Pakistanis and persons from Sub-Saharan Africa, and to the needs of children and young people. The Forum ought to **establish a youth working group**, considering the specific needs of children and those who have been adversely affected by the 2004 constitutional amendment.



## Deliverables

-  Agencies and public bodies will apply technologies (e.g., free-to-use apps) to assist with translation / communication;
-  An outreach information-dissemination campaign will visit all communities in County Carlow;
-  Agencies will jointly deliver an 'access to services' day;
-  Increased visibility of the Integration Forum in rural areas and an increase (20%) in the Forum's membership; and
-  Proofing of the agencies' strategic and corporate plans to ensure the delivery of the objectives set out in this strategy and the avoidance of any ethnic segregation.



## 6.6 Employment and Pathways to Work

### Analysis

Migrants make very significant contributions to the Carlow economy – as employees and as entrepreneurs, and many services, particularly health and catering, are heavily reliant on migrant labour. Migrants are also significant contributors to the agri-food and manufacturing industries, and while they are glad to have employment in Ireland, it is evident that many are employed in jobs that are not commensurate with their educational / professional qualifications. Consequently, many are hitting a glass ceiling with respect to economic advancement, and are being overlooked for promotion. At the same time, Ireland is losing out by not fully harnessing migrants' skills and attributes. Thus, there is a need, nationally, to ensure greater openness to recognising qualifications that have been acquired outside Ireland. While the Bologna System allows for the recognition of third-level qualifications, there is a need for a corresponding system in respect of apprenticeships and trades.

LEADER, the Local Employment Office (LEO) and the SICAP Programme are among the supports that have enabled migrants to establish and grow their own businesses.



**There is a need to continue to mentor migrant entrepreneurs**, and increase their participation in business networks, including traders' associations and chambers of commerce.

### Recommendations

All workplaces in Carlow need to be free of prejudice and racism, and the attainment of a supportive environment will require dialogue and collaboration among and between employers, workers and the trade unions. Actions can build on and dovetail with the awareness-raising and engagement initiatives already being promoted by the trade unions, and Carlow-based actions ought to strengthen collaborative relationships with national and EU-level bodies that are active in this field.

**Educating the general public about the economic benefits associated with migration** and cultural diversity is important in promoting interculturalism. Such education ought to be underpinned by robust data, and Carlow's HEIs may contribute to this, and to the other data collection strands underpinning this strategy.

### Deliverables

-  Annual roundtable engagement of the social partners to review actions on promoting equality of opportunity in recruitment and employment; and
-  Research report on migrants' contributions to the Carlow / regional economy.



## 6.7 Health

### Analysis




Migrants have expressed notable frustrations with the Irish health services, particularly with hospital waiting lists and the costs of visits to doctors and dentists. Some have travelled to their home countries, including when ill, in order to access healthcare there. This has been costly and stressful for many. Migrants also report that Irish GPs take a more routine approach than the personalised and holistic approaches they had experienced with doctors in their home countries. Such experiences may be associated with growing pressures on GP services, and while this structural issue needs to be addressed by national government, there may be a need to make local GPs more aware of migrants' perspectives and expectations. While the HSE's multi-lingual and translation services are comprehensive, they are not universal, and migrants have found themselves struggling to communicate with health professionals. This can be particularly problematic in respect of accessing mental health services.

### Recommendations

Considering their reported experiences of medical / health services and the above-average levels of isolation experienced by migrants (as indicated by lower levels of social capital), specific steps ought to be taken to ensure they **are fully aware of all health service options**, especially in the field of mental health, and that they are enabled and supported to access them.

The data also point to the importance of **engaging with health professionals locally**, to ensure they are more aware of migrants' needs, including in respect of communication / language and clinical approaches.

### Deliverables

-  An inter-agency signposting system, through which migrants are more aware of the services that are available to them – particularly those that cater for linguistic diversity;
-  Increased collaboration between statutory and voluntary providers in engaging with migrant communities, especially in the area of mental health; and
-  Communicate to general practitioners and other frontline health service professionals on the specific needs and expectations of migrant communities.

## 6.8 Schools and Education

### Analysis




While migrants have generally had positive experiences in schools, they report that their children's friends are more likely to be non-Irish than Irish, thus pointing to the need for supports to, and actions on the part of, school communities in promoting integration and interculturalism. The research has also identified some segregation in education in Carlow Town. **Awareness-raising actions among parents** are essential in engendering more positive attitudes towards other nationalities / ethnicities, while, in the interim, inter-school events ought to expose migrant and Irish children to their respective cultures. While several schools provide information materials in languages other than English and Irish, not all do, and such deficits need to be addressed, so that home-school partnerships are meaningful.

