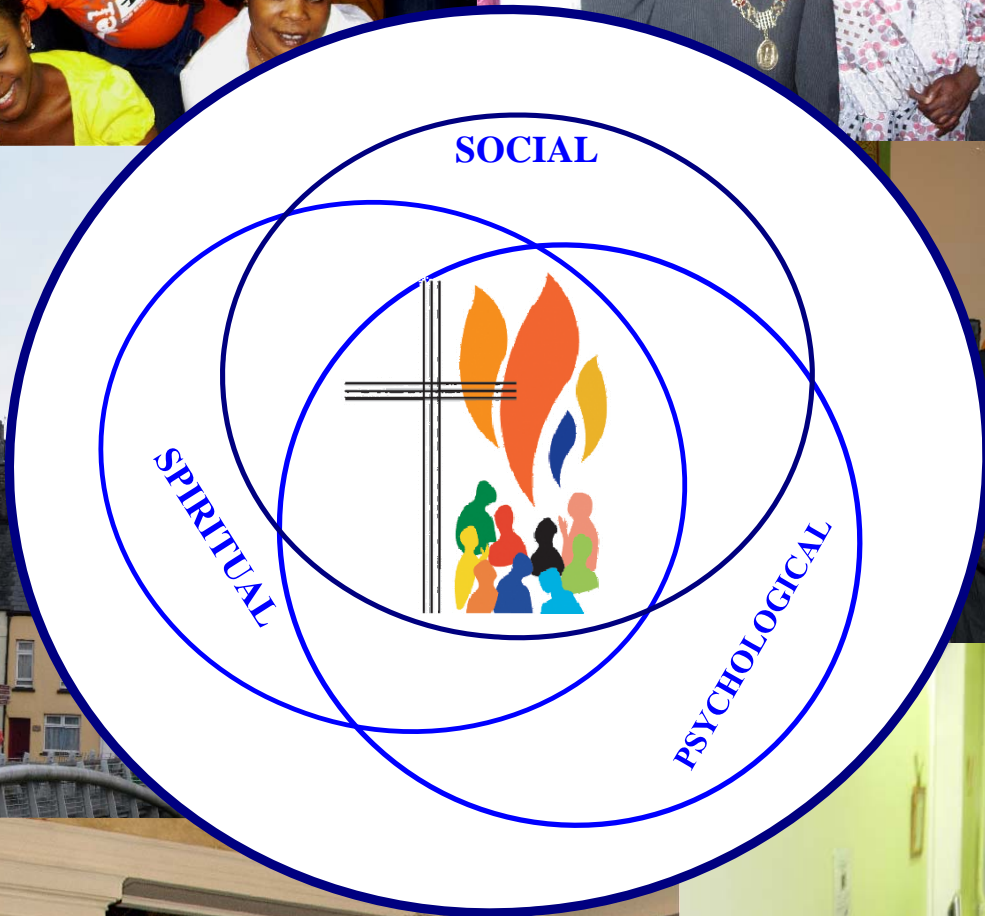


2009 Annual Report

Cois Tíne
St. Marys, Popes Quay, Cork
www.coistine.ie



**In the foreigner
a Christian sees not simply a neighbour,
but the face of Christ Himself, who was born in a manger and fled into
Egypt, where he was a foreigner, summing up and repeating in His own
life the basic experience of His people.**

Erga Migrantes Caritas Christi, 15

INTRODUCTION: Following an evaluation at the end of 2008 Cois Tine took a deliberate decision to refocus its energies on its original vision. To this end it was agreed to concentrate almost solely on pastoral work with African Immigrants. Work with the Irish community, through involvement in public events and networking, would be reduced in order to devote available resources and time to our core client work. In addition Cois Tine, in response to dwindling sources of income, would reduce expenditure on recreational activities and where possible provide in-house training or else find other agencies to fund or co-fund training provision. These decisions placed pastoral care of African Immigrants at the core of Cois Tine's work for 2009 and also took account of the reduced funding opportunities caused by the economic downturn.

As part of the implementation of these decisions an extensive training programme for Outreach Workers was developed and its delivery is on-going. Through this Cois Tine has worked to ensure that volunteers and staff have a fuller understanding of Cois Tine's fundamental mission rooted in faith, and the principles of Catholic Social Teaching. In support of its training programme Cois Tine developed both a *Code of Pastoral Conduct* with clear guidelines for ethical conduct and responsibility and also a *Draft Handbook* of services and information associated with the implementation of Pastoral Outreach Care Work.

