

FOREWORD

When we undertook this campaign, we wanted to encourage as many immigrants as possible to register and use their vote. We also wanted to raise immigrants' concerns high on politicians' radar and to encourage members of our communities to become politically engaged. Only by investing ourselves in the processes of change can we hope to bring about a more diverse and inclusive Ireland.

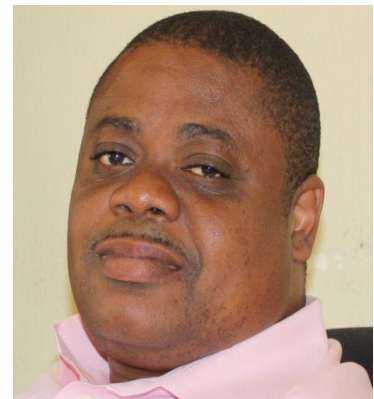
Our campaign aimed to encourage 10,000 immigrants to register and to cast their vote in local elections on 5 June 2009. We are pleased with the final result - 15,681 – a 44% increase on the previous number.

We are uniquely placed to reach far and deep into immigrant communities. We have the informal networks and the relationships to influence communities on a large scale. In our survey, almost 80% learned of their eligibility to vote as a result of our campaign, and having registered, 94% actually exercised their vote.

A significant proportion of the population is now composed of immigrants who are here to stay, who have put down deep roots and who envisage their future in Ireland. Politicians of all parties and none want to attract support from these new communities. There is a mutual interest now in engaging with and supporting one another which can only lead to a better life for immigrants and a fairer Ireland for all.



ISSAH HUSEINI
NEW COMMUNITIES
PARTNERSHIP NATIONAL
COORDINATOR



ERIC YAO
AFRICA CENTRE
COORDINATOR

CONTENTS

FOREWORD	1	CAMPAIGN AIMS – ASSESSING	RECOMMENDATIONS	26
CONTENTS	2	ACHIEVEMENTS	APPENDICES	28
THE RIGHT TO VOTE	3	5.1 Campaign goals	FIGURES	
1.1 Local electoral rights in Ireland		5.2 Approach to assessment & analysis	<u>Page 3 – Figure 1</u>	
1.2 Local electoral rights – Broader Perspective		5.2.1 Desk research	Electoral rights in local elections	
1.3 Diversity in Ireland’s population		5.2.2 Questionnaire survey	<u>Page 11 – Figure 2</u>	
1.4 Electoral rights & integration		5.2.3 Interviews	Campaign Timeline Phase 1 (Nov ’08 – Feb ’09)	
		5.2.4 Other sources	<u>Page 11 – Figure 3</u>	
TWO PHASE CAMPAIGN – PHASE ONE	5	CAMPAIGN AIM ONE	<u>Page 14 – Figure 4</u>	
2.1 Elections in Ireland – June 2009		5.3.1 The electoral register – an outline	Campaign Timeline Phase 2 (Mar – June ’09)	
2.2 Collaboration between NCP & Africa Centre		5.3.2 Electoral codes	<u>Page 16 – Figure 6</u>	
2.3 Working with local authorities		5.3.3 Difficulties inherent in assessing numbers	Combined E & L voters on register of electors	
2.4 Voter Education Training		5.3.4 Focus on L & E voters	<u>Page 15 – Figure 5</u>	
2.5 Campaign launch			% increase in E & L voters on electoral registers in 10 local authority areas	
VOTER REGISTRATION & EDUCATION DRIVE NOV 2008 – FEB 2009	6	CAMPAIGN AIM TWO	<u>Page 16 – Figure 6</u>	
3.1 Five key areas		5.4 Learning about eligibility to vote	L voters on electoral registers of 10 local authorities	
3.2 Campaign launch – Dublin		5.5 Registering & exercising the vote – 5 June 2009	<u>Page 16 – Figure 7</u>	
3.3 Campaign launch – Cork		5.6 Research findings – June 2004	E voters on electoral registers of 10 local authorities	
3.4 Multilingual posters & leaflets		5.7 Encouraging migrant led-campaigns	<u>Page 17 – Figure 8</u>	
3.5 Disseminating information		5.8 Ensuring effective campaigns	Learned about eligibility to vote	
3.6 Targeting the greatest number of immigrants		5.9 Participants’ experience of the campaign & understanding of Ireland’s political system	<u>Page 21 – Figure 9</u>	
3.7 Outreach activities		5.10 Desire to engage in political and civic life	Candidates & their parties	
3.8 Devising training for diverse communities		5.11 Factors influencing high levels of motivation to engage	<u>Page 22 – Figure 10</u>	
3.9 Voter education training – content		5.12 In their own words	Provenance of candidates – by country	
3.10 Voter education training – courses			<u>Page 22 – Figure 11</u>	
TWO PHASE CAMPAIGN – PHASE TWO	9	CAMPAIGN AIM THREE	<u>Page 23 – Figure 12</u>	
4.1 Public meetings – planning & format		5.13 Immigrant candidates – June 2004	Where candidates stood for election	
4.2 Public meetings – where, when & who		5.14 Political parties’ engagement with immigrant voters	<u>Page 24 – Figure 13</u>	
4.3 Final reminders			Candidates performance in the election	
		IMMIGRANT CANDIDATES LOCAL ELECTIONS JUNE 2009		
		6.1 Immigrant candidates – June 2009		
		6.2 Provenance of candidates		
		6.3 Where candidates stood		
		6.4 How candidates performed		
		6.5 Paving the way for a more inclusive future		

THE RIGHT TO VOTE

1.1 LOCAL ELECTORAL RIGHTS IN IRELAND

The right to vote in Ireland is determined by citizenship and is conferred as follows:

- Irish citizens may vote at every election and referendum;
- British citizens may vote at Dáil, European and local elections;
- Other EU citizens may vote at European and local elections;
- Non-EU citizens may vote at local elections only.

1.2 LOCAL ELECTORAL RIGHTS A BROADER PERSPECTIVE

Ireland ranks alongside the Nordic countries in conferring local electoral rights on non EU nationals with minimal conditions. All immigrants over 18 years who have been legally resident in Ireland for six months who complete a simple registration form may exercise their vote in local elections.

Figure 1 outlines electoral rights in local elections across 36 countries¹.

Key

A – All foreign nationals

AS – Those from member countries of a particular alliance of states

CL – Those from countries with colonial ties

CS – Those from countries with cultural similarities

CT – Those from certain territories

EU – EU citizens

RE – Those from countries with reciprocal arrangements

RECS – Those from countries with reciprocal arrangements and cultural similarities

FIGURE 1 ELECTORAL RIGHTS IN LOCAL ELECTIONS		
COUNTRY	RIGHT TO VOTE	ELIGIBILITY TO STAND AS A CANDIDATE
ESTABLISHED EU MEMBER STATES		
Austria	EU/(CT)	EU/(CT)
Belgium	EU	EU
Denmark	A/AS/EU	A/AS/EU
Finland	A/AS/EU	A/AS/EU
France	EU	EU
Germany	EU	EU
Greece	EU	EU
Ireland	A/EU	A/EU
Italy	EU	EU
Luxembourg	EU	EU
Netherlands	A/EU	A/EU
Portugal	RE/EU/CS	RE/EU/CS
Spain	RE/EU	RE/EU
Sweden	A/AS/EU	A/AS/EU
United Kingdom	CL/EU	CL/EU
RECENT EU MEMBER STATES		
Bulgaria	—	—
Cyprus	—	—
Czech Republic	[RE]	[RE]
Estonia	A	—
Hungary	A	—
Latvia	—	—
Lithuania	[A]	[A]
Malta	RE/AS	RE/AS
Poland	—	—
Romania	—	—
Slovakia	A	A
Slovenia	A	(A)
OTHER EUROPEAN COUNTRIES		
Iceland	A/AS	A/AS
Liechtenstein	—	—
Norway	A	A
Russia	—	—
Switzerland	ECT	ECT
NON-EUROPEAN IMMIGRATION COUNTRIES		
Australia	CL/CT	CL/CT
Canada	—	—
New Zealand	A	—
USA	CT	CT

¹ Electoral rights for foreign nationals: a comparative overview of regulations in 36 countries (Waldrauch) European Centre for Social Welfare Policy and Research, Austria 2003

1.3 DIVERSITY IN IRELAND'S POPULATION

Census 2006 revealed that over 10% or about 420,000 of the Irish population are nationals of other countries, just over one third or 145,276 of whom are from non EU countries. The National Household Survey shows that, in the first quarter of 2008, this figure had fallen by just over 10% to 129,700. Although inward migration has reduced and remains closely connected to economic performance, the Central Statistics Office has predicted that inward migration will continue in the period 2011 – 2041.²

1.4 ELECTORAL RIGHTS & INTEGRATION

The right to vote and to stand for election are two very important aspects of political participation and the research undertaken in Ireland and in other countries to date indicates that political participation promotes integration. Immigrants' right to vote at local elections was introduced in Ireland in 1963 and in 1974 it was followed by the introduction of the right to stand as a candidate.

Although not as evident in the 2004 local elections, most political observers noted that "the immigrant vote" was of great interest to the mainstream political parties in the June 2009 elections.

Parties fielded candidates who were born outside Ireland and also invested in attracting votes from immigrants. The proportion of the population composed of immigrants has become too great to ignore.

The imperative to attract votes from immigrants means engaging with them, learning about their lives and taking on issues of importance to them. Once such issues begin to feature on a political landscape – actually manifest on the radar of local politicians and political party machines - they cease to be invisible and marginalised. An engagement is now possible between the voter and politician where each have a mutual interest to lend support to the other.

Although many of the issues with which immigrants grapple may be resolved only at national or indeed supra



Elena Morena, (Trinity Immigration Initiative) at "Meet the Candidate" public meeting in Dublin 1, May 2009

national levels, the connections between local and national political arenas may be used very effectively once this engagement has begun.

So called "third country nationals" right to vote is of course confined for now to the local level. EU citizens have the right to vote in European Parliament elections. What is true for local elections is also true for elections at national level – political parties did not invest in attracting immigrants' votes in the 2007 general election and so they remained largely ignored.

No one's life should be subject in the long term to policies and decisions over which they have no influence. The right to vote and to stand as a candidate are basic elements of our capacity to exercise this influence.