Some migrants reported that their children have been discouraged from learning the Irish language, and they find this objectionable as it distinguishes them from their Irish peers. Parents and teachers also report that junior and leaving certificate foreign language papers require inordinate amounts of translating into English, and that this discriminates against students whose native language is not English. The most significant issue highlighted by migrants and education providers was the legal limbo in which Irish-born children, who do not have Irish citizenship, find themselves; their exclusion from SUSI is a significant barrier to accessing third-level education and economic and social progression. While these are national issues, Carlow-based stakeholders can make common cause with other counties in advocating for systemic and legal changes.

### Recommendations

There is a need to **devise a specific school-based set of actions**, whereby pupils / students and parents of all nationalities are enabled to interface more with one another. Such actions will include intra- and inter-school intercultural gatherings and will promote greater awareness of the merits of cultural diversity. Those in the education sector should also be supported to look at practices, including curricular content and delivery, to ensure that these are conducive of interculturalism. There is also scope for education providers to work with migrant parents in enabling them to support their children's educational trajectories. Actions can include familiarising them with the Irish curriculum, enabling them to source career advice (for teenagers) and involving them more in extra curricular activities and school events.

### Deliverables

-  Carlow College, Carlow Institute of Technology and Carlow College of Further Education will secure and maintain 'college of sanctuary' status;
-  Subject to resourcing, all schools will secure and maintain 'yellow flag' status; and
-  Schools will achieve a more balanced intake in line with the ethnic composition of their catchment areas.

## 6.9 Community and Voluntary / Volunteering

### Analysis

The Irish National Health Survey (2015) reveals that almost one-in-ten non-Irish nationals has nobody on whom they can call in a time of need. The corresponding figure for Irish nationals is two percent. The research underpinning this strategy notes below average levels of participation in civil society organisations, particularly among females. **During the focus groups, many migrants spoke about the challenges associated with being accepted into local organisations.** While challenges exist, there are also examples of migrant engagement in civil society, including in parents' associations (schools), sporting bodies and faith-based organisations. Some communities, such as Ballon, have made proactive efforts to reach out to newcomers, and the experiences there, **in respect of language classes and social events, represent a template that can be promoted in all communities across Carlow.**

The survey data also points to the centrality of community development – principles and practices to the delivery of this strategy. Engagement with all community and voluntary groups – bilaterally and through networks and conduits such as the Public Participation Network, Volunteer Centre, the Carlow Sports Partnership, cultural organisations and umbrella bodies in the voluntary sector is integral to the promotion of integration and interculturalism.




Due to the political culture in their home countries, and in particular in totalitarian, communist and post-communist countries, many migrants are unfamiliar with community development, while others may have a suspicion of collective community action. Therefore, it is unreasonable to expect them to come forward seeking to join community and voluntary groups in Ireland. This implies that **Irish people have a responsibility** to reach out to newcomers to their communities and to convey to them the possibilities in respect of community engagement and citizen participation in local development. Groups / organisations ought to be proactive and outgoing in engaging with newcomers to communities, and in providing them with platforms and mechanisms through which they can access local social capital and contribute to local decision-making and development.

The main responsibility for the promotion of volunteerism – as a driver of integration and interculturalism – rests with host communities and with those in leadership positions in civil society. While some cultural organisations may be associated with one nationality or ethnicity, communities need to avoid parallel structures.

### Recommendations

Actions here need to dovetail with those in respect of promoting integration into the community, and ought to ensure that **migrants are made more fully aware of how community and voluntary organisations and local development systems operate.** At the same time, **host communities need to be more proactive** in reaching out to migrants, so that participative democracy in Carlow is reflective of the composition of society. Specific proofing mechanisms will need to be built into the promotion of volunteerism, so as to ensure effective inclusion of 'hard-to-reach' groups, including women, youth and those from linguistic minorities.

### Deliverables

-  A community-based befriending programme in each parish/locality in the county;
-  A community development training programme, with a module on interculturalism delivered to all civil society organisations in Carlow; and
-  Increased ethnic mix in all community and voluntary bodies.

