

The Irish experience so far

Seminar on political and civic participation of
third country nationals, Warsaw, September
23rd, 2011

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- Food for Thought!
 - ***“Integration and civic participation are symbiotic, mutually reinforcing, and a necessary condition and byproduct of the other” (Carnegie Corporation of New York, 2003:17)***
 - ***To exclude long-term residents from voting would not only violate principles of representative democracy but would also foster divisions between natives and immigrants and encourage the neglect of immigrants' grievances, thus fostering alienation and bitterness (Layton-Henry, 1991).***

- Migrants' Civic and Political Participation – International Experience
 - Article 21(1) of the *Universal Declaration on Human Rights* (adopted and proclaimed by the General Assembly of the United Nations on December 10th, 1948) states that "every one has the right to take part in the government of his/her country, directly or through freely chosen representatives".
 - In 1992, the Council of Europe adopted the *Convention on the Participation of Foreigners in Public Life at Local Level*
 - The civil and political rights of migrant workers are covered by Articles 11; 12; 13; 14; 15; 16.1, 2, 4, 8; 17; 18; 22; 25; 27; and article 31 of the *International Convention on the Protection on All the Rights of Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families*.
 - The ninth EU's Common Basic Principle on Integration states that "the participation of immigrants in democratic process and in the formulation of the integration policies and measures, especially at local level, supports their integration"

- Forms of Civic and Political participation
 - Conventional (Electoral) Politics – Political parties, voting, standing for elections
 - Infra-Politics (Non-Electoral): protests, demonstrations, sit-ins, hunger strikes, boycotts, Trade union politics, in pressure groups, and the direct mobilisation of ethnic communities; humanitarian movements, environmentalist movements, neighbourhood committees, customers' associations

- Rationale for staged civic and political participation of migrants in Australia (Zappala, 1999)
 - Initial survival and settlement
 - Majority of migrants not naturalised
 - Political institutions and culture of host society's hostility
 - Migrants not seeing themselves as permanent settlers

- Voting Rights in Ireland
 - Dáil Éireann (the House of Representatives): Irish and British Citizens
 - Seanad Éireann (the Senate): Graduates of Trinity College and National University of Ireland, Trade Unions, Councillors, Elected politicians and nominations by the Taoiseach (Prime Minister)
 - European Elections (Irish and EU nationals)
 - Referendum: Irish Citizens
 - Presidential Elections: Irish Citizens
 - Local Elections: All those who are regularly resident

- Electoral Legislation

- Voting rights and registration procedures are covered in Part II, the second Schedule of the Electoral Act 1992; the Electoral (Amendment) Act 1996 and Part VII, Section 76 of the Electoral Act 1997 (see table 4.1. for details). According to the Electoral Act 1992, Part II, section 10, “a person shall be entitled to be registered as a local government elector in a local electoral area if he/she has reached the age of eighteen years and he was, on the qualifying date, ordinarily resident in that area”. Provisions for the participation of foreign nationals in local elections go as far back as 1963.

- Political Participation – Some Irish Experience
 - Dr Moosagee Bhamjee elected to the Dail (first Muslim TD) in 1992
 - Dr Taiwo Matthew and Rotimi Adebari Elected Town Councillors in 2004. The later was elected Mayor of Portlaoise in June 2007

- Migrant Candidates in the 2009 local elections
 - Fianna Fail: 9
 - Fine Gael: 8
 - Labour: 4
 - Green Party: 8
 - Independent Candidates: 8

 - Countries of Origin: Nigeria (14), India (1), Poland (8), Russia (2), Colombia (1), Pakistan (1), Lithuania (2), Latvia (2), Zimbabwe (1), USA (1), Moldova (1), Netherlands (1), Congo DRC (1) and South Africa (1)

