

North West Migrants forum has been very active over the past few months. The centre was closed for two weeks at the start of August but we came back busy with our Activist Summer School. Here's a short round up of what we have been up to in recent months!



## **Effective Activism Summer School**

NWMF held our Effective Activism Summer School from 21st-26th August. Young people attended from more than seven schools, two universities and the Northwest Regional College. The week was a mix of talks, workshops and practical action with speakers from a range of backgrounds including activists, politicians, political commentators, journalists, university lecturers and community members who shared their life experiences and expertise. Talks and discussion were held on a range of topics including social activism, social change, Community, Political and Government Structures in Northern Ireland, The Good Friday Agreement, Cultural politics, Common Travel Area restrictions and Good Relations in NI.

We have also produced an information booklet to help people navigate politics in Northern Ireland, topics include the political system in NI, levels of government, political parties and how to register to vote. It also highlights our Common Travel Area campaign to raise awareness and end discrimination against residents of NI in citizenship categories who cannot avail of cross border travel under the CTA. We launched the booklet on the second day of the summer scheme, with the support of veteran activist and former MLA Eamon McCann.

Throughout the week, our young activists distributed copies of our guide across the city as a practical exercise during summer school. They distributed about 300 leaflets each day in Guildhall Square, Waterside, Crescent Link and other estates around the city. The Summer Scheme ended with a day trip to Belfast where we visited Belfast Multi-Cultural Association (BMCA) and team building trip to Let's Go Hydro in Belfast.

**Download an online copy from our website:**  
<https://www.nwmf.org.uk/north-west-migrants-forum-politics-in-northern-ireland-booklet-launch/>



## **AUGUST-SEPTEMBER:**

Effective Activism Summer School  
21st - 26th August

Better Health – Stronger  
Communities Project.

Publication of information booklet  
on Politics in NI.

Meeting Gregory Campbell MP -  
5th August

CTA campaign trip to Dublin  
meeting Ogra FF and Kenyan  
Embassy, 11th September

Advancing Racial Equality Meeting  
in Stormont, 14th September

Meeting with Bishop Donal  
McKeown, 28th September 2021

Meeting Bishop Rt Rev Andrew  
Forster, 24th September 2021



# EFFECTIVE ACTIVISM

summer scheme



## Better health - stronger communities project.

Our 'Better Health - Stronger Communities' Project has been running since 17th June 2021 with 10 weeks of exercise, 2 healthy eating workshops, a 3 hour self care workshop and a 3 hour suicide awareness session. The project aims to promote participants' mental health and wellbeing, increase knowledge and awareness of participants own mental health and that of others around them through training on cultural awareness, mental health and suicide prevention. The programme was funded by the Community Foundation for Ireland- The Begin Together Fund (Bank of Ireland). Additional funding from the Public Health Agency has allowed us to extend it until March.



**We resume after Christmas. Childcare is available and registration is still open.**  
<https://bit.ly/BHnwmf>

## Meeting with Catholic and Anglican Bishops.

In September, we met both Bishop Donal McKeown of Diocese of Derry and Rt Rev Andrew Forster Diocese of Derry and Raphoe.



At both meetings we discussed the Common Travel Area, Racial inequalities, the racial equality strategy and the 16 year wait for it to be implemented. We also expressed our disappointment at the lack of political will to prioritise racial equality and the need for faith leaders to lead by example.

Both Bishops signed our pledge on key race equality issues. Both Bishops highlighted how equality was central to their Christian beliefs.

We look forward to meeting again with them soon as well as other faith leaders in the North West and beyond

## Racial equality at Stormont - 14th September 2021

On Tuesday 14th September 2021, the North West Migrants Forum arranged a visit to Stormont to mark one year since the assembly debated and reaffirmed its commitment to racial equality. The day was an opportunity for a number of Black and Minority Ethnic led Organisations and individuals to present their work and challenge MLAs to stand by their previous commitments. NWMF introduced a pledge for MLAs to take concrete action to create a society where all members are valued and ethnic minorities are protected from discrimination, harassment and seen as equal citizens.

