

Cois Tine

Annual Report 2010



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

During 2010 we received grants for specific pieces of work which were carried out in accordance with the grantors requirements. We also received donations from individuals, from **the Diocese of Cork & Ross, the Little Way Association** and the **Franciscan Community** in Cork City. We are particularly grateful for these as they allowed us to cover the cost of our core running costs and the upkeep of our premises.

Cois Tine does not have the funding to pay the commercial rent rates. We are therefore in a very special way grateful to the **Dominican Community** who provide the premises we use rent free. Without this generosity Cois Tine could not operate. The availability of the premises at Popes Quay is a real and valuable contribution towards ministry to immigrants in Cork City.

Our sincere thanks to all who have supported the work of Cois Tine through giving of their time as volunteers, through their prayers and by providing the funds we need. Below is a list of major contributors who provided support in kind or financially.

Health Services Executive.

Douglas Parish.

Cork City Council.

The Dominican Community.

The Diocese of Cork and Ross.

The Holy Rosary Sisters.

The Little Way Association

The Capuchins. Community

Cork City Partnership.

The Presentation Sisters.

The Society of African Missions.

The Franciscan Community

The Sisters of Charity

Martin Luther King viewed integration as more than merely living together, side by side, in tolerant coexistence. Integration...is evidenced in the welcome embrace of the other as a full participant in social, economic and political life. 'Integration is meaningless without the sharing of power. When I speak of integration', he said, 'I don't mean a romantic mixing of colours. I mean a real sharing of power and responsibility'. Integration requires not only changes in laws and public policies... It also demands 'a change in attitudes, the loving acceptance of individuals and groups'. Racial Justice and the Catholic Church, Bryan N. Massingdale, (Orbis Books, 2010) pp 175/6



Cois Tine is a project of the **Society of African Missions Justice Office**

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INTRODUCTION

During 2010 Cois Tine continued the policy implemented in the previous year of focusing almost solely on its original vision of providing support for African Immigrants. While many of those who use our service are Asylum Seekers living in Direct Provision Accommodation Centres we notice more and more that our client group is changing to African immigrants legally resident in Ireland. This reflects the on-going decline in the number of new asylum applications being made. In 2010 these totalled 1,939, the lowest number since 1996. Cois Tine's work therefore is changing from a ministry predominated by the tasks of initial welcome and dealing with the asylum process to support around integration into the community.

While there is a definite move towards integration, involvement with Asylum seekers is still a very significant part of Cois Tine's work. The four Direct Provision Accommodation Centres in our general area have remained at or close to capacity occupancy during the year. While nationally the number of individuals in the asylum process is dropping the Accommodation Centres in the Cork area are being kept open and full while there were closures in other parts of the country.

Many of those we came into contact with during 2010 have spent years in the accommodation centres. Once again we again experienced the perennial problems associated with the Direct Provision System caused by delays in the processing of asylum cases to completion, i.e. the stress and depression associated with forced idleness, insecure residency status and living in the constant fear of deportation. Sometimes this was further compounded by trauma experienced before and during migration. Among both asylum seekers and legally resident immigrants we also encountered complex health and social care needs. There are individuals with mental health issues, people who have been trafficked, who are living with HIV/AIDS and who have been the target of witchcraft practices.

Facts and Figures in Brief: During 2010 a total of 8,556 people came through the doors of Cois Tine to avail of the services we provide. This is more than a 50% increase on figures recorded in the previous year. While many were repeat visitors this high number shows the necessity of having a facility for our largely African Immigrant clientele to use. In addition many other of contacts and meetings took place between Cois Tine staff/volunteers and clients during outreach visitation.

Services to Asylum Seekers: In 2010 Cois Tine continued its traditional support role for asylum seekers through the range of services below. In addition during the year there was a significant increase in outreach visitation achieved through the work of six volunteers. As in previous years clients were referred on to other agencies when their needs were beyond our remit, e.g. for housing, benefits and legal advice.

Services to legally resident African Immigrants: While African Immigrants who have been granted the right to live in Ireland are better off than those in the asylum process they still face an uphill struggle. Most succeed in overcoming the difficulties associated with tasks such as finding accommodation, accessing benefits and schools for their children. However, in addition to the everyday problems and difficulties we all face there are other areas that are not so easy for Africans. The absence of an extended family support network, coping

with cultural difference, and often the lack of transferable skills make living and in particular, finding employment in the Irish community more difficult for Africans. In response to these difficulties Cois Tine aims to be a space in which legally resident Africans can cope with and deal with these issues.

