

Newsletter

• July to September 2025



From workshops to meetings to our annual fun day and Summer Club, the North West Migrants Forum has not stopped! In this edition of our newsletter you can read all about what we have been up to and what we have in store over the autumn months.

Youth leader Cathy Malcolm with some of the young people in the sea at Portrush.



OUR annual Summer Club proved to be a massive hit once again with 50 young people taking part in a wide range of fun activities.

Youth leaders Cathy Malcolm and Cara Gilliland compiled a fantastic programme for those aged between seven and 15 years.

From fishing at The Oaks to Foyle Arena's climbing wall to splashing about on Lake Kilrea, it was a truly memorable time for all those who took part.

Cathy and Cara said, "Thank you to all the parents who entrusted their son or daughter to us, it was an absolute pleasure to have them attend the Summer Club.

"We will genuinely miss the laughter and cheers that lit up our days over the summer months.

"The Summer Club was established to enable children of different backgrounds to spend quality time with each other and to learn to respect different cultures and viewpoints as they grow and move towards adulthood.

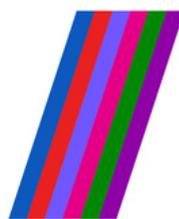
"It was lovely to see friendships made, friendships we know will last far beyond these summer months."

The Summer Club was made possible through funding from the Co-Op Foundation and the North West Migrants Forum is very grateful to them for their generosity.

In this edition...

- Recruitment drive launched for ICI Programme
- Tuning up for Black History Summit 2025
- A tribute to our dear friend Danny McQuilkin
- Stories sought for our Hidden History exhibition
- Update on our two Intercultural Cafe
- Dave Duggan on why Anti-Racism Charter matters

New jobs being created through ICI Programme



PEACEPLUS
Northern Ireland - Ireland

Co-funded by the



European Union



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Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland



Northern Ireland
Executive
www.northernireland.gov.uk

WE are delighted to announce the creation of several paid roles through our new Intercultural Cross-Border Inclusion Programme (ICIP).

Funded by SEUPB through PEACEPLUS, the ICI Programme is a collaboration between ourselves as lead partner, Donegal Intercultural Platform, Multi-Ethnic Sports and Cultures NI, Rural Community Network and Dublin-based Irish Network Against Racism.

Designed with a geographical focus on rural and urban areas across Northern Ireland and in Donegal, Leitrim and Monaghan,



ICIP

INTERCULTURAL
CROSS-BORDER INCLUSION PROGRAMME

the three-year programme's overall aim is to foster a more inclusive and welcoming society by challenging institutional and structural racism, supporting

intercultural understanding and enhancing participation of minority ethnic communities across borders. To ensure the ICI Programme reaches its full potential, a major recruitment drive has just been launched.

Details of the various roles are available on our website, www.nwmf.org.uk and on our partner organisations' websites.

The Intercultural Cross-Border Inclusion Programme is supported by PEACEPLUS; a programme managed by the Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB)

Available roles:

North West Migrants Forum

- Project Manager
- Location: Derry/Londonderry

- Project Administrator
- Location: Derry/Londonderry

MSCNI

- Project Co-ordinator
- Location: Belfast

- Project Administrator
- Location: Belfast

Rural Community Network

- Community Development Outreach Worker
- Location: Cookstown

Donegal Intercultural Platform:

- Project Co-ordinator
- Location: Letterkenny

- Intercultural Project Worker
- Location: Letterkenny

- Administration and Development Worker
- Location: Letterkenny

Black History Summit 2025 - Celebrating heritage and cultural exchange

OUR Black History Month Summit returns on October 24, once again celebrating the diverse histories and vibrant futures of our communities. This year we are thrilled to announce a special partnership with the British Council's UK/Kenya Season 2025, spotlighting innovation and creativity through arts, culture and education between Kenya and the UK.

Alongside our signature educational and dialogue programme, the 2025 Summit will showcase a powerful cross-cultural experience. As part of the UK/Kenya Season, we're bringing two outstanding guest musicians to the stage: Nelson Ngotiek and Ritchie Remo.

Nelson Ngotiek is a respected Maasai traditional folk singer from Kenya, known for his powerful voice, deep-rooted storytelling and dedication to preserving the rich musical heritage of the Maasai community.

