



**To all CWI Members**

**A Very Happy Christmas and we look forward to working  
with you in 2019**



Welcome to this issue of the Community Work Ireland newsletter, *Community Work News*. Many thanks to all our contributors. The views expressed are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Community Work Ireland. If there are issues that you think should be covered or you would like to contribute, please contact [info@communityworkireland.ie](mailto:info@communityworkireland.ie)



An Roinn Forbartha  
Tuaithe agus Pobail  
Department of Rural and  
Community Development



**pobal**  
government supporting communities

# Our Communities: National Framework Policy for Local and Community Development

## *It's a case of a lot done but a bit more to do*

We wrote in this newsletter this time last year, that the work to develop the implementation plan for *Our Communities*, the *National Framework Policy on Local and Community Development* was nearing completion. As we approach the end of 2018, the work to complete the document is ongoing.

As you probably know by now, *Our Communities* was published at the end of 2015. In November 2016, the Department of Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government hosted a national forum on local and community development in Ireland. The forum was a first step in progressing implementation of the framework policy and delivering on the Programme for Government commitment to develop a strategy to support the community and voluntary sector and encourage a cooperative approach between public bodies and the community and voluntary sector.

As part of the process, the Department established a Cross-Sectoral Working Group. This is chaired by Bairbre Nic Aongusa (DRCD Assistant Secretary) with representatives from the Departments of Rural and Community Development, Housing, Planning and Local Government, Health, Justice & Equality, Social Protection, the Irish Local Development Network (ILDN), local authorities, the Community and Voluntary Pillar and Community Work Ireland.

The CSWG worked on an initial draft of the implementation plan and a smaller subgroup were then tasked with editing and refining the implementation plan. This has been quite an intensive process and has seen its fair share of robust discussions to ensure positions are protected.

After consulting with CWI members on a number of occasions, the CWI position has included:

- Recognition and respect for the contribution community work makes to addressing poverty, social exclusion and inequality
- A programme to support autonomous community work;
- Programme of continuous professional development for community workers;
- Training for those charged with monitoring community work programmes.

**Critically, the work of the CSWG and all it produces is based on an agreed set of values and principles. Those of you aware of the values underpinning community work will find these values familiar.**

The action plan is now largely agreed, and it does include a number of actions that reflect the CWI position.

There remains some work to do on the draft implementation plan, now referred to as *Local and Community Development in Ireland: Integrated Strategic Plan 2019-2028*. As it stands, CWI are completing our comments on the narrative contextual pieces of the strategy and the sections on monitoring remain to be completed.

We are hoping for publication in the New Year and have called for a consultation process soon after.



***CWI has two representatives on the Cross-Sectoral Working Group – Rachel Doyle and Ann Irwin. Ann represented CWI on the smaller Taskgroup.***

***CWI member Ronnie Fay is also on the CSWG as a representative of the Community & voluntary Pillar***

## Impact of the WCDC2018



***The World Community Development Conference 2018 at Maynooth University provided renewed motivation for a community development approach for the work of Rohingya Action Ireland and the resettled Rohingya community living in Carlow.***

The community, a total of 78 Rohingya refugees have resettled in Carlow town. They arrived in April 2009 from two refugee camps in Bangladesh – the world’s largest Kutupalong refugee camp and Nayapara camp. The process of resettling and re-integration to a new life and culture was managed by St Catherine’s Family Resource Centre and assisted County Carlow Development Partnership, volunteers, churches, schools, colleges and civil society organisations.

Almost 10 years on, the Rohingya community have witnessed many different approaches in the resettling process. After members of the Rohingya community attended the World Community Development Conference in Maynooth in June it was clear that a grass roots approach would continue to ensure that the Rohingya community in Carlow continue their new lives with choice and opportunity. This approach stipulates that members of the Rohingya community work together to meet their own changing social, economic and cultural needs. This is already happening in Carlow where the

needs of the community are identified by the community who work closely with local partnerships and support organisations.