Waldrauch contends that it is not citizenship but residence that should determine voting rights and "the basic rule in this respect is the longer one stays, the stronger one's moral claims."³

The imperative to attract votes from immigrants means engaging with them, learning about their lives and taking on issues of importance to them. Once such issues begin to feature on a political landscape – actually manifest on the radar of local politicians and political party machines - they cease to be invisible and marginalised. An engagement is now possible between the voter and politician where each have a mutual interest to lend support to the other.

³ Electoral rights for foreign nationals: a comparative overview of regulations in 36 countries (Waldrauch) European Centre for Social Welfare Policy and Research, Austria 2003

² Population and Labour Force Projections, 2011-2041; CSO April 2008, p17

TWO PHASE CAMPAIGN

PHASE ONE NOV 08 - FEB 09

PHASE ONE

LAUNCHING THE CAMPAIGN

2.1 ELECTIONS IN IRELAND JUNE 2009

Three types of election took place in Ireland on 5th June 2009:

- **The 2009 European Parliament Election** - to elect twelve candidates to serve as Irish Members of the European Parliament (*MEPs*) – three for each of the four constituencies in Ireland
- **Two Bye-Elections** to elect two candidates to serve as Members of Dáil Éireann (*Teachtaí Dála* – TDs) for the constituencies of Dublin Central and Dublin South.
- **The 2009 Local Elections** to elect 1,627 candidates to serve as Councillors on 114 directly elected local authorities in Ireland composed of County, City, Borough & Town Councils

2.2 COLLABORATION BETWEEN NCP & AFRICA CENTRE

Since the establishment of both organisations, NCP and Africa Centre have worked collaboratively on joint projects. The two organisations have much in common and have developed good working relationships. Staff and volunteers jointly planned the campaign from July 2008.

2.3 WORKING WITH LOCAL AUTHORITIES

Dublin City Council's Office for Integration invited NCP to join the steering committee for their migrant voters campaign.

Key components included information and publicity materials in several languages; financial support for leading immigrant organisations to mount their own campaigns and voter education training.

NCP & the Africa Centre also secured financial support from Fingal, South Dublin and Cork County Councils as well as Cork City Council.

In addition, they were successful in securing financial support to initiate the campaign from Community Foundation Ireland together with the Immigrant Council of Ireland (ICI). ICI was unable to continue but their involvement at the early stage of the campaign was very valuable.

2.4 VOTER EDUCATION TRAINING WITH THE VINCENTIAN PARTNERSHIP FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE

Staff from NCP and the Africa Centre along with almost 70 other immigrants received voter education training in October 2009 with the Vincentian Partnership for Social Justice⁴.

Based on the "Train the Trainer" cascading model, the course was designed to ensure that the community leaders who were trained were in turn equipped to deliver training to others – both formally and informally.

2.5 OUR VOTE CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE – CAMPAIGN LAUNCH

The campaign was launched on Monday 3rd November 2008 at the Africa Centre in Dublin 1. The aims for the campaign were established as follows:

- To encourage 10,000 immigrants to register to vote and to cast their vote in local elections on 5 June 2009
- To raise awareness of the Irish political system among immigrants
- To create awareness of and commitment to priority issues for immigrants in Ireland among candidates in the local elections

⁴ A partnership between the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, the Vincentian Congregation, the Daughters of Charity and the Sisters of the Holy Faith established in 1996 to tackle poverty & injustice in the social and economic structures in Ireland today based on the spirit of their founders.

VOTER REGISTRATION & EDUCATION DRIVE

NOV '08 – FEB '09

3.1 FIVE KEY AREAS

Campaign events were planned for five key areas, with staff and representatives from member groups taking a lead role in each area:

- Dublin
- Cork
- Limerick
- Galway
- Athy, Co Kildare

3.2 CAMPAIGN LAUNCH – DUBLIN

The campaign was formally launched in two areas - Dublin and Cork.

A press release was issued prior to the launch in Dublin on Monday 3 November 2008.

Held at the offices of the Africa Centre on Lower Abbey Street, Dublin 1, the Dublin campaign was launched by the Coordinator of the Africa Centre Eric Yao who encouraged immigrants to vote as “*a way to participate in society*”.

NCP National Coordinator Issah Huseini believed it was time for immigrant voters to “*show their political power and demonstrate to our elected officials and political leaders that they are politically engaged and prepared to fight for their rights and the dignity of their communities*”.

3.3 CAMPAIGN LAUNCH – CORK

The Cork campaign was launched by Deputy Lord Mayor Councillor Patricia Gosch on Friday 14 November 2008 at the NCP offices based at Cois Tine on Pope's Quay in Cork City.

3.4 MULTILINGUAL POSTERS AND LEAFLETS

Posters and leaflets were produced in over 25 languages. NCP and the Africa Centre produced a number of posters and also used the information produced by the local authorities in each of the key areas for the campaign.



Deputy Lord Mayor Cllr. Patricia Gosch; Cllr. Damien Wallace & Sylvia Adamska, Development Worker, NCP Cork at the launch of the campaign in Cork, November 2008.

3.5 DISSEMINATING INFORMATION

Staff and volunteers conducted a large scale dissemination campaign, distributing posters and leaflets to many locations throughout Dublin, Cork and Limerick cities and counties as well as in Galway City and Athy.

3.6 TARGETING THE GREATEST NUMBER OF IMMIGRANTS

The campaign teams in each area identified the locations which would enable them to reach the greatest number of immigrants.

To reach:

- immigrants already engaged and active within their communities; information was distributed to NCP and Africa Centre member groups;
- asylum seekers; campaign teams visited Direct Provision Centres in Dublin, Cork, Limerick and Galway;
- recently arrived immigrants; information was distributed to immigrant support services; organisations within the community and voluntary sector; Family Resource Centres;
- Employment Resource Centres; Citizen Information Centres; Garda stations;
- well established immigrants: information was distributed to mosques; churches; shops & supermarkets; businesses and companies with large immigrant workforces; post offices; credit unions;
- students; information was distributed to third level institutions; student unions; student societies; VECs; schools; libraries; language schools.
- To raise awareness as widely as possible, information was also distributed to newspapers and magazines and posted on many websites;
- Two street events were held on 25 February 2009 at the GPO on O'Connell Street and at Moore Street Mall on 21 March 2009. These events gave members of the public – Irish and newcomer alike – the opportunity to learn more about the local elections and to complete a registration form to vote.

3.7 OUTREACH ACTIVITIES

- Two visits to each of the six Accommodation Centres in Cork - Glounthane; Kinsale Road; Wellington Road; Millstreet; Clonakilty & Cobh. The first visit opened up good communication and a representative from An Garda Síochána joined the second visit to assist with voter registration.
- Staff and volunteers at the Limerick office of the NCP visited the Accommodation Centres at St Alphonsus Street, Dock Road, Sarsfield Road and Foynes to raise awareness and assist asylum seekers to register to vote.
- Galway based volunteers visited accommodation centres at the Proms; Eyre Square & Headford Road to speak with asylum seekers and to encourage their interest in voting.
- NCP, the Africa Centre and their member groups passed on information about registering to vote at their meetings, gatherings and fora. They also posted the information on their websites and published notices in their newsletters and other publications.
- Volunteers in Kildare visited immigrant communities in Kill, Kilcock, Maynooth and Castledermot and estimate that they helped approximately 250 people to register to vote.

3.8 DEVISING TRAINING FOR DIVERSE COMMUNITIES

Based on the training which they had received in October 2008 with the Vincentian Partnership, campaign staff, volunteers and community leaders devised and delivered their own training courses reflecting the needs of their own communities.



Members of the Lithuanian and Hindu Irish communities at "Meet the Candidate" public meeting, Dublin 1, May 2009

3.9 VOTER EDUCATION TRAINING – CONTENT

Although training courses were tailored to suit each group, the content broadly included the following elements:

- History of suffrage in Ireland
- Responsibilities, powers & functions of local government in Ireland
- Role of a local government councillor & choosing one
- Political parties in Ireland
- Organisation of local elections and the PR system
- Registering to vote

3.10 VOTER EDUCATION TRAINING - COURSES

Over 400 people benefited from training delivered in Dublin, Cork & Kildare. Courses included the following:

Course Organiser: Somali Community in Ireland
Date: 26 October 2008
Venue: Belvedere Place, Dublin 1
Participants: Members of the Somali community
No. of participants: 30

Course Organiser: NCP
Date: 6 December 2008
Venue: NCP Offices, Cork
Participants: NCP member groups
No. of participants: 12

Course Organiser: Somali Community in Ireland
Date: 7 December 2008
Venue: Belvedere Place, Dublin 1
Participants: Members of the Somali community
No. of participants: 40

Course Organiser: Women's Integration Network
Date: 18 February 2009
Venue: Athy. Co. Kildare
Participants: Immigrant and Irish members of the local community
No. of participants: 85

Course Organiser: The Africa Centre
Date: 28 February 2009
Venue: Africa Centre, Dublin 1
Participants: Immigrants from Africa
Centre and NCP member groups
No. of participants: 12

Course Organiser: Nigeria Association
Network Ireland (NANI)
Date: 27 March 2009
Venue: Trinity College Dublin
Participants: Members of the Nigerian
community
No. of participants: 68
*The event was also broadcast on the
Perod Show on OBE TV which has an
audience of 20,000.*

Course Organiser: Darfur Solidarity
Group
Date: April 2009
Venue: Grosvenor Square, Rathmines,
Dublin 6
Participants: Leaders from the Sudanese
community in Ireland
No. of participants: 6

Course Organiser: Darfur Solidarity
Group
Date: 21 April 2009
Venue: Irish Film Centre, Dublin 2
Participants: Members of the Sudanese
community in Ireland
No. of participants: 17
*In total, the Darfur Solidarity Group
reached 168 members of their community
through their outreach work to members'
homes & the Dublin Mosque in Dublin 8.*



Reginald Inya, NCP explains registration to first time voters at the Dublin north inner city public meeting in May 2009

TWO PHASE CAMPAIGN

PHASE TWO MARCH – JUNE 2009

MARCH – JUNE 2009

4.1 PUBLIC MEETINGS - PLANNING & FORMAT

Once the final register of electors was published on 15 February 2009, the opportunity to become part of the local government electorate was through the supplementary register which closed two weeks prior to the election on 18 May 2009. NCP and Africa Centre intensified their campaign and convened a number of public meetings to continue to raise awareness, train new voters and give candidates and voters an opportunity to meet and dialogue with one another.