PASTORAL SERVICES: During 2010 Cois Tine engaged in a wide range of pastoral responses that can be classified under the headings of Social, Psychological and Spiritual. While a distinction has been made above between Asylum Seekers and Legally Resident Immigrants many of the services provided by Cois Tine were relevant to both groups.

Social

Drop-in Centre: This remains at the heart of Cois Tine's work. It is a safe place to access one to one emotional support, information, referral and spiritual direction. The presenting issues encountered were wide and varied—see appendix 5.

- **Advocacy:** On behalf of individuals - help in dealing with officialdom, agencies etc.
- **Drumming Circle:** With a multicultural membership.
- **Events/Parties/Trips:** In all twenty such events took place as well as seventeen Community Building Lunches (see Appendix 2).
- **One-to-one Contact:** This core work took place on many levels ranging from ordinary social intercourse through befriending, providing information and advice and on to formal counselling and therapy.
- **Provision of Rooms:** Various groups used Cois Tine as a base for their meetings and activities. These were available during normal opening hours and by arrangement on evenings and weekends. See Appendix 4.
- **Supporting organisational development:** Through facilitation of meetings and helping immigrant groups develop terms of reference, structures and procedures and by providing capacity building training. Much of this work was carried out in cooperation with Cork City Partnership.
- **Computer/Internet Facilities:** Due to demand this service expanded significantly in 2010. See below.
- **Training Courses:** Training provision was a major activity during 2010. In all twenty courses varying from one-off events to courses that took place over an extended period were run during the year. Some training was organised and delivered by external agencies and others by Cois Tine staff and volunteers. As in previous years, training aimed to increase skills and to provide asylum seekers with constructive activities while they await decisions on their asylum applications. In 2010 Cois Tine expanded its training into two specialist areas by developing and delivering two new and unique training programmes. (These are described in more detail below under "New Initiatives in 2010". See appendix 3 for a full list of training topics and the duration of courses.)
- **Networking and promoting inclusion:** Cois Tine promoted the inclusion of immigrants through its participation and input at meetings, consultations and by serving on groups such as the Cork Integration Strategy Steering Group. The official launch of the Cork Integration Forum (CIF) by the Minister for Integration during 2010 was the culmination of a long process supported and promoted by Cois Tine over the past two years. This immigrant led umbrella group has the specific aim of *"bringing about an integrated and cohesive Community in Cork City by being a medium for dialogue regarding issues affecting the lives of immigrants and a place where immigrants can contribute to the development of this aim."*

The activities and services outlined above all contribute to the ability of African Immigrants to participate actively in our society and assist or facilitate the process of integration. We view them as an integral part of our ministry to welcoming the stranger and we see our work in these areas in the context of the Encyclical Erga Migrantes Caritas Christi which distinguishes between “first welcome” (i.e. our work with Asylum Seekers) and “welcome in its full sense, which aims at the progressive integration and self-sufficiency of the immigrant.” Par 43.

Psychological

- **Counselling and alternative therapies:** While many of the supports and services listed above under the heading of “Social” contributed positively to the psychological wellbeing of our clients, Cois Tine also provided services specifically to address the psychological impact and sometimes trauma suffered by immigrants before, during and as a result of the migration process. A number of the clients who benefitted from these services were victims of torture and abuse. These services are provided free of charge. During 2010 four counsellors provided 107 counselling sessions.

In 2009 having found that some clients could not engage with the counselling process due to language barriers or because they could not bring themselves to talk about what had happened to them Cois Tine ran a pilot project using Massage, to establish the need for and effectiveness of such for this service. The results were very positive and so we decided to continue this service. Two trained therapists provided 109 massage sessions to clients during 2010. These were also free of charge.

- **Medico-legal reporting:** A total of 13 Medico-Legal Reports were prepared in the last year. This number is down significantly on previous years reflecting both the drop in the number of asylum applications and the fact that SPIRASI can no longer fund one of the two Doctors who undertook this task in Cois Tines premises.

The therapies that Cois Tine provides aim to assist clients to overcome or cope with the trauma they have experienced and so to allow them have a better quality of life. This in turn will facilitate engagement in the process of integration.

Spiritual

Religion is a central element of expression of cultural identity. It plays an important role in the rebuilding of identity in a new culture and it also serves as vital link with the immigrant’s own community. Cois Tine supports the development of the faith identity of immigrants both Christian and non-Christian.

We are especially pleased with the success of the interfaith event organised by Cois Tine in the early part of 2010. Over six hundred people attended and representatives of six faiths, Hindu, Buddhist, Baha’i, Jewish, Muslim and Christian officiated at the event which was opened by the President of Ireland Mary McAleese.