The workshops and discussions at WCDC 2018 provided ample food for thought on best practice in activating a community and reinvigorated what community development means in practice. Discussions were held on representative and meaningful participation, engagement of all community members and moving from dependence to independent living. Many of us involved in community development have witnessed ‘the refugee’ being defined by a charity model view as impoverished and disenfranchised compared to the social model approach as being defined as a valued member of the community, with the capacity to lead, to educate, to participate with their own expertise in what they need. Written into the terms of reference of Rohingya Action Ireland are community development principles, practices and values, which explore cultural, social and political opportunities to advance the human rights of the Rohingya. RAI aims to ensure that the Rohingya voice and experience of all genders stays prominent and remains at the forefront of any campaigning. Moving from an approach of ‘doing for’ to now ‘doing with’ has established stronger links with civil society organisations working together in solidarity, adhering to the principles of community development of collaboration, empowerment, social justice, gender

equality, community self-determination, participation and inclusiveness. The WCDC 2018 inspired the founding members of Rohingya Action Ireland, Mohammed Rafique, Haikal Mansor, staff from Carlow College St Patrick's, Carlow County Development Partnership, TUI and Burma Action Ireland that a community development approach has worked and will continue to work as the Rohingya build new lives in Carlow.

The conference also provided an opportunity to present the Rohingya Photo Exhibition to communities and activists from around the world. The exhibition was opened by conference chairperson Anastasia Crickley and was displayed in the library of Maynooth University. It provided participants at the conference with an opportunity to reflect on visual images of the level of human rights abuses directed at the Rohingya in Myanmar. Mary Robinson attended the exhibition and spoke with members of the Rohingya Community offering encouragement and solidarity to the community. The Minister of State for National Resources, Community Affairs and Digital Development, Seán Kyne, also visited the exhibition along with keynote speakers and prominent activists at the conference.

Speaking after the conference, chairperson of Rohingya Action Ireland, Mohamed Rafique said, "we feel privileged to have been invited to WCDC 2018, not only have we been given the opportunity to raise awareness on the current situation in Myanmar and Bangladesh, we have also gained support. People are interested in our wellbeing and our stories. I believe that by our community working in partnership with local, national and global civil society groups we can and will make a difference to those suffering human rights abuses in Myanmar and throughout the world"

*Stephanie McDermott is the Secretary of Rohingya Action Ireland*

*Haikal Mansor is a member of Rohingya Action Ireland*

## CWI Annual General Meeting

A sincere thank you to all that attended the CWI Annual General Meeting in October. There were a number of valuable discussions that will inform CWI work in 2019.

With a sincere and heartfelt thanks to Jamie Gorman who stepped down from the CWI central Group at the AGM for his work, time and commitment and a warm welcome to Liam and Niamh, the new CWI Central Group is:

- |                      |                      |
|----------------------|----------------------|
| • Áine Deeley        | • Siobhan McLaughlin |
| • Anastasia Crickley | • Oonagh Mc Ardle    |
| • Obert Makaza       | • Patricia Brennan   |
| • Valerie McFarlane  | • Ronnie Fay         |
| • Seanie Lambe       | • Catherine Lane     |
| • Niamh Wogan        | • Liam McGlynn       |

# Undocumented Student Scheme

## *The Migrants Centre Ireland outlines the new Undocumented Student Scheme*

In October the government announced a scheme that could potentially regularise the status of thousands of undocumented migrants working and living here in Ireland. Referred to as the [undocumented student scheme](#) the Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Service (INIS) are currently administering the scheme within the Department of Justice and Equality.

This scheme allows any migrant who first registered as a student in Ireland between 1 January 2005 and 31 December 2010, and who (using their terminology) “commenced their presence in the State lawfully under a student permission” to come forward and apply to have their situation regularised.

In order to be successful, applicants must meet a series of criteria and must produce a range of supporting documentation. If successful, applicants will receive a letter of approval and be granted Stamp 4S permission to remain in the State for two years. After two years, if successful applicants have adhered to the terms of their permission they will be granted Stamp 4 permission for a further 12 months.

What is the significance of a scheme like this? And why should community development workers be aware of it? Undocumented workers regularly experience precarious and often exploitative working conditions. The threat of being reported to authorities and ultimately being deported make exercising your employment rights as an undocumented worker very difficult. Undocumented migrants are now, similar to the undocumented Irish in the USA, living and working in Ireland long term deeply embedded in communities across the country in rural Ireland and urban cities. Chances are your project or local community group have come in contact with undocumented migrants. Indeed, thousands of working families in Ireland are completely dependent upon the labour provided by undocumented migrants in Ireland. This scheme will go some way to

protecting the rights of thousands of undocumented who are currently working in precarious situations.

