

Welcome to the Immigrant Council of Ireland's new Integration Hub. The Hub has been specifically designed to meet the needs of Ireland's increasingly diverse society.

Over the next 3 years it will focus its efforts in two key areas:

1. Building civic and political participation
2. Tackling racism

## 1 POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

- Among the 31 local authorities in the Republic of Ireland there are 949 local councillors but only 2 are migrants
- Only 31 new Irish/non-Irish contested the 2014 local elections (mostly Polish and Nigerian) [ESRI, 2017]
- If the proportion of non-Irish candidates contesting the election reflected the resident population it would have been 218 selected or declared [ESRI, 2017]
- Of 158 members of the Dáil just one member is a naturalised Irish citizen
- In the period April 2015-16, 54,203 new migrants arrived in Ireland [Census 2016]
- Non-Irish nationals don't appear to be taking up their right to vote – there's a gap of approx. 9% between the percentage of non-Irish nationals who are listed on the electoral register compared with the population figures [ESRI, 2017]

Data from recent local and national elections shows a very low level of engagement of migrants in registering to vote or running for elections. The Immigrant Council's own outreach work has also uncovered a lack of knowledge of political rights among migrants. Improving political participation is an essential part of successful integration, giving migrants the opportunity to get involved and influence and enrich the societies of which they are a part.

It also means our decision-making structures are more reflective of the communities they are representing.

“For migrants just to know the political landscape is important. Starting the conversation is what's important. Building political participation among the migrant population is not rocket science, it just requires some time and effort. People need to know how to engage and be encouraged to do so.”

**Kany Kazadi,**  
Migrant Integration Promoter

“The training was very enlightening for me. I didn't know you could vote in the local elections before the training. It was also really interesting to learn about the way the votes are transferred – I had never heard of the proportional representation system before. I would definitely vote and I'm more interested in Irish politics now.”

**Thelma Ajayi,**  
attended political participation training

## 2 ANTI-RACISM

- A total of 245 completed reports of racism in Ireland were received between July and December 2016 [ENAR]
- One in 10 of racist incidents involve violence [Immigrant Council of Ireland]
- The two most common sites for racism and discrimination is workplace and people's homes [Immigrant Council of Ireland]
- People of African origin are most likely to become a victim of racism or discrimination, followed by people of Eastern European origin [Immigrant Council of Ireland]
- There's a worrying high number of children and young people under 18 among both victims (23%) and perpetrators (15%) [Immigrant Council of Ireland]

Unfortunately racism and discrimination is on the rise in Ireland – we know this from official statistics and from our own research and support work. But at the same time we have also witnessed incredible acts of welcome and inclusion at the community level. Right now we have a real and important opportunity to refine approaches

“My kids are scared, they do not eat and are crying at night. They are afraid to go outside the house, my son cries and doesn't want to go to the school because he is afraid. This is a horror what is happening here. I'm afraid for my family, my partner is neurotic. I already cannot withstand mentally...I do not know how it will end.”

**Lukasz**

which effectively tackle racism, while at the same time promoting examples of positivity. The Immigrant Council is particularly concerned by the shortcomings in support and advocacy for victims of racism and discrimination and would also be calling for effective hate crime legislation.

### THE INTEGRATION HUB WILL:

- Support increased political participation of migrants – as voters and candidates
- Work with Local Authorities to improve approaches to integration
- Run holistic anti-racism campaigns
- Run media training for migrants
- Hold intercultural events – partnering with Places of Sanctuary
- Provide anti-racism and cultural awareness training

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