As in previous years Catholic immigrants were supported through:

- Liturgies.
- Home visitation/blessings and spiritual support.
- Visitation of Accommodation Centres.
- Liaison with Parishes.
- Spiritual Direction.

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

NEW INITIATIVES DURING 2010

- **Conflict Resolution Training Programme:** A new and innovative programme was developed as a tailor-made response to the needs of Sudanese and Somali Immigrants when it became clear that divisions (factional, tribal and political) reflecting those in conflicts taking place in their homelands were affecting the ability of these national groups to form supportive communities and also preventing engagement in the process of integration here in Ireland.

To address this a training programme on conflict resolution and community building was developed and delivered during twelve full days spread over a period of months. This provided a forum for healing, conflict resolution and community building as a necessary precursor to engagement in the wider integration process. It included input on employment skills, politics, leadership, equality and gender issues and of course conflict resolution. The programme was delivered through the cooperation of Cork City Partnership and Cois Tine with the assistance of external facilitators. Considerable time, effort and resources were committed to this programme with initial funding coming from the Society of African Missions and further funding to extend the programme made available through Cork City Partnership.

- **Specialist Training for Counsellors and Therapists:** The second new training initiative was developed to enhance the skills of counsellors and psychotherapists so that they can provide a culturally sensitive service, work with a diverse client group, support survivors of torture and trauma and be open to people of different cultures.

The course entitled "*Practical Counselling Skills – an introduction to issues relevant in a multicultural Ireland*" consists of seventeen weekly two hour modules spread over two terms. Under the guidance of qualified and experienced counselling practitioners, term one aims to develop a strong foundation in Practical Counselling. Term two examines various issues in the context of a multicultural Ireland and provides practical guidance, as well as useful points for discussion, so assisting participants in their approach to integration. This course will finish in April 2011. A new course will begin on September 22nd 2011 with the view to having the course accredited. Second term modules which focus on multicultural issues can also be used for training other groups – thus contributing on a wider level to a greater awareness of diversity and the need for integration.

- **Research Projects:** During the year Cois Tine engaged in a number of research projects. One, almost completed, was to research and formulate guidelines and training for cultural competence, a resource aimed at helping local NGO's, Community, Charity Ogranisations, Sports, Social Groups and Statutory Agencies to link with and include immigrants in their activities.

Research also began on two other topics affecting the lives of African immigrants i.e. *Human Trafficking* and *Witchcraft*. This aims to explore these issues from the perspective of Africans living in Ireland, with particular emphasis given to the increasingly widespread use of witchcraft as a psychological weapon and restraint. Two professional volunteer researchers are in the process of undertaking this work which will be completed by April 2011. We intend to use the research material for publication and as the basis for developing training.

- **Expansion of Computer and Internet provision:** Due to demand from clients a new and larger Computer training room was set up. In addition a new mentoring/training programme

was developed using male and female immigrant volunteers who act as one-to-one mentors thus allowing culturally and gender sensitive training. Clients book appointments for training with their mentor at times that suit them. In addition to equipment previously purchased, fifteen refurbished laptop computers were donated by Camara, a volunteer-based organisation that uses technology to improve education in Africa. Sixty three clients/students signed up for the mentoring programme while seven volunteered their services to teach. This programme encouraged our clients to use one another as resources for learning. In addition to developing useful skills this facility is also an important emotional support and means for individuals to maintain contact with events, family and friends in their home countries



- **Development of Mná Cois Tine:** This group for immigrant women in Cork began in June. The group is open to women of different nationalities living in Cork. It aims to help members to empower themselves by creating a forum where they can meet, discuss and learn from each other and so facilitate their integration.

A men's group is also in the process of forming at Cois Tine. So far this is not as well established or structured as the women's group.

- **Charity Shop:** In the current financial climate with a severe shortage of money we are all battling to meet exceptional demands. In an effort to generate funds, become more self-reliant and self-financing Cois Tine has opened a Charity Shop on Shandon Street and is in the process of opening a second one beside it. To date stocking these with donated goods has not been a problem however, finding sufficient and committed volunteers to run them is getting more difficult. By the end of 2010 this venture had not, due to set up costs, turned a profit but based on figures available to date we estimate that by March/April 2011 they should be profitable.

