

Local migrant residents take seat in Leinster House

AN INNOVATIVE migrant political integration scheme that sees migrants placed with TDs for a six month internship is underway in Leinster House.

The Opening Power to Diversity scheme, which was first piloted in January, has been given the green light by the Oireachtas for a second round of placements.

The EU-funded scheme, which has been devised by Crosscare Migrant Project, is designed to engender increased integration of migrants in the Irish political system.

"We want people firstly to get a unique first-hand experience of what life for an Irish politician is like," said Crosscare Policy Officer, Joe O'Brien.

"We also want people to be inspired and feel that politics is now something that they can get involved in. Our migrants and new Irish citizens have come to Ireland with energy, fresh ideas and different perspectives - these are things that politics in Ireland needs."

The scheme was granted four places in its pilot phase. This time, six places have been allocated and the new interns are now almost two months into their placement.

Mulhuddart resident Adaku Ezeudo, originally from Nigeria, was one of the four interns participating in the first round of placements. Speaking to *Northside People* about her six



• Ekow Agyeman Prempeh is working alongside Fianna Fail TD Michael Moynihan under the Opening Power to Diversity scheme

month placement with Fine Gael TD Derek Keating, she said: "The scheme was the first of its kind so I saw it as a unique opportunity to be part of something special."

"Migrant communities in Ireland are so distant from the political process; the scheme was offering a chance to gain insight and knowledge of the Irish political system so I grabbed hold of it with both hands."

"It was also an opportunity

to showcase the migrant community to politicians. I wanted to show them that migrants are talented, educated and capable like anyone else and that we have a lot to offer."

Ghanaian Ekow Agyeman Prempeh of Tyrrelstown is currently in Leinster House working alongside Fianna Fail TD Michael Moynihan for his six month placement.

"I want to deepen my understanding of the art of politics," said Ekow.

"Some of the people in Leinster House have been there for many years so for me, it's a great opportunity to tap into their experiences and to grow leap and bounds in understanding how the system works."

"Would I run for election in future? I would not be surprised. I want to give a voice to a minority who continue to be silenced in Irish politics."

According to the 2011 census, 12 per cent of the population are now non-Irish. This figure has jumped 143 per cent since 2002.

Despite significant growth in the numbers of non-Irish nationals resident in Ireland, migrants continue to be almost completely unrepresented in the Dáil.

In the 2011 General Election just three of the 564 people who ran for the 166 seats were naturalised Irish citizens.



• ETHNIC MIX: Mayor of Fingal Cian O'Callaghan, Chair of Fingal Ethnic Network Ms Pamela Hagan-Morgan and Blaise Tangamu from Fingal Ethnic Network pictured at the launch of the showcase event.

Showcase of services for new communities

THE Fingal Ethnic Network (FEN) has revealed details of a major showcase event for service providers of interest to ethnic communities in Dublin 15.

The event will take place at Fingal County Council Civic Offices, Blanchardstown on Wednesday November 14 and will provide information on the range of services available in the area for the various new local communities.

Translation and interpretation services will be provided at the event by a local voluntary group.

Mayor of Fingal, Cllr Cian O'Callaghan, will open the showcase on the day at 1pm and launch FEN's 3-

Year Plan at the event, which is supported by Fingal County Council's Community Office, Safer Blanchardstown and An Garda Síochána.

There will be over 30 organisations present including MABS (Money Advice & Budgeting Service), CIC (Citizens Information), Blanchardstown Area Partnership, the Gardai and many community and voluntary groups active in Dublin 15.

Speaking at the launch of the event, Chair of the Fingal Ethnic Network, Ms Pamela Hagan-Morgan emphasised the significance of the event.

"This is an important opportunity for the ethnic community to inform

themselves about services that are available in the Blanchardstown area," she said.

"We are holding this event in the council's civic offices which is central and easily accessible to all."

Fingal Ethnic Network was established in 2008 and now caters for the 70 plus ethnic organisations and groups now resident in Fingal. The 2011 Census of Population results indicate that almost 50,000 people of non-Irish origin now live in the county.

The event runs from 1pm to 4pm on Wednesday November 14 in the foyer of Civic Offices, Grove Road, Blanchardstown.



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So close for Euromillions winner

A LUCKY Dubliner missed out on a €100 million Euromillions jackpot last week, but was compensated with a €277,226 cheque for matching five numbers plus one lucky star.

The winner, who wants to remain anonymous, bought his €18 Quick Pick ticket in Centra on Parnell Street and he was still shaking when he dropped into National Lottery offices to collect his cash.

"I've never won more than €20," said the man who is a regular Lottery player.

"I popped the ticket in the ticket checker and when the message 'contact the National Lottery' came up, I was sure there was something wrong. I never imagined it was good news and I was a couple of hundred thousand euro richer."

The winner said he has currently no plans for the windfall, as the news is "still sinking in."

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