## 6.10 Sport and Leisure

### Analysis


Carlow-based stakeholders concur with the national strategy in respect of the positive role that sporting organisations play in promoting interculturalism. The Carlow Cricket Club represents a valuable social outlet for migrants, while other clubs are enabling friendships and integration. Such efforts need to continue and be strengthened over the coming years. Thus, sporting organisations ought to be more formally linked / involved with the Carlow Intercultural Forum.

### Recommendations

In other geographies, sporting and cultural organisations have been to the fore of anti-racism campaigns, and ought to be so in Carlow as well. They play an important role in engaging young people – both in proactively promoting inclusion and in bringing about attitudinal and behavioural change in Carlow society. In addition to delivering on the Carlow Intercultural Charter, sporting, artistic and cultural organisations may pursue their own additional codes in respect of promoting diversity and interculturalism – in tandem with local organisations and with national / parent bodies (e.g. FAI and GAA) and international structures.

The survey and consultations among migrants also noted their appreciation of Ireland's landscapes and outdoor activities. Many come from countries, particularly in Eastern Europe, with strong traditions in angling and hiking. Thus, there is potential to greater involve migrants in recreational/conservation projects in Carlow and beyond.

### Deliverables

-  Increased ethnic mix in all sporting and recreation bodies; and
-  Recruitment of intercultural ambassadors / officers in all sporting organisations (at county level) to ensure on-going commitment to integration at club level and to promote best practice and knowledge transfers.





*In addition to identifying bespoke actions for County Carlow that give effect to national policy objectives, as articulated in the national Migrant Integration Strategy, the Carlow Integration Steering Group advances two additional and complementary sets of deliverables. These relate to 'Supports for Vulnerable' Persons and 'Children and Families'.*

## 6.11 Support for Vulnerable Persons

### Analysis

While it is beyond the scope of this research to quantify the scale or nature of any people trafficking and / or economic exploitation of migrants in Carlow, evidence emerged over the course of the fieldwork that reveals that a number of migrants live in precarious circumstances, with limited resources and low levels of social capital.

### Deliverables



-  Awareness raising (particularly among civil society) of the signs of people trafficking and ensuring that the appropriate legal and social responses are in place. This will include the development of a protocol for action where these situations are encountered or suspected. Agency personnel will need supports and training to ensure they always deal sensitively and constructively with vulnerable persons; and
-  Financial service providers (banks and credit unions) and those who provide information to the public (e.g. MABS and CIC) will deliver an information campaign - advising migrants of best practices and legal safeguards in financial services and financial management.

## 6.12 Children and Families

### Analysis

The existing supports to children and families e.g., non-formal education and parenting programmes provided by the FRCs, KCETB, CYPSC and St. Catherine's Social Services, among others, have proven to be effective in addressing the particular needs of children and families – as identified in the research presented earlier in this document. These merit expansion and outreach delivery.

### Deliverables

-  Strengthening of existing supports to children and families; and
-  Culturally sensitive support and advocacy services to migrant families – including awareness raising in respect of parenting and child protection practices in Ireland.



# Deliverables 2020 – 2024

-  An intercultural training programme, delivered on a rolling basis, to community groups, frontline agency personnel and the social partners;
-  A rolling calendar / schedule of events to celebrate Irish / Carlow culture and the various cultures of migrant communities – showcasing entrepreneurship, crafts, food, music and other modes of expression;
-  Increased visible presence of ‘white Irish’ people at events that celebrate and promote Carlow’s cultural diversity, and increased inter-ethnic participation in all intercultural events;
-  Supports for schools and cultural / arts organisations to raise awareness of Carlow’s cultural diversity and to enable migrants to ‘tell their stories’;
-  A Carlow / regional anti-racism campaign;
-  Responsible reporting of migrant-related issues – in all media;
-  Demonstrable leadership from civil society, the business community, the media, churches, public bodies and local leaders in naming issues and in promoting truth about the merits of interculturalism;
-  Training / information provision for personnel in agencies and community support services to enable them to respond more effectively to migrants’ needs;
-  Ongoing capacity-building of the Carlow Integration Forum – including strengthened linkages with decision-making fora and public bodies;
-  Structured inter-faith / inter-religious dialogue and gatherings;
-  Good practices, such as those associated with ‘Moving On’ (training and / or employment progression) and the refugee resettlement programme, will be more mainstreamed;
-  Continuation and expansion of English language programmes;
-  A specific training / support programme for women in migrant communities to ensure that they are fully aware of their rights and freedoms under EU / Irish law;
-  Increased (+25%) voter participation (by migrants) in the next local / general election;
-  Increased (+25%) voter registration (among migrants);
-  Agencies and public bodies will apply technologies (e.g. free-to-use apps) to assist with translation / communication;
-  An outreach information-dissemination campaign will visit all communities in County Carlow;
-  Agencies will jointly deliver an ‘access to services’ day;