Ritchie Remo is a celebrated Irish country music singer and traditional folk artist whose heartfelt performances and storytelling have earned him fans across Ireland, the UK and beyond.

Their historic performance will dovetail perfectly with the spoken elements of the Summit programme, created this year around the theme of 'Standing Firm in Power and Pride'.

Among the keynote speakers will be Zita Holbourne, tireless campaigner for equality, freedom, justice and rights through arts and activism. Zita was a founding member of ACA Lawyers 4 Justice, BME Lawyers for Grenfell and the Movement Against Xenophobia. She has also played an instrumental role in campaigning against the Windrush Scandal.

The second podium speaker will be Lisa Williams, founder of the Edinburgh Caribbean Association. Ms Williams curates education programmes, arts, events and walking tours to promote



Ritchie Remo and Nelson Ngotiek will unite at our History Summit on October 24 for a unique musical collaboration.

awareness of Black Scottish history and links between Scotland and the Caribbean.

And travelling from Wales will be Rajvi Glasbrook, member of the Welsh Government's Race Equality Action Plan Committee and its working group on Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Communities, Contributions and Cynefin in the New Curriculum.

Panellists for this year's Summit include Dr Naomi Green, researcher on our Hidden History Project. There will also be contributions from Ulster University researcher Seun Awonuga and Daniel Sanusi, organiser of Ulster University Students' Union's first-ever Black History Month celebrations.

North West Migrants Forum Chief Executive Lilian Seenoi Barr said it is the first time in the Summit's history that there will be speakers from all parts of the United Kingdom. Mrs Barr added that the event promises to be an enlightening experience providing invaluable insights into Black history and studies.

Date: October 24

Venue: Ulster University's Magee campus

Special Feature: British Council UK/Kenya Season Collaboration

Admission: Free but registration is required:

<https://bit.ly/nwfmsummit2025>



In happier times...Danny with Tshamano Moshapo at one of our events in 2017.

Sadness at passing of Danny McQuilkin

WE were deeply saddened to learn of the passing of our dear friend and long-time supporter, Danny McQuilkin. Danny was more than a volunteer; he was a pillar of our community and a true ally of the North West Migrants Forum. For many years Danny was a constant presence at our fun days, workshops, training sessions and countless other events. He generously gave his time, energy and unwavering support to everything we did. But Danny's contributions went far beyond volunteering. He built genuine connections with our service users and offered them meaningful support as they navigated life in a new country. Whether it was helping someone integrate into their local community or quietly stepping in with financial support for those facing hardship, Danny always did so with compassion and humility. He gave from the heart, often at personal cost and never sought recognition. In 2016, when hundreds of Syrians arrived in the North West after fleeing war, Danny was one of the first to welcome them. With an open hand and a kind heart, he quickly helped build a plan to support their resettlement, ensuring they felt safe, seen and supported. Danny was a man of immense integrity, guided by a deep sense of justice and humanity. He had a unique ability to see people not as labels, not as 'migrants' or 'foreigners' but as fellow human beings. As they say in Derry, Danny 'knew the craic'. He brought warmth, humour and authenticity to every encounter. We are immensely grateful for Danny's contributions and we know that without his support, the North West Migrants Forum would not be where it is today.



Danny with his friend Feza back in 2016.

Stories sought for next phase of Hidden History exhibition

EVERYONE HAS A STORY.

As part of the next phase of our Black Heritage NI: Hidden History Project, funded by The National Lottery Heritage Fund, we are urging the public to celebrate Northern Ireland's inspirational Black people by putting them forward for inclusion in our new exhibition.

From community heroes to family members to those doing brilliant work in their respective professional fields, we are keen to hear about those helping shape modern society. In July we launched the first stage of our exhibition in Derry Central Library. There it was viewed by a staggering 912 people over a four-week period.

From the Central Library it moved to Creggan Library and has since been transported to Shantallow Library. For October it will be on display in Strabane Library.

The feedback has been amazing with members of the public describing it as "hugely interesting", "fascinating" and "very important".

Manager of the Hidden History Project, Aynaz Zarif, said she wanted to thank Chantelle Lunt and Naomi Green for researching and bringing the exhibition to life.

Urging people to tell their own stories or those of colleagues, family members or inspirational figures they know for the next phase of the exhibition, Ms Zarif added, "We know these stories are out there, we just need the public to bring them to us.