In order to improve services within our premises Cois Tine recruited three new staff members through the Community Employment Scheme and also secured the services of four third level placement students. The work undertaken by these individuals is explained in greater detail below. Other areas of Cois Tine's work also developed during the year particularly Counselling and Alternative Therapies. A new Computer Room was also provided opening up new training opportunities and also a means for our clients to stay in contact with their home countries. Drop-in support remained a key area of work while our Women's Group, Multicultural Choir and Drumming Circle continued their activities.

PASTORAL SERVICES: During 2009 Cois Tine engaged in a wide range of pastoral responses that can be classified under the headings of Social, Psychological and Spiritual.

Social

- Drop-in Centre: - open on weekdays.
- Meeting space/rooms: – open weekdays, some evenings and weekends.

- Advocacy – on behalf of individuals - help in dealing with officialdom, agencies etc.
- Drumming Circle: – with a multicultural membership, met weekly, made some public performances.
- Choir: - Multicultural membership, meets weekly, gave occasional public performances.
- Events/Parties/Trips: – fewer such events in 2009 due to funding restrictions.
- The Cois Tine Women’s Group: -met regularly to discuss issues facing women in the asylum process and to explore ways to constructively use their time to learn new skills for integration.
- Computer/Internet Facilities: As a result of a Grant secured from the Conrad Hilton Fund a new Computer room was set up in 2009. This has seven internet linked PC’s available free of charge to our clients.

All the above have elements of recreation, practical/emotional support and assist in the process of integration. We view them as an integral part of our ministry to welcoming the stranger.

Training Courses held at Cois Tine during 2009: Some of these were organised and delivered by Cois Tine staff and volunteers while others were a collaborative effort with agencies such as Cork City Partnership and AKIDWA.

- Computer skills (Group Courses and individual tuition).
- Personal development.
- Women’s Health.
- Organisational Development.
- Pastoral care (for volunteers working with Immigrants).
- Driving Theory.
- Preparation for living in Irish society.

Training aimed to increase skills, to help immigrants integrate into the local community and to provide asylum seekers with constructive activities while they await decisions on their asylum applications.

Awareness Raising: Through the following means -

- Newsletters/Briefings dealing with justice issues.
- Web Site – highlighting justice issues affecting Immigrants.
- Networking/Committees/Steering Groups – Providing a Christian perspective with the aim of promoting inclusion, integration and the welcoming of the stranger.
- Public/Church events – Giving input, presentations on issues affecting immigrants.

In 2009 Cois Tine engaged in these activities to a lesser extent than in previous years. Nevertheless, in the long term, awareness raising activities and networking are very important to making the inclusion of immigrants in our communities and Church a normal and accepted part of life. Cois Tine’s contribution to promoting integration was recognised when we received first place in the Integration Category of the 2009 Cork City, Lord Mayor’s Community Awards.

Support and facilitation of Immigrant Community Groups: This was achieved by providing:

- Meeting facilities/rooms – Allowing new community groups to organise and function.
- Administrative and organisational backup supporting group development.

- Training – Especially in organisational development.

The overall aim of these activities was to empower immigrant groups and to increase the capacity to organise and to engage in active citizenship. In 2009 twenty-three groups used Cois Tine for their meetings and activities.

Psychological

Counselling and alternative therapies: Cois Tine's facilitation of Counselling for Immigrants continued during 2009. Four volunteer Counsellors provided this service.

In a new departure, SPIRASI a Dublin-based agency with the specific remit of caring for Survivors of Torture provided therapeutic care at Cois Tine. This was made possible by a grant from the Mercy Solidarity Fund. Three SPIRASI therapists were involved in delivering this specialist service. In 2010 Cois Tine will seek funding to continue this service and also to provide training that will allow locally based Counsellors to work in a culturally sensitive way.

Another new but related area of work for Cois Tine in 2009 was the provision of Massage as an alternative therapy for clients who could not benefit from the Counselling process due to their lack of English or simply because they could not express their feelings. This has proved a worthwhile development and, funding permitting, we hope to continue this service in 2010.

One-to-one contact with Immigrants: This contact takes place during pastoral outreach care work or in our premises. This is the core pastoral work of Cois Tine from which all other areas of work have developed. Over five thousand signatures were recorded at our Reception in 2009. Many of these were repeat visits and all were made by people accessing the services and facilities we provide through our base in Pope's Quay.

Particular effort was made to increase our outreach capability in 2009. As mentioned above a special training programme for outreach volunteers was developed. As a result all the Accommodation Centres in the Cork City area and in Cobh are visited on an almost weekly basis. Home and Hospital visitation has also increased.