OTHER AREAS OF WORK

Collaborative Work: Cois Tine's policy of cooperating with voluntary, statutory and new community organisations was continued in 2010. We have especially close links with Cork City Partnership, NASC and the Community and Enterprise Department of Cork City Council and have worked with them in a number of collaborative projects during the year. Cois Tine provided meeting rooms for groups such as The New Communities Drug Awareness Group and many African immigrant groups – (see appendix 4 for list of Groups). As mentioned above Cois Tine also participated in meetings and steering groups always with the view to promoting inclusion and contributing a Justice and Peace perspective based on Catholic Social Teaching.

www.coistine.ie During the year the layout of the Cois Tine website was redesigned and updated. In all 85 new articles/reflections were posted on the Cois Tine site during the year. About half of these were researched and written by ourselves, others were relevant articles on immigrant issues already published and linked to. We are grateful to Carol Dorgan who researched material for the Website's monthly Reflection.

Staff and volunteer levels: It was a year of great change for Cois Tine in respect of its staffing. As planned Gerry Forde moved to the Society of African Missions (SMA) Justice Office in Wilton in order to focus more on the broader Justice and Peace work of the SMA. He still provides administrative and website support for Cois Tine. The retirement of Sr. Mairead Fitzpatrick and Fr. Kevin Kiernan's transfer to Dublin as Chaplain to Beaumont Hospital were also big changes. We wish them well and we are grateful for their

contribution to the work of Cois Tine and for the positive difference they made to the lives of many as they struggled with the difficulties inherent in the process of migration.

On a more positive note during the year seventeen volunteers were recruited and trained. Six placement students undertook specific areas of work and we were fortunate to have the services of three community employment scheme staff who engaged in administrative, reception and maintenance work.

Finances: 2010 was, in terms of finances, a much better year than expected due to the fact that one-off funding, especially for training provision, came from a number of unexpected sources. Cois Tine carried forward almost €26,000 from 2009. In 2010 Cois Tine spent a total of €70,507. Sixteen thousand Euro of this was spent on setting up and running the Cois Tine Charity Shop which during the five months it was open had an income of €12,000. While the Shop did not show a profit we estimate that it should be by March/April 2011.

Excluding Shop costs Cois Tine spent a total of €54,506 on providing services and running its premises. Income for the year was €68,000 made up of €12,000 from the Charity Shop and €56,000 from Donations; Grants etc. (see accounts below). The sum of €23,200 was carried forward to 2011. Most of this is already earmarked for projects in 2011. Full income and expenditure accounts are appended below.

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

As Cois Tine enters its tenth year it is clear that there is still a need for its existence. Given the current funding situation and the fact that an increasing number of clients are settled residents rather than in the asylum process Cois Tine will in 2011 focus on maintaining current levels of support, services and availability to Africans living in Cork City.

To this end we will continue; one to one support, pastoral care, counselling, alternative therapies, training delivery, computers/internet availability and the provision of space for immigrant groups. In the longer term as more of our client group become legally resident we aim for Cois Tine to become a recognised Pastoral Centre for Africans living in Cork.

In the current climate it also makes sense to cooperate with other agencies, especially NASC, Welcome English and the Migrant Rights Centre who provide services specifically for immigrants. All are experiencing difficulties in coping with funding issues and with the changing immigrant situation. Therefore a greater multi-agency and task sharing approach makes sense and is the best way of supporting our client group. To this end Cois Tine will, with the agencies concerned, explore ways to improve cooperation while at the same time maintaining our specifically pastoral, African and Church centered focus.

COIS TINE ACCOUNTS JAN – DEC 2010			
EXPENDITURE		INCOME	
1. Bank Charges	50	Donations/Gifts	27,481
2. Insurance	411	Fund Raising	999
3. Equipment	5,245	Grants	22,700
4. Housekeeping/Hospitality	3,194	Charity Shop	11,944
5. Building Maintenance	7,292	Training Delivery	4,800
6. Office Costs	6,610		
7. Publications	697		
8. Training	11,443		
9. Staff/Volunteer Expenses	4,571		
10. Staff/Volunteer Training	1,910		
11. Utilities	1,532		
12. Events/Activities	11,552		
13. Shop	15,999		
Total	70,507		67,923
			
	Balance at start of year	€25,784	
	Income during the year	€67,923	
	Expenditure during the year	€70,507	
	Balance at the end of the year	€23,200	