"If you know of someone you feel deserves recognition, we would love to hear from you."

You can get in touch with us by filling in this short, easy form:

<https://bit.ly/NIstories>



Researchers Chantelle Lunt and Dr Naomi Green at the exhibition launch. You can keep up to date with the project at www.hiddenhistoryni.org.uk



Mayor of Derry City and Strabane District Council Ruairi McHugh enjoying the launch event. Below: A full schedule of where and when you can catch the exhibition.

Exhibition

Tour schedule: Find your nearest location below:

Derry Central Library

1 - 30 July 2025

35 Foyle St, Derry, BT48 6AL

Creggan Library

2 - 30 August 2025

59 Central Dr, Derry, BT48 9QH

Shantallow Library

2 - 29 September 2025

92 Racecourse Rd, BT48 8DA

Strabane Library

1 - 29 October 2025

1 Railway St, Strabane BT82 8EF

Coleraine Library

2 February - 30 March 2026

Queen St, Coleraine BT52 1BE

Dungiven Library

1 April - 28 May 2026

107 Main St, Dungiven, BT47 4LE

Belfast Libraries

July - October 2026

Details to be confirmed, check our website for updates

Opening times may vary.

Please contact the library or visit their website.

Artist Alborz draws gratitude of Portrush church community

ONE of our members, Iranian asylum seeker Alborz Nobakht, has been in the headlines after he put his incredible artistic talents to good use by helping brighten up a church in Portrush. After arriving in NI, Alborz and his 15-year-old son Mohammed were placed in a hotel in Portrush. Shortly after moving to the north coast town, Alborz found support in Ballywillan Presbyterian Church. Ballywillan has been a haven for countless individuals and families who have sought refuge here in recent years. Stunned by his artistic abilities, church officials soon matched the Iranian with a project to suit his skills. Church Elder Christine Dunlop explained, "Alborz came to church with a number of other Christian Iranians and I discovered he was an artist when he produced the most amazing pencil sketch." At his request and that of another artist, Mrs Dunlop purchased paints and other supplies.

"Alborz completed some fabulous pieces of work. He told me he was a muralist and calligrapher by profession, showing me his work for big companies. But it was his pencil drawings that fascinated me."

Completely self-taught, Alborz Nobakht's subjects range from landscapes to famous faces to ordinary men and women caught up in the situation back home. His arrival, along with another group of Iranian asylum seekers, was perfect timing for Ballywillan as the church children's room needed a fresh coat of paint.



Alborz Nobakht has received a letter of support from the congregation at Ballywillan Presbyterian Church in recognition of his art and his commitment to parish life.

Keen to repay the kindness shown to them, Alborz and his friends got to work. The room was completed on a Friday. The following Sunday was Ballywillan's Children's Service when everyone was invited to an indoor picnic. Because of his commitment to participating in church life, Alborz has been given a

letter of support which the people of Ballywillan hope will assist him in his bid for refugee status. "We have an amazing range of very gifted people coming to Northern Ireland," Mrs Dunlop added. "These lovely human beings will add to the diversity and complexity of our society and we will be all the better for them."

Smiles and sunshine at our family fun day! ☀️





Why you should adopt the North West Anti-Racism Charter

By Dave Duggan

THE North West Anti-Racism Charter arose from cross-border gatherings where people wanted to push back against the normalisation of racist language and behaviour.

The Bloody Sunday Trust's vision is to promote human rights, conflict transformation and understanding between people. It runs The Museum of Free Derry. A natural ally is the North West Migrants Forum whose vision includes promoting respect, fairness, equality and success. These Derry-based organisations linked up with The Irish Network Against Racism which is dedicated to finding common strategies for combating racism across Ireland. Together, they brought the Charter into being.

They asked me to draw out key desires registered in the workshops and to begin drafting a Charter.

Participants wanted something that used personal language that was accessible; that centred on the human race, recognising both common humanity and existing differences; that was intentional in words and action; that held people to account and that could work as a document for public display.

I am a blow-in to this place, a Plastic Paddy born in London in the mid-1950s.



Dave Duggan is a writer and dramatist. His latest book 'Journeywork, A Creative Life' is a collection of essays on his life and practice as a writer.

I was reared in an area where the sign 'No Blacks, No Dogs, No Irish' was common.