Application to be placed on the supplementary register necessitates the authentication of registration forms by a member of An Garda Síochána and NCP & Africa Centre invited members of the force to be present at these meetings in order expedite the process of registration.

The format of these public meetings was as follows:

- Welcome & introduction
- Voting in local elections – Why?
- Registering to vote – How?
- Brief talk from electoral candidates
- Q&A session

4.2 PUBLIC MEETINGS - WHERE; WHEN & WHO

Over 500 people participated in meetings held in Dublin, Cork, Limerick, & Galway from March - May 2009. They included the following:

Date: 4 March 2009
Venue: NCP Offices, Cork
No. of participants: 9

Date: 13 March 2009
Venue: Menlo Park Hotel, Galway
Guest Speaker: Frank Fahey, TD Fianna Fáil
Candidates: Cllr Mary Leahy, Fianna Fáil; Cllr Billy Cameron, Labour; Cllr Tom Costello, Labour
No. of participants: 80

Date: 28 March 2009
Venue: Killinarden Community Centre, Tallaght
Candidates: Cllr John Hannon, Fianna Fáil; Cllr Marie Corr, Mayor of South Dublin County; Cllr Sean Crowe, Sinn Féin
No. of participants: 35

Date: 21 April 2009
Venue: NCP Offices, Cork
No. of participants: 9

Date: 24 April 2009
Venue: NCP Offices, Cork
No. of participants: 11

Date: 8 May 2009
Venue: Patrick Punch Hotel, Limerick
Candidates: Cllr Joe Ledden, Cllr Thomas Hannon & Elena Secas Labour; Pat O'Sullivan, Independent
No. of participants: 80

Date: 9 May 2009
Venue: Old Georges School House; Balbriggan
Candidates: Terry Kellegher, Socialist Party; Vilma Mocevičienė, Fine Gael
No. of participants: 30

Date: 14 May 2009
Venue: NCP Offices, Cork
No. of participants: 10

Date: 14 May 2009
Venue: Teachers' Club, Parnell Square
Guest Speaker: Lord Mayor Cllr Eibhlín Byrne, Fianna Fáil
Candidates: Patrick Maphosa, Independent; Colm Stephenson, People before Profit; Maureen O'Sullivan, Independent
No. of participants: 120

Date: 16 May 2009
Venue: Educate Together NS, Blanchardstown
Guest Speaker: Frank Fahey, TD Fianna Fáil
Candidates: Adeola Ogunsina, Fine Gael; Denis Keane, Socialist Party; Idowu Olafimihan, Fianna Fáil; Ignatius Okafor, Independent; Niamh Moran, Fianna Fáil; Ruth Coppinger, Socialist Party
No. of participants: 75

Date: 18 May 2009
Venue: GAA Hall, Millstreet, Cork
No. of participants: 10

Date: 21 May 2009
Venue: NCP Offices, Cork
No. of participants: 12

Date: 22 May 2009
Venue: NCP Offices, Cork
No. of participants: 11

Date: 24 May 2009
Venue: NCP Offices, Cork
No. of participants: 13

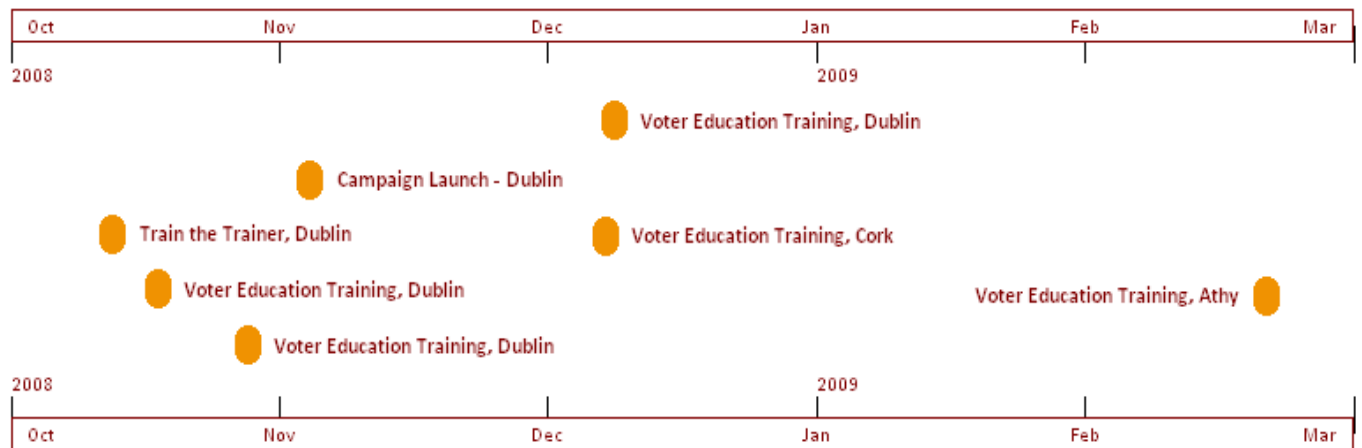
4.3 FINAL REMINDERS

Once the supplementary register closed on 18 May, NCP and Africa Centre concentrated on ensuring that as many of those finally registered would actually make it to a polling station to cast their vote. Meetings, gatherings, newsletters and websites were used as opportunities to issue final reminders. Using email and webtext, messages were sent to those who had participated in training and at public meetings and they were encouraged in turn to pass on the reminders.



Members of the Nour Women's Group with Laura Kersulyte, NCP at "Meet the Candidate" public meeting in Balbriggan, May 2009

Figure 2
Campaign Timeline Phase 1 (Nov '08 - Feb '09)

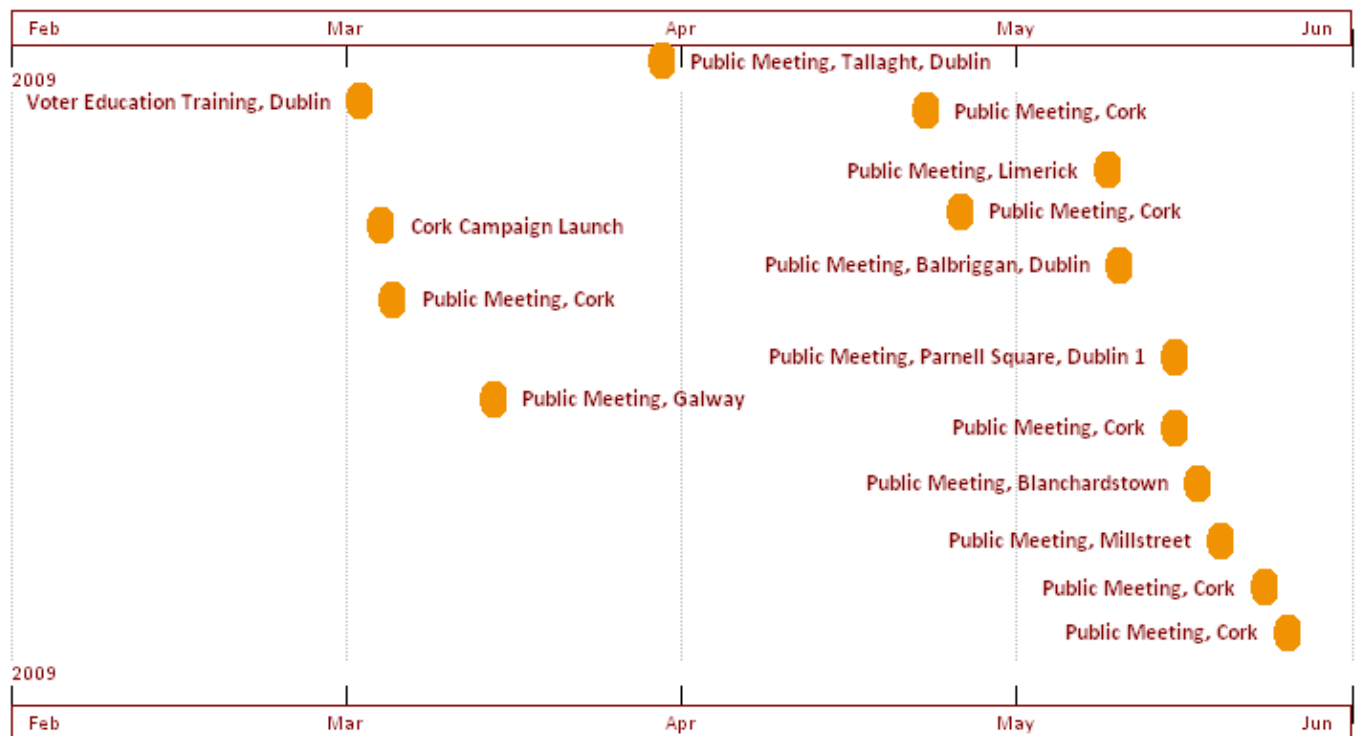


Figures 2 & 3 outline the two phases of the campaign.

Following its launch in November 2008, the first phase of the campaign focused on raising awareness of the electoral system in Ireland, on voting rights and on how to register to vote.

The second phase concentrated on providing opportunities for candidates and voters to meet and on encouraging immigrants to use their vote.

Figure 3
Campaign Timeline Phase 2 (March - June 2009)



CAMPAIGN AIMS

ASSESSING ACHIEVEMENTS

5.1 CAMPAIGN GOALS

At the outset of the campaign, NCP and the Africa Centre outlined three aims towards which the activities would progress. All aims are inextricably linked to both organisations' main objective of improving the lives of their members in Ireland and building a more equal, integrated society. Two of the three aims focused on raising awareness, confidence and participation within new communities themselves. The final one focused on increasing politicians' interest and commitment to their immigrant voters.

5.2 APPROACH TO ASSESSMENT & ANALYSIS

A number of approaches contributed to this assessment, concentrating on the data and feedback most valuable to examining each of the three campaign aims.