It is also a ‘campaign win’ for the Justice for the Undocumented campaign which was instrumental in securing government agreement for an undocumented scheme. Justice for the Undocumented has been campaigning for regularisation for undocumented migrants and their families for over 8 years. Supported by the MRCI, a community work approach has been central in building relationships and partnership with undocumented migrants organising collectively to bring about systemic change. Community Work Ireland is one of 55 organisations who have endorsed JFU’s regularisation call. It’s a good news story for those who believe change is possible and who are committed to change being sought and fought for by those with the

daily lived experience at the heart of issues like this.

While we welcome the scheme, MRCI feels strongly that it does not go far enough, and we will be working with undocumented migrants and supporters to campaign for further schemes to regularise the status of so many who fall outside of this narrow scheme. In the meantime you may have

a colleague, friend, community member who could benefit from this scheme. We would encourage anyone from an immigrant background or working with migrants to check [the criteria](#) as soon as possible. The scheme closes on January 20th 2019 and is unlikely to be extended. Full information on the scheme can be easily accessed through the Migrant Rights Centre Ireland website at [www.mrci.ie/2018scheme](http://www.mrci.ie/2018scheme) . If your community is interested in the scheme or you feel there would be interest in running a local information session let us know email [jfu@mrci.ie](mailto:jfu@mrci.ie) As we say in JFU “one day longer – one day stronger”. Thank you for your support and solidarity in 2018!

*Helen Lowry is a CWI member, community worker and Deputy Director of MRCI*



# Happy Birthday to the Universal Declaration Of Human Rights



## Universal Declaration of Human Rights 1948 - 2018

On December 10th, 1948 the UDHR, which stands as the foundation stone of current human rights struggles and a roadmap for guaranteeing the rights of every individual everywhere, was adopted by the UN General Assembly. At that meeting in Paris of the 58 UN member states (now 193), 48 voted in favour, 2 did not vote and 8 including Saudi Arabia and the USSR abstained without dissenting. Ireland joined the UN in 1955 so couldn't vote then.

Eleanor Roosevelt, widow of the US President F.D Roosevelt, chaired the UDHR drafting committee and played a significant role in securing its adoption. She is the only woman named as being directly involved. The Preamble reaffirms 'the equal rights of men and women' but the language in the Articles of the Declaration, reflecting the time of its development, use 'man' to refer to all human beings. The Preamble itself especially its first statement 'of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family' and a number of the Declaration's 30 Articles, reinforced and amplified by the Covenants and Conventions which have since been built on them, provide a useable basis for community work framed as supporting and informing unfettered participation by rights holders in rights realisation.

The growing post World War II women's movement and the horrors of apartheid and ongoing legacies of slavery illustrated the need for instruments amplifying the UDHR and were instrumental in securing the eventual development and adoption of the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and the International Convention on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (ICERD) These along with the other conventions and the two

Covenants on Civil and Political Rights and Economic, Social and Cultural Rights which Ireland has ratified have been well used by Irish community and issue groups.

However, as the horrors of monstrous rights abuses globally continue unabated, supported by governments and populist hate rhetoric much more remains to be done. The next 7 months, and 7 years of the UDHR are crucial both here and elsewhere for humanity and our future. 70 years from now it will be too late for the climate and environmental justice issues which challenge us locally nationally and internationally. The neo-liberal commodification of involvement and participation via tendering and commissioning and controlled structures and programmes with centralized mandates may offer immediate responses, economies and system efficiencies, but in the end these will only serve the neo-liberal anti-people agenda.

The UDHR and the Treaties which followed don't contain all the answers and won't work in the same way everywhere for every issue. However, this time when rights have been articulated but implementation remains challengingly complicated, calls, I believe, for community development to name and work more clearly to the rights frame which has always been an essential if implicit underpinning of the work. The space to manoeuvre on the tight rope of compliance is very limited but finding it and pushing its boundaries whatever the work is about, at whatever level and wherever it's undertaken, is I think uniquely if differently possible for all and I look forward to struggling with you to find it.

