

## Culture Connect, Ireland

[www.cultureconnect.ie](http://www.cultureconnect.ie)

### PROBLEM

Culture Connect was founded in 2010 in Drogheda, Co. Louth. It aims to promote the sharing of cultures between Irish citizens and immigrants Educate people to recognise the strength in cultural diversity.

A non-profit organisation creating cultural diversity, friendship networks and information exchange its mission is to promote interculturalism, community cohesion, racial equality and to provide appropriate services and programmes that meet the needs of a culturally and linguistically diverse community.

The Culture Connect information centre provides advice and support on issues such as housing, employment rights, social welfare entitlement and immigration. Advice can be provided in over 25 different languages – Polish, Lithuanian, Latvian,

Afrikaans Portuguese, Spanish, Russian and other languages to new communities with limited English. It also provides information to Irish citizens who may wish to know about other cultures in the community.

It provides support and mentoring for new second generation Irish and migrant youth to help them navigate their challenges.

2-way cultural awareness training is also available to support service providers and immigrant parents to minimise the various challenges they experience in working together.

Conversational/ESOL classes are designed to help new migrants engage with volunteers from the local community and develop their English. Facilities are generally tailored to meet the needs of both Indigenous Irish community and ethnic minorities within Louth. Advice and support is confidential and supported by a dedicated and experienced team.

### ACTION

Culture Connect's Expanding Youth Horizons Initiative, was aimed at advancing the learning and development of vulnerable and academically at-risk children, aged 12 to 18yrs. It offered a unique opportunity that improved the academic prospects, achievements, self-esteem, and life opportunities of disadvantaged young children.

The goal of the programme was to help students in their 3<sup>rd</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> years who were academically at risk to pass their Junior and Leaving certificate exams by teaching them the skills that they needed to succeed. The tutoring and support programme ran for 3 months while supporting students from disadvantaged schools/communities in Drogheda and its environs. It offered one-to-one and group learning support in Maths, English, Sciences and Irish.

Since 2011, Culture Connect has supported over 5,000 students, accommodating students from different nations each week.

### RESULT

- *Improved confidence in participants.*
- *Enabling platform for academic interaction for participants outside the usual school environment.*
- *Great financial relief for disadvantaged parents who may not have been able to afford commercial grinds.*
- *Participants realising the importance of good grades and working very hard to achieve them in their exams.*
- *A social platform where students developed and built relationship with students from other schools was created.*

*The programme was sponsored by Skills and Opportunity Funds (ULSTER BANK) while the second strand was sponsored by ESB Energy Generating Fund.*