5.2.1 DESK RESEARCH

The findings of a number of recent Irish and European studies have been used. Among those that have been invaluable are

- *Irish Politics - Political Parties and Immigrants in 2009* (Fanning, O'Boyle & Shaw) Migration & Citizenship Research Initiative MCRI 2009
- *Getting On: From Migration to Integration - Chinese, Indian, Lithuanian and Nigerian*
- *Migrants' Experiences in Ireland* (Feldman, Gilmartin, Loyal, Migge) MCRI 2008 Prepared for the Immigrant Council of Ireland
- *Irish Political Parties: Immigration and Integration in 2007* (Fanning, Shaw, O'Connell & Williams) MCRI 2007

- *Trends in the EU-27 regarding participation of third-country nationals in the host country's political life* Geyer European Parliament DG for Internal Policies 2007
- *Building Europe with New Citizens? An Inquiry into the Civic Participation of Naturalised Citizens and Foreign Residents in 25 Countries* (POLITIS) (Vogel, Ossietzky) European Commission DG for Research 2006
- *Electoral rights for foreign nationals: a comparative overview of regulations in 36 countries* (Waldrauch) European Centre for Social Welfare Policy and Research, Austria 2003
- *Local Voting Rights for non nationals in Europe; what we know and what we need to learn* (Groenendijk) Migration Policy Institute 2008
- *The Migrant Integration Policy Index (MIPEX)* integrationindex.eu.
- *Positive Politics: Participation of Immigrants and Ethnic Minorities in the Electoral Process* (Fanning B, Mutwarasibo and Chadamoyo N. (2003)

5.2.2 QUESTIONNAIRE SURVEY

A survey requiring written responses to 12 questions was distributed to a sample of NCP and Africa Centre member groups. 38 questionnaires were returned providing a representative sample of responses to key questions. The survey is available at *Appendix 1*.

5.2.3 INTERVIEWS

Telephone interviews were conducted with representatives from 20 NCP and Africa Centre member groups. Interviews were also conducted with staff and volunteers who worked on the campaign; staff in the Franchise and Community & Enterprise Sections of ten local authorities; representatives from An Garda Síochána and candidates in the local elections.

5.2.4 OTHER SOURCES

Data and information from a range of other sources was also used including from reports, documents and recordings of the campaign events, registers of electors, newspapers and websites.

CAMPAIGN AIM 1

**TO ENCOURAGE 10,000
IMMIGRANTS TO
REGISTER TO VOTE AND
TO CAST THEIR VOTE IN
LOCAL ELECTIONS ON
5 JUNE 2009**

5.3.1 THE ELECTORAL REGISTER – AN OUTLINE

Electors register to vote and are listed on the register of electors in the locality in which they live.

The register of electors is managed and maintained by the registration authority which are the 34 city and county councils throughout Ireland.

While residency in Ireland for a period of 6 months for all who are 18 years and over is all that is required to be able to vote, the extent of eligibility is dependent on citizenship.

Four main categories of citizenship determine voting rights – Irish, British, EU & Non EU.

5.3.2 ELECTORAL CODES

The register of electors held by each city and county council record not an elector's nationality but their citizenship category and this is designated by the use of letters as follows:

- No letter against a name indicates an Irish citizen – who may vote in all elections and referenda.
- The letter D against a name indicates a person who holds British citizenship and who has the right to vote in Dáil, European Parliament and local elections, but not in presidential elections or referenda.
- The letter E designates an EU citizen (other than Irish or British) who may vote at European Parliament and local elections only.
- L is used to identify citizens of countries other than EU who have the right to vote only in local elections.

5.3.3 DIFFICULTIES INHERENT IN ASSESSING THE NUMBER OF REGISTRATIONS ARISING FROM THE CAMPAIGN

Throughout the campaign, new voters registered in a number of ways:

- At all **meetings, gatherings and events** throughout the campaign, RFA1 & RFA2 forms were distributed;
- NCP and Africa Centre member groups distributed forms to their **membership network**;
- NCP and Africa Centre staff and volunteers conducted **outreach activities** to accommodation centres; places of work & business, places of worship & leisure as well as to families;
- The campaign team also distributed forms through outreach **streetwork** on Dublin's O'Connell and Moore Streets

On some occasions, forms were returned by the NCP and Africa Centre team in bulk to the registration authorities. At other times, new voters completed the forms in their own time and returned them directly to the registration authorities.

In addition, a number of organisations, agencies and individuals were engaged in the process of encouraging new voters to register. This includes the registration authorities themselves, community and voluntary sector organisations; political parties and the campaign teams of independent candidates

Such was the extent of the activity, networking and cascading involved, that it would not be possible to arrive at a reliable estimation of the number of new entries on the register of electors which could be attributed exclusively to this campaign.

5.3.4 FOCUS ON L & E VOTERS

The most accurate figures are those that come directly from the register of electors and the focus in this report is on the categories of L and E voters. The increase in the number of E and L voters who registered to vote with the 10 local authorities in the campaign areas is presented in *Figure 4*.

Figure 4 Combined E & L Voters on Register of Electors

(Pre and post June 2009)

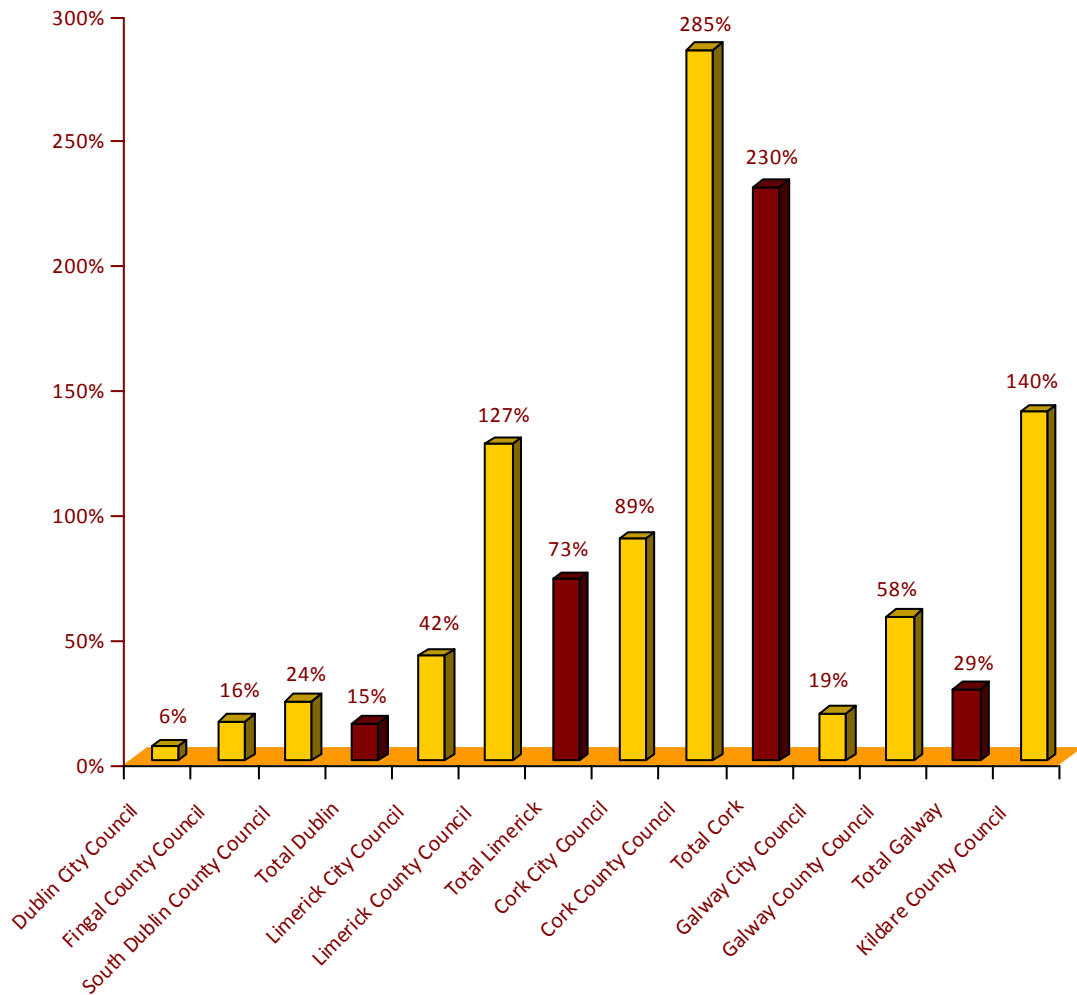
Registration Authority	Pre-June 2009	Post-June 2009	Increase	%
Dublin				
Dublin City Council	8,913	9,455	542	6%
Fingal County Council	8,628	10,035	1,407	16%
South Dublin County Council	4,937	6,121	1,184	24%
Limerick				
Limerick City Council	1,013	1,438	425	42%
Limerick County Council	581	1,319	738	127%
Cork				
Cork City Council	849	1,607	758	89%
Cork County Council	2,166	8,334	6,168	285%
Galway				
Galway City Council	5,169	6,152	983	19%
Galway County Council	1,778	2,814	1,036	58%
Kildare				
Kildare County Council	1,746	4,186	2,440	139%
Total	35,780	51,461	15,681	44%

Figure 4 represents the increase pre and post June 2009 of 10 of Ireland's 34 registration authorities and is therefore not a national representation. Those selected are the authorities in the localities where the campaign was concentrated.

Variations in the management of data mean that not all the pre June 2009 statistics are drawn from the same point in time. While it would be preferable if they were, the statistics above still provide a snapshot of the increase in L & E voters from a point in time prior to this campaign to the number registered to vote in the June 2009 local elections.

The overall increase is 15,681 new voters registered – which represents a 44% increase on the numbers registered to vote prior to the campaign. While this exceeds the campaign goal of 10,000, NCP and the Africa Centre do not attribute the total result to this campaign alone as outlined under point 5.3.3 above.

Figure 5
% increase in E & L voters on electoral registers
in 10 local authority areas



The numbers of E & L voters on all 10 local authorities' electoral registers increased with the greatest increase in County Cork and the smallest in Dublin City Council. However, when the three local authority areas in Dublin are combined, the increase is 3,313 or 15% more than the numbers registered in the 2008/2009 electoral register.