*Anastasis Crickley is the CWI Chairperson*

# Community work and climate change: where do we start?

We have now started to see the impacts of a changing climate here in Ireland. In the last year alone, we've had storms, flooding, drought and a Beast from the East. The farming community seems to be always on the edge of a fodder crisis. These weather patterns are set to become the norm in the decades ahead as a result of climate change. When we think about these challenges as community workers, it can be difficult to know where to start. What role can we play in addressing this global issue? We might even ask ourselves, is it our role to be concerned about climate change?

As community workers, our focus has long been on addressing poverty, inequality and social exclusion in Irish society. Our task, according to Pobal's 1999 definition of community work, is 'social change to achieve equality, social justice and human rights'. There's nothing about saving the birds and the bees in there. And besides, rainforests seem a long way away when we're working to meet people where they're at in rural Donegal, urban Limerick or the countless places around the country where community development is practiced.

## Helping communities to weather the storm

But the recent weather events have highlighted that the impacts of climate change will be felt here in Ireland too. A community's ability to weather the storm of a changing climate is closely linked to the resources, supports and wealth which they have at their disposal. This means that those communities and groups already experiencing poverty, discrimination and social exclusion in Irish society are more vulnerable to climate impacts while having the least resources to respond to them.

This is the issue which Mary Robinson raises on a global scale in her latest book ***Climate Justice: Hope, Resilience and the Fight for a Sustainable Future***. Community workers, with our focus on social inclusion, equality and rights can play an important part in addressing this in issue in Ireland.

## Evolving Irish climate policy

Since 2015, when Ireland passed a climate law and signed the Paris Agreement, the state has developed a two-part approach to addressing climate change. The first element is to foster low carbon development by reducing our reliance on fossil fuels and emissions from agricultural, construction and transport (the National Mitigation Plan). The second element is to support actions to reduce the vulnerability of the country to the negative effects of climate change and to avail of positive impacts (the National Adaptation Framework).

In 2017, the government also launched the National Dialogue on Climate Action to engage communities in discussion about societal response to climate change. So far, regional gatherings have been held in Athlone

(July) and Tralee (November).

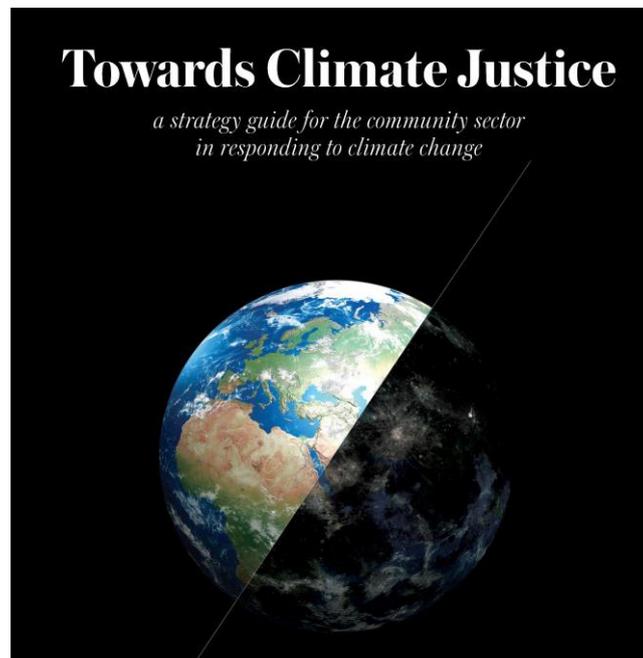
## Supporting local action

At the same time, communities around Ireland are already taking actions that contribute to sustainability and climate justice. For example, the 200 members Sustainable Energy Communities network access grants and expertise from the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland to save energy and generate renewable energy locally. Similarly, the Better Energy Warmer Homes

Scheme supports the insulation and retrofitting of private homes. This scheme has been used by organisations like Energy Action Ireland and several Local Development Companies to develop social enterprises around addressing fuel poverty. There are many possibilities for actions responding to climate change to also address social justice and equality.

## CWI and Climate Justice

In 2012, Community Work Ireland published ***Towards Climate Justice: A strategy guide for the Community Sector in Responding to Climate Justice***. This EPA funded resource explored the issue of climate change for marginalised and disadvantaged communities in



Ireland and set out strategies for practice to respond to climate change. We are also members of the Stop Climate Chaos coalition of NGOs and community organisations who campaign for climate justice.