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-  Increased visibility of the Integration Forum in rural areas and an increase (+20%) in the Forum's membership;
  -  Proofing of all agencies' development and corporate plans to ensure consistency with the objectives and values of this strategy;
  -  Annual roundtable engagement of the social partners to review actions on promoting equality of opportunity in recruitment and employment;
  -  A research report on migrants' contributions to the Carlow / regional economy;
  -  An Inter-agency signposting system, through which migrants are more aware of the services that are available to them – particularly those that cater for linguistic diversity;
  -  Increased collaboration between statutory and voluntary providers in engaging with migrant communities, especially in the area of mental health;
  -  Communique to general practitioners and other frontline health service professionals on the specific needs and expectations of migrant communities;
  -  Carlow College, Carlow Institute of Technology and Carlow College of Further Education will secure and maintain 'college of sanctuary' status;
  -  All places of education will secure and maintain 'yellow flag' status;
  -  Schools will achieve a more balanced intake in line with the ethnic composition of their catchment areas;
  -  A community-based befriending programme in each parish / locality in the county;
  -  A community development training programme, with a module on interculturalism delivered to all civil society organisations in Carlow;
  -  Increased ethnic mix in all community and voluntary bodies;
  -  Increased ethnic mix in all sporting and recreation clubs/ organisations;
  -  Recruitment of intercultural ambassadors / officers in all sporting organisations (at county level) – to ensure on-going commitment to integration at club level, and to promote best practice and knowledge transfers;
  -  Awareness raising (particularly among civil society) of the signs of people trafficking, and ensuring that the appropriate legal and social responses are in place;
  -  Financial service providers and those who provide information to the public will deliver an information campaign - advising migrants of best practices and legal safeguards in financial services and financial management;
  -  Strengthening of existing supports to children and families; and
  -  Culturally sensitive support and advocacy services to migrant families – including awareness raising in respect of parenting and child protection practices in Ireland.



# 7

## Implementation, Delivery, Monitoring and Review

The delivery of this strategy will require attitudinal and cultural changes in communities and in organisations. Agencies will need to be more proactive in sharing information and in engaging in partnerships with one another and with civil society – locally, regionally and nationally. We must continue to deliver on the actions that are set out in the previous Carlow Integration Strategy and in national policy. In order to give effect to the additional and evidence-based recommendations set out here, and in ensuring the adoption and application of the principles advocated here, citizens and organisations in Carlow will need to be proactive, and there will be a need to provide for specific investments. Our approach stems from a rights-based approach, and will see all organisations and agencies pursuing and promoting modes of governance that are inclusive of migrant communities. Driving and delivering this strategy will require all stakeholders to be highly visible and constantly proactive – generating a momentum around integration and interculturalism and embedding tolerance and inclusion as societal norms and values.

The work, including the data collection and analysis, associated with the formulation of this strategy is part of an ongoing process. Carlow-based actors must also continue to look outwards, and to address the contextual – political, governance and structural – issues that affect the wellbeing of migrants and the capacity of local organisations and institutions to be responsive, innovative, creative, collaborative and promotive in advancing interculturalism. Each of the agencies represented on the LCDC and other bodies – formal and non-formal – have responsibilities for taking ownership of the principles, strategies and actions outlined here, so that efforts are collective and collaborative, and become universally mainstreamed. The LCDC offers a mechanism for information-sharing, ongoing data collection and advocacy. It also provides a forum through which agencies can raise issues and monitor their contributions towards a more intercultural Carlow. Thus, the local ownership of the strategy, as demonstrated in 2019, needs to be a hallmark of its delivery. In addition, there is a need for leadership and coordination, and it is essential that a full-time development officer be recruited to drive the various actions and to promote the deliverables that are presented here.

This strategy is a living document that will evolve and be refined as agencies and civil society ensure the delivery of the recommendations advanced here. These recommendations translate into several strategic and specific actions, and stakeholders need to come together – initially to commit to specific actions, and subsequently to provide progress reports, share information and learnings, and to bring forward new actions. Therefore, as the deliverables presented in this strategy are attained, targets should be revised upwards, so that all stakeholders continue to innovate and to be ambitious for interculturalism in Carlow. This 'living template' will expand and be refined, over the next three to four years, as Carlow becomes Ireland's most intercultural county and the **Carlow Intercultural Charter** becomes a living reality.