The greatest increase is in Cork with 6,926 new voters registered – this is 230% more than the numbers registered prior to June 2009. The number of registered E and L voters on the 2008/2009 electoral registers for both local authorities in Cork was low at 3,015 and the increased numbers reflect much more accurately the size of its immigrant population as well as the sustained and robust campaign undertaken by NCP and other organisations in the run up to the June elections.

Almost 2,500 additional E & L voters in County Kildare show a 150% increase on previous numbers and the increases of 73% in Limerick and almost one third in Galway are also substantial.

<i>Figure 6</i>				
L voters on electoral registers of 10 local authorities				
Registration Authority	Pre June 2009	Post June 2009	Increase	%
Dublin				
Dublin City Council	8,306	8,545	239	3%
Fingal County Council	7,983	9,327	1,344	17%
South Dublin County Council	4,726	5,839	1,113	24%
Total Dublin	21,015	23,711	2,696	13%
Limerick				
Limerick City Council	991	1,372	381	38%
Limerick County Council	439	1,109	670	153%
Total Limerick	1,430	2,481	1,051	73%
Cork				
Cork City Council	614	1,233	619	101%
Cork County Council	2,015	8,152	6,137	305%
Total Cork	2,629	9,385	6,756	257%
Galway				
Galway City Council	4,342	5,532	1,190	27%
Galway County Council	368	1,072	704	191%
Total Galway	4,710	6,604	1,894	40%
Kildare				
Kildare County Council	1,255	2,432	1,177	94%
Total	26,313	38,774	12,461	47%

Figure 6 outlines the increase in the number of L voters on the 10 electoral registers.

This figure demonstrates that the large increase in County Cork is in the L voters – an overall increase of 6,756 voters - 257% more than on the 2008/09 register.

Limerick and Galway County Councils also show a considerable increase in the number of L voters registered – 670 and 704 voters respectively, giving increases of 153% and 191%.

The number of L voters in Co. Kildare has almost doubled to 2,432 – an increase of 94% on the 2008/09 register.

The number of E voters recorded in *Figure 7* indicates those who have not only registered their vote in Ireland but have also removed their names from the electoral register in their home country. E voters who have registered here but have not yet taken this step (referred to as “potential E voters”) are not included.

Although in overall terms, the % increase in the L & E voter register were almost the same at 47% and 44% respectively, the numbers involved are far greater for L than for E voters.

In Dublin, the increase in E voters was almost three times that of the increase in L voters, but the numbers involved are far smaller – the total number of E voters registered to vote in the 3 Dublin local authorities is 12 times less than the number of L voters.

The numbers in Kildare have almost trebled to 1,263 E voters and the increase on the Limerick City Council electoral register is high at 200% but it started from a low base.

<i>Figure 7</i>				
E voters on electoral registers of 10 local authorities				
Registration Authority	Pre June 2009	Post June 2009	Increase	%
Dublin				
Dublin City Council	607	910	303	50%
Fingal County Council	645	708	63	10%
South Dublin County Council	211	282	71	34%
Total Dublin	1,463	1,900	437	30%
Limerick				
Limerick City Council	22	66	44	200%
Limerick County Council	142	210	68	48%
Total Limerick	164	276	112	68%
Cork				
Cork City Council	235	374	139	59%
Cork County Council	151	182	31	21%
Total Cork	386	556	170	44%
Galway				
Galway City Council	827	620	-207	-25%
Galway County Council	1,410	1,742	332	24%
Total Galway	2,237	2,362	125	6%
Kildare				
Kildare County Council	491	1,754	1,263	274%
Total	4,741	6,848	2,107	44%

CAMPAIGN AIM 2

TO RAISE AWARENESS OF THE IRISH POLITICAL SYSTEM AMONG IMMIGRANTS

5.4 LEARNING ABOUT ELIGIBILITY TO VOTE

Both NCP and the Africa Centre are membership based organisations and one of their defining characteristics is that leadership is in the hands of the members of the communities they represent.

This obviously gives them a significant advantage when conducting a campaign that depends on reaching members of new communities.

The survey results demonstrate that this campaign penetrated new communities to a significant extent. 79% of those surveyed learned of their eligibility to vote as a result of the campaign, while 10% found out from a friend and 3% from their local council.

It is likely that the remaining 8% represents campaigns conducted by other community, voluntary and representative groups.

5.5 REGISTERING AND EXERCISING THE VOTE ON 5 JUNE 2009

Just over 10% of those surveyed were already registered to vote and almost 90% registered during the campaign. Of those who registered, 94% actually exercised their vote and 6% opted not to do so.

5.6 RESEARCH FINDINGS FROM LOCAL ELECTIONS JUNE 2004

Research commissioned by the Immigrant Council of Ireland (ICI) and published in 2008 into the integration experiences of four national groups in Ireland yield interesting findings⁵.

50% of Nigerians were registered to vote as compared with 10% – 20% of the other three national groupings - Chinese, Indian, and Lithuanian.

As to the reasons why, 70% of Indians said they did not know that they could as compared with 30% of Chinese and Nigerian.

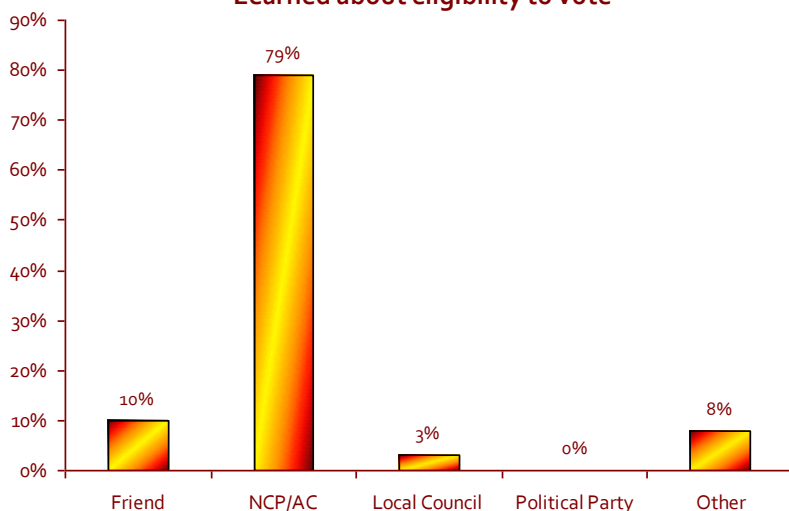
60% of the Lithuanians surveyed indicated that they were not interested in voting.

40% of Nigerians, one in every 10 Indians and one fifth of Lithuanians exercised their vote in the June 2004 elections.

5.7 ENCOURAGING MIGRANT LED CAMPAIGNS

While no attempt is made to directly compare these results and it is too early to draw definitive conclusions about participation in the 2009 elections, early indications are that registration, voting and participation rates were higher than 2004. The ICI concluded that awareness levels about voting rights was not high and recommended that resources be made available to support for information campaigns and voter registration drives. Their report recommended that *“Much of this work might be most effectively carried out by the community and voluntary sector, notably by migrant-led media and organisations that know how to target their audiences.”*

Figure 8
Learned about eligibility to vote



79% of those surveyed learned of their eligibility to vote as a result of the campaign, while 10% found out from a friend and 3% from their local council.

⁵ Getting On: From Migration to Integration - Chinese, Indian, Lithuanian and Nigerian Migrants' Experiences in Ireland (Feldman, Gilmartin, Loyal, Migge) MCRI 2008 Prepared for the Immigrant Council of Ireland

5.8 ENSURING EFFECTIVE CAMPAIGNS

The level of activity was certainly greater than that which preceded the 2004 elections.

Political parties were far more engaged in 2009 than in 2004 with immigrant communities – as both voters and candidates.

A number of local authorities provided financial and other supports to ethnic minority led organisations to conduct voter education and registration campaigns.

Certainly the experience of the NCP/AC campaign bears out the ICI claim that the most effective work will be carried out by organisations led by members of their communities.

“Much of this work might be most effectively carried out by the community and voluntary sector, notably by migrant-led media and organisations that know how to target their audiences.”

5.9 PARTICIPANTS’ EXPERIENCE OF THE CAMPAIGN AND UNDERSTANDING OF IRELAND’S POLITICAL SYSTEM

Over 80% of those surveyed had participated in at least one event during the campaign and three quarters of these indicated that they had found the experience interesting.

90% felt they had “learned a great deal” and when asked how they would rate their understanding of the Irish political system, 50% of respondents reported that it was limited; over one third felt they had a greater understanding following their participation in the campaign and over 10% believed they had no understanding.

Half of the respondents found the most helpful element of the event was the

explanation of how to vote and one third reported that the most helpful element was the Q&A session.

5.10 DESIRE TO ENGAGE IN POLITICAL AND CIVIC LIFE

Interest in engaging with the political process is not just limited to exercising the vote.

The survey results reveal that just under half of those who registered and voted also encouraged family and friends to do the same.

The results obtained when respondents were asked their interest in more active citizenship are also interesting.

71% of those surveyed affirmed that are “interested in influencing how decisions are made in Ireland” and indicated their desire to “get more involved in civic and political life”.

Just under a quarter reported that while they are “happy to cast their vote on election day”, they do not “want any further involvement” 5% of respondents indicated that they “do not see any point in getting involved in Irish civic or political life.”

5.10 FACTORS INFLUENCING HIGH LEVELS OF MOTIVATION TO ENGAGE

A number of factors influence the high levels of motivation to engage with civil and political life.

- One is the desire to build a better life and to engage with the people and processes governing rights and entitlements. NCP and the Africa Centre are among the leading organisations over the past five years that are mobilising immigrant communities into articulating the needs and wishes of their communities and becoming agents of change within Irish society.
- To a greater extent than heretofore, such communities are also becoming aware of the strength they may leverage as they engage as active citizens. This is also becoming clearer to political parties and to the wider public.
- The desire to create a better future for their children is a huge motivational factor for many parents. To ensure their children will grow up in a society where they

have rights and entitlements equal to those available to the children of others will require major change in the way in which decisions are made and resources deployed in Irish society.

- An additional factor revealed in the survey is the number of voters who found themselves eligible and able to vote for the first time. One quarter of respondents exercised a vote for the first time in their lives and almost 60% voted for the first time in Ireland.