### Call out to members

Are you interested in addressing climate change in your work but don't know where to start? CWI recognises the need to support our members to stay informed and engage with climate issues. We are convening a Climate Justice Resource Group for community workers who want to learn more about climate issues and incorporate climate justice into their work in practical ways. The group will take a peer-to-peer approach to

sharing information and best practice examples, as well as providing workers with a chance to engage with and inform climate policy.

If you are interested in joining this group, get in touch with us at [annirwin@communityworkireland.ie](mailto:annirwin@communityworkireland.ie)

*Jamie Gorman is a CWI member and is the CWI representative on the SDG Coalition*



Housing Action Now is a housing activist group made up of community workers, housing activists, artists and teachers. HAN was established in 2013 with the aim of radically changing the current Irish housing system from a commodified, profit-driven model to one based on meeting the long-term housing needs of the people of Ireland in secure and sustainable ways. <https://www.facebook.com/HousingActionNow/>

On November 22<sup>nd</sup> HAN launched their Fair Rent Homes Campaign which is calling for the development of a sustainable solution to the housing crisis.

The campaign is calling for:

- Provision of state-owned rental housing on a large scale, on a non-profit basis
- The provision of secure, affordable, high quality rental housing for anyone who needs it, regardless of income.

The campaign states:

Fair Rent Homes would mean that;

- 70,000 households would be provided with a home, at a fair rent, for life
- a pool of high quality, Fair Rent Homes would be there, owned by the nation, for future generations, instead of spending billions on rent subsidies to private landlords
- pressure would be put on the private rental sector to improve standards and provide fairer rents in order to compete with Fair Rent Homes

For further information on the Fair Rent Homes campaign see the video can be seen here <https://www.facebook.com/HousingActionNow/videos/>

Sign the petition in support of the Fair Rent Homes Campaign <https://my.uplift.ie/petitions/fair-rent-homes-now?>

## Human Rights Committee

The purpose of the Dept Foreign Affairs and Trade Human Rights Committee is to inform Irish Civil Society regarding relevant DFAT Human Rights engagements, initiatives and policy responses while also creating a space for questions and dialogue. DFAT engagements with the UN and sometimes that of other Depts, including with the Geneva based Human Rights Council, New York based Third Committee that deals with human rights are discussed, and updates given on Ireland's engagement with Treaty Bodies like CEDAW and with Special Rapporteurs. Council of Europe, and to an extent OSCE and EU human rights related dimensions are also covered.

The DFAT Committee is appointed by the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade for a three year term and consists of people from Irish (mostly Development) NGOs, ICTU, academics and some individual members - see the DFAT website for names. Meetings are chaired by Martina Feeney Head of the Human Rights Unit, civil servants from DFAT and other Depts attend, give updates and take questions on these, and where relevant there are video link ins with Irish Missions to the UN.

## Ireland at the UN and Civil Society Space Here and There

Ireland is a candidate for election to the Security Council in 2020 for 2021/22 and the campaign is already underway. Canada and Norway are competing with Ireland for the two seats in the UN region which the 3 countries belong to. The task is therefore challenging. It has highlighted the need for coherence between Irish human rights initiatives at global levels (e.g. sponsoring and championing civil society spaces and civil society actors) and initiatives of that nature here in Ireland.

This was a focus last month at the second meeting of the new DFAT Committee appointed earlier this year. The Committee was also briefed on the upcoming electoral act legislation. I believe that this discussion needs to be developed and broadened - autonomous community development has a key role to play in creating the conditions for independent civil society, and independence means being resourced to work in people's interests with independent analysis and actions rather than centrally pre-designed and inflexible initiatives. All work in progress.

## Ireland's National Action Plan on Business and Human Rights

Ireland's National Plan on Business has now been launched and an Oversight Committee to be Chaired by Breege O'Donoghue formerly of Primark is being established. The Annual UN Forum on Business and Human Rights in Geneva Nov 26/28 attracted over two thousand registrations. I think this may be becoming a useful space to focus on economic, social and cultural rights. Many of the rights infringements by business and corporations are in these areas as well and proactive protocols including at an Irish level might be useful.