- Polish Candidates in the 2009 local elections
 - Anna Banko (Fianna Fail): Limerick South City
 - Anna Michalska (Fianna Fail): Kilkenny City Council
 - Katarzyna Gaborec (Fianna Fail): Mullingar Town Council
 - Wojciech Wisniewski (Fianna Fail): Shannon Town Council
 - Bartlomiej Bruzewick (Fine Gael): Dublin North Inner City
 - Tomasz Askuntowicz (Fine Gael): Tullamore Town Council
 - Agnieszka Faltyn (Fine Gael): Templemore Town Council
 - Anna Kulikowska (Labour): Shannon Town Council

- Migrant Candidates elected in the 2009 local elections
 - Mr Adebari was elected to the Laois County Council and the Portlaoise Town Council
 - Dutch former aid worker Jan Rotte, who retained his seat for the Labour Party in Lismore, Co Waterford, and
 - Ms Kristina Jankaitiene, a Lithuanian school teacher who took a seat for the Green Party in Carrickmacross, Co Monaghan.
 - Ms. Anna Rooney (born in Russia, elected to Clones town council in 2009)

- **Becoming a Local**

- *INDEPENDENT CLLR ROTIMI ADEBARI AFTER BEING DECLARED MAYOR OF PORTLAOISE ON JUNE 28th, 2007 (Source Irish Independent)*



- League of the Filipino Nurses – Overseas Nurses Section of the Irish Nurses Organisation
 - Filipino diplomatic delegation visit INO HQ in Dublin: Back (l-r): **Tony Fitzpatrick** INO IRO; **Madeline Spiers**, INO president; **Clare Treacy**, INO director of social policy. Front (l-r): **Jainal Rasul Jr**, Labour Attaché; **John Ferris**, Honorary Consul of Ireland; Consul General **Mario de Leon**; and **Fidel Taguinod**, INO Overseas Nurses Section (Source INO)



- **Rotimi and Ronke Adebari received by the Ceann Comhairle (Speaker of the Lower House) John O'Donoghue on July 5th, 2007 at Leinster House**



- **Minister of State for Integration John Curran (right) with Yinka Dixon, Green Party, Drogheda, and Patrick Maphoso, Independent, Dublin city, at Leinster House. Photograph: Dara Mac Dónaill**
 - Seminar on Political participation – April 29th, 2009



- Two migrant candidates with the Leader of the Opposition



- Four Independent Candidates of Migrant Backgrounds in the 2011 General Elections
 - Mr Buhidma Hussein Hamed (originally from Libya) – Dublin South Constituency
 - Mr Clement Esebamen (originally from Nigeria) – Dublin West Constituency
 - Mr Rotimi Adebari (originally from Nigeria) – Laois – Offaly Constituency
 - Benjamin Ashu-Arrah (Originally from the Cameroon) – Cork North Central Constituency

– Initiatives to promote migrants' civic and political
Integration

- Voter Registration Campaign by Dublin City Council and other stakeholders
- Recruitment by political parties of migrant (Polish) organisers (Fianna Fail and Fine Gael)
- Recruitment of migrant organisers by Trade Unions
- Campaign for the spousal work permit – initiated by the League of Filipino Nurses
- Setting up of migrant networks (Research and Publication of Positive Politics 2003 and Negative Politics 2004)
- Voter Mobilisation Campaign by Africa Centre and the New Communities Partnership
- Count Us In

- **Count Us In Campaign (February 17th, 2011)**



- **Count Us In Campaign (2)**



- **“In Many civilisations, immigration has brought new growth and enrichment” – Pope John Paul II (2001)**
 - Source: John Paul II, Message for the World Day of Peace 2001 Dialogue between cultures for a civilisation of love and peace, 12:AAS XCIII 92001) 241; cf. Also John Paul II, Apostolic letter Novo millennio ineunte, 55: AAS XCIII (2001) 306

- Thank You
- Go raibh míle maith agat (Gaelic – Irish)
- Dziękuję (Polish)
- Merci (French)
- Asante (Swahili)
- Murakoze (Kinyarwanda)
- شكرا (shukrān) (Arabic)
- 謝謝 [谢谢] (xièxie) (Chinese – Mandarin)
- Weebale (Luganda)