71% of those surveyed affirmed that are “interested in influencing how decisions are made in Ireland” and indicated their desire to “get more involved in civic and political life”.

5.12 IN THEIR OWN WORDS

Again and again, interviews with those who worked on the campaign revealed how surprised many immigrants were to find that they had a right to vote and this was particularly true for those who have not as yet obtained residency rights. In addition, for some it was their first time to witness an election campaign conducted without resort to threats or violence. The following is a selection of comments from interviewees in their own words:

- *“For me, the whole campaign was a real eye opener – I have learned that this right to vote – this is real power that I have and I do not intend to waste it”*

Ghanaian voter

- *“I found the question and answer session brilliant – for me it was great to hear people freely express their opinion.”*

Congolese voter

“I no interest in politics –but at work they were talking about the local election - I went to the meeting in the Teacher’s Club and they were so enthusiastic – talking about the power we had and that we should use it. So I registered to vote and I did vote this time – I don’t know – maybe politics will become different here for me”

Lithuanian voter

- *“I found it really great to be able to encourage people – use your vote – your vote will count – it will not disappear somewhere! Your vote is meaningless in Zimbabwe”*

Zimbabwean voter

- *“I rang my sister straightaway to tell her – I have a vote here in Ireland – a young man from Nigeria has come to my door to tell me I have a vote! We need to do this back home – this is a good thing – I feel that I am being*

trusted by the Irish people – I was so happy to vote!

South African voter

- *“I was so surprised to find out I could vote – they have not decided if I can stay or not. It meant so much to me to cast my vote – I enjoyed finding out about the different parties and candidates. If I can stay, I would like to get involved more.”*

Sudanese voter

- *“Going out to vote can be such a problem back home – there is so much fear and violence. This is the first time I have ever used my vote – it was a good experience.”*

Nigerian voter

- *“I have no interest in politics –but at work they were talking about the local election - I went to the meeting in the Teacher’s Club and they were so enthusiastic – talking about the power we had and that we should use it. So I registered to vote and I did vote this time – I don’t know – maybe politics will become different here for me”*

Lithuanian voter

“I found the question and answer session brilliant – for me it was great to hear people freely express their opinion.”

Congolese voter



Diaspora Women’s Initiative, Afro-Irish Kids and members of the Lithuanian community at the Dublin north inner city “Meet the Candidate” meeting in May 2009

CAMPAIGN AIM 3

TO CREATE AWARENESS
OF AND COMMITMENT TO
PRIORITY ISSUES FOR
IMMIGRANTS IN IRELAND
AMONG CANDIDATES IN
THE LOCAL ELECTIONS

- Stressing party policies and characteristics which are imagined to be attractive to immigrant voters
- However, the recording and management of membership data does not allow parties to gain insights into the ethnic backgrounds of their members. The main tool currently used is the use of surnames to gauge nationality, which is a crude measure in 2009.

While this aim is very important from the point of view of both NCP and the Africa Centre, it is difficult to arrive at an accurate assessment.

The members of the electorate in any election are of immense interest to every candidate in the run up to the election at least, however once the election is over, the interest frequently wanes.

This report will examine two aspects of increasing political awareness of the needs and wishes of new communities:

- Immigrant candidates and the support of political parties
- Political parties' engagement with immigrant voters

5.13 IMMIGRANT CANDIDATES JUNE 2004

In the local elections in June 2004, six immigrant candidates stood for election on an independent platform. Two were elected – one onto each of Portlaoise and Ennis Town Councils. None of the political parties fielded any immigrant candidates.

5.14 POLITICAL PARTIES' ENGAGEMENT WITH IMMIGRANT VOTERS

Political parties have taken a number of actions to attract and engage with immigrant voters including:

- Appointing specialist officers to undertake outreach work and build relationships
- Engaging directly with community leaders and representative groups
- Ensuring information is available in a number of languages



Junyu Wang, Overseas Chinese Organisation at "Meet the Candidate" meeting in Dublin's north inner city, May 2009

IMMIGRANT CANDIDATES

LOCAL ELECTIONS JUNE 2009

6.1 IMMIGRANT CANDIDATES JUNE 2009

The competition in the June 2009 local election was for 1,627 seats divided across 268 electoral areas which are clustered into 4 categories as follows:

- 75 Town Councils
- 29 County Councils⁶
- City Councils⁷
- Borough Councils⁸

Research undertaken by the MCRI in UCD in 2004, 2007 and again in 2009 indicates that political parties have significantly increased their interest and actions to attract immigrant voters and to field candidates from immigrant communities.

In the June 2009 elections, a total of 45 immigrant candidates stood for election, 10 of whom were Fianna Fáil candidates; 8 stood for each of Fine Gael and the Green Party, 4 were Labour and 15 stood on independent platforms. *Figure 9* illustrates the breakdown.

Of these 45, four were elected:

- Cllr Rotimi Adebari (Independent) from Nigeria retained his seat on Portlaoise Town Council and also won a seat on Laois Co. Council.
- Cllr Jan Rotte (Labour) from the Netherlands retained his seat on Lismore Town Council

- Kristina Jankaitiene (Green Party) from Lithuania was elected to the Carrickmacross Town Council
- Anna Rooney (Fianna Fáil) from Georgia was elected to Monaghan County Council

6.2 PROVENANCE OF CANDIDATES

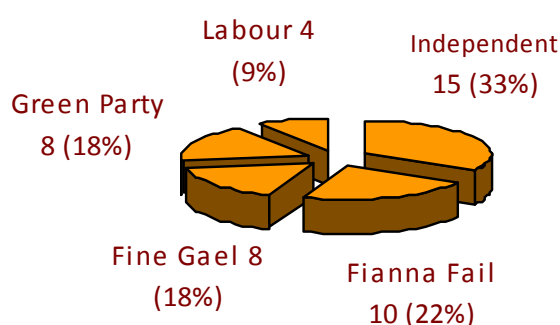
Over 60% of the candidates came from two countries – 17 from Nigeria and 9 from Poland. Three came from each of India and Pakistan and 2 from each of Latvia, Lithuania and Russia. Finally, one candidate came from each of Colombia; the Democratic Republic of Congo; Moldova; the Netherlands; South Africa; the United States and Zimbabwe. The country and regional spread are represented in *Figures 10 & 11*.

6.3 WHERE CANDIDATES STOOD
The 45 candidates competed for seats in 30 local authorities – that is just over a quarter of the total 114.

Immigrant candidates stood in 60% of city councils' elections; 38% of county councils' elections and in one fifth of the town and borough councils' elections around the country.

Figure 12 provides a detailed account of where all candidates stood for election.