The Northwest Migrant Forum led the initiative with cooperation from Belfast Multi-Cultural Association (BMCA), Horn of Africa People's Aid NI (HAPANI), East Africa Youth NI, Multi-Ethnic Sports & Cultures NI (MSCNI), BME Women Network and Belfast Islamic Centre (BIC). The groups were supported by the Committee on the Administration of Justice (CAJ), Equality coalition and Amnesty International.

The first commitment to racial equality by the NI Executive was made in 2005, 16 years ago, when the first Racial Equality Strategy was published. Although the executive has repeatedly recorded its commitment to tackling racial inequalities in all its forms since 2005, it is deeply disappointing that there has been a lack of progress in the implementation of key aspects of the strategy. While we welcome the cross community support on the day - we challenge politicians to speak out AND take concrete actions. Activists and community leaders from the Black, Asian and Minority ethnic community came from across the country to actively champion their own rights. The event was a clear demonstration that there are excellent leaders here in NI who need to be listened to and valued. The Racial equality strategy must be implemented without delay.

Thank you to all the MLAs who came to speak to us and those who paid us courtesy when we stopped them at the corridors of Stomont to sign our pledge to advance race equality in Northern Ireland.



## Dublin visit - Kenyan Embassy and Ogra FiannaFail

We took our CTA campaign to Dublin, starting with a reception at the Kenyan embassy to mark our director's selection to Derry City and Strabane District Council. We took the opportunity to seek the Kenyan Embassy support to lobby the Irish government to extend CTA rights to Kenyan citizens living and working in the island of Ireland as many without UK or Irish citizenship are impacted by these rules



We were then welcomed by Ogra Fianna Fail a great team of young activists very eager to learn and to support our cause. We discussed the Common Travel Area, Direct provisions and the policies that continue to exclude and discriminate non Irish citizens in the island of Ireland. We also spoke about the impact of racism and the importance of an All-Ireland anti-racism strategy and potential for an All-Ireland health service.



Both the Kenyan embassy and Ogra Fianna Fail made actionable commitments to advocate for change to these rules

## Meeting with Gregory Campbell MP



In August, we met with Gregory Campbell MP. Our aim is to confront and challenge racism where we see it, Engage leaders across the political spectrum to inform and challenge them to take concrete action in tackling racial inequalities in N.Ireland.



## OCTOBER-DECEMBER:

October: Black History Month Workshops in local Primary Schools: Model School, Oakgrove, St Annes and Eglinton.

Friday 22 October: Strand Road Police station, Black History Month presentation and training.

Saturday 23rd October: Black History Month Summit at City Hotel, Derry. Hosted by Bishop Andrew Forster and Bishop Donal McKeown

Throughout October- Stormont and Council Buildings were illuminated to mark Black History Month.

13th November: Launch of National Lottery Fund evaluation.

Our Better health, stronger communities ran throughout Autumn and will return after Christmas.

November - NWMF has received donations to make food parcels d

16th November: Campaign for change: Meeting with TD and Senators in Dublin

8th December: Presentation of oral evidence to Committee to the Executive on the Refugee Integration Strategy

## Black History Month Workshops

In October we marked Black History Month. This month is an important opportunity to educate and increase recognition of Black History by learning about the lives of important people and historical events that are often overlooked in the history books. The month is also an opportunity to challenge racism and highlight issues facing Black people today. People from African and Caribbean backgrounds have been a fundamental part of British and Irish history for centuries. However, their contribution to society is often unrecognised, ignored or distorted, this is particularly true locally.

Learning about black history can help us understand the roots of racism and why it still exists today. Understanding the roots of racism can help us to break down barriers of racism and prejudice

This year we offered free workshops for schools and community organisations to celebrate Black History with us. Local Schools who took part in this initiative included Model School, Oakgrove, St Annes and Eglinton

The pupils had an educational but fun-filled day. The workshops included a presentation on Black History and its importance, A video highlighting the achievements of people from the Black community, activities and poster making, Q&A and African cultural and traditional performances.