Social trips and events during 2010
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1. Interfaith Event City Hall	11. International Women's Day
2. Killarney – women only	12. Launch of Charity Shop
3. Outing to Belgooley – men and women	13. Farwell Party for Community Employment personnel
4. Somalia Independence Day	14. Retirement party for Sr. Mairead Fitzpatrick
5. DailEireann – Somali/Sudanese Training Group	15. New Year party
6. Community Building Lunches (17 meals – prepared by immigrants)	16. Eritrean Independence Day Celebrations (SMA Centre, Wilton)
7. Clonakilty Direct Provision Centre Trip to Fota	17. Eucharistic Celebrations (X 3 for African Communities)
8. Wildlife Park (Women, men and children)	18. Haiti Prayer Service
9. Cultural and Historical Walking Tour of Cork	19. Fota Wildlife Park (Women and children)
10. World Refugee Day	20. Diversity Day

Training Programmes facilitated and hosted during 2010

1. Community building	For members of Somali and Sudanese Communities, this included two weekend residential sessions, i.e. 12 days in all)
2. Leadership Training	2 X Weekend Workshops
3. Receptionist, cultural awareness and hospitality programme.	2 x 2 day programmes
4. Life Coaching	2 X 1 Day Workshops
5. Drugs Prevention Awareness Programme	12 weekly sessions
6. Basic Computer Skills Training	2 X 1 Day Courses
7. Breastcheck Awareness (HSE)	Morning Course
8. Manual Handling	2 X 1 Day Course
9. Driving Theory	2 X 4 Session Course
10. Practical Counselling Skills	8 evenings (on-going)
11. HIV/AIDS Awareness	1 day programme
12. Staff Induction	2 X 1 Day training
13. Listening Skills (emphasis on multicultural)	Weekend Worksop
14. Drumming Workshop	1 Day
15. Capacity Building	2 X 1 Day Course
16. Organisational Development	2 X 1 Day
17. Embedding Diversity in youth Work	1 day Workshop
18. Creative Facilitation	Weekend Workshop
19. Creative Drama	Weekend workshop
20. Women's integrative therapy and relaxation	2 Days day in collaboration with NASC

Groups Facilitated at Cois Tine during 2010	
1.	New Communities Partnership
2.	Angolan Community (ongoing)
3.	Amnesty International Cork Chapter (ongoing)
4.	National Youth Council
5.	Anambra Association (Ongoing)
6.	Akidwa
7.	Common Purpose
8.	Amnesty
9.	Cork Domestic Violence Integration Group
10.	Cork African Women's Group (Ongoing)
11.	Dtalk
12.	Fir Cois Tine (Men's Group)
13.	Lifelong Learning Festival
14.	Mna Cois Tine (Ongoing)
15.	Mna Feasa
16.	MyCork
17.	National Youth Council
18.	NeCoDrA (New Communities Drugs Awareness Group)
19.	Snatch Drama
20.	Spirasi
21.	Yoruba Progressive Association
22.	Together (Polish Organisation - Ongoing)
23.	Nigerian Association (Ongoing)
24.	Cork Integration Forum Committee (Ongoing)
25.	Igbo Union (ongoing)

One-to-one support has always been part of Cois Tine's work with a staff member being available to meet with and discuss issues with clients. Below we list presenting issues encountered during 2010. These can involve referral on to another organisation or counsellor, case-work and repeat visits by a client.

PRESENTING ISSUES		
1. Accommodation problems (Direct Provision and outside)	2. Transportation, mobility and isolation	3. Living with HIV/Aids and worries about others finding out.
4. Allowance Problems (Direct Provision)	5. Annulment	6. Barriers to progress especially Language, Education and Training
7. Transfers (Direct Provision)	8. Depression	9. Enquiries re use of premises
10. Expulsion from Accommodation Centres	11. Bereavement: due to loss of family member	12. Racial discrimination and hostility
13. Deportation fears	14. Domestic Violence	15. Financial Difficulties
16. Signposting for legal issues	17. Spirit possession and Witchcraft	18. Prostitution
19. Letter writing	20. Disturbed Dreams	21. Rape
22. Welfare Appeals	23. Boredom	24. Parenting issues
25. Citizenship Applications	26. Loneliness	27. Workplace discrimination
28. CV Writing	29. Relationship Difficulties (Intercultural)	30. Assistance with conflict resolution
31. Requests for References	32. Social Isolation	33. Fears of returning home
34. Court appearances	35. Trauma	36. Undocumented workers
37. Family Reunification	38. Baptism	39. Miscarriage
40. Child care issues.	41. Mental health issues	42. Organisational Development
43. Assistance with College Projects – Migration, Trafficking and Mental Health issues associated with the Direct Provision System	Blessings: 44. Of New Babies 45. For bad Dreams 46. For Healing 47. Of Houses 48. For Spirit possession 49. For Fertility	50. Asylum Seekers processing decisions about going underground
51. Qualification Recognition		