Figure 9
Candidates and their parties



⁶ 24 counties plus 2 in Tipperary and 3 in Dublin

⁷ Dublin, Cork, Galway, Limerick, Waterford

⁸ Clonmel, Drogheda, Kilkenny, Sligo and Wexford

Figure 10
Provenance of candidates - by country

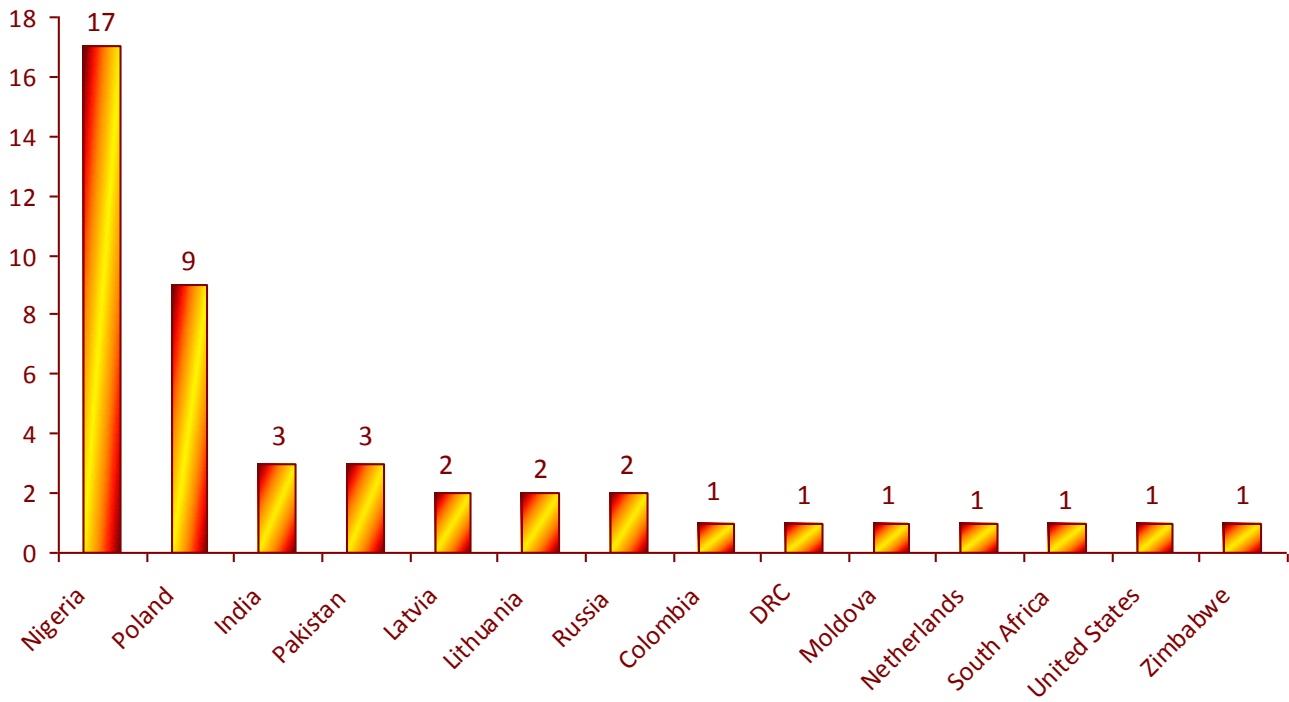


Figure 11
Provenance of candidates - by region

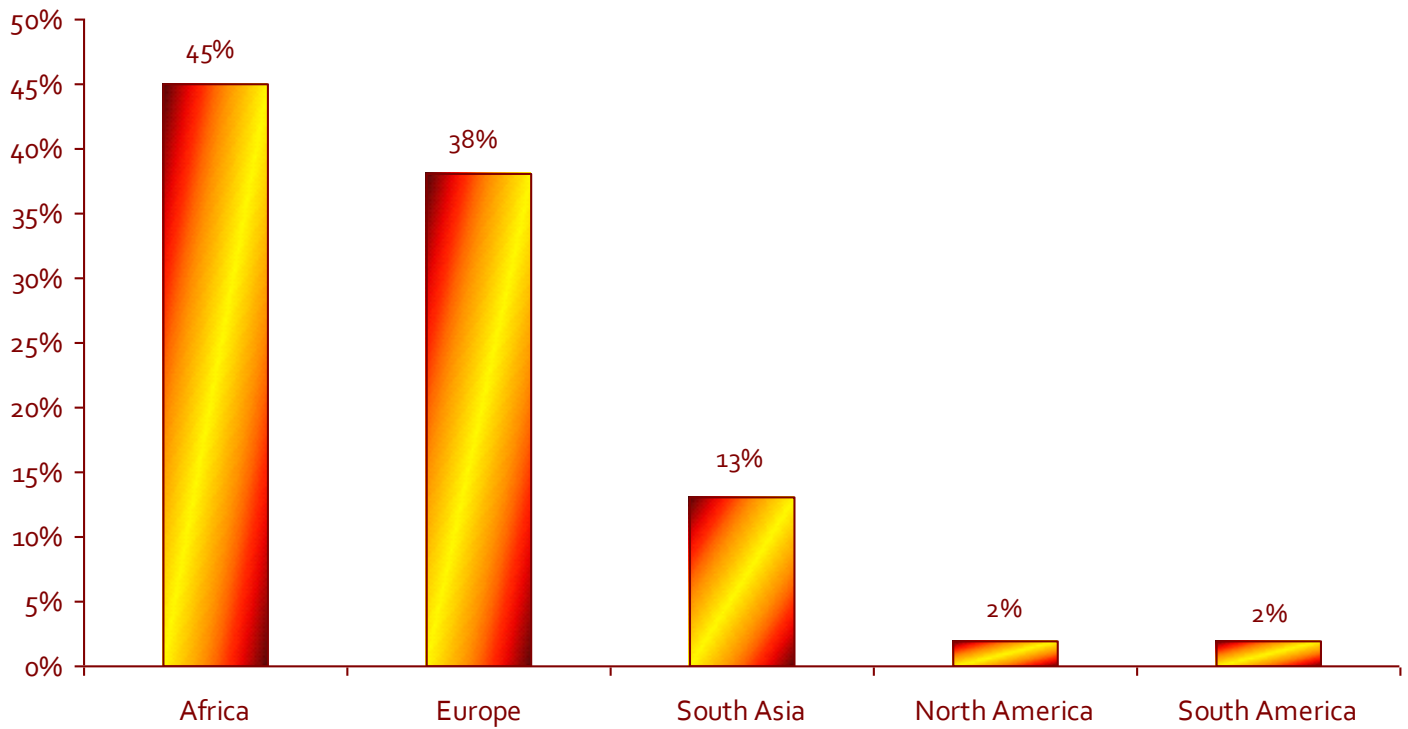


FIGURE 12

WHERE CANDIDATES STOOD FOR ELECTION

NAME	PARTY	ELECTORAL WARD	COUNCIL	NAME	PARTY	ELECTORAL WARD	COUNCIL
Ala Olsevskia	FF	Portlaoise	Portlaoise TC	Paul Osikoya	GP	Tuam	Tuam TC
Anna Banko	FF	Limerick City South	Limerick CC	Philips Femi Obimah	GP	Mullingar	Mullingar TC
Anna Michalska	FF	Kilkenny City	Kilkenny CC	Tendai Madondo	GP	Tallaght South	South Dublin Co. Co.
Anna Rooney	FF	Clones	Monaghan Co. Co.	Yinka Dixon Oludaiye	GP	Drogheda East	Louth Co. Co.
Idowu Sulyman - Olafimihan	FF	Mulhuddart	Fingal Co. Co.	Baby Pereppadan	I	Tallaght South	South Dublin Co. Co.
Ina Nemirskaite	FF	Carrickmacross	Carrickmacross TC	Chinwe Obadeyi	I	Ennis	Ennis TC
Katarzyna Gaborec	FF	Mullingar	Mullingar TC	Eddie Kimpwene	I	Castlebar	Castlebar TC
Shaheen Ahmed	FF	Lucan	South Dublin Co. Co.	Festus P. Asemota	I	Bandon	Cork Co Co.
Stella Oladapo	FF	Letterkenny	Letterkenny TC	Frances Soney-Ituen	I	Athy	Athy TC
Wojciech Wisniewski	FF	Shannon	Shannon TC	Gbemi Shogunle	I	Clondalkin	South Dublin Co. Co.
Adeola Ogunsina	FG	Mulhuddart	Fingal Co. Co.	Ignatius Iggy Okafor	I	Mulhuddart	Fingal Co. Co.
Agnieszka Faltyn	FG	Templemore	Templemore TC	Lech Szczecinski	I	South West Inner City	Dublin CC
Benedicta Attoh	FG	Dundalk South	Louth Co. Co.	Patrick Maphoso Tathego	I	Dublin Inner City	Dublin CC
Joanne Crowley	FG	Clonakilty Town Council	Clonakilty TC	Rashid Butt	I	Mullingar West	Mullingar TC & Westmeath Co. Co.
Michael A. Phillips	FG	Letterkenny	Letterkenny TC	Rotimi Adebari	I	Portlaoise	Portlaoise TC & Laois Co. Co.
Okey Williams Kalu	FG	Castlebar	Castlebar TC	Senthil Ram Ramasamy	I	Waterford North & South	Waterford CC
Tomasz Askuntowicz	FG	Tullamore	Tullamore TC	Sheikh M Ahmed	I	Waterford East	Waterford CC
Vilma Mocevicene	FG	Balbriggan	Balbriggan TC	Taiwo Matthew	I	Ennis	Ennis TC
Alex Peter Ivanov	GP	Baileborough	Cavan Co. Co. & Coothill TC	Zahid Hussain	I	Castleknock	Fingal Co. Co.
George Enyoazu	GP	Dundalk West	Dundalk TC	Anna Kulikowska	L	Shannon	Shannon TC
John Hardt	GP	Kildare	Kildare Co. Co.	Elena Secas	L	Castleconnell	Limerick Co. Co.
Kristina Jankaitiene	GP	Carrickmacross	Carrickmacross TC	Jan Rotte	L	Lismore	Lismore TC
				Jose Ospina	L	Bantry	Cork Co. Co.

FIGURE 13
CANDIDATES PERFORMANCE IN THE ELECTION

NAME	PARTY	NO. OF 1ST PREFERENCE VOTES (% OF TOTAL VOTE)	% QUOTA	NO. OF SEATS	NO. OF CANDIDATES	RANK
Jan Rotte ***	L	77 (9%)	94%	9	12	8/9
Anna Rooney ***	FF	110 (9%)	90%	9	13	9/9
Jose Ospina	L	390 (3.2%)	81%	5	13	10/13
Kristina Jankaitiene ***	GP	202 (7.8%)	79%	9	18	9/9
Rotimi Adebari ***	I	649 (7.8%)	62%	7	16	5/11
Elena Secas	L	1,045 (7.8%)	62%	7	12	8/12
Tomasz Askuntowicz	FG	310 (6.1%)	62%	9	16	11/16
Katarzyna Gaborec	FF	289 (5.5%)	55%	9	22	11/22
Taiwo Matthew	I	378 (4.9%)	49%	9	16	11/16
Agnieszka Faltyn	FG	70 (4.8%)	48%	9	17	11/17
Anna Michalska	FF	311 (3.6%)	47%	12	21	16/21
Adeola Ogunsina	FG	965 (7.3%)	44%	5	12	7/12
George Enyoazu	GP	406 (8.2%)	41%	4	11	5/11
Paul Osikoya	GP	123 (3.7%)	37%	9	15	11/15
Benedicta Atttoh	FG	586 (5%)	36%	6	11	8/11
Baby Pereppadan	I	799 (5.2%)	32%	5	12	7/12
Okey Williams Kalu	FG	150 (3%)	31%	9	16	13/16
Michael Abiola Phillips	FG	193 (3%)	31%	9	21	14/21
Ina Nemirskaitė	FF	76 (3%)	30%	9	18	13/18
Frances Soney-Ituen	I	102 (3%)	30%	9	18	18/18
Idowu Sulymman-Olafimihan	FF	611 (4.6%)	28%	5	12	10/12
Wojciech Wisniewski	FF	105 (2.8%)	28%	9	13	11/13
Tendai Madondo	GP	636 (4.2%)	25%	5	12	10/12
Alex Peter Ivanov	GP	294 (2.9%)	23%	7	13	13/13
Ignatius Iggy Okafor	I	464 (3.5%)	21%	5	12	11/12
Yinka Dixon Oludaiye	GP	261 (2.5%)	18%	6	11	10/11
Chinwe Obadeyi	I	140 (1.8%)	18%	9	16	14/16
Shaheen Ahmed	FF	448 (2.9%)	17%	5	13	13/13
John Hardt	GP	367 (2.3%)	16%	6	13	12/13
Rashid Butt	I	185 (2.5%)	15%	5	11	11/11
Rashid Butt	I	77 (1.5%)	15%	9	22	18/22
Sheikh M Ahmed	I	129 (1.95%)	14%	6	15	14/15
Anna Kulikowska	L	50 (1.3%)	13%	9	13	12/13
Ala Olsevska	FF	59 (1.3%)	13%	9	17	17/17
Vilma Moceviciene	FG	57 (1.2%)	12%	9	17	17/17
Eddie Kimpwene	I	53 (1%)	10%	9	16	16/16
Festus Peters Asemota	I	263 (2%)	9%	3	7	7/7
Patrick Maphoso Tatlhogo	I	154 (1.3%)	8%	6	14	13/14
Philips Femi Obimah	GP	40 (0.8%)	8%	9	22	21/22
Gbemi Shogunle	I	151 (1%)	7%	6	15	15/15
Anna Banko	FF	66 (1%)	6%	7	19	18/19
Stella Oladapo	FF	40 (0.6%)	6%	9	21	21/21
Zahid Hussain	I	136 (1%)	5%	4	8	8/8
Senthil RamRamasamy	I	23 (0.5%)	3%	4	9	9/9
Lech Szczecinski	I	55 (1%)	3%	4	10	10/10
Senthil RamRamasamy	I	12 (0.4%)	2%	5	11	11/11
Joanne Crowley	FG	Information not available				

6.4 HOW CANDIDATES PERFORMED

Of the 45 candidates who stood for election, four were elected. 17% or 11 candidates achieved over 50% of the quota, with four of these achieving over 75%. Just over one quarter of the candidates polled between 30%-50% of the quota and almost half of them were over 80% short of the quota while a quarter were 90% short.