# County Carlow Intercultural Charter

Carlow is home to many diverse nationalities, ethnicities and cultures, all of whom contribute to its vibrant social, cultural and economic life. This **Intercultural Charter** is a statement of County Carlow's commitment to foster and sustain a vibrant, inclusive and truly intercultural society, in which all residents have a sense of belonging and are valued equally, regardless of their colour, ethnicity, nationality, heritage, creed or culture. We also commit to the development of structures and the delivery of services, which will enable this to come about. To fulfil this will require collaboration between all citizens, as well as the statutory, voluntary, academic and private sectors and the social partners.

## In advancing an intercultural Carlow, we are committed to:

### Celebrating Diversity

We will create opportunities to acknowledge and celebrate the diverse traditions, customs, calendars and festivals, which the various communities in the county observe, and, in so doing, encourage learning and mutual respect.

We will raise awareness of the stories of migrant communities and of their experiences and hopes for life in Carlow.

### Value and Respect All, & Combat Racism

We will promote the attainment of a Carlow society, which values all cultures equally, regardless of the colour of a person's skin, their place of origin, ethnicity, heritage, entity or religious belief, and in which there is tolerance, inclusion, mutual respect, engagement and intercultural interaction.

We will promote and demonstrate respect for all ethnicities in attitudes, language, modes of expression and behaviours.

### Information and Access to Services

We will provide clear, easy-to-understand information in different languages about the services in the county, in both printed and on-line formats, in accessible publicised spaces and in the places that are regularly visited.

We will find ways to get information to those who are isolated or who are not able to access centralized information spaces.

### Community and Political Life

We will actively reach out to migrants and members of new communities - to proactively support them in respect of community engagement and citizen participation in local development.

We will support the development of intercultural and multi-ethnic community groups and associations, and will ensure minorities are more fully represented on, and participate in, community and voluntary organisations.

We will support the full participation of migrants and migrant groups in the bodies that make decisions in the county, and will strive for migrants' full engagement in the political process.

### Education

We will support equality of access, equality of opportunity and full participation in all aspects of education throughout the lifespan – including lifelong learning, and we will celebrate and promote the richness of cultural diversity through the education system.

We will support and celebrate the existence of different mother tongues in the county.

### Employment and Pathways to Work

We will support the provision of training and employment opportunities that will enable migrants fully develop in their careers, and ensure all workplaces are proactive in promoting equal opportunities.

We will encourage the further development of an entrepreneurial culture in new communities, and support migrants who wish to develop their ideas for setting up and growing their own businesses.

# Acknowledgement

*The members of the Integration Steering Group wish to acknowledge all those who contributed to this strategy. We look forward to working with you all and with other stakeholders in delivering this strategy over the coming years.*

An Garda Síochana	Evangelical Churches
Bagenalstown Family Resource Centre	Forward Steps, Family Resource Centre
Kilkenny and Carlow Education and Training Board	Gospel Faith mission (GFM)
Carlow Chamber	Grace Family Church
Carlow College	Health Service Executive (HSE)
Carlow County Council	Kilkenny Islamic Centre
Carlow Cricket Club	Men's Sheds
Carlow Cultural Islamic Centre	Mercy Convent / An Gairdín Beo
Carlow Educate Together	Money Advice and Budgeting Service (MABS)
Carlow Education Centre	Polish School
Carlow Institute for Further Education	Polish Chaplaincy
Carlow IT	Probation Service
Carlow Mental Health Association	Public Participation Network (PPN)
Carlow Older Person's Forum	Rape Crisis Centre
Carlow Parish	Redeemed Christian Church of God
Carlow Sports Partnership	Riverdale Nursing Home
Carlow Volunteer Centre	Services Industrial Professional and Technical Union (SIPTU)
Carlow Women's Aid	St Vincent de Paul
Carlow Youth Services	Teagasc
Catherine's Social Services	VISUAL
Citizens' Information Centre (CIC)	Women's Aid
Dept. of Employment Affairs and Social Protection	Youthreach
Diocesan Office	

*We gratefully acknowledge the six hundred people who completed survey questionnaires. Your responses have provided the valuable data that underpin this strategy and will allow for ongoing monitoring and evaluation.*

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