Medico-legal reporting: Following an interview and medical examination reports providing evidence to support asylum applications are written for submission to the Refugee Appeals Tribunal. Ultimately these reports assist immigrants to reach the end of the asylum process and get on with their lives. Two medical Doctors work with Cois Tine to provide this service.

Befriending: Long term contact with some refugees and asylum seekers is on-going. Cois Tine is open to maintaining contact with clients for as long as they need.

These services are all about welcoming and caring for individuals by providing them with the emotional support and information they need to cope with the burdens they have brought from their homelands, the stresses of the asylum system and the problems of settling into a new culture and place.

Spiritual

Contact in our centre and during pastoral outreach care is carried out within Cois Tine's Christian ethos. We provide spiritual support for Catholic immigrants and are respectful of the religious traditions of non-Christian immigrants. In 2009 Catholic immigrants were supported through:

- Liturgies.
- Home visitation/spiritual support.
- Liaison with Parishes.
- Spiritual Direction.
- A Newsletter for Catholic Immigrants.

Through the Spiritual, Psychological and Social services outlined above Cois Tine provided a range of pastoral supports all aimed at helping immigrants as they begin their lives in Ireland.

OTHER AREAS OF WORK

Website: During 2009 the Cois Tine website, www.coistine.ie was maintained and updated regularly. A monthly Reflection was posted and usually this focused on the Christian response we are called on to make to migrants. In addition articles pertaining to Cois Tine's work and activities were posted on a regular basis. More recently two new Sub-Sections were added to the Resources Section one containing all the monthly Reflections published to date and the other with materials and speeches associated with the Interfaith Event held in City Hall Cork.

Collaborative Work: In the last year Cois Tine's policy of cooperating with voluntary, statutory and new community organisations has led to continued links and cooperation with groups and agencies providing services to immigrants. Among these are Cork City Partnership, Welcome English, Cork City Council, NASC Immigrant Support Centre and many others. Cois Tine continues to provide Office space for the New Communities Partnership (NCP) and meeting rooms for groups such as NeCoDrA (New Communities Drug Awareness), African Country immigrant groups and organisations such as Amnesty International many of whose members are Immigrants.

In 2009 Cois Tine was closely involved in the forming of *The Cork Integration Forum* which promises to become the main voice for immigrants in Cork City through which they can promote inclusion and contribute to the development of integration.

A number of changes during 2009 have brought about a renewed and welcome openness to collaboration and common action among agencies working with or supporting immigrants in the Cork region. Changes in staffing arrangements as well as the reality of shrinking resources have contributed to making inter-agency cooperation both necessary and desirable. For example: Christmas 2009 was marked by NASC – the Immigrant Support Centre and Cois Tine hosting a joint Christmas Party for Asylum Seekers and Refugees. Towards the end of the year interagency cooperation reached new heights with statutory, voluntary and immigrant groups coming together to prepare a Consortium Bid for European Union funding to support projects aimed at promoting integration and supporting services for Immigrants in Cork City.

Increased staff and volunteer levels: 2009 also saw a significant increase in Cois Tine's work force. In all Cois Tine has a total of twenty three volunteers who fulfil a wide range of functions. Three Community Employment Scheme workers joined us during the last year and have made a very welcome addition to our staff. They are responsible for Caretaking/Maintenance, Administration and Reception duties. In addition four third level students had placements with Cois Tine in 2009. One provided Computer training to clients and also maintained our Computers. The other students undertook research related work that will, we hope, develop into practical projects beneficial to our clients in 2010.

In consultation with *Welcome English*, (a voluntary group providing English language lessons for Immigrants) a second placement student from the Contemporary Migration and Diaspora Studies Programme in UCC began research to develop a programme in Spoken English/Public Speaking to assist immigrants improve their general level of spoken English. This has a particular emphasis on:

- Preparation for public speaking and interviews.
- Practice in reading and speaking (which includes pronunciation and diction).
- English for special and Academic purposes (this may be business / medical / legal etc.
- Gaining an insight into Irish culture.

It is hoped that this will result in specialist lessons being available during 2010.

Yet another area of research, which we hope will bear much fruit, was undertaken through the collaboration of Cois Tine staff, volunteers and another UCC student. This area of research emerged as a response to the needs of immigrants and employers in the Cork area. As a result work to construct a framework for accessing employment began. This centres around the development of a comprehensive training programme aimed at helping refugees and asylum seekers prepare for working life in Ireland and recognizes that employment is a major stepping-stone to integration. We have already had discussions with NASC, a partner organisation in Cork City, who have agreed to take the lead in running the programme. Cois Tine will, of course, continue to support this initiative and work collaboratively with NASC providing continued research support and practical input through the delivery of course modules when the programme begins. Funding will be sought through the European Integration Fund to implement it.