## The Global Compacts on Migration and Refugees

The Global Compacts on Migration and Refugees have both experienced some problems. The Refugee Compact has been more or less signed off on now and the Migrants Compact is being endorsed at a global inter-governmental conference in Marrakesh Dec 10/11.

The Compacts were developed from commitments made at the 2015 UN Summit on Migration as an initiative of all UN member states to agree the overall framework for global migration governance for safe, orderly and regular migration. However, it has proven difficult to ensure that the commitments made in New York (and which the Irish Mission there played a key role in getting agreement on) are not rolled back and, for example, that the particular interests and issues of and for women on the move are directly named and addressed.

From the EU Austria, Hungary, Slovenia and Estonia have withdrawn their support as well as Australia and the USA (which withdrew before consultations on the text began). Switzerland, one of the co-facilitators of the process for developing the Migration Compact, has had to abstain due to concerns in the national parliament.

The Compacts have their limitations but provide a floor of guidance for all concerned with migration of whatever kind and give a very basic roadmap towards a future where the contributions and rights of migrants and refugees and the reality that all societies are migrant societies with most people moving within their own region of the world are acknowledged.

## Ireland's Third National Action Plan on Women Peace and Security

A process of consultation is currently underway to inform the development of Ireland's Women Peace and Security Third National Action Plan (NAP) in response to the UN Security Council's Resolution 1325 and associated agreements. While mostly outward facing towards Ireland's work in various conflict and post-conflict zones there are two key home based dimensions:

Issues for women in Northern Ireland with regard to peace and security there. Technically Ireland's NAP can't cover Northern Ireland but there is concern to include what's seen as an essential North/South dimension.

- Issues for women, whether migrant, refugee or asylum seeker women from conflict zones who now live in Ireland.

*Anastasis Crickley is the CWI Chairperson*

# National Strategy on Volunteering

The Department of Rural and Community Development are in the initial stages of developing a strategy for volunteering. The Dept has issued a 'Call for Input' (CFI) to inform and seek views from stakeholders on key topics under consideration to develop the National Strategy on Volunteering (the Strategy). The purpose of this document is to:

- Inform stakeholders of the proposed volunteering strategy;
- Seek views from stakeholders on what constitutes volunteering;
- Invite comments and proposals on the CFI including additional and emerging considerations which may further inform the Strategy.

The outcome of this CFI and potentially the input from a proposed National Advisory Group will inform the Department's development of this volunteering strategy.

If you would like to contribute your views on volunteering, please download the Submission Form from the Department's website and send your completed submission to [volunteer@drcd.gov.ie](mailto:volunteer@drcd.gov.ie) in Word.doc format. Please note that returning the submissions in this format is required to facilitate the collation of information. If you wish, you may also return your submission in PDF format and Word.doc format. The subject line of your submission should read 'Volunteering CFI Submission.'

The closing date for submissions is **3pm on Thursday, 14 February 2019.**



**Margaret Mead says it as it is:**

**“Never underestimate the power of a small group of committed people to change the world. In fact, it is the only thing that ever has”**

Migration may seem complex, and yet it has always happened - it's in all our DNA. Migration in today's modern world comes with many complexities and barriers - families migrate for many different reasons, and not everyone has the same access or opportunity to migrate in a safe and regular way. Migration is happening after all in a deeply unequal world, a world in which immigration systems have institutionalised racism and capitalism impacts on the movement of people and goods. The story of the undocumented is one that needs to be heard and understood in the context of migration today.

Migrant Rights Centre Ireland estimates there are between 2,000 to 5,000<sup>1</sup> undocumented young people living in Ireland. Children and young people are undocumented in Ireland either because they were born in Ireland to undocumented parents or because they came to Ireland to join undocumented parents. In the absence of laws and policies for them to become documented these young people face deeply uncertain futures and face insurmountable barriers to access the labour market or progress to third level. Young Paperless and Powerful (YPP) are a youth project supported by the MRCI; a youth led campaign calling for legislation, so no child or young person grows up undocumented in Ireland.

