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# New Communities Partnership: Current Context

The New Communities Partnership (NCP) is a national network of over fifty minority ethnic-led groups in Ireland. We work together to build on our strengths and to address the underlying causes of the difficulties new communities in Ireland are facing.

The NCP emerged from collaboration between Cairde, a community development organisation and twelve minority ethnic led groups to whom Cairde was providing capacity building and other supports. In the early 2000s the groups were working in a rapidly changing context in which multi cultural Ireland was a fairly new phenomenon for everyone. They recognised that it would take time for policy makers, state institutions and ordinary citizens, including new communities themselves to adapt and change to the challenges that this context posed. However, they were also aware that there were many factors inhibiting the development of Ireland as a welcoming and inclusive society for new communities.

The NCP was formally launched by the Minister for Community Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs in 2005. Since then, it has grown to include over fifty groups representing fifty four nationalities. In 2006 the NCP received core funding under the European Refugee Fund which together with small grants from the Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust, Dublin Inner City Partnership, Paul Partnership, Citizens Information Board and Dublin City Council will maintain the NCP up to December 2007

**In 2004 the twelve groups decided that working collaboratively in partnership would greatly increase their collective capacity to address the issues faced by ethnic minority groups integrating into Irish society.**



# Building an Integrated Ireland

The importance of building an integrated Ireland is a shared agenda for everyone living on the island. This is reflected in the National Action Plan for Social Inclusion 2007 -2016 when it states "Integration is one of the most important challenges being faced by Irish society over the coming years". Experience in other countries has shown that failure to address these challenges may consequently sow the seeds of deep problems in the long run.

NCP believes that integration is about building a society that respects diversity and develops the capacity to fully accept people from different cultures. It is equally about meaningful participation in decision making and beyond to the implementation of policies. It is about equal rights for all.

NCP wants to play its part in creating such a society by engaging positively and in partnership with policy makers, service providers and civil society. We want to be the subjects rather than the objects of our own development. We have skills, abilities, capacities and wisdom which we wish to contribute as active citizens. Our members are talented people who have shown courage, strength of character, an ability to be flexible and take risks in moving to Ireland and making a new home here. We are already organised and active, albeit largely on a voluntary basis, making a valuable contribution to our own development as well as that of the towns and cities we live in. We wish to enhance and expand our current contribution to Irish society, but require additional resources to effectively do so.

To this end, much of this strategic plan details actions that relate to building a national minority ethnic community infrastructure, which will provide a mechanism for self organisation, dialogue and direct engagement with policy development and implementation, service planning and delivery locally, regionally and nationally.

While building integration is the ultimate goal of this strategic plan the consultation process that informs it highlighted all too clearly that "integration may well be a luxury for many minority ethnic communities whose challenge is much more about survival in present day Ireland" (NCP Co-ordinator)"

## Key Issues for NCP

Key issues of immediate concern to NCP members dominated the consultation process and were seen to be central to successful integration. This is no great surprise as members of minority ethnic groups were identified as vulnerable and disadvantaged in the National Action Plan Against Racism.

The issues prioritised below are interconnected, some relate to the failure to implement existing laws and policies while others pertain to the need for changes in policy. Many of the issues named here are experienced by the general population but minority ethnic communities live with additional inequalities. All are barriers to successful integration.

### The key issues facing NCP are:

- Employment
- Housing
- Education
- Direct Provision
- Women's Issues
- Intercultural Communication
- Racism and Discrimination
- Funding
- Access to Health services



# Mission, Vision and Values

The mission, vision and values of the NCP define the principles that guide us in our work.

## Mission

The mission of the NCP is to be an effective network, representing and empowering minority ethnic led groups at all levels in order to influence positive change in policies that impact on their lives.

## Vision

The NCP's vision is an intercultural and inclusive Irish society where minority ethnic groups are achieving equality in economic, social, political and cultural aspects of Irish life.

## Values

The NCP is guided by the principles and practice of community development. We wish to highlight four key values:

<b>Respect &amp; Dignity</b>	The NCP believes in the positive affirmation of the identity of our members. We respect individuals' views in an environment of tolerance and trust and believe that such respectful relationships build commitment within NCP itself. NCP is in turn accountable to its members by implementing agreed actions.
<b>Equality</b>	Ireland is a diverse society. The NCP believes in the inherent dignity and equality of all and that means equality among members of the NCP itself, between men and women, and between minority ethnic communities and the wider society.
<b>Participation</b>	The NCP believes that our members have the right to participate in the decisions which affect our communities. We believe in representing issues that are grounded in the lived experience of our communities. We work collectively, develop partnerships within and without and adopt a flexible and responsive approach to ensure this happens
<b>Empowerment</b>	The NCP believes in our own capacity to define our own needs, articulate our hopes and fears and represent ourselves locally, regionally and nationally



# Summary of Core Strategic Goals

The NCP's strategy for the next three years is defined by its four core strategic goals. These have been agreed on following extensive consultation with members and stakeholders, and collectively they present a strong statement of intent on the part of the NCP.

