

**New Communities Partnership**

**Action Plan 2006-2007**



**Supported by the  
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## **Table of Contents**

- 1. Introduction**
- 2. New Communities Partnership (NCP)**
- 3. Action Plan April 2006 to December 2007**
  - 3.1. Strategic Aim One: Build the Organisational Capacity of the NCP
  - 3.2. Strategic Aim Two: Build the Capacity of the NCP Membership
  - 3.3. Strategic Aim Three: Build the Policy Capacity of the NCP
- 4. Strategy Implementation**

## **1. Introduction**

The New Communities Partnership (NCP) is a national network of over twenty five Ethnic Minority groups who have come together to support their communities through a strategic alliance with other ethnic groups.

The aim of the NCP is that Ethnic Minority organisations and community leaders would work together to address the underlying causes of the difficulties new communities in Ireland are facing. Challenges such as; racism and discrimination; unemployment and access to employment; poor housing and accommodation; and access to public services;

Community activists involved in the NCP have identified a number of barriers which slow the pace of change and the realisation of a healthy intercultural society in Ireland. Language and culture barriers; racism and discrimination; access to education and recognition of qualifications; the slow pace of institutional change; and a lack of state investment in helping public services accommodate diversity are among the factors which hinder the development of Ireland as a welcoming and inclusive society for new communities. The NCP wishes to engage positively and in partnership with policy makers and civil society towards building a 'more inclusive and intercultural Ireland'

The NCP, which was initiated by Cairde in partnership with a number of minority ethnic led community groups in 2004, is presently resourced by Cairde with office space, telephone and supports. This document sets out an Action Plan for the NCP for the Period April 2006 until Dec 2007 which will see the NCP emerge as an independent ethnic minority community infrastructure.

## **2. New Communities Partnership (NCP)**

New Communities Partnership (NCP), which was publicly launched in April 2005, is presently structured as a central organising committee with one member from each member group in attendance. The organising committee meets every six to eight weeks as a decision making body. As with other nascent organisations much of the work of the past twelve months has focussed on agreeing organisational procedures and developing the structure of the NCP.

The period ahead will continue to focus on organisational development which will be accelerated due to the availability of funding for; the recruitment of staff; leadership training; and office overheads. In addition to developing the capacity of the NCP as a national network the NCP has prioritised two further areas for the year ahead, 1) Securing funding, capacity building and other resources for NCP member organisations and 2) developing the policy capacity of the NCP.

The NCP are aware that to contribute to the building of a more inclusive and tolerant society they must be able to articulate the needs of their communities in a way that is constructive. To do this they must build on their existing leadership and community organising capacity and their understanding of how systems in Ireland work; they must develop relationships with policy makers and service planners; and they must engage and mobilise the energy of their own communities towards solving the difficulties they experience.

NCP member groups also aim to pool costs recognising that by working together significant savings could be made by sharing resources. To this end the NCP and some member groups are presently operating from one centre, costs such as; rent; audit and accountancy; insurance; admin and overheads are pooled. This also has the benefit of ensuring when additional funding resources are acquired they will go directly to community activities. For NCP groups based in other Irish cities (Limerick, Cork and Galway) a similar model of pooling resources will be attempted.

NCP members recognise that community organising can take some time; they are also aware that many in their communities have become frustrated or mistrustful of community organising due to the slow pace of change or past experience of failure. For many community members trust and confidence in community structures such as the NCP will be built on receiving practical assistance with day to day difficulties.

There is some frustration among NCP member groups that while there are many well resourced Irish NGO's working with Ethnic Minority communities none are managed and staffed by community members and in general immigrant led organisations are voluntary and unfunded. A consequence of this is that where there is dialogue in regard to the needs of ethnic minority communities at a policy or service level it is more often non-ethnic minority community members representing black and ethnic minority communities.

The NCP aims to address this over the coming months and years by building the leadership capacity of ethnic minority communities. The NCP will seek to work in collaboration with other organisations active in the migration sector; and will seek to learn from the experience of Irish groups and take a quantum leap in their development so that their communities are not waiting many years to achieve economic and social conditions comparative to the indigenous Irish community.

### **3. Action Plan April 2006 to December 2007.**

In April 2006 the steering group of the NCP and representatives of Cairde worked with an external consultant to develop an Action Plan for the NCP. In developing the action plan it was recognised that the environmental context for

the plan was largely determined by:

- I. Cairde/NCP commitments entered into to year end 2007 with the Reception and Integration Agency under funding received through the European Refugee Fund.
- II. The desire of the NCP membership and Cairde that leadership structures emerge within the NCP.
- III. The desire within the NCP and Cairde that the NCP become independent of Cairde within a manageable timeframe, but by December 2007 at the latest, which wouldn't undermine the developments in the NCP to date.

### **Key Strategic Aims**

The key strategic Aims for the NCP for the period 2006- 2007 are:

- 3.1. Strategic Aim One: Build the Organisational Capacity of the NCP
- 3.2. Strategic Aim Two: Build the Capacity of the NCP Membership
- 3.3. Strategic Aim Three: Build the Policy Capacity of the NCP

3.1. Strategic Aim One: Build the Organisational Capacity of the NCP

By December 2007 it is envisaged that the NCP will be an independent National Network for Ethnic community organisations. To achieve this aim it will be necessary to build the organisational capacity of the NCP. Objectives to achieve this task will include:

#### ***Objective 1: Establishing an Interim Steering Committee.***

A key objective of the NCP is to establish itself as an independent national network for Ethnic Minority Organisations. To become independent the NCP will have to establish agreed leadership structures and management processes.