While YPP is a youth group, it has all hallmarks of community work. The ingredients are the same: an empowered group of young adults, committed to working collectively for change, the human rights of children and young people are at the core of everything they do. The group originated as a sub-group of the Justice for the Undocumented Campaign, itself an established campaign informed by community work processes, working to advance rights and regularisation for undocumented migrants in Ireland. Since 2015, YPP has been going strong, and they have really pushed the boundaries of what a youth group can achieve. By using safe, creative and empowering methodologies, YPP have been telling the story of growing up undocumented in Ireland, why they want change and what they want policy makers to do. They have engaged

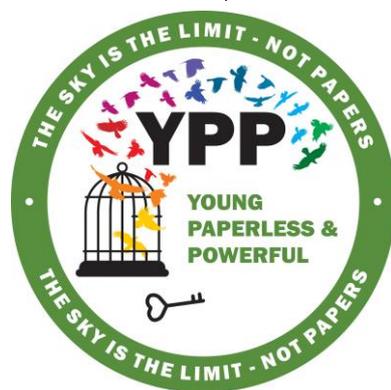
in spoken word and film making creative processes, taken part in radio and newspaper interviews, they've run conferences and workshops, and attended government committee meetings. They are a politicised, energetic group of young adults – who have hopes and dreams like every other young person in the world.

This Universal Children's Day YPP launched their second film, [This is my Life](#). It is a different and mature venture for the group. I urge you to watch the film, hear their story and share it widely. The making of this film was youth led from pre-production to the film launch – from designing the story boards, writing the script and deciding on location to the film launch itself. The film launch was hosted and held by young people on Universal Children's Day November 20<sup>th</sup> in the Ombudsman for Children's Office. This journey and process has galvanised the campaign for the group: YPP are campaigning for legislation so that no child or young person grows up undocumented in Ireland, whether born here or not.

This year we've seen and heard a lot about children and young people who are embedded in their communities, facing the very real and daily threat of deportation. This is a burden that no young person or child should have to carry, a threat that they should never have to face. Momentum for change on this is growing. We have seen inspiring action taken by young people and communities coming out in force calling for justice with most recently Nonso Muojeke and Eric Zhi Ying Xue. And it hasn't gone unnoticed by the government. Only a fortnight ago, at a debate in the Seanad, 23 out of 39 Senators voted in favour of a bill put forward by the Labour party which is calling for birth right citizenship. YPP want to see this bill expanding to include young people, who like themselves came here as children, went to school here, made friends, connections and roots in their communities, and who are at risk of being deported on a daily basis.

Hear directly [from young people about](#) life growing up in Ireland and why it doesn't have to be so and be ready to take action with #undocyouthIRL early in 2019!

***Mairead McDevitt is a Youth and Community Worker with the Migrant Rights Centre Ireland***



<sup>1</sup> [MRCI \(2016\) Ireland is Home](#)

# Ballyheimat: Home sweet home

## Margo Gorman shares her views on Brexit

Hundreds of thousands March in Berlin in resistance to the racism and xenophobia fuelled by anti-immigration groups. Hundreds of thousands march for a people's vote on Brexit in London, where people who felt "at home" for generations feel like "foreigners". The proposal to create an external European border through Ulster makes Donegal with its meandering miles of border particularly vulnerable. Marching to demonstrate solidarity is important but we also need a bridge between our isolation in individualised "homes" and the threat of polarisation into US and THEM when we go out the door. Could more consciousness about "home", and what it means, help to renew our commitment to "community"?

In English, "home" is a place of residence and includes institutions like children's home or nursing home. The experience of migration is much more than the loss of a roof over your head as those living with the trauma of homelessness or refugee accommodation have highlighted for us. The loss of connection to community and with it the familiarity of a local neighbourhood/ family/ takeaway/ school/nursery/clinic/shop or park and participation in the small routines of daily life magnify insecurity. Such losses can undermine belief in community as a place which expresses our common humanity.

In German, the word "Heimat" is usually translated into English as home or homeland but it is more than that. It is a word for a sense of belonging and connection to community – more important than nation. When working for European Community Development I lived in France, then Belgium, before returning to Ireland. I met my German life-partner in 1997 in Saarbrücken – a place where, in the negotiations after the fall of the Third Reich, the people could vote to belong to either France or Germany. As I sit on a Donegal hillside writing this, my life-partner continues to work in Community Development in Berlin, currently on a project with refugees within an innovative intercultural community centre, Sprengelhaus, which is the embodiment of many of the themes, preoccupying community development organisations across Europe.