I worked as a volunteer, in South-East Asia and in West Africa.

I have been welcomed here as an immigrant. I experienced the occasional jibe, laughed off as 'only a joke', easy enough to cope with, being White Irish. I see and hear racism in this place, often casually, as in the phrase "I'm not a racist, but..."

The Charter exists to fill the void opened by that 'but'.

It is an attempt to distill the goodwill and welcome that abounds in this place, contrary to the boorish language and behaviour sometimes seen in

public and which is rife online.

Slight revisions from the organisations helped finalise the draft.

I mulled a while, seeking a literary form that might hold these desires in an engaging way.

A cross-border event took place to adopt and affirm it. Copies of the Charter, in either language, are available from the North West Migrants Forum and The Bloody Sunday Trust.

Hang the Charter in your hall or in other places of business or leisure. It will aid conversation, affirm goodness and make people feel welcome.

The Charter will be launched on October 7 in Derry's Guildhall between 11am and 1pm.

Changes afoot as work gets under way on second floor

VISITORS to our centre may have noticed work under way on the floor beneath us. This is because construction work has begun on our hugely exciting Intercultural Community Café.

Funded by SEUPB through its PEACEPLUS programme, the café will, on a practical level, comprise a working training kitchen and seating area where, among other things, we will hold 'Drop-in and Catch-up' sessions three days a week.

Also, in conjunction with the North West Regional College, we will train 30 individuals in menu planning, health and safety, food hygiene and first aid - the aim being to prepare them should they choose to join the catering and hospitality sector. The café will mark a new chapter in the life of our organisation and we are thrilled to see work under way on it. Building will last four to five months.

We are thrilled to be at the heart of such a transformative scheme and we want to put on record our thanks to SEUPB, through its PEACEPLUS funding stream, for putting their faith in us.



Our second floor has been completely stripped back as work has begun on our Intercultural Community Café.



Bits 'n' pieces...



Mairtín McMenamin delivering one of his lovely Irish-themed English classes in our main hall.



And what a lovely surprise it was for us to find three of our members on the front of the JRCT annual report. Right there in the centre is Iz Stokes, the American student who spent the summer with us!

Young people make a splash at Summer Club 2025!

'We will miss the laughter that has lit up our days over the past two months'







Where possible, we always try to shop local...

These are just some of the stores and businesses we have worked with and supported in recent months

Danske Bank

Reddin's Coach Hire

Holiday Inn

Post Office

Poundland

Centra

Visit Derry

Tesco

Musgrave Market Place

Able & Flinn

Doherty's Bakery

Foyle Taxis

Translink

The Works

Embassy Property Ltd

Clinton's

Hillbilly Chicken

Sports Direct

PNP Solutions Ltd

Vodafone

Marie McGrellis Photography

M Hamill Photography

Dominos Pizza

iPrint

The Oaks Fishery

Foyle Arena

Brooke Park

In Your Space Circus

Brunswick Movie Bowl

Claude's Café

Pilot's Row

Nerve Centre

Bonnie's Bouncy Castles

Gordon's Chemist

Boots Chemist

Dunne's Stores

Aircoach

Kilrea Lake

Void Gallery

Smyth's Toys

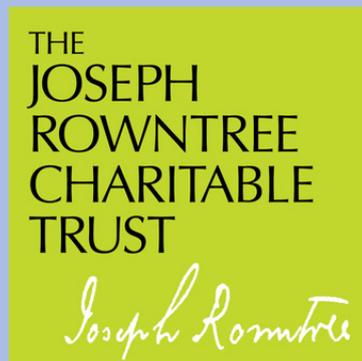
Parky the Magician

Manor Construction

A huge thank you as well to those who made donations directly to our organisation. You know who you are.

We rise by lifting others ❤️

Thank you to our funders and sponsors. Without your continued support none of our work would be possible



We hope you have enjoyed our latest newsletter!

Remember, you can always contact us on **02871 362184** or **07912295571**

Our website is www.nwmf.org.uk and you can keep up to date with our work on...



We'll leave you with this quote from @jessthelefty:

'Wild that we live in a time where simply caring about people of different races, genders, religions etc is seen as 'political'. Since when did basic human decency become controversial? We now treat discrimination as a respectable political stance instead of what it truly is - morally reprehensible.'