We also ran a Black History Month workshop at Strand Road Police Station on Friday 22 October where we spoke about Black History and Culture as well as institutional racism, Black Lives Matter and disproportionality in policing.



# Black History Month Summit - City Hotel 23rd October



NWMF organised the first ever Black History Month Summit on Saturday 23rd October at the City Hotel. It was co-hosted by the Catholic and Anglican bishops of Derry, Bishop Donal McKeown and Bishop Andrew Forster. The event drew attention to the history and diversity of contributions of people of African descent on the island of Ireland. The event also brought together politicians, faith leaders, and civil society groups to learn about some of the key issues facing our Black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) communities.

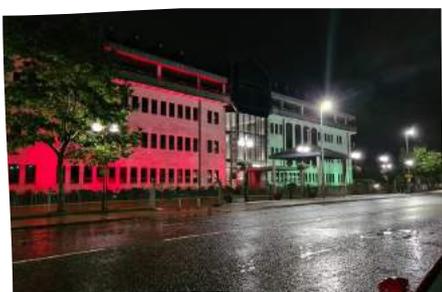
A distinguished group of speakers addressed delegates: Bishop Donal McKeown and Bishop Andrew Forster; the Chairperson of the UN Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent, Dominique Day; Dr Livingstone Thompson, Chairperson of the African and Caribbean support organisation; Beverly Simpson; Patrick Corrigan, from Amnesty International; Coumilah Manjoo from Belfast Multi-Cultural Association and Dr Philip McDermott. Among the politicians there to lend support were the Mayor of Derry City and Strabane District Council, Alderman Graham Warke, the DUP Junior Minister, Gary Middleton, councillors from different parties on the Council. Cllr. Rachael Ferguson, Cllr. Ryan McCready, Cllr. Derek Hussey, Cllr. Conor Heaney, and Cllr. Shaun Harkin. Mr Middleton addressed the conference in person while his fellow Junior Minister, Declan Kearney of Sinn Féin, spoke to delegates virtually.

The event was also attended by the Chief economics and director of central economy who is also the Racial Equality champion from The Department for Communities, George Sampson and David Lennox, Deputy director, corporate engagement and communication division, who is also the racial equality champion at the department for justice and Eddie Doherty, Area manager of the Housing Executive. The event ended on a high note with an interactive black history Quiz hosted by Paul Sceeney, dance performances by Sudanese Youth, Eritrean Musicians Samuel Yohannes, powerful spoken words from Poet and artist Raquel McKee, Djembe drummer Donna Namasuka and , musician Wilson Magwere.

## Illumination of Stormont and Council Buildings

To mark Black history month, NWMF requested the illumination of Stormont and Council buildings in red or green, the official Black History Month colours.

Derry City and Strabane, Causeway Coast and Glens were illuminated from 1st-3rd October, Armagh city, Banbridge and Craigavon on the 3rd of October; Fermanagh and Omagh, Mid Ulster, North Down, Newry Mourne and Down district on 23rd. Belfast City Council, Antrim and Newtownabbey Council on the 25th. The Northern Ireland Assembly also marked Black History month by illuminating Stormont buildings on the 23rd October 2021.



## National Lottery Fund Evaluation.

Our evaluator held focus group discussions on 13th and 20th November for service users, young people and committee members. There were also some personal interviews with service users, committee members, accountant and one of our other funders.



## Food Parcels

Thank you to the staff & pupils from Lisnagelvin Primary School who donated their harvest food collection to NWMF. Our young people sorted and organised the donations to make food packs which so far have helped 21 families. We are still distributing these, please contact us to make a referral.