Each goal has an associated set of objectives and actions that will ensure the delivery of the strategy over the next three years (2008 - 2010).

1	Build the NCP as a local, regional and national representative network for minority ethnic led groups.
2	Empower minority ethnic led groups to articulate their own needs and campaign for the full realisation of their human rights
3	Be a powerful advocate on issues of concern for members
4	Work collaboratively with other NGOs and statutory agencies to build an integrated Ireland

## The Story to Date: Building Momentum

From its inception, the NCP has embraced the challenge of working collaboratively across cultures. Building understanding, trust and effective working relationships across fifty four nationalities has taken time and is an ongoing challenge. This is no small achievement, especially with so few resources. The learning from this experience has much to offer the new intercultural Ireland. NCP members have provided a web of social, emotional and practical supports for newcomers, many of whom go through a difficult experience of culture shock when first they arrive in Ireland. Meeting people from similar ethnic backgrounds initially helps with the loss of identity and resulting confusion they experience on arrival. Networking across cultures within the NCP broadens out the web of contacts and greatly facilitates integration locally and nationally.

## Evolving Management Structure and Policy Direction

A steering committee of twelve members was elected in November 2006 and has started working as the Management Board of the NCP, holding meetings every six weeks. This Management Board has given leadership to all the member groups in terms of creating a network that respects diversity and is truly intercultural.



The NCP staff, management and members actively participate in a number of key policy arenas, where they exercise leadership in advocating for the rights of their communities and the creation of an integrated Ireland. Arenas include:

- The Health Services Executive (HSE) National Intercultural Strategy Working Group
- A working group on funding for the migration sector, set up within the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform
- Main committee and sub groups of the National Consultative Committee on Racism and Interculturalism
- Anti Racism Diversity and Integration Strategy Steering group – Dublin City Council
- Social Inclusion Measures group – Dublin City Council
- Social Inclusion Measures group – Limerick County Council
- Garda North Central Forum – Dublin
- Fingal Ethnic Minority Forum
- Football Association of Ireland Intercultural Focus Group

## First Annual Conference

The first annual national conference of minority ethnic led groups was held in Croke Park, Dublin in May 2006. It was attended by over two hundred delegates, with key note speakers from statutory agencies including the Reception and Integration Agency, Irish Human Rights Commission, Dublin City Council, the Department of Community Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs and the Dublin Inner City Partnership. This conference raised the profile of the NCP with minority ethnic led groups throughout the country, policy makers and service planners from a wide range of agencies. A DVD of the event was made. Since then the Network has grown steadily and the number of requests for its voice to be heard within policy arenas has also increased significantly

## Securing Core Funding

Securing core funding under the European Refugee Fund was a milestone for the NCP and its membership. It resourced it to employ a full time national coordinator, two part time development and advocacy workers working out of offices in Dublin, Cork and Limerick. At the same time, it gave a strong message of hope to member groups who were increasingly frustrated by the lack of financial support for minority ethnic led organisations. It was and continues to be their experience that it is Irish NGO's working with and on behalf of new communities that are resourced, while their own groups are for the most part voluntary and unfunded. A further consequence of the lack of funding is the inability of minority ethnic led groups to represent their own issues at policy level.

## Outreach to Member Groups

Ongoing outreach to member groups has been a core activity of the NCP since its inception. Regular contact is maintained at a regional and national level to ensure the two way flow of information and support that is a key feature of the work of the network. Regional development has been greatly facilitated by a model of working in close collaboration with the Paul Partnership in Limerick, the Cork City Partnership in Cork and Cairde, Dublin Inner City Partnership & Dublin City Council in Dublin. These organisations have given support and practical assistance in terms of resources, office space, facilitating meetings within the network itself as well as with organisations external to it. This model of working in geographical clusters has allowed the NCP to reach out to member groups while at the same time, connect them in to the local and regional structures.



# Building Effective Working Relationships

One of the key areas of focus for the NCP has been building effective working relationships with human rights and equality bodies such as the Equality Authority, the Irish Human Rights Commission, Combat Poverty Agency, as well as with Government departments, local authorities, all of which are central to the work of the NCP. Collaborative links have been made with a number of partnership companies, NGOs, community development projects and family resource centres as well as with cultural and sporting organisations. This will continue to be a key objective for the period of the strategic plan.