There has been an explosion of interest in the importance of Heimat in Germany in the last decade. There are studies, newspaper and magazine articles, books, research etc. demonstrating how we can choose to identify with more than one Heimat. When I spot a large carrier bag from a supermarket chain with the slogan! "Re-discover Heimat!" in Sprengelhaus, ([www.sprengelhaus-wedding.de](http://www.sprengelhaus-wedding.de)) I realise it is time to uncover the significance of this word for an Ulsterwoman with origins in Strabane in Northern Ireland and living in my grandparents' homeplace in Donegal. When we cross cultures and/or intermarry, the exchange enriches our understanding of our own origins as well as insight into the ways "other" people live.

The Irish word "Baile", shaped into "Bally" by the dominance of English, names a place of family in community in more than 160 towns and townlands in Donegal., with its 1134miles of coastline and 200+kms of border with Derry, Tyrone and Fermanagh. "Homeplace", the name given to the Seamus Heaney Centre in Northern Ireland is a sign of how poets and writers in every community use the idea of Heimat as a reference point. The words "Baile" or "Homeplace" are better than home or homeland as a translation of "Heimat" so I invented the word Ballyheimat to express my sense of belonging here.

Ballyheimat in Donegal is people – family, neighbours, networks and friends; Ballyheimat reeks with the smell of seaweed; Ballyheimat is coloured by the sweep of seasons across the hills and Atlantic ocean visible from my window: Ballyheimat is memory mixed with hindsight and heritage. Ballyheimat is the place where you huddle together against the desolate rain and the occasional rainbow promises the pot of gold somewhere.

Not everyone has a sense of Heimat or Homeplace. For some there is no sense of Heimat anywhere and they don't miss it or they rely on a digital version of Heimat or feel most at home in a business lounge in an airport, fast train or hotel chain. For others, the loss of Heimat is like the loss of self. Heimat is unique to each individual and yet only carries meaning when it evokes something collective. It can be a place of nostalgia when we regret how the super trawlers out at sea have replaced the fleet of small local fishing boats arriving at sunset into Killybegs – a place where residents claim they experienced ethnic diversity long before it hit the city of Dublin. Now the once buzzing port has many

shuttered memories. The everyday reality of Heimat connects diverse interests so reconciliation of real or potential conflict is needed if it is to be an inclusive space.

The proposed European border through my Ulster Heimat highlights the tensions underpinning current patterns of migration. Yet migration is part of our pattern of survival as it has been throughout the history of humanity. Exchange and trade between cultures and societies brings greater wealth both socially and economically. Local communities, especially those on the margins, need renewal and cross-fertilisation from other cultures in order to create the conditions where we can enjoy our common humanity. Power-players use protectionism, inequality and our fears bringing violence and chaos to the most vulnerable and while we squabble, the elite cream off the wealth or crash in the attempt and make way for a new elite.

A sense of Heimat/Homeplace is deeply embedded in our consciousness – deeper than skin colour or religion with their patterns of inclusion or exclusion. It is so deep we often aren't aware of how it influences us or those around us or how it can become exclusive and place us poles apart from others in our community. We can easily be puppets dancing on the strings held by demagogues who manipulate our fears and use minorities as scapegoats. Many Irish people would rather blame the British for divisions within Ulster and fail to acknowledge our part in that dynamic. There may be greater security in a consciousness which challenges the polarisation between US and THEM, Protestant and Catholic; Unionist and Republican; British and Irish. Is there an Ulster Heimat which can cross the border?

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## National Action Plan for Social Inclusion - Review

The Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection has commenced a review of the implementation of the National Action Plan for Social Inclusion 2007-2016 and the Updated Plan 2015-2017 (NAPinclusion 2007-2017). The review is being carried out by Indecon International Consultants.

Indecon are now providing the opportunity for all interested stakeholders to contribute to the review by submitting their views in writing. Details on the consultation process can be found here:

<http://www.welfare.ie/en/Pages/PublicConsultationReview-of-theImplementation-of-theNAPforSocialInclusion2007-2017.aspx>

**The deadline for submissions is Wednesday, 16 January 2019.**



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# CWI Membership

CWI membership is currently free to new members and those wishing to renew membership.

Join at [www.communityworkireland.ie](http://www.communityworkireland.ie)