## Campaign for Change: Meeting with TDs in Dublin on CTA



As part of our Campaign for Change, NWMF arranged a meeting with members of Fianna Fail Parliamentary group in Dublin the 16th of November. It was a really successful and informative meeting. NWMF brought representatives from BMCA, New Community Voice and CAJ. We met with FF Senators and TDs and shared presentations on the reality of CTA restrictions and its impact on health, education and sense of belonging. CAJ spoke on the policy aspect which put forward some practical solutions that could help alleviate some of the current issues. We obtained a pledge from FF to look in to these and we will be following this matter closely. .

### **Evidence to the Executive on the Refugee Integration Strategy.**

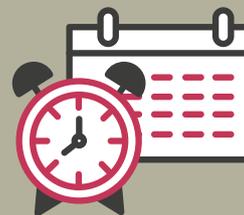
North West Migrants Forum was invited to brief the Committee to the Executive on the Refugee Integration Strategy on Wednesday 8 December 2021 alongside Bernadette McAisley from STEP / Stronger Together, Coumilah Manjoo from Belfast Multicultural Association, Ann Marie from Red Cross and Breidge McPherson and Catherine Barr from Women's Centre, Derry. We spoke about the current situation for Refugees and Asylum seekers and the failure of the proposed Refugee Integration Strategy to acknowledge and address the Hostile Environment Immigration policy and lack of any timelines or measureable outcomes. We will be running group discussions in January to feed back into our formal response and we urge you to take part.

### **Connecting Communities to Campaign for Change: Winter School.**

Our Connecting Communities to Campaign for Change Winter School will take place from February 4th to February 6th, 2022. Funded by the Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust, the Connecting Communities to Campaign for Change Programme aims to create a cohort of individuals and organisations with campaigning and advocacy skills who can engage meaningfully with policy processes across the Island of Ireland and the UK. The Active Citizens Winter School aims to connect active citizens from minoritized communities - and in particular people excluded from the Common Travel Area (CTA) - with civil society organizations in the Island of Ireland

# What's on in NWMF January to March

# 2022



## dates for your diary

### **North West Migrants Forum Annual General Meeting**

7th January 2022. 6:00 pm to 7:30  
email [Aynaz.zarif@nwmf.org.uk](mailto:Aynaz.zarif@nwmf.org.uk) to attend.

### **Refugee Integration Strategy**

2 Focus group discussions will be organised by NWMF  
for consultation on the Draft Refugee Integration Strategy on  
**Tuesday 11th January and Saturday 15th January.**

### **Better Health, Stronger communities Project:**

6 week plan. Saturdays and Wednesdays from second week of January including Physical Activities  
and Mental health workshops. Registration still open <https://bit.ly/BHnwmf>.

### **Connecting communities to Campaign for change:**

Active citizen Winter school: 4th to 6th February  
Residential for 3 days and 2 nights which aims to connect active citizens from minoritized communities  
- and in particular people excluded from the Common Travel Area (CTA) -  
with civil society organizations in the Island of Ireland.

### **Protest on CTA:**

21st March - to highlight the impact of Common Travel Area rules, and the disproportional impact on  
minority communities, particularly for those in border areas

### **Effective Activism, Supporting Intercommunity Practice:**

Monthly social action meetings: 2 meetings will be held in January and during Winter School.  
Joint workshops on social action will be held including young people on the last day of our Winter School

### **International Woman's Day Celebration: Breaking the bias; Gender, Race and Intersectionality**

Residential for Women day 4th to 6th March  
A 3 days and 2 nights residential for women only.  
We will have panel discussions on leadership, representation and gender violence  
and women's health and selfcare.

### **Lets talk about race and racism in NI/ Race, Culture and Identity Programme at Schools**

A six week programme to be delivered in ten primary schools and post primary schools throughout  
February and March 2022.

**To find out more about any of our events please contact us**

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**<http://nwmf.org.uk/>**

*Thank you all for supporting us  
throughout the year.  
Happy Holidays everyone and best  
wishes for 2022.*

★  
We  
WISH YOU  
A  
MERRY  
Christmas



North West  
Migrants Forum