## Programme Goals and Objectives

The following tables outline in details how NCP will give effect to its strategic goals. Each goal has a set of outcomes objectives, which in turn have a associated set of actions detailed for the duration of the strategy plan.

<b>Goal 1</b>	Build the NCP as a local, regional and national representative network for minority ethnic led groups.
<b>Objective 1.1</b>	Establish NCP as an independent network with regional and national structures that facilitate communication and collective action.
<b>Actions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Consolidate regional geographical clusters operating out of Dublin, Cork and Limerick</li><li>• Facilitate member groups to review the process whereby they are represented on the Steering Committee, taking on board recommendations from such a review</li><li>• Hold monthly meetings of the Steering Committee to deal with operational issues and an annual review meeting that evaluates this strategic plan, extracts the learning and prioritises actions for the next year</li><li>• Hold at least four regional and one national conference for member groups</li><li>• Design, publish and distribute promotional information in relation to the NCP and circulate widely.</li><li>• Update the website</li><li>• By the end of year 3, a fourth regional cluster will be established.</li></ul>



<b>Objective 1.2</b>	Secure sufficient resources to build an effective network.
<b>Actions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Negotiate with the City / County Councils and Local Area Partnerships to acquire sustainable premises in Dublin, Cork and Limerick</li> <li>• Employ a National Co-ordinator, an Administrator, 4 Development and Advocacy Workers (2 in Dublin and 1 each in Cork and Limerick) and C.E workers in each region.</li> <li>• Establish a recruitment process to fill vacancies and put in place employment policies, staff support and supervision.</li> <li>• Actively seek resources from funders within national and local government, the E.U. and philanthropic organisations to support core and programme costs.</li> <li>• Employ a Development and Advocacy worker to work in new regional cluster</li> </ul>
<b>Objective 1.3</b>	Reach out to all minority ethnic groups, listen and hear their concerns and ensure that the work of NCP is grounded in what member groups want. Do this regularly using a variety of ways that ensure inclusion.
<b>Actions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintain regular listening contact with individuals, member groups (on their own and within regional meetings) to ensure that the issues of concern are raised and heard within NCP and externally.</li> <li>• Link member groups with local community development projects, family resource centres, and local area partnerships to support and encourage inclusion and collective action.</li> <li>• Following the extensive listening to members, the NCP will put into effect a programme of actions that best meets the needs and leverage the strengths identified.</li> </ul>
<b>Objective 1.4</b>	Facilitate a training process that will build empowerment, trust, cooperation, teamwork and leadership within the Steering Group and within and across member groups.
<b>Actions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Secure resources independently or work in collaboration with other NGO's to provide a Management and Leadership Training Programme that is specifically designed to meet the needs of a start up organisation. This training programme will be open to paid and non paid staff of NCP, including all members of the Steering Committee.</li> <li>• Continue to identify the training needs of community activists from within the member groups and will secure resources independently or work in collaboration with other NGO's to have these needs met. Previously identified training needs in relation to the English language, community development, management committee skills, leadership, strategic planning, policy development and making funding proposals will be prioritised in year one. NCP staff will ensure that training is accredited wherever possible.</li> </ul>



# Summary of outcomes for Goal 1

- A resourced network in place with regional clusters in Cork, Limerick and Dublin
- Active membership
- Offices in Cork, Limerick and Dublin
- Staff in place supported by strong Steering Committee
- Core and programme costs funded
- Management and Leadership programme for Staff and Steering Committee Completed
- Regular regional meetings and one annual conference for member groups
- Training programmes for member groups in place
- Annual review of representative process
- Promotional material distributed widely
- Website updated

## Goal 2

Empower minority ethnic led groups to articulate their own needs and campaign for the full realisation of their human rights.

### Objective 2.1

Support the ongoing development of minority ethnic led groups within geographical regions.

