

Failte Isteach Programme, Ireland

INTERCULTURAL

INTERGENERATIONAL

INCLUSION

PROBLEM

Fáilte Isteach is a Third Age community project with volunteers welcoming new migrants through conversational English classes. Fáilte Isteach works at breaking down the barriers that migrants and communities face by extending the hands of friendship and goodwill through the practical, welcoming, and inclusive way the programme is delivered. The programme provides more than the transfer of skills and knowledge - it is making a positive difference to everyone involved. There are Failte Isteach groups in every county in Ireland, and in Leitrim we host three classes across the county in the towns of Carrick-on-Shannon, Dromahair, and Drumshanbo.

ACTION

Classes are tutored entirely by volunteers who are encouraged to welcome participants to their community through language; identify needs through conversation and focus primarily on fluency and building confidence. Flexible classes allow our volunteers to support participants in their immediate language requirements while offering a warm welcome. Volunteers are made up of older Irish people in the communities.

The programme aims to utilize older volunteers' skills, talents, and expertise and harnesses their desire to contribute to society. Our volunteers are all adults but vary in life stage from those who recently finished school to retirees.

The classes are predominantly populated by Ukrainian students at the moment in Leitrim but we have had a wide range of nationalities and cultures in our classes. There are students from the Middle East, North and Sub-Saharan Africa, South America, Southeast Asia, and other European countries. We also encourage sharing of cultural traditions through conversation, food, and music. rational approach.



RESULT

The students felt that the classes brought immediate language and social integration benefits to them within specific, practical, and realistic learning situations thus further facilitating their motivation to learn English. Nearly all the successful students reported that they liked English. They claimed that such a liking stemmed from their satisfying English learning experiences in the classes. The students stressed that most Fáilte Isteach tutors tried to involve them as active participants in the learning process by taking the students' experiences and interests into account when developing a lesson or by adapting the learning materials to the student's individual objectives, needs, and capabilities. Furthermore, students were actively encouraged to assist each other.

Volunteers feel they assist in levels of well-being and boost the self-esteem of migrants. It's also a way to strengthen informal networks and social support systems. For the volunteers, social contact with a wide range of people can increase the chances of finding social support, useful contacts, and helpful information. Meeting up with other tutors and newcomers "from around the globe" exposes them to new experiences.