- I. As an interim measure the NCP will elect a steering committee of not less than eight members and not more than twelve.
- II. There will be a minimum of three women represented on the committee. Members of the steering committee must be drawn from active community organisations within the NCP; membership of the steering committee is not open to individuals who are not representative of an active NCP group.
- III. The steering committee will be constituted for a period of twelve months or up to the holding of the next NCP national conference; whichever comes first.
- IV. The steering committee will liaise with Cairde on issues in relation to staff recruitment and management; funding and expenditure; and planning towards the emergence of the NCP as an independent entity.

### ***Objective 2: Staff Recruitment***

- I. The NCP will recruit a full time coordinator (Dublin Based) and a regional support work (Limerick Based) to develop the work of the NCP nationally.
- II. The NCP recognise that the fundamental strength of the network will come from the capacity of its member groups to engage and remain involved. With this in mind a full time Development Worker will be recruited to support the achievement of Strategic Aim Two.
- III. The development worker will continue the capacity building work with member groups carried out by Cairde to date; they will support member groups to develop their own structure and plans; they will support member groups to identify funding streams and make funding applications; and will support member groups to identify and meet their training needs.

### ***Objective 3: Planning Towards Disengagement from Cairde.***

By December 2007 it is envisaged that the NCP will be operating independently of Cairde. To support the NCP reach this goal:

- I. By August 2006 a Steering Group will have been established.
- II. Throughout 2007 the steering committee will take an increasing level of responsibility for decision making within the NCP
- III. The NCP coordinator will work to the steering committee in an employee/ employer relationship.
- IV. The steering committee will oversee the drawing up of a three year strategic plan for the NCP to be complete by December 2007.
- V. The strategic plan will identify future strategic aims and objectives for the NCP and likely funding sources.
- VI. With Cairde's support the steering committee will attempt to secure longer term funding for the NCP by December 2007.
- VII. In mid 2007 the NCP will move to alternative premises; vacating the offices presently provided by Cairde.

#### **3.2. Strategic Aim Two: Build the Capacity of the NCP Membership**

A key objective of the NCP is to support the emergence, growth and development of ethnic minority led organisations. As a priority objective the NCP will assign significant resources to this task over the next twelve months. In a policy context the NCP will be prioritising the securing of funding and other capacity building resources for ethnic minority led organisations. In the context of its own resources the NCP has prioritised the recruitment of a development worker to work with member groups specifically.

### ***Objective 1: Provide Capacity Building and Leadership Training***

- I. Recruit Development Worker to support member organisations to build on their leadership, organisation and policy capacity.
- II. In partnership with other agencies develop a leadership training programme to be delivered to between 20 and 30 active community leaders.

***Objective 2: Build Membership and Engagement in NCP***

- I. Employ and resource a Regional Support Worker to link with groups outside of Dublin and ensure they are fully involved with NCP structures, training programmes and decision making.
- II. Convene an annual national conference of ethnic minority groups; commencing with the first in May 2006.
- III. Hold a consultation process with NCP membership and other ethnic minority stakeholders as part of the process of producing a three year strategy for the NCP by December 2007.

**3.3. Strategic Aim Three: Build the Policy Capacity of the NCP**

The NCP as a national ethnic minority community infra-structure aims to provide a mechanism through which ethnic minority communities can; dialogue and engage with policy making and service planning structures; and other civil society structures in Ireland. The NCP, over time, aims to provide a more coherent and efficient mechanism for the dissemination of information on; education; health; employment services etc to ethnic minority community organisations. To enable the above the NCP will develop its policy capacity by entering into dialogue with key policy development agencies and community development structures.

***Objective 1: Support the Call for Increased State Investment in Ethnic Minority Led Organisations.***

- I. The NCP will continue discussions with Pobal, the Reception and Integration Agency, the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform and the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs in support of the call for a specific funding line for ethnic minority led organisations.
- II. The NCP Coordinator will prioritise the issue of funding and other capacity supports for ethnic minority led groups in their discussions with policy makers, service planners and other partners.

***Objective 2: Develop links with key community development and social inclusion bodies.***

- I. The NCP Coordinator will seek to develop links and collaboration with CDP's and Partnership Companies over the coming months; initially in Dublin, Limerick, Cork, Leitrim, Galway and Monaghan.
- II. The NCP will seek to establish a working relationship with key human rights and equality bodies such as the NCCRI; Equality Authority; and the Irish Human Rights Commission.

***Objective 3: Lobby for the Implementation of Government policies which improve the lives of ethnic minority communities in Ireland.***

- I. The NCP will engage with the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform in relation to the implementation of the National Action Plan Against Racism.
- II. The NCP will seek to support the work of the Health Services Executive and other statutory bodies as they develop their Intercultural Strategies.
- III. The NCP will seek to engage with the Department of Education and Science, Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment, FAS and other relevant bodies in relation to the employment and education needs of ethnic minority communities.

## **4 Strategy Implementation**

The NCP are mindful that they will be unable to successfully deliver this Action Plan without the continued collaboration and goodwill of other actors. With this in mind the NCP will seek to work in close partnership with; other community development organisations; NGO's; Government Agencies; other ethnic minority networks and groups; and other interested parties willing to support the NCP's work.

### 4.1 Resources

Cairde/NCP have recently secured European Refugee fund grant aid through the Reception and Integration Agency which will resource the implementation of this Action Plan up to the 30th December 2007.

Cairde will seek to support the NCP to secure additional funding to enable it to continue its work beyond that point.