### Actions

- Continue to link individuals to groups, paying particular attention to the inclusion of women. NCP staff will work with women members to identify the barriers to women's participation and to develop appropriate responses in overcoming them.
- Support the groups to develop, to analyse the issues that impact on the lives of minority ethnic communities and to develop action plans re specific issues. NCP staff will work with groups on an individual basis and in clusters to do this.
- Continue to help member groups access resources to help themselves by ensuring they have accurate information and effective local, regional and national links with relevant NGOs and potential funders.
- Continue to help integrate member groups into the local community, cultural, political, social and sporting life

<b>Objective 2.2</b>	Ensure minority ethnic groups have meaningful participation in the development, implementation and monitoring of national and regional policy and service provision.
<b>Actions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure that members of minority ethnic led groups are trained to understand the policy making process, how to convert issues of concern into policy positions, and how to communicate and lobby for their policy messages.</li> <li>• Promote and support the participation of member groups in local, regional and national policy arenas, forums, networks relevant to the work of NCP.</li> <li>• Ensure that representatives have feedback and support mechanisms to fully represent the views of NCP rather than those of individuals</li> <li>• Pay particular attention to the representation of women's issues by women, and ensure that all necessary supports are put in place to make this happen</li> <li>• Ensure regular review of the relevance and effectiveness of all such participation</li> <li>• Assist member groups to make policy submissions as appropriate</li> </ul>

<b>Objective 2.3</b>	Ensure that minority ethnic communities receive accurate information on their rights in a variety of creative media
<b>Actions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work closely with the Citizens Information Board, Pobal, Family Support Agency, the Combat Poverty Agency, The Equality Authority , Anti Poverty Networks, Amnesty. Integrating Ireland, Immigrant Council of Ireland, The Africa Centre, Aikdwa, The Minority Ethnic Health Forum, Cairde, The Migrant Rights Centre, NCCRI, CAN, The Refugee Information Centre and other relevant NGO's to ensure quality information is circulated to minority ethnic communities</li> <li>• Promote web based information by drawing the attention of member groups to useful websites</li> </ul>



# Summary of outcomes for Goal 2

- More women active within and beyond the NCP
- Barriers to women’s participation identified
- Increased capacity among member groups to analyse issues of concern and organise collectively to have them addressed
- Member groups informed about human rights and sources of funding
- Effective collaborative links established between member groups and local, regional and national structures and programmes
- A strong minority ethnic community voice in policy arenas
- Supportive feedback mechanisms in place to inform policy and support representation

Goal 3	Be a powerful advocate on issues of concern for members
Objective 3.1	Support the ongoing development of minority ethnic led groups within geographical regions.
Actions	NCP will pay particular attention to issues of employment, education, housing, health, justice and physical security, social and family welfare, identity expression and self respect



### Objective 3.2

NCP will continue to work collaboratively with other NGOs, Government Departments, Rights Based Organisations to ensure that rights are realised especially in relation to equality of treatment, opportunity and outcome.

### Actions

- Build on existing relationships with the Office of the Minister for Integration, An Garda Síochána, The HSE, Departments of Education, Justice, Equality and Law Reform and other government departments to compile and distribute accurate information on the rights of minority ethnic communities in Ireland
- Act as a bridge between the information holders and those seeking information, all the time facilitating effective direct linkages locally, regionally and nationally
- Identify information gaps and seek to fill them appropriately

### Objective 3.3

NCP will work to ensure that the denial of the rights of minority ethnic communities is researched, highlighted and used to hold duty bearers to account.

### Action

Identify a priority issue for research and collective action (to be carried out in years 2-3)

### Objective 3.4

NCP will challenge negative stereotypes and prejudice in the media and promote a more positive messaging of minority ethnic communities.

### Actions

- NCP staff will avail of media opportunities locally and nationally
- Develop a long term communications strategy and secure resources to implement it.

## Summary of outcomes for Goal 3

- NCP acknowledged as a bridge between information holders and those seeking information
- NCP acknowledged as a voice for the concerns of minority ethnic communities
- A priority issue identified for research and action in collaboration with other NGOs
- NCP communications strategy in place
- Negative images of minority ethnic communities challenged by NCP

<b>Goal 4</b>	Work collaboratively with other NGOs and statutory agencies to build an integrated Ireland
<b>Objective 4.1</b>	Map out the community, voluntary and statutory agencies that have similar values and interests in relation to building an integrated Ireland.
<b>Actions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Compile a community profile within each region.</li> <li>• Ensure member groups are familiar with the roles and responsibilities of community, voluntary and statutory organisations</li> </ul>

<b>Objective 4.2</b>	Ensure the continuity of dialogue in relation to building an integrated Ireland.
<b>Actions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reach out, consult, dialogue, collaborate and compliment actions between: At local level: with groups such as Community Development Projects, Family Resource Centres, Area Partnerships, Local VECs, City and County Development Boards and HSE structures, Sporting Bodies, Women's' Groups, Youth projects etc.</li> <li>• At national level with groups such as the Family Resource Centre Forum, The Family Support Agency, The Community Development Programme, Pobal, Planet, National Anti Poverty Networks, The Minority Ethnic Health Forum, The National Women's Council and NGOs working on behalf of minority ethnic communities to establish effective working relationships on issues of mutual concern.</li> <li>• Profile NCP as a partner not a threat, through ongoing dialogue, promotional material and programmed work.</li> <li>• Invite other groups to NCP activities and meetings locally, encouraging a two way flow of information sharing and understanding</li> <li>• Develop and support joint actions to combat racism and discrimination, promote integration and research and develop relevant policies</li> </ul>



