



Humanising Rights and Responsibilities Series:
I'm Ok, You're Ok and That's Ok:
2011 Conference

Listening to Young People's Voices



The 2011 Conference was hosted by Clare Intercultural Network CIN and the Intercultural and Diversity Education Centre – IDEC Ireland and sponsored by the Equality Authority and Community Foundation

Agenda

10.00	Registration: Opening of Conference : Welcome from Clare Intercultural Network
10.45	Equality, Social and Cultural Values: Dr Mary Murphy , National University of Ireland, Maynooth
11.00	Official Launch: Listening to Young People's Voices – A Research Project : University of Limerick and Mary Immaculate College: Dr Eimear Enright, Deirdre O'Rourke, Dr Orla McCormack, Maurice Harmon
11.20	World Café – Discussion Groups
12.05	Gender, Human Rights and the Right to a Belief System Dr Roja Fazaeli , Trinity College Dublin: Presented by Elaine D'Alton, Clare Women's network
12.30	World Café – Discussion Groups Harvest of Ideas – summary of the essence of the discussion
	Launch of Book & DVD by Professor Marie Parker Jenkins, University of Limerick : Book: The Flagless Ones: An Iranian Refugee Family's Story by Hassan H. Faramarz: DVD: A Journey of Hope by Firoozeh Faramarz
1.45	Tools for Diversity and Education in Practice : Yellow Flag Programme – Paula Madden, Irish Traveller Movement Spotlight on Stereotyping – Deirdre Toomey, Equality Authority
2.00	Place of Ideas – Discussion Group: The Market Place of Ideas will allow participants to contribute to finding solutions to the issues raised during the morning. It will also help identify ideas to inform policy makers and decision on interculturalism, equality, religious diversity and human rights in Irish education.
3.30	Identifying Actions
3.45	Summary of Key Perspectives from the Day
	Close

Audience:

Educators from primary, secondary, youth reach, third level and adult education, policy makers, University education and law departments, development education organisations, groups and networks, youth organisations, relevant state agencies, the community and voluntary sector, 3rd level and Youthreach students were invited to the conference. The targeted audience was involved in education, governance, human rights, equality, curriculum, policy and practice and service delivery areas at local, regional and national levels.

There were approximately 63 people including 10 representing young people in attendance. Attendees came from the education sector, from primary to post grad, including providers, educators and students, and from the development education field. The local and national NGO sector, in particular, Youth organisations, was well represented. Representatives from national agencies completed the diversity of the participants.

The Event

The conference opening address by the Coordinator of CIN, Alphonse Basogomba, followed by address by the Mayor of Ennis, located the day within the international Human Rights celebration and reminded us of the responsibility locally to create environments for all to enjoy their human rights. Presentation inputs are attached. Presentation inputs were followed by all participants first engaging in a world cafe discussion on what their experience and concerns were which then was fed back in the form of a harvest of the important issues and the next important questions to come from conversations. These can be divided as follows:

Area of discussion	Issues	Participants' questioning for discussion:
Values	Democracy	Not just formal politics – make it relevant in schools

	Pluralism	<p>People's values need to be respected.</p> <p>Why should people conform – this will get rid of individual identity.</p> <p>Nor do we allow dissent – allow option to opt out of voting</p> <p>Find commonality beyond the differences</p>
	Equality Diversity Rights	<p>The degree of change depends on the lens through which we look at things and our own experiences.</p> <p>Difference is good, it makes society work.</p> <p>Respecting the difference while working towards inclusive.</p> <p>Stereotyping is still a problem.</p> <p>Awareness raising, stereotyping/identity.</p> <p>Religious diversity needs to be connected to human rights</p>
Leadership	Inclusive Proactive	<p>Leadership – values – create a debate.</p> <p>Non-judgemental and respectful.</p> <p>Communicate in ways we all understand.</p>
	Communication	<p>Parents need to be brought into the conversations and discussions – partners.</p>
		<p>Learn from young people's good examples.</p>
Policy	Reflective Broad Consultative	<p>Need for discussion and debate on values that underpin our society/systems.</p> <p>Core values tend to be implicit and deeply embedded rather than explicit.</p> <p>Importance of voice and empowerment in schools and beyond.</p> <p>A change towards valuing practical life experiences by service providers.</p>
	Challenging	<p>Challenge consensualism in Irish society: valuing diversity.</p> <p>Actually allow debate and critical questions to be asked – not common in Ireland: change agent versus prophets of the existing system.</p> <p>Interrogating assumptions.</p> <p>Acknowledge different truths.</p>

Practice	Public discourse space	Different value systems do not have to be conflicting. Should we be 'labelling' values systems? One's values are often flexible and changing. We need to open up conversations more about diversity, give people the language of diversity, and ensure people are comfortable discussing equality and diversity.
	Participation Debate discussion	Safe spaces to communicate, acknowledgement. Parents need to be brought into the conversations and discussions – links. Need to challenge teachers' personal views. Need for public space not dominated by vested interests.
Structures and systems	Reform Change	Maybe we should use the word 'improve' rather than 'change'. Safe places need to be questioned – bullying a problem – stereotyping a problem.
	Accountability Transparency	Need for positive spaces. Treating people how they would like to be treated – requires engagement.

Research

Some of the feedback from the young people on the research provided the researchers with considerations that now need to be integrated into the research. In particular young people talked about young people wearing masks to fit in at school and that a lot of work needs to be done prior to the research on creating trust and confidentiality.

'Young people vulnerable – want to please, to identify'

'Safe places need to be questioned – bullying a problem – stereotyping a problem'

'People hide themselves to be accepted'

'Name, background important'

'Have safe place – to discuss and talk'

Additional Comments

- Acknowledge different truths
- Start by enabling people to talk to each other
- How issues are dealt with depends on teachers and school
- I enjoyed learning about different religions
- Shining a light
- The flagless one
- Religious diversity needs to be connected to human rights

Dissemination

The conference feedback will be part of the research report and will also be the starting point for other activities on this subject throughout the year.