

WHAT IS INTERCULTURALISM?

The concept of interculturalism is one that sees cultural diversity as a strength that can enrich society. Interculturalism recognises that racism exists and needs to be challenged. An intercultural approach is the development of strategies, policies and practices that encourage interaction, understanding, and respect between different cultures and ethnic groups.

This concept is widely advocated by the European Commission in its policy statements and through specific programmes. Intercultural approaches are increasingly being applied to policy areas in Ireland North and South, particularly in relation to education policy.

Interculturalism is the opposite to assimilation (the absorption of minority ethnic groups into the dominant culture) and goes beyond multiculturalism which tolerates the culture of minority groups with no acknowledgement of the need to change the negative attitudes and practices of the majority population.

HOW CAN WE IMPLEMENT INTERCULTURALISM?

- Challenge attitudes
- Accept that everybody is equal in rights, values and abilities
- Prosecute racism and discrimination
- Develop policies to deal with discrimination
- Interact, collaborate and exchange with people from different cultures
- Dismantle the myths and labels attached to minority ethnic groups
- Challenge the systems which result in inequality
- Change attitudes and behaviours through education, etc.

HOW CAN WE MAKE OUR SCHOOLS AND WORK PLACES MORE INTERCULTURALLY FRIENDLY?

- Organise an intercultural lunchtime/evening event that draws on the talents of those students/colleagues from different cultures
- Organise for someone to come in and to give a talk
- Organise a debate on the theme of racism/ethnic diversity or a related theme such as immigration
- Launch a policy or a publication linked to the theme of interculturalism
- Organise an anti-racism/intercultural training session
- Link-up with local community groups to organise an event

- Issue a press release to mark the event and to highlight some of the challenges, myths and misinformation about groups such as Asylum Seekers, Migrant Workers or Travellers
- Display posters and general information in the school or work place so as to show your support for interculturalism and to reflect and promote diversity

RESOURCES AND WEBSITES

www.nccri.ie

Website of the National Consultative Committee on Racism and Interculturalism, with a wide range of background information, this activity pack and its updates

www.equalityni.org

Website of the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland, with information on a range of equality issues including racial equality

www.diversityireland.ie

Website of the National Action Plan Against Racism

www.equality.ie

Website of the Equality Authority in the Republic of Ireland, with information on a range of equality issues, including information about the equality legislation

www.ihrc.ie

Website of the Irish Human Rights Commission

www.unhchr.ch/

Website of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, with a section especially for teachers (see 'for teachers' on the main page of the site)

www.justice.ie

Website of the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform which includes press statements on Ireland's recent ratification of the CERD and the forthcoming national anti racism public awareness programme

www.cre.gov.uk

Website of the Commission for Racial Equality in Britain, with a range of information on racial equality issues

www.nihrc.org

Website of the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission

www.blink.org

Website of the 1990 Trust, with links to a number of other sites

www.enar-eu.org/http://www.icare.to/

Websites of the European Network Against Racism in Brussels and the Internet Centre Against Racism

www.hri.ca/racism/

Website of the Human Rights Institute in Canada that includes updated and comprehensive information on the World Conference

www.paveepoint.ie/Pavee

Website of Pavee Point Travellers Centre

www.itmtrav.com

Website of the Irish Traveller Movement

www.irishrefugeecouncil.ie

Website of the Irish Refugee Council

www.refugeecouncil.org.uk

Website of the United Kingdom Refugee Council

www.immigrantcouncil.ie

Website of the Immigrant Council of Ireland

www.mrci.ie

Website of the Migrant Rights Centre, Ireland

www.ria.gov.ie

Website of the Reception and Integration Agency