## Summary of outcomes for Goal 4

- Community profile completed within regions and distributed to member groups
- Member groups are familiar with the community, voluntary and statutory structures and programmes that are relevant to effective integration
- Member groups are actively working in collaboration with local, regional and statutory organisations on issues of integration, especially in relation to racism and discrimination
- NGOs attend NCP events

## Looking Forward

In this strategic plan we wish to continue to build a network that is committed to and driven by its members.

NCP's strength lies in its members. We have demonstrated our ability to reach out, include and empower people from minority ethnic communities to speak for themselves with a strong voice. We manage cultural, religious and ethnic differences by building relationships of respect, dispelling fear and promoting equality. We promote a model of leadership that is facilitative, and as such continues to attract new members.

This plan outlines how we wish to build on this strength in the next three years. Our members have expectations of themselves and of us that will only be realised if we can secure core funding. This has to be our priority for year one.

NCP has also demonstrated how it can make a significant contribution to building an integrated Ireland. To date we have acted as a bridge, encouraging and supporting the meaningful participation of our members into all aspects of Irish life. This plan spells out how we wish to continue to prioritise successful integration locally, regionally and nationally. We believe that this can only happen when the social, economic, cultural and political inequalities experienced by minority ethnic communities are addressed. We do not wish to duplicate any existing organisation or structure. We wish to add value to what already exists by ensuring that "those who wear the shoe, can say where the squeeze hurts".

In this way, we will work to ensure the meaningful participation of our members.

This will require a change in policy, attitudes, behaviour and a focus on equality of outcome.





# NCP Membership by Nationality



# Group Membership

No.	Organization	City
1.	RROMA Association in Ireland	Dublin
2.	BINI UNION	Dublin
3.	Co-operative Support Services for EM	Dublin
4.	Integration of African Children in Ireland	Dublin
5.	Darfur Solidarity Group in Ireland	Dublin
6.	Wan African Network (WANET)	Dublin
7.	Integration of Nour Women in Ireland	Dublin
8.	Somali Community in Ireland	Dublin
9.	Afghan Community of Ireland	Dublin
10.	Mauritian Community in Ireland	Dublin
11.	Eritrean Community in Ireland	Dublin
12.	Overseas Chinese Organization	Dublin

No.	Organization	City
13.	Congo Lisanga	Dublin
14.	AKIDWA	Dublin
15.	Nigeria Association Network Ireland	Dublin
16.	Libyan Community	Dublin
17.	Romanian Community of Ireland	Dublin
18.	Slavanka (Russian Women's Group)	Dublin
19.	Palestinian Community	Dublin
20.	Igbo Community	Dublin
21.	Algerian Community	Dublin
22.	Hindu cultural centre Ireland	Dublin
23.	Burundian Community	Dublin
24.	Kurdish Women Group	Dublin
25.	Brong Ahafo Ne AnnuaNom-Kuo	Dublin

No.	Organization	City
26.	Association of Cameroonians in Ireland (ASCAMI) Cork Branch	Cork
27.	Association of the Ivory Coast Community in Cork	Cork
28.	Cork Somalian Community	Cork
29.	Diaspora of Togolese People in Ireland	Cork
30.	Muongano LeCheile	Cork
31.	Igbo Union Cork Chapter	Cork
32.	Cork Intercultural group	Cork
33.	Brazil in Cork	Cork
34.	Zimbabwe social group	Cork
35.	Intercultural group of Ireland	Cork
36.	Lithuanian Community	Cork
37.	Nigerian Association Cork Chapter	Cork
38.	Ghanaian Association	Cork
39.	Angola Community	Cork

No.	Organization	City
40.	Guinean Association	Limerick
41.	(GIFA) Ghana Ireland Friendship Association	Limerick
42.	Edo Union Limerick Cultural Organisation	Limerick
43.	Lady Sheila Music	Limerick
44.	Congo Business & Cultural Association Ireland	Limerick
45.	ASCALI &Co (Cameroonian Association)	Limerick
46.	Somali Association In Ireland (SAI)	Limerick
47.	Sudanese Association	Limerick
48.	IGBO Association, Limerick Branch	Limerick
49.	DIASPORA Togo (Togolese Association)	Limerick
50.	ELIKYA	Limerick