6.5 PAVING THE WAY FOR A MORE INCLUSIVE FUTURE

Although the results of the elections in June 2009 – given the number of immigrant candidates who stood – may not seem impressive, the election still saw a greater emphasis on issues of interest to immigrants and the potential of immigrants' voting power than ever before. The candidates themselves, the political parties and campaign teams had the opportunity to learn a great deal from the June 2009 elections which can be put to the service of future elections.

The 2009 research report by Fanning *et al* reported that parties need to “*listen to and learn from their immigrant and ethnic minority community members*” and “*‘top-down’ party responses on political integration often seemed abstract*” The report also recommended that “*political parties, especially the larger ones, need to put in place schemes for mentoring immigrant members.*”

RECOMMENDATIONS

NCP & AFRICA CENTRE

AUTHENTICATION OF APPLICATIONS FOR THE SUPPLEMENTARY REGISTER

RATIONALE

Once the deadline for inclusion on the main register of electors has closed, then voters apply to be placed on the supplementary register.

Their registration forms need to be authenticated by a member of An Garda Síochána.

For some immigrants – especially those more recently arrived; entering a Garda station is an intimidating prospect. To ensure this did not prohibit immigrants from registering to vote, NCP & Africa Centre invited members of the force to be present at public meetings to authenticate registration forms.

Although this took place in “neutral places” and not in a Garda station, their experiences and associations with police forces elsewhere led to feelings of discomfort and uneasiness.

RECOMMENDATION

Commence campaigns much earlier ensuring that the vast majority of registrations take place in time for inclusion on the main register of electors.

AN GARDA SÍOCHÁNA & THE DEPARTMENT OF THE ENVIRONMENT, HERITAGE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

MEANS OF IDENTIFICATION

RATIONALE

There was confusion about documents which constituted means of identification when registering to vote and at polling stations when voters arrived to cast their vote.

The Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government list the following as acceptable

- Passport
- Driving licence
- Employee identity card
- Student identity card with a photograph and issued by an educational institution
- Travel document containing name and photograph
- Bank or Savings or Credit Union book containing address in constituency

It also lists the following as acceptable for local elections only:

- Temporary Residence Certificate card
- Garda National Immigration Bureau card

Finally, it lists a number of documents that are acceptable provided they are accompanied by a further document verifying the address of the voter in the constituency:

- Cheque book
- Cheque card
- Credit card
- Birth certificate
- Marriage certificate⁹

Asylum seekers and those who have been granted refugee status often have either no or minimum paperwork. However, all refugees will have a GNIB card but this and other forms of ID were refused in a considerable number of cases, although they are specifically mentioned in the Department’s literature.

The acceptability of forms of identification varied from station to station and from Garda to Garda – there did not seem to be a “corporate” approach.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Provide each Garda with a wallet sized card enumerating the forms of identity acceptable for the purposes of registering and voting. Provide specific training for Gardai involved with registering immigrant voters, especially asylum seekers and refugees.

Provide specific training for those working at polling stations and a full and accurate list of acceptable forms of identification for immigrants.

LOCAL AUTHORITIES – FRANCHISE SECTIONS

FLEXIBILITY IN REGISTERING VOTERS FROM DIRECT PROVISION ACCOMMODATION CENTRES

RATIONALE

It is very difficult for those living in direct provision accommodation centres to take all the necessary steps to register to vote.

For this reason, NCP and Africa Centre arranged for the occupants from a number of centres to attend public meetings and at the same time, to register.

These registration forms were then delivered to the franchise sections of the relevant local authority for inclusion on the register of electors.

⁹ www.environ.ie

In a number of cases, the staff did not include them in the register, stating that they did not accept bulk registrations and that each one would need to be submitted individually.

RECOMMENDATION

Provide for the particular circumstances of those living in direct provision accommodation centres.

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE, EQUALITY & LAW REFORM AND DIRECT PROVISION ACCOMMODATION CENTRES

RESTRICTED ACCESS

RATIONALE

NCP and Africa Centre staff and volunteers found it very difficult to gain entry to direct provision accommodation centres.

They were informed that the centres had received instructions from the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform prohibiting political activity or canvassing.

RECOMMENDATION

Ensure that such a restriction is removed.

POLITICAL PARTIES

SUPPORTING CANDIDATES

RATIONALE

Although 45 immigrant candidates stood for election, only four of them won seats.

Just 17% or 11 candidates achieved over 50% of the quota, 25% won between 30%-50% of the quota and almost half of them were over 80% short of the quota while a quarter were 90% short.

To be elected in Ireland requires a significant level of involvement with a local community and a public profile.

RECOMMENDATION

Build relationships and commence campaigns earlier, involving candidates at a local level and supporting them to build bridges into their communities.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1

VOTER EDUCATION CAMPAIGN QUESTIONNAIRE

APPENDIX 2

VOTER EDUCATION CAMPAIGN PRESS RELEASE



OUR VOTE CAN MAKE A
DIFFERENCE
VOTER EDUCATION CAMPAIGN

Before the nationwide local elections in June, the NCP and Africa Centre led a campaign to encourage as many immigrants as possible to use their vote.

We would like to know if our campaign was helpful and in what ways we can improve future campaigns. We need your help to do this.

Thank you for taking a few moments to complete this survey. We appreciate your honest feedback and any thoughts you have to help us improve future campaigns are very welcome.

Finally, please do not write your name on the sheet – this survey does not require you to reveal your identity.

{1}
I found out that I was eligible to vote from

- ☐ A friend
- ☐ NCP/AC campaign
- ☐ Local council
- ☐ Political party
- ☐ Other

{2}
Please tick the box that applies to you:

- ☐ I registered to vote during the NCP/AC campaign
- ☐ I have been registered to vote in Ireland for a few years

{3}
I found the registration process

- ☐ Very simple and straightforward
- ☐ A bit difficult – I needed some help
- ☐ Very difficult

{4}
Please tick the box that applies to you:

- ☐ On 5 June, I voted for the first time in my life
- ☐ On 5 June I voted for the first time in Ireland
- ☐ I have voted in elections before in Ireland and in my own country

{5}
Please tick the box that applies to you

- ☐ I registered and voted myself
- ☐ I registered and voted myself and I encouraged family and friends to register and vote also
- ☐ I did not vote - politics makes no difference to my life

{6}
Did you attend an NCP/AC event during the campaign?

- ☐ Yes ☐ No

{7}
I found the NCP/AC event I attended

- ☐ Very interesting
- ☐ Some parts were interesting
- ☐ Not interesting

{8}
I learned

- ☐ A great deal
- ☐ A little bit
- ☐ Nothing

{9}
The most valuable part of the event for me was

- ☐ The explanations of how to vote
- ☐ The candidates' talks
- ☐ The question & answer session
- ☐ The opportunity to meet with other people

{10}
Please tick the box that applies to you:

- ☐ I now have a much greater understanding of the Irish political system
- ☐ I have a limited understanding of the Irish political system
- ☐ I have no understanding of the Irish political system

{11}
Please tick the box that applies to you:

- ☐ I am interested in influencing how decisions are made in Ireland and I want to get more involved in civic and political life
- ☐ I am happy to cast my vote on election day but I do not want any further involvement
- ☐ I do not see any point in getting involved in Irish civic or political life

{12}
For future campaigns, I would recommend that NCP & AC:

- ☐ Run a similar campaign – I was satisfied with it
- ☐ Change some aspects and add in other activities – these are my suggestions: - - - - -

PRESS RELEASE PRESS RELEASE PRESS RELEASE

EMBARGO UNTIL: 12 MIDNIGHT SUNDAY 2ND NOVEMBER 2008

TENS OF THOUSANDS FROM ETHNIC COMMUNITIES CALLED ON TO REGISTER TO VOTE

Tens of thousands of people from ethnic minority communities are being encouraged to register to vote in a new campaign launched today. (Monday 3rd November 2008). Organised by the Africa Centre and New Community Partnership (NCP) the voter registration initiative is part of a wider campaign which includes voter education and a call to participate in 2009 local elections.

With ethnic minority communities making up 10% of the population their potential as a political force is clear. The new campaign ***Our Vote Can Make a Difference*** aims are to:

- Get at least 50,000 people from ethnic minority communities on the voters' register
- Provide correct and clear information on their voters' rights through posters, leaflets and public information sessions nationwide.
- Link with local, city and town councils, trade unions, employers, third level institutions

The Campaign which is divided into two phases will witness a massive voter registration drive nationwide combined with training workshops on civic participation and the electoral system from November 2008 - February 2009. The second phase which is branded ***Get Out To Vote*** will run from March 2009 until the local elections.

The campaign is relevant to people who are:

- living in the country for six month before 25th February 2009 as a resident, an asylum seeker, a migrant worker or foreign student and;
- 18 years or over on 25th February 2009

"Casting a ballot is more than voicing your opinion; it's a way to participate in society", according to Eric Yao Co-ordinator of the Africa Centre. "In June 2009, immigrant voters will show their political power and demonstrate to our elected officials and political leaders that they are politically engaged and prepared to fight for their rights and the dignity of their communities", said Issah Huseini, National Co-ordinator of NCP."

The *Our Vote Can Make a Difference* campaign is supported by The Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust and St. Stephen's Green Trust in collaboration with local authorities around the country.

Note to editors: The campaign launch takes place:

- at **10.30 AM**
- on **Monday 3rd November 2008 at the Africa Centre, 9c Abbey Street Lower, (Methodist Church Building), Dublin 1**

NOTES

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