Somali Community: During the year Cois Tine in collaboration with Cork City Partnership undertook a series of meetings with the male leaders from the Somali community. This led to the establishment of a programme focusing on community building, reconciliation and conflict resolution. This is particularly relevant as members of the Somali community here in Ireland come from opposing sides in the on-going conflict in their homeland. This programme will continue until August 2010 and will entail nine facilitated sessions. This innovative programme will be a learning experience for all participants including Cois Tine staff and it is hoped that it will provide a model for working with other groups in the future.

Interfaith Event: In mid 2009 work began on preparing for what turned out to be a very successful and worthwhile event that took place in January 2010. One of the many actions specified in the Cork City Integration Strategy launched in 2008 was an Inter-Faith Event. Cois Tine committed to be the lead agency for organising this event.

Preparing for this event and negotiating a collaborative response was a demanding process that needed the participation and trust of all participants. Representatives from the Muslim, Jewish, Hindu, Buddhist, Baha'i and Christian faith participated in this process and the result was a prayerful

event in which the beliefs of all were respected. Over six hundred people attended the event in City Hall Cork with the key note address being given by President Mary McAleese. We are most grateful to her and indeed to all who helped make this event an example of the intercultural and interreligious cooperation and harmony that epitomizes the ideals contained and expressed in part of our Mission Statement i.e. *“Cois Tine is a multicultural organisation that respects and promotes the integration of people from all communities, cultures and faiths”*. In 2010 we hope to maintain and to develop the links and contacts that we have made with other religious groups.

Finances: Like most voluntary groups Cois Tine experienced difficulty in accessing funds during 2009. Thankfully, we had anticipated this and were therefore very careful regarding expenditure in 2008. As a result we carried €32,920 forward to 2009. Most of this was granted specifically for projects in 2009 (e.g. for Computers and a specialist Counselling Project). In 2009 fewer grant opportunities were available and as a result our overall income dropped to a total of €36,381, considerably down from the €57 thousand of the previous year. The largest source of Income in 2009 was Donations at €15,150. The remaining income was split almost equally between Fundraising, and Grants.

Expenditure (excluding staff salary which is covered by the Society of African Missions) amounted to €43,345 which left a shortfall of €6,964 of expenditure over income. This was met from the €32,920 carried forward to 2009. The balance in Cois Tine’s account at the end of the year was €25,784 most of which is committed to on-going projects. Full accounts are attached at the end of this Report.

CONCLUSION: 2009 was a busy but successful year for Cois Tine. The situation in which we work continues to be one of change. While the number of immigrants coming to Ireland is decreasing significantly those who are here are likely to suffer most from the current economic downturn and the anti-immigrant sentiment that this is stirring up. In 2010 Cois Tine will continue to implement the changes instigated last year. Our focus will remain on providing a pastoral response to our primarily African client group.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS: Our sincere thanks to all who have supported the work of Cois Tine during the last year. Below is a list of major contributors who provided support in kind or financially.

Health Services Executive.	Douglas Parish.
The Office of the Minister for Integration	The Capuchins.
The Diocese of Cork and Ross.	The Holy Rosary Sisters.
Conrad Hilton Foundation.	The Dominicans.
The Mercy Solidarity Fund.	The Franciscans.
The Little Way Association.	The Presentation Sisters.
Cork City Partnership.	Cork City Council.
The Society of African Missions.	The Garda Siochana.

Continued ...

Our thanks also go to many individuals not mentioned above but who made donations in cash or kind or gave of their time as volunteers. The contributions you

made helped the work of Cois Tine during the year. We are sincerely grateful.

COIS TINE ACCOUNTS JAN – DEC 2009			
EXPENDITURE		INCOME	
1. Bank Charges	40	Donations/Gifts	15,150
2. Insurance	408	Fund Raising	10,375
3. Equipment	11,155	Grants	10,143
4. Housekeeping/Hospitality	2,482	Refunds	650
5. Building Maintenance	2,622		
6. Office Costs	4,996		
7. Publications			
8. Training	2,610		
9. Staff/Volunteer Expenses	6,791		
10. Staff/Volunteer Training	272		
11. Utilities	1,200		
12. Events/Activities	10,878		
Total	43,454		36,318
	BALANCE SHEET		
	Balance at start of year		€32,920
	Income during the year		€36,318
	Expenditure during the year		€43,454
	Balance at the end of the year		€25,784